

Gifts Of Healings

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In 1 Corinthians 12:7-10, Paul states that each member of the Body of Christ is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. Then he lists nine manifestations or gifts of the Spirit. One of those manifestations is more literally the “gifts of healings,” in the Greek. There is no statement in the Bible that says that any of these manifestations will ever cease. So, in this short article, I would like to address two important questions, 1) “Why does God heal in certain situations?” and 2) “Why doesn’t God heal in certain situations?” Jack Deere, in his book *Surprised By The Power Of The Holy Spirit*, does an excellent job of answering both of these questions. So, not wishing to reinvent the wheel, I want to review his answers to these two questions. By using Jack Deere’s answers, I am not saying he is responsible what I am teaching here or that I agree with all of his teaching. I do not personally know Jack Deere and cannot vouch for his life and ministry, but I can say that I respect his writings.”

Keep in mind that the answers to these two questions tend to revolve around three poles of theology: 1) the conservative Evangelical pole, which teaches that these manifestations have ceased; and 2) the Third Wave or Charismatic pole, which believes these manifestations are still in operation and are a part of the gift of salvation; and 3) the extreme Pentecostal pole, which teaches that these gifts are given with the baptism in the Holy Spirit... a baptism that is evidenced by speaking in tongues. I write from a different, fresh perspective which I have named Biblecostal™. Biblecostal™ theology doesn’t teach that tongues have ceased, or that tongues are evidentiary, or simply add the spiritual manifestations of 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 to Evangelical doctrine. (*There is no Biblical statement that we must speak in tongues to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and tongues do not accompany every baptism in the Holy Spirit.*) Biblecostal™ Theology is a theology that is based on restudying the Bible and creating a fresh theological paradigm that teaches that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience that equips New Testament believers for service, which is subsequent to salvation and tends to be accompanied by inspired speech... with that inspired speech being either tongues or prophecy. This doctrine sees Luke’s “baptism in the Holy Spirit” (Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5; 11:16) as different from Paul’s “by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body” (1 Corinthians 12:13). I see Luke as a historian and theologian whose writings should be allowed to stand on their own, i.e. they should not be interpreted through the writings of Paul. Yet, the writings of Luke and Paul are complementary, not contradictory.

Additionally, Biblecostal™ doctrine is not combative. We can fellowship with and accept others who hold other biblical positions.

With that short introduction, we can address the two important questions that I raised.

First, God heals people out of compassion and mercy. This compassion and mercy is wonderfully illustrated in the healing ministry of Jesus Christ. Virtually all of the references to compassion in the Gospels have to do with the healing ministry of Jesus Christ. The word that is translated “compassion,” *splagchnizomai*, not only means “bowels,” but womb!

Secondly, God heals people to glorify Himself. This is seen in

Matthew 15:30-31 (NASB-U), “And large crowds came to Him, bringing with them those who were lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they laid them down at

His feet; and He healed them. [31] So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.”

Is there any doubt that God has created all things and works all things after the counsel of His divine will that they might glorify Him? The Westminster Catechism states it beautifully.

Question 1: “*What is the chief and highest end of man?* **Answer:** *Man’s chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever.* So, God chooses to heal some people in some circumstances to glorify Himself and His Son!

Thirdly, God heals people in response to faith. This is seen in

Matthew 9:19-22 (NASB-U), “Jesus got up and began to follow him, and so did His disciples. [20] And a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years, came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak; [21] for she was saying to herself, ‘If I only touch His garment, I will get well.’ [22] But Jesus turning and seeing her said, ‘Daughter, take courage; your faith has made you well.’ At once the woman was made well.”

Sometimes, in keeping with His own sovereignty, God chooses to heal people according to their faith. The question still remains “What about those who seem to have faith, but are not healed?” We shall attempt to answer that question shortly, but let it suffice to say that faith is only one reason among many that God might choose to heal a person!

Today faith is used as a sort of battering ram to batter down the gate of heaven. People believe that they can storm the throne room of heaven for a healing, even when God says, “No!” Today faith is used as a guarantee for whatever people want. Many believe that if they simply have faith, they can command God to do whatever they want—regardless of what God wants or wills.

Fourthly, God heals people in response to His own promise.

James 5:14-16 (NASB-U), “Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; [15] 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. [16] 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.”

Here is a prescription that we should follow, if we want God’s healing. Call for the elders of the church and let them pray over the one who is sick, anointing him/her with oil in the name of Jesus, and pray a prayer of faith; and the person will be healed and his/her sins will be forgiven.

It would appear that some people are sick because of sin—not all people, only some people. It is profitable, therefore, for the saints to confess their sins to one another and pray for one another, so that they may be healed.

