COMPELLING TRUTH

Does the Bible say anything about cancer?

TL;DR

Illnesses, including cancer, are a result of the Fall and sin entering the world. While God might not heal everyone of cancer today, He will one day restore and redeem all that sin has destroyed.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Cancer is not mentioned specifically in the Bible, but God's Word does mention other diseases that could have been cancer, and it talks about disease generically. The Bible acknowledges disease as a tragic consequence of living in a fallen world. Illness, including cancer, is not a direct punishment for individual sin, but a result of the brokenness introduced by sin’s curse on creation. God offers hope and comfort to believers facing such suffering, assuring them of His presence and promising ultimate healing and restoration. Even when healing doesn’t happen in this life, believers can trust in the coming eternal life, where sin and its effects, like cancer, will be completely eradicated. Through every hardship, God is present, and His love and purposes remain steadfast, offering strength and hope.

FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

- The Bible does mention some diseases that could have been cancer (for example, 2 Kings 20:6–8).
- Disease in general is one of the results of the Fall (Genesis 3). God cursed the ground (the earth) because of the disobedience and the lack of trust Adam and Eve showed to Him.
- Psalm 103:1–5 says, "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's." God gives us hope. Although He might not heal us on this side of eternity, the promise is that He will one day heal and restore all that sin has destroyed.

FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

- Disease isn't a direct punishment for some sort of sin an individual commits, but the result of the Fall. Not only was the entire earth cursed, but death was introduced to all people—they must return to dust (see also Romans 6:23).
- People who are believers suffer as much disease as those who are not believers. But believers can trust that God will work all things together for good (Romans 8:28).

IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY

Cancer is a tragic reality of living in a sin-stained world. But those who know Christ can rely on Him to walk with them through it and can trust that one day, their cancer will be no more and they will know a fullness of life we can't even imagine (1 Corinthians 2:9; 13:12; Ephesians 3:20–21). Today, God sometimes chooses to heal people from their diseases. He might do this directly or through medical treatment. Or He might allow the cancer or other illness to continue, but a Christian will never have to journey alone. God is with us in all our struggles on this earth. James 1:2–4 and Romans 5:1–5 talk about viewing our hardships with joy, trusting God to work through them. Romans 8 reminds us that we can never be separated from Christ's love. For those who have put their faith in Jesus for salvation, He has prepared a place, free from sin and the effects of sin (Matthew 25:34; John 14:2–6; Revelation 21:4), and that includes cancer.

UNDERSTAND

- Illness, including cancer, is a consequence of sin entering the world and is not part of God's original design.
- Cancer is not a direct punishment for personal sin, but a result of the brokenness caused by the Fall.
- God provides hope, comfort, and ultimate healing for believers, even if physical healing does not occur in this life.

REFLECT

- How have you experienced God’s presence and comfort during times of illness or suffering?
- What does it mean for you to trust in God’s goodness and sovereignty, even when healing doesn’t happen?
- How can you find hope in God’s promise of ultimate healing and restoration, even if physical healing isn’t guaranteed in this life?

ENGAGE

- How can we explain to others that illness, like cancer, is not a punishment from God, but a result of living in a fallen world?
- How might our understanding of God’s sovereignty and goodness change the way we respond to sickness and suffering?
- How can we support and encourage those who are struggling with illnesses while reflecting God’s love and compassion?

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