

3. Miracles and healing must not be equated with supernaturalism in general. It is a favorite pressure approach of faith healers to say that if you believe in the supernatural power of God, then you must also believe in His power to heal in the case at hand. This is simply not true, for it is a non sequitur. God does not have to use His supernatural power to prove that He possesses it. Furthermore, any gift given once has been given to the whole church.

4. To disregard human means in the matter of healing and simply pray for a miraculous cure is like praying for a harvest and then sitting in a rocking chair without planting or cultivating. God more often than not uses human means in the accomplishing of His purposes. This is true in matters of health too.

5. Those who claim that the gift of healing is exercised today have to admit that the gift is limited in its effectiveness, for they do not claim to heal decayed teeth or suddenly mend broken bones.

6. Reports of miraculous healings (within the limitations already stated) may be true (but this is not necessarily related to the gift), may be false, may be the cure of something that was psychosomatic.

Naturally all of these six considerations do not apply to every case, but they are germane to the whole question of healing today.

Thomas R. Edgar (pp. 103-107) writes:

To sum up, there is no explicit statement in the New Testament that gifts of healings and miracles were performed by members of the local church. If someone insists that the Corinthian church actually performed all of the spiritual gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12, then there is still no proof that any other church performed such ministries. In other words, there is no evidence that miracle-working and healing were common in the first-century church. They were not common but were mainly performed by apostles.

The Epistles definitely state that miracles (including healing) were for the confirmation of the gospel message as it was proclaimed in new areas. Romans 15:19 is especially clear. Another very strong passage is Hebrew 2:3-4, which apparently restricts the miracles to eyewitnesses of the Lord and implies that the miracles were past as far as the Hebrews were concerned. Such a conclusion coincides with the evidence of the book of Acts. Very few cases of miracles or healing were private. The case of Eutychus, which was unusual, is the only case of a miracle connected with a meeting. The miracles in Acts were performed for and before the multitudes, did not depend on the recipient's faith, never failed, and were performed almost en masse. This fits perfectly with the opinion that the miracles (sign gifts) were to confirm the gospel to unbelievers. They were not primarily for the benefit of the faithful. They were not evidence of someone's faith. They were not practiced in a religious meeting. There is little similarity with the modern-day healing campaigns or with modern claims to healing. The claims of modern-day proponents of healing and miracles do not agree with the practice of the early Church, nor with the purpose, nor with the results.

There are other indications that such gifts were not exercised for the benefit of the local church. James 5:14-15 implies either that these gifts had ceased or