DO YOU WANT TO BE WELL?

JOHN 5:1-9

Sermon Study - 11.8.2026

Leader's Corner

Do you want to be well?

John 5:1-9a (NIV)

Main Idea: Jesus invites us into a deeper kind of healing—one that challenges our desires, confronts our deflections, and calls us to take courageous steps toward wholeness.

Main Passage: John 5:1–9a

Main Practice: Honestly examine where Jesus may be inviting you toward greater wholeness and identify one intentional step of faith you can take this week.

Leader Summary: In John 5, Jesus encounters a man who has been unable to walk for 38 years. Instead of immediately healing him, Jesus asks a surprising question: "Do you want to get well?"

It's a question that seems to have an obvious answer. But Jesus' question invites us to consider something deeper. Sometimes the very things we long to be free from have become familiar parts of our identity. Healing and transformation can require vulnerability, surrender, and change.

This week's message explores three dimensions of our spiritual formation:

* Our Desires: Are we willing to honestly acknowledge what we long for and allow Jesus to shape those desires?

* Our Deflections: Are we avoiding the deeper work Jesus wants to do in our hearts through excuses, blame, shame, or distraction?

* Our Willingness to Risk: Are we willing to respond to Jesus, even when obedience requires vulnerability or stepping into the unknown?

As you lead, remember that people may be carrying grief, disappointment, unresolved pain, or experiences in which healing hasn't come as they hoped. Create space for honesty without pressuring people to share or implying that suffering results from insufficient faith.

Prayer and Praise

Opening Prayer:

Heavenly Father,

Thank You that You see us, know us, and meet us right where we are. Just as Jesus approached the man at the pool, You come near to us in our struggles, disappointments, and places of brokenness.

Lord, help us hear Your question today: "Do you want to be well?"

Give us courage to honestly examine our desires, recognize the ways we sometimes avoid Your work in our lives, and trust You enough to take our next step.

May this group be a place where we can be honest about our struggles, encourage one another, and experience Your grace together.

Shape our hearts and draw us closer to You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Suggested Worship Songs:

* "Goodness of God" – Bethel Music: Remembering God's faithfulness through every season

* "Run to the Father" – Cody Carnes: Bringing our brokenness and burdens to the Father

* "Lord, I Need You" – Matt Maher: Acknowledging our dependence on God's grace

Group Discussion

Encourage your group to read John 5:1–9a aloud before beginning.

OPENING | Connecting to the Story

1. Jesus asks the man what seems like an obvious question: "Do you want to get well?" Why do you think Jesus begins with a question rather than immediately healing him?

2. The man had lived with his condition for 38 years. How can our circumstances—even painful ones—become so familiar that the possibility of change feels uncomfortable or intimidating?

OUR DESIRES | What do we really want?

3. Jesus doesn't begin by asking about the man's faith, effort, or past failures. He asks about his desire. What does this reveal about how Jesus approaches people?

4. In the sermon, we were challenged to look beyond surface-level wants and consider our deepest desires. What makes it difficult to honestly acknowledge what we're longing for, even to ourselves?

Follow-up: How might bringing those desires to Jesus allow Him to reshape them?

OUR DEFLECTIONS | What are we avoiding?

5. Read John 5:7 again. The man responds by explaining why he hasn't been healed rather than directly answering Jesus' question. What do you notice about his response? How might years of disappointment have shaped his perspective?

6. Sometimes we respond to difficult situations through blame, excuses, busyness, avoidance, or shame. Which of these tendencies do you think most commonly keeps people from addressing what is happening beneath the surface?

Personal reflection: Is there an area of your own life where you've been avoiding a conversation or a step toward greater spiritual health?

OUR WILLINGNESS TO RISK | Getting up and walking

7. Jesus tells the man, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." Why do you think carrying the mat is a significant part of this story?

8. The sermon suggested that the things we've carried through painful seasons can become testimonies of God's grace rather than sources of shame. How have you seen God use someone's past struggles to encourage, strengthen, or help others?

9. The man's obedience eventually brought him into conflict with religious authorities because he was carrying his mat on the Sabbath. How might following Jesus sometimes challenge our desire for comfort, approval, or the appearance of having everything together?

10. Consider the three invitations from this week's message:

* Desires: What do I need to honestly bring before Jesus?

* Deflections: What have I been avoiding or explaining away?

* Risk: What step of faith might Jesus be asking me to take?

Which invitation resonates most with you right now, and why?

Practice

Group Exercise: What's on Your Mat?

Time: 10–15 minutes

In John 5, Jesus invites the man to get up, pick up his mat, and walk. His mat represented years of suffering and limitation, yet it became something he carried as he walked into a new chapter.

This exercise invites group members to consider what they may be carrying and how Jesus might be inviting them forward.

Step 1 | Reflect (2–3 minutes)

Invite everyone to spend a few quiet moments reflecting on these three questions:

DESIRE: What is one area of my life where I deeply desire healing, growth, or transformation?

DEFLECTION: What excuse, fear, distraction, or pattern might be preventing me from honestly engaging with Jesus about this?

RISK: What is one step I could take toward greater wholeness?

Encourage group members to write down their reflections.

Step 2 | Share (5–7 minutes)

Invite people to share one reflection or next step with the group.

Reinforce that sharing is an invitation, not an expectation. Members can share as much or as little as they feel comfortable.

Step 3 | Pray (3–5 minutes)

Pray together over the desires, struggles, and next steps that were shared.

Remind the group that the goal isn't to fix one another. It's to walk alongside one another as Jesus continues His work in our lives.

Weekly Challenge: ONE STEP IN 24 HOURS

Jesus didn't simply invite the man to think about getting well. He called him to respond.

Within the next 24 hours, identify and take one practical step toward the area of wholeness Jesus is bringing to your attention.

Group Accountability: Consider pairing up with someone in your group and checking in with each other during the week.

Remember: Our willingness to take a step doesn't guarantee an immediate outcome. We can trust Jesus with both our obedience and the results.

Further Study

John 5:10–15 | The Rest of the Story

The man's physical healing wasn't the end of his encounter with Jesus. Later, Jesus finds him again and challenges him to consider his spiritual life. **Consider:** What's the difference between experiencing relief from our circumstances and experiencing deeper spiritual transformation?

2 Corinthians 12:7–10 | Strength in Weakness

Paul describes a persistent struggle that God does not remove, yet he discovers that God's grace is sufficient and His power is made perfect in weakness. **Consider:** How can we pursue healing while trusting God when His answer doesn't look like what we hoped for?

A Thought Worth Considering: C.S. Lewis, in *The Weight of Glory*, challenges the idea that our desires are too strong. Instead, he suggests that we often settle for lesser things when something far greater is available.

Reflection: Are there places where we've become comfortable with something less than the life Jesus invites us to experience?