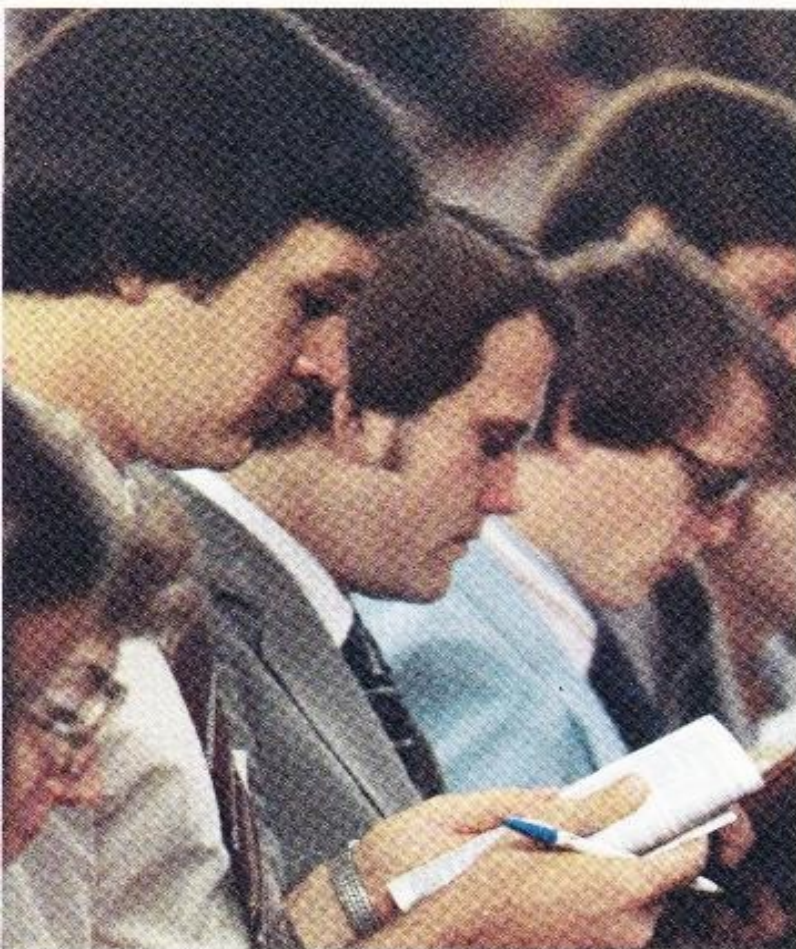


The Holy Spirit In The Now II

by Oral Roberts



The Holy Spirit In The Now 2

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My Personal Word To You

Friend, I believe you are in for another spiritual learning experience that will enhance your relationship with Christ in a way you have never dreamed possible. This study on The Holy Spirit In the Now II comes out of my personal experience and many years of prayer and study of the Word. Before you begin to read these lessons, I would like for you to get your Bible. I believe you can more successfully study this series of lessons with your Bible at your side.

And as you study, keep in mind that this series of lessons was taught to a class of approximately 2,500 people. These lessons are stenographically reported and only slightly edited in some instances to make a thought clearer, or to put it in more logical sequence for the person who was not there to hear it, but will be reading it. This is volume two of a three-volume series.

I would like to tell you about the miracle that brought this class about because it is now a part of the established curricula at Oral Roberts University.

It was through the generosity of my good friend, the late J. Arthur Rank, outstanding British businessman, member of the Parliament, and Methodist layman, that the Oral Roberts University's first endowed academic chair on the Holy Spirit was established in the fall of 1972.

I first met Lord Rank in 1967 while speaking at a luncheon of leading Christian laymen and businessmen in London. At the end of the session, as I was shaking hands with various individuals, I was introduced to him. Although I had heard his name many times and knew of his Christian witness, this was my first time to see him in person. At that time Lord Rank was in his late seventies but he stood tall and straight, with a clean look in his eye and strength and character stamped upon him. I knew I was in the presence of a man of God. I took his hand and said, "Lord Rank, I'm honored to meet you." Then a curious impulse came upon me and I added ... "I pray that God will fill you with the Holy Spirit."

Two years passed before I saw Lord Rank again, at which time I learned he had received the Holy Spirit. He then shared with me how this had transformed his Christian life and how Jesus Christ had become so real to him through the Holy Spirit. He said, "I feel as though Jesus were walking by my side."

Because of his great interest in the Holy Spirit, Lord Rank determined to establish this chair at ORU. However, on the day he was to sign the papers, he passed away. The trustees of his estate honored his desire and set aside a

generous sum for the next five years for this purpose. I am honored to be the first professor of this course on the Holy Spirit.

As you study these lessons, I pray that God, through the Holy Spirit, will reveal Jesus to you in a way more real than you have ever experienced before.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Oral Roberts". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The word "Oral" is on the left, and "Roberts" is on the right, connected by a continuous line. The letters are dark and the background is a light, textured grey.

Chapter 1, You Can Have God's Power In You

Suggested Scripture reading for this lesson: Acts 2

Have you ever crossed the Continental Divide in the United States? It's located in the Rocky Mountains. When the rain falls at that precise spot one part falls on the western slope and goes downhill to the western part of the United States. The rest falls on the eastern slope and goes downhill to the eastern states. The Continental Divide physically divides the continental United States.

This is a term that I think of in reference to the Day of Pentecost. The Day of Pentecost is the great "Continental Divide" of the New Testament. On the one hand we have pre-Pentecost and on the other hand, post-Pentecost.

Before the Day of Pentecost we have the life of our Lord in the flesh. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary, by a miraculous conception, and anointed by the Holy Spirit at the River Jordan under the ministry of John the Baptist (Matthew 1:18; Matthew 3:13-17). There we see the holy dove coming and lighting upon Jesus' head. Then He is both led and driven by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness (Matthew 4:1; Mark 1:12). There He enters a terrific struggle with the devil, a conflict with satanic forces that continued throughout His life and throughout the life of the Church, even today.

Our Lord went through this tremendous struggle and conflict which ended in the devil offering Him three great temptations. He overcame these temptations with the same things He gives to you and me today:

- (1) The Word of God
- (2) His faith in God
- (3) The power of the Holy Spirit

Our Lord was in the flesh. He was born of a woman. He received His humanity from her body, but He received His divine nature from God. This is what we call the mystery of the Incarnation — God in the flesh. God came down in the form of a human being. JESUS CHRIST WAS SO MUCH MAN IT WAS AS IF HE WERE NOT GOD — YET HE WAS SO MUCH GOD IT WAS AS IF HE WERE NOT MAN.

You see, Jesus was so much God it was, in a sense, as though He were not human. Yet He was so human — He entered into our humanity so deeply — it was as if He were not God. He was God-man and He called himself Son of

man, Son of God. These were the dual natures, yet the divine part was extremely limited in our Lord. The human part was brought out much more. Why? Because for Jesus to relate God to us He had to enter into our humanity. He had to sit where we sit. He had to feel what we feel. He had to experience what we experience. He had to know what it was like.

Also, as we look at Jesus in His human form we really see God. We cannot see God with the naked eye but as we study the Bible — particularly the four Gospels and the book of Acts which are the sources of original information about the earthly life of our Lord — we see that Jesus is trying to reflect God. He is trying to show us what God is like so that we don't have to be scared and frightened of God as so many were in the Old Testament. Jesus Christ in a sense, took God and brought Him down on a human level. He brought Him down on a sense level so that we who are born and live on a sense level can better relate to God.

Jesus Christ voluntarily limited himself. That is...

He laid aside His original glory and power which He had with the Father before the foundation of the world.

He laid aside His eternal riches.

He became subject to time, to space, and to death.

Our Lord voluntarily limited himself to time — to about 33 years.

He limited himself to space ... to a certain geographic area on the surface of the earth around Palestine. Jesus could only be in one place at one time, the same as you as a human being are subject to being in one spot at one time.

He limited himself and became subject to death, the same as we are, that He might look it in the eye, meet it face-to-face, submit to it, conquer it, and take away its sting. He arose from the dead, and He shows us that we too will be resurrected and will live forever.

Jesus entered human flesh. He did that by the Holy Spirit. He said that He did nothing except by the Holy Spirit. He didn't come in His own name. He said He and His Father are one (John 10:30) and that He could do nothing of his own self (John 5:19,30). He did all that He did — all of the miracles — by the Holy Spirit.

Near the end of His earthly life Jesus began to talk a lot about the Holy Spirit, saying:

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away:

for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you (John 16:7).

Jesus said, "It's better for you . . . Those disciples, having lived on the sense level of being able to see Jesus with the naked eye, to hear His word, to touch Him with their hands, to live with Him on the sense level, were distraught. They had built their lives around the physical, outward being of our Lord. They had never fully grasped the Christ-nature of Jesus Christ.

You will recall at His death that the disciples forsook Him and fled (Mark 14:50). They could not comprehend the mystery of the Incarnation. When the body of Jesus was killed, the disciples thought that Christ was dead, that they themselves would be put to death, so they fled for their lives.

You can see how fragile a sense relationship with Christ is. If you say, "Oh, I wish I had lived 2,000 years ago. I wish I could have seen Him and touched Him ..then you are wanting to be on a sense level. But Jesus said, in essence:

"It is better for you that you don't have this relationship because in My human form I'm limited.

"I voluntarily laid aside My glory, My power, My riches.

"I became subject to time and space and death, and if you build your life around My physical visible form you will never fully accept God. You can never understand what you have. You'll never have the inner strength."

Jesus also said:

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever... he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you (John 14:16,17).

The Greek word for comforter in this verse is paraclete. It means "one called alongside to help." Jesus said of the Holy Spirit — the Paraclete — "He is WITH you, but He shall be IN you." This is a very important point. Had our Lord remained in the flesh, subject to death, to crucifixion, if He lived today, He could still be killed. But Jesus said, "The Holy Spirit is with you and He shall be in you." In other words: "God is going to come inside you where the world cannot get their hands on Him. They can't crucify Him again. He's going to be living inside you."

Just as the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus during His humanity, then after the humanity of Jesus has been raised from the dead and Jesus has ascended

back to the Father in His new body, where He's glorified, He will pray the Father who will send the Holy Spirit — this pure Spirit, this direct expression of the Godhead, of the holy person of God — to the followers of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit brings Jesus back, no longer limited but fully unlimited. No longer just in the flesh but GLORIFIED. The Holy Spirit brings Him back not merely to be with us, but to be IN us and He will be in us FOREVER. On this side of Pentecost — post-Pentecost — we no longer have the limited Lord walking around in the flesh, subject to time and space and death. We have the glorified Lord and we have the Holy Spirit bringing Him back to us.

The First Outpouring Of The Holy Spirit

The first time the promise of the Father was given — the Holy Spirit was outpoured... individuals were baptized in the Holy Spirit (these phrases mean the same thing)—was on the Day of Pentecost. The story is told in Acts 2. This is the first of five occasions recorded in the book of Acts when the Holy Spirit was given. Here the one hundred and twenty gathered together in the Upper Room and the Bible says:

They Were All Filled With The Holy Ghost, And Began To Speak With other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:4).

From this moment on we have the Charismatic Age, the age of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and divine love working in human society to meet people's needs. This is now post-Pentecost when the Church, or the Body of Christ, is spreading over the world. It is the time when the Church needs the supernatural power of God in the individual members so that they can act as individuals under the anointing of the Holy Spirit or they can act collectively as a body, as a group, in the world.

In Acts 2 we see the pattern that THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME UPON THEM IN ORDER THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE POWER FROM ON HIGH — not only power from the earth but power from on high — heavenly power, supernatural power. They were given this power so that they would be transformed and become witnesses of our Lord. They were given a new dimension of power through the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

They Spoke In Tongues

They also had an ability from within through which they could express

their inner man in tongues, a new tongue. I call this the prayer language of the Spirit. It was an opening up of the inner man from a deeper level within themselves. They all were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues. It was the beginning of tongues. It was not an ending. They began to speak with other tongues, suggesting a lifelong experience.

In 1 Corinthians 14:2 we learn what those tongues were:

He that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God.

That is to say, speaking in tongues is not a horizontal experience. It is not man to man. It is vertical — it is man to God. It is coming out of the belly of the inner man (John 7:37-39). The rivers flood up and the Holy Spirit produces a new kind of communication — speaking in tongues.

In 1 Corinthians 14:15 the apostle Paul says:

I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

Paul says that in addition to the human language stored up in the intellect, there is another language stored up in the spirit of the man who has been saved, who has been born again, who has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul said that when he prayed he would pray with the spirit — with his spirit. In the second verse of that same chapter (1 Corinthians 14:2) Paul called it praying "in the spirit." He is talking about praying in tongues, praying in a language that his intellect has not learned. Then he goes on to say, "I will pray with the understanding also." That is, "I will pray with my intellect, with words that I have learned."

This is a profound statement and if I seem to dwell on it a bit, I have a reason for it. I think it is the focal point at which you must begin in order to understand yourself. To understand what God is trying to say to you through the whole Bible, to understand how you are to approach life — how you are to develop your relationship with God, and how you are to become the man or the woman — the person — that God intends for you to be.

Let's Go Back To The Beginning To The Way God Created You

In the first chapter of Genesis we have the following statement:

And God said, Let us make man in our image (Genesis 1:26).

GOD MADE MAN. It's a very important statement that God made him man. Now let's see how God made him. God made man in His own image, or likeness. That means in the moral and spiritual likeness of God. In the second chapter of Genesis we read how God formed man's body out of the dust of the earth and then He breathed into that lifeless mass His own breath — the breath of God — and man BECAME something. MAN BECAME A LIVING SOUL (Genesis 2:7). So you see, God says that He created man. He created him in a very special way after His own image and likeness, with the moral and spiritual capacities that God has.

The thing to remember above all else is that God made man and he became a living soul.

Man Is A Spirit Made In The Image And Likeness Of God

Now while man is in the Garden of Eden there's one thing that God tells him he cannot do. He told him this to reveal to him that he had the power of choice. Had God not put the tree of knowledge of good and evil — which was forbidden to man to eat from — in the garden, He would have had to put something else there. He had to put something in the garden so that man would exercise his power of choice — whether to obey God or to disobey God, to will God's will or to will his own personal will.

Now the devil came in the form of a serpent to tempt Eve. It is important to remember that the devil comes to people in different forms. He may even come as an angel of light. In the New Testament we are told:

...Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14).

If we will read other translations of this verse we can get a clearer understanding:

Satan **disguises** himself as an angel of light (Revised Standard Version).

Satan himself **masquerades** as an angel of light (Phillips).

You see, Satan cannot actually become an angel of light. He can disguise himself but there is not a genuineness. He does not become an angel, but he can look like one.

Now Jesus described the devil as the father of liars (John 8:44). Here is

the father of liars saying that God is a liar. He's on the job in the very beginning, isn't he, living up to his name? The devil said, "It isn't so, you will not die."

Now if Adam and Eve had a dialogue with the devil — which they probably did — they probably said, "But God said that if we eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil we will die. He said that we could eat of anything in the garden but not this. That is, God doesn't deny us the privilege of eating it, but He says if we do eat of it we will die."

And the devil says, "You will not die."

It's no different than his approach to us in various forms today in which he says — in so many words — "What God says really doesn't work. It isn't relevant to the NOW."

And we can say that it does work or we can say it does not work. We have the power of choice.

The devil said to Eve, "What will happen is that you will be like God. You will KNOW. You will start to know."

Here is the breaking into the world of knowledge, but not in the way God intended. There was nothing God would withhold from man. In fact, when He made everything — including the earth — He said it was very good (Genesis 1:31).

Finally, before I go on to my next thought I want to include another statement made by God to the devil. He said in Genesis 3:15:

"The Seed of this woman right here — one of her offspring (and now He's talking about the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God, who someday would become a man and come down in the likeness of flesh and die on the cross) — you and He will meet. And you are going to bruise His heel (that is, you are going to strike His humanity, you are going to be able to kill Him). But when you strike His heel, that heel is going to be placed on your head (on your brain) and He will bruise your head."

GOD PROMISED NOT ONLY A MESSIAH, A REDEEMER FOR MAN, BUT ALSO A RESTORATION TO THE WHOLENESS WITH WHICH HE CREATED MAN.

God promises it through man, through God who would become a man, who would become the Second Adam, who would face the same kind of temptation that Adam and Eve faced and that you and I face today. He would be fully human, so human it would be as though He were not God, and yet so much

God it would be as though He were not man. He would, as it were, throw this Man Jesus to the devil and say, "Do with Him what you will. He has the power of choice."

We see Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane struggling over the power of choice, facing the cross, having the ability to say no to the cross, but finally willing God's will, saying, "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

Jesus turned against the subtle suggestions of Satan, the seemingly logical arguments of the devil — not believing the devil but believing God — and becomes the Second Adam, the whole man, the Savior of man, through whom you and I can be made whole human beings in the NOW.

First, we have the disobedience of man which is sin. That sin caused God to pronounce judgment upon him (Genesis 3:14-19). A curse fell upon everything. It fell upon our earth which is full of all kinds of negative forces — germs, diseases, poisons. It fell upon man.

Man Becomes More Mental Than Spiritual

He becomes more mental than he is even physical. He walks in the flesh. He's not only a flesh or physical being of flesh and bone but also, in a spiritual sense, he's in the flesh. He's no longer in the Spirit.

Exactly what God said would happen to the soul, happened! God said, "The day that you eat of this you shall die." The devil said, "You will not die."

Now one of them is lying. But the fact is, God did not lie and the devil did lie. The fact is, man did die. Because God is talking about a spiritual death, and the spirit of man died.

Adam's and Eve's spirit, or soul, died in much the same way as an automobile is burned out or your television set is burned out. Their spirit died. That is, it died from what it had been. It no longer had stamped upon it the likeness and image — morally and spiritually — of God. It was a lost soul, still in the human flesh but now antagonized by the mind. The mind goes against the soul and the body. Man becomes like a brain walking around on two toothpicks.

That's still true today. Higher education couldn't care less whether man has a soul or not. They don't even care about his body. The soul and body of man are orphans. Mind is god today. That is the way man has conducted himself, as a general rule, since his fall in the Garden of Eden.

God gave man his mind and He intended for man to use his mind. Having a soul is no substitute for having a mind. There's no substitute for study

and the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom and understanding. But when the mind takes precedence over the way God created us, then we have defaced God's image upon us. We no longer have that built-in thing that God put there. We are now divided and our bodies suffer.

Jesus Christ, The Second Adam

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became a man. Notice how He was born. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. The beginning of man's creation was by the Spirit. Now we have removed the spirit and gone into the intellect only. We are going to reason it all out. And it all starts a second time with Jesus who was conceived of the Holy Spirit. His body was like an embryo placed in the womb of the young virgin Mary.

Then when He was a young man He was filled with the Holy Spirit without measure (John 3:34). You couldn't measure it, it was so great. He said He did nothing of himself (John 5:19,30). Jesus subordinated mind and body to the spirit. And the spirit — His human spirit — was filled with the Holy Spirit and it worked out through His mind and body.

In Him you see the living example of the whole man. You see what the original Adam was at one time, and could have been forever had he not broken the law of God.

The Second Adam, Jesus Christ, became a whole man by being born. Adam was created a whole man; Jesus was born a whole man. He was born of the virgin Mary but conceived by the Holy Spirit, filled with the Holy Spirit, and He allowed the Holy Spirit to dominate His life. He willed God's will for himself.

Don't you wish you could have seen Jesus' physical body, absolutely free from disease? Don't you wish you could have been near that great mind? Well, of course you can as you read the Bible — especially the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. But to see that mind work is to know that the basis of all of it was the relationship of His soul with God, out of which there was a flow through His mind and His body and they became a whole unity, a total personality.

So what does Jesus Christ offer us?

First, Jesus Offers Us A New Birth

Jesus says we have to be born a second time. He says that we can't make it the way we are, that we are lost, straying human beings, that we'll never make

it through the logical processes by our own reasoning. So Jesus says to Nicodemus and to all of us:

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:3,5).

He always goes back to the spirit with which man was made. Everything starts in the spirit. The Bible says, "Walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:16). It says, "Be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). Jesus said, "Ye must be born again." That is, repent of your sins, renounce the way that you're going — your own way. Renounce the way the world operates. Renounce the forces of sin and will God's will for your life. And He says that you will be born a second time.

Nicodemus thought Jesus was talking about reentering his mother's womb physically. And Jesus said, "I'm not talking about that; I'm talking about you — the spirit, the soul, you — the man inside the body."

So the first step is to be born again. Enter into a newness of life, so that the spirit, the human spirit with which you were created and born, now is renewed. It's no longer dead in disobedience or sins or trespasses (Ephesians 2:1-6). It's no longer dead in the sense of it relating to God. It's no longer dead in that God's image is there. It's no longer dead from the standpoint that it was made a certain way and now by its own choice it's gone away from that certain way. It has come alive, rejoicing, calling God, "my Father."

Jesus said to one group, "Ye are of your father the devil" (John 8:44). But now Jesus is translating us from the kingdom of the devil to the kingdom of the Father and we cry in our hearts, "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15). That is, we say, "God, You are MY Father. You have restored Your image upon my soul. You've given my soul a new life, a new birth. I'm a new creature."

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Second, Jesus Offers Us The Baptism In The Holy SPIRIT

In the third chapter of Matthew, John the Baptist said:

He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire (Matthew 3:11).

Here John is talking about the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In Acts 1:5

Jesus talks to His disciples. He is now in His resurrected body. He has died, been raised from the dead, and now He is ready to ascend back to His unlimited form — going back to His original glory and power and riches that He had before He became a human being. And He says to them:

Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence (Acts 1:5).

That's the second stage — to be baptized, to be immersed, in the Holy Spirit. First of all, you are born again by the Holy Spirit. You receive the person of the Holy Spirit when you are saved or born again. Now these are synonymous terms: saved, salvation, born again. We are talking about the same thing when we use these different phrases. You receive the Holy Spirit when you are saved because He gives you a new life. God's Spirit bears witness with your spirit that you belong to Him (Romans 8:16). But there is a dimension of the Holy Spirit that's called a baptism. It's not a He, it's an it. The Holy Spirit is a He. The Holy Spirit is a person. But the baptism in the Holy Spirit is an it. It's an experience. It's a dimension of the Holy Spirit himself. When you are immersed in the Holy Spirit, Jesus said:

Out of his [your] belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified) (John 7:38, 39).

Christ was still alive, He had not yet ascended, when He said this. The baptism in the Holy Spirit has for its purpose a releasing of the living waters of God inside you. Immediately you are able to communicate with God with your spirit in a new language.

When you speak in tongues through the baptism in the Holy Spirit, this is what happens to you. Paul describes it:

I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing [praise God] with the spirit, and I will sing [praise God] with the understanding also (1 Corinthians 14:15).

What is Paul saying? I want you to notice that he is now reversing the order of mind over spirit and putting spirit over mind. He is going all the way back to creation when God made man a spirit in His own moral and spiritual likeness. Man turned away from that to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and chose knowledge ... all out of proportion to the way it had been planned for him. Man became a mental, intellectual being by his own choice, placing mind as boss rather than soul as boss, letting his life be directed mentally by his logical processes, rather than by his spirit being indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

Now, we have a reversal of that. When you are baptized in the Holy Spirit, suddenly out of your innermost being comes a new language. It is not a learned language, such as the one you speak in, that's stored in your intellect — in your mind. It is a language of the Spirit. It is a language by which you speak under the utterance of the Holy Spirit. Only the Holy Spirit can give you the power to do this.

How You Can Receive The Baptism In The Holy Spirit

In order for you to be baptized with the Holy Spirit you've got to do two things. I've never seen anyone receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues — the prayer language of the Spirit — who doesn't do these two things.

First, you have got to stop speaking in your own language for a moment. You have to stop. You simply stop praying and praising God in English or whatever language that you know and speak with. You momentarily stop.

Second, you have to open your mouth.

I think that right here many sincere Christian people break down. They feel that they cannot have the ability to pray in tongues or praise God in tongues. They are waiting for God to do it. Now God has no need of speaking in tongues himself. Jesus Christ had no need of speaking in tongues because He and His Father are absolutely one. Jesus had the ability to communicate with God perfectly from within, which you and I do not have.

In Romans 8:26, it expressly says:

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought.

We know that we do not always know how to pray as we want to. Now you cannot say that about Jesus Christ. You cannot say that He does not know how to pray as He ought. We don't know how to pray as we ought. I would be the first to say that I don't. I'm sure that you would also say that. So tongues are for people who have believed on our Lord but who have been accustomed through their lifetime to thinking through their intellect, to speaking through their intellect, to learning through their intellect, to living in their intellect.

This is right and proper but the fact of the matter is that we are far more than intellectual or physical beings. We are, first of all, primarily spiritual beings. I mean we are spirit made in the image of God, with a mind and a body

attached to us. The real you is your spirit. And there's a language stored up there in your spirit. Remember that Christ said, "He that believeth on me ... out of his belly (innermost being) shall flow rivers of living water."

How do you know what happens? Well, have you ever felt the Spirit of God coming up within you? I've never talked to a Christian yet who said that it had not happened to him. I don't mean that he used the language that I'm using because each one of us says it in his own way. But each of us is conscious of something coming up, something good. We who understand it — at least who understand it to some extent — know it is the Spirit of God like rivers flooding up.

And in that river is the prayer language of the Holy Spirit. This is the Holy Spirit coming up, trying to speak through you, but you have words. You have to open your mouth. God is not going to pump it into you and make you speak in tongues. Therefore, you have no right to say, "When God is ready, I'm ready," because you are 2,000 years late. In order for this baptism in the Holy Spirit to be released within you, you have to stop your own speech momentarily and open your mouth and start to speak.

As The Spirit Gives You Utterance

The Holy Spirit gives us utterance, He gives His own language. And what is that language? First of all, you don't understand it. Then what good is it? you might ask. The good of it is that it gets beyond your understanding, down where your spirit is, where the deepest part of your lives. Through that language coming out, you are saying what you wish you could say through your mind but you don't know how. The end result is that you edify yourself.

He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself (1 Corinthians 14:4).

It's a very personal subjective experience. It is for prayer in your personal life. This prayer language, speaking in tongues, comes through the baptism in the Holy Spirit. As far as I'm concerned, and as I understand the Bible, this experience is for everyone.

Notice that Acts 2:4 says they were ALL filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Now there was no laying-on-of-hands, although we read of this happening in other places. Those who were present that day included Mary, the mother of Jesus. There were 120 people in the Upper Room and they were all

filled with the Holy Spirit, but no one laid hands on them before they received.

Now in Acts 2 we also find the sermon Peter gave that day to the crowd that gathered out of curiosity.

