

Walking Worthy

Living and Serving Through the Holy Spirit

Zion's Roar Holy Spirit Ministry
Bixby, Oklahoma



Book 3 - Chapter 07 – Study 04

Healing According to Scripture

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To the church,

I write to you concerning the promises of healing, the power Christ has given to His people, and the responsibility that remains upon every person who asks God to restore the body. I write because many have fallen into one of two errors. Some have stopped believing that God still heals through His power, while others speak of faith in healing but neglect the things God has already placed before them for their health. Both errors must be corrected, because neither one reflects the fullness of what is written.

God has not changed. The power that healed the sick through Christ did not disappear when the apostles died. Christ commanded His disciples to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out devils, saying, "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8). Luke likewise records that Christ "gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick" (Luke 9:1-2). Matthew likewise summarizes Christ's ministry by writing, "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people" (Matthew 9:35). Once again, preaching the kingdom and ministering healing are presented together. Throughout Christ's earthly ministry, the proclamation of the kingdom and the ministry of healing repeatedly appear together. Christ Himself declared, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Throughout His ministry, that abundant life was demonstrated not only through His teaching, but also through His compassion toward those who suffered. The Holy Ghost still gives gifts of healing according to His will, and those who have received authority from Christ are not called merely to stand beside the afflicted and offer words of comfort. They are called to pray in faith, lay hands upon the sick, speak in the name of Christ, and minister what they have received from God.

When Peter met the lame man at the gate of the temple, he did not speak as a man waiting helplessly for something to happen. He said, “Such as I have give I thee: In the name of Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk” (Acts 3:6). Peter knew the power did not originate in himself, but he also knew that something had been placed within him that could be ministered to another. He spoke, reached out his hand, and raised the man up. God supplied the power, Christ supplied the authority, and Peter acted in obedience.

This is the balance the church must recover. We must never make man the source of healing, but neither should we deny that God gives men and women authority and gifts through which healing may be ministered. To say that God is the Healer does not mean His servants are spectators. He has chosen to work through vessels of flesh, placing heavenly treasure within earthen vessels so that the power may be known to come from Him.

Healing is not only for a small group considered worthy, spiritually advanced, or useful enough to deserve it. When ten lepers cried out to Christ for mercy, He told them to show themselves to the priests, and as they went, all ten were cleansed. Only one returned to glorify God. Christ asked, “Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?” (Luke 17:17).

The nine were not denied healing because they would later fail to return. Christ extended mercy to all ten. This reveals that healing is not earned by human perfection. It comes through the mercy, compassion, promises, and power of God. Yet their healing also exposed their hearts. Ten received mercy, but only one returned with gratitude.

We must therefore understand that receiving healing and responding properly to healing are not the same thing. A person may receive mercy and still fail to honor the One who gave it. Healing should lead us into gratitude, obedience, testimony, and

greater surrender. It should not merely return us to the same careless life we lived before.

This leads to a question every person seeking healing should be willing to consider. Why do you desire to be healed? Is it only because you want the pain to end?

Is it only so that life may become easier, more comfortable, or more enjoyable?

There is nothing wrong with desiring relief. Pain wears down the body and the mind, and Christ showed compassion toward those who suffered. Yet healing can carry a purpose greater than comfort.

What will you do with the strength that is restored?

Will the life given back to you glorify God?

Will your healing become testimony?

Will you use your restored body to serve your family, encourage the afflicted, strengthen the church, proclaim the Gospel, and help bring others toward Christ?

Will you return to give glory to God, or will you receive mercy and continue walking as though nothing was required of you?

We should desire not only to be healed from something, but to be healed for something. Throughout the Gospels, those who truly understood what they had received responded by glorifying God. Healing was never intended to terminate upon the individual, but to magnify the One who gave it. Healed for service. Healed for testimony. Healed to complete the work placed before us. Healed so that the mercy of God may be seen through a life that was restored and then offered back to Him.

This does not mean that healing can be purchased by making promises to God. We cannot bargain with Him by saying that if He heals us, we will finally become useful. Neither should anyone conclude that a person remains sick because they have failed to give God a sufficient reason to heal them. That would condemn the afflicted without knowledge and place a burden upon them that Scripture does not place.

The question of purpose is not asked so that healing may be earned. It is asked so that the heart may be prepared. God already knows the purpose of every life, but we should know what we intend to do with the mercy we are asking to receive. A restored life should not be wasted by returning to the same neglect, rebellion, or harmful habits that weakened it before.

This is where faith is often misunderstood. Some believe that trusting the promises of God means doing nothing while waiting for a miracle. They refuse to change what is harming them, neglect the body, reject useful help, and call their inaction faith. But faith and presumption are not the same.

A person who stands before a moving train and says that God will protect him, while refusing to step out of its path, is not demonstrating great faith. He is tempting God.

When the devil told Christ to cast Himself down from the temple because the angels would protect Him, Christ answered, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matthew 4:7). The promise of protection was true, but the promise was not permission for deliberate recklessness.

The same principle applies to healing. We cannot continually place ourselves in the path of destruction and demand that God rescue us from what we refuse to leave. We cannot pray for strength while continuing habits that destroy strength. We cannot ask God to protect the body while refusing to care for it. We cannot deliberately ignore wisdom and then call the consequences a trial of faith.

