

Chapter 9

Demonstrate Gifts of Healing

Although James does not mention the gifts of the Holy Spirit in his treatment of the calling of elders for anointing and prayer, I think it is a foregone conclusion that the operation of gifts of the Holy Spirit are essential for ministering to the sick. The Apostle Paul spent considerable time teaching on the gifts of the Holy Spirit in his letters to the churches.

There are four passages that speak of this; 1 Corinthians 12-14, Romans 12, Ephesians 4 and 1 Peter 4. It is not our purpose here to teach on the gifts of the Holy Spirit but to focus on gifts that relate to healing.

We look first to 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, then 12:27-31. This is the most extensive teaching in which Paul lists the gifts of the Spirit which are given to the church. There are 22 gifts mentioned in the New Testament, but many more are demonstrated throughout the scriptures.

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

Notice it doesn't say a gift of healing, or a person with a gift of healing, but GIFTS OF HEALING.

Then read the last part of the chapter, verse 27-31.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. ²⁸ And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰ Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹ Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way.

The Manifestations of the Holy Spirit

Paul used another word here called manifestation. The Greek word he used for the operation of a gift is *phanerosis*, which means a “flashing or shining.” It is a sudden unpredictable appearance when the Holy Spirit chooses. In verse 7 he says, *“The manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.”*

The Holy Spirit’s gift in you “flashes” for the whole church to profit from it. It carries the idea of being spontaneous. It flashes here, and it flashes there. It's like lightning. It is unpredictable. It is the Spirit of God that ignites the gifts when He needs them to operate. Then, when its mission is accomplished, the individual with the gift goes back to normal functioning.

People that have supernatural gifts of healing don't walk around all the time healing people. If someone has a gift of healing, he doesn't walk around all day healing everyone he encounters. He doesn't go to the hospital emergency room and heal everyone there. He can't heal everyone he touches. The gift of healing doesn't work that way. Even the disciples did not claim such giftedness. They operated gifts of healing as the Spirit directed them.

The Holy Spirit’s manifestations are flashings of a gift. He makes it appear, then it dissipates. Then, when needed, it appears again, not by the will of a man, but by the will of God.

Verse 8-9

“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 healing by the same Spirit;”

What Are the Gifts of the Spirit?

There are many gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned and demonstrated in the word of God. Let me give you a list of all the gifts of the Spirit, so you have a better picture of how the Holy Spirit weaves various gifts in the body of Christ, the church. There are many opinions about the number of spiritual gifts. I count 22 gifts of the Spirit demonstrated or mentioned in the New Testament. For instance, Paul talks about the gift of celibacy. Few Christians aspire for that gift, but it is a gift of God.

22 Gifts of the Spirit

- Administration
- Apostleship
- Discernment
- Evangelism
- Exhortation
- Faith
- Gifts of Healing
- Giving
- Helps
- Hospitality
- Leading
- Mercy
- Miracles
- Pastor/teacher
- Prophecy
- Serving
- Speaking
- Teaching
- Interpretation of Tongues
- Tongues
- Word of Knowledge
- Word of Wisdom

For our purpose here, we want to focus on the Gifts of Healing. I want everyone to see that gifts of healing are what He says, not “a gift of healing,” or “the gift of healing,” but GIFTS OF HEALINGS. It is not a gift that one person has and others don’t. Paul says there are gifts of healing. They are multiple gifts for the facilitation of healing. Gifts of healing are not all alike. Some are miraculous, and some are more mundane or practical. Some get more attention than others, but they all are necessary to facilitate the healing the Lord intends to give.

Consider Seven Gifts of Healing

I have highlighted seven gifts that are useful in anointing and praying for the sick. I will explain each and then illustrate each of them.