By the way, Peter did not preach in tongues, he spoke in his own language.

The Purpose of Tongues Is Always Intercessory

You are interceding for yourself or you are interceding for someone else. You do not teach or preach in tongues.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit with the accompanying tongue through which you pray through your spirit, is available to every child of God. But the gift of tongues, which Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 12, is not available as a ministry gift to everyone. The moment we get outside of our personal prayer life and into the ministry of the Body of Christ we are talking about ministry gifts and not everyone receives the same ministry gift. I will say more about that in chapter 6.

The Holy Spirit Is Outpoured On The Samaritans

In Acts 8 we find the second record of those who were filled with the Holy Spirit. Philip went to Samaria. The Samaritans were half Jew and half Gentile. They were a mixed breed. Philip preached Christ to them and,

... demons came out of the people ... sicknesses were healed ... many miracles were done through the name of the Lord Jesus ... great joy came to that city.

Right in the midst of this the leading occultist — Simon — came up and professed to believe in Jesus Christ. He was a sorcerer. He had dealt with witchcraft — black magic and things of that nature. If you will read Acts 8 you will find that Simon had had that whole town in the palm of his hand. He had deceived them. They thought he was a great man of God. They did not realize that he was influenced by a demon. But when Philip came preaching Jesus Christ, those people were delivered from occultism, from witchcraft and things of that nature. Simon himself, the leader, professed in that revival to be converted.

Philip did a great job but that was as far as he could go. Then Peter and John came down from Jerusalem to look things over. When they got there they first examined these new converts to Jesus Christ. They wanted to know if they

had received the Holy Spirit, and they said they had not.

I want you to notice here that the Holy Spirit meets us right at the point where we are. I'll keep saying that phrase because after awhile you'll see exactly what I mean by it in your own life.

The Holy Spirit Meets You Where You Are

So Peter and John laid hands on these new Christians and they received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now as you will remember no one laid hands on the one hundred and twenty on the Day of Pentecost, yet here Peter and John laid hands on these Christians and they received the Holy Spirit. What this says to you and me is that. . .

THERE IS A VARIETY OF METHODS WHICH GOD MAY USE TO BAPTIZE PEOPLE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Then the second thing Peter and John did was to deal with Simon, the occultist. Simon saw that through the laying on of their hands these people received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now the Bible does not say they spoke in tongues. In all the Bible commentaries I've read, the writers agree that they did. I believe they did but it does not say so. I want to stress the fact that it does not come out overtly and say they spoke in tongues. But there was something about the Samaritans receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit that was obvious to this occultist, Simon. And he offered Peter and John money if they would let him have this gift so that he could lay hands on people and they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Peter looked at him and said:

Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity (Acts 8:20-23).

Then Simon pled with Peter and John that none of these things would fall on him. It was a powerful experience.

Saul of Tarsus Receives The Baptism In The Holy Spirit

The third record is in Acts 9 and involves Saul of Tarsus, who later became Paul the apostle, and Ananias, a layman in the city of Damascus. The

Holy Spirit gave Ananias a vision of Saul of Tarsus being in the city and having had his heart touched by God. At first, Ananias was frightened because Saul was killing many Christians and had indeed come to Damascus to find Christians to bind them and to take them to Jerusalem where they would be put to death. But the Holy Spirit bade Ananias to go where Saul was residing. Ananias walked in and said, "Brother Saul, I've come to lay hands on you and to pray for you that you might receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Now again there was the laying on of hands. Again, it does not mention that Saul of Tarsus prayed in tongues or spoke in tongues at that moment. We only know from reading 1 Corinthians 14, which is Paul's own autobiographical experience of his tongue-speaking, that he did — later, if not then — start speaking in tongues.

Again I want to point out the variety of methods that God uses. You cannot simply say, "This is the way God does it and there is no other way." God uses many methods.

I keep saying to people, "Quit worrying about HOW, just so you do. Just so you come into the experience." We're not worrying about how this denomination emphasizes it, or that denomination emphasizes it or does not emphasize it. We are concerned about individuals receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. God will direct you. God will lead you. God is sovereign and unique, and since He made you in His own image He made you sovereign and unique. You are different from anyone else because you are you, so God is going to deal with you in the way He chooses to deal with you.

The Holy Spirit Is Outpoured On The Romans

The fourth incident of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is found in Acts 10. It concerns the household of Cornelius at Caesarea. This included soldiers — Roman soldiers — who had worshiped God but knew little or nothing about Jesus Christ having come. But Cornelius was so devoted to God that his giving and prayers had come up before God as a memorial. God sent down an angel and said, "Go for Simon Peter." And they brought Peter and he begins to preach to them.

In fact, this is a great lesson to us in racial understanding because the Jews just didn't have anything to do with the Romans. The Romans were in the same spot, in many ways, that the black man is in our white society today. But Peter went down there and the Spirit began to speak to him that God is no respecter of persons, that God loves everybody. And Peter said:

I perceive that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

This happened after Peter had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. You see, he still was prejudiced. He still had racial prejudice. It's funny how it has gotten around that when a person receives the baptism in the Holy Spirit, suddenly he is super spiritual. He is super holy, super perfect. I want to tell you that you are the same old human being. You are not suddenly an angel because you have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. You are not suddenly made perfect. You will go on making mistakes until the day you die. You will have prejudices and vices. It is not the fault of the Holy Spirit that you are like that, or that I am. It's just that we are human beings. We are stubborn and we get vices and prejudices. We make them so important that we live by them.

But finally the Holy Spirit got inside Peter, whom He had already baptized in the Holy Spirit, and showed him that he should have no respect of persons.

Now while Peter was preaching he made a statement about repenting and believing on Jesus for the remission of sins. And the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the Word (Cornelius and his household). Peter didn't lay his hands on them or anything. While he was still speaking the Holy Spirit came down and baptized them, and they all began to speak in tongues.

When Peter got back to Jerusalem to report this, he was excited about it but the Jewish elders — all of whom had been baptized in the Holy Spirit — didn't like it. They didn't think the Jews should go to the Gentiles or have any dealings with them. Certainly not on a spiritual basis. Then Peter recounted to them how Cornelius and his household had received the same baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues that they themselves had received on the Day of Pentecost. The elders "pulled their horns in" — excuse the expression — and began to rejoice and praise God. That ended the racial discrimination problem in the Early Church.

I've said all along that when you get people baptized with the Holy Spirit and praying from the inner man, it will do more to solve the racial problem than anything else we can do. But it won't solve it automatically. It won't be solved just because you're baptized in the Holy Spirit. You've got to listen to God.

You've got to respond to these feelings you get about human beings. You've got to quit looking at people as being white or yellow or brown or black or some shade in between. You no longer think of them like that because we are all made of one blood.

The Holy Spirit Is Outpoured On The Ephesians

The last example of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is found in Acts 19. Paul goes to Ephesus and there he finds a small group of men — maybe a dozen — who are disciples. They believed on Jesus through the ministry of John the Baptist. Now let me reemphasize what I've already said. In Acts 19:2, Paul finds these men and he asks:

Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?

And they said:

We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

What this means is that now, many years after the Day of Pentecost, Paul finds a group of people who believed in Jesus way back there before the Day of Pentecost. John the Baptist had told them of the coming Christ, of how Jesus was coming, and they believed. But they had not known any more, or at least not much more than that. That is, they had believed all they had been taught. Now Paul finds them, and the Bible says that he laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit and spoke with tongues and prophesied (Acts 19:6).

Notice again that the Holy Spirit met these men where they were. I'm trying to say to you that theologically — or doctrinally — you cannot say that there is one method by which you receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. You can't do it because God is going to meet you where you are.

First of all, you must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, repent of your sins, and from that moment on you can receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The very moment you accept Jesus Christ is the best time to receive. There's no doubt about that. But if you don't have the knowledge, if you don't stop talking in your own tongue for a moment and open your mouth, it probably will not happen. ^

You know, that's a real tragedy. How willing we are to open our mouths on other good things and yet we keep it shut when it comes to speaking in the Spirit. Is it because we are frightened that if we relinquish the intellect for a moment and get down here into the real us, the real spirit of ourselves, that something bad will happen to us? Is it that we're afraid that the stored-up language in the inner man is something we should never express to God? Or is the real reason just simply a lack of teaching?

People always ask me, "Why haven't we been taught this?"

Well, I wish I could answer that. I wish they could have been taught earlier but they have not been. And that's what I'm here for, trying to teach a

little bit. I certainly can't say that I know it all and I know there's much more out there. But I can certainly share what I know, and what I'm saying I do know.

Paul was very concerned about these Christians who had believed in Jesus through John's baptism. And we are very concerned about every Christian who missed this gift when they were saved. At the time you are saved you can receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Why doesn't this happen? When you accept Christ you receive the Holy Spirit and you can very scripturally and honestly say, "Yes, I'm a Christian. I have the Holy Spirit." You do have the Holy Spirit. But you may not have the dimension of the Holy Spirit — the baptism in the Holy Spirit — that our Lord is talking about and that is talked about in these five examples recorded in the book of Acts — this experience by which you can open up the inner man and the Spirit gives you utterance and prayer and praise that comes out of your inner man.

While it's not a cure-all, I can tell you personally that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is one of the most soul-satisfying experiences I have ever known. Until you receive it you will not be able to fully understand what I am saying. Yet the moment you receive the experience you will understand what I am talking about. You will edify yourself. You will strengthen yourself in the inner man. You will empty out many of the things down there which, through the intellect, are not being emptied out. You will feel a freedom within and you will find a blossoming of your intellect.

Chapter 2, You Can Become More Than You Are

Suggested Scripture reading for this lesson: 1 Corinthians 12

There is probably no more powerful statement or encouraging statement in the Bible than this: Wherefore he said,

When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men (Ephesians 4:8).

When Jesus ascended up on high — leading everything into captivity — He gave gifts unto men.

Christ Gave Gifts Unto Men

Jesus Christ was a human being. He came down in the likeness of human flesh, conceived and born of the Holy Spirit, through a young woman who was a virgin. His was a supernatural birth by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Became Man

I don't think I can say that to you too often because you will be a human being 24 hours a day all the days of your life. It's important to stress the humanity of our Lord as well as His divinity — that He was God in human flesh. In a sense, this is what you are—you become the lengthened shadow or the human incarnation of our Lord's life. Just as He was God Incarnate, or God in the flesh, so you become Jesus' life reproduced by the Holy Spirit.

The real purpose of the Holy Spirit is to reproduce the life of Jesus in you — to take all those tremendous powers within Him and reproduce them in your life to where Christ actually lives in the NOW... in the flesh ... in your flesh and in my flesh, in your spirit and mind and in my spirit and mind, in the whole man. He lives in the NOW and we are doing His works. Here in Ephesians we are told that He gives gifts unto men. He gives gifts unto US.

We are men but we are not mere men.

We are human but we are not mere humans.

We are God-gifted humans. We are now in a position to become not only achievers but overachievers.

Some time ago I ran across a report that some doctors released. In this report they said that people, as a general rule, feel good only 20 percent of the time, that they feel bad 80 percent of the time. The report said that the typical

human being — however strong he may appear outwardly — struggles all the time with feelings of inferiority. That is, within himself he is saying:

"I really can't do this."

"I can't make my grades as a student."

"I can't put my business over."

"I can't make my marriage work."

"I can't love my parents... I can't relate to them."

"I don't understand my child."

"I can't do my job."

There are feelings of inadequacy that seem to want to build in us, to live in us. As a result we are always in conflict with what we are, what we feel we are, and with what God can make us to become. There's a conflict there.

The Bible says that Jesus has given gifts to men. He gives the gifts of the Holy Spirit to men, dividing them as He will. Turn now to Hebrews 2:4:

God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost [Spirit], according to his own will.

Notice that the writer of Hebrews says that God has given us gifts of the Holy Spirit. Honestly and frankly, it's hard to believe that. I think most people find it's virtually impossible to believe that they are given a gift of the Holy Spirit. They seem to think it's for someone else. Particularly, they believe that these gifts were given to people 2,000 years ago but that today it isn't so, or it isn't so for them at least. It's hard to individualize or personalize to the point that you know God has given a gift in your life. Now isn't that true? And the more difficult your life is, the more needs you have, the harder it is to believe the Holy Spirit gives gifts to men today.

There are many gifts that our Lord gives. How do we explain the gifts that Jesus gives? Remember that we are now post-Pentecost. The baptism in the Holy Spirit has been given and the Christian Church has come into existence. We use the word Pentecost, or Pentecostal, to refer to the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Now in Ephesians 4:8 we come to a new word translated into English — gifts. In the original Greek, in which our New Testament was written, the word gift is charisma. Charisma is a favor or gift of God.

I want to make a comment on that term charisma as it is used in a contemporary sense. The contemporary use of it is exactly opposite to its real

meaning. For example, if we have a public figure who is extraordinarily handsome, articulate, or able and strong, we say, "Hey, he has charisma." Or, "He's a great charismatic leader." This term was used particularly in regard to the late President Kennedy. Many said, "He's a charismatic leader." That is true. He had a lot of charisma but that's not the sense in which it's used in this reference.

The word charisma, as it is used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12, means grace or favor, and the emphasis is NOT upon the person who has it but upon the GIFT itself. That the Holy Spirit will work in the person is the important thing.

When a person has a gift of God you should talk about the great grace or gift in the person. Give the glory to God and not to the individual. The emphasis here is upon the charisma, the favor or grace of God, that has been given to a person without taking into account his personal worthiness. In other words, a gift is something you can't earn. If you could earn it, then you've bought it. And it's no longer a gift.

I'm emphasizing this because there are people who have been led to believe that if a gift of the Holy Spirit is manifest through a person — such as a gift of healing or a gift of tongues — that he is super spiritual. That is, he is a super person, super holy, he never makes a mistake. The implication is that he's given the gift because he's earned it, which is absolutely false.

Salvation itself is a gift. Salvation has to be a gift. When you receive a gift of the Holy Spirit or a gift of the Spirit, such as the gifts of healing or the gift of miracles, or the gift of tongues, it's not because you are somebody special. It's not because you're super holy, nor is it because you will continue to be super holy.

Some of the people who are the most mistake-prone have a gift and a lot of people stumble over it. If you're stumbling over this, you're making a mistake because you're judging God by some person. You don't judge God by some person. God is God whether a person is right or wrong.

I want to make a distinction between the person of the Holy Spirit, the gift or the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The Person Of The Holy Spirit

In my view of the Bible you cannot be saved without having received the Holy Spirit. You are born again by the Spirit of God. If you genuinely know our Lord and you've been saved and know it, and people talk to you about receiving

the Holy Spirit and you say, "I've already received the Holy Spirit," you're absolutely correct. I'll always hurt inside when someone comes to a saved person and says, "You don't have the Holy Spirit." Now I know what they mean by it, but they don't explain what they mean. Therefore, this creates a division between Christians.

Let me tell you that the common meeting ground of Christians is not in the gift of the Spirit. The common meeting ground is Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. Now when we're saved by the grace of God, we're brothers and sisters. You may call yourself a Catholic or Baptist or Episcopalian or Pentecostal or Nazarene or Lutheran, or you may belong to no church at all, but if Jesus Christ is your personal Savior we're brothers and sisters. Christ is our common meeting ground.

But there are gifts of the Holy Spirit. When you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit you receive this communication ability — this prayer language of the Spirit — between your heart and God. Now beyond that, there are very special gifts of the Holy Spirit and they are enumerated in 1 Corinthians 12:1-11:

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit, And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit [1] the word of wisdom; to another [2] the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another [3] faith by the same Spirit; to another [4] the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another [5] the working of miracles; to another [6] prophecy; to another [7] discerning of spirits; to another [8] divers kinds of tongues; to another [9] the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

Some of the gifts of the Spirit were manifested pre-Pentecost in certain individuals but never, never on a "whosoever will" basis. Never on what we might call a wholesale basis. We see them in some of the great prophets; for example, Elijah. We see them working in David. But after the Day of Pentecost, or even on that day, you see the Holy Spirit bringing the unlimited Christ inside the human being. All of a sudden this Christ who dwells within, who is full of all

these gifts, begins to manifest these gifts in individual persons.

A gift of the Spirit — there are nine of them listed here—is just simply Jesus Christ manifesting part of himself to a person. This is not something special you get from outside. It's inside you, where Jesus is.

Notice that:

The Holy Spirit brought Jesus to the earth, but Jesus brought the Holy Spirit back to us.

The Holy Spirit brought Jesus to the earth, brought Him here as a man, raised Him from the dead, and enabled Him to be glorified in heaven. But it is the glorified Jesus who now prays the Father to send us the Holy Spirit. See? It's in reverse. On the one side, the Holy Spirit manifests Jesus and now it is Jesus manifesting the Holy Spirit within us. The Holy Spirit's work is to take of Jesus' wisdom and knowledge and healing and faith and this communication ability to reach God directly, to take all of that and manifest it through you.

Paul's Teaching On The Nine Gifts Of The Spirit In 1 Corinthians 12

Paul wrote this book to new converts at Corinth. Corinth was perhaps the most corrupt and profligate city in the Roman Empire. It was seething with idol gods. It had a temple full of gods, idol gods, without the power to speak. They also had temple priestesses, young women whose purpose was to have sexual intercourse with the worshipers before the act of worship could be completed. It was a city that was actually rotten at its foundation in the character of its people.

Jesus Christ, through Paul, came into that city and was praised and a great revival was held. People came out of idolatry, out of this licentious sexual type of worship into the purity of Christ. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit began to be manifested in and through them. But because of their background they did not have the knowledge that they needed to possess in order to use these gifts of the Spirit in a profitable way.

The Corinthians were quite a highly emotional people. As I said, they were new converts. They had just come out of this licentious idolatrous type of worship. Christianity was brand-new to them and yet Christianity was spontaneously flowing through them. There was a great conflict between the Christ who was in them and their past knowledge of the idol gods whom they had worshiped.

Now this has a lot to do with this first statement of Paul:

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant (1 Corinthians 12:1).

Paul is recognizing that the spiritual gifts — the word of knowledge, the word of wisdom, the gift of faith, the gifts of healing, the gifts of miracles, tongues, interpretation of tongues, discerning of spirits, and prophecy — are all being manifested in these new Christians. They are there but they are not understood.

This is probably the most true thing about people today who are Christians — they don't understand the Holy Spirit. They don't understand the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They are uninstructed — or, should I say, we are uninstructed. Very little time has been given over the centuries, or in your lifetime and mine, to the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Many say, "I've never even heard that I could have the Holy Spirit." Others say, "I've never even heard that there are gifts of the Holy Spirit." You seldom ever hear it taught or preached or even talked about. Here we are in a so-called sophisticated, civilized, Christianized nation — and if we're having problems, consider the problems of these Corinthians who had been converted out of idolatry.

In no way does Paul endeavor to put the Corinthian Christians down. He's just simply dealing with them as born-again, Spirit-filled men and women through whom the gifts are working, but they're not doing a very good job with them.

Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led... (1 Corinthians 12:2).

What Paul is saying is that not only did they worship something that their hands had made out of wood or iron or copper or gold — a dumb idol — but they were carried away with these dumb idols. That is, these Corinthians were led about by idol gods as though they had rings in their noses and chains attached to them. The idols had just led them around. This was the background out of which these Corinthians had been saved.

These idol gods were inanimate — they were not human. They were not spiritual or divine. They were just plain physical. Yet back of them were demonic spirits and these evil spirits were working through these dumb idols. These evil spirits had entered these people and brought them into the strange world of the occult. The occult had led them into licentiousness. Sexuality outside the marriage bond and all kinds of lust were at the very center of their

worship. Paul is saying, "I want you to remember you were led out of this."

Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost (1 Corinthians 12:3).

What is Paul saying here? In Corinth at this time there were people who would come into a public service and scream out, "Jesus Christ is accursed! Jesus be accursed!"

Some believe that this was a militant type of Jewish person who did not believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ. They denied that He was God come in the flesh. They would invade the service and would scream out, "Let this man be accursed!" These new Christians didn't know what to say. These new converts — new Christians — were saying, "Well, is that a Christian expression? Is that a Christian expression that Jesus is accursed?"

Paul says, "Nobody who has the Spirit can call Jesus accursed. Neither can they call Him Lord without the Holy Spirit."

At the conclusion of one of my classes on the Holy Spirit, a fine young Christian boy came up to me and said, "Brother Roberts, can a person be filled with the Holy Spirit and have a demon at the same time?" I mean, he was serious. He was asking the question, the same kind of question that the Corinthian Christians were asking, "Can anybody who has the Spirit call Jesus accursed? Can anybody who is a Christian deny the humanity and divinity of our Lord? Can they say that He was not a man as well as God?"

Paul says, "No, and neither can they call Him Lord except by the Holy Spirit."

The first Christian confession was this:

Jesus Is The Lord

Then they amplified it — way back there in the first or second century — to Jesus is my Lord. Jesus is MY Lord. Now it was upon this foundation that Paul began to explain the gifts of the Holy Spirit, that they're based upon the lordship of the Son of God . . . that Jesus, the Man, is God in the flesh. He is Son of God and Son of man.

This is so up to date it is like it was written for us today. Whether you encounter them or not, I encounter people in person and through letters, people who have all kinds of occult beliefs about Jesus. They may believe that one part of Him is God but they cannot accept the other part — His humanity. Or they go

off into some sort of mysticism or spiritism and say that you don't have to have the name of Jesus Christ at all, that it doesn't make any difference about Him. I mean that is really rampant in American society right now. Just as there's a great moving of the Holy Spirit in America and the world today, there's a tremendous revival of the occult, of mysticism, of spiritism, and things of that nature. They always go hand in hand. Why? Because wherever God works, the devil is there to contest. Wherever there is good, evil comes against the good and this creates conflict. The Christian always lives in conflict. Our Lord lived in conflict and we live in conflict.

Paul went on to say that in addition to the fact that Jesus is Lord, there are many varieties of the gifts of the Spirit.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:4).

God is a God of infinite variety. God is sovereign and unique himself. You and I are sovereign and unique within ourselves. But there are so many different varieties of the manifestations of God. Yet, Paul says, "It's the same God, the same Spirit." In other words, there is a great variety of gifts but a unity of purpose and a unity of the Spirit. Only God can bring about such a variety and yet bring it into perfect unity.

Later in this chapter Paul illustrates this unity, comparing Christ's Body — the Body of believers with all the different gifts working in them — to a human body. There is a variety of parts to the body — head, nose, hair, neck, shoulders, chest, hips, right on down the line—yet there is a unity in the entire body.

Variety with unity. God has placed in the Church — the Body of Christ — all this variety of gifts. Nine gifts are listed in 1 Corinthians 12, but they are by no means the full number of gifts of the Spirit. There are gifts of ministry, gifts of person...

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:28).

Paul says that there is an infinite variety of the gifts of the Spirit but they all work in unity of purpose. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

There may be 800 different denominations but if each of us really believed in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, we could come into the unity of the Spirit.

Paul goes on to say that The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal (1 Corinthians 12:7).

This is important to you. These gifts are manifested to every person in the Body of Christ. This means every woman and man in the Body of Christ. It means every born-again person.

For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:8,9).

These are the first four gifts. Now these gifts are not necessarily listed by order of their importance any more than if you had nine children that you would admit that the first four are more important than the last five. If that's true then I'm at the bottom of the totem pole in my family because I was the baby. I was the last so that just puts me way down. If you estimate the value of these gifts in their numerical order and say that the one mentioned first is more important than the one mentioned last, then by the same comparison we who are the babies of the family —the last born — don't have much of a chance, do we? But certainly God doesn't deal with us like that.

The Word Of Knowledge

The gift of the word of knowledge usually works when you're baffled, when your intellect or your mind cannot cope, knowledge wise, with a problem. It is not a substitute for study. It does not take the place of seeking knowledge on a human level. The Bible says:

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

The Bible puts a great stress upon study. That's why we have schools and universities. That's why some of us who are not in school continue to study and to learn. A person is very foolish to think that he could have a gift of the word of knowledge and suddenly not have to study the Bible or the world he lives in anymore, that this gift is an end in itself. That's very foolish because that is not practical. This gift is an addition. It comes when your knowledge is insufficient for the situation you're facing or someone else is facing.

The Word Of Knowledge And The Purchase of The ORU Campus

For example, I was in California in 1961. We'd been struggling with the

call of God to build Oral Roberts University. We had no land, we had no money, no faculty, no buildings. We just had the call of God. I knew I was to do it. HOW? I hadn't been told.

I knew the present campus was the piece of land we needed. Some 10 years before this I had stopped my car down here and with my children I had prayed, "God, hold this piece of ground for us." It was not for sale. It was owned by an oil family and they didn't need the money. They had lived here 35 years. Other people had tried to buy it. Developers had tried to secure it for subdivision. Nobody could buy it.

Here I am in California and the Holy Spirit is moving on me. Today the urge is within me: "Pick up the phone. Call Tulsa. Tell your associates to go out and make an offer on that piece of land." Well, who is that talking to me? I stop and think about it and my intellect breaks down. How are you going to buy all that land, with no money, from a man who won't sell it? But you see, the Holy Spirit was flooding up within me and there was a word of knowledge in there waiting to come out. I was to deliver that word of knowledge over the telephone to one of my associates. The knowledge had to become a WORD of knowledge.

I want to stress that this gift is not a gift of knowledge, it's a gift of a WORD of knowledge. You have to verbalize any gift, even as Christ had to be born to become flesh. He had to humanize himself in order to show us what God is like. It's important that you understand the humanity of Jesus so you can understand why you have to humanize anything of the Spirit that comes upon you. You have to have a balance between the Spirit and your human flesh or your human mind. You have to verbalize.

So I began talking to the Lord. "How do I say it, Lord? You tell them, Lord, They'll understand You better anyway." Then there came a knowing within me and that happens to be the third gift, the gift of faith.

The Gift Of Faith

How does a gift of faith work? I can tell you what'll happen to you so you'll know when you have it. That's about the best I can do, or anybody else can do. When you have the gift of faith you are supernaturally emptied of doubt. You are not trying to make yourself believe. You don't say, "Lord, I really believe." You are not just working yourself up, you're not just pumping yourself up, and holding yourself up to keep from falling. If you are doing this, you're not in faith yet. You're still in doubt.

To be honest with you, I believe all faith begins with doubt. I believe you

have to have honest doubts. I believe if you believe everything that comes along, that's not faith. I believe you have to test it, think about it, pray about it. Have honest doubts.

Here's how you will know when the gift of faith has moved in; for example, you are struggling to believe and all at once the struggle is over with, and down inside you KNOW. You don't know intellectually and you cannot intellectualize it, but down here YOU KNOW. You know that you know that you know that you know that you know that you know that you know.

