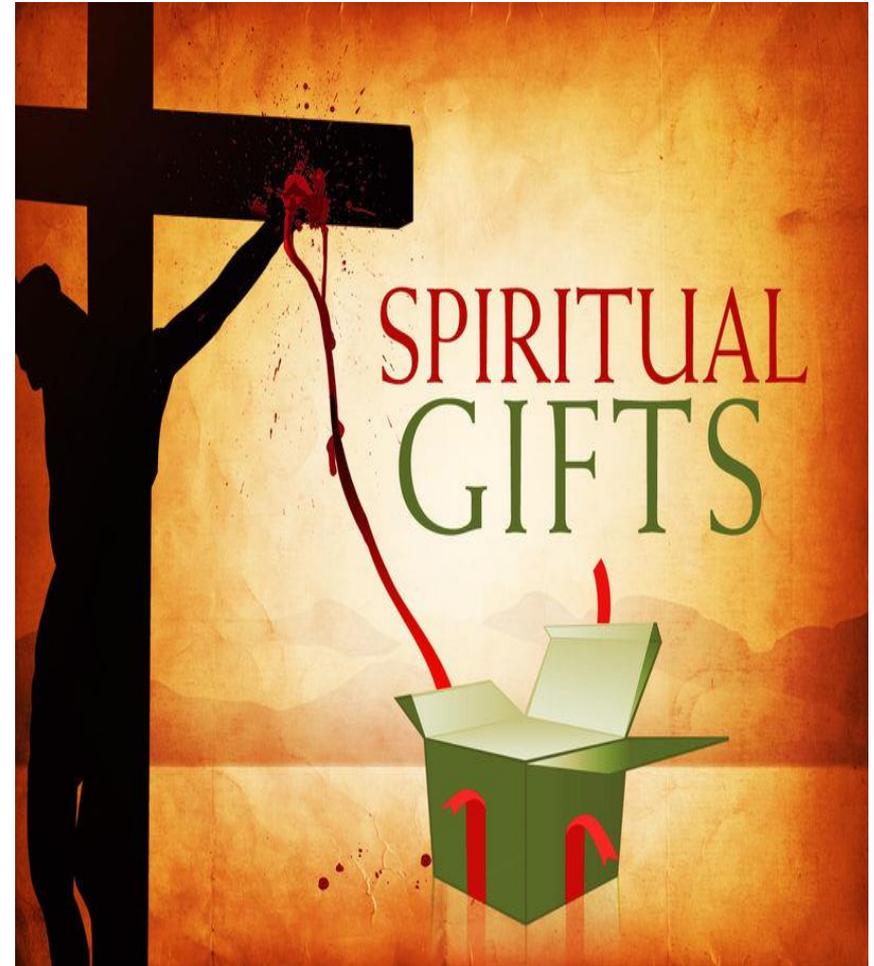


What every Christian Ought To Know.

#10 How To Discover His Spiritual Gift.

- **Notice (Rom. 12:6-8)** “Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; **7** if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; **8** or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”



“You Are Gifted, So Start Unwrapping”

- If your tired of “mediocre” Christianity, If your tired of just going through the motions, if your not content to sit around and endure until you die, then here is “GREAT” news. God has called you to serve Him, and God has equipped you to serve Him. God has given each of you a **“SPIRITUAL GIFT.”** You’re to **take** that gift, **discover** it, and **deploy** it for Jesus.

An Introduction to Spiritual Gifts

- **Notice (1 Cor. 12:1) “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware.”** (Ignorant)
- A spiritual gift may be linked to a “natural” talent, but it goes beyond natural talents. A Christian is **“Super natural.”** These gifts are not **earned**, nor are they **learned**. They are the Super natural **“Gifts of Grace.”**
- Nothing has been more abused in our modern time, and nothing more misunderstood in Evangelicalism than this whole area of **“spiritual gifts.”** And it is critical that we understand it because it is absolutely vital to the life of the Church. There is nothing that is any more vital, apart from the divine energy of God Himself, than the ministry that the believers have by way of their spiritual gifts, or their endowments from God for ministry.

- We first must understand that the Church is a living organization. It is the body of Christ. And Christ is the head of that living body. It is the fullness of Him that fills all in all, and the Church is not a human institution, and it is not an earthly organization. It is an organism, and as such, it is eternal.
- The Church cannot die, and that is its property that gives us the understanding that it is eternal, that it is supernatural. Its head is Christ, who lives forevermore. Its members are believers who have been given eternal life.
- In **(Matt. 16:18)**, Jesus said, **“...and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.”** It is **indestructible, eternal, and supernatural**. As such, it is a **living organism**.
- The Church has been endowed by the Spirit of God with **“supernatural gifts”** for its ministry of **edification** and **evangelism**, they then become critical to its operation. That is why we must understand spiritual gifts, and that is why we must understand that Satan counterfeits them. He counterfeits them because **they are absolutely necessary to the life and functioning of the Church**.
- The Church is a living, breathing, organism that functions as life and breath. And it is functioning on the basis of the ministry of **each member** within that Church to minister to the other. And that’s why it’s seen as a body, and every one of us is like a member of that body. **We have a function in harmony and symphony with every other member.**

- **Here is a list of some questions that we're going to be answering concerning "Spiritual Gifts:"**

1. What are spiritual gifts? How many are there?
2. Are they important? How many do I have?
3. How do I get them? How do I know what they are?
4. Can I seek certain gifts?
5. How do I understand the purpose of gifts?
6. What about miraculous gifts like languages and healing?
7. Are they still in operation?
8. What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit?
9. Does every Christian possess the fullness of the Holy Spirit?
10. Are all the gifts still in operation? If not, which ones, and how did they cease, and why?
11. What is the gift of languages? What is the gift of healing? Have some gifts ceased?
12. Can the gifts be counterfeited? What is the most important gift?

What Was Going On At

Corinth?

- Paul was informed about the problems that were going on in this assembly. In response to the letter, the information from **Chloe**, and the **three others**, he begins, in the first chapter to write and solve these problems, at least on paper, and give them information so that they can solve them in actuality.
- Now, just to remind you about some of the problems, it is inconceivable that any one church would have manifested to the fullness all of these problems, but the Corinthian church did.
- They had **divisions** every way you could cut it. They were divided about human opinion of little picky things.
 1. They were divided over human philosophers.
 2. They were divided over human wisdom.
 3. They had human **personality cults** and **cliques**.
 4. They manifested **carnality**. They were **sexually perverted** so that in the congregation was both fornication and incest.
- There was **worldliness** – preoccupation with the things of the world;
 1. they were suing each other;
 2. there was rebellion against apostolic authority;
 3. there was a failure to discipline;

- The experienced **marital conflict**; there were **conflicts in the area of the single people**; there was **abusive liberty**;
- there was **idolatry, selfishness, pride, demon worship**; the **insubordination of women, abuses of God's intended roles for men and women**;
- They abused of the **Lord's Supper**; abuses of the love feast.
- Adding to this carnality, they were abusing and perverting the spiritual gifts. That's the context in which Chapters **12 to 14** is written. It isn't any different than anything else in the whole letter; it's just right in line with all the other things that were going on in the Corinthian assembly. Just as they had perverted everything else, they were perverting this dimension of their life.
- Now, if you study it carefully, you will find – that they had managed to drag into the church life all of the features of their former pagan existence. They had not made a clear-cut separation; they had not come out from among them and been separate; they had not ceased to handle unclean things. They had dragged them all into the assembly.

- And even though they were rich in spiritual gifts, **(1Cor. 1:7)** says, **“So that you come behind in no-gift”** – in other words, they had everything; they lacked nothing; they had the fullness of the gifts. In spite of all of that, with all the knowledge that they should have had, with all the gifts that they did have, they were ignorant of how they should function, especially regarding the gift of languages, modern-day called **“tongues,”** but biblically the word is **“languages.”**
- Further, in Corinth, a concept of the Holy Spirit was dominating, and that concept that dominated their thinking confused the Holy Spirit with ecstatic, enthusiastic – in the true sense of the **Greek word – “activity.”**
- To the Corinthians, somebody who stood up and gave an **utterance,** whether it was a **language, prophecy, or interpretation,** or whatever it was, seemed to be more godly, the more wild the utterance was, the more miraculous it appeared so that the gift of languages became the one that was exploited the most.
- The ecstatic speaking that went on, as if it were the **“true gift”** of languages, was then given credence as the **highest degree of spiritual maturity** because it **demonstrated the greatest manifestation of an outside power. It couldn't be identified with any normal faculty of man.** So, they tended to lean toward that which was more bizarre and more far out.

- Now, this “**carnal**” concept was a remnant of their unsaved, idolatrous days when ecstatic utterances, made by pagan priests and worshippers, under the control of a demon, were thought to be the highest level of religious experience. That’s the kind of culture they lived in. And this had been dragged into the assembly.
- From the very start, the Holy Spirit had been doing amazing things in their midst. The gifts were there, and evident for the “**edifying**” of the body. There were tremendous things that the Spirit of God had done in the founding days, and they had seen Him work in their midst. But in that age in which they lived, and in their culture, they had a kind of religion that we called the “**mystery religions.**”
- These mystery religions had as characteristic of their function which included **frenzies, ecstasies** and **enthusiasms** that went on. And it was easy for them, in their carnal state, when these things infiltrated the church, to confuse them with the true gifts of the Holy Spirit. And this is exactly what happened.

- In their church, for example, there were divisions. Where did those divisions come from? They came because they dragged into the church things that they held to before they were saved. For example, They all sort of rallied around this philosopher, or that philosopher, and when they came into the church, they did the same thing: **“I am of Paul,” “I’m of Apollos,” “I’m of Cephas,” “I’m of Christ.”** They created more personality cults.
- In their pagan kind of life, they also identified around not only **“Philosophers,”** but **“different philosophies.”** And they used to argue philosophy. This was a big thing in Greek culture. It was sort of an intellectual stance. And when they got into the church, they argued about the words of human wisdom.
- **Notice (1 Cor. 2:1;14),** where Paul says, **“And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God.” 14. “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”** The natural man, with all of his human wisdom can’t understand the things of God. Well, that’s what happened; they dragged all their human philosophies and their human personality cults, that same mentality, into the church. And so, they polarized, (broke up in opposing factions.)

- Don't forget that the name of the city, "**Corinth**", became a **verb**. There was a certain thing identified with the city that it literally became a verb; the verb "**to corinthianize**," means to "**go to bed with a prostitute.**" When somebody thought of Corinth, that's what they thought of because that's the kind of culture they lived in.
- So, what happens in the church? They dragged that same morality into the church, and in **chapter 5**, you got a person who is having "**sexual relations with his mother or his step-mother.**" You've got people who are "**joining themselves to prostitutes**" in **chapter 6**. The same thing they had known in their pagan life they dragged into their assembly in the church.
- Also in **chapter 6** the Corinthians "**loved to go to court.**" It was kind of a sport to go to court and debate. So, when they became Christians, what did they do to each other? **They sued each other**. Again, dragging the same mentality from the world into the assembly of believers.
- Also **Chapter 7** deals with "**fouled up marriages in the church,**" because you have the same problems there; they dragged them right into the church from the world.