1. The gift of prayer (intercession, revelation)
2. The gift of wisdom (comfort, direction)
3. The gift of faith conveyed (word of faith)
4. The gift of encouragement (comfort)
5. The gift of discernment (diagnosis)
6. The gift of touch (powers, miracles)
7. The gift of word of knowledge (prophecy)

1) The Gift of Intercession

The gift of intercession is a gift the Holy Spirit gives to certain people so they can pray effectively. The gift of intercession is often a sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's call to prayer over desperate situations. The Spirit of God gives people with the gift of intercession burdens to pray for specific people in need. The need is not from a prayer request or a payer list, but a burden from the Holy Spirit to their heart. It is an urgent call to pray.

My Mother's Gift

My mother had this gift. She had the gift of knowing what to pray for when the Holy Spirit burdened her heart. My siblings and I knew that our mother had the gift of hearing the Holy Spirit's call to prayer. She would often remind us we couldn't get away with any sin because the Lord would tell her, and He often did. Let me illustrate.

My brother and I were going on a double date. We had to travel to Ohio from Michigan for a Youth for Christ rally about two hours' drive from our home.

On the way back, it was late at night. I was driving my little six cylinder red Ford Falcon on some secondary roads. I was passing another car when suddenly a truck came around a curve in the other direction. I couldn't pull back into my lane since the car next to me was in the way. I couldn't speed up and it was too late to step

on the brake. In that panicked moment, I shifted the car into second gear to get more power and then stomped on the gas. My brother began screaming, "We're going to die!" At the last possible moment, we made it back into my lane as the truck sped past us. It terrified us. My heart just about stopped. I knew we were going to die for sure. There seemed to be no way to avoid that head-on collision. My brother looked at me and said, "Mom's going to know. You watch mom will know this happened."

We got up the next morning for breakfast and my little brother was sitting at the table. As he read the cereal box in front of him, he started giggling. I asked him what was so funny. He said, "Oh, it's mom. You know how she gets. She went nuts last night shouting, "The boys are in trouble. Mike and Dick are in trouble, pray! Plead the blood of Jesus, Oh, Lord Jesus protect them. Oh, Lord, put the angel of the Lord around them."

He said she went on like this for 15 or 20 minutes, just praying and pleading with God. I asked Steve what time this happened, and he said it was about midnight the exact time we were trying to pass that car.

This is the gift of intercession. God often gives it as part of the gifts of healing. When someone is in a physical crisis, the Holy Spirit prompts sensitive prayer warriors to pray.

2) The Gift of Wisdom

In this gift, God miraculously gives someone guidance and wisdom that somebody needs as they're seeking God for healing. They did not receive teaching on how to do this, but the Holy Spirit grants them a special anointing to provide guidance to a person in physical need. It is wisdom that comes from above. Lots of people have opinions about what someone should do about their health, but this is different. It is not a personal opinion but an insight from the Holy Spirit.

Diane's Story

There was a young lady in my church who was suffering from a difficult pregnancy. She was at risk of losing the baby. She had gone through hospitalization after hospitalization. Her husband was a fanatic about faith healing. He actually instructed her to stop going to the hospital, to stop going to the doctor, and to

simply trust the Lord. However, she got sicker and sicker until one day at church she asked me to pray for her healing. As I prayed for her, I stopped. I felt the Lord whispered to my spirit, "Do not pray for her. She doesn't need prayer. She needs to go to the doctor. I stopped praying because when the Lord impresses me with something, I need to say it. I said, "Diane, I need to stop praying. I don't want you to be offended by this, but the Holy Spirit in me says I should not pray for you for healing, because God has another way for you. He wants you to go to the doctor and take care of the situation with your baby."

All of a sudden, Diane started crying and sobbing. It got to where she seemed hysterical. Then she looked at me through those tears and said, "Pastor Dick, why didn't you tell me this six months ago?" Then she told me that for six months her husband had refused to let her go to the doctor and refused medications because he wanted to trust God for a miracle.

