

Faith Healings

Have you ever wondered why “faith-healers” never go into hospitals and heal the sick? Why is it that the “sick” have to come to them, and only when these “healers” are in venues where TV cameras are recording and the environment is controlled? It’s the same reason that psychics and fortune tellers never win the lottery. It’s because these people are a fraud, and their practices are a Satanic scam. This begs the question, can anyone really be healed by faith?

You might have heard of so-called “faith-healers” like Peter Popoff or Bennie Hinn. Popoff was exposed as a fraud. He claimed to receive direct messages from the Lord, by the *“inspiration of the Spirit,”* as he would call out people from his audience by name, and identify vague health problems of theirs, without ever meeting them ahead of time. However, he had concealed a radio receiver in his ear, and his staff was feeding him information about audience members, only after the guests had fill out a comment card. As you would expect, Popoff got rich scamming people. Benny Hinn, would also allegedly heal people, but he never cured any condition that could be substantially documented. In other words, when Hinn’s followers were “healed” of severe conditions, like blindness or cancer, these conditions weren’t verified by doctors beforehand, nor were these so-called healings medically validated afterwards. Other followers of Hinn’s were “healed” of less significant conditions; things equally unproveable, like arthritis, or an aching back.

In 1999, an investigative documentary series called The Fifth Estate, interviewed one of Hinn’s crew, a man who would screen people before they would go up on stage with Hinn. This employee of Hinn’s explained the process used to keep those who were truly sick from ever making it onto the stage. As staff members interviewed potential guests, the interviews went something like this. STAFF – *“What’s wrong with you?”* GUEST – *“I have rheumatoid arthritis in my left shoulder. I can’t lift it.”* STAFF – *“Can you lift your shoulder? Because if you can’t lift your shoulder, you can’t go on stage.”*

You can see the scam that’s happening here. Before a guest could ever get on stage, that person would have to first be able to demonstrate movement, to make it look like the impending healing had worked. This is the same thing they do with people who claim they can’t walk, and then suddenly arise from their wheelchairs as though healed.

One woman, Ella Peppard, went to Hinn for healing, but Hinn didn’t just fail to heal her, he caused her death! In September of 1986, Peppard, who was 85 years old, was waiting her turn, when Hinn struck another man in the head while declaring aloud that the man was *“slain in the Spirit!”* This tactic of knocking people over is common for Hinn and other so-called “faith-healers.” The man fell backwards, knocking Peppard over, and she broke her hip. At this point, Hinn had a real injury in front of him. Of course, Hinn wasn’t able to heal her, and she was eventually taken to a hospital. The shattered hip resulted in blocked arteries and she died days later. The state medical examiner determined that she died of multiple pulmonary emboli (blocked arteries), caused by the broken hip.

What’s really happening when people are *“slain in the Spirit”* and “healed” of these vague and undocumented health issues? Is this a placebo effect? A placebo is a false treatment that doctors have sometimes used to “cure” people of problems that they don’t really have. The placebo effect is when a person's symptoms improve after receiving a treatment, when the treatment actually has no active value, such as a doctor giving a patient a sugar pill instead of real medicine. This improvement is due to the individual's beliefs about the treatment, regardless of whether the treatment is real. So, when followers of Popoff or Hinn go to them for

healing, these followers are ready to believe that it worked. The same thing happens when a client gets his palm read by a fortune-teller. The client goes in believing that the fortune-teller is real, and leaves there convinced he will have good fortune based on what he was told. Unsurprisingly, he experiences “good-fortune” in every little thing that happens to him, and he goes back again and again for more palm-readings.

Psalms 103:2-3 says, ***“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits; who pardons all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases.”*** Christians rightly speak of God as the Great Physician, but should believers expect to never experience disease? Does this verse mean that God *will* cure all disease, or that He *can* cure all disease? Does God cure all who ask of Him? This essay aims to shed light on the realities of what the Bible says about healings, and how Christians should pray for healing.

You’ve no doubt seen the logos used in the medical field, which features the serpent on the staff, taken from the historical account of the book of Numbers. Here are some examples.