- We find out later, in **chapters 8, 9, and 10**, that they had a terrible time **“abusing their liberty.”** Why? Because they had come from a society where anything goes. They came into the church, and they started doing whatever they wanted, no matter how it affected the church. And Paul said, “You can’t do that in the church. You have to limit your liberty for the sake of another.
- There was **“feminism”** in their culture, and there was a feminist revolution, and it came into the church, too. And women wouldn’t wear veils in the church, or women wouldn’t be covered in the church, which was the **“symbol of modesty.”**
- You see, everything that was culturally a part of their life, because they were carnal, manifested itself in their church. So, why wouldn’t we assume that the pagan style of religion would also manifest itself in their assembly under their carnality? Of course it would.
- That is precisely what happened. The **world’s religion** came right in, infiltrated the life of the church, and they began to do the things within the confines of Christianity, with new definitions and new terms to try to make it look right, that they were doing **essentially before they ever knew Christ and calling them “gifts of the Holy Spirit.”**

- They worshipped under a system known as the **“mystery religions.”** For over a thousand years, these religions dominated Western culture. And we still have the remnants with us now, operating in Europe and in the Roman Catholic Church all over the world. The remnants of the mystery religions.
- There were many forms of the mystery religions. They found all different categories and all different forms, but they can all be traced back to a single origin. **Notice (Rev. 17:5) “and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”**
- This text is describing the final form of world religion. In the tribulation, at the end of the tribulation, the **“true Church”** is gone, and the world begins to establish a form of religion. This final form of world religion comes together under one heading, and that form is called, in **verse 5, “Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots And Of The Abomination of the Earth.”**
- The **“mystery religions”** came out of Babylon so that all - now watch it – all false worship stems back to the **“Tower of Babel.”** And so, when it all comes together at the end, it is just a final form of the **“Babylon false system.”**

- And notice that Mystery, Babylon – that is, the false religion that began at the Tower of Babel – is the mother of all other false systems.
- **The true Church is the Bride; the false one is a harlot.** All of the false systems of the world are spawned out of the evil system that came at the Tower of Babel.
- Keep in mind that the Tower of Babel was man’s first sophisticated, organized counterfeit of true religion, **Genesis 10**. They built this tower to god, and Nimrod was the patriarchal apostate who set it all up. He was the **grandson of Ham the son of Noah**. And he set the whole thing up. And they established a false system of religion as a counterfeit to the truth.
- Every system since then – mark this – was spawned out of that. Why? Because when God judged those people, what did He do to them? He scattered them all over the world. And they took with them the **“seeds of false religion that began at Babel.”** They adapted it; they altered it; they sophisticated it even more; they changed it here and there; they added to it so that it became complex and varying in varying cultures. But the seeds of it all were at Babel. That’s why Mystery, Babylon here is called the **“mother of all false systems.”**

- Now, Nimrod then spawned a network of false religious systems. And that's why, when you go around the world, you find so much similarity in these false systems. According to Greek Mythology Nimrod had a wife, which was bad for Nimrod because she was a very, evil person. Her name was **"Semiramis."**
- According to Greek Mythology, she married Nimrod, and they had a son named **"Ninus,"** thus naming the city of **Nineveh** after him.
- Now, she was the first high priestess of the Tower of Babel religion. She really founded what is known today as the mystery religions. She was the mother of it all. And now, when God scattered these people, they took with them Semiramis' system. And in different countries, you remember God not only scattered them, but he changed their **"languages."** So, then she got all different names, because different cultures have different languages, and that means different pronunciations and different names.
- So, in **Assyria**, she was called **Ishtar**. In **Phoenicia**, her name was **Ashtaroth**. In **Egypt**, her name was **Isis**. In **Greece**, her name is **Aphrodite**. And in **Rome**, her name **Venus**. It's all the same. It's all Semiramis. She also gave birth to a son. She didn't really give birth to a son in the way she claimed, but she gave birth to a son whose name was Tammuz. Tammuz. You can even read his name in the Bible in **Ezekiel**. In Phoenicia, his name was **Baal**. In Egypt, **Osiris**. In Greece his name was **Eros**. And in Rome, his name was cute, little, loveable **"Cupid."** That's Baal.

- She claimed that her son was conceived by a sunbeam. You know why? Because that's a counterfeit to the virgin birth. He had no earthly father; he was conceived by a sunbeam. Isn't it amazing that clear back at the Tower of Babel, if the rest of the world doesn't understand Genesis 3:15, Satan did? He knew there was a seed of a woman. And this phony one. **Notice (Gen. 3:15) "And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."**
- And then, amazingly enough, Tammuz, or Baal, or Cupid, or Eros, or whatever you want to call him – Osiris – was killed by a wild boar, and 40 days later rose from the dead. You want to know where **"Lent"** comes from? It doesn't come from the Bible; it comes from **the 40 days that Semiramis mourned for Baal**. Now, that's part of the mystery marriage between Babylonian mystery religions and Romanism, or Christianity that became Romanism.

- Lets look a little closer at the Corinthian corruption .
 1. They believed in **baptismal regeneration**. They believed that people were saved by being baptized in water. So, they had **systematic baptisms**.
 2. They also believed in **sacrificial systems**. They slaughtered pigs and lambs and dogs and birds mainly. They had feasts and fasts.
 3. They believed in **mutilations** and **flagellations** (**Scourging themselves as a public penance.**) If you wondered where that came from, it didn't come from the Bible; it came from the mystery system. Because later on, the whole Babylonian system moved to Rome **historically**. And it was there, waiting until the Church developed and married with it.
 4. They believed in **pilgrimages**.
 5. They believed in **public confession**.
 6. They believed in **offerings, religious ablutions** (the washing of ones body) **to pay for sin**.
 7. They believed **you had to give penance**; you had to pay for your sin.
- There was one of the mystery religion systems in Greece that said you had to go dunk yourself X number of times and hold yourself under ice-cold water that was cut in a frozen lake to get rid of your sin. **Another one** was, you had to crawl so far on bleeding knees. Where did it come from? It came from this system which infiltrated Christianity in terms of **Rome**.

- Now, there's one thing that was characteristic of the mystery religions that found its way into Greece - **and this is all historically verifiable** – and that is that they had indulged in what they call “**ecstasy.**” Now, ecstasy is not what you feel when you kiss your girlfriend.
- **Ecstasy**, to somebody involved in the mystery religions was cultivating a magical, sensuous communion with deity. In other words, you'd do anything you could do to get yourself in a sort of a semiconscious, hallucinatory, sort of hypnotic spell where you would sensually commune with a deity. And you would have a euphoric kind of feeling; almost an anesthesia would take place. **And they assumed that that was a union with God.**
- Now, here's a situation where a person gets into a condition, where his personality becomes abnormal, where his normal morality is set aside so that he indulges in orgies or whatever, and where his brain goes into neutral and emotion takes over. **This is ecstasy.**
- **“These states were ecstasy”** - ekstasis – **“and enthusiasm”** – enthousiasmos, and that's not like what we think of enthusiasm. Enthusiasm, in our society, means something different. We define enthusiasm as **“something really giving it your all.”** But that is not the Greek term. It is a state of euphoria induced on someone so that you become semiconscious.

- Now, they were able to do this by induced vigil and fasting, tense religious expectancy, whirling dances, physical stimuli, the contemplation of the sacred objects, the effect of stirring music, inhalation of fumes, mob frenzy – “such as was happening in the church at Corinth.
- In ecstasy, a person can go into all different kinds of responses in trance-like ways. For example, have you ever seen the guru that crosses his legs and sits there and sort of goes into oblivion? That’s a form of ecstasy. And it can be created in the mind.
- The Buddhist, for example, his ultimate aim in life is to enter Nirvana. Nirvana is where you sink into a state of total nothingness. You contemplate yourself out of existence. Such a total trance are you in that you don’t come out of it.

- On the other hand, you have the whirling dervishes and the mad, wild frenzy of ecstasy that you see in other kinds of religion that ends up in orgies. This goes way back to Baal, same thing.
- You see it even today. You see maybe somebody whose quote-unquote **“slain in the spirit,”** where they go flat out into a trance. Or other people who are acting bizarre. They used to call them the Holy Rollers, running up and down, wildly, frenzy – and you see the stirring of this kind of thing.
- Further he says, “In ecstasy, in the freeing of the soul from the hampering confinement of the body, in its communion with the deity, powers arise within it of which it knows nothing in the daily life hampered by the body. It not becomes free as spirit to hold communion with spirits: also released from transiency, it is endowed with capacities to behold what only the eyes of the spirit can behold, that which is removed beyond time and space.”
- Now, listen to that, folks. This euphoria creates a tremendously good feeling. And people say, “This is fantastic.” And they would say, “We have communed with the deity.” And, folks, that is exactly what people today are saying, and they’re saying it’s a result of certain gifts of the Holy Spirit. And their conclusion is, “Well, I felt so good; I’ve never felt this way before; it’s got to be God.”

- Listen, I know people who could stick cocaine up their nostrils and feel better than those people feel, or who could smoke dope, or could shoot heroin. That is not the criteria. There are drunks who've never been so happy. That is not the answer. But what happens is, this artificial euphoria is created, and **then the "assumption" is made that you must have connected up with God.**
- Well, if you think that is a must in Christianity, you better know that is the same feeling that the pagans got when they did it their way. Totally apart from anything godly.
- Have you ever noticed somebody who goes to a healer with terrible pain, who walks away feeling nothing, only a day later to be in agony again? Because there is created a euphoric anesthetic response in the mind.
- Now, you see, those two things made up the system of religion in which the Corinthians had lived and grown. Now when they became believers, it was very much like them, because they were not spiritual but – carnal to manifest the same type of behavior religiously as they dragged every other dimension of the world into this assembly. So, their kind of religion was ecstatic, orgiastic, frenzy; it was chaotic; it was confusing, and **Paul says**, "Look, for one thing, let everything be done," **"decently and in order. And another thing, let it be done to edifying."**
- In **chapter 14**, Paul gives them rules to change the whole pattern of how they're doing it. Lets just pretend you're a visitor in Corinth, and you say to your wife, "Wife, let's visit the First Baptist Church of Corinth." "Oh, wonderful. Let's go there and have our hearts blessed." "I hope their preacher is **bald**, and **good looking.**" "Just maybe their **minister of music** is nice to his wife."

- So, you go. And you arrive at wherever they meet. You go in, and you're right on time, but all the **rich people** have already been there an hour and finished the love feast. And there's nothing left for you or all the poor who are just arriving, because they get there later from work, because they have to work harder. And the rich are over in a corner, eating the food real fast so there won't be any left for the poor at the love feast.
- And you go in, and you notice that they're not only **gluttonous** in the corner, but they're **stoned**. They're **drunk**. They're over there having a terrific time. And all the poor people are sitting on the other side of the room, with their stomachs gnawing, saying, "Those dirty, rich people – what kind of a love feast is this..." And now you've got a great **division**.
- And then somebody brings up a certain issue, and they **argue** about it. And the drunks are **loud** and **obnoxious**, and you're saying to yourself, "This is a funny church we're in."
- And then somebody says, "It's now time for the Lord's Supper." **And they abuse it. They drink too much of it, and they eat it up.** Because, you see, the poor haven't had anything yet. And it turns into a **mockery**. And when that's done, they go into the regular service, and everybody stands up and starts **yelling** and **hollering** and **talking** at the same time. And people are **speaking in ecstatic utterances**, and somebody's trying to **give a prophesy**, and some over here are **singing a song**.