HOW? It's an inner knowing. What has happened? The Holy Spirit has just supernaturally swept your heart of doubt, cleansed it of doubt, and for that moment you couldn't doubt it if you wanted to. I mean it's like Christ standing there, believing for you. And in that moment you're in Christ's stead. You have a faith that's as unshakable as His. Let me tell you, when you get that feeling, make your deals. I mean start wheeling and dealing. That's the way to move forward.

That day in 1961 I had that feeling. The Holy Spirit had emptied me of doubt and there came this tremendous inner knowing: Step to the telephone. Call your associate in Tulsa. Tell him to go out and buy that land. (I knew that I knew that I knew.)

I called and he says back to me over the phone, "He won't sell."

I said, "Go today. The word of knowledge is, go today. TODAY."

So he goes and later he comes back on the phone and he says, "I walked up and knocked on the door and I said to him, 'Mister,' and I told him what you said. He said, 'Yes, my wife and I decided yesterday to sell the property.' "

So now my next problem is, how do we get the down payment? But I didn't have to take the second step till I took the first one. That's the beautiful part about God. It took several days, of course, to draw up the contract and get everything fixed up on the property and by that time my faith had gone into action and we'd gotten the down payment. That's a story all by itself.

We had a combination of the gift of faith and the word of knowledge, both of them working together. You can depend on the fact that when one of the nine gifts is working in you, there's another one nearby. They usually come in clusters. I just praise God for it. I mean there's enough of them there to get the job done and every one of them has a lot of big brothers. I found that out.

My Wife And The Word Of Knowledge

Another example of the word of knowledge: My wife and I were out of the city in a crusade. I had asked her to go with me. We have had a great struggle over this through the years because we have four children. Evelyn is a mother and a wife. I'm a father and a husband and I'm called of God to go all over the earth and preach.

When she came to me the children would be without her, and she and I were pulled back and forth and we were hurt in our spirit. We wanted to be with each other. We wanted her to be with the children. We wanted me to be with them. The children were hurt at times and my whole family at times was torn apart. I don't know that we've yet completely overcome the hurt that may have been in all of my four children because of my travels over the earth. At one time I almost gave it all up because I couldn't be with my family.

Anyway, on this trip Evelyn came in one morning and said, "Oral, I have this deep feeling and I can't get away from it. I've got to go home today."

I said, "Why, Evelyn?"

She said, "I have to go."

"You think the children need you?"

She said, "I don't know."

I recognized that it was a word of knowledge. When Evelyn speaks to me like that I always say, "Honey, you obey the Lord."

She got on a plane and went home. She had not been in the house more than 10 or 20 minutes when one of our children walked in in terrible, terrible need. He was troubled and he came in and sat down and put his head in her lap like he did when he was a little boy and said, "Mother, I'm in trouble. Pray for me.

Then she knew. She knew why she had had to take a trip of 1,500 miles to come home. And that child's life was saved for God. That was Richard.

Evelyn was given a word of knowledge but she had to verbalize it to me. It was also a gift of faith because she knew it would not be just a wild goose trip she was taking. She KNEW in her heart. That's the Holy Spirit working.

You've had experiences like these . . . and even people who don't know Christ have similar types of experiences. Apparently there is a facsimile in nature — in the natural realm — of the gifts of the Spirit. What I mean by that is that they go all the way back to the creation, back to Adam and Eve, when God made man perfect with perfect knowledge and perfect wisdom and

understanding. Then man disobeyed God and through sin lost these gifts, but evidently traces of those gifts — that extra knowledge — remain.

There are traces of power within people who have never acknowledged God. They seem to be very, very superior. Some call it extrasensory perception or something else. I really don't know what ESP is. I know a lot of people who say they do. I do know that people come to a point where they know something and they may say it's ESP. Maybe it is, maybe it isn't, but they KNOW something. I'm talking about people who are not guided by the Holy Spirit. What I'm saying is that in the natural state of man, there are traces of the original creative power apparently still existing.

But we don't have to live merely on that level. We can have the extra added dimension of the Holy Spirit himself. I want Him to manifest in me the gift of the word of knowledge, which is divine, which is supernatural. I want the gift of the word of wisdom manifested in me. I want the gift of faith. I want to go beyond what the natural man is using today. I'm not saying that the natural forces are bad because I believe many of them are very good, but why stop with that? A gift of the Spirit adds to our natural abilities rather than taking away from them.

The Holy Spirit Increases Our Natural Abilities

I receive letters from the students. We are always writing to each other or they're talking to me, and they don't know that I slip off and take notes. I wrote down what one of them told me. He doesn't even know I wrote down what he said. But he played on one of our athletic teams and was quite a star. He said: "President Roberts, after receiving the infilling of the Holy Spirit I began praying both in the Spirit and with my understanding. It was not long until I saw something happening to me, both as a student and as an athlete. I am a strong competitor by nature. I'd been doing according to my natural talents but now I was doing better. It was strange, yet beautiful. There was more of an inner release from tension, more spontaneous ability coming forth in the games. What abilities I had were being added to. It was like a miracle."

The following is part of a letter that was written to me and in it is the term overachiever.

Dear President Roberts:

I have had the baptism in the Holy Spirit but did not pray in tongues often and regularly. I usually prayed with my understanding or my mind only. What I desired was a release so I could pray in tongues at will and as often as I

needed to so I could receive more of God's help. Especially did I want to pray in tongues when I had a need. After praying with others and with you, the Holy Spirit helped me find this release in tongues.

When I came to ORU I was not fully prepared.

I found I had to work harder, much harder. I came to a point where I knew I couldn't make it. Listen to this: I came to a point where I knew I couldn't make it. That's faith in reverse. When doubt is actualized, it also knows something. It's also an inner knowing. She went on to say:

I came to a point where I knew I couldn't make it, not only academically but in other ways, both as a student and a person. While struggling with this, I heard you say I could be baptized in the Holy Spirit and pray in tongues at will and as often as I needed to strengthen myself within. Well, I had this gift but you struck a responsive chord, for my need was very great.

Then you said when I prayed often in tongues it would have the effect of making me more aware of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit referred to in 1 Corinthians 12 - that these gifts would start coming alive in me for they were already inside me, all the time, through the Christ who lives in me. This really stirred and quickened my mind and I have become illumined with this truth. It affected my study habits. I discovered a growing desire to learn of God's world as my professors here at ORU were seeking to assist me. In my next examinations my grades went up. The net result is my grade point average is up.

THE NEXT THING I KNEW THE POINT WHERE I HAD BEEN POTENTIALLY THE STRONGEST BUT ACTUALLY THE WEAKEST, WHICH WAS MY ABILITY TO COMPREHEND, WAS BEING HIGHLY STIMULATED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. What happened was, my attention span increased, my reading comprehension increased, my retention was increased. All I can say is WOW! I've become one of the top students at ORU.

Then it dawned on me ... I have started to become an OVER ACHIEVER. This means I've gone beyond my apparent inherent ability. Praying in the Spirit often and at will and having access to the gifts of the Spirit and really applying myself, have made this possible for me. I know with the Spirit's continued help I'm really on my way UP.

Don't you think that's an interesting comment on what we're talking about in this lesson?

The Word Of Wisdom

I was at the World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin that Billy Graham held in the '60s. A minister from India came to me and said, "Are you Oral Roberts?"

I said, "Yes."

He said, "I've been wanting to meet you. One of the reasons I came was to meet you."

I told him I was flattered to hear that, and what could I do for him?

He said, "I've a very, very difficult problem. I've never understood or believed in miracles or that God healed the sick, although I've preached for many years. Here is my problem. Two of my members rushed into the church one day — there where I was — with their child. And this little child was dying. The doctors had just given him up. The parents thrust their little child into my hands and said, 'Pastor, pray for God to heal him.' I was in a dilemma. They'd asked me to do what I didn't believe could happen, ask God to heal. Before I realized it, though, I did pray for him, and to my utter amazement God healed him."

And I said, "Well, what's your problem?"

And he said, "My problem is very serious. Did I do right? Did I do right in praying for the little boy?"

My intellect started to respond instantly and say, "Of course you did right." I wanted to say, "Of course you should have prayed for him. And God healed him. Give God the thanks." That was my mind, but the Holy Spirit checked me. I knew instantly that was not the answer to give this man. Up out of me came a phrase and it was a word of wisdom. I heard it inside me and I knew if I would speak it, it would be a word of wisdom and it was this: "You want to ask me if you did right in praying for the little boy and God healed him?"

And he said, "Yes."

I said, "Why don't you ask the little boy?"

He said, "Oh, oh. Why don't I ask the little boy? Yes, why don't I ask the little boy? Oh, I see what you mean. You have given me the answer and I'm going back to India and have a healing ministry."

All I said was, "Why don't you ask the little boy?" It wasn't something coming out of my intellect. It was by the Holy Spirit. It was a gift of the word of wisdom that was planted in my mind, then I spoke it. That word of wisdom — "Why don't you ask the little boy?" — became the sounding phrase all over the

Congress. Everywhere I went people would stop me and say, "Are you the man that said, 'Why don't you ask the little boy?'"

It became a great blessing and as Billy Graham later told me, "Oral, we had no idea when we invited you that you would have such a chance to witness for the healing power of our Lord."

Chapter 3, You Can Be Healed

Suggested Scripture reading for this chapter: Matthew 9:18-26, 3 John 2

If there is one word that characterizes the Christian life, it is CONFLICT. God never promised you — as a Christian — a bed of roses. It is a life of conflict. Our Lord himself faced conflict. After His baptism at the River Jordan by John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus and He was both led and driven by the Spirit into the wilderness (Matthew 4:1; Mark 1:12). There Jesus faced the devil and the three major temptations of His life. And it was conflict for the rest of His human existence.

And so it is with us who serve God. Life is conflict. And for these conflicts we face there is manifested by the Holy Spirit the gifts that reside in our Lord — the various graces and gifts in Him. In this chapter I want to talk about how the first three gifts of the Spirit — the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and faith — work together with the gifts of healing.

The Gift of The Word Of Wisdom

The first gift mentioned is THE WORD OF WISDOM (1 Corinthians 12:8-10). Notice it is not a gift of wisdom, a charisma of wisdom. It is a gift of the WORD of wisdom. It is not only a revelation from God but it is something you say. You deliver it to someone. It is not a word of wisdom until you speak it. That is, you deliver it.

The Gift of The Word Of Knowledge

The next gift as indicated here by the same Holy Spirit is THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE. This is given in a situation where things are getting out of hand. You don't know what to do. You've apparently done all that you can do but you don't have the facts. The real facts are hidden. Your human mind is unable to comprehend the situation and you wish you knew.

Now then, there is a gift of the word of knowledge whereby the Holy Spirit just takes the mind of Christ and reaches into that situation that you're in and reveals the facts, just lays them open to you. Suddenly you're in possession of the facts. You know what the real issue is and that becomes a word of knowledge when you speak it.

I'm going to get back to each of these gifts in a moment and give you actual testimonies or illustrations of how they relate to the gifts of healing. I'm briefly going through them now so you'll be better prepared for the illustrations.

The Gift Of Faith

The next is A GIFT OF FAITH. Now this gift, which is the third gift mentioned, is the one that's probably manifested more often than any other. It's probably more active than any other gift in our lives. We need to know its characteristics so we can be in a position for the Holy Spirit to manifest it in us. It's characteristic in that the Holy Spirit will come to you in a moment when you're in some kind of crisis or emergency or need and your heart begins to fill up with doubt, confusion, uncertainty. In that moment the Spirit supernaturally empties your heart of doubt. It just cleans it out and instills in you the faith of God. For that moment it's like Jesus standing there having the faith for you and in you.

It's A Powerful Faith.

It's an inner knowing. You come into a knowing that defies the situation, that defies the facts. I mean, the human facts in the case. You KNOW and there's no way you could doubt at that moment because Jesus is there believing through you. He's believing for that situation. He is using your heart, your mind, your being. He is filling you with faith so that you can believe for that situation.

The Gifts Of Healing

Then the fourth gift is in the plural, the gifts of healing. I believe this is because every healing is a separate gift of healing. The gifts of healing work in compassion. I think this is best understood by reading Matthew 14:14:

And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

Notice that Jesus didn't have sympathy, He had compassion. Compassion is different from sympathy. Sympathy causes you to feel sorry for someone and say, "I wish I could do something for you." But it has little power to help anybody.

Compassion is what Jesus felt when He healed the sick. It moves you to action. Compassion is a surge of power that sweeps over you, and becomes almost a hatred for what's hurting or destroying a person. You don't hate the person, but you feel hatred toward the thing that's dragging him down. You have an almost compulsive urge to pray — or give the command of faith—for his sickness or problem to be healed by the power of God.

Healing Is For The Whole Man

Now please know this, when I talk about the gifts of healing I'm talking about healing for the whole man, not merely for one part of him. When I first started praying for the sick, I made some mistakes along this line. I thought the healing gift was primarily for the human body, for physical illnesses. Gradually the Spirit began to show me that in the Bible healing is for the whole man. It's for the body, it's for the soul, it's for the mind, for finances. It's for any problem that needs to be healed.

Sickness takes many forms. We think of sickness in the form of cancer or pneumonia or something like that. But sickness is anything that brings you into disharmony with yourself, with other people, with nature, or with God. Sin is a form of sickness. Fear is a form of sickness. Loneliness is a form of sickness because through loneliness people lose the will to live, and they die before their time. I mean loneliness can kill you just as much as cancer can kill you. It won't kill you in the same way but it can have the same effect as far as your life stopping is concerned. I learned that healing taught by Jesus is for the whole man. Through the years I learned that whole-man healing is really what Jesus is talking about when He uses the term, "Be made whole." WHOLENESS.

A gift of healing begins within you. There's a surge of compassion and this compassion takes the form of a hate for what's wrong with a person. You don't hate the person, but there's a hatred toward the thing that's dragging this person down. You can scarcely restrain yourself. When a gift of healing works through me and I have this compassion, I have a terrific urge to reach forth my hands, to speak to the illness in the name of Christ and COMMAND it to go by the power of God. A gift of healing is something that takes hold of you and passes through you.

An example of this is the little woman with the issue of blood we're told about in the Bible. She came and touched the hem of Christ's garment. She said, "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole" (Matthew 9:21). When she did, Jesus turned around and said, "Who touched me?" (Mark 5:31). And all the crowd said, "We didn't." "Well," Jesus said, "somebody did, for I felt the power go out of Me." He felt this power, this compassion, go out of Him and into her. She said, "I did." She told Jesus why she had touched Him. The fact is that when she touched His garment with her hand she was touching Him with her faith.

This is a real good illustration of a gift of healing. When she touched His garment with her hands she was touching Him with her faith. The garment He was wearing — His clothes, in other words — was a point of contact. It was her point of contact. When she touched the garment she believed. She had faith that

He would heal her. It became her point of contact just as the key you put in your car is a point of contact for your motor to turn over and start. A light switch is a point of contact between the light bulb and the power plant.

A Point Of Contact Is Something You Do And When You Do It You Release Your Faith

I mean the faith that you have for something. You HAVE IT. But it isn't enough to have it any more than it is enough to have the price of a loaf of bread. Unless you release the money for the loaf of bread the grocer will not release the loaf of bread to you. It's a double release. You release your faith so that God's healing power can be released back. In other words, this woman touched Jesus' clothes with her hands but she touched HIM with her faith. And He felt it. He felt the power go through Him.

Jesus was moved with compassion and He healed the sick. The feeling of compassion was something that moved Jesus. I mean it moved the Man. It moved Him toward these people. He wanted to touch them or He wanted to let them touch Him. He wanted to speak to them. He wanted to impart to them life . . . life . . . life . . . which is what healing is. It's LIFE.

All Healing Is From God

I have been careful through the years when a gift of healing has worked through me to point out that I cannot heal. Only God can heal. Only by the Spirit of God can a healing be brought to a human being. I'm not the healer. I would heal if I could. I'd empty every hospital bed in the world if I could. I would rid the world of suffering if I could, but I cannot. And no one else can.

Beyond the spiritual area, if we get into the secular area of the healing arts, such as medical science, no doctor can heal any more than a farmer can grow corn. A farmer can plow the ground and plant the corn but there's something else that's going to grow the corn. It's going to be nature, or God. A doctor cannot heal. He can assist nature. Whatever heals is inside. But thank God for doctors who assist nature and who also sometimes can say a word of knowledge to a patient, which enables the patient to help bring healing to himself.

To me, all healing skill is ultimately from God. I use the word ultimately because all healing skill is ultimately from God. It may not be intended by such individuals. Some person in the healing work may not feel like giving credit to God but ultimately it is God who heals.

Now let's discuss these four gifts and see how they relate to each other: the gift of the word of wisdom, the gift of the word of knowledge, the gift of faith, and the gifts of healing.

Simon Peter And The Word Of Knowledge

First, let me call to your attention an episode in the life of our Lord. He was traveling with His disciples and He asked them a question.

"Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" (Matthew 16:13).

The disciples replied that "so-and-so says you are Elijah and someone else says you're one of the prophets." Each one reported what someone else had said.

Then Jesus said, "But whom say ye that I am?" (Matthew 16:15).

And Simon Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16).

Jesus Christ instantly said, "Simon . . . flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 16:17).

In other words, Jesus said, "This is not a human revelation, this is not an intellectual comprehension."

This was the word of knowledge when Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." As far as we know, no human being had ever said that before. Simon Peter said it and it became a word of knowledge to him and to all the others — "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

A Scripture May Become A Word Of Knowledge To You

You can receive a word of knowledge by opening your Bible and a certain Scripture will stand out to you. Maybe you read that Scripture before and it didn't mean anything or very much to you then. Or maybe you have read it and didn't remember that you'd ever read it. Maybe you didn't know it was in the Bible.

In 1947 when I was starting this ministry — trying to begin, trying to understand that Jesus Christ is in the now, that He is here in the power of these nine gifts, that people can be healed — I was having a hard time. You would be amazed how difficult it was then to understand this simple fact that so many millions are accepting today as almost commonplace.

I was pastoring a small church in Enid, Oklahoma, and attending Phillips University at the same time. I had an 8 o'clock class. One morning I ran out to catch the bus because I was about to miss it. I remembered that I'd not read something in my Bible. I had a habit of never leaving the house without reading something from the Bible so I ran back in, grabbed up my Bible, and opened it real quick. My eyes fell on 3 John 2.

It was like you turned the lights on in the room.

There it was. I had been reading the Bible, and particularly the New Testament, through so many times those past few months, but I had never remembered seeing this verse:

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

When I read that, I didn't care whether I caught the bus or anything else. I yelled to my wife, "Evelyn, come here."

She said, "What's the matter?"

I said, "Read this."

So she read it out loud. I'll never forget her words. She said, "Oral, is that in the Bible?"

I said, "Honey, you just read it. There it is in the Bible."

"Did you know it was in the Bible?" she said.

I said, "No."

"Oral, do you mean as much as you've been reading the Bible that you didn't know that verse was in the Bible?"

I said, "That's right."

In other words, the Holy Spirit had suddenly brought that verse to my mind and as we read it, it became a word of knowledge. Through that verse my whole life was turned around.

I began a study of the life of Jesus in the Gospels — Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John — and the book of Acts. I studied the Man's life until I saw that He is the healing Christ. I didn't have to confer with any man. I didn't have to go to someone and say, "Does God heal?" I came out of that with a knowing in me that Jesus Christ is in the NOW, that He will heal people either by medical science or by prayer or by maybe different types of things, but He wants people to be well in body, mind, and soul.

From then on I was like a bullet shot from a gun. I was headed for my mark. I was like a Niagra released to society.

It's amazing how you can be reading the Bible and the Spirit will illuminate a passage to you and that becomes a word of knowledge to you. As I started this ministry, suddenly I was aware of a human conspiracy that had been raised against me. I said, "What have I done? I haven't started yet. Why have they started hating me?"

Then there was a word of knowledge in the little church where I was pastoring. A woman stood up and the Holy Spirit brought a Scripture to her mind and she addressed it to me. It became a word of knowledge. It was this:

No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper (Isaiah 54:17).

Well, now, you can read that verse a hundred times and maybe not get anything out of it at all, or maybe you would think it was for Isaiah or for Paul or for Peter. You'd never think it was for you. But that moment it became a word of knowledge to me in the NOW. The Holy Spirit was saying, "Write your name in this passage, Oral Roberts. You obey Me and nothing ever formed against you will have any success."

Now, folks, that's powerful medicine for a young man starting out, not knowing how to bring healing to people, not having anyone to share with and having almost everybody against him. That's powerful medicine. That's a word of knowledge.

The Word Of Knowledge Often Works With The Gift Of Faith And The Gifts Of Healing

Before Reverend Bob DeWeese, who stood by my side through the years in the crusades, came with me, his wife Charlotte was dying with leukemia. Bob DeWeese had the best medical care for Charlotte and the best praying people. I mean he combined everything. He did everything that he knew to do and still Charlotte was dying.

As he relates the story he says that there was just nothing more he could do. She was just slipping away. She was dying. No matter what medicine, no matter what treatment, no matter if he prayed or the church prayed where he was pastoring, it didn't seem to make any difference.

Here's a beautiful young woman with two children, the wife of a minister, being cut down. What can you do? Bob said one day he got up off his knees and it was like a voice from within him said, "Now is the time."

He knew enough about the Holy Spirit to know this was a word of knowledge. He shudders to think had he not known that it was a word of knowledge. He immediately went into his wife's bedroom and said, "Charlotte, now is the time."

His words went to her heart and she knew in a moment's time that she would be healed. A gift of faith entered her heart which is a knowing, a knowing inside. She just rolled the covers back and got out of that bed and into perfect health.

When I see Charlotte, especially after I hear her tell this or Bob relate it, I'm just almost overwhelmed when I realize that it was our Lord coming to them in their distress and saying, "Now is the time." It was a word of knowledge.

How The Gift of The Word of Knowledge, The Gift Of Faith, And The Gift of The Word Of Wisdom Were Manifested In The Founding of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International

In the early '50s, I was walking down Wilshire Boulevard in Beverly Hills, California, with a young man named Demos Shakarian. Demos is a very wealthy man. He's a Spirit-filled layman who at that time was sponsoring ministers and revivals and missions with his own money. He is a very generous man for God's cause.

For quite a few years he had known that God was going to do something through him. As we walked along that day, suddenly he began to pour it all out like a torrent of water.

"Oral," he said, "I see an army of business and professional men all over the world being filled with the Holy Spirit. They're laymen — laymen, laywomen — they're not ministers or preachers or priests at all. Many of them have never been inside the church. Many of them don't know God. Some of them are atheists today but I see them ..."

Suddenly I knew that a word of knowledge was being spoken. I said, "Is that right, Demos?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "Just what do you feel inside?"

And these are almost his exact words. I can't say them verbatim, but

nearly. He said, "Way down deep in here I know God's going to do this."

I said, "Demos, do you realize that's the gift of faith? First you had a word of knowledge that God has shown you this is to happen. Secondly, you now have the gift of faith. You KNOW. Do you have any doubt . . . any?"

"Oh," he said, "no, none. But I did at first" (This is another confirmation to me that real faith usually begins in doubt because faith can stand investigation. It can face the facts and sometimes the facts, as they exist, frighten you. They tend to make you disbelieve or to doubt that it can happen.)

But he said, "I KNOW. Way down deep in here I know."

That's the gift of faith. It was as if Christ was standing there saying, "I KNOW." That's as far as Demos Shakarian had gotten with the word of knowledge and the gift of faith. Now the Holy Spirit gave me a word of wisdom to deliver to him. I said, "Next Saturday morning I will take off from my crusade (which I was holding in Los Angeles at that time). You choose the place for a meeting and we'll announce it in the crusade. Find all the businessmen you can. I'll be your first speaker. We'll start it."

He said, "Will you?"

I said, "I will."

That's something I didn't ordinarily do because I had huge crowds at night. I had to save my strength to pray for the thousands of people. If I worked all day I couldn't work that night, you see? But there was a word of wisdom in my heart telling Demos HOW. . . telling him to set the time Saturday morning, to get the men together.

Twenty-one men gathered. I delivered the message and I knew myself, during the message, that God was in this so I could lend a word of encouragement. Then we decided that wherever I went for the next few months in crusades, Demos would fly there, invite businessmen to a Saturday morning breakfast and thus through the faith that Demos Shakarian had — the inner knowing — the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship was born. That's how it came into existence.

It has become, in my estimation, the most powerful, effective tool to bring men and women into the Holy Spirit this world has ever known. I mean, they have over a half million business and professional people involved. It began with just 21 men.

Now they can take over the biggest hotels in America, the biggest

ballrooms — 5,000 in a ballroom — and they pack it out.

That's how it got started, and nothing can stop them. You know why? Because it is built upon the Holy Spirit and upon the unshakable faith — the inner knowing — that God raised them up.

Demos asked for a suggestion for a name. He had all kinds of names but I'm the one who gave him the name. I think it was a word of wisdom. I said, "Name it the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship. I mean, say it. Come right out and say it. The full gospel, nothing held back."

Demos said, "We'll do it."

That's my little contribution to the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International. They've taken it so much further than I thought it could possibly go. To me, it's a miracle. I thank God for men like Demos Shakarian and all those connected with him.

How The Gifts Of Healing And Compassion Work Together

How can I describe the gifts of healing and compassion? I'm going to tell something on myself first. The gifts of healing have to work through people who love. I know that. The more love they have the better God can use them with the gifts of healing. But sometimes it'll work in the individual as the Spirit manifests it even if at that moment the person is not in love. I don't mean that it will continue but it can happen for the moment.

I was in a city having a great crusade and extra-large crowds. I was praying for more people than my body could stand up to even when I was charged with the Spirit of God. There's a physical limit. I had finished one night and was running to my car where a man was waiting to drive me to my hotel. I had one thing on my mind, to get into bed and get to sleep. By now I'd prayed so long my arms were hurting, I was hurting. I know that a person in the Spirit should never get tired but I get tired anyway.

So I was rushing out and all of a sudden I felt somebody pulling at my clothes. It was a woman. She grabbed my coat and flung me around. I said, "Yes?"

She said, "I'm sick, I'm sick. Touch me. I want to be healed."

There was a flash of anger that went through me of which I am ashamed. You know what I felt like? I had been up there praying until I felt like every bit

of strength I had was gone. Couldn't she understand that a human being had to have a little rest?

So I just walked on and she just walked on after me. She'd grab me and I'd break loose. She'd grab me and I'd break loose. Finally she just got hold of me and it was almost like hatred of whatever it was that was making her do that flashed through me. I touched her and I said, "Be healed."

Don't think I'm telling this with any pride at all. This is very humiliating to tell. It shows you I wasn't in a great spirit of love that night. I mean, that part of that night. I'd been very loving up there in the crusade prayer line, but I wasn't very loving on the way to my car.