God created the body and gave it the ability to recover. He provided food, water, rest, plants, knowledge, helpers, physicians, and many other things through which the body may be supported. Hezekiah received a promise of healing, yet a lump of figs was placed upon his boil. Paul advised Timothy concerning his stomach and frequent infirmities. The Good Samaritan poured oil and wine into the wounds of the injured man. None of these

actions denied God. They used what was available while depending upon Him.

There is no contradiction between praying for miraculous healing and using what God has already provided. The contradiction begins when natural means replace God, or when faith is used as an excuse to reject responsibility.

Medicine must not become our god. Physicians must not become our final authority. Food, exercise, herbs, rest, and knowledge must never replace prayer, spiritual authority, the laying on of hands, or the gifts of healing. These things have limits, and none of them is the original source of life. Yet refusing every available provision does not prove faith. Sometimes it only proves pride, fear, or stubbornness.

We must not make ourselves our complete healers, as though the outcome depends entirely upon our own knowledge and effort. But neither should we make ourselves careless and demand that God perform a miracle to correct what we knowingly refuse to change. We care for the body because it belongs to God. We seek help because wisdom is also His gift. We pray because natural means cannot replace divine power. We lay hands upon the sick because Christ commanded it. We believe for miracles because the Holy Ghost has not lost His gifts.

The church must stop treating these truths as enemies. Our confidence should never rest in a method. It should rest in God. Whenever our faith shifts from the Lord to a particular technique, prayer, individual, or formula, we have already begun to look beyond the Source of every healing. Faith does not oppose wisdom. Spiritual healing does not require deliberate neglect. Practical responsibility does not cancel the supernatural. All of these must remain under the direction and authority of God.

The person ministering healing must also remain obedient. Power does not excuse pride, and testimony does not excuse

disobedience. After Christ cleansed a leper, He commanded him, “See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest” (Matthew 8:4). The healing was real, but the healed man was still under instruction. A miracle does not release anyone from obedience. Neither the person healed nor the person through whom healing is ministered may take control of what belongs to God.

The one who ministers healing must never use the gift to build a name, create dependence, gather admiration, or make merchandise of the afflicted. The gift belongs to the Holy Ghost. The authority belongs to Christ. The glory belongs to God. The servant is only responsible to believe, obey, and freely give what has been freely received.

The one seeking healing must also examine the heart. Do not ask only, “Can God heal me?” Ask, “What will this healing produce in me?” Will it produce gratitude or forgetfulness? Obedience or a return to carelessness? Service or self-indulgence? Testimony or silence? God’s mercy should not merely make the old life comfortable. It should strengthen a renewed life that is given to His purposes.

I write this not to weaken faith, but to remove the false ideas that have attached themselves to it. Faith is not sitting still while destruction approaches. Faith hears God and moves. Noah believed and built. Joseph believed and prepared. The lepers believed and went toward the priests before they saw themselves cleansed. Peter believed and took the lame man by the hand.

Faith acts because it believes.

The church must continue to pray for the sick, lay hands upon them, seek the gifts of the Holy Ghost, speak in the authority of Christ, and expect the power of God to move. Christ also declared:

"And these signs shall follow them that believe... they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." (Mark 16:17-18)

Whatever questions may surround the interpretation of this passage, it cannot simply be ignored. At the very least, it shows that the ministry of healing was expected to accompany the preaching of the Gospel among believers. This agrees with the broader New Testament pattern, where the church prayed for the sick, laid hands upon them, and looked to God to bring recovery according to His will.

At the same time, every believer must care responsibly for the life and body entrusted to them. Remove what is harming you. Use the wisdom God has provided. Receive appropriate help without placing your faith entirely in it. Believe for the miraculous without demanding that God reward deliberate neglect.

Let those who minister healing do so without pride. Let those seeking healing come with faith and purpose. Let those who have been restored return and give glory to God. Let no one claim the power as his own, and let no one deny the power because it operates through human vessels.

God may heal in a moment. He may heal through the laying on of hands. He may heal through a spoken command, through the prayer of faith, through a gift of the Holy Ghost, through a process, or through something He has already placed within His creation. God's healing is not limited to the body alone. The Scriptures also declare, "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3). The same Lord who restores physical strength is also able to restore the wounded heart, the discouraged soul, and the broken spirit. We must not imprison God within one method while rejecting every other way He may choose to work.

Let us believe without becoming careless. Let us act without becoming self-reliant. Let us use wisdom without falling into unbelief. Let us minister authority without taking the glory. Let us

desire healing not only so that suffering may end, but so that a restored life may become evidence of the mercy and power of God.

May the Lord restore faith to His church, awaken the gifts of healing among His people, and give us wisdom to care for what He has entrusted to us. May every healing produce gratitude, obedience, testimony, and service, so that the afflicted are restored, the name of Christ is glorified, and others are drawn toward the truth.

Written in Love, Truth, Admonition and Instruction by John,
servant and disciple of Christ, Zion's Roar Holy Spirit Ministry.

God Alone Is the Source of Healing

Before we can understand the gift of healings, we must first understand the source of every healing. There are few subjects that generate as many different opinions as healing. Some believe the gifts of the Holy Spirit ended with the apostles. Others teach that every believer possesses the gift of healings. Some conclude that every sickness remains because of insufficient faith, while others no longer expect God to heal apart from ordinary means. Such differences should not drive us to tradition or experience, but back to the Scriptures themselves. If this foundation is not firmly established, every conclusion that follows will be built upon unstable ground.