- And you say, **“Whoa, this is incredible.”**
- And then they give you the little brochure, “Welcome to the First Baptist Church of Corinth.”
- And if you happen to have an **“unbelieving”** guest, he would go away saying, **“These people are mad. They’re out of their minds.” (1 Cor. 14:23)**
- This was the Church at Corinth, and that’s why Paul said in **(1 Cor. 11:17)** **“When you come together, it’s not for the better, it’s for the worse.”** It’s a mess. So, here they all are in this wild, crazy, frenzy, carrying on. Paul’s got to straighten it out. You know, one of the reasons that I believe that the true gift of **“languages”** is just that – languages, not ecstatic babble – is that **God would never give a gift that would be the same as Satan uses.**
- So, **Greek religion** invaded the Corinthian assembly, and they wrote the letter, and they said, “Would you please tell us how we can tell what’s good and what’s bad, and who’s what, and what’s going on?”

- Here's Corinth, a city filled with priests and priestesses, and soothsayers, and people in ecstasy and enthusiasm, claiming divine power, divine inspiration. And in the church they're carnal, and carnally dragging all this mess in there. And they've abused it all the way to its limits. They expected the Holy Spirit to work; no question about that. The Holy Spirit had promised to work.
- They knew **(Joel 2:28)** had begun to be fulfilled, **“It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions.”** They knew that was beginning to happen. And they knew that Jesus had said to the disciples that when the Spirit comes, amazing things are going to happen: people will speak with languages, and according to the end of the **sixteenth chapter of Mark**, there are going to be amazing things attending those who believe. They knew the Spirit of God was going to work.
- **Jesus promised, in (John 14, 15, and 16) to send the Spirit. In (Acts 1:5,) before He ascended, He said, “You’ll be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”** And they were expecting it, and it was happening. And then it all got muddled because of Satan, and they didn't know how to tell what was what.

- Now, you remember that **(1 Corinthians)** is one of the earliest letters in the New Testament. And you just remember that it didn't take long to muddy the water. Why? Because Satan doesn't let any grass grow under his feet.
- And if anybody's silly enough to say today – and sometimes they'll say to me, **“Well, look what happened; it must be of the Spirit.”** That is the assumption that Satan doesn't counterfeit. That's why in **(1 Jn. 4:1)** The Bible say's **“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”**
- The true spiritual leaders at Corinth probably asked Paul something like this, “Paul, you know, we have so many richly-gifted people in our church. But the problem is everybody wants to do everything at the same time. And then we've got all kinds of wild things happening, and it's all causing confusion. Could you help us solve our problem?”

- Paul begins helping them with verse number 1. **Notice (1 cor. 14:1) “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware (Ignorant).”**
- Why? Because I’ve already told you that the church can’t function without the operation of **spiritual gifts**. That is how the Holy Spirit operates, and that’s how the body is built. It has to happen. And it’s vital. And another thing, Satan is counterfeiting it. So, **you can’t be ignorant**. You must understand that you can’t base your understanding on experience, because you are not that **discerning**. The Corinthians weren’t, and they admitted it. That’s more than I can say for some folks.
- And the spiritual gifts in the Corinthian church were doing exactly the **opposite** of what God **intended**. Instead of **unifying** the body, they were **splitting** it.
- **“Now, concerning spiritual gifts”** – he’s not referring to spiritual people here but gifts, spiritual gifts. The word pneumatikōs appears **26** times in the New Testament, **25** of those times it means **“characterized or controlled by the Holy Spirit.”** One time it is used in reference to Satan. But its normal use is **control by the Spirit.**

“The Ministry of Spiritual Gifts”

- **(Rom. 12:1-8)** “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. **2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. **3** For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. **4** For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, **5** so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. **6** Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; **7** if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; **8** or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

- You must have a proper attitude of **HUMILITY**: don't think too **highly** of yourself but think **rightly** about yourself.
- **Humility** is a proper self evaluation and a grateful heart that knows the source of that is God.
- The proper attitude of humility is a right estimate of one's own giftedness so that in understanding our gifts we do not **over extend** ourselves, **over exaggerate** our function nor do we **underestimate** and **undervalue** our function.
- God has designed **each of us uniquely** and we must understand that. When people understand
- **Who they are.**
- **What they're gifts are.**
- **Humbly and thankfully appreciate them.**
- **Then move out to minister/use those gifts. then, and only then will the body be healthy.**

- There are three categories of gifts. There are **sign** gifts, there are **speaking** gifts, and there are **serving** gifts. That's easy to remember, each with an "**s**," **sign**, **speaking**, **serving**.
- **Sign gifts** were intended for a reason, for signs pointing to something very significant.
- They were unique to the time of the apostles. They were unique to the New Testament age. They were unique to the establishing of the new covenant, to the time when Israel rejected the Messiah, when the apostles' teaching **needed to be authenticated**.
- They were unique to the time of the writing of Scripture. That's why they are called in **2 Corinthians 12:12** special gifts or signs that belong to an apostle. **“The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.”** So the sign gifts, or the miracle gifts, tongues and healing and miracles and so forth, interpretation of tongues, those miracle gifts were for the **apostolic period**.

- These gifts are also referred to in **(Heb. 2:4) “God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.”** Also in **(Mk. 16:20) “And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.”**
- **Sign gifts** attended the works of the apostles so that the people would **know that they were from God**. There was no Bible. There was no New Testament to compare their teaching with, so it was the miracles that **“authenticated”** them.
- Sign gifts are included in **(1 Cor. 12)** where Paul talks about the gifts. **(1 Cor. 12)** was written about 54 A.D., 54 in the year of our Lord, after Christ's birth. By 58, Romans is written. And what is intriguing is that in Paul's list of gifts in **Romans**, unlike his list of gifts in Corinthians, **none** of the miraculous/**sign** gifts is mentioned. They were very much a part of the list of 1 Corinthians a few years earlier. They are **not mentioned** at all in the list in Romans.
- Spiritual gifts are also found in **Ephesians**, written about 63 A.D. and **they're not mentioned there**. And you find **(1 Peter 4)** mentioning the gifts and that's in 66 A.D. and **they're none of them either**.

- You can see even in the sequence of New Testament books that there was a diminishing of those gifts.
- If the sign gifts have passed away with the apostles, what is left? Notice **(1 Pet. 4:10)**, "**As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.**"
- You've been given gifts by God's grace, as you have received a gift, minister it as a good steward. You don't **own** your gift; you only **manage** it for God. It's His. So as you've received it, use it for His glory.
- Then the Lord divides those gifts into two kinds. **notice verse 11. "Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies.."** And he divides the gifts into those two categories: **speaking gifts** and **serving gifts**, says nothing about sign gifts, which **again** were unique, to the **apostolic era**.

- In **(Rom. 12)**, there's no mention of the sign gifts. Paul is giving instruction here for the ongoing life of the church. There's no need to correct the Roman church as there was need to correct the Corinthian church because they were misusing, counterfeiting and abusing those sign gifts. But that is not the issue in Romans and when he speaks here to the ongoing life of the church, he says nothing about the sign gifts, as **Ephesians** says nothing about it, as **1 Peter** says nothing about it.
- So basically we are left with two categories of gifts;
 1. **The speaking gifts**, such as **prophecy, teaching** and **exhortation**.
 2. **The serving gifts** such as **serving, giving, leading**, and **showing mercy**.
- Paul leaves out the sign gifts because they have an end to them. **Why?** Because they belong to a unique era and not the ongoing life of the church. And his instruction here for the ongoing ministry of the church does not include them.

- We need to understand that the list in 1 Corinthians does include some things that aren't here in the speaking and the serving gifts and there are some included here that aren't in 1 Corinthians.
- What this implies is that these are not rigid, absolute lists, but there's a sense of flexibility and a sense of latitude.
- For example, in 1 Corinthians you have the gift of the **word of wisdom**, of the **word of knowledge**, very much like **teaching**.
- You have the gift of **prophecy** there; you have the gift of **prophecy** here. You have the gift of **ministry** here, or **serving**, and you have the gift of **helps** in 1 Corinthians.
- You have the gift of **ruling** here; you have the gift of **government** in 1 Corinthians. First Corinthians adds the gift of **faith** and the gift of **discerning spirits**.
- Romans adds the gifts of **exhortation**, **giving** and **showing mercy**. So some of them are the **same**, some of them are **similar** and some of them are **different**.
- These categories are very general and they may be blended. It's like an artist with a palette of colors, mixing his colors to get just the color he wants. God has painted us a color unlike any other color, mixing together the blending of the gifts he chose for us so that we come out with an individual gift that is very hard to identify in name because it's so unique to us.

- These are categories of gifts in which there's tremendous diversity and blending of these categories. In fact, you may be the blend of many of these categories. But these are samples and a somewhat comprehensive sampling here in Romans of what Paul wants the church to be busy doing.
- **First, present yourself to the Lord.**
- **Second, rightly evaluate what it is God has given you to do.**
- **Thirdly, understand that you must mingle as a member of a body.**
That means you are vital, you are absolutely necessary, you are crucial to that. And then he says do it, and that's his point beginning in the middle of **verse 6**. If you have the gift of prophecy, then prophesy; ministry, then minister; teaching, then teach; exhortation, then exhort; giving, do it with singleness of heart or simplicity; ruling, do it with speed; showing mercy, do it with your... In other words, do it. It is exhortative.
- He's not arguing here in Romans, like in 1 Corinthians when he presents the gifts there; it's pretty much an apologetic. He's sort of trying to correct them and straighten them out and teach them the right things about gifts. Here he's just grabbing them sort of one at a time and saying if you've got it, man, do it. You present yourself a living sacrifice, you rightly estimate what God has given you to do, you understand that you're strategic to the entire body of Christ and then you get at it. There's no place for indolence.

The Speaking Gifts-Prophecy

- **Prophecy**: Notice (Rom. 12:6) "if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;"
- To often prophecy is misunderstood. It's basically the gift of **preaching**, of **proclaiming**. There are people who believe that it is a supernatural apostolic gift that has ceased. That is simply not true because of its inclusion in **(Rom. 12), and (1 Cor.)** where the sign gifts are listed.
- Now **prophecy** is a very important gift, In fact, the apostle Paul in writing to the Corinthians said the most about prophecy and tongues. The reason being if you'll remember, tongues was being abused and prophecy neglected. But it's an essential gift. Do you remember **(1 Cor. 14: 1-5)** **"Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. 2 For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries. 3 But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. 4 One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. 5 Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying."** Paul really puts the emphasis on the **importance of prophecy.**

- Now the **Greek term “prophecy”** tells us exactly what it means. It is the term prophteia. The verb is prophteu. It simply means to **“speak publicly, to speak before, literally.”** Before what? Before people, to get up and speak. That's all it means. There's Nothing mystical, or supernatural in that sense. It simply means to speak before people. It is the gift of public speaking.
- Now prophecy may be included in a supernatural way, like a prophet of the O.T. or the N.T. Their primary purpose was **“forthtelling, and foretelling, the future.”** But its primary significance is **public speaking**. In the O.T, you will find that prophets
 1. **Instructed.**
 2. **Exhorted.**
 3. **Warned.**
 4. **Rebuked.**
 5. **Encouraged.**
 6. **They stressed duty.**
 7. **Obedience.**
 8. **Repentance.**
 9. **They promoted reverence.**
 10. **They called for righteousness.**
 11. **They condemned sin.**
 12. **They warned about judgment.**
 13. **They promised blessing.**
- It wasn't always brand new revelation. It was simply public speaking in giving forth the message of God. Their emphasis usually was in a practical application, making the Word of God relevant to life. They were relevant communicators of God's Word.

