
THE

ULTIMATE PRESCRIPTION

**What the
Medical Profession
Isn't Telling You**

"THIS BOOK CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE."

**DR. JAMES L.
MARCUM, MD**
with CHARLES MILLS



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The Ultimate Prescription: What the Medical Profession Isn't Telling You

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The names of the patients in this book have been changed to protect their privacy.

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*I would like to dedicate this book to my parents,
Jim and Mary Marcum,
who have taught and supported me throughout my life.
They have focused my learning
on what the Great Physician teaches.
This book exists because of their love and guidance.*

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INTRODUCTION

AT THIS VERY MOMENT, you and I are part of the largest, most comprehensive health study this world has ever known. It's not being funded by a well-respected organization like the National Institutes of Health or the American Medical Association. There are no highly trained scientists bending low over colorful test tubes or peering pensively into microscopes, searching for clues. No forms are being filled out or random samples being taken. This study is quietly, unobtrusively being carried out in our homes, our schools, and our places of business.

The goal of this far-reaching investigation is to answer three simple questions. The first is, *What happens to the human body when it does everything . . . wrong?* What happens when it continues to take in toxic, nutritionally deficient foods, gets less than the necessary amount of sleep, is deprived of sufficient water intake, is inundated with a steady stream of harsh chemicals, is introduced to a never-ending supply of devastating, side-effect-laden pharmaceuticals, and is forced to breathe a constant flow of polluted air?

The second question is similar to the first, but it has to do with the human mind: *What happens when the information pouring into a brain's neural network is wrong?* What happens when it's

taught to focus entirely on its own needs, its own desires, and its own happiness, at the expense of all else?

Finally, the study is examining people's spiritual lives, asking the third question: *What happens to a person's relationship with God when that relationship is based on beliefs that are built on flawed foundations, on images of God that are totally, heartbreakingly wrong?*

The results are pouring in. We can see them at the mall, on television, on the Internet, and in line at the bank. We can catch glimpses of them as we talk with coworkers or even strangers on the street, when we read the blogs of "experts" on the web, and when we scan the evening news sources. We can see them at our local churches, in the halls of Congress, and especially in crowded doctors' offices.

Many of us see the results of this ongoing study reflected back to us from our own mirrors. We find ourselves gazing into the faces of overweight, overworked, overstimulated people we hardly recognize. We lean forward and squint into the eyes of people who haven't a clue about what's going on inside our own bodies, yet we know that all isn't right in there—that something bad is happening deep inside us. We understand—although we don't know how or why—that something important is missing, something necessary for the days, weeks, and years ahead. But all we can do is stand there, unsure, confused, and afraid.

That's what happens when the human body, mind, and spirit become so wrapped up with what tastes good, feels good, and seems good that we lose sight of what really *is* good. *That's* what happens when truth is hidden and people start to depend on a random set of highly polished, expertly marketed, and decidedly deadly . . . lies.

In the condition that civilization has placed itself, doctors don't know what to do beyond treating symptoms and hoping

for the best. Psychiatrists shake their heads in disbelief, wondering how their patients could ever get so emotionally messed up when they have so much for which to live. Pastors gaze down from their pulpits at dwindling flocks, searching for a way to transform what seems to have become an unattractive, seemingly inattentive, and reportedly highly agitated God into someone worth worshipping. And while parents juggle their overstretched budgets to cover astronomical medical insurance premiums and the costs of a growing list of prescription drugs, they must stand helplessly by as their children are attacked by diseases that used to afflict only the elderly.

Very Different

Life hasn't always been this way. One hundred years ago, the world was a very different place, filled with people living very different lives. The vast majority of people lived in the rural countryside, and in America, many lived on family farms. Most families grew and ate their own food. They didn't eat food marketed to them by national corporations that commercially processed their nourishment with heavy amounts of fats, salt, and added calories.

Social life was centered around the family unit, and the local church was the hub of activity in a community. A majority of the populace enjoyed a weekly day of rest, and the Bible was often the most read book in the home. Physical activity? That went hand in hand with what it took to survive or simply to put food on the table. They walked places instead of rode, drank water instead of pop, went to bed with the sun instead of after the late news, and found pleasure in creative—not passive—outlets. As a result of their rural lifestyle, people were less likely to suffer from the conditions so prevalent today; obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and many forms of cancers were not the mainstay of the medical

literature and the media of the day. Sure the technology was not as advanced in detection, but these conditions of excess just were not described.

