

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit—part 3

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Faith

As we continue our look at the gifts of the Spirit, we come to the gift of faith. Faith in this context is not the same as saving faith. All believers in Christ have saving faith, or they would not be Christians. The apostle Paul says concerning this, *to another [is given] faith* (1 Corinthians 12:9), indicating that not all have this gift. If the gift of faith is not the same as saving faith, then what is it? A good description is “special faith,” or “faith to accomplish the extraordinary.”

An Old Testament story illustrates this kind of faith. One morning, Jonathan, the son of King Saul, awoke with the thought that the Lord did not need the entire Israeli army to conquer the Philistines. He said to his armorbearer, *“For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few”* (1 Samuel 14:6b). This conclusion led Jonathan to take a step of faith that resulted in a great victory over the Philistines. The important thing to remember is that this was an extraordinary event. Jonathan did not go out alone against the enemy on a regular basis, but on this occasion, he had the gift of faith.

In the New Testament, we find this gift working through the apostle Peter. As he fixed his eyes on a lame man, Peter said, *“Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk”* (Acts 3:6). In an instant, Peter was given the faith to take that lame man by the hand, pronounce him healed, and pull him to his feet.

Likewise, we can experience the gift of faith today. We may find ourselves suddenly filled with absolute confidence that God not only can do something extraordinary, but that He will do it. We may ask God to heal someone, and suddenly God fills us with the confidence to pronounce that they are healed, and they are. These outbursts of faith are

not the normal experience of the believer, but instead they are occasions where our sovereign God fills us with faith and then honors that faith to bring Himself glory.

Healing

The gift of healing is probably the most sought after of all of the spiritual gifts. At one time or another, we have all longed to be healed or to see someone we know healed. What exactly is the gift of healing? Does it still take place today? Do all of the people who claim to be anointed by God to heal the sick have this gift? Has the rise in modern medical technology replaced the need for divine healing? These are all questions that must be addressed when considering the subject of healing.

Unfortunately, there are those in the church who seem to want to eliminate anything supernatural, but they do so in contradiction to the Scriptures rather than in agreement with them!

Healing, according to the Bible, means the restoration of the body from a state of damage or disease to a state of wholeness. When the Bible refers to Jesus or to one of the apostles healing the sick, it means that the sick were restored to health by the miraculous intervention of God. Jesus said to the disciples of John the Baptist, *“Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear”* (Matthew 11:4-5a).

Luke tells us in the book of Acts that when Peter said to the lame man, *“In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk ... immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength”* (Acts 3:6-7). That is the gift of healing! Whether instant or gradual, when God heals, the sick are made well.

Does healing take place today? Nothing in Scripture indicates otherwise. Jesus healed people while He was on earth, and *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever* (Hebrews 13:8). Sometimes He uses human instruments, and sometimes He heals independent of any human agency.

This brings us to the issue of people being anointed by God to heal the sick. Have certain people been given “healing ministries”—those who can simply choose to heal anyone, anywhere, at any time? I think the evidence is against this. As mentioned earlier, there is no biblical basis for anyone permanently possessing any of these gifts. Although some believers might have a more frequent manifestation of some of the spiritual gifts, nothing in Scripture indicates someone could have a permanent gift of healing. As believers, we are all channels through which the gift of healing may work.

Some say that the gift of healing is now being manifested through modern medical technology and that we should not look for supernatural healing to take place. But the Bible says nothing about “the supernatural” being superseded by “the natural.” Medicine falls into the realm of the natural; the gift of healing is in the realm of the supernatural. Unfortunately, there are those in the church who seem to want to eliminate anything supernatural, but they do so in contradiction to the Scriptures rather than in agreement with them! Granted, medicine has made great strides since the days of Jesus and the apostles, but it is still a long way from eradicating sickness and disease. Although we thank God for modern medical technology, we recognize the ongoing need for His divine intervention in our lives.

Be assured that God is still supernaturally healing people. And like all of the gifts, it is given for the edification of God’s people. ↵