When I spoke those words, I had the witness in my spirit that this was what God was saying, not what pastor Dick was saying. Diane witnessed that and said, "Thank you for saying that! I needed someone to say it was okay to go to the doctor." She went to the doctor, got the medicine she needed. God brought forth a wonderful baby into this world. After this, the husband thanked me for hearing from God and being bold enough to contradict his opinion. God sometimes speaks a word to his children to give wisdom and direction.

There is a passage in the Old Testament that is often overlooked or missed.

And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left."

– Isaiah 30:21

I shared this scripture as a devotional among fellow missionaries. After teaching, one of my colleagues approached me and asked for the reference because he had never seen that verse before. Yes, God, by the Holy Spirit speaks to His children.

3) The Gift of Faith

The gift of faith is a gift to believe God for miracles. It is demonstrated in people who can take the Word of God and believe it and then share that assurance with others. This inspires faith in them. It is also demonstrated by people who have a vision, or insight into God's plans for the future. They are usually visionary people.

Many preachers and evangelists have a gift of faith. As they preach, many are inspired, and their faith stirs up others to believe in God. This gift is from the Holy Spirit. One gift of healing is the gift of faith to share with someone the assurance of what God intends to do. They are people who are well-versed in the scriptures and sensitive to the Holy Spirit's desires. The Spirit of God may give them a verse of Scripture and say, "The Lord is saying this. You need to build your life on it. You need to claim that before the Lord." God uses that in their lives and they find great victory in believing the Lord.

Vision Casting

After fasting and praying in one of my churches, God had given me very specific plans for the future ministries of the church. I shared those plans specifically with the congregation in a morning worship service. Many responded by saying how it stirred their faith to believe God was going to do great things. One young man, however, met me at the door of the church and rebuked me for having a vision for a vibrant children's ministry. He shook his finger in my face and said, "Pastor, that may have worked in other places, but it won't work here. We've already tried to have a children's ministry and it won't work!" I was stunned. Yet I knew what God had put in my heart to do, so I answered him with full assurance of faith, "I will tell you right now, God will do it here, but you will not be a part of it." Within a year, he left the church, and the church went on to establish a strong and vibrant children's ministry.

This gift is also the authority of the believer. The person who has the gift of faith is able to exercise authority over the enemy in someone's life. We are all given authority over Satan and his kingdom, but a few believers have a special anointing to deal with the works of the devil.

I have watched this happen; I have had it happen personally, in which someone prays and binds Satan, and immediately Satan is bound. I had the experience with a brother in Christ. I don't normally have this gift, but as I anointed and prayed for him for a long-standing infection, the Lord impressed me to speak to the infection.

The Lord whispered, "Don't just pray for the disease. Speak to the infection as though it were a person, bind it in Jesus' name, and tell it to leave."

So, I did that while praying. It was a moment of great boldness before the throne of God. That was a momentary gift of faith. I really believed that it was what God was speaking to me in telling me to rebuke the disease. I don't normally rebuke diseases. I rarely do it and only when I feel the Holy Spirit saying, "Speak to the disease." The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 18:18, "*Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*" Most believers don't have the faith to do that, nor should they try. But when the Spirit of God directs, men and women of faith do it.

The next day, he went to the doctor and discovered the infection was gone. That stubborn infection had left his body within 24 hours. How's that possible? It is possible because the Holy Spirit prompts bold faith to declare the work of God. He uses multiple gifts in exercising healing in the body of Christ. We need all of those gifts.

4) The Gift of Comfort

This gift could be called the gift of comfort or the gift of encouragement. This is a gift in which God motivates someone to come alongside another person who is sick and bring to them words of comfort. Not only do they have words of comfort, but they exercise the gift of helps to assist them through the sickness. They pray for them but also minister to them.

The word comfort in Greek is *parakletos*, meaning one called alongside to assist. It is what the Holy Spirit does for us. He is called the *paraklete*, meaning the Comforter.

The Helen Keller Story

You have probably heard of Helen Keller. Scarlet fever blinded Helen Keller when she was nineteen months old. She lost her hearing and her sight. Being blind and deaf, she became a very rebellious child. No one could control her. She couldn't see or hear, so she did not understand the world around her. Helen Keller had a problem that nobody could solve. God did not see fit to heal her.

