



## Discovering Your Design:

*Preparing Christ's followers to change the world*

## HEALING

**DEFINITION: THE SPIRIT-GIVEN ABILITY TO RESTORE PEOPLE TO HEALTH FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.**

- Literally the word is "gifts of healings"- the plural could refer to different types of healing (emotional, spiritual or physical) or different times of healing, hence Fee calls each occurrence of healing "a gift in its own right" (Fee, 594).
- The Bible does not teach that people with this gift will heal everyone they meet - God is sovereign. God's ultimate concern for us is to become more like Him - this may happen through healing or maybe through our illness! The ultimate promise in the Bible is not healing but resurrection!
- The Bible does not teach that healing can only take place if and when the person has faith (e.g. Acts 3:1-7). Peter, John and the lame man.
- Not all healings in the Christian community can be explained by the gift, sometimes God heals by answering our prayers for healing, other times He uses medicine, etc.
- Not all Christians agree whether this gift still exists today - to be sure when you consider the kinds of miracles we read about in the New Testament many of those are not seen today (e.g. they often healed everyone {Matthew 8:16}, raised the dead {Acts 9:37-40} etc.).
- This gift has many charlatans associated with it. If we say the gift exists it does not mean that everyone who claims to have it is legitimate.
- Sometimes God doesn't heal us physically but graciously gives spiritual and emotional healing (i.e. strength and victory e.g. Joni Erickson-Tada).

**Biblical References:** I Corinthians 12:9,28,3 (see also James 5:13-16)

**Contribution:** this gift builds up the body by demonstrating the power of God, by restoring people to health - enabling them to again serve. It focuses our attention on God's power causing us to glorify Him.

**Biblical Examples:** Jesus (Mark 2:1-12, 3:1-6, 5:1-20), Peter (Acts 3, 5:15,16), Paul (Acts 14:8-10, 19:11,12, 20:9-12).

**Characteristics** - People with this gift :

- have their prayers for healing answered
- believe God has the power and desire for the person to be healed
- understand that this gift, like all others, is exercised under God's sovereign will and plan-sometimes God's will is for someone not to be healed in this life (Paul's "thorn"- 2 Corinthians 12:7-9)
- use it to the glory of God - they keep the focus on God not themselves cf. Acts 3:16

**Cautions:**

- keep God's sovereignty always in view
- never allow your gift to divert people's focus and praise - his glory is always our goal

**Christian Responsibility:** we are told in I Corinthians 12:26 to suffer with those who suffer. This gift reminds those of us who do not have the gift to show our concern for them. This gift also reminds us of the biblical pattern established in James 5 for people who are sick.