This imagery comes from Numbers 21. The Israelites had turned away from the Lord, and God had justly punished them for their sin. Numbers 21:6-9, ***“The LORD sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. So the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, because we have spoken against the LORD and you; intercede with the LORD, that He may remove the serpents from us.” And Moses interceded for the people. Then the LORD said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live.” And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived.”***

From this account, we can see how the Lord heals, and compare it to the so-called faith-healers on television. First of all, the “power” of these faith-healers is unlike the power of God. When God heals, He heals instantly, totally, and He heals actual medical conditions that are provable. Faith-healers don’t heal instantly, nor totally, nor heal any provable medical condition. Faith-healers convince people that through their faith and financial offerings, God will reward them with health.

Another significant thing to point out, that exposes the Satanic rip-off of so-called faith-healers, is that the people they heal almost always fall to the ground immediately after they’re “healed.” You’ve likely noticed the same thing; people being touched, falling to the floor, and usually laying there as though unconscious. I’ve seen this first-hand. In 1995, when I was in college, some buddies and I were curious about an alleged spiritual movement we’d heard about, and we drove down to the Brownsville “revival”; a Pentecostal experience at Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida. Being young and growing in my faith, I wanted to know if the events in Brownsville were the Holy Spirit at work, or just clever men preying on the naïve. We attended the church services for three consecutive nights, and my suspicions were confirmed. Each night I watched pastors touch hundreds of people; each one falling to the floor and laying their limp, often laying there for over an hour. After these people would fall, volunteers from the church would place modesty-towels over them; in case the person on the floor was a woman in a skirt, or if a person’s shirt

became untucked, etc. As I watched these spectacles, I wondered why nothing like this is seen in the Bible. When Jesus and His disciples heal, nobody falls down. When God heals, the people get up! This is not a subtle distinction. As I watched these fake healings in Brownsville, each “healed” person was immediately rendered useless. In contrast, when God heals, the healed person is immediately alert, attentive, on their feet, made fit and ready for service.

Am I being biased? Am I criticizing from a distance? In case anyone suggests that I’m being unfair of my assessment of what took place at Brownsville, let me point out one more thing - I was one of the individuals that went down for a healing touch! I told my buddies, *“I’ve never seen anything like this in person, but if this is of God, I certainly want to be a part of it. Why wouldn’t I? I’ll go down and have the pastor pray over me and touch me. If the Holy Spirit is working here, I want whatever the Lord is offering!”* I did just that. I went down with an open mind. I was on the auditorium floor, waiting in anticipation for my turn, and I watched over a hundred people before me get touched and fall to the ground. I prayed, *“Lord, if this is of You, let me also experience Your great work!”* The pastor prayed over me, and put his hand on my forehead, just like he’d done with all the others. Nothing happened. Again, he kept praying. Again, nothing. Next an associate pastor joined him. Still, nothing. Finally, a third man joined in. Now, three pastors were shouting and praying and had their hands on my head. Nothing. They finally moved on, and oddly enough, the very next person they prayed for and touched immediately fell to the ground. Having my suspicions confirmed, I carefully walked through a sea of limp bodies lying on the ground as I made my way back to my seat. What am I to conclude? I conclude that if you want to fall to the ground, you will. If you want to lay limp for an hour, you will. People do these things because they believe something spiritually healthy is happening, though it’s not.

There were other concerns I had about what I saw at Brownsville. The first night we were there, we noticed a woman sitting in the front row of the choir. The choir participated in over two hours of worship. The entire time, this particular woman whipped her head around violently. The whole time, never stopping! This looked far worse than any type of epilepsy or Parkinson’s Disease that I’ve ever seen. It would hurt terribly to try to imitate her. I asked one of the ushers to explain to me what was happening with the woman. He said, *“She was in an automobile accident and broke her neck. The Lord healed her! The Lord has her whipping her head around to show the degree to which her neck was healed. She does this all the time!”* This was a very disturbing answer to my question. Her violent head whipping was no act of grace, it was an affliction, and resembled nothing like any healing in the Bible. Can you imagine reading something like this in the Scriptures! Suppose that Jesus healed a cripple, and as a result, the crippled man’s legs now kicked violently and uncontrollably. This wouldn’t be a blessing, but a curse! Nobody who saw that would want Jesus’ healing touch. Now, at Brownsville, this woman is afflicted with some sort of demonic curse, and those in attendance are deceived into thinking that she’s received a blessing from God. Obviously while she whips her head around she’s unable to make use of her eyes, as she couldn’t hold her neck still long enough to read a hymnal or follow the director’s hand-motions. She’d be unable to take a drink of water, or engage someone in a conversation, etc. Besides all this, it was incredibly distracting to say the least. Yet, when it’s time to worship the Lord, I’m supposed to believe that Jesus is the author of this behavior? God’s healings never look like this!