- The best definition anywhere of the prophetic gift is found in **(1 Cor. 14:3) “But one who prophesies speaks to men...”** That's what the prophecy gift is, it's a **speaking-to-men gift.**
- This speaking gift is mentioned in **(1 Pet. 4:11) “Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances (oracles) of God;”** It's a speaking gift that uses the **Word of God for its content.**
- **Example:** When God called Moses to deliver Israel out of Egypt in **(Ex. 4-7:1)** Moses said I can't do it, I can't speak publicly. God said to him in
- **(Ex. 4:14-16) “Is there not your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he speaks fluently. And moreover, behold, he is coming out to meet you; when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. 15 “You are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I, even I, will be with your mouth and his mouth, and I will teach you what you are to do. 16 “Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people; and he will be as a mouth for you and you will be as God to him.”** Notice **7:1 “and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet.”**
- In other word's, Aaron will be your **public speaker.** He was not a supernatural prophet, He was just a man who **stood in front of people and spoke.**

- **There are other examples found in the O.T.** (Num. 11:25-26,) (1 Kings. 18:29,) and (1 Chron. 25:2-3) and then, we see it in (Matt. 7:22) where many people are going to stand at the judgment and say, “...‘**Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy in Your name,**” We've been Your preachers, we've been Your public speakers, we've stood up in front of crowds and spoken on Your behalf. So, Aaron was going to be Moses' speechmaker. That's the idea.
 - Again, looking back at (1 Cor. 14:3) really sums it up beautifully. It says “**he that prophesies speaks unto men.**” **FOR WHAT PURPOSE?**
1. **For EDIFICATION:** To build them up.
 2. **For EXHORTATION:** To challenge them to obedience.
 3. **For COMFORT:** To comfort them in time of need.
- It isn't necessarily for telling the future. It isn't necessarily supernatural revelation. It is public speaking with the purpose of building up, challenging to obedience and comforting. And the content of it is the oracles of God. It may be to unbelievers. It may be to believers. **It is a public speaking gift, proclaiming the Word of the living God.**

- Now there's never been a time in God's economy, throughout all the redemptive history when God hasn't had His preachers, when God hasn't had His spokesmen. Sometimes yes, they gave new revelation, no question about it. Sometimes the prophet of God spoke in the sense that **(Ezekiel 7:1)** says, **"The Word of the Lord came unto me saying."** And that does happen in the Old Testament.
- But there were also times when it wasn't a **direct revelation**. They were preaching what was already the oracles of God, what was already received revelation. **They were reiterating what had already been revealed. Which is exactly what I do every time I preach/teach.**
- In Zurich, Switzerland in the sixteenth century, it was customary for all the ministers to get together every week for what they called quote-unquote **"prophesying."** What were they? Expository, exegetical, expositions of the Scripture. And the idea was: come to the Word of God, exegete it, dig it out, and draw together an exposition of it that would be applicable to the day. In fact, notice **(2 Peter 1:19,)** Peter says **"And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;"** Prophecy is a light shining in a dark place. It is the light of God's Word confronting the darkness of the world. "

- **Notice (1 Thess. 16-22)** And this is another indication of the importance of this and also the fact that it goes far beyond some revelatory gift that has ceased with the N.T. Here the apostle is writing an epistle, giving instruction to the church. And he wraps it up with some very interesting things at the very end. Starting in **verse 16** say, "**Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; 18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 19 Do not quench the Spirit; 20 do not despise prophetic utterances. 21 But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; 22 abstain from every form of evil.**"
- Now all of this goes together. If you despise "**prophesying,**" you'll quench the Spirit. If you accept prophesying, then prove it and make sure it's good, it's right? Don't quench it. But don't just take everything that's preached to you as "**GOSPEL!**" **Prove it. Test it. See if it's good.**
- **How do you test it?**
 1. If it lines up with scripture. "**The faith.**"
 2. Secondly notice (**Rev. 19:10,**) "**For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.**" All true biblical preaching is that: It is preaching the Word of God and exalting the Son of God. "**If any man speak,**" (**1 Peter 4:11,**) "**then speak the oracles of God.**" It is exalting the Son of God, (**Rev. 19:10,**) "**The Spirit of Jesus is the essence of prophecy.**" It must exalt the **work** and **person** of Christ and proclaim the Word of God.

- So, Paul says if you have the gift of **“prophecy,”** then get on with it according to the measure of your gift, if you will, and according to the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Preach the Word.
- It's another way of saying what he said in **(2 Tim. 4,)** **“preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, 4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.”**
- And don't let anybody look down on it and don't worry if people want teachers who tickle their ears. **(those who entertain them)** You just preach the Word. So, I'm under mandate, to **“PREACH THE WORD.”**

The Speaking Gifts-TEACHING

- So what's the difference between **teaching** and **preaching**?
It's hard to recover all the distinctions in the Greek terms, but we know this, that the speaking publicly gift, the “**prophteia**” gift, the proclaiming gift, the gift of the herald, if you will, like **John the Baptist**, who was a prophet and heralded the coming of the Messiah, the proclaiming gift is distinct from the “**didactic**” gift. (**Rom. 12:6; prophteia**)(**12:7; didactic**)
- Here the word is didask from which we get “**didactic.**” The implied meaning of this word is the “**formal, systematic training or teaching.**” It is used, for example, of training a choir over the weeks and the weeks until finally they have mastered what they have been trained to learn and they are ready to perform. The “**gift of preaching**” is a one-time (**one sermon at a time**) proclamation, an announcement, a heralding of the biblical truth.

- The gift of **“teaching”** is the function of systematically training people, taking them from one point to another systematically. It can refer to a teacher in a seminary or a Bible college or a Bible fellowship teacher. It can refer to someone who disciples a person one-on-one, someone who carries them from point A to point B to point c. It is the **“ministry of leading someone along in the systematic understanding of the teaching of the Word of God.”**
- The early church met every day. **(Acts 2:42)** says they were continually together in the apostles' **“doctrine.”** There was a didactic exercise going on where the church came together to analyze and systematize the Word of God. And that's what we're called to do in **(Matt. 28,) “go into all the world, and make disciples of all men, teaching them,** (didactically, systematically instructing them in an increasing understanding of the Word of God,) **teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”**
- It is undeniable that Paul had the gift of “teaching.” Paul was not only a teacher. But he could proclaim as well. He could also systematically impart truth. Anyone who reads Romans, knows that Paul was a teacher. He is the systematizer of all systematizers. And that's what he says in **(2 Tim. 1:11,) “I am appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.”** He uses all three words to describe himself. And by the way, it's not totally uncommon for a person to be both a preacher and a teacher in God's design. Paul was that.

- **Timothy was a teacher.** In (2 Tim. 2:2) he says, "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses..." and I believe Paul systematically taught Timothy, he says, "entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." You teach them, they'll teach others. Get in the process of systematically teaching people. Timothy, no doubt, had that gift.
- **Barnabas had that gift,** according to (Acts 15:35,) "But Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch, teaching and preaching with many others also, the word of the Lord." Paul and Barnabas were teaching and preaching, proclaiming and applying to the contemporary scene and heralding the Word of God and then getting with people and systematically didactically imparting to them the truth of Scripture.
- **A certain Jew named Apollos.** In (Acts 18:24-25) "Apollos was born in Alexandria, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. 25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus..." Systematically he taught them.
- Elders (**Pastors**) have that gift. "Elders" which speaks of his "maturity," are to be didaktos, skilled in didactics, skilled in teaching. They're to have an aptitude for that. It's the ability to analyze and systematize and pass on, instructing people in the Word of God. Notice **God's expectation's upon the office of "Pastor."** (1 Tim. 3:2) "An "overseer," then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, apt (able) to teach,"

- **Jesus certainly had it.** You remember on the road to Emmaus, (Luke 24,) He (Jesus) opened the Scriptures and expounded. The word "expounded" is? Diernneu, from which we get **"hermeneutics," thorough interpretation.** Dia adds an intensity. **"He thoroughly interpreted the Scriptures."** That's the teaching gift, to fully interpret, to thoroughly interpret the Scriptures so that it's understandable, systematic feeding of the Word of God.
- Where a **"Pastor"** must be evaluated is on the basis of whether or not he faithfully, systematically exposit to his people the Word of God. I'm not sure that all are doing that?
- **Eric Fife** once said, "If the study is a lounge, the pulpit is an impertinence." And if you don't have the gift of teaching, **LEAVE IT ALONE!** Notice (James. 3:1) **"Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment."** Greater condemnation, don't be in a hurry to be a teacher. You better know that God has **"called"** you , and **"gifted"** you for the task.

- **PROPHECY**-(Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:10)

A person with this gift has the God given ability to “**publicly speak for God.**” This involves both “**Foretelling**, and **forth telling**,” They declare the truth for the purposes of:

- **Edification**: to **build someone up**.
- **Exhortation**: to challenge someone to **fire them up**.
- **Comfort**: to find the hurting and **hold them up**. This person is able to discern right from wrong.
- **Opportunities**: Preaching, Community, National concern, Finance Comm., Search Committee.

- **TEACHING**-(Rom. 12:7)

Those with this gift know how to clarify truth, you like to study and discover Insights of why facts are true. You like to mine nuggets from the word of God, and share them with the people of God.

- **Opportunities**: Pastor, Bible fellowship teacher, V.B.S., Men’s/women’s ministry, Youth/Children’s ministry.

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- **EVANGELISTS**-(Eph. 4:11)

Those with this gift can comfortably share their **testimony** and the **Gospel** with the hope of leading the sinner to salvation. In the early church this office had the same responsibility as the Pastor except they usually went to places where Christ had never been mentioned. They resembled a Missionary in the field.

- **Opportunities**: Pastor, Preacher, Visitation, Outreach, and Missions.

- **EXHORTATION**-(Rom. 12:8)

This person has the ability to stimulate people in their faith. They lead others to love Jesus more. They have the ability to **ENCOURAGE**. Man, every church needs more encouragers. We need more like Barnabas.

- **Opportunities**: Preacher, Counseling, Crises center, Music ministry, witnessing, Evangelism.

- **WISDOM**-(1 Cor. 12:8)

This doesn't just mean your intelligent. It's not even mere common sense. Wisdom is seeing life from God's point of view. It's being able to know the mind of Holy Spirit through the truth of God's Word, and properly apply it to any given situation.

Opportunities: Pastor, Church leaders, Deacon, teacher, Counselors, women's shelter, crises center, nursery.

- **Discerning of Spirits.**-(1 Cor. 12:10)

This gift often goes hand and hand with "**wisdom.**" This person has the ability to understand that not everything that is spiritual is of God. They understand spiritual warfare, and the devil comes to imitate, and destroy that which is holy.

Opportunities: Pastor, teacher, Church leaders, , Counseling, Crises center, Music ministry, witnessing, Evangelism, nursery.

The Serving Gifts

- Second gift is the gift of serving.
- Paul says in verse in (Rom. 12:7), "if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching." Ministry, or literally, diakonia, the gift of the deacon the serving gift. If you have the gift of serving, then serve.
- It's a practical service. It's the same as the gift of helps in (1 Cor. 12:28.) "And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues." It's the same word used in (Acts 20:35), "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"
- "Helps" means. "support," It's a support gift, a gift of practical help, a gift of serving. It could come, in a million ways, unique as each individual.
- In (Acts 6:2), the apostles said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables." Look, we need to give ourselves to serving the Word and praying, so let's get some people who can serve tables. The church is dependent on the helpers. There are myriad of support things that have to be done in the ministry. Absolutely no limit to it. If you have that kind of a gift, then be at it.