Throughout the Scriptures, God consistently reveals Himself as the One who heals. Healing is never presented as something that originates with man. No prophet, apostle, elder, or believer has ever possessed healing as though it belonged to him. Men and women have been used by God to minister healing, but the power has always belonged to Him.

When the children of Israel came into the wilderness after their deliverance from Egypt, the Lord declared:

"If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee."

(Exodus 15:26)

Notice that God did not say, "I will send someone to heal you." Neither did He say that healing belonged to a prophet or priest. He declared that He Himself is the One who heals. Healing is not first identified as a gift, a ministry, or a miracle. It is first identified as an expression of God's own character.

The psalmist later testified to this same truth:

"Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." (Psalm 103:2-3)

Here we find forgiveness and healing listed among the benefits that come from God. Just as no man possesses the authority to forgive sins apart from God, neither does any man possess healing apart from Him. The blessing proceeds from the Lord.

Again, the psalmist wrote:

"Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses. He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions." (**Psalm 107:19-20**)

Once more, the source is unmistakable. They cried unto the Lord. The Lord answered. The Lord healed. Throughout the Old Testament, the pattern remains the same. Whether healing came immediately or through a process, whether through a prophet or by God's direct intervention, the glory always belonged to Him.

This same foundation continues in the New Testament.

One of the clearest examples is found after the healing of the lame man at the gate of the temple. Peter spoke in the name of Christ, took the man by the hand, and immediately the man received strength in his feet and ankles. The miracle was so astonishing that the people gathered around Peter and John in amazement.

Had Peter desired honor for himself, this would have been the perfect opportunity to receive it. Instead, he immediately corrected the people.

"Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" (**Acts 3:12**)

Peter refused to allow the people to believe that the miracle originated in him. Although God had worked through him, Peter understood that he was only the instrument. The authority belonged to Christ. The power belonged to God.

This principle must remain fixed in our minds as we continue our study. Whenever healing is attributed to the holiness, ability, or personal power of the one ministering, attention has already

begun to shift away from the One who deserves all glory. God has always chosen to work through human vessels, but the vessel must never be mistaken for the source.

This truth will become especially important as we begin examining the gift of healings. If we begin with man, we will eventually glorify man. If we begin with gifts, we may eventually seek the gifts more than the Giver. But if we begin where Scripture begins, with God Himself, then every miracle, every gift, every answered prayer, and every healing will continually direct our attention back to Him. Before asking who receives this gift, how it operates, or how it should be exercised within the church, we must settle this question first.

Every genuine healing finds its source in God.

That truth is not merely the beginning of our study. It is the foundation upon which every other conclusion must rest.

Why Did God Give Gifts of Healings?

Having established that God alone is the source of every healing, we are now prepared to examine the passage that introduces the gift itself. The expression "gifts of healings" appears in only one chapter of Scripture as part of Paul's list of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. If we are to understand this gift correctly, we must begin where Paul begins.

He writes:

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." (1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

Before Paul names any individual gift, he first establishes several important truths. These opening verses are often overlooked because readers are eager to reach the list of gifts. Yet these verses

provide the framework through which every gift must be understood.

First, Paul reminds us that there are diversities of gifts. The Holy Spirit has not given the same function to every believer. Just as the human body has many members performing different tasks, so also the body of Christ consists of believers who have received different gifts and ministries according to God's wisdom. This diversity is not a weakness within the church. It is one of God's designs for its strength and unity.

Second, although there are many gifts, there is only one Spirit. The gifts do not originate from different sources, nor do they belong to different classes of believers. Every genuine spiritual gift proceeds from the same Holy Spirit. Therefore, no gift should ever be exalted above the One who gives it.

Third, Paul reminds us that these gifts operate under the lordship of Christ and according to the working of God Himself. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all presented as actively involved in the operation of these gifts. The believer is never presented as their owner, but as the one through whom God chooses to work.

Perhaps one of the most important statements appears in verse seven.

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."
These manifestations were never intended to exalt the individual through whom they operated. Their purpose was to strengthen the body of Christ, minister to those in need, and ultimately bring glory to God.

Notice carefully what Paul says.

He does not call these the manifestations of men.

He does not describe them as natural talents developed through study or experience.

He calls them the manifestation of the Spirit.

The word manifestation refers to something being made visible or revealed. When the Holy Spirit manifests Himself through one of His gifts, it is His work that is being displayed. The believer becomes the instrument through whom the Spirit chooses to act, but the manifestation itself belongs to the Spirit. This protects us from two opposite errors. On one hand, we should never conclude that a person possesses healing power within himself. On the other hand, we should not deny that God continues to work through His people simply because the power belongs to Him. The vessel is real, but the power remains God's.

This is an important distinction because many misunderstand the nature of spiritual gifts. Some speak as though a person possesses a gift in such a way that he may exercise it whenever he desires. Others speak as though certain individuals possess extraordinary power within themselves. Paul's words leave no room for either conclusion. The gifts are manifestations of the Holy Spirit. They reveal His activity, not man's ability.