Additionally, over the course of the three nights, there were continual displays of speaking in tongues in a Scripturally forbidden manner (1 Corinthians 14). I can’t help but ask, what’s to be gained by all this un-Biblical behavior? When I’ve asked this of people who participate in this sort of thing, I get the same answers, *“We know we’re experiencing something spiritual, so we don’t have to reconcile it with Scripture.”* This is such

a horrible answer, and leaves so much room for Satan to manipulate the Church. All things must be measured against the Word of God!

Again, when the Lord heals, people immediately get up and are rendered fit and ready. Here are some examples. Simon's mother-in-law is healed by Jesus in Mark 1:31, ***"And He came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand, and the fever left her, and she waited on them."*** Noticed that she got up and began serving! Jesus heals a leper in Mark 1:40-45, and afterwards the man leaves proclaiming freely what the Lord had done. Why didn't the leper fall to the ground and pass out after he was healed? Because God's healings don't result in that sort of nonsense!

In Mark 2:11-12, Jesus heals a paralyzed man that couldn't walk. ***"I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home. And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone."*** The healed man immediately got up and was fit for heavy lifting! In Mark 5:15, Jesus had cast a legion of demons out of a single man. The man had been naked and his body was covered in lacerations, but immediately after Jesus cast the demons out of the man, those in attendance, ***"observed the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind."*** His body healed, no medical care needed, no longer wild and uncontrolled, now modestly dressed and behaved. Notice that the man wasn't whipping any part of his body around, showing that he was free. Instead, he was calm, acting normal. In Mark 5:41-42, Jesus raises a girl from the dead. ***"Taking the child by the hand, He said to her, 'Talitha kum!' (which translated means, 'Little girl, I say to you, get up!'). Immediately the girl got up and began to walk."*** She got up, began walking, and resumed normal activity. Jesus didn't say, *"You must be weak, having been dead. Now lay in bed, sleep, and get some rest."* No, quite the opposite! The miracles in the Bible are plenty, but the point is obvious; healed people don't fall down and go limp!

Looking at the healing works of the apostles in the book of Acts, we see examples of God healing people through the faith His believers. In Acts 5:12-16, the early Church was growing exponentially, and the gospel message was being validated by the healing miracles worked through the apostles. ***"At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's portico. But none of the rest dared to associate with them; however, the people held them in high esteem. And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number, to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them. Also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed."*** Let's unpack this a bit.

The first couple of verses can be confusing, so let's see who is in view, ***"they*** (the apostles) ***were all with one accord in Solomon's portico. But none of the rest*** (church elders who weren't apostles) ***dared to associate with them*** (the apostles); ***however, the people*** (the body of believers) ***held them*** (church elders who weren't apostles) ***in high esteem."*** Looking further, ***"they were all with one accord in Solomon's portico,"*** the twelve apostles, who were all in Solomon's portico, are in one accord; preaching the same Word, and working miracles in the same manner, in the name of Jesus. Solomon's Portico is a part of the outer temple grounds and was a series of covered courtyards where people gathered to get out of the sun or rain. ***"But none of the rest dared to associate with them; however, the people held them in high esteem."*** "The rest" refers to other believers who were elders within the Church at Jerusalem, none of whom held the office of Apostle. These other elders dared not to associate with the apostles, so as to not blur themselves as having equal

authority with them, lest the body of believers expect miracles from these elders too. ***“However, the people held them in high esteem,”*** meaning, these other elders, though not apostles, were still held in high esteem by the body of the church. Luke, the author of the book of Acts, makes these distinctions to show how the church was unified, while still recognizing the authority of the elders, and placing the greater authority of the apostles in a category all their own.

Luke also shows how the apostles were also held in highest esteem, as the following evidence demonstrates that plain enough; ***“they (crowds of people) even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them.”*** The Scriptures don’t confirm that this worked; if people were healed by manner of simply having Peter’s shadow befall them. Though God could heal this way, it’s not likely that God did heal this way. This type of healing would be very casual and wouldn’t require anyone to engage Peter at all. When Peter heals elsewhere in the Scriptures, he’s directly engaged with the individual so that the person healed knows full well that it’s the power of Jesus bringing the cure. Luke probably draws attention to this particular behavior of the crowd only to show the magnitude of esteem the people held for Peter; Peter being the figurehead of the apostles. As people saw the miracles being wrought, some people got overly zealous and started to stretch the apostle’s impact into the realm of superstition. In other words, some in the crowd believed that the healings they were seeing were due to the greatness of the person, in this case Peter. They believed that anything associated with Peter, even his shadow, was equally as effective for healing. This resulted in over-esteeming the man, and not the Lord; otherwise known as saint-worship.