- **Serving**, means to wait on a table. It's used, for example, when Jesus raised Peter's wife's mother and it says she got up and served them. She diakonia'd them, she deaconed them. That's what the word means. It means to serve them something to eat.
- It's used several places in the N.T. meaning to serve, to provide a meal, very, very menial but very important service. It came then to be a very general term for any kind of spiritual service. And throughout the N.T. you find that the word is used over and over again. It's a very common word.
- There is nearly 75 **different** times when one form of that word or another is used in the New Testament, serving, all kinds of dimensions to it. Any kind of supporting service, it could be the **official service** of someone designated as a deacon, or it could be the **unofficial service** of someone just stepping in to a gap to serve.

- Remember, don't get caught up thinking that one gift is better than the other. You see, the issue isn't what you are; the issue is what you do with what you are. Your eternal **“commendation”** is not going to be whether or not you had the same effect that **Billy Graham** did on the world. The issue in your eternal reward is going to be did you **maximize the gift** you had because God designed you the way He designed you. Did you use the gift that God gave you? That's the issue, to the fullest.
- In a sense, our judgment is relative. Not relative to each other but relative to what God enabled us to do and whether or not we did it.
- Remember **(Rom. 12,)** Present yourself a living sacrifice. Abandon yourself to a renewed mind and a renewed will, rightly evaluate your own attitude. Are you humbly thankful for the gift you have and do you understand it not too highly and not too lowly? Do you understand how essential it is to the body of Christ, the body of Christ can't function without it? Will you do it? If it's preaching, will you preach? If it's serving, will you please serve? If it's teaching, will you please teach?

- **MINISTRY**-(Rom. 12:7)

This is just another word for “**service.**” This person meets spiritual needs in a practical way. The everyday things that make the church function, and flow. Some people go as far as to differentiate “**Service,**” and “**Helps.**” **Helps** tend to be more specific such as an Associate Pastor, is one who comes along side of the Pastor using their talents to aid (HELP) the Pastor in serving the body. **Service,** has a more general role of “**Doing whatever needs to be done.**”

Opportunities: Deacon, Ushers, Nursery worker, Meal organizer, Event organizer, I.T. tech, audio/visual tech, Bus ministry, flower/decoration, lawn care, building maintenance, Musicians. Custodian.

- **GIVING.**-(Rom. 12:8)

Even though we are ALL commanded to give, these people have the ability to accumulate and disperse assets so that the work of God may be carried on. They make good decisions to meet immediate needs.

Opportunities: Benevolence Comm., Personal comm., Finance Comm., Financial advisor, Tax accountant.

- **FAITH.**-(1 Cor. 12:9)

When Paul mentions the word “Faith” in this context, he’s not referring to “Saving faith,” or “Serving faith” that is common to all Christians. After all (Rom. 12:3) is clear **“For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.”**

- This type of faith is referring to **“Superabundant faith,”** the **“gift” of faith.** Notice (1 Cor. 13:2) **“...and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.”** As Adrian Rodgers said: “If God wants you to remove mountains, he’ll give you mountain-moving faith.”

- I know a few people with this kind of faith, and I’d like to think I have it, but to compare my faith with Sister **Charlotte Harvey’s** faith, is humbling at best. I love to be around folks with this kind of faith. They believe God can do anything, anytime, or anywhere, **ALL THE TIME!** It’s an **extraordinary CONFIDENCE** in the power of God.

- **Opportunities**: Benevolence Comm., Finance Comm., Intercessory of prayer ministry, basically every ministry needs someone with this gift.
- **MERCY.**-(Rom. 12:8)
The person with this gift can identify with people, and help to alleviate the pain in those who are hurting. This person can feel a genuine empathy and compassion for people in general. (the saint and sinner.)
- **Opportunities**: Hopefully your Pastor, Benevolence (giving) comm., Counseling, Crises center, Teen Challenge, Hospital visitation. Any ministry that needs acts of mercy.

The **Sign** Gifts

- “**Sign gifts**” were given to “**authenticate**” the work of apostles and prophets, particularly at the beginning of a “New-Age” or (Dispensation) when God does something new and different in the world.



SPIRITUAL GIFTS:
SPEAKING IN TONGUES

4. Tongues a Sign to The Unbelievers:

After the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, it didn't take long for those in Jerusalem to hear the uneducated, ignorant Galilean fisherman preaching in languages from all around the world. **(Acts. 2:5-12)**. The crowds were amazed, and asked, **"...What does this mean?" (Acts. 2:12)**

The answer is found in (1Cor. 14:20-25) **"Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature. 21 In the Law it is written, "BY MEN OF STRANGE TONGUES AND BY THE LIPS OF STRANGERS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE, AND EVEN SO THEY WILL NOT LISTEN TO ME,"** says the Lord. **22 So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe. 23 Therefore if the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad? 24 But if all prophecy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; 25 the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you."**

- If you never learn anything else about tongues, you should know this. **“Tongues are for a sign, not to them,”** what? **“That believe.”** That statement, in and of itself, should challenge any current so-called tongues to task. It couldn't be any more simple. **“It is to them that believe not.”**
- There are **three principles** you should learn about the purpose of tongues.
 1. It's a sign of cursing,
 2. It's a sign of blessing.
 3. It's a sign of authority.
 1. A sign of cursing.
 - This is the primary thing. Let's look at **verse 21** again. **“In the law,”** and the law does not always refer to the **Pentateuch**. It frequently refers to the whole O.T., so he's saying, **“In the Old Testament, it is written,”** and then he goes on to quote (**Isa. 28:11-12**), **“With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak to this people,”** and this people refers to **Israel** in the text here, **‘and yet for all that will they not hear me,’ says the Lord.”**
 - **Notice this:** It says in **verse 22**, **“Tongues are for a sign,”** not for **believing** people, but **UNBELIEVING** people.

- When Paul quotes V.21 “BY MEN OF STRANGE TONGUES AND BY THE LIPS OF STRANGERS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE, AND EVEN SO THEY WILL NOT LISTEN TO ME,” he is saying, “Look, just as when **Isaiah** said it (**Isa. 28:11-12**), just as when **Moses** said it (**Deut. 28:49**), just as when **Jeremiah** said it (**Jer. 5:15**), those languages are a sign to the unbeliever that God is about to act in judgment.”
- You may be thinking, “Well, what did it mean in this generation in which Paul lived?” Well, when they began to speak those languages on the **Day of Pentecost**, every Jew should have known that the judgment of God was eminent.
- Truth is, it was about **30 years later (A.D. 70)** when the Roman Emperor came in and wiped out Jerusalem and with it, Judaism as such.
- The sacrificial system ended and it’s never been restored. They should have known the judgment of God was going to fall.

- If the judgment of God fell on the **unbelief** and **apostasy** of the **northern kingdom in 722 B.C. (The Assyrians)**, if the judgment of God fell on the unbelief and apostasy of the **southern kingdom in 586 B.C. (The Babylonians)**, then you better believe, it will fall on a **nation** that turns its back on and **crucifies** its own **Messiah**. **AND IT DID.**
- Once the destruction of Jerusalem came in **70 A.D.**, the whole purpose for the gift of languages **ceased**. That's what the text says; It never was intended to be something for a Christian. It's for one who doesn't believe. Which one? A Jew, one of **this people** that they might know God is acting in judgment.
- Jesus said, in **(Luke 13:35)**, **“Behold, your house is left to you desolate.”** And then in chapter **21:20**, He carried it a step further. He said... **“And when you shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then you know that its desolation is near.”** And verse **24**, **“They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles.”**

- All through the ministry of the apostles, **judgment was coming on Israel**. Jesus preached it, and the sign of languages again showed it. This is why Paul refers to **Isaiah 28**, even in spite of that, he says, at the end of **verse 21**, **they wouldn't listen!**
- This purpose can be traced and be seen to be true in the book of Acts. In **Acts Ch. 2**, **“Many unbelieving Jewish people were present.”** And later on, when you have another incident of speaking in tongues on the occasion of, perhaps, chapter **8**, chapter **10**, chapter **19**, even though in each case, those people **become believers**.
- The occurrence of this same phenomenon becomes a reinforcement of the reality to the Jews who saw and would tell their countrymen what had happened. Because in **Acts 8**, **Acts 10**, **Acts 19**, where tongues occurred, there were always believing Jews present who would come back and report that they had seen the same thing. So it was not only to link those new elements of the church with the Pentecost occasion and with the Jews there, but it was also to reinforce to the Jewish nation that indeed, **God was going to judge.**

- **So first of all, it's a sign of cursing.** And **It's also a sign of blessing.** This is a residual benefit of number one. "Cause/Effect." Number one is the **primary purpose** for this gift, **cursing**. The tongues of Pentecost were saying,
 1. God is not going to any longer work through one nation.
 2. God is not any longer going to speak just one language.
 3. God is not any longer going to favor one people.
 4. God is going to go to the world, and through the world to build His **"church." The Kingdom for all nations.**
- The very fact that they spoke in all those languages was God's way of saying, **"It's all over for the uniqueness of Israel, and I'm going to speak in the world's languages and build that church that's hidden in the Old Testament."** So tongues speak primarily as a sign of a curse on Israel.

II. Tongues was also a sign of “Blessing.”

- This also speaks of the blessing that’s going to come to the whole world; because as Christ turned away from a rebellious people, He opened His arms to the world. So it becomes a sign of blessing, residually. It’s like **(Rom. 11:12)**, where Paul says, **“The fall of them is become the riches of the world.”** Jerusalem destroyed, Israel set aside; and yet, in their setting aside, **we became beneficiaries** – but how? – because **God reaches out to us**. The “Gentiles.”
- So God’s New Testament apostles and God’s New Testament prophets **(those that succeeded the Apostles)** suddenly burst out spontaneously declaring the wonderful works of God in every language.
- Acts 2 is an unmistakable sign that a transition had come; a curse on one hand, but then a blessing on another hand; because even Jews could still come, couldn’t they? **Three thousand did on the day of Pentecost**. So, in a sense, while being a judicial **sign of a curse**, residually it’s also a **sign of blessing**.

III. Tongues was a sign of “Authority.”

- Who were the great messengers who preached this transition? Who were the men of God who spoke of the curse and the judgment? Who were the men of God who spoke of the blessing to come to all nations? They were none other than **the apostles and the prophets**; and it was to them that God gave the ability to speak these languages as an authenticating, validating sign that what they were saying was indeed the truth.
- To the Jewish mind, it would be so shocking and so shattering, so incomprehensible, that God would change this way, that there must be **reinforcement** that what they were saying was true. And so God gave them the ability to speak these languages.
- Paul says, in **(1 Cor.14:18)**, **“I thank God, I speak in tongues (languages) more than you all.”** As an apostle, this was an authenticating sign, such as the other sign gifts that he had. He even says, in **(2 Cor. 12:12)** that, I had all the signs of an apostle, **“The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.”** So it was a sign of authority to those who preached the **message of transition.**

- This is the **ABC** of the purpose of tongues: **C – cursing, B – blessing, A – authority**. That’s it, folks. You don’t see private devotions there. You don’t see evangelism there. It’s just very unique purpose. And, you see, once the event came, the destruction of Jerusalem, the transition was made and the church was born; **the sign was no longer necessary**.
- There are **Seven feasts** mentioned in Lev. Three of which are **direct pictures** of the work of Jesus Christ.
 1. The feast of **Passover**: (Lev. 23:5)
 2. The feast of **Unleavened Bread**: (Lev. 23:6)
 3. The feast of **First Fruits**: (Lev. 23:9-15) These first three are “spring” holidays.
 4. The Feast of **Pentecost**: (Lev. 23:15)
 5. The feasts of **Trumpets**: (Lev. 23:23-25)
 6. The **Day of Atonement**: (Lev. 23:26-32)
 7. The feast of **Tabernacles**: (Lev. 23:33-44)

“The Gift of Miracles”

- **So what is a miracle?** A miracle is a “**supernatural intrusion**” in to the natural law, which can have no other explanation than that God is acting. **Only God can get the glory.**
- Miracles are seen all over the Bible. The miracle of “**creation.**” There clearly seen in the ministries of **Moses, Elijah,** and **Elisha.** Many miracles were evident with the “**Acts of the Apostles,**” in the early church. The greatest Miracle worker of all was **King Jesus.**
- **Jesus was a miracle worker.** For what reason?
Notice (John. 2:11) “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee and thus manifested forth His glory.” Jesus did miracles to manifest His glory? What is His glory? **The composite of His attributes as DEITY.** Why did He do miracles? **To reveal Himself as God.**
- **Miracles,** are confirmation that God is being revealed. That has always, and will always be their intent. Miracles are confirmation that God is being revealed.