All that has changed. Today, we tend to eat whatever is convenient, dumping copious amounts of highly processed foods down our throats and hardly ever glancing at nutrition labels. Our cuisine is saturated with chemicals placed there to preserve “freshness” and turn us into addicts who will keep coming back for more. Television commercials scream their audio-enhanced messages urging overconsumption as families eat on the run, rarely sitting down to enjoy a healthy meal together.

We listen to the chirping of iPhones instead of birds. We spend more time indoors than out. We let the media define our thoughts, telling us what’s important in life. Texting is replacing talking. Watching is replacing reading. Like sheep without a shepherd, we’re allowing “media darlings” and other random strangers to dictate our thoughts and agendas. We’re overmedicated and undernourished. The family unit is eroding, and God is becoming less and less important in our lives. When we finally exhaust ourselves in our constant strain to have everything, all the time, increasing numbers of us look around at our lives, judge them worthless, and decide life isn’t worth living anymore. The rest of us simply stare into our mirrors and wonder why we’re sick so much of the time.

The Good News

I have some good news for you, and you don’t have to be a rocket scientist to understand it. We’re in this tragic condition because we weren’t designed to live life this way. It’s as simple as that. The One who made us, who lovingly formed us from the “dust of the ground” according to Genesis 2:7, had a very different lifestyle in mind. We were designed to live

in harmony with nature, not to manipulate it to our liking or financial gain. We were created to live a life free of undue stress, not to run ourselves 24/7, as if doing anything less were unacceptable. We were supposed to be creative creatures, not passive couch potatoes who spend our lives being entertained by the creative efforts of others. Most important, we were designed to worship the God who made us, not spend our lives running away from Him.

In short, we were designed to worship our Creator, love one another, and care for the earth. The further we distance ourselves from that ideal, the sicker we become.

Where Do I Start?

When I sat down to write this book, I was almost overwhelmed by the challenges ahead. Where would I start? What would be the very first words? How could I bring to the world a plan of action that would make a real difference in people's lives, that would change people, that would literally save them from years of disease and suffering? Should I use a scientific approach and find double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled trials to prove and promote the truths found in the original human "owner's manual," the Bible? The scientific community would certainly appreciate that approach. Should I compile all the great works of God's healers throughout time and weave them into one gigantic volume? The literary community would be thrilled.

But in the quiet of soul-searching contemplation, I felt God asking me to write about the things I have seen and heard over the years as a cardiologist. I want this book to be personal—me talking to you about what I've discovered to be at the very heart of good health. I want to share with you, not only doctor-to-patient but friend-to-friend, the many deceptions that cloud our lives and make us sick.

Am I qualified to do this? Why should you want to read a book by James Marcum? What makes me so special? The answer lies not in the messenger but in the message. The power of this book doesn't lie in the words and studies and nutritional information you'll read. It's not dependent on the depth of research conducted or the degrees held by people I've quoted. The power of this book is entirely dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit, both in its writing and in its reading.

The truth is, I "practice" the healing arts. But God *created* them. And it is to God that I want to refer you and every patient who comes to see me, because He is what's missing in the lives of so many people. He holds the answer to every illness, every condition, and every heartbreak. He is the "Great Physician," the only true healer, the One who can touch lives and make us whole again.

That's why I've written this book. Because I believe God has given me a message to share with you.

In the pages that follow, I plan to introduce you to some of my patients and talk about how the very questions you're asking about your health are being answered in their lives.

Most Influential

I was reading about a recent poll of men who were asked who they thought was the most influential man today. This would be the individual to whom they looked for answers, someone they wanted to emulate.

Number one on the list was Don Draper, a character on the television series *Mad Men*. He's not even a real person!

Number two was Usain Bolt, an Olympic gold medalist who, many believe, defines the true spirit of competition.

President Barack Obama slipped in as number three.

While this poll may or may not reflect the feelings of most men, it was just another example of how the media have the

power to create an influential character, market him as an ideal to the world, and influence the minds of a large segment of the population. The media are doing this same thing when it comes to telling us how to build and maintain optimum health. They're busily promoting dangerous medications, toxic foods, destructive lifestyles, and dubious cures. All this leads us to the question, who controls the media? Who, or *what*, is pulling the strings on the most powerful influence in our world today?

As for the poll I talked about previously, wouldn't it be nice if the person listed as the most influential man in this world were the man who loves us most; who provides true answers to life's troubling questions; who is, right at this moment, bending beside you as you read this book? Wouldn't it be nice if the one who received the most votes had been the One who longs to hold you in His arms, remembers the day you were born, appreciates the good in you, wants to eradicate the bad, and is building a future for you that exceeds your wildest dreams? Why didn't He make the top-ten list?

The reason is that the deceptions under which we're all living include not only what God does but what He *is*.