Sadly, this sort of thinking is still common today. For example, some Catholics will travel from around the world when someone discovers a shadow that they think looks like the silhouette of Mary, the mother of Jesus. People will come from afar to worship the shadow, touch the shadow, and pray to the shadow; all while believing that something will happen if they do so. This is the overreaching type of fanaticism that I think Luke says was taking place in Jerusalem at this time. The reality is, when the apostles healed, it was a deliberate act, one that required them to speak in the name of Jesus, sometimes enjoined with physical touch, all as a confirmation of the authority and ministry of Jesus. As the apostles were governed by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit wrought miracles through them, as the Spirit saw fit. The result, beyond the obvious healing, was that people were turning in faith and being added daily to the church.

One might say, *“Well, what about the miracles associated with those who touched Paul’s personal items, in Acts 19:12?”* Acts 19:11-12 says, ***“God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.”*** Luke says that these particular miracles were ***“extraordinary,”*** in that they were rare. What’s happening here is that in some rare cases, when the patient was at a distance that Paul couldn’t get to for one reason or another, Paul approved of the healing, and sent his personal items, as a sign that he had given the authority. Sort of like how one uses a signet ring to seal an envelope; showing authority and approval. Paul’s handkerchief represented his approval and God allowed the miracle through this manner, based on the genuine faith of those who used them, and not due to any superstition. So, nothing flippant or passive is happening here. These weren’t items that Paul dropped or discarded, which somehow held healing powers. Not at all. In fact, this rare healing can be compared to the healing of the deaf man, when Jesus put His own fingers in the deaf man’s ears, while the deaf man watched Jesus do this. The fingers were visual evidence that the healing came from Jesus, and a confirmation that no incantation or spell was spoken over

the deaf man without his knowing. In the same way, Paul's personal items served as instruments that showed that the healing was by the power of Jesus, through Paul's authority and approval.

Consider the following two healings of Peter, found in Acts 9:32-42. As Peter traveled, he stopped in the town of Lydda, and, ***"there he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years, for he was paralyzed. Peter said to him, 'Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed.' Immediately he got up."*** It's interesting to note that God selects patients whose diseases are incurable. Peter also doesn't pretend that it's by his own power, but speaks as one having authority from Jesus. ***"Get up and make your bed,"*** when God heals, He makes us fit for action and work. The bed Aeneas had been using for his sickness, was now a bed reserved just for his sleeping; it would now be made-up daily. Verse 35 goes on, ***"And all who lived at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord."*** In the towns of Lydda and Sharon, people had submitted to the convincing evidence; turning themselves over to Jesus to be ruled by Him. Miracles can turn people to the Lord, but so should truth. We tend to be spiritually stagnant until something critical (negative) or spectacular (positive) happens. Instead, we ought to be governed by truth, always, not circumstances.

The verses that follow speak of another healing through Peter. Verses 36-42 say, ***"Now in Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which translated in Greek is called Dorcas); this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did. And it happened at that time that she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her body, they laid it in an upper room. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, having heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him, imploring him, 'Do not delay in coming to us.' So Peter arose and went with them. When he arrived, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them. But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed, and turning to the body, he said, 'Tabitha, arise.' And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. It became known all over Joppa, and many believed in the Lord."*** Let's unpack this.

This miracle needs to be compared to the healing of Aeneas, as there are key details which reveal Peter's heart in both cases. In the healing of Aeneas, we saw that Peter knew the will of God in how to proceed, seemingly without needing to pray for direction. Peter confidently spoke over Aeneas, and God responded by the immediate healing. Here, with Tabitha, Peter is unsure how to proceed. Peter was confronted by a group of crying widows who were imploring Peter to bring Tabitha back to life, and therefore Peter ***"sent them all out"*** of the room. Why? Peter was unsure of God's will for Tabitha, and Peter didn't want to be presumptuous, nor compelled by vanity, nor pressured by the widows. The Lord may not have wanted her to be resurrected; Peter had no confirmation yet. So, Peter empties the room and seeks the Lord. We see next that his prayer to the Lord was with his back to Tabitha's dead body; he prays facing away from her. Why? This shows Peter's heart again, and suggests two things. Either that he didn't want the sight of the dead woman to possibly discourage his faith, so he prayed turned away from her. Or, more likely, seeing the body might compel his compassion, and he feared that he might be compelled to get ahead of the Lord and speak before the Lord had confirmed whether He wanted her resurrected or not. Peter puts the matter behind him, literally and figuratively, and focuses upward until the Lord confirms what to do next.