Her help did not come as a miracle, but it came through a very gifted woman, Anne Sullivan, who herself had gone through a period of blindness and knew what it was about. She had studied blind people for years and understood their difficulties. She took responsibility for Helen Keller at seven years of age, when she was totally out of control. Anne took her into the backyard and put her hands under a water pump and helped her feel it. Of course, Helen felt it but did not understand what's going on. Then Anne wrote on her hand W-A-T-E-R. All day long she walked around with her, helping her feel things and then writing it out. Even though Helen Keller didn't know how to spell and didn't know all the letters she could relate that touched item to the word spelled out on her hand. By the end of the day, she had learned approximately 50 words.

Anne became her dearest and closest assistant throughout their lives. Helen Keller became a mighty writer, a woman used powerfully even though she was blind and deaf.

Now, that was not necessarily a spiritual gift in Anne, but it was certainly a gift given by God to help someone who had a physical need. It was the gift of helps. It was the gift of comfort and encouragement. Most people who suffer long-term illnesses need a comforter. They need someone to come alongside and assist them, to help them despite their illness.

Joni Eareckson Tada, who became a quadriplegic from a diving accident at the age of 18. She struggled with her paralysis, wondering why God did not answer her prayers for healing. Later in life she said, *"Sometimes God allows what he hates to accomplish what he loves."*

5) The Gift of Discernment

The gift of discernment is the ability given by the Holy Spirit to understand something that mere intellect or external evidence cannot know. It can be the ability to detect (discern) the presence or involvement of unclean spirits in the affliction of diseases. But more often, it is the ability to pray in the Spirit for things only God could reveal.

My Brother's Gift

My brother David has this gift. He never asked for it. God gave it to him. I don't know when it started, but I know it has manifested many times throughout his life. When my brother preaches a message and people come forward for prayer, he lays hands on them and prays for them. As he prays over them, the Holy Spirit moves on him enabling him to discern what their needs are without them telling him. He prays "in the Spirit as the Spirit gives him the words to say." As he prays, he refers to things happening in their lives and asks God to resolve those issues.

Usually the people have not told him what's happening in their lives. He simply knows it. I asked my brother how he knows what to pray? He answered, "I don't know. I just sense the Spirit of God telling me what to pray. So, I pray whatever the Lord burdens me to pray for."

People often ask him how he knew their exact need and situation. There was no rational or scientific way to explain how he knew it. This is the gift of discernment, to discern what to pray for. This gift is a tremendous help when praying for the sick. The person with the gift of discernment can perceive the person's need without being told what it is. It is not a gift that operates all the time. It's only when the Spirit moves on him.

At one point in his ministry, a missionary friend invited him to travel overseas with him for evangelistic and revival services. David consented to go, eager to be used by God. When the campaign started and people responded to be prayed for, the missionary said to David, "Okay, Dave. Do your thing? Pray and prophesy over them." Dave was shocked because that is not the way the gift works. It only operates when the Spirit moves him, not when the missionary wants it to happen. My brother attempted to pray over some people, but the Lord did not give him a burden of what to pray for.

Finally, my brother told his friend it was not working, and this was not how the Spirit operates. His friend got very indignant. He wanted him to perform, saying, "I paid your way on this trip so you could prophesy over people. Now do it!" My brother apologized for the misunderstanding and left the missionary's campaign. This gift is not a toy to be played with. It is not entertainment. It is intercession as the Spirit gives utterance.

6) The Gift of a Healing Touch

This is a strange gift of feeling the power of God through one's hand. I have a few friends who have this gift. It is not a gift that operates all the time, but on occasion. One friend explained he was at a conference when he was really doubtful about gifts of healing. He was questioning the power of God and the miraculous. He had seen wonderful things happening at these special services he was attending, but his heart was unmoved. The leader asked for those who needed to be healed to move into the aisle and for people around them to lay hands on them and pray. My friend was in a group of people who were praying for somebody that was very sick. The man in charge of the group said he felt the Lord wanted my friend to lead in prayer. As he started to pray he felt his hand get hot. He thought maybe he had a pinched nerve or something.