I want to tell the world that He's number one in my life. And I want you to know that the answers you're looking for when it comes to physical, mental, and spiritual healing can be found in Him.

Are you ready to uncover these deceptions? Are you ready to find the truth in an error-filled world? Then let's begin our journey back to health through the discovery of the ultimate prescription.

—James Marcum, MD

1

A VICTIM OF DECEPTION

IT WAS 2:00 A.M. on Wednesday when my pager went off. Tuesday is a “call night” for me, which means I’m available all night for any and all situations that need my attention at the hospital. I should have known better than to think I’d enjoy a full night’s sleep.

The familiar number illuminated on my pager identified the source. I dialed it quickly, and the emergency room doctor picked up on the first ring. “We’ve got a male, thirty-eight years old, experiencing severe chest pains and heart arrhythmia. I’m thinking MI.”

My colleague was right. The symptoms were common for myocardial infarctions. I knew the man in the emergency room was quickly running out of time and, if something wasn’t done soon, he could die.

When I arrived in the exam room, “the patient” became David. He was now very real to me—a man with pale skin and terrified eyes. His blood pressure was dangerously low, he had

already received a dose of aspirin to thin his blood, and he was hooked up to a beeping electrocardiogram (EKG) machine.

I introduced myself and quickly scanned his chart. This was serious. Very serious. After breathing a quick prayer on my patient's behalf, I began to explain to him that he needed a procedure to open up the artery supplying the front of his heart with blood and I was going to assemble a team to fly him by helicopter to a facility where this operation could take place.

What happened next took only a few moments, but it seemed to last forever. David slumped down onto the examination table as his heart rhythm became completely random and unstable. The condition caused the blood to stop circulating in his body—a condition called ventricular tachycardia. Within seconds, he had passed out completely.

A team of highly skilled caregivers rushed into the room. The skin on David's chest was uncovered, and two electrode pads were attached to a device called a defibrillator by wires. These pads were placed over his heart. A shock of electricity jolted his body, causing it to convulse slightly as all eyes turned to the EKG. Sure enough, the waves of lines indicating the patient's heartbeats ceased their wild and random dance and settled once again into a steady *ba-beat, ba-beat, ba-beat*. David's eyes fluttered open, and he stared up at me for a moment, unsure of what was going on.

"How do you feel?" I asked.

"I'm okay," he responded weakly, glancing about at the other faces in the room, wondering where all those people had come from.

When I asked him about his pain, he said it was gone. I noticed that his blood pressure and heart rhythm had normalized, and for the moment, at least, my patient was out of danger. David had been dying and had been pulled back into life using a

now-common technology. I whispered a prayer of thanks to the God who taught medical professionals how to perform “miracles” using the simple tools found in most modern hospitals.

As preparations for David’s flight to the operating facility continued, I walked into the waiting room to talk with David’s wife and two daughters. They had heard the alarms. They’d seen the technicians running down the hallway. They knew that something was very wrong with their husband and daddy. And they were terrified. Panic showed in their eyes as they desperately clung to one another, trying to maintain a grip on sanity.

“How could this happen?” David’s wife wanted to know after I had explained the situation. “He’s never been sick a day in his life!”

How Could This Happen?

How could this happen? I hear that question often. The answer isn’t easy, and I told David’s wife, Debbie, that I would explain everything as best I could later. But for now, we had to make sure that her husband was getting the acute care he needed.

David’s left anterior descending coronary artery showed a 98 percent blockage. His heart simply was not receiving enough blood to function normally. The situation would be similar to having your air supply 98 percent blocked when you’re trying to climb a mountain. That would affect not only your ability to breathe but also the ability of every organ in your body—including your heart—to function. Blood—pumped by the heart—carries oxygen up to the top of your head and down to the tips of your toes. In essence, when your heart stops functioning correctly, your entire body begins to suffocate.

Within minutes, a stent—a device to keep an artery open—was placed in David’s coronary artery so blood could flow freely

again. My patient was fortunate that no permanent damage to his heart or other organs had taken place during his sudden heart attack and dangerous rhythm on the examination table. I guess the best place to have a cardiac event is in a hospital while carrying on a conversation with a cardiologist!

This is where some well-meaning people miss an important point. We hear a lot about alternative medicines, potent herbal cures, or the importance of diet and exercise. And I will be the first to champion anything that has been proven to work. But there is, and always will be, a place for modern medicine, *especially* in emergency situations. If I have a heart attack, I want a stent. If my heart is going too slowly, give me a pacemaker. If I am bleeding to death, stop my bleeding and start a transfusion. If I have a bacterial infection, bring me some antibiotics. Without modern medicine, a whole lot of people would not be around to explore alternative medicines, examine herbal cures, or learn the importance of diet and exercise.