I started on to my car because by this time she released me and she just sank to her knees, saying "Oh, thank You, God. Thank You, God. All the pain is gone." She began to rejoice and I turned around and looked at her. And my thought that I didn't say was, oh, no. It can't be. Instead of being glad, I was completely confused.

I was driven to my room. I lay down but I couldn't sleep. I tossed and turned. All I could think of was that woman. After a while, right out of me, the Spirit spoke, and said, "I healed her all right but you won't get any credit for it."

Now listen, nothing could have happened to me much better than that to begin teaching me that while God healed her in spite of my lack of love — healing her because she had the faith that if she could just touch a man of God or cause him to touch her — that I was not in the Spirit. He was teaching me that though I have this gift working in me and I have not love I will not be blessed. I will receive no reward. I believe if I had continued in that kind of spirit, eventually God would have withdrawn himself from me.

I hate to tell you that but it's the truth, and I pray the Lord will help somebody with it. What happened was that in spite of my tiredness and irritability — which you often get into when you're extra tired, at least I do — when I did turn to touch the woman, there was moving through me a compassion that was almost putting me completely aloof from her as a person, but coming against the disease. That now brings me to the real point on the gifts of healing.

I said to a great surgeon once, "Doctor, I know how successful you are because I know some of your patients. But they all say the same thing, that you are a withdrawn kind of person. When you treat them you seem very cold."

He said, "They're right."

I said, "Then how can you have such success? Healing has to do with

persons as well as sickness, as you know.”

He said, "Yes, I know that. When I began as a doctor I was very emotional. I became involved with my patients and soon they were as emotional as I was. I was unable to help them. I gradually learned that I had to develop a hatred against the diseases they had. I almost had to detach myself from them so that I could get at whatever the thing was that was destroying them. Of all the surgeons I know who are very successful, I don't know one who is of the gushy type.”

I'll never forget that. In the moments when I have been probably the most successful in praying for the healing of people, if you had looked at me closely you might have thought I hated the person I was praying for. You see, I was absorbed in the act of healing with the Lord Jesus. I was coming against an enemy. I was coming against something or someone that was destroying that individual. When you're going after that thing, you don't have much time to smile. That's one of the big differences between sympathy and compassion.

Compassion is divine because it is God against the devil. It is God coming to wipe him out. All his works are to be wiped out, for the Scripture says Jesus Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

Many times my associates and my wife have urged me, "Oral, watch the expression on your face even when you're preaching." I've got to stop and smile right now lest you all think I'm mad. I'm not mad. I'm glad. But I am sore at the devil. Do you know what I mean? I'm coming against something that's unlike God. When I'm preaching against the devil or I'm praying against disease, praying against fear, I have to be very careful lest I show people this hatred I feel for what is destroying them. I have to be careful so they won't feel that hatred is toward them.

The Healing Of Willie Phelps

Sometimes a gift of healing will start in you and it works in such a strange way that you can't explain it. I guess if you could explain God He wouldn't be God.

Years ago I was in Roanoke, Virginia. I had concluded the crusade on a Sunday afternoon. There were as many outside the auditorium as there were inside. When I went outside I had to pray for people out there who couldn't get in. I had finished a long healing line inside and I was wet to my skin with sweat. I'd loosened my tie. I had my coat off and my Bible in my hand. I was extremely tired. But as I was leaving the building, walking down a corridor, I looked into a

room. There sat a little boy with crutches between his arms and body with his head in his hands. I walked on and something compelled me to go back. I went in and I said, "Son, what are you doing in here?"

He said, "I'm waiting for Oral Roberts."

And I said, "What are you waiting for Oral Roberts for?"

He said, "I'm supposed to be healed today."

He was about 12. I asked him his name.

He said, "I'm Willie Phelps."

"Where are you from?"

"I'm from Lynchburg, Virginia."

"Where are your parents?"

"They're outside. They couldn't get in."

"How long have you been in here?"

He said, "Just a few moments."

I said, "Well, did you know that the crusade is over? We've had the benediction."

He said, "No. All I know is I'm supposed to be healed."

I want to tell you that Oral Roberts came alive because he knew the gift of faith was now working in that child. He knows something. I said to him, "Willie, I'm tired and I don't know that I have the faith. When I'm tired I don't have as much faith so I don't know if I have the faith to pray for you."

He said, "I don't know about that, Mr. Roberts, but I'm supposed to be healed today."

I said, "I tell you what I'll do, Willie. You see my hand?"

He said, "Yes."

I'll put my hand on you and I'll just say, 'Jesus, heal Willie' because that's about all the strength I have left. I will pray if you will really believe."

He nodded his head.

I put my hand on him and the little prayer I said wasn't big enough to heal anybody if you think like most people do that you've got to pray big prayers to get healed. So I prayed this little prayer and said, "Bye, Willie" and walked out and went on.

I came back to Roanoke for another crusade about a year and a half later. One night a boy came running up to me. He had grown. He said, "I'm Willie Phelps." I said, "You're not! There's no way."

He said "I'm Willie Phelps."

I said, "Tell me." There were his parents and I said, "Parents, tell me about it. Tell me."

Here's the story. Before they came from Lynchburg to Roanoke the little boy had said to his daddy and mother, "Now, I'm going to be healed." (One leg was short and he wore a shoe that was built up. Also he had a flat hip socket.) "In the morning (Monday) will you promise to take me downtown and buy me a new pair of shoes because when I'm healed this old shoe here won't fit."

And they promised.

So after they left that afternoon and got back to Lynchburg Willie gave his crutches to his mother and said, "Dad, I'm coming." He reached down and pulled off his shoes — one had a built-up heel — and he walked. The next day they went down and bought him new shoes. At noon he went to school and almost broke up the class. The little kids many times before had grabbed his crutches and made him stand there and beg for them but this time they all said, "Willie, what's happened?"

And the teacher said, "Willie, come up in front and tell us."

He told the story that I've told you. They had him walk up and down in front of the class, and the teacher put her hand on his hip where he'd been afflicted and he was really healed.

Then Look magazine came down and visited them and took his picture. If you'll go back to the '50s and pick up a certain issue of Look magazine you'll see his picture. They found him out playing.

We check on Willie every now and then. He's a grown man now. He's still well. What was it? What did it? I really can't say it was my faith. It was a gift of faith in the child, and suddenly I felt a gift of healing pass through me right into him and he was healed by the power of God.

Panel Discussion On The Gifts Of Healing

Oral: On our panel this evening we have Collins Steele, a vice-president and my administrative assistant at Oral Roberts University, and for many years operations manager for our crusades; Carl Hamilton, provost and executive vice-

president of ORU; and my wife Evelyn.

Evelyn, let's begin with you.

Evelyn: You mentioned that no matter how much we seek one of the gifts of the Spirit, we cannot get it unless the Lord actually wants us to have it. So how do we put ourselves in the position to receive one of these gifts?

Oral: Well, let's just read what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:1. Follow after charity (or love), and desire spiritual gifts. DESIRE spiritual gifts. It does not say to seek them. It says desire them. Why would one want to desire them? Because you would have that much of the power of Christ to meet a need in someone's life or maybe in your own life . . . but more particularly to help meet a need in someone else's life.

It doesn't say seek because the fallacy you fall into in seeking a gift would be that you would not seek the Giver. The Giver of the gift, the Holy Spirit, is much more important than the gift itself. So you must, in my view, never seek a gift. You must seek Him who gives the gift. It says here in 1 Corinthians 12:11 that He divides severally as He wills — not as I will or you will.

Collins, do you have a comment or question?

Collins: I found on many occasions in my life when I would be in a very awkward position, and I had no idea what I would do, that at a given moment the direction would come. It would come when I had done all I knew to do. I believe it was the gift of the Spirit functioning.

Oral: Can you give us an illustration of what you're talking about, Collins?

Collins: Of course. Many times in handling the physical arrangements of the crusade meetings we'd come up against a situation that would be beyond our comprehension. We would come up against a regulation of a city, possibly. We would go before a board to try and get the permission to put up the tent. . .

Oral: How'd we ever lick that thing in Pittsburgh where they wouldn't let us put up a tent at first? I was here in Tulsa. You were up there in Pittsburgh trying to erect the tent. I picked up the Tulsa newspaper and read where I wasn't going to be permitted to preach there because they wouldn't give us a permit to put up the big tent. It raged in newspapers across America. When you finally got the tent up, they packed it out the first night, Turned out to be a great thing, didn't it?

Collins: Sure did. It was a blessing but it wasn't much of a blessing when we were going through it.

Oral: You found a direction in the midst of a refusal, is that right?

Collins: Right. We knew at the right moment the direction we had to take to see the right people, to say the right things, and to get accomplished the things that had to be accomplished.

Oral: Collins, in 1956 we were in Australia and were having some of the greatest meetings of our lives. Suddenly we were attacked by a mob of people that came into the audience. They were trying to get to me and as I was leaving that night they found the car I was to be driven in. They surrounded it. But my men had already taken me away in another car. My wife was in the car the crowd thought I was in. They started to turn the car over. When they saw that only my wife was in there they stopped. My men possibly saved my life that night.

When I awakened the next morning I was told that during the night the men had taken the tent down and loaded it on the ship. They handed me a ticket on an airplane and told me I was leaving the country at a certain time that day. I didn't know anything about this. Collins, I've never asked you what prompted you and the other men. You met around midnight, didn't you, and made that decision?

Collins: Yes, we had a prayer meeting. Reverend DeWeese and several of the sponsoring ministers and the team members. We prayed about it and we decided that this was what we should do. I really think it was God moving through the gift of wisdom and guiding us in what to do. It was evident that we had done all that we could in Australia in this location. We were being treated very, very mean . . .

Oral: Not by the audience but by the 200 people who were allowed to come and disrupt the meetings. We had no police protection. They stood there with their hands and arms folded.

Collins: That is correct. We had done all that we could do in an effort to protect the lives of people and property. Yet the police would allow these people to come in. They even set fire to one of our trailers. It really took the gift of patience to lay hands off.

Oral: I remember one night there was a redheaded Irishman in the meeting who had migrated to Australia. Right in the midst of this mob coming in, he jumped up, doubled up his fists, and said, "Come and get me!" He said, "I'll take the whole bunch on." He was not a member of our team.

Collins: We literally issued written orders through each service for our ushers to abide by. . . not to touch anyone.

Oral: You remember in the '60s when the riots broke out in this country. People began to be hurt and killed. It struck us in the '50s. We knew what it was all about. But you got me out of that country, and probably saved my life. Do you think it was the gift of the word of wisdom working?

Collins: I think it was. Yes, it was.

Oral: Do you remember at that time they said they had no laws on the statute books for the protection of ministers of the gospel, that mobs had been going into the churches just like they had come into our tent? After we left they changed the law. They got laws on the books. Later Billy Graham went to Australia and he had one of the greatest crusades of his whole life. He wrote me a letter from Australia, which I treasure. I have it in my possession now. It just broke me up and made me weep. He said he'd met people who had been saved and healed in our crusades and he wanted to encourage me. It took a big man to do that, didn't it?

Collins: It sure did and as great as our crusade was, and was building, it could have never reached the climax that the effect of this reached.

Oral: Yes, because ...

Collins: By our leaving early.

Oral: The leaders took up for us after they saw the treatment that the mob, and especially the press, gave us. The press aided and abetted this mob. After we left, the leaders took up for us and they passed laws. I hadn't thought about that, but it did turn out well after it was over.

Collins: Right.

Oral: All right, Evelyn, what's your next comment?

Evelyn: Why do you think gifts of healing are mentioned in the plural?

Oral: I believe that every healing is a separate gift of healing. I believe also that no one Christian like myself would have the plurality of the gifts of healing at any one time. Let me illustrate. Through the years I've noticed at times when this gift was working through me that it was very effective towards certain types of illnesses. At other times it wasn't present at all. It would seem that I had no effectiveness to help a person with a particular affliction.

I remember one night out here at the Fairgrounds Pavilion in Tulsa in the

early '50s. We had a crusade and two little crippled boys came in the line. The first one, I could not help. I prayed and I prayed but somehow he received no help. When you have seven or eight thousand people sitting there, watching, observing, and with apparently no results, it's very discouraging to them and to you. Pretty soon, another little boy — about the same age — came with the same crippled condition. The moment I touched him and prayed, down went his crutches. He ran and he leaped and the crowd began to praise God. We happened to have the cameras there that night and later it was on nationwide television. We wondered why. WHY? What was it?

I had the same experience in another crusade with some blind people. Several blind people came through the line. My prayers were ineffective. Nothing seemed to happen. Then here comes another blind man. By that time I'm very discouraged. I say just a little simple prayer. I touched him as if to move him on. Very quietly he said, "Well, I can see you now."

And I jerked around and said, "You can see me?"

He said, "Yes, you look just like I thought you would."

"Are you seeing?"

He said, "Oh, yes, I'm seeing. And I knew that I would see."

When the healing line was over and we dispersed, Reverend Bob DeWeese and I stopped at a place to get a hamburger. By now I was rather confused. I turned to Bob and I said, "Bob, what did I do? I prayed for these and nothing happened. I touched this man and said a little prayer and he was healed. What did I do?"

Very wisely Bob said, "Oral, it wasn't what you did. It wasn't something you did. It was the Holy Spirit."

There's one thing I know about healing. A lot of times when you think you can, you can't. The Holy Spirit has to move in whether you're conscious of the Spirit doing it or not. The Spirit has to do it. That I know. It's the most humbling and humiliating ministry in the world.

Do you remember the night in Jacksonville, Florida, when the little boy who was born without a hip socket came for prayer? The miracle started and all of a sudden I cried out that my right hand was like it was on fire. My hand was hurting like you were sticking it with a thousand pins. I didn't know at that time why my hand was being inflamed or touched like that. Suddenly I jumped to my feet. I didn't say anything and the crowd jumped up and here they came and completely engulfed the platform and me. People were pushed up in

wheelchairs. They came out of the wheelchairs and just kept right on walking. People on crutches just dropped their crutches. Collins, the next day you fellows picked up armloads of crutches and eyeglasses and hearing aids. You remember that?

Collins: Right.

Oral: It started and stopped in five minutes. Do you remember that?

Collins: Yes, yes I do.

Oral: And after that I couldn't do a thing. Explain that to me.

Carl: God is sovereign.

Oral: God is sovereign.

Carl: He moves as He will. President Roberts, when you were talking this evening about the operation of the gift of faith it especially touched my heart. The gift of faith is meaningful to me because the result of it lives at my house — my daughter, Carla Jo.

When Carla Jo was a baby she was in an isolation ward at Hillcrest Medical Center. The doctor had told us she was dying and if her condition did not change for the better she could not live another 24 hours. We got in touch with you. You went to Hillcrest. They dressed you up in a gown and mask and you went back to the isolation ward.

Later you told me that you felt impelled to touch the baby but you had been told not to because she was in the oxygen tent. But she put her toe through one of the openings in the end of the oxygen tent and you touched her toe. This was about 5:30 one afternoon. The gift of faith operated in your heart. You KNEW she would be healed.

At that same time my wife Joyce was on her way home from the hospital. Joyce KNEW the baby would be healed. My mother was at our home. She came into the room where I was and said, "Carl, I KNOW the baby's going to be all right. God is going to heal her."

From that moment, every moment, every day, every week, every year has been a better year. I know about the gift of faith because one of the outcome s of it lives at my house.

Oral: Well, I didn't know you were going to tell that, Carl, but I'm glad you did. Again, it was the Holy Spirit at work. Of course, I've been in other situations like that and prayed and nothing happened. I have to tell the truth just

like it is . . . sometimes you just don't know. As Brother Bob DeWeese said, "It wasn't something you did, Oral. It was something the Holy Spirit did."

Chapter 4, Two Guest Sermons

RENEWAL OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALING by Dr. Francis MacNutt
and CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT THROUGHOUT THE EARTH by Rev.
Michael Harper.

I invited two well-known charismatic leaders to share in this semester of
THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE NOW. They are:

Dr. Francis MacNutt and Rev. Michael Harper.

Dr. FRANCIS MacNUTT is a former faculty member of the Aquinas
Institute in Dubuque, Iowa. He is also the founder and a former director of
Merton House in St. Louis, which is a center for the charismatic renewal for the
St. Louis area. He is the author of three books on healing —Healing, The Power
to Heal, and The Prayer That Heals. He travels almost constantly in the United
States and abroad (31 countries thus far), participating in symposiums on the
restoration of the healing gifts to the Church of Jesus Christ.

★ ★ ★

The REVEREND MICHAEL HARPER is an Anglican priest from
London, England. He is head of the Fountain Trust, a private spiritual
organization which is trying to bring the charismatic power of the Holy Spirit
into the churches and homes of Great Britain. Michael Harper was ordained to
the priesthood in 1955 and received the baptism in the Holy Spirit sometime
later. He was inspired of the Holy Spirit to lead this kind of ministry for Christ.

I've personally known Michael now for several years. It was he who was
my first sponsor in Great Britain, particularly in London, at the first luncheon
where I was a speaker before some of the leaders of that nation, including the
late J. Arthur Rank. Lord Rank endowed this first academic chair on the Holy
Spirit at ORU.

Reverend Harper also asked me to speak for a large gathering of
ministers from the Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Pentecostal, and
other denominations in Great Britain. We have had fellowship in the Spirit over
the years.

★ ★ ★

Renewal Of The Ministry Of Healing by Dr. Francis MacNutt

About four weeks after I was ordained I was stationed in a parish in San Francisco. One of my Protestant friends came over to the rectory to visit me. He had his car out front and he wanted me to get in his car and go over to his home and pray for his little boy who was partly blind. Now this had not been covered in my seven years of seminary training... what to do in case somebody asks you to pray for healing.

Now part of our Catholic tradition is that we do believe in miracles. We do. But somehow we got the feeling that it would take a very extraordinary person to pray for a healing . . . that you could go to Lourdes, France, or some other shrine and perhaps it would happen there. But if you are an ordinary person like myself, an ordinary sinful human being, you wouldn't dare launch out and start praying for the sick . . . that only the saints were able to do that with some success.

So the one thing I was sure I wasn't going to do when he came to visit me was get in that car. I didn't. I was very embarrassed. I knew that what he was asking was scriptural, but I didn't want to disappoint him. I felt that I was really unworthy to pray for somebody for healing. I didn't know how to explain it to him because after all he was a Protestant. So the best I could do was suggest the names of a couple of priests in the San Francisco area who I thought were pretty holy and were just crazy enough to do something like that.

The next acquaintance I had with the ministry of healing was about 20 years ago when I watched Oral Roberts on television. On those programs he prayed for people and you saw the healings take place. I have to admit to you that I wondered if it were really true. I wondered if all that was really happening. I'd never been in Oklahoma. I was away up North and so I never had an opportunity to check it out.

But it was really through my Protestant friend that I came into an understanding that...

Any Person — Even Myself — Can Pray For Healing With The Expectation That Miracles Can Happen.

For 10 years I was part of a panel of six priests who went around the country giving symposiums on prayer for priests. These symposiums were sponsored by the National Federation of Priests Council. When I first went, I was the only one of the six speakers who talked about Pentecostal prayer. This was unusual so I was the last one on the program. They felt by the end of five days that the men would be warmed up enough to take me. The first time we did

it the men got so involved with the questions and the arguments that when it came time for the meeting to break up, it was like there was unfinished business.

So they moved me up earlier and earlier on the program until finally I appeared halfway through the program. They put me on Wednesday. Now they gave the men Wednesday night for recreation. But so much interest was generated among the priests by discussing the gifts of the Spirit that they found at least half the priests, rather than going into town — even though they had never been there before — would rather stay in that evening and talk about the Holy Spirit. Now that was extraordinary news. When we had time to evaluate what was happening, the official evaluation of this was that the men would prefer to hear Francis MacNutt on Wednesday evening than any form of recreation. Over the course of the symposiums we put on across the country, three of the other five priests in the symposium faculty asked for the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The Work Of The Holy Spirit In Marvin, South Dakota

Well, it got to be kind of a standing joke that wherever I was, if there was an opportunity we'd bring in "ringers" from the outside — people to give their testimony. Of course in every city there were different kinds of people we'd bring in. One time the prayer symposium was held in Blue Cloud Abbey, Marvin, South Dakota. Now that's out near Wounded Knee .. . Sioux Indian country.

When we got out there I asked if there were any prayer groups in the area. At the airport the other men on the panel were kind of kidding around saying things like, "This will be an acid test for the Holy Spirit." You know, if we could find anybody at Blue Cloud Abbey to give witness, it would be a real test.

Sure enough, there was a prayer group of Sioux Indians. But the leader of the prayer group said that he wouldn't ask these men to speak, that they were too shy and too embarrassed. There were 50 priests and a bishop present at the symposium and he just didn't want to put his people on the spot. So we let it go at that.

On Wednesday I gave a talk on the healing ministry. Just about five minutes from the very end of the talk, the prior's bell rang and he disappeared. A little while later he came up to me — I was standing at the lectern — and he whispered. "Frank, there are three Indians who just came in. Two of them have

been healed. Would you like them to speak?"

And I said, "Sure, bring them in." So just as I finished the talk three Indians marched in. The other five men on the team just collapsed as if to say, "Oh, no!"

So the Indians said they would speak. There were two women and a man. What was especially good was that they had had no public speaking experience. It was clear that they didn't like it. They were afraid.

The first woman told them how she had been saved from witchcraft and various other things. She told how her life had shaped up and of the beauty of knowing Jesus Christ in a personal way.

The second person — a young woman — was very embarrassed. She had just come in out of the fields. She was dressed in blue jeans, kind of heavy set, and about 20 years old. She got up there and she was scared to death. She told these priests and the bishop. "You know, I didn't believe in this stuff either until a week ago. I went to a prayer meeting in Minneapolis. The minister there told us about healing. He prayed for me and I was healed."

Then she said, "You know, it made a believer out of me."

Then she sat down.

Now the man who had come in was an older man . . . very quiet. Apparently, he hadn't been willing to talk but after the two women spoke he decided that he should speak too. So he got up. He gave a very simple moving testimony. After he finished his testimony he looked out at those priests — this man dressed in tattered old clothes, very simple — and he said, not loud, "How many you men believe in Jesus Christ? Raise your hand."

They raised their hands a little bit.

He said, "How many you men ever heal anybody? Raise your hand."

About two hands went up. (I recently talked to a priest who was there and he said he would never forget the look on that Indian's face when only two hands went up.)

He looked out at them and he was dumbfounded. He said, "How come? You believe in Jesus Christ, you no heal anybody?" And he sat down.

These men were left there in the silence to ponder that and it was so beautiful. I've met men who were there and who were encouraged after that. They've begun to go out into the hospitals and to pray. It's just beautiful to see

this beginning to come alive everywhere I turn.

I'm really grateful to men like Oral Roberts, who at a time when this wasn't very popular went out. They knew that this was a genuine ministry from God. They went on and they did this. And it's through men like President Roberts that the healing ministry has come back into the churches.

Now there's something I would like to teach about the healing ministry because I know most of you, especially being connected with Oral Roberts University, know in a very deep way about the healing ministry. But there's something which has concerned, I think, almost all of us. Anybody who has ever prayed for healing has been concerned about this:

Why Is It That Some People Seem To Be Healed And Other People Are Not?

I've yet to meet a person who would claim that he had 100 percent success in praying for healing. In our own ministry we've had extraordinary results. When we pray for psychological healing, the Lord has healed about 80 percent of the people we've prayed for ... mental depressions and things like that. In physical healing, maybe 40 to 50 percent. When we get down to Latin America where the faith of the people is simpler — the percentage rises to maybe 70 or 80 percent. That's phenomenal. It's really good news.

But how do we account for those people who are not healed? How do we pray in such a way that we don't hurt those people who are not healed?

I'm sure you've faced that problem, haven't you? Some of those people who do not seem to be helped go away and they begin to feel that maybe God doesn't care. So we move all the way from some of the traditional churches that don't believe healing ever happens, except in extraordinary circumstances, to the people who believe that healing always should take place if you have faith. You have that whole spectrum. What I've seen has been with people who have a deep faith in the Lord and want to pray for healing. But there are a few people who are not healed . . . sometimes many who are not healed. Those people go away feeling that they don't have any faith or that the Lord doesn't care.

There's a great mystery involved. Unless God should choose to reveal it to us, we can't say that we know why a person is not healed. But let me just give you an example of the kind of thing that we've discovered, aside from a lack of faith.

If We Pray For Symptoms And There's A Deeper

Root Cause Why The Person Is Not Well, The Person Isn't Going To Be Healed.

The symptoms will come back if the root cause has not been taken care of. One of the common root causes is emotional problems that all of us have. We live in a very tense world, a very competitive world, and probably most of you are deeply affected by that world. If you are, that tension is going to be reflected in one way or another in your body.

Jesus said that we should not be anxious, we should not be troubled, but I find that most Christians, including most Christians who are baptized in the Spirit, have this kind of trouble with anxiety. You don't want it but you have it. And until those deep emotional problems are healed, the physical problems are probably going to remain.

Now I can give you a good example of this kind of thing from our own experience. One of my good friends who is a leader of a large prayer group — 1,000 people — in Minneapolis wanted to be cured of his habit of smoking cigarettes. It had come upon him in personal prayer that he should give it up. Not only that, although the prayer group was Catholic, many Protestant friends were coming.

Of course for many Protestants, smoking really is a moral issue. If they would see the leader of the prayer group smoking in between talks, they would be convinced that the Holy Spirit couldn't be in that prayer group. He knew this.

So he tried to quit but he couldn't. He got the leaders of the prayer group together and he said, "I want you to pray for me for healing." So the leaders of the prayer group, all ten of them, gathered around him and they prayed for him that he would be healed of this habit. The next morning when he woke up he picked up a cigarette, lit it up, and off he was going again.

Every time there was a guest speaker in that city he would invite the guest speaker over to pray for him. Some prayed for deliverance from demons. Some told him to claim his victory because he had already been prayed for. So he would claim his victory and the next morning he would light up again.

Pretty soon it was getting to be very embarrassing. He actually contemplated resigning as leader because he didn't want to give a bad example.

One afternoon when we were there we spoke about the Lord's ability to heal us of our emotional scars. We also mentioned the kind of scars that these often are and he suddenly got the inspiration. He said, "I know where it comes

from, I KNOW. When I was a teenager growing up I lived on the farm. I felt that my independence was really taken away from me. There was nothing I wanted more as a young man than to be free. For me, smoking cigarettes at home was a sign of freedom. One afternoon I saw my dad sitting in a rocking chair, puffing away on a cigarette. I went up to him and I said, 'Dad, I can hardly wait until I'm old enough so I can smoke like you.'