Intimated in this verse is a reason why God sometimes does not heal: because of cherished or unconfessed sin! Sin can thwart the healing power of God in our lives. Isaiah states in

Isaiah 59:1-2 (NASB-U), “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not so short That it cannot save; Nor is His ear so dull That it cannot hear. [2] But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.”

But, we are still left with the second question, “Why doesn’t God heal in some situations?”

Well, first, God doesn’t heal in certain situations, because of apostasy. When people stop pursuing God and pursue other things in His place, not only does God withdraw His presence—but also He eventually withdraws His miraculous power. If you will study the nation of Israel, you will notice that during times of apostasy there is **no** Word from the Lord or miraculous manifestations. It seems that the only Word from the Lord during these times was Word of His judgment upon them. ***The Children of Israel seemed to have an inherent understanding of the fact that God was judging them, when there were no miracles.***

We see this situation in Psalm 74. Because of the sin of Israel, enemies had overrun the land and God’s judgment was upon them. Listen to Asaph’s words in

Psalm 74:9-11 (NASB-U), “We do not see our signs; There is no longer any prophet, Nor is there any among us who knows how long. [10] How long, O God, will the adversary revile, And the enemy spurn Your name forever? [11] Why do You withdraw Your hand, even Your right hand? From within Your bosom, destroy them!”

We are so arrogant in America and in certain segments of the Church that it never dawns on us that the paucity or scarcity of miraculous manifestations of the Spirit may be due to the judgment of God, because of our apostasy!

Secondly, God doesn’t heal in certain situations because of legalism and lukewarm faith. A legalistic environment is not the ideal environment for God to work in. Both the Sadducees and the Pharisees were legalistic and this restricted the healing power of the Holy Spirit.

In addition, lukewarm faith is a barrier to the Spirit’s “gifts of healings.” This is captured in the prophetic motif of the seven churches of Revelation. We are in the time of the Laodicean Church. The message to the end-time, Laodicean Church, is recorded in

Revelation 3:15-17 (NASB-U), “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. [16] So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. [17] Because you say, ‘I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,’ and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.”

Well, what kind of attitude is Christ looking for? It is stated in

Matthew 22:37-39 (NASB-U), “And He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. [38] This is the great and foremost commandment. [39] The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’””

Thirdly, God doesn't heal in certain situations, because of unbelief. While some tend to lift faith in God as the ultimate and only reason why God doesn't heal, that is not true. There are stories, in the Bible, where Jesus healed people in spite of a lack of faith. But the Bible does state explicitly in

Mark 6:4-6 (NASB-U), "Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household.' [5] And He could do no miracle there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. [6] And He wondered at their unbelief. And He was going around the villages teaching."

I don't believe that Mark's "could not" is absolute. God is Sovereign and He can do whatever He wants to do, whenever He wants to, and how He wants to, but God "will not" work miracles in an atmosphere of unbelief!

Jack Deere said the amazing thing to him is not how little God heals in conservative Evangelical churches, but that He heals at all!

Fourthly, God doesn't heal in some situations, because of the redemptive value of suffering. This is difficult truth of American people to swallow, but we often learn far more from suffering than we do from miraculous healing. This is illustrated in Paul's life. Paul had a thorn in the flesh. We don't know what it was, but we do know that Paul sought the Lord for divine intervention. The situation is talked about in

2 Corinthians 12:8-10 (NASB-U), "Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. [9] 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. [10] 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."

Peter also gives some insight on this point in

1 Peter 1:6-7 (NASB-U), "In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, [7] so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

And the refining value of suffering is something completely different than God's judgment!

Fifthly, and finally, God doesn't heal in some situations, because of sovereign timing and sovereign mysteries. Have you ever wondered why Jesus healed only one paralytic at the pool of Bethesda? Here were all of these sick people, lying around the pool of Bethesda, waiting on an angel to trouble the water so they could be the first one in and get healed. Jesus walks up, with the power to heal everybody lying there, but heals only one paralyzed man? Why? The sovereign timing and mystery of God.

“As we contend for these manifestations, we must **not** overlook the element of sovereignty, for Paul clearly says, ‘One and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills’ (1 Corinthians 12:11).”¹

In addition, when people aren’t healed, it is **not** so much a function of God’s will, as it is the fact that the fullness of what Jesus purchased yet awaits His return to be totally and conclusively activated.²

¹ Jack W. Hayford, *People Of The Spirit*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee, 1993, p. 131.

² Jack W. Hayford, *People Of The Spirit*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee, 1993, p. 133.