So, with his lack of faith, but with a burning hand, he reached out and touched the person and prayed for their healing. He said this was a goiter that was very visible. As he laid his hand on that person, his hand felt like it was on fire. Amazingly the goiter immediately disappeared. It was gone! I asked my friend if he needed to keep a glove over his hand now. He said, no, that is not how it works. There is no power in his hand. The power is only operative when the Spirit of God moves on him for certain people, but not for all.

Ron only has that gift when the Spirit of God moves on him. The Holy Spirit moves in his heart, then something happens in his hand that radiates heat. He knows when God is going to do it because he feels it in his hand. He didn't earn it. He didn't ask for it. It was God's gift.

7) The Gift of a Word of Knowledge/Revelation.

The gift of a "word of knowledge" is similar to the gift of discernment, but goes deeper. The person with this gift hears the whisper of the Holy Spirit. He (or she) receives specific information from God that cannot be known through the senses. Some would call this a revelation. In a sense, it is a prophetic gift, meaning God reveals His secrets to his servants.

“Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets. The lion has roared— who will not fear? The Sovereign LORD has spoken— who can but prophesy?” – Amos 3:7-8

This gift of prophecy is not always predictive. It does not always predict something is going to happen. More often, it is when someone has a clear leading of the Holy Spirit and declares what the Spirit is witnessing to their spirit.

We have such a case in the book of Acts with Agabus who predicted a famine. According to Acts 11:27–28, he was one of a group of prophets who travelled from Jerusalem to Antioch. The author reported Agabus had received the gift of prophecy and predicted a severe famine, which occurred during the reign of Emperor Claudius.

Philip’s four unmarried daughters also had the gift of prophesy, so we know it is not a gift limited to men. (Acts 21:9) Peter operated the gift of prophecy when he dealt with Ananias and Sapphira’s lying to the Holy Spirit. How did he know Satan had filled their hearts to lie to the congregation and keep back money for themselves? The Holy Spirit revealed it to Peter. That is the gift of prophecy.

But some of you will say, “But that was then, this is now. They did not have the New Testament Scriptures. Now that we have the complete revelation of God. We do not need the gift of prophecy.” I ask you, how do you know that the gift of prophecy ceased with the Apostles? The Bible does not state anywhere that the gift of prophecy ceased with the Apostles. In fact, Jesus said, *“the Holy Spirit would teach you all things and show you things to come.”* (John 16:13)

Do you think that somehow, because we have the canon of Scripture, the Holy Spirit is now gagged that He cannot speak or reveal things to His servants? Jesus said, *“He that has ears let him hear what the Spirit says to the church.”* God is not like the idols of the pagans that He cannot speak or hear. God did not stop speaking when the Apostle John wrote the end of the book of Revelation.

This is not a gift to be played with. It is a terrible thing in the eyes of God to say, *“Thus says the Lord”* when the Lord did not say it. Deuteronomy gives stern warnings about false prophets, people with enormous egos who invent things in

their own minds as being from God. A surefire test of a genuine gift of prophecy is to ask, “Does it come to pass?”

Threefold test of a prophet according to Deuteronomy 18:20-22

²⁰ But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death. ²¹ You may say to yourselves, “How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the Lord?” ²² If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed.

There are many would-be prophets. They are well-meaning believers who genuinely believe that God speaks to them and reveals secrets. The proper test of anyone claiming to exercise the gift of prophecy is whether or not it comes true. You can't say the Lord told me, “blah, blah, blah” with no evidence that the Lord spoke.

