



Spiritual Gifts, Healing

The temporary spiritual gift of healing was the ability to heal at will. The purpose of the gift of healing was not just to alleviate human suffering. It was the ability to heal people with all kinds of diseases to provide a highly visible platform of recognition of their authority from God and communication of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The apostles and many of their close associates had the gift of healing. 1 Cor. 12:9.

"to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit," (1 Corinthians 12:9, NASB)

The gift of healing was designed to focus attention on the message of apostles, prophets, pastors, and evangelists before the New Testament Canon of Scripture was completed and circulated in 96-100 AD. Healing certified the message of the Gospel with supernatural phenomena. Those who were given the gift were not required to exercise their faith for the gift to work. For instance, someone with the gift of healing in the Pre-canon period of the Church Age could simply notice that a person's eye was red and inflamed. In sympathy, he could say, "Be healed" and that person would be instantly healed, whether he believed that the healing would take place or not. The recipients faith was not required either. That was because the nature of this gift was to establish the authority of the apostles or close associates. People would see tremendous wonders and pay attention to the message being communicated. Acts 19:11-12.

"God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out." (Acts 19:11-12, NASB)

The gift of healing was closely related to the gift of miracles. Although they were different, they both were supernatural. A man with the gift of healing could heal at will. He could heal anyone at any time he chose to do so. Many with this gift had the gift of miracles as well. Healing does not exist today as a spiritual gift because it ceased with the completion of the New Testament Canon of Scripture as did all other temporary spiritual gifts. 1 Cor. 13:10.

"but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away." (1 Corinthians 13:10, NASB)

Paul's Use of Healing in His Ministry

Paul had the gift of healing. Even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched Paul were taken to the sick and their illnesses were cured and demons departed from them. Why could Paul do that? It was because so many people were crowding in and he wanted to heal many to establish his authority as an apostle and the authority of the Word of God. So, through the handkerchiefs and aprons, Paul could exercise his gift of healing. Acts 19:11-12

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Once Paul's authority and message were established and generally accepted, God withdrew the gift of healing from him by 57 AD. It was no longer needed. Paul was not able to heal two of his closest friends - Epaphroditus who was dying in Philippians 2:25-27 and Trophimus in 2 Timothy 4:20. He solicited prayer on their behalf, but he could not heal them. Paul had to leave Trophimus behind at Miletus because he could not heal him.



"But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need; because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow." (Philippians 2:25-27, NASB)

"Erastus remained at Corinth, but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus." (2 Timothy 4:20, NASB)

Paul wasn't able to heal himself either in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. He prayed three times to heal himself, but it didn't happen. God would remove the thorn in the flesh eventually. The thorn demon was a messenger from Satan to buffet him and keep him humble. This suffering for blessing was to prevent him from becoming too proud from all the marvelous revelations that God had given him regarding the Church Age and the Eternal State. Paul could not heal himself. Why? The spiritual gift of healing had been removed. If it was that way with the greatest of all apostles, it was probably the way it was with all the apostles.

"Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Corinthians 12:7-10, NASB)

True Healing Today

Any healing today must come directly from God and not through any delegated human authority or intermediary. Normally, healing is performed through medicine or even a tranquil mental attitude so that the body can heal itself. While this normal healing capability of the human body is a grace gift from God to us all, it is not the gift of healing.

Healing is not a question of God's power. Healing is not even a matter of someone's faith. It is the wisdom of God's sovereign will in individual situations. God heals today only in special cases in which He has a special purpose, such as extending your life so that you can learn doctrine. However, no one has the right to take any credit for such healing. The credit lies with the wisdom and sovereignty of God. True healing also occurs when a demon-possessed person experiences the demon leaving their body. In this way, such a person is then "cured." This method is used by Satan to establish false teachers.

We have something much greater than the temporary spiritual gift of healing today. We have the completed Canon of Scripture. We have the indwelling and filling ministries of the Holy Spirit. We have the perfect inner peace from spiritual growth. We draw the closest to the Lord's grace in time of physical suffering. The duration of our suffering in this life is just a drop in the bucket when compared to our eternal future.

Many people have unstable, sentimental, and stupid attitudes toward illness and especially toward terminal illness. Is terminal cancer too great for the grace of God? Cancer is Exhibit A to mirror the doctrine of dying grace.

God can sovereignly heal any illness if it is in His plan to do so for that believer. He also responds to prayers of other believers regarding illnesses of all kinds. Remember that when the believer's work here on earth is finished according to the sovereign will of God, He will take them home to be with the Lord.



Not a minute sooner and not a minute later. James 5:15-16.

"and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." (James 5:15-16, NASB)

False Healing Today

There are two types of faith-healers today. There are the fakers who put on a show to demonstrate their false healing ability complete with the acting staff to make the show convincing. Then there are those who cooperate with demon induced illness by "casting out" the demon resulting in the immediate cure of the illness. Both types do this to deceive people and in doing so, they promote satanic ideas.

Satan can be a source of illness. In the case of Paul, it was a messenger of Satan or a demon. 2 Cor. 12:7.

"Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself!" (2 Corinthians 12:7, NASB)

Satan produced Job's sickness in Job 2:6-8.

"So the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life." Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes." (Job 2:6-8, NASB)

Demons can bring on illness. Matt. 12:22; Matt. 9:32-33.

"Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw." (Matthew 12:22, NASB)

"As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to Him. After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel."" (Matthew 9:32-33, NASB)

Unsaved religious people can cast out demons and if an illness or malady was produced by that demon possession, the victim will appear to be "healed." Matt. 7:22-23.

""Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'" (Matthew 7:22-23, NASB)

False healing can be performed by false teachers and false religious people. Matt. 24:24.

""For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect." (Matthew 24:24, NASB)