

# Luke 8:43

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

## Analysis

**And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any.** The phrase "issue of blood" (en husei haimatos, ἐν ρύσει αἵματος) describes chronic hemorrhaging, likely continuous uterine bleeding. The condition persisted "twelve years"—the exact lifespan of Jairus' dying daughter, creating deliberate narrative symmetry. While Jairus' daughter enjoyed twelve years of life and blessing, this woman endured twelve years of suffering, isolation, and ritual uncleanness.

Under Levitical law (Leviticus 15:25-30), chronic bleeding rendered her ceremonially unclean, unable to touch others, enter synagogue worship, or marry. Everything and everyone she touched became unclean. She lived in social death—isolated, stigmatized, avoided. She had "spent all her living upon physicians" (prosanaloūsa holon ton bion eis iatrous, προσαναλώσασα ὅλον τὸν βίον εἰς ιατρούς)—exhausting financial resources on medical treatment that failed. Mark 5:26 adds that she "suffered many things" from physicians, suggesting their treatments worsened her condition.

The phrase "neither could be healed of any" (ouk ischysen ap' oudenos therapeuthēnai, οὐκ ἰσχυσεν ἀπ' οὐδενὸς θεραπευθῆναι) emphasizes utter medical futility. No physician, no treatment, no expenditure helped. Her condition was humanly incurable, medically hopeless, completely beyond natural remedy. This hopelessness sets up Christ's supernatural intervention—where human effort

utterly fails, divine power perfectly heals. Her desperate faith would reach for Jesus as the final, only hope.

## Historical Context

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First-century medicine was primitive and often harmful. Physicians treated uterine hemorrhaging with various remedies including herbal concoctions, amulets, and bloodletting—treatments that frequently worsened conditions. The woman's expenditure of "all her living" indicates she was likely once wealthy but medical expenses reduced her to poverty. Luke, as a physician (Colossians 4:14), honestly acknowledges medicine's limitations—an admission remarkable for his profession.

Leviticus 15:25-30 prescribed the isolation required for women with abnormal blood flow. She couldn't attend synagogue, participate in festivals, prepare food for others, or have normal social contact. Her condition made marriage impossible and, if married, would have dissolved the union. For twelve years, she lived as a social outcast, religiously unclean, forbidden from worship community. The shame and loneliness would be crushing—ritual impurity carried stigma suggesting divine disfavor or hidden sin.

This background makes her action in verse 44 remarkably courageous. Touching Jesus in her unclean state violated Levitical law and could have brought public condemnation. Yet desperate faith drove her beyond legal concerns to reach for the Healer who could restore not just physical health but social standing, religious participation, and human dignity.

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How does the woman's twelve years of suffering parallel and contrast with Jairus' daughter's twelve years of life?
2. What does the failure of physicians and exhaustion of resources teach about human limitation and the need for divine intervention?
3. How does understanding Levitical uncleanness deepen appreciation for both the woman's desperate courage and Jesus' compassionate response?

## Interlinear Text

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καὶ γυνὴ οὖσα ἐν ὥρᾳ αἵματος ἀπὸ ἑτῶν δώδεκα  
And a woman having G1722 an issue of blood years G2094 twelve  
G2532 G1135 G5607 G4511 G129 G575 G1427

ἥτις εἰς ιατρούς προσαναλώσασα ὅλον τὸν βίον  
which upon physicians had spent all G3588 her living  
G3748 G1519 G2395 G4321 G3650 G979

οὐκ ἴσχυσεν ὑπ' οὐδενὸς θεραπευθῆναι  
neither could of any be healed  
G3756 G2480 G5259 G3762 G2323

## Additional Cross-References

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**John 9:1** (Parallel theme): And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

**Isaiah 2:22** (Parallel theme): Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

**Luke 8:27** (Parallel theme): And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.

**Luke 13:16** (Parallel theme): And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

**Luke 13:11** (Parallel theme): And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

**2 Chronicles 16:12** (Parallel theme): And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians.

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