False Prophets

I had an experience with brothers who played the prophet and prophesied over a pregnant woman. They said the Lord said, “She will bear a son who will be called John, and he would be great.” I said nothing because the test of a prophet is whether it comes to pass. Six months later, the baby was born. It was a girl. What do you do with a false prophet? Stone him? No, you warn him. This is not a game we play. If you say the Lord said, thus and so, and it is not true, you are a lying spirit and not being led by the Holy Spirit.

There are three voices that people hear in their minds.

- 1) It is their own ideas and impressions.
- 2) It is the whispers of the devil, who is a liar from the beginning.
- 3) The voice of the Holy Spirit.

When God Speaks

I was in a service where I was a guest speaker. The pastor had cautioned me they had a church split over charismatic gifts and he hoped I would do nothing of that nature. While the worship team was singing a song about the Lord's ability to heal,

I felt strongly the Lord saying, "I want to heal the deaf this morning." It was no audible voice but a strong impression that the Holy Spirit was speaking. I said, "That's nice Lord. You go ahead and heal." Then the Lord whispered to my heart, "No, I want you to tell the people that I want to heal the deaf this morning." I chuckled to myself and said, "Lord, I can't do that. The pastor warned me not to." While I was walking onto the platform, that same inner voice said, "You know my voice. Say the words I give you to say." I approached the pulpit and apologized to the congregation for what I was about to do, but that I had full assurance that it was from the Lord. Then I said, "The Lord is saying he wants to heal deaf ears this morning."

As soon as I spoke those words, God gave me a clear description of the person with a hearing loss and what they were experiencing. And I repeated, "The Lord is saying, I want to heal you today." My comments were brief and unemotional. I concluded by saying, "Let me pray for your right now." I prayed and went on with the prepared message.

By the end of the service, I had put it out of my mind, but an elderly man came running up to the front to tell me that God healed his ears. He wears hearing aids but that morning his hearing aids were not working. He said he could understand nothing the worship team said, but as soon as I spoke, his ears opened and he heard the entire message clearly without his hearing aid. Well, that was great. I felt relieved that the Lord indeed had spoken. After nearly everyone left, another man came to me to tell me I had described his hearing exactly as he had told his wife on the way to church. But he did not heal because he said he could not trust God anymore after his grandson died. He had prayed for his healing and it didn't happen. I encouraged him to trust the Lord despite his disappointments, and we prayed.

I left that afternoon thinking I really blew it with the pastor and he was liable to report me to our District Superintendent, however nothing more happened until weeks later I got a letter from the pastor. I thought, "Oh, no, now I'm in trouble." But his letter was kind. He reminded me of his warning not to do anything Pentecostal in his church. Then he told me the story of a businessman in his church who was there that morning. As it happened, he was overlooked for promotions because of his hearing. That morning when I prayed, he asked the Lord to heal him. Several weeks later, he had his hearing tested and it was excellent. He got the

promotion he was hoping for. The man said to his pastor, "Please tell Pastor Dick that he indeed heard from the Lord that morning and thank him for listening and obeying the voice of the Holy Spirit."

God still speaks today. Listen to His voice.

Sometimes God speaks through visions and dreams.

Our church had been going through some very difficult times with a major church discipline. Many people were angry and left the church. In one week we lost 13 families. I was discouraged and wondering what to do. That day I received a letter in the mail from a woman who did not attend our church, but who later I discovered often heard from the Lord. She said that as she was praying for our church she had a vision of our church property and it was surrounded by angels with drawn swords. She said, "Pastor, I don't know what you are going through but the Lord wants you to know not to fear, the Lord has sent his heavenly hosts to protect your congregation."

I was greatly encourage by that word of revelation. And what she said came true. God began to change the attitudes of the congregation. Satan was defeated and the floodgates of blessings started flowing into our church, so much so that within two years there was standing room only as people felt the presence of the Lord.

Think About It

Chapter 9: Demonstrate Gifts of Healing

Do you have any spiritual gifts? What are they?

Do you have any of the gifts of healing?

Do you know anyone with gifts of healing?

How have you seen that gift used in church?