After the Lord confirms what Peter is to do, it's only then that Peter turns toward the dead woman and speaks, ***"Tabitha, arise."*** She returned to life, ***"and he gave her his hand and raised her up."*** Taking her hand

and helping her up, wasn't because she was too weak to rise on her own. We know the Lord's healings are always total and complete. Rather, this gesture was to welcome her to life again, and to extend the hand of fellowship.

Consultation was necessary before Peter acted. Sometimes God doesn't want to raise the dead or heal the sick. For example, the Apostle Paul writes to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:20, and mentions their mutual friend, Trophimus, as Paul says, ***"Trophimus I left sick at Miletus."*** Paul, as an apostle, had the ability to raise the dead and heal the sick, as long as it was God's will in that moment. It's safe to assume that Paul prayed for Trophimus to be healed, but Paul had resolved himself that it was not God's will to heal the man at this time, so Paul moved on with his ministry, leaving the man sick in the town of Miletus. This wasn't a failure of Paul's, but a recognition that though God can heal anyone, it's not always His plan.

This reminds me of a time when I was a pastor in a church in Pennsylvania, and we had a congregant who was diagnosed with cancer. We brought him onto the stage to have the church elders pray over him, as the Bible instructs in James 5:14-15, ***"Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick."*** These verses aren't a guarantee that anyone prayed for by the elders will be healed, but these verses teach that this action is an appropriate step to take in seeking the Lord's will. When we had brought the man on the stage, we gave him a microphone before we prayed over him, and he shared the following with the congregation, *"God has seen fit that I should battle cancer for His glory. If He decides that this cancer will be my death, then I'll glorify Him through any interactions with medical staff and my family. If He decides that this cancer will be removed from me, then I'll glorify Him as the reason for the cure. I have cancer for the glory of Jesus!"* What a testimony! I'm unaware of how the Lord answered the prayers for that man, since I moved to Florida shortly after that day. The man's contentment in Jesus was powerful!

I recall a miraculous healing in my church when I was living in California. A woman had an upcoming operation to remove a tumor in her brain. She was brought before the church for prayer, and brought with her x-rays of the tumor. The elders prayed, along with the congregation. Shortly after, she went to her pre-operation appointment, where a final x-ray was taken. However, this new x-ray revealed no tumor at all! It was just gone, as though it hadn't ever existed. It was a miracle; no medical explanation. She came to the church with both the old and the new x-rays. No operation needed, just God's miraculous hand! God can, and does, continue to heal people in miraculous ways. The Lord's will be done!

So, a big question is, can faith-healers be real? The Bible says that the Holy Spirit gives the gift of healing to some. The gift of healing is a real spiritual gift, as we see in Luke 9:1-2 and 1 Corinthians 12:30. The gift of healing is the special ability whereby the Spirit enables certain Christians to heal without human aid; to see healing come about through prayer alone. God doesn't heal everyone that these people pray for, and Christians with this gift know that. Christians gifted with healing are different than those book-selling/stadium-filling "faith-healers" you see in the news. Their difference is seen in several ways. First, phony "faith-healers" seldom talk about Jesus, the gospel, and the work of the Holy Spirit. Their message contains little spiritual truth and often much about themselves. Contrast this with the Scriptures, where we see faith-healings as a type of priming of the pump in order for a greater thing to happen next, which is the preaching of the Word and the salvation of many. When we read about the acts of the apostles, after a miracle is wrought, we typically see many coming to faith; whole families or communities turning to the Lord. In other words, the healing wasn't the main thing, the Word of God was the main thing. With phony "faith-healers," the "healing"

is always the main thing. Second, phony “faith-healers” preach that it’s God’s will for all sickness to be healed, and the reason any sickness continues is due to a lack of faith. They falsely proclaim that faith will always heal, and that if you’re not healed it’s because you are lacking in faith. This isn’t a Biblical reality.