Paul then begins listing several of these manifestations.

"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healings by the same Spirit..."

(1 Corinthians 12:8-9)

Here, for the first time, we encounter the expression gifts of healings.

Because this expression appears only here in Paul's list of spiritual gifts, we should be careful not to build definitions that go beyond what Scripture actually says. Whenever the Scriptures do not fully explain a detail, wisdom requires us to avoid speaking with greater certainty than the Scriptures themselves.

Before attempting to define this gift or explain how it operates, we should first observe what Paul actually says. Notice that he does

not pause to define it. He assumes his readers are already familiar with its operation within the church. His emphasis is not on providing a technical definition, but on showing that this gift, like every other manifestation, proceeds from the same Holy Spirit.

This observation should caution us against building elaborate definitions that go beyond the text. Our responsibility is not to invent meanings that Paul never explains, but to carefully examine everything he does reveal. Rather than giving us a technical definition, the New Testament repeatedly gives us living examples. Those examples become our classroom. By observing how God worked through His servants, we learn what remained constant, what varied, and what lessons the Holy Spirit intended us to learn.

As we continue through this chapter, we will allow Paul's own words, together with the examples recorded throughout the New Testament, to explain the nature and purpose of the gifts of healings.

Paul continues by saying:

"But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." (1 Corinthians 12:11)

This verse is one of the most important in the entire discussion of spiritual gifts because it establishes who governs their operation. Before attempting to explain how the gifts of healings function, we must first understand who is directing them.

Paul plainly states that it is the Holy Spirit who works all these things. The gifts do not operate independently of Him, nor are they exercised according to the will of the believer. Every manifestation proceeds from the same Spirit, who distributes them *"to every man severally as he will."*

These words leave little room for misunderstanding. The gifts are not earned through spiritual maturity, purchased through personal sacrifice, or exercised whenever a person desires. They are distributed by the Holy Spirit according to His own wisdom and

purpose. While believers are called to be faithful, obedient, and available for God's service, the manifestation of these gifts remains under the authority of the Spirit who gives them.

This truth also reminds us that the gifts were never intended to exalt the individual through whom they operate. If the Holy Spirit alone determines when and through whom His gifts are manifested, then no servant has reason to boast. The gift is not a testimony to the greatness of the vessel, but to the grace and sovereignty of God.

Paul also tells us why these manifestations are given.

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." (1 Corinthians 12:7)

The expression *"to profit withal"* means that these manifestations are given for the benefit of others. Their purpose is not personal recognition, financial gain, or spiritual status. They exist to strengthen the body of Christ, to minister to those in need, and ultimately to glorify God.

This principle applies equally to the gifts of healings. God did not place this gift within the church so that certain individuals might become famous or gather followers after themselves. Throughout the New Testament, miraculous healings consistently directed people's attention to the power of God and confirmed the truth of the message being proclaimed. Whenever the gift operated according to God's purpose, the result was that God received the glory, the afflicted received mercy, and the church was strengthened.

Understanding this purpose protects us from two opposite errors. One error is to neglect the gifts altogether, treating them as though they no longer belong within the church. The other is to seek the gifts for personal honor or recognition. Neither reflects Paul's teaching. The Holy Spirit gives His manifestations for the common good of God's people, and every gift must remain subject to that purpose.

As we continue our study, another important question naturally arises. If the Holy Spirit distributes these gifts according to His own will, does every believer receive the gift of healings, or has God entrusted it only to some within the body of Christ? That is the question Paul answers next.

Who Receives This Gift?

Having seen that the gifts of healings are distributed by the Holy Spirit according to His own will and are given for the benefit of the body of Christ, we are now prepared to answer another important question.

Does every believer receive the gift of healings?

This question has led to much confusion because many assume that if healing is available to every believer through prayer, then every believer must also possess the gift of healings. While every Christian is encouraged to pray for the sick, Paul makes it clear that not every believer has the same spiritual gift.

After comparing the church to a human body with many different members, Paul explains that God has given different responsibilities to different individuals.

"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." (1 Corinthians 12:28)

Notice that Paul says some have been placed in these various roles. Just as every believer is not an apostle, prophet, or teacher, neither does every believer receive the gifts of healings. God Himself determines the place and function of each member within the body.

Paul then removes all doubt by asking a series of questions. *"Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?"*

Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?" (1 Corinthians 12:29-30)

The answer to every question is clearly no.

Not everyone is an apostle.

Not everyone is a prophet.

Not everyone is a teacher.

Not everyone works miracles.

And not everyone has the gifts of healing.

Paul's purpose is not to diminish any member of the body, but to demonstrate that God has designed the church with diversity. Just as the eye and the hand perform different functions while serving the same body, believers have different callings while serving the same Lord. The health of the church depends not upon every believer possessing the same gift, but upon each one faithfully serving according to the measure God has given.

This understanding also protects us from unnecessary guilt and unrealistic expectations. A believer who has not received the gifts of healings should not conclude that he lacks faith or is somehow a lesser Christian. Neither should one who has received a particular gift consider himself superior to others. Every gift is an act of God's grace, distributed according to His wisdom for the good of the whole body.