David was suffering an acute event brought on by a chronic condition. As I later dug into his history, I began to understand why he ended up on my examination table. His heart disease was caused by elements in his life bringing stress on his body. He smoked. He held a high-pressure job. He ate food practically devoid of nutrition. But did he, his wife, or his two precious daughters recognize those stressors as the cause of his heart disease? No. Because they, like many of us, were operating under some serious misconceptions, and no one was making the lifestyle connection for them.

As important as modern medicine and its technologies are, people fall victim to a number of misconceptions regarding what modern medicine can and can't do. We'll discuss these later in the book, but the first misconception is huge, so let's take a look at that one before we go any further.

The First Misconception

What is a misconception anyway? Doesn't it depend on a person's point of view or perception? Not really. It's a falsehood, a lie, a trick, or an untruth. These are all around us and have been almost since the beginning of time. Sometimes they are so elaborate that even the most astute people don't recognize the untruth. But 99 percent truth is still a lie. Good and intelligent people are being deceived or have become clueless concerning many of the facts of life. Why? Amazingly, the reason usually comes down to money.

More specifically, I want to suggest that the misconception exists because of selfishness. We—and the society in which we live—tend to put ourselves above the interests of others, often because of a desire for money, power, or control.

One current misconception is the idea that modern medicine can fix anything. But to be brutally honest, modern medicine can't *fix* a thing. What it can do is a pretty good job of dealing with the *symptoms* of a lot of things.

"But, Dr. Marcum," I can hear you say, "how about a broken leg? Doesn't a doctor fix that?"

It's true that the doctor can *set* the leg. He or she can make it so you don't have to limp for the rest of your life. But as for the healing of that broken bone, the doctor can only watch and be amazed.

"How about cancer?" you ask. "Don't we praise God for cancer survivors?"

Absolutely! But many others who receive the same treatment, experience the same therapy, go through the same procedures die of their disease. Regardless of the survival rate, nothing was fixed. At best we'd have to say that a rampaging cancer was slowed—which is a good thing indeed. Life was extended through the application of modern medicine. Unfortunately,

that extension often comes at a terrible price, including mutilation and collateral damage to other organs.

And here's the scary part: people who have heart disease, who suffer from cancer, who fight debilitating pain, who stand in lines at drugstores waiting to fill their endless prescriptions, who sit and watch television commercials extolling the power of the latest and greatest pharmaceutical firmly believe that their doctors or the pills are providing a cure to their ills. They think they're getting "fixed." But the truth is, they're wrong.

So what do we do when we're facing a health crisis? The short answer is "It depends on the crisis." The long answer is "It depends on the cure."

I divide illness into two categories: acute illness and chronic illness. *Acute* means that something needs to be done right now, this second, or a patient could die. That certainly describes David as his heart malfunctioned on the examination table. He needed action, and he needed it now.

Chronic describes a condition of ongoing, frequent duration, one that is always present. Although David's heart attack was sudden and acute, it was the result of something that had been going on for a very long time. Arteries do not fill up with plaque overnight. That is why, when his wife asked, "How could this happen?" I knew I needed more information about my patient before I could answer her fully. David's heart attack wasn't the problem. It was the *result* of the problem.

Modern medical technology can be breathtaking in its effectiveness in treating acute illnesses. For instance, an article in the August 2011 issue of the medical journal *Circulation* reported that the average period from the time a patient arrives in the emergency room with a heart attack to the treatment to open the artery is down to sixty-four minutes. This is an amazing use of modern medicine to save lives every day. Most people are

completely unaware of what goes on behind the closed doors of science laboratories and medical institutions. Our ability to learn and understand the universe and the human body is expanding faster than at any time in history. Force fields are no longer science fiction. Machines can now render objects invisible. Using atom smashers, scientists are hoping to discover more about the universe and the relationships between energy and matter. With enough energy, they are hoping to actually *create* matter. Teleportation of matter (the act of moving something simply by thought) is more than a theory at this point. Some discoveries are even being kept secret because of their military significance.

There are now computers performing unbelievable computations. Our DNA has been sequenced, providing a glimpse not only into what is but also into what may be. I've been reading about something called nanotechnology, in which scientists are making very, very small particles capable of going into cells, diagnosing a problem, and delivering specialized medicines to address that problem.