"My father, who was a very strong German Christian, looked at me and he said, 'Son, if I am that bad an example to you, I'm never again going to smoke in my entire life.' He took the cigarette out of his mouth, ground it in the ashtray, and quit."

Now you'd think he would really be edified by the example of his father, but far from being edified, he was mad. It was like it was his last grasp for freedom and his father was dashing it away and making him feel guilty about it at the same time. And he said that late in the evening he could hear his father coughing away because the withdrawal symptoms were very strong. He said that far from feeling sorry for his father, his deep-down feeling was, it serves the old man right.

As we were talking about this, all this came back and he realized that his smoking wasn't just a thing in itself, but it was connected to his teenage rebellion and for his need for independence. So we prayed for what had happened to him when he was in his teens, for his relationship with his father that it might be healed. As the Lord healed those deep things within his spirit, the cigarette smoking just fell away. And he had no problem after that.

So often we find that there is a mystery in these things. The fault isn't in the faith of the person we are praying for, but often the fault is in ourselves. Sometimes it isn't a sinful fault at all. It's just the fact that you and I are human beings. We don't know everything about everyone. There is a great mystery connected with human life.

The Ministry Of Healing Is A Ministry Of God's Love For Us

As long as we don't try to pretend that we are God and that we know all the answers ... as long as we don't try to blame other people for their lack of faith, but rather say, "Well, there's a mystery here. I really don't understand everything I pray for. I'll talk with you again and will pray for light, that the Lord might reveal His light on this situation," we find that this entire ministry is one of God's love.

Since I've learned that, I have to say that I don't think I've seen a single person hurt through prayer for healing, not a single person hurt. Everyone helped, everyone. Even those who don't seem to be physically healed go away with a sense that Jesus cares because I, as a Christian, have launched out and have looked at this person and talked with them and have been willing to represent Jesus to them by praying.

I'd like to encourage you all not only to pray, but to continue to pray and to pray even more for your friends. Usually the first sign that a person has that God is present is when they are healed. If you'll come to a person who is really beat down, who doesn't think that God cares, who doesn't have any faith, and say,

"Well, you may not have any faith but Jesus loves you, whether you know it or not," wonderful things will happen.

I'd say once every two months the Lord shows me in a very dramatic fashion that I don't know what I'm praying for. He wants me to know that I don't know all the answers. I'd like to give you an example of that.

About a year ago I went down to Houston to give a retreat. There was an old-time friend of mine down there who has seven children. After the retreat I went over to his home. I told his family about the movement of the Holy Spirit in the Catholic Church. They were really interested. I told them about the healing ministry. When I finished Harry said, "You know, my son Randy has asthma real bad. I wonder if you would pray with him."

So I gathered the whole family together and we prayed for Randy that the Lord would heal him of his asthma. Now in my experience asthma is a rather easy thing to pray for. Many people are healed of that. So I had a lot of confidence, humanly. I prayed, then I left.

After a period of time I was in Houston again and I called up Harry. I went over to his home and again had dinner. While we were all sitting around the table Harry said, "Hey, did we ever tell you about Randy?"

And I said, "No."

Then they all began to laugh. I thought to myself, well, that's kind of a weird reaction. Then they told me what had happened. After I walked out the door after praying for him, Randy had the worst asthma attack of his entire life. Really bad ... so bad that they weren't sure if he would live.

They called a doctor who lived right down the street from them. The doctor came over and gave Randy emergency treatment. Now Randy had been

going to a different doctor. So after this doctor finished giving Randy medication, he said, "You've got to get Randy over to my office first thing in the morning." They took Randy down to his clinic the next morning. They ran him through some tests and discovered that he had been misdiagnosed. He was put on the proper medication and Randy was cured.

Now was my prayer heard?

Yes. But not in a way that I would have expected. The way the Lord wanted to cure Randy was by getting Randy to the right doctor at the right time.

You never should try to put God in some kind of a box, in some kind of a structure, because God wants to be free. Not only does He want to be but He will. He's going to be free. God is not bound by these structures that we put Him in.

So when we pray for healing, our job is to pray in obedience to the Lord and then get out of the way and let the Lord produce whatever results He wants. When we do that we really find that what Dr. Roberts says is true, you can really expect miracles to happen .. . often completely unexpected miracles . .. absolutely unexpected. That's the good news of the gospel.

The Four Basic Kinds Of Healing

I think I've received a very good understanding from the Lord of the four basic kinds of healing that can take place. Unless we understand, at least in our hearts, that there are four different kinds, we are going to make mistakes. The four basic kinds of healing as I see them are healing of sin, inner healing, physical healing, and healing of demonic illness.

First, Healing Of Sin

This is the healing of the things that take place in our spirit which we are personally responsible for because we have sinned knowingly. Now in our church, and in all the churches, I think we've understood that the appropriate response when we have sinned is to repent. We need to change and to tell God that we are sorry. If we've hurt our neighbor we need to tell our neighbor too.

What hasn't been so clear has been the relationship of that kind of sickness in our spirit to physical sickness.

We had an extraordinary weekend retreat a few years ago which 200 people took part in. On Saturday afternoon we had a special common penance service. We asked people to repent. We especially asked them to repent of any

resentment or bitterness that they carried around in their hearts.

We have found in our ministry that bitterness and resentment and hatred are indeed the most serious sins. Far more serious than any others. I'm not saying that drunkenness isn't an important sin, but the worst sin is the lack of forgiveness. I think that explains why our Lord when He talked about prayer almost always talked about our need to forgive our enemy. He said:

Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift (Matthew 5:23,24).

That's extraordinary. This verse says if your neighbor has got something against you, go make it up with him, then come to the altar with your gift. So we know that there is a very close correlation between loving God and forgiveness.

Most of us, and I include myself, when something has been done to us which we feel is unjust, it really makes us angry. Now it's all right to be angry. Our Lord was angry. But we've got to do something about it and use that anger in a constructive way. If we let the sun go down on our anger and we begin to let that anger fester down deep inside, it's going to kill us. We usually feel real justified because the other person is so evil. It's like we say, "Why should I forgive him?"

During this retreat we had this common penance where we asked people to forgive. Immediately after that we had a prayer that the Lord would heal all those emotional problems that people had . . . the things that had happened to them . . . that had hurt them deeply.

There was no mention at all up to that point in this retreat of any kind of physical healing. We were out to deepen the Christian life in these people and to help them become more loving people in their community. But when we said that prayer, and when these people forgave, two were dramatically and instantly physically healed.

Afterwards one of the men got up and told the whole group about his healing. He said he'd had open heart surgery. Ever since this surgery his chest had been in constant pain. Of course, he had a real adequate physical reason for being in pain. But when I asked him to forgive he thought of his boss and a surge of anger went through him. I guess his boss was really hard to work for. As soon as he thought of his boss he said, "Oh, I hope this guy really gets it. I can't forgive. I can't forgive him because he's such a so-and-so."

Finally there was a long period of silence in which he tried to forgive. Then he thought, well, OK, I'll let him go; I'll stop chewing on him. When he did, all the pain left... all that physical pain.

It was a dramatic example of how our bodies and our spirits correlate with one another. We are not spirits, inhabiting bodies. We are one person made up of all these different components. I think many Christians are not sensitive to how much resentment they carry around deep down inside. I know I've got a lot and I have to keep working at it to get rid of it... to become a more loving person.

I think many of us are a little like Mark Twain. He said, "I know we are supposed to love one another as Christians. I don't hate anybody but if I ever do I've got the guy all picked out."

I think most of us are sensitive to the fact that we do need forgiveness and repentance for our personal sins. That's really clear. What we are not perhaps sensitive to is the relation of forgiveness with the physical ills we have.

Second, Inner Healing

Now the second type of healing is what I call inner healing. It's a healing of the kinds of problems that people have when they go to see a psychiatrist. These ills are not always caused by what you've done on purpose. They are caused by what has been done to you. In some traditions, we call this original sin. It's the sin of the world into which you are born.

They say that when we are little children growing up that the love of our parents has a great effect upon us. If our parents are loving and the people around us are loving, we will have a real head start on life to become loving people. But if we are deeply hurt, if we are rejected for one reason or another, especially in the early years, great damage can be done to us. -

Long before we have the strength to stand on our own feet and make a decision for or against Christ, long before that happens we are like clay almost, to be molded by our parents. If a child should have the misfortune of having a drunken father who is angry when he comes home at night, or maybe not have any father at all, or have a mother who doesn't really want the child, that child is going to be hurt. We know it. When we are loved we begin to grow and to expand. When people hate us it turns us in upon ourselves and we are affected.

We know from experience that when we ask the Lord to heal those things that have hurt us in the past, that are still with us holding us down, He will do it.

Because we know that this kind of suffering is not redemptive. It prevents us from receiving the freedom that Jesus wants to give us as children of His Father.

I personally have found that people who want to pray in tongues and cannot, that the most common reason for this is that there's some block — they are not free enough to respond. It's usually not a lack of faith. They want to, see, they really want to, but something has happened that has them all bottled up. After the Lord heals that, then over and over again I've seen them, on their own, come into the reception of the prayer language of the Spirit.

In one retreat I saw at least 20 people who prayed for this kind of healing afterwards begin for the first time to praise God in the Spirit.

I was giving one retreat and there were a number of Catholic sisters there. It was in the early days. I think this one night we must have prayed for about 60 people to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

About one o'clock that night one sister came up and said, "My sister (who was a blood sister) is in the back row. She wants to come forward and pray for the baptism in the Spirit but she's frightened." I said I would talk to her the next day. I talked to her and she was a very stable person. She was an administrator. Something in me told me to ask about her relationship with her father.

Sometimes if a person has a harsh relationship with their father, they think of God the Father in a harsh way. I asked her what her relationship with her father was and she said, "Well, heavens, there was no problem there. He died when I was one year old."

What had probably happened was that when she was old enough to understand, her friends, her mother, and others told her that God had taken away her father. They meant it to be a consolation. You know, "He is OK, he's with God. God took him." But to a little child it's like God had killed her father.

Everybody else has a dad, she probably thought, why am I the only one in the neighborhood who doesn't have a father? The reason that was explained to her was, God did it. To a little child it doesn't seem fair. No matter what anybody says, it's not fair that the person who should mean the most in your life, next to your mother, is not there.

So something in her told her not to trust God because if you get too close to God, He's going to do what happened to your father. You see that? It wasn't conscious. It wasn't anything she wanted. It was a deep fear she had of getting too close to God.

So we prayed that the Lord would heal her of what had happened when she was one year old, when her dad died. Later when this was explained to her and after we prayed, her whole face changed. She said, "Now I want to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit." And she did.

So we see that the Lord really wants to heal all those things that have happened to you in the past, that have hurt you, that make you do those things like Paul said, that you don't want to do. Jesus wants to free you from your anxieties and fears.

All of us have these fears that hold us back. Some are afraid that they will never have enough money. I suppose the deepest fear of all is that you are unlovable. Many people feel that God can't possibly love them. I find many people carrying around these wounds from the past — good charismatic people — and we don't have to if we understand that all we have to do is to go back to that situation and ask the Lord to heal it.

Third, Physical Healing

Now the third kind of healing we all know is physical healing. I suppose the only thing we need to say here is that it often is connected with an inner healing. Arthritis sometimes is connected with the tensions that we have. When you talk about people losing their healing, I don't think it's usually that they lost their healing and don't have faith. It's simply that the symptom has been taken care of, but the deep-down reason, the anxiety or whatever caused the illness, wasn't healed so the illness returned.

Many physicians feel that all illness is psychogenic, which means that it has this kind of component in it, that it originated in mental or emotional conflict. For instance, we all carry around tuberculosis germs. Now some people come down with it and others don't. Why the difference? Why are some people susceptible and others are not? Some doctors feel that the thing that makes the person susceptible is his weakness in his spirit.

I talked to an orthopedic surgeon last winter and he said, "A patient can come into my office and all I have to do is look at him. Before he says a word I can tell with about 90 percent accuracy what the disease will be that will finally kill him. There's something in the cast of a person's face that lets you know the problems he has got, where his weakness is, and how that's finally going to affect him in his body."

This makes so much sense in terms of the gospel. Jesus didn't come just to save souls. No, that's only one part of it. He came to save PEOPLE. If a man

was hurting and he was a leper, Jesus would cure his leprosy. If his sins needed forgiveness He'd reach out and say, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Wherever it was, Jesus would reach out to touch and to heal.

Fourth, The Healing Of Demonic Illness

Now the fourth kind of sickness is caused by demonic spirits. It took me some time to come to that conclusion. I believed that there were such entities, but I thought it was rather rare that they manifested themselves. I didn't think it was common. But in my healing ministry, from time to time I've come up against something where I felt that there should have been a healing. We really had prayed for the deepest thing and nothing happened. We realized that the only possible thing left was a demonic interference which prevents the other healings from taking place.

To give an example, when we were down in Lima, Peru, in our second retreat 250 people took part. It was meant to be in English because I don't know Spanish. We had a team of 12, but many Peruvians came to the retreat. They wouldn't be kept out so we really had to have simultaneous translation.

A young Peruvian woman came who had really been mistreated all her life. She was in real despair, very melancholic, and mentally depressed. She had no father. People tried to sexually molest her as she grew up. Her money was stolen, all kinds of terrible things happened to her as she was growing up. Her view of life was pretty dismal.

We talked to her and prayed with her and asked the Lord to go back into all those areas of her life where she had been hurt and to heal her. We had come to expect, as I said, that almost every time we pray that kind of prayer the Lord will answer it because that kind of suffering is no good, it's not redemptive. But there was no change in her.

Usually the change is so great that a person will move at least from sadness to peace and frequently from peace to absolute laughter. They will just sit in a chair after you pray with them and laugh as the freedom of the Lord comes in. Nothing like that happened to her.

The next day she came back with her interpreter and she said, "I'm sorry, nothing happened last night. Thanks for the effort."

We talked to her to see if there was anything she had missed. Sure enough, she said, "I forgot to say it because I didn't think it was important. Two years ago I had an intestinal illness and I went to a witch doctor. He went to the

corner of my room and he made some incantations, brewed up a potion and gave it to me. I drank it, fell to the floor, and screamed. Something happened to me and I was cured.”

I called in several priests who knew Spanish and together we performed a very simple deliverance. After that, her healing took place. So we do know if that’s what’s at stake it’s the kind of prayer that is necessary — the prayer of deliverance. This is very different from the healing prayer. With a prayer of deliverance, you talk to the evil spirit; you command it in the name of Jesus to leave.

That is the kind of ministry I never wanted to get into, and I do as little of it as I can. All I can say is, it’s necessary. Sometimes the reason the person hasn’t received healing is because a prayer of deliverance from an evil spirit is needed. On the other hand, I’ve seen people who will say that all sickness is of that nature.

I talked to a young man once who had acne and his prayer group had proceeded to drive out the demon of acne. Now this is where you really have to be open. Personally, that doesn’t appeal to me. I asked him what happened. That’s the test. He said, “Well, about four-fifths of it went. I just have a few blackheads left.” I don’t know. My first assumption would always be a more simple assumption unless there is real discernment. Something more is at stake because that’s not the kind of ministry that just everyone should get into. I don’t believe it should be done except by people who have a real ministry in it. And preferably — if there’s time — it should be done in private.

These are the four kinds of healing ministries that I know of in my own life. I think it’s really important when you are talking to somebody and you are going to pray with them to realize that any one of those four could be present, or any two or any three, or sometimes all four together. If you know this, it will prevent you from jumping to hasty conclusions and saying, “I know exactly what’s wrong.” Unless the Lord tells you, just proceed by what the person says and by what seems best to you.

It’s very important to be able to discern. Just as a doctor has the gift of diagnosis, built up through experience and understanding of people, we need a gift of diagnosis. It comes to us first through listening to God but also through our own experience and through really listening to people and recognizing that each person is unique. In one way, perhaps, we are all the same but each person has a different experience of life.

The Lord wants to come to each of us in that special way which is

personal to us. Because He loves you — not as a member of a mob, but as YOU — He calls you by name.

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Charismatic Movement Throughout The Earth by Rev. Michael Harper

Thank you, Oral Roberts. This is a great privilege for me to come here. This is my second visit to this university. It was a tremendous thrill to have Oral Roberts with us in England. I didn't know he was even in the country until he telephoned me from London. I was in the middle of a conference and we had a very big meeting scheduled for that Saturday. We had taken one of our big cathedrals for a festival of praise.

We hadn't gotten a speaker for the evening session and when I learned he was in London I thought I'd see if he would speak. It was just a long shot. So I asked him over the phone, "Will you speak on Saturday?"

He said, "Sure, I will."

I don't suppose it has ever happened before that on four days' notice one could get a speaker like Oral Roberts. Of course we didn't have any chance of publicizing the meeting... at least not that we would have Oral Roberts as the speaker. It was a glorious surprise for everyone. When he and Evelyn arrived, we could hardly get them in. The cathedral was filled. We reckon we had over 2,000 people there . . . every little space was taken up . . . people were even sitting on the floor. We had just a tremendous time in Guilford Cathedral.

Well, I'm thrilled to be at ORU and to be sharing with you about the most exciting subject that anyone could be sharing in today — the charismatic movement. I get more and more excited about it.

The tremendous thing about the early Christians is that it was evident for everyone to see that they were Christ's. I think the problem, basically, in the churches and in the lives of Christians today is that this glory of God is all locked up inside.

Now when we're baptized in the Spirit all that's locked up inside begins to come forth. That's the beautiful thing about it. It's a shining forth and it becomes noticeable that you are a child of God. It's a manifestation of the Spirit. It's for real. That's why so many people all over the world today are getting interested in this movement.

I think a lot of people come to the end of the road spiritually. They've had so much that's phony and so much that's unreal and so much that's dull and they want the real thing. You may have seen the great movie, *My Fair Lady*. In that movie there's a song which Liza Doolittle sings. I have a great deal of sympathy for her. She sings the song, *Show Me*:

Words! Words! Words! I'm sick of words.

Sing me no songs, read me no rhymes, don't waste my time, show me.

That's what I believe many people today are saying to the Church: "Words, words, words, we're sick of words. We've heard your theologies. We've listened to your sermons. Will you please now give us a demonstration. We want to see. Show us." That's what the early Christians did.

The Early Christians Were Able To Reach A World, Not Just By The Word But By Demonstration

Certainly, they preached the Word. They proclaimed the powerful Word of God but it wasn't the Word only. It was in demonstration of the Spirit... in power. The result was people's lives were changed. All kinds of people.

I don't want anyone here to think that the charismatic movement is just a little peripheral movement.

I've just recently been to Australia and one of the church leaders there said to me, "Is this the latest fad? We've had all kinds of fads in the past and all kinds of things that people get hold of that interest them for a few years and then they get turned off that, and turn on to something else."

I was able to say to him, "No, sir. I don't believe that's true. I believe this is the greatest thing that has happened in the Church since the Reformation. It could be the last great thing before the great day when Jesus Christ returns."

The Historical Link Between The Charismatic Movement And The Creation Of The State Of Israel

I want to draw your attention to the very fascinating link — historically — between the charismatic movement and the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. I believe when we look at the Word of God we shall see that there is a vital link, a fascinating link, between what's happening to God's people, the Jews, and what's happening to God's people within the churches as the Holy Spirit is being poured out upon us.

The history of the Jewish nation is one of the most fascinating histories of any people in the whole world. Hegel, the German theologian and philosopher said, "I can explain the whole of human history. But there is one thing I cannot explain and that is the survival of the Jews."

The great Prussian king, Frederick the Great, was an agnostic. He was in his court one day and very arrogantly asked, "Is there anyone here who can prove to me the existence of God? Is there anyone here who can give me proof that God exists?"

One of the court very boldly said, "Yes, your majesty, the Jews."

If you study history you will see this remarkable thing. The only nation, the only company of people, the only race which has survived all through these centuries without a country of its own is the Jewish nation.

There are two kinds of phases that the Jews have been through. First is the phase in which they have been persecuted. There have been many times when people have tried to wipe the Jewish race out. Hitler wasn't the first one to try to do it. Others have tried before him, without success.

Second, there came a period, a very interesting period in the nineteenth century, when it looked as if the Jewish nation would disappear completely. This was not because of persecution but because the Jewish nation began to be assimilated into the other nations.

The Jewish birth rate dropped significantly from about 3,000,000 to only 300,000. They were intermarrying. Two-thirds of the Jews were atheists. They were taking over all the finance houses in Europe. Two-thirds of the professors in Europe were Jewish.

Then persecution came again, beginning at the turn of the century, and the miracle began to take place. From just 300,000 Jews there are today more than 20,000,000 Jews throughout the world. Theirs is a wonderful story.

There were two very significant years: 1948 and 1967 which was the year of the Six-Day War. It's very interesting to notice that at the peak of the power Israel possessed 12,000 square miles. God had promised to Israel 300,000 square miles. Indeed, today, Israel is in possession of more territory than it was at its heyday, when King Solomon was on the throne.

The Gifts And The Calling of God Are Irrevocable

In Romans 11:29 it says that the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. The King James Version says — "without repentance." This is a

tremendous statement. If you will look at the context, you will see it has to do with the Jewish nation. God has called the Jewish nation and He will see that that nation survives. Eventually, I believe He will see that that nation will turn to Christ. The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. God never wipes out His gifts. He never withdraws them.

Now I think you may begin to see the very fascinating link there is here with the charismatic movement. In the charismatic movement we're beginning to see the return — on a large scale — of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Let me remind you again of that great event on the Day of Pentecost. When the Day of Pentecost took place questions were asked. People began to say, "What does this mean? Can you explain to us what this is all about?" And Peter gave a very simple explanation of it. Really, what Peter was saying is, "This is not an accident. This is not just a haphazard event. This is something which has been prophesied. This is something which is God's Word. This is the fulfillment of a prophecy that goes way back into the Old Testament, into the prophecy of Joel."

It is fascinating to look into the account of the Day of Pentecost in the second chapter of Acts. Peter says: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh (Acts 2:17).

The interesting thing here is that Peter alters one word in the Old Testament prophecy. He substitutes that little phrase, "in the last days," for Joel's word "afterward." If you look in the prophecy of Joel you'll see that it says:

Ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed. And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed. And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy (Joel 2:26-28).

What's the significance of the words, "in the last days" and "afterward"? I think it's very simply this. On the Day of Pentecost when Peter said, "Here is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel," it was quite impossible that there could be a literal and complete fulfillment of that prophecy. God was not on that Day of Pentecost pouring out His spirit upon all flesh because all flesh wasn't there. There were only 120 people gathered there.

The interesting thing is that if you look in the prophecy of Joel the whole context of this outpouring of the Spirit is to be seen in terms of blessings upon

Israel. "My people Israel," God says, "will never be ashamed." It's all in the context of the blessing on Israel.

Well, that was not fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, because Israel was far from blessed on that day. Israel was in subjugation to the Roman Empire. Israel was about to suffer in A.D. 70 the most terrible persecution that it has ever suffered. Virtually the whole Jewish nation was wiped out.

The Emperor Hadrian, who visited that area some time later, could find only one small village with about 70 people in it. That was all that was left of the whole nation. Over a million Jews were crucified after the awful siege and taking of Jerusalem. So that was hardly a time of blessing. It could hardly be said there that God's people Israel would not again be put to shame.

So Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, changed that word "afterward" to "in the last days." Now, the phrase, "in the last days," refers of course to the whole period between the first coming of Christ and His return in glory. That is the last days. Peter quite rightly is saying that this event that was taking place is not some remote event, not a haphazard event, but the beginning of a new age, the Age of the Holy Spirit, in which God is going to pour out His Spirit upon His people.

Now do you begin to see the significance of this historically? The interesting thing is that the birth of the Zionist movement took place at the end of the nineteenth century. That was also the birth of the Pentecostal movement. That happened at the end of the last century and the beginning of this century. Another interesting feature of this is that 1947-1948 was the beginning of Oral Roberts' ministry. And 1948 was the founding of the State of Israel.

Many people, looking back over the last 20 years, will say that one of the most important years was 1967. That was the year when the Jews entered in and for the first time since A.D. 70 took possession of the whole of the city of Jerusalem.

Now, do you begin to see what I'm getting at? Do you see now that Joel's prophecy is being fulfilled. Now Israel is being blessed and now it is possible that the Holy Spirit may be poured out upon all flesh, everyone all over the world — all denominations, all churches, all kinds of people. That's exactly what we're seeing.

The Pentecostal movement began at the beginning of this century and it has gathered momentum. In the 1940's and 1950's the Pentecostal movement expanded very rapidly and the movement began to penetrate into the historic

Protestant churches. The beginning of the Pentecostal movement in the Roman Catholic Church is generally reckoned to be 1967, following in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. The Jesus Revolution also began around that time here in the United States. So, you see, now the Scripture is being fulfilled literally, that "afterwards" — after the blessing of Israel — comes the restoration of God's gifts.

God Has Never Withdrawn The Gifts of The Spirit

The gifts and the callings of God are irrevocable. God has never withdrawn the gifts of the Spirit. In the past the Church has not entered into the blessing of the gifts of the Spirit. The Church has not received the gift of prophesying, the gifts of healing, the working of miracles. The Church has neglected them, forgotten them, despised them, not understood them. But now — and especially, I believe, linked with the State of Israel and the restoration of God's people — is this mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible teaches us that God has not rejected the Jews. He is restoring them. He is preserving them. He is keeping them. They are still His people. The cause of the Jews and the cause of Christ's people will one day, I believe, coincide. The people of God will be united as one people following the one Lord, Jesus Christ.

One of the major explanations of this charismatic movement is that it fits in perfectly with prophecy. It fits in perfectly with the purposes of God that in the last part of the last days there is to be this mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

We had a conference in Britain just a few days after the Six-Day War. In that conference we had a minister who spoke to us. He told us his subject was the State of Israel, the Jewish people, and the prophecies related to them. He reminded us of a very interesting Scripture. Jesus said:

When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh (Luke 21:28).

My word! You could hear a pin drop in that conference because we'd all been so excited and thrilled with this fantastic victory of the comparatively small Jewish army over the much larger, more experienced Egyptian army. We'd seen almost the words of the Bible there in the headlines of the newspaper. . . the very names and places that are sacred to Christians all over the world.

I want to tell you that I believe that's what we, as God's people, can do . .

. begin to lift up our heads. We don't need to be ashamed. We can look God in the face.

When we see these things beginning to happen, then I believe we can lift up our heads for our redemption is drawing near. God's plans and God's purposes are working out. His gifts and His callings are irrevocable.

It's a tremendous thing to see God doing this. Over the last 20 years I've seen tens of thousands of Christian people of all kinds of churches and denominations being filled with the Holy Spirit as on the Day of Pentecost, speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives them utterance and beginning to manifest the gifts of the Spirit.