At the same time, Paul's teaching does not discourage believers from desiring to be useful in God's service. Immediately after asking whether all possess the same gifts, he writes:

"But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way." (1 Corinthians 12:31)

There is no contradiction between these statements. The Holy Spirit alone determines how His gifts are distributed, yet believers are encouraged to earnestly desire those gifts that most benefit the church. Such a desire must never be motivated by pride or personal recognition, but by a sincere longing to serve others and bring glory to God.

Having established that not every believer receives the gifts of healings, another question naturally follows.

If only some receive this gift, how does it actually operate when God chooses to use it?

To answer that question, we must leave Paul's instruction to the Corinthians and examine the examples recorded in the book of Acts, where we see the gift in operation through those whom God used to minister healing.

How Does the Gift Operate?

Having established that not every believer receives the gifts of healings, we must now ask another important question.

How does this gift operate?

Many assume that if someone has the gift of healings, every sick person they pray for will immediately recover. Others believe there is only one biblical method through which healing should occur. Yet when we examine the New Testament, we discover that neither conclusion is supported by the Scriptures.

The book of Acts records numerous healings, but the circumstances surrounding those healings are remarkably diverse. God worked through different individuals, in different places, and by different methods. The common element was never the method itself, but the God who worked through His servants.

One of the best-known examples is found in Acts chapter three. As Peter and John approached the temple, they encountered a man who had been lame from birth. Rather than offering him money, Peter said:

"Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." (Acts 3:6)

Peter then took the man by the right hand, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. The man stood, walked, and entered the temple praising God.

Notice what made the difference.

It was not Peter's touch.

It was not the words themselves.

It was not a particular formula.

The healing occurred because God chose to work at that moment through His servant.

Only a few verses later, Peter made this unmistakably clear.

"Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" (Acts 3:12)

Peter refused to take credit for what God had done. Although he had spoken, reached out his hand, and witnessed the miracle, he knew he was only the instrument. The power belonged entirely to God.

We see this same principle throughout the ministry of Paul.

At Lystra, Paul saw a man who had been crippled from birth.

Perceiving that the man had faith to be healed, Paul simply spoke with a loud voice:

"Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked." (Acts 14:10)

There is no record of Paul laying hands on the man. There was no anointing with oil, no extended prayer, and no repeated commands. God healed through the spoken word.

Later, however, we find Paul ministering differently.

When the father of Publius was sick with fever and dysentery, the Scriptures say:

"Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him." (Acts 28:8)

Here Paul both prayed and laid hands upon the man before healing occurred.

These two accounts are significant because they remind us that the power was never found in a particular method. In one instance Paul simply spoke. In another he prayed and laid hands on the sick man. The outward actions differed, but the source of the healing remained exactly the same.

The New Testament provides additional examples. At times healing followed the laying on of hands. At other times it followed prayer. On still other occasions God worked in extraordinary ways that could never be reduced to a pattern or formula. The Scriptures never suggest that believers are to imitate the method while forgetting the One who performs the work.

This is an important lesson for the church today. Whenever we begin believing that healing depends upon a certain technique, a particular prayer, or a specific individual, our confidence has shifted from God to the method. Scripture continually redirects our attention away from human procedures and back to the Lord Himself.

The methods may differ.

The servants may differ.

The circumstances may differ.

But the source never changes. **God alone is the One who heals.**

As we continue our study, we will discover another truth that protects us from misunderstanding the gift of healings. Even those whom God greatly used to minister healing did not possess unlimited power to heal whenever they wished. The Scriptures provide several examples that demonstrate this clearly.

The Gift Is Not Human Power

As we have already seen, God alone is the source of every healing, and the Holy Spirit distributes the gifts according to His own will. This leads us to another important truth.

The gift of healings is not the possession of the individual through whom God chooses to work.

This point cannot be emphasized enough because many misunderstand the nature of spiritual gifts. Some imagine that once a person receives the gift of healings, he possesses a permanent ability to heal anyone at any time. If this were true, the New Testament would present those who possessed this gift healing every sick believer they encountered. Instead, the Scriptures reveal something very different.

Consider the apostle Paul.

God used Paul to perform extraordinary miracles during his ministry. Luke records:

"And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul." (Acts 19:11)

Notice the wording carefully. Scripture does not say that Paul wrought the miracles. It says that God wrought them by the hands of Paul. Even when God used Paul in remarkable ways, the power still belonged entirely to God.

Yet later we find Paul writing to Timothy:

"Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities." (1 Timothy 5:23)

Timothy was one of Paul's closest companions in the gospel. If Paul possessed an unlimited ability to heal whenever he desired, why would Timothy continue suffering from frequent illnesses?

Why recommend a practical remedy instead of simply healing him?

The answer is not that Paul lacked faith.

Nor was it because Timothy lacked faith.

Rather, the gift of healings operated according to the will of God, not according to the desires of man.

Another example appears near the close of Paul's ministry.

"Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." (2 Timothy 4:20)

These words are both simple and profound. Paul did not say that Trophimus had been healed before he departed. He plainly states that he left him sick.

If the gift of healings functioned as a permanent personal ability, this statement would be difficult to explain. Instead, it perfectly agrees with everything Paul has already taught in 1 Corinthians 12. The Holy Spirit distributes and manifests His gifts according to His own will.

We also read concerning Epaphroditus:

"For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow." (Philippians 2:27)

Paul does not attribute Epaphroditus' recovery to his own ministry. Instead, he gives thanks that God had mercy upon him. Once again, the emphasis is placed upon God's gracious intervention rather than upon human ability.