- **Notice (Jn. 5:36)**, and there are others in John, but these are a couple you can look at. **"But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John;"** In other words, Jesus says if you're trying to find out who I am, there's a greater testimony than the testimony of John the Baptist. **"for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me."**

Jesus was saying my heavenly origin, my divine commission is proven by **"my miracles."** (Jn. 20:30) pretty much sums up John's purpose in the entire gospel.

- **Notice (Jn. 20:30) "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;"** **Why did Jesus perform so many miracles?**
- **The answer is found in Verse 31, "but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."** Jesus did miracles to prove God was being revealed in His **"living word."** These are written that you might believe that this **Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. God was revealing Himself.**

- While we're on the subject **Notice (Acts 2:22)** Peter is preaching at Pentecost says, "**Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—**"
- God wanted you to know who Jesus was, so God approved of Him. So God established Him. So God commended Him. How? By **miracles** and **wonders** and **signs**.
- **Why does God do miracles?** In order to confirm His own revelation. Miracles then are always in the Scripture for one purpose. To prove God is speaking, whether in the **Old Testament written word**, the **New Testament living word**, or the **New Testament written word**, miracles corroborate God's revelation. **That is their only purpose.**
- We find that all through Scripture. When God wanted people to know He was speaking, God did miracles so that they would say this has to be God. That's the point. God normally operates the universe according to His created natural law. But when it comes time for God to make a self revelation, He will step in and contrary to natural law, make things occur, which have no other explanation than that God is being revealed. And so **Jesus' miracles were to reveal His deity.**

- We need to understand that there are only certain times when God does this. Jesus lived thirty-three years, right? Do you know how many years of that He did not do any single miracles? Thirty of them. For 30 years of His life He didn't do any miracles. **(that we know of, according to Scripture)**
- I know that it's been said in apocryphal writings that He made clay pigeons and then blew on them and they flew away and things like that when He was a little boy. Some others have said that He made instant things for His father to help in his business and so forth. That isn't so.
- Jesus never did a single miracle for the first 30 years of His life. You say, how do you know that? **Notice what (Jn. 2:11) says that when He turned water to wine, it says, "This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him."** He'd never done one before that. This proves that **not all ages** and **not all times** and **not all periods** have God's intention for miracles. Only when God gets ready to reveal Himself. And Jesus never revealed Himself until He began His ministry after His baptism, and then the miracles began.

- Jesus never did a single miracle before the hour of **“His revelation as God.”** Not all ages are miracle ages. If you study the Old Testament, you'll find there really are only **two periods of miracles** in the Old Testament.
 1. One is the time of the revealing of the law to Moses.
 2. The life of Elijah and Elisha when God was laying down the platform of prophetic revelation through His prophets.
- The rest of the whole Old Testament you'll find very scarce use of miracles, and as you get to the end of the Old Testament, there were none at all.
- When God brought a miracle He had a specific thing to reveal. God had a specific word to reveal with limits and boundaries around it. And when God was revealing either His **“written word”** or **“Christ His living word,”** it was then and then only that He used miracles as a corroborating and confirming sign. Can God do miracles however he wants, and when He wants? **Absolutely**, but that is not the norm. That is not the pattern as if there were just endless miracles going on. And to talk to some Christians today, you'd think it was so.

- For example, when God finished the Old Testament, the Old Testament was closed and done and set down. It's a **400 year** period of history between Old and New Testament when God didn't particularly do anything. **Certainly nothing MIRACULOUS**.
- Then came the New Testament. Miracles happen. The New Testament is finished, the book is closed, no more miracles. And then all of a sudden the miracles start popping up in the founding of the Roman Catholic church in the 300 and 400. What happened in the meantime? Where have they been? Is God reconfirming the Roman Catholic church? If so, we're in the wrong place. **"I don't think so."**
- Now Jesus did miracles to convince people that He was of God.
- Now once the evidence was complete that Jesus was God and it was all written down, it was completed, Christ finished His work, the apostles all wrote it down, then you find the gift **"fading away."** Now listen, Jesus not only had the ability to do miracles, but **so did the apostles and prophets**, the New Testament writers, the ones who were the heartbeat of the early church. Why? Because there was no written word to corroborate their preaching, and so God gave them miraculous abilities. And they could do miracles because there was no other way for God to prove **(Authenticate)** to people that these guys were speaking the truth among the tons of people speaking **(counterfeits)** in that time of the world.

- In those days there was no standard, no **“revealed written word.”**
- So miracles were the **PROOF**. Miracles then were to authenticate the living word and the written word. So they belong to just two categories, **Christ** and **the apostles** and **those that worked with them** in the foundations of the church. Those are the two groups and only those two that really in the life of the church ever did miracles.
- **This is very important. “The Great Commission.”**

Notice (Mark 16:14-20) “Afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen. And He said to them, “Go into all the world and **preach the gospel to all creation. **16** “He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. **17** “These signs will accompany **those who have believed:** in My name **they** will cast out demons, **they** will speak with new tongues; **18** **they** will pick up serpents, and if **they** drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt **them; they** will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” **19** So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to **them**, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. **20** And **they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.”****

- In **verse 17**, Jesus is talking to His eleven, (12-Judas) and He says, you're going to go out and preach. Now this is what's going to happen when you preach. "These signs are going to follow those who believe." **Now this is for the apostles.** "This is for those people in my name, I'm going to cast out demons and speak with new languages, take up snakes and if they drink any poison, it'll not hurt them. They'll lay hands on the sick and recover." Miracles are going to accompany the **"apostolic gospel."** As you go out and preach and people believe they're going to **"see signs and wonders."** Why? So the rest of the world will know this is the truth and that God is here and this is His word.
- So then verse 19, **"After the Lord had spoken to them, He was received into heaven and sat on the right hand of God."** Jesus left. Now watch **verse 20.** **"And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed..."**
- **How is the word of the apostles confirmed?** With signs. God was attesting to their preaching just as He had attested to the deity of Christ by the signs and wonders and miracles. A miracle acts as a sign pointing to God's revelation.
- The Lord wants His word to be believed. He wants it confirmed and the miracles **they** did were confirming that this was God's truth. When I get up and preach God's truth to you, I don't need any miracles because I have this revelation which substantiates itself and becomes the **confirmer** of my words. But in those days with no written revelation, miracles was the **confirmer**.

- **Now take a mental note of this.** If we say miracles continue to go on today (like many Charismatics,) and they have only one purpose and that is to confirm God's revelation, then God is still revealing His word. And if He's still revealing is word, your Bible is incomplete and **(Rev. 22:18)** is a lie, because it says, **"If you add anything to this book, will be added unto you the plagues that are written in it."**
- It's clear from the gospels through Acts, that there's a progressive lessening of miracles, so by the time you get to Paul's Epistles it just isn't even there. You don't even find them.
- People get sick in Paul's Epistles, they stay sick, including Paul. But once the revelation...and incidentally, we believe it as **heresy** to say revelation continues. Once it is complete and the Bible is done, the purpose of miracles is done. That's enough. You say, but what if people won't believe the Bible. Well, then they don't believe miracles, because it's full of miracles. It can be historically verified. And Jesus said, **"Woe unto you Korazin and Bethsaida, woe unto you Capernaum, if the mighty works had been done in Sodom and Gomorrah that were done in you, they'd have repented. It'll be more tolerable in the judgment for Sodom than for you because of the miracles you saw and didn't believe."** He says, you don't need any more. There's enough in the past to be convincing and it's not a question of miracles. It's a question of your own unbelief **"just like the apostles back in (Mk. 16:14)"** People don't need miracles, they just need to understand the word of God. And if they won't believe the word of God, they won't believe miracles either.

- **Remember the rich man and Lazarus? (Lk. 16:27-31)**

"And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house— 28 for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' 29 "But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' 30 "But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!' 31 "But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.' "

- Send me back so I can tell my brothers." And what is the word to that man if they do not believe Moses and the prophets, they will not believe till somebody what? Rose from the dead.
- Somebody did arise from the dead, and they didn't believe. So you see miracles had a limited time, only for the early era, limited persons, only the apostles and prophets and early New Testament preachers, and a limited purpose only for the confirmation of revelation.
- They were sign posts pointing to God's revelation. First in the **living word**, then in the **written word**, and when that was done and recorded it was over folks. Because now that the reality is here, **WE DON'T NEED A SIGN ANYMORE.**

“Dunamis= Power”

- **Notice (1 Cor. 12:10)** “and to another the working of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.” What is the **“Working of miracles?”**
- The word **“miracles”** is the Greek word **“Dunamis,”** which means **POWER**, and is used 120 times in the N.T., and the verb is used another over 100 times. So it's a very common word.
- It's translated in the N.T. **power, mighty deeds, strength, miracles.**
- Remember this, the word that is translated **“miracle,”** (1 Cor. 12) is the same exact word as power **throughout the gospels.** Actually the best way to translate this gift should be that this is the **“gift of power.”** This is a supernatural, special power; an ability, an energy gift.

- So let's look at the gospels and see what we can see. Jesus has just been in conflict with Satan. **Notice (Lk. 4:13), "When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time."** And when the devil had ended all the testing, the devil had given everything he had to throw at Him. He departed from Him for good. Is that what it says? For just a little while. He was back, real quick. He was back.
- Jesus was forever fighting Satan. Day after day, He was invading the kingdom of darkness in rescuing people. Now **notice verse 14. "And Jesus returned,"** listen to this, **"in the power of the Spirit into Galilee."**
- Now I want to show you a connection here. What was it that allowed Jesus to be victorious over Satan? **"The power of the Spirit."** Notice then that the concept of power is connected with a **"struggle against Satan."** The word **"power"** as seen in the gospels again and again is in reference to **"Christ's conflict with Satan's kingdom."**
- **Notice (Lk. 4:36)** This is a man who has a demon and Jesus rebukes the demon and casts him out. And verse 36 says, **"And amazement came upon them all."** Why? Because He just threw that demon out. **"and they began talking with one another saying, "What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits and they come out."** He doesn't have to do the old traditional Jewish exorcism bit. He just says out, and they go. With authority and power He commands the unclean spirits and they come out, *excusia* and *dunamis*. **Power** is the controlling sock that Christ has on the kingdom of Satan.