The Charismatic Movement Among The Catholics

I think one of the most significant things is this charismatic movement among the Roman Catholics. I never believed it would take place. I remember David Du Plessis saying to me some years ago, "Now when these things begin to happen to the Roman Catholics, they're going to leave us miles behind."

I'm a good Protestant brought up in Protestant England. We feel these things very deeply in Britain, as you probably see from the newspaper accounts about Catholics and Protestants there. We're prepared to go and fight about these things. I couldn't believe it. . . but David is right.

In 1967 we had the significant beginning of the Catholic Pentecostal movement here in the United States. Now they reckon there are over a quarter of a million Catholic-Pentecostals in the United States alone. There are hundreds of thousands of them, and overseas as well. I met with some of them when I was in Australia recently. It's a beautiful thing to see the way God is working.

The Vatican Council opened the door for this. This would not have been possible in the Roman Catholic Church without the decisions made at the Vatican Council. I think it is amazing to see how people work and do God's will without realizing it. Many of those leaders of the Roman Catholic Church at the Vatican Council never realized what would happen in their deliberations about charismatic things.

Back home in England I've got a very interesting verbatim report of all the statements made by the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church when they had their discussion on charismatic gifts in the Vatican Council. It's fascinating to find that Roman Catholics advanced the same arguments as others that these gifts of the Holy Spirit were only meant for the early days of the Church — that

speaking in tongues, prophesying, healing were given to get the Church started.

Cardinal Simmons, who is one of the best-known Roman Catholic leaders, got up and said, "No, this is not right. These gifts of the Spirit were given to the Church for all time. We ought to be experiencing these gifts of the Spirit." The bishop also said, "Our experience is that when the Church most suffers persecution, that's when we experience the gifts of the Holy Spirit most."

God Is Pouring His Spirit Out On All Flesh

Walter J. Hollenweger, I suppose one of the world's experts on the Pentecostal movement, has written a 10-volume book on the subject. He thinks there could be as many as 15,000,000 Pentecostal believers in Russia. It's impossible to know. We cannot know the number that are in the underground Church in Russia because it's underground.

I believe the same thing is happening in other Iron Curtain countries. God is pouring out His Spirit upon ALL flesh. The glorious thing is to know that this is God's plan, God's purpose, the Word of God. This is in prophecy. It's being fulfilled today.

Now of course there are various arguments that have been advanced down through the years about the cessation of the gifts of the Spirit. I've already mentioned one of the main ones. The fundamentalist churches, particularly here in the United States and elsewhere, say that these gifts were given just until the Word of God had been completed. When the last sentence of the Word of God was written, then that was the end of the gifts of the Spirit.

There are other arguments. The more liberal theologians have sought to demythologize the Scriptures. So there's been the demythologizing on the one hand and the dispensationalizing on the other. These are the explanations that people have given for the cessation of the gifts.

It's very fascinating that when you look at the great church historians you will see that they are agreed that the gifts of the Holy Spirit flourished in the Church until at least the third century. I think it's quite clear, when we read the history of the Church, the reason why they were withdrawn at the end of the third century. They gradually decreased, not because the Word of God has been completed — that happened centuries before — but because there came a coldness upon the Church. The Church became institutional. The Church lost its first love. It lost its fire.

Adolph Hornack, perhaps the greatest of all church historians, reported in

his book that these gifts of the Spirit continued until the third century. Canon Michael Green in England has written a book on the subject of evangelism and the Early Church. He says the same thing. These gifts continued and were authenticating signs on the reality of Christian experience until the third century. These things have continued.

God has said:

His Gifts And His Calling Are Irrevocable

God never withdraws what He gives. The Scripture teaches us that when Jesus Christ returns then the gifts of the Spirit will be withdrawn. At Christ's return there will be no sickness and therefore no need for the gifts of healing. When He returns we shall know Him as He is. We shall see Him face-to-face so we will have no need for the gift of the word of knowledge. When He returns we shall be in such perfect union and communion with Him, so there'll be no need for the gift of speaking in tongues. These gifts will be withdrawn when they are no longer needed.

But the gifts are needed today more than they've ever been before. I think we have come to realize that our brilliant technological society has not got all the answers to human problems and needs. We're finding that we're being thrown back upon God again and again. I find this as I read what the leaders of the world are saying. If you could get inside those people and get inside their hearts, you would know that they are frightened. They are scared of what is happening. The Scripture is right, that men's hearts are failing them for fear of the things that are happening upon the earth. They don't know the answers to the problems. The problems are getting more and more complex as society becomes more and more complex.

I believe that God will provide the answers. God is willing to and God will do this by His Spirit. Can you imagine the leaders of some country like the great United States or our own country of Britain or any other nation, having available to them the gifts of the Holy Spirit? Can you imagine our leaders having discernment, understanding, words of wisdom, and words of knowledge so the complicated problems of our society could be worked out and understood? Is this not a possibility that we can think of?

The Gifts of The Spirit Are Unlimited In Their Scope

I think one of the most important aspects of the manifesting of the gifts of the Spirit is our understanding that they are unlimited in their scope. I think

those of us who have been brought up in the Pentecostal movement so often think in terms of the nine gifts of the Spirit. That's quite true as we turn to the 12th chapter of 1 Corinthians. There you'll see Paul lists nine gifts. But he never mentions there that the gifts are to be limited to only these nine gifts. There are other gifts mentioned in other parts of Scripture.

The Creative Gifts of The Spirit

One very important aspect of this, I believe, is the fresh understanding we need of the work of the Holy Spirit in creation. One of the greatest of Christian hymns is, "Come, Creator Spirit, Come." The Holy Spirit was active in the moment of creation. The Holy Spirit, we're told in Genesis, hovered over the earth and took the chaos that was there and made it into order and form and beauty. The Holy Spirit made this world beautiful but man has messed up the world. Man has taken what God has created and made such a mess of it. I believe God wants to give to us, by His Spirit, new creative powers which are of tremendous importance. I remember hearing Bishop Stephen Neill, an Anglican bishop, say he believed that every single person has within him the ability to write, or compose, at least one spiritual song or hymn that would be memorable. A great many of us aren't able to do and to create what God intends us to do and to create, because we're not aware of the mighty creative power of the Holy Spirit.

One of the tragedies, I believe, of history has been the way in which the great forms of art — architecture, painting, writing, poetry, and so on — have become so secularized. These great forms of art used to be so much the prerogative of Christian people. The Christians were inspired to write poetry. Christians were inspired to do those magnificent paintings that became such a common feature at the time of the Renaissance. Christians had this tremendous power of being creative.

But Christians have gradually moved out of that area. Sometimes Christians have thought that it's an area of sinfulness or that somehow Christians shouldn't be involved in this creative activity. Gradually, centuries have gone by and the result has been that these whole areas have been taken over by the world, taken over by those who want to use these forms for evil purposes. The result is that many people today — many Christians, I believe — are not being fulfilled in the way in which they could be.

The Gift of Music

One of the glorious things about the charismatic movement (and here I'm

mentioning a gift which isn't mentioned as one of the nine gifts of the Spirit) is the gift of music. People are beginning to be creative again in the area of music. I know people whom God is giving the power to write songs or to sing songs right on the spot without premeditation. Beautiful songs — songs that are, I think, going to be sung all over the world. This tremendous new creative power is coming out of people today.

I was fascinated when my wife and I went to see the show, *Godspell*. The thing that captured us about it was its tremendous message. The thing that haunted us as we came out was why haven't Christians done something like this before? Why aren't we in these tremendous art forms? I believe one of the things that is happening and is going to happen more and more in this charismatic movement is that the Holy Spirit within us will give us a new creative desire to do things for His glory.

One of the most interesting experiences I ever had was to baptize a Jewish man. He came to Christ because he was interested in art. He'd been across the whole of Europe and visited all the great art galleries. He told me that over and over again as he looked at the portraits of Christ, he was drawn to Christ. In the end he found it increasingly difficult to look at the face of Christ in those portraits. It was through paintings that that man was drawn to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is by no means the only person.

I believe thousands have come to Christ directly or indirectly through beautiful creative art. This is a whole beautiful area that we could move into. We don't have to be great artists and playwrights and poets and novelists to do this.

I remember speaking once upon this very subject in Britain. Afterwards quite a lot of people there came up to me and said, "Well, I have a great gift to make ceramics [or something like this] but when I became a Christian I gave the gift up." We found many people like that who have creative gifts and have given them up because they think that Christians ought not to develop those gifts. I'm sure that the people I'm speaking to now, that there are gifts of the Spirit in you which could be used to the glory of God if only you knew how. Our homes, our apartments, our schools, our churches, can be places of great beauty so that the very way in which we build the churches, the very way in which we decorate the whole thing can be charismatic, so that when people come in they sense that God is there. This is a new thing that God is bringing forth.

There are all kinds of ways in which God will inspire our lives. He will prophesy through us. He will give us gifts of healing. He will also give us creative gifts to inspire maybe large numbers of people. Who knows, maybe I'm

speaking to someone here who has an ability they don't know about to write plays to the glory of God, like the songs in Godspell and so on. These tremendous gifts are available to us.

We Ought Not To Classify The Gifts

There's another aspect of this that I would like to share with you, and that is that we ought not to classify the gifts. I think that's another mistake that people have made to classify the gifts into various important and unimportant gifts. This perhaps stems from the first epistle to the Corinthians. In the end of the 12th chapter of 1 Corinthians Paul writes:

Covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way (1 Corinthians 12:31).

I believe that verse has been misunderstood by people. I think if you look at the original you'll see that in actual fact, the imperative there which says, "Covet earnestly the best gifts" could also be translated as an indicative, so that it would read:

"You do earnestly desire the best gifts."

When this happens in the study of the Bible the only way we can determine whether Paul is saying, "Do this," or "You do this," which is the opposite meaning, is by looking at the context. If you look at the context there, I think you may agree with me that the normal translation of this may be wrong. I believe Paul is saying to the Corinthians not that they should covet earnestly the best gifts but rather that they DO earnestly desire the best gifts.

In other words, the problem with the Church at Corinth was that they did classify the gifts. If you'll read all of the 12th chapter of 1 Corinthians, you'll see that this is one of Paul's criticisms. Some of the people there who had very wonderful gifts looked down upon those with lesser gifts. There were other people who had lesser gifts and these people looked with jealousy and ambition upon those who had greater gifts.

The whole point of what the apostle Paul is saying in this chapter is summed up right at the end. I believe He is telling them not to classify the gifts. He is saying to them, "There is something wrong with what you're doing. This is what you're doing. You're coveting. You're desiring earnestly what you conceive to be the best gifts."

I think almost certainly that Paul had in mind the gift of speaking in tongues for it seems that the Corinthians rated this gift the most important of all.

They felt if a person spoke in tongues, he had already arrived. This was the greatest gift to them.

So right at the end of the chapter Paul says this: (I think this is absolutely crucial to our understanding of 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14, which are the main chapters in the New Testament teaching about spiritual gifts.) "You are classifying, you are grading the gifts. Don't do it. Don't desire the gifts for the covetous desire of your heart, but I will show you a still more excellent way of life."

All of The Gifts Are Important

All the gifts are important for the Body of Christ. There's always been a tendency, first of all, for the Church to despise those people who have the great gifts, the spectacular gifts, and not to want them to minister. Then there's the other way around too. Some people adopt another stance, so you have this conflict all the time.

Paul is saying, "Don't do that." Paul is saying that if you're full of the Spirit, if you have the way of love, then you will desire the gifts of the Spirit, not that they may be greater gifts or lesser gifts, but you will want the gifts that are going to bring blessings to other people. You will accept the gifts that God gives to you, whether they're great in the sight of men or lesser gifts in the sight of men.

The Gifts Are Given So The Church May Be Edified

This is terribly important to the future, I believe, because the whole of Paul's argument here in these chapters is in the context of the Body of Christ. The whole thing is set in the context of fellowship and community. These gifts are not given for an individual fireworks kind of display. . . not so that we can be big wheels. These gifts are given so the Church may be edified. The only distinction Paul makes at all in the 12th, 13th, and 14th chapters is between the gifts that edify the individual (speaking in tongues for devotional use) and the gifts that edify the Church.

Now Paul is saying those are the gifts that we should desire most of all because they edify the most people. Those are the gifts which I believe we should seek and covet. "Earnestly desire," Paul says, "the whole range of gifts of the Spirit but make love your aim." When we make love our aim and that's the motive and the desire of our hearts, the gifts of the Spirit will not divide. They will constructively build up the Body of Christ.

These gifts are sent and they're intended for the Body of Christ; therefore, they are to be worked out in fellowship with other people, not as individuals. The New Testament has no concept of people who are just loners, people who are just out on their own. The whole New Testament concept is the concept of the Church as the Body of Christ, of God's people sharing together the gifts that God gives to them. When that begins to happen, it's beautiful.

I think we can end on this very simple but personal note:

God Has The Whole of History In His Hands

If God is able to control the whole destiny of a people like the Jews ... if God has that control over history. . . don't you think He can give you what you desire? Don't you think He can use you and give you His gifts? If He can control millions of people like that, can't He control your life? Can't He lead you and show you the way that you're to go? If the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance and irrevocable, if God has called you — whatever that calling may be and God may be already beginning to show you—then God is not going to withdraw that calling. He will see you through it, however difficult it may be, however hard it may be.

God is going to see the Church through in these last days. These are the last parts of the last days. God has committed himself irrevocably to us. As we commit ourselves irrevocably to Him, then I believe we're in for a most exciting and most glorious time. I believe that the most glorious pages of church history are about to be written. God wants all of us to be involved.

Chapter 5, How To Know God Is Speaking To You

Suggested Scripture reading for this lesson: 1 Corinthians 14

Our subject for this chapter is the gift of prophecy. Prophecy is an inspired utterance by a believer. He is inspired by the Holy Spirit. Prophecy is words chosen by the Holy Spirit, not by the individual's own learning. It is usually a spontaneous statement, either short or long. It does not come out of something a person has learned . . . something he already knows. It is an inspiration, a flash, an intuition of the Holy Spirit himself.

God speaks to men, and has spoken to men, in many different ways since the dawning of creation.

God speaks through creation. He speaks to us through nature.

He speaks to us through special acts of providence . . . acts of mercy when our life is spared or the life of a loved one is spared. God speaks through some divine intervention, providentially.

God speaks to us by circumstances that we find ourselves in . . . circumstances that sometimes cannot be explained in human terms but, nevertheless, are there for a purpose. Often, if we understand what that purpose is we can change that circumstance. We can cause that circumstance to be rearranged and God will speak to us through that.

God speaks to us through the Bible . . . the holy Word of God. He speaks to us through this Word, written as men were inspired by the Holy Spirit.

God speaks to us when the Word of God is preached.

God speaks to us through the testimony — in word or song — of other Christians.

Oh, there are many ways that God speaks to us but we should remember that He speaks by an inspired utterance. That inspired utterance may be some portion of the Scripture which is spoken under inspiration by a specific person — you or me or someone else.

It could take the form of a verse or a part of the Bible. Or it could take the form of words that are not used in the Bible but are not contrary to the teaching of the Bible. It's an inspired utterance.

Prophecy usually comes at a time when you're facing something rather critical or strenuous and there isn't anything that will apparently meet that need in your life. You are dependent upon the Spirit. You are dependent upon some

special words to be spoken — a sentence, a statement, either short or long. Those words will be more meaningful to you than anything in the world. They will be more precious than silver or gold. They will be just right. Whether you understand them at that moment is immaterial. There are ways that you may understand them either at that moment or later on.

It's very important that we understand that the gift of prophecy has been working in Old Testament and New Testament times. It's been working throughout history. It is working today. What is prophecy?

Prophecy Is God Acting On History — It Is History Written In Advance

It is what God already knows, what God has decreed, what God foresees. He chooses to reveal something that He has foreseen, or to reveal something He has decreed to happen. This is why it is very important for you to understand that. . .

Prophecy Has To Be Confirmed On Both Ends Of The Line

That is to say, if you are inspired of God to give a statement of prophecy, an inspired utterance within the Church or to some individual, God not only must confirm that in your heart but also it must be confirmed in the heart of the other person. There must be a double confirmation, because prophecy is more confirmational than it is directional. I believe that is one of the most important things that you can learn . . .

Prophecy Is Confirmational. . . It Confirms Something More Than It Directs

I'll illustrate that. One of my warmest friends is the Reverend Harald Bredesen who has been a Holy Spirit-filled man now for quite some time. He is a pastor back East in the Dutch Reformed church. He was visiting here on campus and said to me, "Oral, I recently made a very serious mistake. It had to do with prophecy. Some believer, a Christian gave a prophecy over me that I was to go to Oregon. So I left New York and went to Oregon.

"When I got to Oregon I didn't know what I was doing in Oregon. I spent a little while there and had no direction, so I got on the plane and went home. I made a mistake. I took prophecy as a direction."

You see, not only were Adam and Eve gullible, but we are gullible too. Rev. Bredesen just laughed and said, "I was just gullible ... as a Christian I was gullible."

It happens every day. Christians are gullible. The reason Christians are gullible is that they are trying to believe, they are trying to have faith and not doubt. They want to believe people are good and not bad. They want to believe that people tell the truth and not a lie. That's a great trait. We must not lose that trust, but gullibility is a sad thing. We have it away back there in the beginning when Adam and Eve were gullible and believed whatever they were told, except they didn't believe God.

Let me give you another example. I received a letter from a man in the days when I had the big tent with 10,000 chairs. We were having these tremendous crusades and he wrote and said, "The Holy Spirit has shown me that you are to purchase me a big new tent and all the equipment and trucks and everything I need and make it as a gift to me. I'm going to become an evangelist. This is a prophecy from the Lord to you, Oral Roberts."

I dropped him a note back and said, "Wonderful, but God works on both ends of the line. As soon as He tells me, I'll do it."

He hasn't told me so I've never done it. In other words . . . PROPHECY HAS TO BE CONFIRMED ON BOTH ENDS OF THE LINE.

Another example: This is probably the best example I can give you tonight. When the Lord laid it on my heart to build this university He said many things to me, one of which was this, "Build it under the authority of God and on the Holy Spirit." After I started building and before we had become academic in our classes — we were just putting up some of the buildings, going through those struggles — I received a letter from a man in Canada. In the letter there was quite a liberal check. The man wrote, "I want you to apply this on the school." Then he said, "Oral Roberts, I do not want you to think that I like you because I'm sending you money for your school, because I really don't like you. I don't like to hear you preach."

But he said, "The reason I'm sending you this check is very important. It's important to you. My dislike for you is not something violent. I mean, I don't hate you or anything like this. Your personality and mine just clash. It's just one of those things. But I'm sending you this check because the Holy Spirit said to me to send you this check and to tell you to build the university on the Holy Spirit."

Then he added in a line that really, really upset me. He said, "I went to the bank and drew out my life's savings and that's what this check represents. Now do you understand that it's important that you build a university on the Holy Spirit? Do not try to write me back, because I'm not including my address. I never intend to see you; I'm only doing what the Holy Spirit told me to do."

We had a meeting and decided that if the man drew out his life's savings to send to us, that we should try to return it. It didn't seem right to us. We actually had a conference of our top men. After we had prayed every one of us said, "No, this is a confirmation."

The Lord had said to me, "You build it on the Holy Spirit." Now the check came at a critical moment when funds were hard to come by. There were people coming at me from all sides and several were saying, "Don't preach on the Holy Spirit so much. You'll drive people away." Now here comes a confirmation to me to keep on preaching on the Holy Spirit and to build the university on the Holy Spirit, and it was backed up with something you could take to the bank.

Now that was a prophecy confirming something that was already working in me. Don't you see that God was working on both ends of the line? And God always works on both ends of the line.

1 Corinthians 14 and The Gift of Prophecy

Let's turn to 1 Corinthians 14:1 and read a little bit more about the gift of prophecy:

Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. Apparently, prophecy is to be desired more than any of the other eight gifts. Notice in this same chapter (verse 39) that it says:

Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.

It says here to covet to prophesy because prophecy has a purpose to aid the lives of other people.

He that prophesieth speaketh unto men (1 Corinthians 14:3).

Speaking in tongues is vertical: man to God. Speaking in tongues is from your spirit, over your tongue, directly up to God. It is a subjective experience through which you express the innermost longings and hopes and feelings of your heart. It is spoken in a language that you have not learned — in a language not stored up in your brain.

Prophecy is just the opposite. It is a horizontal experience. It's man to man.

Speaking in tongues is from man to God. The interpretation of tongues is God back to man, and man to man. The interpretation of tongues has a great similarity to prophecy. When we get into the discussion of the gifts of tongues and the interpretation of tongues we'll go more deeply into that phase of it. Right now, suffice it to say that the interpretation of tongues has some relationship to prophecy because both ultimately are man to man.

He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3).

First, The Purpose Of Prophecy Is To Strengthen The Inner Man

Prophecy lifts us up spiritually. It strengthens our inner man.

Second, Prophecy Is Given To Exhort

The purpose is to exhort or to urge. There may be a special word given — an inspired utterance — that you will feel urging you on closer to God or urging you to obey God, urging you to be strong in a moment of crisis. It may be an exhortation that will cause you to be strong, to hold up your head, rather than to give way to whatever temptation is facing you.

Third, Prophecy Is For Comfort

I mean, just plain old calming you down. There isn't a one of us that doesn't need to be calmed down at times. There isn't a one of us that can always be calmed down by somebody other than God. Sometimes it takes divine intervention. The Holy Spirit has to intervene. The Holy Spirit has to give a special word to us. We hear it by the ear but we feel it in our hearts. It has the effect of calming us down. Oh, in the age in which we live, how precious it is to receive a word from the Lord in prophecy that has the effect of calming our hearts.

Fourth, Prophecy Speaks To The Intellect —The Mind

But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned [one uninitiated in the gifts of the Spirit, one that doesn't understand the gifts of healing or gift of miracles or gift of tongues or gift of prophecy, then

when you speak to him in prophecy] he is convinced of all, he is judged of all (1 Corinthians 14:24).

WHY? You see, prophecy speaks to the intellect, it speaks to the mind. It speaks to the understanding of the other person. If a person who is either not a Christian or he is a Christian but is not informed on the nine gifts of the Spirit, were to come in to a group of Christian people, prophecy usually is the gift that would be most helpful to him. We are told here that he is convinced. He is judged. Thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest. Falling down on his face he will worship God. He will know that God is in you of a truth. This is prophetic utterance.

Fifth, Prophecy May Come As Part of a Sermon

Many times I've been preaching a prepared message and suddenly it was like I was handed a heavenly bulletin . . . something I had not prepared or studied. Suddenly a stream of words would come out of me and it would be exactly right for some unsaved person and some person not initiated in the gifts of the Spirit. That person would feel something going down his spine. He or she would respond to it and often they have been saved.

During this semester several of the people in this class have sent us word that they have been converted. Some had never been Christians before. They were just sitting there listening, when a word came to them and a feeling of the Spirit accompanied by that word. They just opened up their hearts and let Jesus in.

Several have sent us word that they began to speak quietly in tongues for the first time in their lives. Others received a direction and a confirmation of something they already felt. Well, that is because at that moment something inspirational happened. Something inspired of the Spirit . . . something beyond me. . . something beyond you.. .was given. But it was surely from God.

Notice in verses 30-32 of 1 Corinthians 14 that it says:

If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

What Paul is saying here is that. . .

When One Of Us Gives An Inspired Utterance We Must Be Willing To Be Judged — To Be Tested . . .

What we say has to be tested. It has to be evaluated. One of the things you want to be careful about is someone running around giving prophecies — someone you don't know or somebody who is not willing for his words to be tested — who says what he wants you to do and wants you to do it right now. He doesn't want you to wait upon the Lord.

Don't listen to people like that. That's a very foolish thing. If people are not willing to be judged I discount their prophecies completely. I've never been

afraid to say no to any kind of prophecy like that because I don't believe in it. I don't believe it is scriptural. If we are not willing for our words to be tested and tried, then we can be sure there is something wrong with us and we're not there for the right reasons.

Paul says that...

... all may prophesy

It's within the domain of every child of God to give an inspired utterance but we must submit it to those who sit by. They must be able to evaluate it. That means, wait upon the Lord. Don't just take off on everything you hear. Judge it. See that it is real.

Finally, Paul says that. . .

The Spirit Of A Person Giving Such An Inspired Utterance Is Subject To Him.

He doesn't have to give a prophecy just because he feels it. He has to time it. It's really important to time anything you do — not merely prophecy but anything you do! We have to time our inspired utterance. There has to be order in it. There's a moment for it.

You don't interrupt someone else. You don't interrupt a preacher or a singer. You don't jump up and try to take over the meeting. That's a bad spirit and we have to contend with that sometimes. There are very sincere, honest people who simply either don't know any better, or they're just determined to bull their way through, regardless. And they do a lot of harm.

A Specific Example Of The Gift Of Prophecy In The Apostle Paul's Life

Paul was coming back from one of his missionary trips on his way up to Jerusalem and he stopped at the house of Philip, who had several daughters who prophesied. These girls manifested a gift of prophecy. While Paul was there for a few days a prophet came in, a man who not only had a gift of prophecy manifest in him from time to time, but himself was a prophet.

There are two types that I'm referring to here: One is a person who is a prophet, who is a gift to the Church. He himself is a gift to the Church. The second is a person who is not a prophet but through whom a gift of prophecy may be manifested. He or she may give an inspired utterance at specific times.

Well, while Paul was there a prophet by the name of Agabus came in. He took one of Paul's garments and tied it into knots. Then he said, "Now this is what's going to happen to the man to whom I give it." And he hands it over to Paul. It was a word of prophecy. Agabus said:

Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles (Acts 21:11).

Agabus' words and the knotted garment signified persecution, danger and death. It was a prophecy — an inspired utterance — but it was also directional. It was pinpointing the town. It was pinpointing exactly what would happen.

About that time all the Christians around Paul broke into tears and begged him not to go to Jerusalem, fearing for his life. Paul said:

What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart ? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 21:13).

Paul was saying, "Certainly, I'm going to Jerusalem because that is a part of my calling."

Paul went. He was in danger. He was rushed into prison. He was tried and later sent to Rome and ultimately he was killed.

What was happening? Paul was getting an inspired utterance from God of what awaited him. As I said, prophecy is history written in advance. It is God foreseeing . . . foretelling. It is God acknowledging something that has already been set in motion. Inspired utterance gives maybe a little glimpse into the future but that doesn't mean it is directional. Certainly not always. In my view, not often at all. It is confirmational. Paul is saying, "I know that I'm going to be persecuted. I know that wherever I go — whether it is Jerusalem or otherwise — my life is in danger, but I'm going." It was a confirmation to him. Rather than accepting it as directional he took it as confirmational. . . something which confirmed what he already knew in his heart.