These passages protect us from two serious errors.

The first is the belief that those through whom God has worked possess healing power within themselves. The apostles never claimed such authority. They consistently directed all glory to God.

The second is the assumption that every sickness remains because someone failed to exercise enough faith. If that were true, we would have to accuse Timothy, Trophimus, Epaphroditus, and

even Paul himself of lacking faith. The Scriptures never make such accusations. Instead, they remind us that God's purposes are often greater than our understanding.

This study should also teach us an important lesson about humility.

Those whom God uses in powerful ways must never imagine that the power belongs to them. Likewise, those who seek healing must never place their confidence in a particular individual. God may choose to work through a faithful servant, but the servant remains only an instrument in the Master's hand.

The gift of healings is real. It is powerful. It continues to bless the church. But it has never been human power. It has always been the work of God through willing vessels, according to His perfect wisdom and His sovereign will.

Having established this truth, we may now turn our attention to the instructions God has given the church concerning the ministry of healing. Rather than looking only at extraordinary miracles, we will examine the pattern Scripture provides for the care of the sick within the body of Christ.

Healing in the Church

Having examined the gift of healings and its operation through the Holy Spirit, we now come to the practical instruction God has given the church concerning the care of the sick.

While the book of Acts records many miraculous healings, the epistles also provide instruction for the ordinary life of the church. Rather than leaving believers to wonder what should be done when illness arises, God has given clear direction through the writings of James.

He writes:

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." (James 5:14-15)

Notice that James begins with a question.

"Is any sick among you?"

Illness was not something unknown to the early church. Believers became sick just as they do today. James does not rebuke the sick for becoming ill, nor does he suggest that every sickness is the result of unbelief. Instead, he tells them what they should do.

The sick person is instructed to call for the elders of the church.

This responsibility is placed upon the one who is sick. James does not say that the elders are to search throughout the congregation looking for those who are ill. Rather, the believer who desires prayer is to call upon those whom God has appointed to shepherd the flock.

James then instructs the elders to pray over the sick person, anointing that person with oil in the name of the Lord.

Throughout Scripture, oil is often associated with consecration and dedication to God. James does not present the oil as possessing healing power in itself. The emphasis remains upon prayer offered in the name of the Lord. The oil is part of the act of obedience, but the healing, if it comes, is still the work of God.

This agrees perfectly with everything we have studied thus far.

The source of healing has not changed.

It is not the oil.

It is not the elder.

It is not the prayer itself.

The Lord is the One who raises up the sick.

James makes this clear when he says, *"the Lord shall raise him up."*

Even in the instructions given to the church, all glory belongs to God.

James also reminds us that physical and spiritual needs sometimes overlap.

"And if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

Notice the wording carefully.

James does not say that every sickness is caused by personal sin. He says, "if" he has committed sins. There are times when sin may be involved, and there are times when it is not. We should therefore avoid making accusations that the Scriptures themselves do not make.

James continues:

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

(James 5:16)

The church is to be a people of prayer.

Prayer for the sick is not reserved only for those who possess the gifts of healings. Every believer is encouraged to pray for one another. At the same time, this should not be confused with the spiritual gift itself. Paul teaches that not all have the gifts of healings, yet James calls the entire church to participate in prayer for one another.

These two passages do not contradict one another.

Rather, they complement each other.

The gifts of healings are distributed by the Holy Spirit according to His will.

Prayer for the sick is the responsibility of the entire church.

One is a manifestation of the Spirit.

The other is an act of faith and obedience expected of every believer.

When we understand this distinction, much of the confusion surrounding healing disappears. We no longer expect every believer to possess the same gift, nor do we neglect the privilege and responsibility of praying for those who are suffering.

The church has always been called to care for the sick, encourage the afflicted, and seek the Lord together in prayer. Whether God chooses to heal immediately, gradually, through medical care, or according to another means of His choosing, our confidence remains in Him alone.

This brings us to another practical question that many believers have asked throughout the centuries.

If God is able to heal, why are there times when healing does not come?

The Scriptures do not ignore that question, and neither should we. It is one we must approach with humility, allowing God's Word, rather than our assumptions, to guide our understanding.

Man's Responsibility

Throughout this study we have repeatedly seen that God alone is the source of healing. We have also learned that the gifts of healings are distributed by the Holy Spirit according to His will and that the church is instructed to pray for the sick. These truths should never lead us to neglect another biblical principle.

Peter later summarized the earthly ministry of Christ in these words:

"God anointed Christ of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." (Acts 10:38)

This verse again directs our attention to the source of the healing. The Father anointed the Son through the Holy Spirit, and Christ ministered according to that divine power. The miracle always pointed back to God.

God often works through human responsibility.

Throughout Scripture, faith has never been an excuse for carelessness. Trusting God does not mean ignoring the wisdom He has revealed. Rather, genuine faith obeys God while confidently resting in His provision.

Noah believed God's warning concerning the coming flood. Yet his faith did not cause him to sit idle and wait for God to protect him. God instructed him to build an ark, and Noah obeyed. His confidence was in God, but his faith was demonstrated through obedience.