- **Notice (Mk. 1:34) "And He healed many who were ill with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He was not permitting the demons to speak, because they knew who He was."** The demons couldn't even speak. **In verse 39, it says, "Preached and cast out demons."** Now notice this amazing ability to cast out demons is always connected with His preaching. Why? Because the gift of miracles is always connected to the **"revelation of God"** **remember He is saying something.**
- This is happening all through the gospels, but lets draw it together. **Notice (Lk. 9:42), "While he was still approaching,"** this is the father bringing his child, **"the demon slammed him to the ground and threw him into a convulsion..."** This demon just totally controlling this kid. **"But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy and gave him back to his father."** Here it is again Listen, **"And they were all amazed or astonished at the mighty power of God."** Now notice this, power is again connected with conflict and victory over Satan's kingdom.

- The gift of **powers** or the gift of **miracles** was the supernatural and instantaneous ability to cast out demons, primarily.
- Don't forget about the broader application (God is **saying, changing,** or **doing** something) but the primary use of the gift of powers **by Christ** was in showing that the **“kingdom of God ruled the kingdom of darkness.”** Christ having that instantaneous ability to cast Satan out was **saying** to the world, why would you be a part of that kingdom which I control when I offer you my kingdom?
- In **(Matt. 8:16)**, it says, **“When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill.”**
- Jesus cast out the spirits with just a **“word.”** I don't know anybody who can do that today. Not even the would be Christian exorcist can do that. They go through long sweaty hours of trying to get rid of demons. That is not the apostolic gift of powers or miracles. Jesus with a word cast them out and healed all that was sick. Now there you have the two gifts. The **“gift of powers”** and the **“gift of healing.”**

- These two gifts, miracles related to demon-induced trouble, healing related to physically induced illness.
- What about the apostles? Did they have the same gift? **Notice (Lk. 9:1) “And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases.”** what is the word? **Dunamis**, same word translated **miracle**. Christ, gave them the gift of miracles and with it comes authority over all demons and to cure diseases."
- Then the Bible says **"And He sent them to preach the kingdom of God."** Why? Because these **“signs”** were to **confirm** their **“preaching.”** It doesn't do any good to go around and heal people if you don't open your mouth and say your message from God and have something to **corroborate**.
- These gifts extended beyond the **twelve** to the **seventy** who were personally commissioned by Jesus, and as I said the circle of people who could do this is no wider than Christ, the apostles, and the **“Apostolic fathers”** **Notice (Lk. 10:17-20)** They said, Lord, you'll never believe what happened on our trip. **“The seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.” 18 And He said to them, “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. 19 “Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. 20 “Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.”**

- When you are dealing with the devil, the Bible gets very explicit. It says, for example, in
- In James, "**resist the devil and he'll flee from you,**" right?
- In Ephesians it says, "**take unto you the whole, armor of God.**"
- In 2 Corinthians, it says, "**don't do anything that'll give Satan the advantage.**"
- In 1 Peter 5, it says "**remain steadfast so you don't find the devil chewing you up like a roaring lion.**"
- In 2 Timothy, it says, "**live a pure life so he doesn't have any way to invade you.**"
- It's all **personalized** instruction. Jesus and those earlier apostles to **confirm the revelation** had the power to do instant complete casting out of demons and other wonders. There is no reference in the entire New Testament Epistles to having a Christian cast demons out of another Christian, to having a Christian exorcise demons out of another one. All you have to do to deal with the devil is put on the armor, that's all.

“The Gift of Healing”

- I do believe God heals. God heals miraculously in answer to prayer; in order to reveal His glory. I do not question His miraculous healing, if He so chooses, in response to the prayers of saints. What I want you to understand in this study is the **difference between “healing by God”** and the **“gift of healing.”** There is a great difference between God healing someone immediately, and God healing someone through a human healer and that’s the distinction that I want to make.
- **Notice (1 Cor. 12:9)** “to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,” **Also Verses 28-30** “And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. **29** All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? **30** All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?”

- Remember what we've learned concerning **“temporary sign gifts.”** These were certain enablement's, certain energizing's given to certain believers for the purpose of authenticating or confirming the word when it was being proclaimed in the early church before the scriptures were penned. These were temporary; their purpose was not primarily to edify, though they did that in a secondary sense; their purpose was primarily to **authenticate the message** of the apostolic community.

- **SINCE THE FALL OF MAN** in the Garden of Eden, **disease** and **death** has been a reality. And since that time the search for cures to alleviate the reality of illness and the suffering that goes with it has continued. Many cultures over the years have had their witch doctors and potions for curing disease. You go to the most sophisticated complex hospital in the world and they're doing the very same thing.
- If you go all the way back to the time of the **Egyptians**, you will find the **birth** of what we know as "**medicine**," and they had the wildest cures imaginable. **Baldness**, for example, was cured by pouring a bottle of rattlesnake oil on your head. That's a little crazy, but it's a start.
- Throughout the history of western civilization you have alchemy and all kinds of other things as man continually searches for a cure for the terrible realization of disease and illness.

- I thank God for the gift's that He's given me, but if I could pick one more out of the list it would be the **“gift of healing.”** I've watched people eaten by disease and wished that I could heal them with a word, with a touch, but I can't.
- Why is it that the people who claim to have this gift never get out of their tents? Why is it that they always have to do it in a controlled environment, staged their way, run by their operation, begins on time and ends when it's supposed to. Why aren't they in the hospital, or some remote area where people are really hurting?
- I'll tell you why! **They don't have the gift of healing.** Why? Because the gift of healing was a **temporary sign gift** for the **“authenticating of the scriptures as the Word of God”** and once that was authenticated they ceased. And now when Jesus is leaving He doesn't say to us, “Go into all the world and banish disease.” He says, “Go into all the world and- **“preach the gospel.”** He's more concerned about the **soul** of a man than He is the **body** of a man.

- King Jesus all but banished disease from Palestine during His 3-1/2 year ministry, and did that cause the people to be saved? No it didn't because **saving faith is a gift from God**, according to God's sovereign will. It is given to whom He wills and it comes from hearing the gospel and mixing it with the divine gift of faith. **It doesn't come by getting healed.**
- In **(Rom. 10:17)** it says, **Saving faith "comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."** Miracles didn't save people during the ministry of Christ, and those that were healed were part of the mob that cried **"Crusify Him."** They didn't get saved by miracles in the apostles' day either. The apostles went around and did miracle after miracle of healing, and what did they do? They threw them in jail, and in **chapter 8** a wholesale persecution broke out against them.

“The **Claims** Today Concerning **Healing’s**”

Historically the **Roman Catholic Church** has led the way with healings claimed. They have claimed to be able to heal people with:

1. The bones of John the Baptist.
 2. The bones of Peter, the relics of the cross, more relics.
 3. They’ve claimed to be able to heal at the shrines where Mary the mother of Jesus has appeared, and with vials of Mary’s breast milk. This is sick, but they’ve led the way in so-called healings.
- **There are oriental psychic healers** busy with their reported healings, those that do bloodless surgery using only their hands as scalpels, even claiming to raise the dead.
 - **There are witch doctors** that are using their fading fetishes on the diseases of the aboriginal few left in our world.
 - **There are occultists** who use black magic operating in the power of Satan to do lying wonders such as Paul says in **(2 Thess. 2)** will appear in the great tribulation.

- **Raphael Gasson**, the former spiritualist medium converted to Christ, says, “There are many spiritualist today who are endowed with this remarkable gift by the power of Satan, and I myself having been used in this way can testify to having witnessed miraculous healing taking place at healing meetings in spiritualism.” That’s from his book *The Challenging Counterfeit*.
- **Mary Baker Eddy** (Founder of Christian Science) healed through telepathy.
- **The modern charismatics** who claim all kinds of healing going on. You can sit down, turn on your television now, and they’ll heal you from a distance even on a delayed tape. For the right amount of money you can even receive a **prayer cloth** that will make you **Healthy, Wealthy**, and **Wise**. I’ve had one sent to my house before, and it couldn't be **“activated”** until I sent in a contribution to their ministry.

- **Then you've got the PTL Club and the 700 Club** after watching you get the feeling that there's a "**miracle competition**" going on. Some of the craziest things I ever heard in my life on there.
- One man who was saved, he said, "God wanted to do a special miracle for me, so He poured out all over me the smell of heaven. And I smelled what heaven smells like. And now when I want to re-enjoy the day of my salvation, I go to my closet and get the tie out that I had that day and smell it." This pastor who said he had the gift of healing said, "This is how it works." He said, "In the morning services the Lord tells me what healings are available. The Lord will say, 'I've got three cancers available; I've got **one back**; I've got **two headache healings**,'" and he says, "I announce that to the congregation and tell them that anyone who comes that night with enough faith can claim those that are available for that evening." And this person told me, "Oh, it's so exciting to see how God is working."
You've Got to Be KIDDING ME!!!!!!!!!!

- People don't realize there are **“demonic counterfeit healings”** done by Satan that can be used with God words?
- **Kurt Trampler**, a Munich author and lawyer who is a healer, uses the names of God and Christ but denies them both, but says they work in his healings.
- What about people like **Oral Roberts** and the late **Kathryn Kuhlman** and the new **Brant Baker**? They have tremendous healing claims, startling routines, all kinds of gimmicks, and behind them are a whole gob of lesser known healers plying their trade all over the place. Each has his own technique. Each operates in a controlled environment. Each operates with a set strategy. Each does it his own way. I've never yet seen any of them walk down a hall of a hospital and heal everybody. And yet they all claim that God heals and that God uses them somehow as an instrument in that.
- When somebody says they have the **“gift of healing,”** you should ask, do they manifest all of the fruit of the Spirit? Do they manifest absolute purity of life? Do they manifest purity of doctrine? Do they manifest humility? Do they manifest a total exaltation of Christ, an absolute obedience to His word? And I dare say as you begin to study the people who claim to have the gift, you're going to find wanting areas in their life.

- “Here are some of the aspects of the medical healing process. To start with the body’s ability to heal itself. **Kathryn Kuhlman** often says, ‘I don’t heal. The Holy Spirit heals through me.’ I suspect there are two reasons why Miss Kuhlman continually repeats this statement.
- **First**, if the patient doesn’t improve, the Holy Spirit not Kathryn Kuhlman gets the blame.
- **Second**, she doesn’t have a clue of what healing is all about, and once she puts the responsibility on the shoulders of the Holy Spirit, she can answer if questioned about her healing powers, **“I don’t know. The Holy Spirit does it all.”** A charismatic individual, a healer can sometimes **“influence”** a patient and cure **symptoms** or a **functional disease** by **“suggestion.”**
- In your mind you must make a distinction between a **functional disease** and an **organic one**.
- **A FUNCTIONAL disease:** is where a perfectly **good** organ **does not function properly**.
- **An ORGANIC disease:** is where the organ is **not good**, but it is organically destroyed or maimed or crippled. The **functional** disease has only a symptom without a reality. An **organic** disease has a reality and a symptom. And you will find that in all cases of so-called healers the only kinds of healing they ever accomplish are **functional never organic**. All they’re ever dealing with is the **“symptom.”**

- **Raphael Gasson** further adds: “A healer can sometimes influence a patient and cure symptoms of a functional disease by suggestion with our without laying on of hands. Physicians can do the same thing. The cures are not miraculous. They result from corrections made by the patient changing their thinking processes.
- All healers use **“hypnosis to some extent.”** they play mind games by saying something like this; **“See your pain is going away. Isn’t it wonderful? Jesus has healed you.”** If you couple this tremendous **suggestion** with the euphoric **atmosphere**, throw in some **staging and lights**, it’s easy to see how someone can get all caught up through their **mind** and **emotions**, forcing you into believing your healed.
- **Doctors** use hypnosis (Mind-games)frequently. When they give a patient a pill or a shot they purposely make a point of saying, **“This medicine should make you better in 24 or 48 hours.”** He’s never going to give you medicine and then say **“honestly I don’t know if this stuff works or not?”** And, even if the guy gets better he’s going to still be sick, right?