The Gift of Prophecy and the Beginning of This Ministry

In 1947 I lived in Enid, Oklahoma. I was pastoring a small church and attending Phillips University and coming into the climax of my life when this healing ministry was to begin through me. I certainly didn't know much about it. I don't claim to know all about it now but I knew much less then. I had begun to

pray for people and to tell them about our healing Lord. In 1947 not many Christians were talking about the healing Christ, and fewer still were laying their hands upon the sick and praying for their healing.

There was a neighbor of mine — an unchurched, unsaved man — who had been noticing me while I didn't know that I was being noticed. He'd been coming into the church service and sitting in the back, observing me. One day he saw me and said, "Mr. Roberts, I'm so-and-so and I just want to tell you something. I want you to listen to me." By this time he had opened his heart to God and I could tell that he was really sincere. He said, "You're not going to be in Enid much longer. You're going to leave Enid."

I said, "Why would I want to leave Enid?" I'd already begun to think about building a university. I had looked at a piece of ground there. I didn't know when my time would come to build it but I wasn't going to leave anything untouched in case that was the time.

He said, "You're going to leave. The message of God's healing power that you're preaching is too big for one little town. It's big enough to fill the world."

Although I had looked at pieces of land, in my heart I remembered what God had said, "You are to take My healing power to your generation." Subconsciously I knew that I couldn't do it in one small town, but I didn't take this man's prophecy as completely directional. Although in my heart there was a response to it because God had said, "You are to take My healing power to your generation."

We Tested The Prophecy

In a few days we began to test out this prophecy. We didn't think about leaving at that time. We made no plans to leave but we drove over to Tulsa. While we were here we learned that Rev. Steve Pringle had a big gospel tent on the north side of town. We drove over, having known him for several years. We sat in the meeting and when he learned I was there he asked me if I would come up and speak.

It was a cold, rainy night and only about 200 people were present. I went up into the pulpit and preached. I gave an invitation for men to come to Christ. We were all greatly surprised at the large number from the 200 — percentagewise — who accepted Christ.

As I finished praying for those who came to accept Christ, someone

asked me to pray for them. They hadn't heard yet that I'd entered the healing ministry. I prayed for that person and the Spirit healed him. Another one came and I prayed and that person was healed. Seven or eight were healed that night.

So Reverend Pringle asked me if I'd speak one more night. I spoke the next night, and the next night the crowd was doubled and the whole thing was repeated. Then he asked me if I would hold a revival for him. I said, "I will stay here until Sunday."

What I was saying in my own heart was, "I'm going to test this prophecy. Am I to leave Enid? What is my reason for being here in Tulsa?"

About three things happened to confirm our moving to Tulsa and starting this ministry with this as the world capital base. By Sunday night that tent which seated 1,000 people (which at that time was the biggest thing I'd ever seen outside of a circus tent, and so big that I could not conceive of it being filled for the gospel, certainly not by a stranger who had just driven into Tulsa) was filled and people were standing around outside. We were having to pray for the sick until midnight. We decided to stay another week. By that time people began to hear about what was happening.

My Life Is Endangered

Then one night a man was enraged by it all so he stepped across the street, pulled out his revolver, pointed at my head, pulled the trigger, and tried to kill me. The bullet passed within inches of my head. It tore right through the tent canvas and left a big hole.

Then came the law to arrest this man and newspaper reporters to get the story of what had happened. The wire services picked up the story and the next day across America, from coast to coast, the name Oral Roberts was known. I don't think it was known for the same reason that man intended for it to be known, but they told the story of what I was doing — that I was praying for the healing of the sick.

People began to fly in from all over America — pastors wanting me to come to their churches, delegations from other cities wanting a crusade. I didn't even know what the term meant at that time. People were flown in by airplane to be healed. We stayed there nine weeks, all summer long, and I guess we could have still been there. The results just kept climbing and climbing. There were nights that I'd pray for the sick until 1 o'clock in the morning. You had to come at 3 o'clock in the afternoon in order to get a seat inside the tent. People would bring their own chairs and be outside or have to stand outside.

We Bought Our First Home With \$25

Well, you see, God began to confirm something. But now where would I live? I began to feel that God wanted me in Tulsa. I examined the airlines and I saw that here's a city right in the middle of America. There were good airline connections and it all began to fit in place.

But now I had no place to live and worse than that, I didn't have any money. All I had was \$25 and that is not much money, whatever age you live in. We had \$300 worth of furniture in our house. Our dining room table was so rickety when you put your elbows on it, it went whichever way you leaned. And we were paying on our little car.

A friend of ours who lived in the city walked up to me and said, "Oral, I want you to see my house. It's a nice two bedroom house. We're going to leave and we'd like to sell it." Right in my heart came the confirmation, here is my house. Then right out of the blue he said, "But I've already sold it. The man's coming at 6 o'clock tonight."

And I thought, why did he talk to me about buying this house when he's already sold it?

I called Evelyn, my wife, off to the side and I said, "I have the strangest feeling of confirmation from the Spirit that this is our house." When 6 o'clock came — we were his guests that night for dinner — the gentleman who said he was going to buy it didn't show up. So my friend said, "I'll wait till 7 o'clock." Then he said, "I'll wait till 8 o'clock." The fellow did not show by 9 o'clock.

By that time I had gone on to preach, then came back to spend the night with this man at his invitation. I certainly didn't have money for a hotel in those days. When I got back he said, "Oral, this man hasn't come. Would you like to have this house?"

I said, "Oh, I don't know."

He said "I'll tell you what I'll do, Oral. We kind of feel like you ought to have this house." Then he named the price he wanted, and the down payment.

He might as well have said a million dollars because that's what it amounted to as far as my ability to make the down payment was concerned.

I said, "I'll take it."

He said, "Good. In the morning I'll go to the bank and get the papers and you can sign them."

My wife and I went to bed. I don't remember if we slept well or not, but we got up the next morning and he went uptown and had the papers all filled out, with the amount of the down payment, and brought the papers back.

I'll tell you how much the down payment was. Houses were not very expensive then. The house was \$6,000 and he wanted \$3,000 down and I'd agreed the night before. I had \$25 to my name.

He laid the papers out in front of me and said, "There's where you sign." I picked up the pen. And I started down. I've often wondered what would have happened, for if something hadn't happened, I wouldn't have signed my name because it would have been wrong. But I was bringing the pen down when he said, "Wait a minute. Anna and I have decided to build us a house and we're going to wait a year. If you make this down payment, we'll just have to put the money in the bank so why don't you just wait a year to make the down payment."

I said, "Just as you say. Just as you say." So now I had confirmation. The prophecy I'd received back over there was not merely directional. I was confirming it. God was moving on ALL ends of the line — not just both. We moved in without any of the money that was required. All we had to do was pick up the monthly payments which I felt that God would help me meet, and He did.

The crusade lasted nine weeks. By that time we had invitations from all over the country. Wherever we went we were swamped with crowds and people expecting to be healed. That was the way the ministry got underway.

The Gift of Prophecy And The Purpose of This Ministry

Now as we went along in this ministry, more was revealed. While in Denver in about 1953 I received a prophecy that I held for 10 years. That's a long time to wait to have a prophecy confirmed, but I can tell you this, the best thing in the world on most prophecies is not to act quickly but to test them out, to judge them, and to judge the person.

The Spirit was revealing to me the purpose of my ministry, that it was going to have to do with the healing of the Body of Christ, the sick Body of the Bride. . . that I was to be like a John the Baptist who was a forerunner of the first coming of Christ. .. that this ministry would have to do with the end time and with the second coming of Christ, the renewal of healing, and the renewal of the gifts of the Spirit.

I didn't know many people at that time who were doing anything like what I was doing — certainly not on a big scale. So I was thinking of it in terms of the way God was speaking to me — that I was to have a specific part in the ushering in of the end time. I wasn't told when the end time was coming. I wasn't told then. I'm not told now. So I don't worry about it.

Ten years later, in 1963, we now had gotten up the first buildings here at ORU. We decided to have an international ministers' seminar. Hundreds of ministers from 56 nations flew here for 14 days at our invitation.

God Confirmed A Prophecy Given Ten Years Before

One day a British pastor — brilliantly educated and dynamically spiritual — said in clipped words, "I have a word of prophecy for you, my Brother Roberts." Among the things he said were these, "God has raised you up. (That was not news but he was saying it, so I was listening.) And God has given you a divine project which is directly related to the healing of the Body of Christ. God will give you the qualities of leadership, and if you will be faithful He will make you big enough for the task."

I thought about that. In fact, I had him to give it to me again. I took my pen and wrote it down. I still have a copy of all the words he said to me in that prophecy. It was a confirmation but that was something I knew. Now here it comes back to me what God has spoken out of the depths of my own heart 10 years before. And then he said that God would give me the qualities of leadership, which I felt I lacked. I felt that something like this had to have leadership and I was inadequate for it. Now God was giving me confirmation that what I lacked He would give me a gift from himself.

Do you know there are people who sincerely believe that I would be successful in any endeavor in life. I don't believe a word of it. They think that I have extraordinary powers through birth. You know, in the way some people are gifted through birth. It's a nice compliment and it makes me feel good, but I know I don't have them. My success is through the Spirit of God. Where were all those qualities back there when I was going nowhere? When I was starving to death? When I couldn't get the needs of people met? When I didn't know what to do? If I'm born with such gifts, where were they? They didn't begin to express themselves until the Holy Spirit, through the gifts, began to manifest himself in my life and to me. That's encouraging to people who feel they're inadequate.

I was born a stammerer. Well, I don't think you can expect much out of a

guy who stutters all the time and winds up as a young man flat on his back with tuberculosis. He isn't going anywhere. So people who feel inadequate, I think, have to be encouraged when they know that if they yield to God that God can supply the missing dimension for whatever He purposes for them to do.

God Doesn't Purpose The Same Thing For All Of Us.

Each of us is unique and we have to learn what God wants us to do and not get outside of it. I think if I've had any brilliance at all it has been at this point, to stay within what I'm called to do. To learn it and stay in it. Don't get outside of it, because that's the way you're going to make a fool of yourself and dishonor God.

So the confirmation was coming. It came from all sides.

A Prophecy Comes That Is Not Of God

Well, about that time a man came on campus and he said, "I have a prophecy for you." He was an uninvited guest. That's pretty touchy at ORU for the uninvited could come out here and take this place over. Several have tried, and he was one of them. He said, "The Lord sent me here and the Lord sent me here to tell you..."

I said, "Now, just wait a minute. Who are you?" "What difference does that make?"

"It makes a lot of difference. You know my name. Why can't I know your name?"

"Well, I'm so-and-so."

"Where are you from?"

"I'm from so-and-so but I want to ... "

And I said, "Now wait a minute. Where's your wife?"

He said, "She didn't come."

I said, "You know why she didn't come?"

He said, "What do you mean?"

The Gift of Discerning of Spirits Was Working In Me

By that time the gift of discerning of spirits was working overtime in me. I had smelled him and the smell I had was the devil. I said, "Your wife isn't here because you're not married to her. And you're not married to the second one.

And you're not married to the third one." By that time he quietened down considerably. When he opened his mouth again I said, "And the one you're living with is not your wife." Then he said, "How did you know that?"

I said, "I didn't know it, but when you came in here you didn't come in as a humble man of God, meek and obedient. You came in here on private property and burst your way through."

He didn't know I had seen him come down the aisle, brushing people out of his way. I knew that was not of God because discourtesy is never of God. I mean I didn't have to get as close to him as I did to know he was wrong. But when I got close I began to understand things about him. I said, "Brother, you've got to repent and turn to God and let God clean up your life."

He really flew into a fit of anger. He began to attack me.

I said, "Now wait a minute. This is private property."

He said, "I don't care if it is. I'm a man of God and I'll..."

So I said, "I'm going to ask you one more time to humble your heart because God can deliver you. He loves you. You've been doing this — not only here but other places. I can tell that you're making this a way of life and it's going to destroy you. You've got to repent and ask God to cleanse your heart."

He wouldn't do it.

I said, "If you do, we're going to let you stay but if you don't we're going to put you off this property." Then he said, "I don't have any money. I don't have anywhere to go. I don't have a thing to eat."

I said, "We'll let you spend the night, give you dinner and give you breakfast, but you'll go in the morning."

So he agreed. I called my men and they took charge of him.

A minister brother standing by me said, "Please tell me how you knew all of this."

I said, "Did you see his eyes?"

He said, "Yeah, they looked all right to me."

I said, "You look at the eyes of a person who is saying he's doing the work of God. You look at his eyes. There's always something snaky looking in the eyes of person who's not sincere when he says he's doing the will of God, when he's not with God. There's a look in his eyes and there is an odor to him and it isn't body odor. I mean you can pick it up, you can smell it. Then I picked

it up, inside, that this man was living in adultery.”

And he says, "Is this something special God has given you?"

I said, "I don't know. You asked me and I'm telling you how I picked it up."

I've always believed that wherever there's one gift of the Spirit there are several others hovering around. Those big brothers are there to help us out. You can expect this.

All right, in a few days I made a mistake and I had to apologize. A young man came up to me with a prophecy. I had my mind on something else and I said, "Leave me alone. I don't have any time."

And he said, "Well, Brother Roberts, just as you say."

The quality in his voice spoke of the sweetness of his spirit and I turned around and I said, "Young brother, come here, I think I spoke rashly. Give me the prophecy again and I'll listen."

He gave it to me.

I said, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll take 24 hours and sleep on it and think about it and pray about it." And I did. I called him back and I said, "This prophecy is of the Lord. It confirms something He's already spoken to me about. I thank you because I could have missed it." This brings out the fact that not only the one doing the prophecy can miss it, but the fellow over whom it's said can miss it too, including myself.

There's a verse in 1 Corinthians 13:9 that says, "We prophesy in part..." I want to emphasize that none of us is perfect. While I'm bringing all these things out I don't want to put myself in a position where anyone would interpret that I think I am perfect. I've had some success along this line. I've had some failures too, and this one I almost failed on. I almost missed it and I would have missed it had this boy not been humble.

The Gift of Prophecy In Preaching

I was getting ready to preach in a crusade in Fresno, California. One hour before I was to speak I was still in my hotel room getting ready. I've always spent lots of time with my Bible before I preach. If I had to estimate how much time I put into a sermon, I'd say it's at least 10 hours. No matter how well I know the subject, I've always thought that you really have to prepare yourself from the Bible to preach the gospel. I'd been preparing most of the day and then

all of a sudden there was a word of prophecy given to me by the Spirit. From within, the words stood out like blazing balls of fire:

It Is Later Than You Think!

I said, "Sure. I believe that." Then suddenly I realized the Holy Spirit was talking to me: "It's later than you think." So my mind went to a Scripture about the second coming of Christ.

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only (Matthew 24:36).

I said, "You see there? No one knows the day or the hour of our Lord's coming."

Again it came: *It is later than you think* and He was speaking to Oral Roberts. *It's later than you think.*

My mind went to the sixth chapter of Genesis where God destroyed the world with a flood because they had resisted God and God's Spirit had ceased to strive with man because they had now crystallized their opinion against God. Their sins had reached from earth to heaven and their wickedness had filled the earth. It was like all of their opinions against God had come to be one gigantic opinion. It had crystallized like concrete. It had become hardened and unchangeable and God knew there would be only one family who would obey Him so He was going to start all over again. Now God was saying to me, here's a prophetic word for the people of this generation:

It's later than you think. The opinions of men are crystallizing. Nations' minds are hardening against God. The world is not going to be saved. No nation is going to be saved. Only individuals. Only groups. Institutions will not be saved. Only individuals, for Christianity is one on one. Christ in you.

You're not going to get America saved. You're not going to get the world saved.

IT'S LATER THAN YOU THINK.

A Thousand People Came Forward To Accept Christ... And A Baby Died

When I went out to speak that night I was like a new bullet in a new gun. When I began to preach the words poured out of my mouth and soul. People sat on the edges of their chairs. When I made the appeal over a thousand people got up. They climbed over chairs to get down in front to accept Christ.

Right in the midst of it a little baby died. A mother screamed, "My baby has died." It died right in her arms. She rushed down the aisle and threw the baby at me. Just almost tossed it at me and I caught that little baby. By now its body was stiffening. Its mouth was closed.

I never was in such a critical moment of my life. There I had just given a word of prophecy. I had spoken of the end of time that was nearer than we think. Now right in the midst of a thousand people accepting Christ, a little baby died. We asked for a doctor and there wasn't a doctor in the audience. There I stood before 10,000 people with a little baby that wasn't breathing anymore. I thought, oh, Lord, what do I do now?

I held that baby in my arms. I felt the Holy Spirit coming through my body, coming into my hands, and I touched that little baby. I asked the mother the name and I spoke to that baby. I don't know if its name was Mary but I'll just use the name Mary to illustrate my point. I said, "Mary, honey, Jesus wants you to live. He wants you to live."

By that time I wasn't aware of the crowd at all. I was just up there with Jesus and that little baby. I kept speaking to the baby just like it was living. Well, I knew it was living, even though its spirit may have already been with our Lord. The little body was stiff. I knew I could speak to the child and I kept on speaking.

Suddenly, there was a jerk and another jerk and the mother screamed and grabbed her baby and the little baby began to breathe and to be all right. I stood there thinking about God. God, how could I ever limit You again?

Maybe that would never occur again. Maybe I could pray for another baby like that and nothing would happen. But when we dismissed the meeting that night after I had prayed for this long line of sick people, there was a confirmation in my heart and it was this: "Oral Roberts, it's later than you think and the things I've been dealing with you about — the university and things like that — you must do. Get at it." There was a confirmation to me, you see. Let me tell you it wasn't long till this school began to go up.

What I'm trying to say is the prophecy has a part in people's lives — not necessarily directional but confirmational.

The Gift of Prophecy and Healing

Let me tell you one more thing. This will truly interest you because it happened in this city of Tulsa and it happened in regard to a member of our

faculty, a man I love and a man who loves me. At one time he and I were far apart over this episode. His wife became very ill. She was treated by the doctors and they felt that they could no longer help her. The good people in her church began to give prophecies about how God was going to heal her. Prophecy after prophecy was given, saying, God is going to raise her up. Well, God didn't. She wasn't being healed. She was steadily deteriorating. Then some of them became very upset and blamed the husband. They said he wasn't close enough to God. Maybe there's something wrong with him.

If Your Prophecy Is Of God You Don't Have To Worry About The Results

Then they began to issue other types of judgment. I'm telling this so you'll understand both sides of the way people handle prophecy. Sometimes a person will give a prophecy and if it doesn't come true he gets embarrassed and blames someone else.

The fact of the matter is that if it's a real prophecy you don't have to get embarrassed. You don't have to worry about the results. I mean, it's going to come true. It may not come true that day or that year but if it's really of God, you can wait upon the Lord and submit it to a test. It will happen. If it doesn't happen, then we've got to be honest and say, "I missed it." We have to be just as honest when we make mistakes as we are grateful when we have successes.

So when she was in the throes of death I was called. I mean, specifically called. I went into the home. Here's the family, and they take me back into the bedroom. I kneel down and reach forth my hands, as I do she reaches out and takes my hands in hers and she begins to speak quietly in tongues. I begin to interpret the tongues and she was rejoicing in God, her Savior. She was releasing her spirit.

As I listened and interpreted back to myself what she was saying in tongues, I realized that she was already with the Lord. It was her time to go. Now I knew God could heal her one moment and release her the next moment. I knew that she didn't have to die sick. I knew that it was possible. And so when she released my hands I put my hand upon her and there was a confirmation again. It was her time.

I think most ministers who deal with a lot of sick people know when the death time has come. I think most doctors have an intuition about this. But I knew it was that time because in her heart she was already with the Lord. When I finished and walked out, the family were all wanting to know what I felt. I felt

triumphant on one hand and on the other hand I had to say to them, "The Lord has already taken her heart. I know her spirit's in her body but her inner self was with the Lord. And she's going to be with the Lord soon."

And they said, "But what about all the prophecies that said God was going to heal her?"

I said, "Maybe He has healed her but her time has come."

But there was a great hurt and then someone said, "How do you know?"

I said, "I tell you how you can know whether I'm a prophet of God and serving God or not. Tomorrow at a certain time (and I named the time), you'll know. You know me, you know where I live."

I said that because I KNEW. Within 20 minutes of the time I had said, the Lord took her home. There is a death time just as there is a birth time.

There was a great hurt in my brother for years. Then he said the Lord showed him. He went on and got his Ph.D. and he is now a beloved member of this faculty. He and I couldn't be closer.

I know these things may sound strange but I just thought you'd like to know some of the inside of my own ministry.

Discussion With Oral And Evelyn Roberts

Oral: My guest on the panel this evening is my darling wife Evelyn. Evelyn, are you ready to start our discussion with either a question or a comment on the gift of prophecy?

Evelyn: Suppose someone were to stand up here tonight in the class and give a prophecy — or at least they say it's a prophecy — would that person be out of place?

Oral: First, according to the Bible the person should be known to the group. No stranger should give a prophecy, for how could a stranger be judged? The Bible says that a person be judged by those sitting by. How can the person be judged if you don't know him ... or his background?

That's why when I started the course I said the gifts of the Spirit are ministry gifts. When you use one, it almost makes you like a pastor of a church. No one is going to have a pastor of a church until they investigate him and know who he is and know what kind of life he's living.

So, in the first place, when anyone manifests a gift of the Spirit he is under direct rules. He cannot be a law to himself. He cannot just jump up

because he feels like it, because his spirit is supposed to be subject to him. He's supposed to be able to start or stop at will. He's to be in control of himself. So I would say that we would have to know who he is.

Second, we would have to consider what was said. We would have to think about it, to wait upon the Lord. We certainly wouldn't take any action just like that.

We would consider the confirmational part of it. Is there something being confirmed here? We would want to know if what he or she says is in harmony with the whole Bible. Prophecy, like any inspired utterance, has to harmonize with the teaching of the entire Bible. It cannot stand on its own feet. It has to throw light on the Bible or light on something that God has decreed or God has foretold.

So we'd have to know who the person is, we'd have to consider what he says, we'd have to test it just like the Bible says. If that person was unwilling to be tested, and I was in charge of the meeting, I would ask him to refrain. That's the first thing I would do. If he had a meek and a humble spirit, why, you always treat people like that differently than you do those who just bull their way through.

Evelyn: All right. Now, let me ask you this: Who is supposed to prophesy?

Oral: In a class like this we have a different purpose in mind. We're teaching. This is really not the place here, other than the fact that maybe an inspired utterance will come through my word or the words of the panelists because we are the ones teaching. This is a teaching time.

Now there will be groups — perhaps a church service or something like our ORU vespers services on Sunday night or a small group with just a few people — when a prophecy could be given by a member of the audience. One would feel a word of inspiration to give to the other. That could happen at any time, before we come, after we leave. I would say it would be a rare exception if it happened right here during our class. It could. I wouldn't rule it out, but I would say that's not the purpose of the class.

Evelyn: Suppose it happens in vespers. How do you know it's a prophecy?

Oral: Well, now, that puts the burden and responsibility upon the leaders. Those whom God has put in charge have to know. They have to be men and women of discernment. They have to be people of boldness. They are the

shepherds. They cannot be set aside by any individual in that crowd. For example — men like our chaplain, and the student chaplains he has under him.

The prophecies I heard the nights that I was in vespers were just tremendous. They were in order. They were inspired. Of course, there was not a superabundance of them. There should be two or three at the most and then you move on to something else. When I was at the vespers I was very pleased. Evelyn and I understand that's the way it goes on all the time.

Evelyn: This is a special gift but it does not have to be given by a special person, right?

Oral: Yes. The gift is special but I think most of us are not special. We're just human beings and I'm glad it's like that because people are the only things God has to work with with His gifts.

Evelyn: Another thing I wanted to ask you. Do you think prophecy is ever directional?

Oral: I think there's some direction in prophecy. I do. But it's so much more confirmational that we have to be extraordinarily careful when someone says to us. "You do this," and, "You do that," or "The Holy Spirit told me to tell you to do that." Let me tell you that's taking an awful lot of responsibility upon yourself.

Now you can do that in a message of God from the Bible in a more general sense and allow the Holy Spirit to take it to the individual's heart. But when you walk up to a person and say, "The Lord says this to you, 'Get on a bus and go to Kalamazoo,' " I mean that gets to be a Kalamazoo situation. This will not pan out in the end. That's what I'm saying. There is some direction in prophecy. It is directional up to a point but unless there's confirmation, Evelyn, here and there, not only what the person giving the prophecy feels, but with me — I've got to feel it. If I don't feel it, it cancels him out. If God doesn't confirm it in my heart. ..

Evelyn: Is prophecy ever judgmental?

Oral: Yes and no. You are getting into deep water.

It is judgmental more through the word of knowledge than it is through prophecy. But it's so rare and it's always by someone in the Bible like Peter and John. It would be someone who's really a leader in the Body of Christ.

Evelyn: I had a specific reason in asking you this. I have heard people say, "Thus saith the Lord: You shall do so-and-so and so-and-so ..." They are

very judgmental and it seemed that everybody there thought it was a prophecy. It didn't hit me as being a prophecy.

Oral: Evelyn, I think the problem is not that the person is trying to be judgmental at all. The people that I've seen do this are very sincere for the most part. They do feel inspired of God to do what they do. I think the problem is that they don't know just exactly how to handle the gift. I think that's true of all of us.

There have been times, you know, when I've not known how to handle any of the gifts of God I have. I've had to have help. You've always given your help to me, and I appreciate it, but I've had to have other kinds of help. I think all of us who manifest the gifts have to have help.

Above all, we have to be meek. The young man who started to give a prophecy to me, which I rejected, was so meek and humble I knew he was more right than I was. One of the ways you can judge people in the manifestation of a gift is their meekness. They won't force. They won't coerce.

The Holy Spirit is not discourteous. The Holy Spirit is a very courteous gentleman. For example, I was preaching one night and finished — actually finished — the sermon and was making the invitation to the unsaved in the meeting. Someone jumped up in a loud voice with an apparent prophecy and it was just destroying the meeting. People had never heard that. They didn't know what it was. Some of the sinners were turning back to their seats. I asked the man to be quiet, but he got louder and louder. We didn't know him.

Evelyn: Somebody had to come carry him out, I remember that.

Oral: Well, I asked two of my men to assist the man so he could prophesy where there weren't so many listening. The man may have been absolutely sincere but his timing wasn't right. That wasn't the place. Usually I would say, "Not now. Not now." I don't want to offend anybody. I'm not trying to put a person down, it's just that timing is so important. I felt like running out and helping Richard sing tonight but I didn't. It wasn't the time for me to.