Joseph likewise trusted God, yet when God revealed that seven years of famine were coming upon Egypt, Joseph did not simply encourage the people to have faith. Under God's direction, he gathered food during the years of abundance so that the people would have provision during the years of scarcity.

These examples remind us that trusting God and acting wisely are not opposites. They often work together.

The same principle applies to our physical health.

Our bodies are not our own.

Paul writes:

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

If our bodies belong to the Lord, then we are stewards of something entrusted to our care. Good stewardship includes making wise decisions concerning our health whenever possible.

This means we should strive to eat wisely, obtain proper rest, avoid practices that unnecessarily harm the body, and exercise sound judgment. Scripture also teaches us to treasure God's Word because it affects every part of life.

Solomon wrote:

"My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings... For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh." (Proverbs 4:20-22)

While this passage is not a promise that every illness will immediately disappear, it reminds us that God's truth is life-giving and should shape the whole person, including the way we live and care for the body He has entrusted to us. None of these things guarantee perfect health, but they reflect a desire to honor God with what He has entrusted to us.

The same principle also applies when illness comes.

Some believers have been taught that seeking medical care demonstrates a lack of faith. The Scriptures, however, do not support such a conclusion. Luke, one of Paul's closest companions, is described as *"the beloved physician"* (**Colossians**

4:14). His occupation is mentioned without the slightest suggestion that practicing medicine was contrary to faith.

Likewise, Paul advised Timothy concerning his recurring stomach problems.

"Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities." (1 Timothy 5:23)

Paul did not rebuke Timothy for using a practical remedy. Neither did he suggest that Timothy should refuse all physical means of relief. His counsel recognizes that practical care and faith in God are not enemies.

At the same time, we must be careful not to place our confidence in medicine itself.

Physicians have knowledge.

Some medicines have benefits.

Treatments may bring relief.

But none of these possess the power to heal apart from God's blessing. Whether healing comes through a physician, a surgical procedure, medicine, the natural processes God has placed within the body, or through an immediate miracle, the glory still belongs to God.

Scripture repeatedly reminds us that every good gift comes from Him. We should therefore receive His blessings with gratitude while remembering their true source.

This chapter also guards us against another danger.
Some confuse faith with presumption.

Faith believes what God has promised.

Presumption expects God to do what He has not promised while neglecting personal responsibility.

A person who refuses reasonable care for his body while expecting God to remove every consequence is not demonstrating

biblical faith. Throughout Scripture, God's people were expected to obey His commands, exercise wisdom, and trust Him in the outcome.

As believers, we should do everything within our power that is consistent with God's Word, while recognizing that the final outcome rests in His hands.

We pray.

We seek the Lord.

We obey His Word.

We act with wisdom.

And after doing these things, we continue trusting Him, whether healing comes immediately, gradually, or in ways we do not expect.

This balanced approach honors both God's sovereignty and our responsibility as faithful stewards of the lives He has given us.

When Healing Does Not Come

Few questions have troubled believers more than this one.

If God is able to heal, and if we have prayed in faith, why are there times when healing does not come?

This is not merely a theological question. It is a deeply personal one. Many faithful Christians have watched loved ones suffer despite countless prayers. Others have prayed for their own healing without seeing the answer they hoped for. In moments like these, we must be especially careful not to allow emotions, traditions, or personal experiences to become our authority. We must allow the Scriptures to speak.

One of the first truths we must remember is that God is sovereign.

Throughout the Bible, God demonstrates His power to heal, yet He never places Himself under man's control. He remains the Creator, and we remain His creation. His wisdom is perfect even when our understanding is limited.

The prophet Isaiah records God's words:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9)

There are times when God reveals the reason for His actions, and there are times when He does not. Our inability to understand His purposes does not mean that He has ceased to be good, faithful, or compassionate.

The apostle Paul himself experienced this reality. He wrote:

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh... For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 **Corinthians 12:7-9**)

Much has been written concerning the identity of Paul's thorn in the flesh, and faithful students of Scripture have reached different conclusions. Our purpose here is not to settle that debate. What is clear is that Paul earnestly sought the Lord for its removal, and the Lord answered in a way Paul did not expect.

Rather than removing the trial, God promised sufficient grace to endure it.

This passage reminds us that an unanswered request is not necessarily an unanswered prayer. Sometimes God's answer is "yes." Sometimes it is "wait." At other times, His answer fulfills a greater purpose than we can presently see.

The lives of God's faithful servants also remind us that sickness itself is not proof of spiritual failure.

Timothy experienced frequent infirmities.

Trophimus was left sick at Miletum.

Epaphroditus became so ill that he nearly died.

None of these men are rebuked for lacking faith. Instead, they continued serving the Lord faithfully in the midst of their circumstances.

This should cause us to be very cautious before making judgments about others.

Far too often, those who remain ill are told that they simply do not have enough faith, that there must be hidden sin in their lives, or that they have failed to claim God's promises. While Scripture certainly teaches us to examine ourselves, confess our sins, and

trust the Lord, it never gives us permission to make accusations where God Himself has remained silent.

Job's friends made that very mistake.

Seeing Job's suffering, they assumed they knew the reason. They confidently concluded that hidden sin must be the cause. Yet by the end of the book, God declared that they had not spoken rightly concerning Him.

Their error should serve as a warning to us.

We should be quick to pray.