- There's a tremendous power in **"POSITIVE THINKING,"** particularly where **functional** disorders are concerned. Hypnotism is not something to play around with. Relieving symptoms can be dangerous.
- **For example**, there was a poor woman whose back pain went away at **Kathryn Kuhlman's** suggestion leaving her temporarily free to frolic around as if she was miraculously healed, until her cancerous vertebrae collapsed.
- **Symptoms** – pain, nausea, dizziness may be purely **psychological** – but they may also be the **warning** signals of dangerous, possibly life threatening **organic diseases**. To eliminate a symptom without getting at the cause of that symptom can cause delay in treatment, which may be serious or even fatal.
- There's another story of a little boy whose both legs were crippled. He went to see **A.A. Allen**, who is now dead, drunk himself dead. There was more alcohol in his veins than there was blood, and he finally died. But **A.A. Allen** healed this boy, took off his braces, and had the kid try to walk off the stage. I'll never forget it. And he stumbled a little way and the power of his mind carried him, and his parents kind of helped him along. And he said, 'Don't ever put the braces on again,' and it wasn't any time at all until gangrene had set into his legs, and there was the necessity of amputating those legs. **Very dangerous to fool around with symptoms when you're not dealing with real ORGANIC CAUSES.**

- **“Lastly,”** in our attempt to understand healing we must deal with **“organic diseases.”**
- These are diseases that are caused not simply by **dysfunction** of an organ, but by **derangement** of the structure of an organ or organs. This list would include:
- Infections, heart attacks, gallstones, hernias, slipped discs, cancers of all kinds, broken bones, congenital deformities, lacerations, and multitudes of other diseases and sub-divisions. All of these are included in the organic disease classification.
- Some organic diseases are **“self-limited,”** that is they are healed by the body itself such as the common cold and minor sprains. But to cure many organic diseases the body needs help.
- These are the diseases that healers, even the most charismatic, **CANNOT** cure. When they attempt to do so, and they all fall into this trap since they know and care nothing of the difference between **functional** and **organic** disease, they tread on very dangerous ground. When healers treat serious organic diseases, they are responsible for untold anguish and unhappiness. This happens because they keep patients away from possibly effective and life-saving help and **“HEALERS”** become **“KILLERS.”**

- **Kathryn Kuhlman**— You will never find among all of the patients **Kathryn** treats a **“spontaneous cure”** of a cleft pallet, a hernia, gallstones, heart disease, paralyzes due to injury, or any of the hundreds of other organic ailments for which patients seek help.
- What is most unusual is that there are **NO** well-documented spontaneous cancer cures reported in her books. You’d think among the millions of cancer patients healers treat, at least one or two would demonstrate spontaneous regression.
- The truth is, **“isolated spontaneous”** cures of cancer occur with or without the help of healers. The chances of being cured of cancer by **Kathryn Kuhlman** or any other healer are the same as the chances of being cured if you don’t go for help at all.
- The national average for Physicians (when dealing with cancer) is a cure rate of **50%** or **better**. I think I’ll take my chances with **GOD FIRST**, and if he chooses not to heal me immediately, then I’m going to see the **DOC**, and maybe He'll choose to heal me through their abilities. And, If I’m still not cured then God will just have to do it on the other-side (**HEAVEN**).
- When somebody says, **“You have to believe. Look at all the evidence.”** Where is the evidence? Where are the **organic spontaneous** healings? Next time you see a healer, take a broken arm up to him and say, “Here, heal it.” The truth will surface **QUICK, FAST**, and in a **HURRY**.

- Someone may say, “**The reason I believe in these “healers” is because they do it biblically.**” Folks as we have learned, they **DON’T** do it biblically. Somebody else says, “Well the reason I believe it is because it’s based on the sound teaching of the Bible, that **“by His stripes we are healed and healing is in the atonement.”** That is the most gross interpretation of **(Isa. 53)** you could imagine. This text is not talking about **“PHYSICAL”** healing; it’s talking about **“SPIRITUAL”** healing, **SALVATION!!!!**

- **So, why do people go to “healers?”**
- They go because people who are sick are **DESPERATE**. We need to be careful and NOT be-little these folks either, because there is a certain desperation that comes in disease.
- **Sickness drives people.** It drives them to do things that they normally wouldn't do. Originally clear-minded intelligent balanced people become irrational.
- Job 2:4 is a good verse on this. **(Job 2:4)** says, **“Skin for skin, yes, all that a man has will he give for his life.”** People will do anything to live. **“All that a man has will he give for his life.”** For a lot of people, all you have to do is go to your doctor and have him say, **“You’ve got a terminal illness,”** and the **“PANIC”** sets in and the overwhelming desire to be healed. People will go, and do just about anything, because their **DESPERATE**.

“The **GREAT** Physician”

- **Let's look at Jesus**. How did He heal? Because He set the pattern for all the spiritual gifts. In Jesus' day there was a world full of disease, and they didn't have any medical science. They were really hurting. There wasn't any way that they could get healed. Diseases were more prevalent than today. Diseases were destructive, and incurable. Plagues would wipe out cities. And the greatest single problem of man is disease in terms of the physical life.
- So when Jesus came into the world and when He wanted the world to **“know that He was God,”** He realized that the greatest way to point attention to Himself was to go through the world healing disease. And He did. And then He passed that ability on to His apostles. But how did Jesus heal?

Here are **SIX** way's in which **JESUS** healed.

1. Jesus healed with a word or a touch.

Notice (Matt. 8:5-8) “And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him, 6 and saying, “Lord, my servant is lying **paralyzed (ORGANIC)** at home, fearfully tormented.” 7 Jesus said to him, “**I will come and heal him.**” But the centurion said, 8 “Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, **but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.**”

Jesus healed – “Be healed.” That’s all. No theatrics, no falling “slain in the Spirit,” (hypnotics) nothing. **“Be healed.”** Verse 13 says: **“And the servant was healed that very moment.”**

2. Jesus healed INSTANTANEOUSLY.

Notice (Mk. 5:28-29) **“For she thought, “If I just touch His garments, I will get well.” 29 Immediately the flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction.”** we just read it, what does it say? **“And immediately** the fountain of her blood was dried up. She could feel her healing, **Immediately.**

- I’ve heard people say, “Oh, the Lord healed me, and since He’s healed me I’ve been getting progressively better.” Jesus never did a progressive healing. He never did a, “From now on I want you to take a little of this and rest a little and you’re going to be healed as you go.” When He sent away the lepers they were healed as they went, but that was instantaneous on the road.
- When **JESUS** met the blind man at the pool, as soon as he washed his eyes, **“instantly” the blind man could see.** The scripture knows no other kind. Otherwise if Jesus healed progressively that kind of miracle would be worthless to demonstrate His deity, because somebody would say it was just the **“natural process.”** Right? It had to be instantly.

3. JESUS healed **TOTALLY**.

Notice (Lk. 4:38-39) “Then He got up and left the synagogue, and entered Simon’s home. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Him to help her. **39** And standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her; and she immediately got up and waited on them.”

Here’s the woman lying on her deathbed and when Jesus healed her, He healed her “**TOTALLY.**” He didn’t say, “Now that you’ve been healed I want you to just take it easy for a while.” NO He said woman you better get yourself in that kitchen and deep fry Me some “**WILD TURKEY, and CROPPIE.**” She was healed of a deathly disease, got up, and made dinner. Instant, total healing. It’s the only kind Jesus ever did. He healed with a **touch** and **a word, instantaneously,** and **totally.**

4. JESUS healed **EVERYBODY**.

- Jesus wasn't like Kathryn Kuhlman, Oral Roberts, Brant Baker, or anyone else. He didn't have all the people with organic diseases leave the same way they came. **Notice (Lk. 4:40)**
“While the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and laying His hands on each one of them, He was healing them. 41 Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, “You are the Son of God!” But rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ.”
- He healed with a **word** and a **touch**, **instantaneously**, **totally**, and **EVERYBODY**. That's why He didn't have to do it in His own environment with tents, and T.V.'s. He could go where they were.
- Here's another beautiful picture of Jesus healing.
Notice (Lk. 9:11) “But the crowds were aware of this and followed Him; and welcoming them, He began speaking to them about the kingdom of God and curing those who had need of healing.” Do you know anybody that has that ability today? I don't. Folks, this is the way Jesus healed, and it was also the way the apostles healed.

5. JESUS healed ORGANIC DISEASE.

- Jesus healed people who were **crippled** from birth, now they could walk, without assistance. People who were **blind** could see. People who were **deaf and dumb** could speak and hear. These are organic things. Jesus didn't go around healing low back pain and palpation of the heart and breathing problems. There are so many illustrations of that we don't even have time to begin.

6. JESUS RAISED THE DEAD.

- **Notice (Mk. 5:35)** “While He was still speaking, they came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, “Your daughter has died; why trouble the Teacher anymore?”
- **Now notice verse 41-42:** “Taking the child by the hand, He said to her, “Talitha kum!” (which translated means, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). **42 Immediately the girl got up and began to walk, for she was twelve years old. And immediately they were completely astounded.**”

- **Luke 7. 11-16** records another beautiful picture of this.
- “Soon afterwards He went to a city called Nain; and His disciples were going along with Him, accompanied by a large crowd. **12** Now as He approached the gate of the city, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a sizeable crowd from the city was with her. **13** When the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her, and said to her, “Do not weep.” **14** And He came up and touched the coffin; and the bearers came to a halt. And He said, “Young man, I say to you, arise!” **15** The dead man sat up and began to speak. And Jesus gave him back to his mother. **16** Fear gripped them all, and they began glorifying God, saying, “A great prophet has arisen among us!” and, “God has visited His people!”
- **Here’s the big question**, Why was it that **Jesus** healed with a **word** or a **touch, instantaneously, totally, everybody** with **organic diseases**, and **raised the dead**? Why was it? Was it to infatuate the people? Was it just to play games with the people?
- **ANSWER: (Jn. 20:30-31)** “Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; **31** but these have been written so that you may believe that **Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.**

- **CONCLUSION**: Dispelling demons and diseases was Christ's way of confirming that He was **God** in flesh, the **Messiah**, the **Savior**. And as Jesus came toward the end of His ministry, the miracles began to get less and less because He'd gotten His message across and they had no other reason to exist, and they faded out.
- I'm not saying God doesn't do **miracles**, or doesn't **heal**, because He can do anything that He wants, and wills to do.
- Folks, there's no evidence **biblically**, or **practically** that anybody today is operating with the true **"gift of healing."**
- If God wants to heal, that's His business, that's His privilege and He may choose to do it through the **"prayers of an individual saint."** In fact He promises that the **prayer of faith** shall – what? – **"restore the one who is sick (weakened by persecution)."** (James. 5:15)
- But let's not confuse **God's healing** in response to prayer, with the ability to go around and heal everybody at will as Jesus could do and as the apostles could do. **This is the difference between "HEALING BY GOD" and the "GIFT OF HEALING."**