Yes, there is a place for technology. But this same body of knowledge is accomplishing something unexpected. Using these new devices and techniques, we are now discovering how activities such as worship can change chemical reactions in our bodies—reactions that affect every cell, muscle, and organ. We can identify how rest, nutrition, and even laughter help cure our ills and strengthen our immune systems. These “treatments” enable disease to be fought at the cellular level. This information has not been readily made available. And there's a reason, which we'll identify later.

But there's a downside to advancing technology. As it expands, we tend to look more and more at what *we* can do as human beings. We start worshipping at the altar of science instead of at the feet of the One who made us. As we start to see our symptoms

diminish, we think we've found a cure. So who needs God? And the deception deepens.

The most important question we need to be asking ourselves is not, How can we get well? but rather, *Why are we sick?* That is the only question that can lead to finding the "ultimate fix."

Number One Killer

Cardiovascular disease is the number one killer in America, and its worldwide prevalence continues to rise. Some sources will contend that doctors, hospitals, medications, overdoses, and medical errors are surpassing cardiovascular disease as the number one source of death, and this may be true. But both statistics support the same conclusion. Neither patients nor doctors are clear about what exactly causes heart disease and how best to combat it. There are many theories regarding the causes.

One common theory blames inflammation and damage to the inner layer of blood vessels, the endothelium. Another theory is that the real cause of the condition is genetic. But genetic alterations take many, many generations to develop. Heart disease was practically unheard of a hundred years ago, and there are still places on earth where very few suffer from this condition. For instance, in Africa, rural China, and other parts of the world where the diet is less Western (in other words, more plant based), the prevalence of cardiovascular disease is much lower.

In about half the cases of cardiovascular disease, the first manifestation is a heart attack. In other words, patients don't know the attacks are coming, and their doctors are not entirely clear about what triggers the attacks. That is why education is crucial.

Over the next twenty-four hours, around three thousand American hearts will malfunction. This is nearly the same number of persons who died in the tragedy of September 11,

2001. This comes to 1.1 million heart attacks a year. One out of three people will die at the time of the initial event or within the first twelve months after it.

Forty percent of Americans have cardiovascular disease of some sort, and in women the death rate from this condition is eight times higher than the death rate from cancer. In fact, in women, cardiovascular disease poses a greater risk than breast cancer and all other diseases *combined*. Those numbers continue to climb.

I need to say something that may startle and even anger you. But I'm just the messenger, so please don't shoot. *It has been estimated that 80 to 90 percent of cardiovascular disease is acquired.* That's right. The painful truth is that we give the disease to ourselves by the choices we make over a lifetime. We create the chronic condition that brings about the acute event by placing endless stressors on our systems—stressors that eventually do us in.

David did not even know he had a problem until that early Wednesday morning when he felt as if an elephant had sat down on his chest to rest. I thank God that after the event, David began his search for the ultimate prescription. When he was faced with death, he started to evaluate the reasons he had a heart attack.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. James L. Marcum is a board-certified behavioral cardiologist with a thriving practice at the prestigious Chattanooga Heart Institute. *USA Today's* Qforma database named him one of the nation's most influential physicians. He and Charles Mills cohost *Heartwise*, a call-in radio program that airs on more than 500 radio stations around the globe. In addition to hosting the *Bible Rx* and *Heart of Health* television programs, Dr. Marcum is an in-demand speaker who specializes in boldly treading on health care topics normally overlooked in the highly marketed and profitable field of health care. Married with two children, Dr. Marcum lives in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and enjoys music, sports, and outdoor activities.



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The screenshot shows the website's homepage with the following content:

- Navigation:** Home, Health, Spirit, Projects, About, Connect, Resources, Contact.
- Welcome to Heartwise!** A introductory message stating the site is a place for answers to questions, emphasizing truth, love, and healing.
- Weight Management:** A featured section for a new book by Dr. Jim Marcum, titled "WEIGHT MANAGEMENT by the 'Book'". It includes a "AVAILABLE NOW!" banner and a "Read More" link.
- Dr. Charlene McCullough:** A section for a new nutrition column, including a "Click here to read Dr. McCullough's Nutrition column" link.
- Ask A Health Question:** A section for user questions, including a "Click the link below to ask your question now!" link and an "Ask A Health Question" link.
- Heartwise TV & Radio:** A section for multimedia content, including "Heartwise on TV" and "Heartwise on the Radio" links.
- Welcome by Dr. James Marcum:** A video player showing Dr. Marcum speaking.
- Health Questions Answered:** A Q&A section with a question about sleep and a corresponding answer.
- Dig Deeper:** A list of links for "Health Articles", "TV Schedule", "Shop Heartwise", "Donate", "Site Map", and "Contact Us".
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