Another important question is, *“Why don’t we see the type of healings today that we frequently read about in the New Testament? Where are the apostles today, healing the blind, raising the dead, etc.?”* First, the office of Apostle that people like Paul, John, and Peter held, is not an office that anyone holds today. The original Biblical apostles had a unique authority, such that they were writers of much of the New Testament. All believers who have come after them are under their authority; no believer is equal to them. This means that all believers then, and now, are subject to what these men said. In other words, no other Christians can add to the Bible, nor can any Christian claim to be independent of the authority of what these apostles wrote under the inspiration of God. So, anyone who calls themselves an “apostle” today has misspoken. Keep in mind that one of the qualifications of being an apostle was to have seen the risen Jesus, which since Paul has done.

Another thing to consider, when wondering why we don’t see these types of miracles today, is understanding the purpose of demonstrative gifts. The term demonstrative gifts mean those gifts that manifest themselves in an experiential way, such as healings, miracles, and tongues. They are real, but seldom used today. These gifts were given to serve as a demonstration of the validity of the message of the gospel, particularly when it was first preached by the apostles in new cities and regions. As the apostles took the new message of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection into the world, most hadn’t heard that before, and were skeptical. People challenged whether or not the apostles were really sent by God and could be believed. So, the Lord gave them demonstrative gifts to validate their authority. As a community turned in faith and churches were being launched, those demonstrative gifts would diminish in those areas. Take the United States for example, a country that is Bible saturated; churches everywhere, Christian radio, Bibles sold at Walmart...the opportunity to receive the gospel is widespread. In fact, you’d be hard-pressed to find an American who can’t quote a Bible verse to you. So, in the U.S. we see and hear of little happening with demonstrative gifts. But, in countries that have little gospel impact, maybe in “closed” countries where the Bible is illegal, or in remote countries that still don’t have the Bible in their language, we still hear stories of demonstrative gifts being used by the Lord.

Take for example, Francis Chan, a famous pastor that I listen to and respect greatly. Years ago, Chan, was speaking about a time when he saw demonstrative gifts being used through himself. Around 2019, Chan was on a mission trip in Southeast Asia, in the country of Myanmar, in a remote village, when the Lord used him to heal. As Chan relays the events in a sermon he gave in 2020, he says, *“Over the years, when I meet the sick, I pray for them and I believe for healing. And I’m so shocked, because every time I pray, nothing would happen. It get’s discouraging. However, recently, when sharing the gospel with the people in Myanmar, I prayed, ‘God please, please hear me. Jesus, if you were here, I know what you would do. You would heal these people.’ People started coming forward for healing. Every person I touched was healed. You guys, this is craziness! I’ve never experienced this in 52 years of living.”* Chan went on to say that some of the people healed were those that were born deaf. He continued, *“You guys, this is out of my comfort zone! This is stuff I’d read about! But I’m going, ‘Man, it happened!’”*

Chan’s experiences continue to show how demonstrative gifts are typically limited to areas that have little gospel impact. From Bible times to today, people have sought demonstrative gifts. People have wanted to

see them, and experience them for themselves. The problem with being zealous for the supernatural, is that these desires can result in abusing these gifts. For example, we regularly see the abuse of the gift of tongues in churches. I've personally witnessed the gift of tongues being used in about a half-dozen churches, but each time, it was being abused. This means that it was not being used in a manner commanded by the Bible, in 1 Corinthians 14. I'd see many people at once speaking in tongues, and never with interpretation. This type of abuse is sadly too common in churches. When I've asked people about this sinful use of tongues (sinful, because it's directly forbidden to be used in these manners), they answered with things like, "*We know we're experiencing something spiritual, something supernatural, so we don't need to defend it.*" This is a terrible answer, and shows the lack of Biblical authority over these particular churches and believers.

When it comes to supernatural healing, should you seek the Lord for these types of healings in your life? Yes, you should. I'd encourage anyone to seek medical help, and healing through prayer. Both are blessings from God. Should you seek the elders of the church for the prayers that they offer, according to God's Word? Yes, you should. Should you resolve yourself to the Lord's will, whether He chooses to heal you or not? Yes, you should. With that, we must always avoid mediums, like psychic's and palm-readers, or the "faith-healers" that we see coming through our area selling books and tickets. We should avoid churches where spiritual gifts are abused, or where they preach that "*anyone with faith will be healed.*"

Seek the Lord and His will, and put your hope in an eternity with Him where there will be no pain, sickness, or death. Revelation 21:4, "***He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.***" Praise the Lord, the Great Physician!