Quick to encourage.

Quick to comfort.

But slow to assume we know why another person is suffering.

Whether healing comes in this life or awaits the resurrection, the believer's hope ultimately rests in Christ.

Every miracle recorded in Scripture pointed beyond itself to a greater promise. Even those whom Christ and the apostles healed eventually experienced physical death. Their healing was wonderful, but it was temporary.

The day is coming when every child of God will receive a body that is no longer subject to sickness, pain, weakness, or death.

Until that day, we continue trusting the Lord.

We continue praying.

We continue caring for one another.

We continue believing that God is able.

And even when we do not understand His purposes, we continue confessing what Scripture has declared from the beginning.

The Judge of all the earth shall do right. (Genesis 18:25)

Our faith does not rest upon receiving every answer we desire. It rests upon the character of the God who has never failed His people and whose promises will all be fulfilled in His perfect time.

Seeking the Gift of Healings

Having studied the source of healing, the purpose of the gifts, their operation, the church's responsibility toward the sick, and God's sovereignty when healing does not come, one final question remains.

Should believers desire the gift of healings?

The answer is found in Paul's own words.

After teaching that not every believer receives the same gift, Paul concludes the chapter by saying:

"But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way." (1 Corinthians 12:31)

The word covet simply means to earnestly desire or zealously seek. Paul is not discouraging believers from desiring spiritual gifts. On the contrary, he encourages such a desire. Yet his instruction must be understood within the context of everything he has already taught.

We are not to seek spiritual gifts to become well known.

We are not to seek them so others will admire us.

We are not to seek them for financial gain or personal influence.

The gifts belong to the Holy Spirit, and they exist for His purposes, not ours.

This becomes even clearer in the chapters that follow.

Immediately after encouraging believers to desire the best gifts, Paul spends an entire chapter teaching about love. First

Corinthians 13 reminds us that spiritual gifts, no matter how remarkable they may be, are meaningless without genuine love.

A person may possess extraordinary abilities, yet without love those gifts accomplish nothing of eternal value.

Love, therefore, becomes the proper motive for seeking any spiritual gift.

A believer who loves God and loves his neighbor desires to be useful in God's service. He longs to comfort the afflicted, strengthen the weak, encourage the discouraged, and bring glory to Christ. If, in God's wisdom, the Holy Spirit chooses to manifest the gifts of healings through such a servant, all praise belongs to God alone.

This also reminds us that we should never compare ourselves with other believers.

The Holy Spirit has not called every member of the body to perform the same ministry.

Some teach.

Some preach.

Some encourage.

Some show mercy.

Some serve quietly behind the scenes where few people ever notice their labor.

Others may be used by God in extraordinary ways through various spiritual gifts.

Every one of these ministries is valuable because every one has been appointed by God.

Faithfulness is far more important than reputation.

The Lord has never measured His servants by the visibility of their ministry, but by their obedience to His calling.

For those who desire to be used by God, the Scriptures provide a simple pattern.

Draw near to the Lord.

Walk in obedience to His Word.

Serve His people with humility.

Seek His glory rather than your own.

Be willing to be used however He chooses.

Then leave the results in His hands.

If He chooses to manifest the gifts of healings through your life, give Him all the glory.

If He chooses another ministry for you, serve Him with the same joy and faithfulness.

Our greatest goal should never be to possess a particular gift.

Our greatest goal should be to know Christ more fully, to become more like Him, and to faithfully accomplish whatever work God has entrusted to us.

One day, spiritual gifts will no longer be necessary. The sick will no longer need healing. Faith will give way to sight, hope will be fulfilled, and every child of God will stand complete in His presence.

Until that day, may we seek to be faithful stewards of every opportunity God gives us, trusting the Holy Spirit to distribute His gifts according to His perfect wisdom and for the glory of God alone.

"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Peter 4:10)

May our desire never be to receive recognition from men, but to hear these words from our Lord:

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant." (Matthew 25:21)

To God alone be the glory.

FINAL REFLECTION

The subject of healing has often been surrounded by misunderstanding. Some have denied that God heals today, while others have made healing the center of their ministry. Some have attributed healing to the power of certain individuals, while others have concluded that every sickness is the result of a lack of faith. As we have seen throughout this study, the Scriptures present a much different picture.

God alone is the source of healing.

The gifts of healings are manifestations of the Holy Spirit, distributed according to His will and for the benefit of the body of Christ.

Not every believer receives the same gift, yet every believer is called to love, serve, and pray for one another.

The church is instructed to care for the sick, to seek the Lord in prayer, and to trust Him regardless of the outcome. While God often heals, He remains sovereign over all things. Our confidence must never rest in a particular person, method, or experience, but in the Lord who alone has power over life and death.

As you leave this study, do not simply ask whether the gifts of healings still exist. Ask a greater question.

Have I allowed the Scriptures to shape my understanding, or have I allowed tradition and experience to become my authority?

Like the Bereans, search the Scriptures daily. Examine every conclusion in light of God's Word. Hold fast to what the Scriptures plainly teach, reject what they do not support, and give all glory to the One who alone is worthy of it.

May we never seek spiritual gifts for our own honor, but that God the Father may be glorified, His church strengthened, and His name proclaimed throughout the earth.

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

(1 Corinthians 10:31)