



## **God Heals by Humbling**

By John Piper

*“I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and restore comfort to him and his mourners, creating the fruit of the lips. Peace, peace, to the far and to the near,” says the LORD, “and I will heal him.”* (Isaiah 57:18–19)

In spite of the severity of man’s disease of rebellion and willfulness, God will heal. How will he heal? Isaiah 57:15 says that God dwells with the crushed and humble. Yet the people of Isaiah 57:17 are brazenly pursuing their own proud way. What will a healing be?

It can only be one thing. God will heal them by humbling them. He will cure the patient by crushing his pride. If only the crushed and humble enjoy God’s fellowship (Isaiah 57:15), and if Israel’s sickness is a proud and willful rebellion (Isaiah 57:17), and if God promises to heal them (Isaiah 57:18), then his healing must be humbling and his cure must be a crushed spirit.

Isn’t this Isaiah’s way of prophesying what Jeremiah called the new covenant and Jeremiah called a new heart? He said, “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel. . . . I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jeremiah 31:31, 33).

Isaiah and Jeremiah both see a time coming when a sick, disobedient, hard-hearted people will be supernaturally changed. Isaiah speaks of healing. Jeremiah speaks of writing the law on their hearts.

So the healing of Isaiah 57:18 is a major heart transplant — the old hardened, proud, willful heart is taken out and a new soft, tender heart is put in which is easily humbled and crushed by the memory of sin and the sin that remains.

This is a heart that the lofty One whose name is Holy can dwell with and give life to.