Evelyn: You read 1 Corinthians 14:1 which says: "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy." Does that mean prophecy is the most important gift?

Oral: Evelyn, generally speaking the gift of prophecy would be more profitable in more situations than any other gift. I don't believe God is trying to rank it in importance above one of the other nine gifts. I think by its very nature of being an inspired utterance, of giving light to a person, confirming something

in his heart, that prophecy might have a wider use.

Evelyn: You made a statement that prophecy is an inspired utterance from God. Then not every sermon has prophecy in it, right or wrong?

Oral: That's a loaded question if I ever heard one. Are you saying, Evelyn, that not all sermons are inspired?

Evelyn: No, I'm not saying that.

Oral: What does the audience say? Yes or no?

Response from audience: Yes and no.

Oral: Not all of them are inspired?

Evelyn: I often hear you make a statement in one of your sermons that you've never said before. All of a sudden you say, "Boy, that was hot off the wire." Is that a prophecy?

Oral: That could be an inspired utterance.

Evelyn: But not necessarily.

Oral: Of course, I believe you can be anointed by the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel. In fact, I believe you have to be. But it doesn't necessarily have to have prophecy in it, though when you are anointed by the Holy Spirit you're very apt to have some inspired utterance, something coming up that you haven't thought of that the Holy Spirit hands you at that moment.

I love to hear an anointed man or woman preach the gospel because you really can feel the inspiration. You can hear things that you know are not coming directly from their minds, but are coming out of the Holy Spirit. Haven't you had that experience, something that stood out and was very inspirational? That would be a form of prophecy too.

Evelyn: Now you made a difference between a man or woman who was called of God to be a prophet or prophetess and a gift of prophecy being manifested in a person for the moment.

Oral: Yes. I think everybody, every believer, every child of God, may prophesy. They may have this gift manifested in them from time to time but also there is an office of a prophet. In Ephesians 4:11 it says,

"He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers ..."

This would be an office, a charismatic office. It's a gift of the Spirit and

the person — the prophet, the pastor, the evangelist, the teacher — is a gift to the Church. He or she is a gift.

Evelyn: All right, I'm going to ask you one more question: You said you were going to speak tonight a little bit on "prophesying in part" but you didn't get very far with it. The Scripture that came to my mind is in 1 Corinthians 13:9 where it says that now we know in part and we prophesy in part. Does that mean that we just don't have the whole picture? We just do a little bit on this earth and when we get to heaven, when all things are perfect, it will all come to pass? Is that what it means? I've often wondered what it means to prophesy in part.

Oral: I think that whatever we do here on earth is in part because we're not perfect. We don't have perfect spiritual vision. For a moment we do. Really in prophecy that inspired utterance is perfect. We ourselves prophesy in part. The prophecy is not necessarily in part. We, our ability to prophesy, our ability to do God's work — our ability is limited. That's why God calls upon us for dedication, to be sincere, because we are not perfect in everything we do.

He says to be perfect but not in the sense that people expect perfection. They expect you to be perfect the way that God would not, but we prophesy in part. It'll be done away with when that which is perfect is come, or when our Lord returns. There'll be no need for prophecy or tongues or the gift of knowledge or the gifts of healing or anything like that because He himself will be here, and in Him is perfection.

Evelyn: The very first statement you brought tonight set the stage for teaching on prophecy, which was this: the gifts of the Spirit are manifested to meet needs. I love this because now I see a reason for the gift of prophecy to be given at times when a person is in great distress, trying to find God's will, trying to get something confirmed. Perhaps God said something that we're trying to get confirmed and in this instance I can see that prophecy has a great part in our lives.

Oral: It does.

Evelyn: Especially when it reproduces the life of Christ through us.

Oral: Well, if it's really inspired and handled right the gift of prophecy will reproduce the Lord's life in our midst.

Chapter 6, You Can Move Into A New Dimension With God

Suggested Scripture reading for this lesson: 1 Corinthians 14

In this class I will discuss the gift of tongues and the gift of interpretation of tongues. But before I do I want to talk about. . .

The Difference Between The Gift of The Holy Spirit and The Gift of Tongues

There's a tremendous difference between the gift of the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues, but one is part of the other. The Person of the Holy Spirit comes into your life when you are born again. It is the Holy Spirit that gives you the new birth, just as the Holy Spirit conceived our Lord Jesus as a human being in the womb of the young virgin Mary. The Holy Spirit gave Him His birth in a supernatural way — in the same way your birth into the kingdom of God is supernatural and is brought about by the Holy Spirit.

Now the Person of the Holy Spirit, who comes in when your soul is saved, has a deeper dimension of himself. This is called the baptism in the Holy Spirit. It is also referred to as the infilling of the Holy Spirit. These are synonymous terms.

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS AN IT. . . THE PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS JUST WHAT THE NAME IMPLIES —A PERSON.

The experience I'm talking about is an IT. That's an important difference to make.

The Baptism Is A Deeper Dimension Of The Holy Spirit In Your Life

In Acts 2 we have Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost. You will remember that on that day this dimension of the Spirit — the baptism in the Holy Spirit — was first given to man. The one hundred and twenty who were present that day spoke in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:4). After this was noised abroad and the crowd was attracted they ceased speaking in tongues. They did not use tongues to teach with. It was a tremendous phenomenon to the crowd and was a great edifying influence to those who had received the gift of the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. But when it came time to teach and preach Peter and the others used their own language just as we

would do today.

At the close of the sermon — when the great crowd had been convicted of their sins — they asked Peter, "What must we do to be saved?" And Peter replied, "Repent..."

Repent means to change your mind ... to change your attitude toward God, toward yourself, and toward other people. Peter said:

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).

Ye Shall Receive The Gift Of The Holy Spirit

I believe that you receive this gift when you are saved but the deeper dimension of it is not always manifested. Apparently people don't know what to do. Some have been taught against the gift of the Holy Spirit. Some have never heard about it. Even though it has been in the Bible all this time — unchanged — thousands of people are only now beginning to know that it is in the Bible and it is for them.

What I'm trying to say is that the moment you accept the Lord Jesus Christ, repent of your sins, and believe on Him and are saved by Him ... at that moment. . . the gift of the Holy Spirit comes in.

From that moment on you have the divine ability to speak to God from your inner man with your spirit — if you only knew how. You can speak to Him in a new tongue, on a different wavelength than you use intellectually as you speak to Him through your mind. Through this experience of speaking in tongues you can edify yourself, or you build up your total personality.

Speaking In Tongues Is Not A Peripheral Experience

Speaking in tongues has been thought by some to be a peripheral experience that you can take or leave. In chapter 1 we went back to Genesis and talked about the creation of man. There in the Garden of Eden where God placed Adam and Eve, He placed before them what they could do and what they could not do.

He placed before them one tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God told them, in essence, "You shall eat of everything in this garden but you shall not eat of this one tree." It was the tree of knowledge and Eve desired it. She tempted her husband, who yielded to temptation with her, and they ate of this tree. And something happened to them.

You see, God said, "If you eat it you'll die." The devil came and said, "No, you won't die. You'll KNOW, but you won't die." God said, "You will die." The devil said, "You won't die."

They believed the devil rather than God. They willed to obey the devil rather than to will God's will. When they ate, they KNEW. . . there was a knowledge that came to them. There was the ascendancy of the mind. Here's where man really went astray.

God had first made man in His own image. He made him a spiritual being. He gave man a mind and a body and brought him together as a human being but man was essentially a spiritual being. He expressed himself intellectually and physically, living in a physical house, but his body was a temple of God.

The devil didn't want that. The devil came against man with this temptation to subordinate the spirit to the mind, to elevate the mind over the spirit and the body, and divide man. There was a cleavage, a flaw that developed, which has never been totally overcome. Since then man's approach to life has been more intellectual, more mental than spiritual. Our whole educational system is founded upon this.

Man is essentially a spiritual being and he's incurably religious. This is why there is the occult today — devil worship and such things. If man does not turn to God to satisfy his spiritual longing, or to receive spiritual fulfillment, then he will turn to the devil for spiritual fulfillment. There is where he goes astray again because he cannot be spiritually fulfilled outside of God. But he turns to something else that's supernatural.

God's work is supernatural but the devil's work is also supernatural. It's a mimicry of the genuine. In 2 Corinthians 11:14, it says:

Satan himself is transformed [or transforms himself] into an angel of light.

Satan appears as it were an angel of light. He doesn't appear as an angel of light because he is not an angel of light but he appears as it were an angel of light. He's a mimicry, an imitation of the real thing. Nevertheless, there's supernatural power in the personality of the devil and in demons and in the work that they do in human lives. As I said, we're going to enter into that in quite some detail a little later on.

When Jesus Christ came He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and He was filled by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came upon Him and He did all His

great works through the Holy Spirit. He subordinated himself to human flesh. He became a human being. He was a human being exactly as God had first made man. He became the Second Adam but Jesus remained the whole man. He didn't yield. He did not subordinate His spirit to the mind or to the body or to anything else. He put God first, and out of it we see this great whole Man, Jesus Christ, leaving us an example. He was one with God. He had this perfect communication with God.

In the baptism in the Holy Spirit there is a restoration and an ability to edify the total personality. The total being is touched by the baptism in the Holy Spirit. **SPEAKING IN TONGUES IS NOT A PERIPHERAL EXPERIENCE — IT IS THE WIDE OCEAN ITSELF.**

In speaking in tongues we are not only praying with our spirit in the Spirit, but as Paul says, we pray with the understanding, also (1 Corinthians 14:15). Something happens in speaking in tongues, first to the spirit of man, to the way God made him. It helps him to become more spiritually oriented, more related to God, more able to communicate directly with God.

Tongues Is Speaking Directly To God

In 1 Corinthians 14 we notice some fascinating things about speaking in tongues as a part of your devotional experience.

Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God (1 Corinthians 14:1, 2).

Here we have a restoration of man's inner ability to speak directly to God. It goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden when man and God were one, when they communicated directly, man to God and God to man. Here we have a restoration of this through speaking in tongues. A new wavelength has come to us. It's not new to God. It isn't new to the way God created man but it's new to people today who have not discovered that this is the way God made man, to have this direct communication with God.

Let me repeat. God made man to have direct communication with Him and through tongues we speak TO GOD. We don't speak to man. **SPEAKING IN TONGUES IS NEVER TO MAN.** The interpretation of the gift of tongues is to man but speaking in tongues itself is, first of all, a devotional experience. It is for one's own communication with God.

For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries (1 Corinthians 14:2).

There is a lot of mystery in the communication that a human being has with God. It is not mysterious to God. It is mysterious to man. Most people don't understand how to communicate with God. Probably the one thing people would want above all else is to know how to pray, how to speak with God, how to communicate in a real mystic way with the Father. Here it is. It is first described in Acts 2:4 when the one hundred and twenty received the baptism in the Holy Spirit:

They. . . began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The apostle Paul speaks of it in 1 Corinthians 14:14,15:

For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth . . . What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

Here Paul is talking about his spirit praying. It is not an intellectual prayer. It is not a prayer originating in his mind. It is a prayer originating in his own spirit, a spirit that has been born again by the Holy Spirit. He now speaks with his spirit but he speaks in the Holy Spirit — the prayer language of the Spirit.

Now let me make a distinction right here. There is a ministry gift of tongues — one of the nine gifts of the Spirit mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 — and there is a private devotional tongue which is available in EVERY believer. It is this private devotional tongue — which I call the prayer language of the Spirit — that we're talking about right now.

This prayer language of the Spirit is a divine and human cooperation. It is God and man. The Holy Spirit is down here inside, and down inside is the desire of our hearts which is often bottled up . . . which is often formless and seemingly void. There it is inside. We are bottled up with our emotions, our frustrations, the goals that we desire that seem to be impossible. We have this deep earnest desire to communicate with God and we try it, with our minds, with our understanding, and sometimes it works. Sometimes it doesn't.

But when we go down deep into the inner man and pray in the Spirit with our spirit, the Holy Spirit and our spirit join together, creating a new language ability, a new power of communication with God, and we speak directly with

God. There you have the beginning of the forming of the supremacy of the spirit over the mind again.

The present charismatic movement is the most significant thing in this century. There are abuses to it like there are anything else that's genuine in the world. Even the American dollar is counterfeited at times.

The restoration of the ability to speak in tongues as the Holy Spirit gives utterance, which is followed then by the gift of tongues itself, is related directly to the supremacy of the spirit over the mind. This is the way you were created and this is why Paul says, "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also." ALSO. You see, he linked them together. He put them side by side but he put one before the other. Paul put the spirit before the intellect, praying with the spirit before praying with the ^ understanding. He first prayed in tongues (the prayer language of the Spirit) directly to God and then he prayed with his understanding.

Paul even went so far in 1 Corinthians 14:13 to say that if you speak in tongues then you can interpret what you pray. YOU CAN INTERPRET YOUR OWN TONGUES. That is to say, after you have prayed in the Spirit you can wait a moment, breathing the spirit of prayer and God will answer you. You can know the words that you said in tongues or you can get a response back from God to the prayer you have just prayed or the praise or the song that you gave. It's a very personal thing that comes through the Holy Spirit.

How do we know that?

First Corinthians is largely autobiographical. If you will notice, Paul speaks of "I" often and then he goes into "the Church." The moment he starts talking about the Church and about the group, he moves from devotional tongues — your own personal prayer language — to the gift of tongues. That's how you can tell.

The Gift Of Tongues Has To Do With Other People — Devotional Tongues Has To Do With Yourself

Devotional tongues has to do with your own bottled-up feelings . . . being able to release yourself. .. to release all these pent-up emotions inside you. You can relieve your inner self by praying and praising God in the prayer language of the Spirit. Paul says, "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." In Ephesians 5:19 he talks about making melody in our hearts . . .

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

Here Paul is referring to singing in tongues. That is, right out of your heart, as the Holy Spirit gives you utterance, there comes the ability to sing in words and in tunes that you haven't learned. It's a tune and it's a word created by the Holy Spirit.

If you've never been in a group that sang in the Spirit, you've really missed something. There's an edification that begins inside. The first time I ever heard it in a group I thought it was angels singing. I was with my wife and we looked around and people were singing in the Spirit, and suddenly we joined in.

We were all singing in the Spirit. The words were not coming out of our intellect but coming by the Holy Spirit out of our spirit and so was the tune. Just as suddenly as it began, it stopped. There was edification throughout that audience that was priceless indeed.

When we speak in tongues we are speaking to God. We know that when we speak to God that we are either praying or we are praising God. We are communicating with Him in our prayers or in our praises (singing here would be the same as praising God). This is a very personal experience. You can have it the moment you will to have it. If you are saved you have the Person of the Holy Spirit. In John 7:37-39 Jesus said:

If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

The river is there and the language is there. If you are saved and have never spoken in the prayer language of the Spirit, remember that you can. YOU CAN!

How To Release Your Prayer Language

As a born-again Christian, you already have the power of the Holy Spirit within you, constantly flooding up in rivers of living water, waiting to be released to God in the prayer language of the Spirit. So releasing that force of the Spirit within should be as easy and as natural for you as releasing the air that fills your lungs.

All you really have to do is stop holding the Spirit back, stop allowing your natural man — your mind — to control your spirit. Instead, open up to the

power of the Holy Spirit within. Allow your spirit, together with Him, to take control of your tongue and speech organs in much the same way that your mind does when you're speaking in your natural language.

Now this is something you will do. Your will plays a vital role in the releasing of your prayer language. God is never going to make you release your prayer language. That is to say, He is not going to do it for you. The Holy Spirit will form the words as you speak them, but it's up to you to do the speaking. By a simple exercise of your WILL, you must open your mouth and let the sound come out.

Just focus your mind on Jesus and worship Him aloud. Focus on His unlimited Spirit dwelling within you. Think only of Jesus. Think only of the Holy Spirit within you.

Give thanks. Praise Him. WORSHIP THE LORD ALOUD, out of the very depths of your soul. Lift your voice in praise and in worship, and talk to Jesus. Say, "Praise the Lord," or, "Hallelujah," or anything you feel like your heart is wanting you to say. Say it out loud. Let what you feel come out of your mouth.

As you continue thanking and praising the Lord in your natural language, you will feel the Holy Spirit coming up in your spirit. Now all you have to do is let the prayer language come out. As the Spirit gives you utterance, just raise your voice to the Lord and let the new words come out.

At first there may be just one or two syllables or words, interspersed among the words of your natural language. But as you continue worshiping the Lord, the prayer language will begin flowing stronger.

Because your mind is not creating the words you are speaking, it will not understand them. Because of that, you may think that you are making up words. But you are not. You are allowing the Holy Spirit to form the words you speak. And, according to the Bible, you are speaking them directly to God.

For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries (1 Corinthians 14:2).

As you pray and worship God in the prayer language, God is understanding what you say even if you don't. And the beautiful part is that through the Holy Spirit's help you are finally able to talk to God out of the deepest depths of your heart.

Once you have released your prayer language — you've let the sound

come out of your mouth in syllables and words you've not formed in your mind — continue to do so for a few moments. Then stop. Ask God to give you the interpretation of what you just said. Wait just a few seconds; then, by your will, begin to speak words in your natural language that come from your mind. Stop. Speak again in your prayer language, followed again by interpretation.

As you shift back and forth from praying in the prayer language to praying in your natural language, you are actually praying the Holy Spirit's words. You are interpreting back to your mind what you just said ... or the Father's response to what you said. You are allowing the Spirit to "fertilize," or enrich your mind so that your understanding is no longer unfruitful.

You see, if you pray in the prayer language and don't interpret it back to your mind — if you pray without understanding — you've got just half a loaf. That's better than no loaf, of course. You'll feel better in your inner man, but with understanding you've got the whole loaf. You not only feel better but you also understand more. You see things in a new light and have a new power to relate to others.

Speaking in tongues is not a cure-all. By itself it doesn't make everything right or do everything we need done. But it is part of getting back to the spiritual supremacy we had when God first made us.

By not using the prayer language of the Spirit, you are missing a personal edification of yourself, an edification of your total personality, a building-up and strengthening of your inner man which will help you get back to where the spirit is supreme over the mind and the body.

Speaking in tongues is to God. It is your spirit joining with the Holy Spirit. You open your mouth and a new language comes forth. When that language comes, it opens you up. It expresses the inexpressible. As it does so it builds you up. It touches your total personality.

After you have prayed in your prayer language of the Spirit, you can stop and start praying with your understanding or praising God with your understanding, and you can pray much better, much more clearly through your understanding. I know this to be true because I do it every day of my life. It's something you wouldn't know unless you were close to me because I seldom do it in public. I wouldn't do it in public unless that tongue had become a gift of tongues. That's what we want to talk about for a few minutes.

Going back to 1 Corinthians 14, you'll notice that Paul says in the church . . . That's the moment you know that your own devotional tongue has been

transformed into the gift of tongues.

What Is The Gift Of Tongues?

The gift of tongues is the same Holy Spirit operating in you. But the result is to edify a group rather than just yourself. There's much misunderstanding and divisiveness in the Church over this point, and it's important for you to understand the difference between the prayer language of the Spirit and the gift of tongues.

Many times when a believer releases his prayer language, he mistakenly thinks that he has been given the gift of tongues, one of the nine gifts of the Spirit. This is not scriptural. The prayer language of the Spirit is not the same as the gift of tongues (see 1 Corinthians 12) even though the principle of speaking in a gift of tongues or through the prayer language is the same.

The gift of tongues, unlike the prayer language, is a ministry gift. That means that it operates through a believer in a group situation, as an INTERCESSORY prayer or praise in behalf of the entire group. It is NOT subject to the will of the believer to release, but is subject to the sovereign will of the Holy Spirit. The prayer language, on the other hand, IS subject to the will of the believer, and is given to him to use in his own private devotions in behalf of his personal needs. And, as I understand the Bible, it's a gift that is available to every believer.

Paul talks about the use of the gift of tongues in 1 Corinthians 14:26-31.

Every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying (1 Corinthians 14:26).

Here we have a group of believers and this group of believers is either at a church service or in a prayer group or just a small group. The gift of tongues usually works better in a more closed type of session because if people come in who are uninstructed in tongues, or uninitiated in tongues, and all they heard you do was speak in tongues, they would really think you were mad. Those are not my words, those are Paul's (1 Corinthians 14:23). And that certainly hasn't changed over the years. It's good that he said that because it shows what happens.

In a group of believers here's how the gift of tongues might work. As an individual I am often bottled up inside with needs and problems that I cannot meet or solve. Through praying in the Spirit I'm often able to release myself and

then pray with the understanding, and through this dual kind of prayer I really edify myself. The same thing can happen in a group. For example, say I'm in a group and the Holy Spirit has moved in me. Suddenly my discernment goes to work and I discern the needs, the problems, of the group. I may not know exactly what the need or problem is in itself. .. I may not know the details about it . . . but I feel — I FEEL — that this group is bottled up. I feel like they are burdened down or I feel like they can't get released. So my spirit, led by the Holy Spirit, reaches out and gathers up the needs and problems of the group and begins to pray in tongues, to speak to God, in an intercessory prayer for this group. Now this prayer — this tongue — must be interpreted because they don't know what I'm saying.

Now if this group is instructed in the gift of tongues and interpretation, they will know that I'm praying in their behalf. How would they know? When the gift of tongues is given to me, at that moment — in behalf of that group — I raise my voice and I start exercising the gift of tongues. There's a heightened quality about it. There's an authority in it. It's in behalf of others and it has a very attractive drawing power to it. People sense this, especially those who are instructed feel this. They feel that someone is interceding for them. They feel the inside of themselves beginning to open up. It's a tremendous force that spreads over the group.

Through the gift of tongues, prayer or praise has been expressed. You see, people are often bottled up inside because they don't know how to praise God. They don't have the joy of the Lord. Sometimes they're sighing, and though they might say, "Thank God," it's not a joyous thank God. So the gift of tongues could take the form of praise so that it would gather up the unexpressed praises of the saints of God, or the believers, and express them to God. After the tongue is given, there's a pause.

The Gift Of Tongues Is A Very Concise Grouping of Words

I emphasize this because some people have asked why the tongue itself is so brief and short, while the interpretation may be much longer. It's very simple. First of all, tongues is the condensed form of the prayer or the praise. It is getting to the very heart of the matter. When we begin to pray through the intellect, if we follow that through logically, we might just wander all over everywhere. Have you ever heard a prayer like that? The person never seemingly gets through? He's trying to get through. He's trying to come to a high point. He's trying to get

to a place where he feels release. It's often hard to do when you're praying only with your understanding. It's a longer prayer because you're using more words. You don't know what to say. You don't know how to say it. You're groping for the right word.

In tongues, it's concise and condensed. It's the Holy Spirit's prayer your spirit is entering into. It is the Holy Spirit taking your shapeless, unformed prayer and putting shape and form and substance to it. It is taking everything you feel and long for, inside, and putting it into the fewest words and delivering it to God. And in essence, saying, "There it is, God."

The Gift of Interpretation of Tongues

When the interpretation comes, remember it's not a translation. If it were a translation it would have to be word for word, at least the meaning of word for word. But it's not a translation, it's an interpretation. It's giving the sense of the matter.

Let's take the two or three forms of interpretation. One could be an interpretation of what the tongue is — what was said in the tongue to God. In other words, if you wanted to know the depth of the prayer, the direction of the prayer, or the praise that was made in tongues, the interpretation could take the form of that so you would be nodding, "Yes, yes, that's what I wanted to say." It could take another form — that is, a response of God to the prayer or to the praise. That is, God would speak back and here it is almost like prophecy. This is why Paul said:

Greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret (1 Corinthians 14:5).

Now the moment a person interprets the tongue, the interpretation is on the same level as prophecy. Just as prophecy is addressed to the understanding in your own learned language, so interpretation of tongues is expressed horizontally. It's from God to man. It's an expression coming from God back to my spirit and mind and I speak the interpretation of tongues to you. Now I'm speaking to you. The tongues is to God but the interpretation is to you. It's coming horizontally. The tongues is vertical — going up. The interpretation is coming back and it's either in the form of prayer, the form of praise, or it is God's response.

God's response could take the form of prophecy. It could take the form of a word of knowledge. It could take the form of a word of wisdom. It could take the form of a healing. It could take the form of discerning of spirits. Now this is

very important to understand. You may recall that I said wherever there's one gift in operation there are usually several others right there too. Many times a person to whom the Spirit has given a gift for that moment may manifest three or four in the group.

All nine of the gifts could be operating in five minutes time in one group of believers. Why? Because it is the Lord Jesus himself working. It is the reproduction of the life and power and works of the living Lord — the manifestation of the life of Jesus in the now — to meet needs.

These Gifts Work When There Is A Critical Need

When we have come to the end of our own understanding, our own resources, when we don't have the knowledge that we can grasp through our intellect, the gift of the word of knowledge may begin.

Or when we reach the point where the human mind doesn't have the wisdom, then the gift of wisdom can be manifested.

We may reach the point where our own faith is not sufficient. We're believing with all of our power and we just simply can't go beyond a certain point and the gift of faith would be manifested so that in that moment you could believe as God believes. It's the faith of God.

Likewise, in tongues. We may have been praying with our understanding, communicating with God to the best of our ability, and we reach a limitation. Immediately through the Holy Spirit we go right into tongues, either devotionally — if it just involves you as an individual — or if it is in a group, the Holy Spirit may choose to manifest the gift of tongues in you.

How Do You Know That The Gift Of Tongues Is Working In You?

There are several ways you can know. One of them is that you would feel intense interest in people around you. You would feel compassion. Actually, you probably would feel the same thing you would feel if a gift of healing were to be manifested in you. We who have had the gift of healing expressed through us know what the first feeling is. It's a feeling of compassion and compassion is identification with people. It's identifying with the person who has the sickness. It's not sympathy. It's compassion. It's the living Lord himself standing there by the side of the sick person ready to express His healing power. That's what a gift of healing is. It's just that much of Jesus walking in and taking charge of the situation.

We become ill in ways other than physical, even ways other than mental. We become ill spiritually. We become ill with problems. I used to pray for people to be healed in their bodies and it appeared that my total ministry was for the body. When I began in 1947, first I would preach to the crowd. Second, I'd make an invitation to the unsaved, and hope they'd be saved. And third, I'd start praying for the healing of their bodies.

No one had instructed me to look upon a human being as a whole person. I didn't know a lot of things about these gifts then as I know now. But I'm learning. That's one thing about the gifts of the Spirit. . . you continue to learn. You just simply haven't learned all there is to know about them. There's more yet to learn.

When the Spirit manifests a gift of tongues through you, some of the words will start forming in your mind. Sometimes you can almost see the words or you feel the words and you start out by faith. It is an act of faith. You have to cooperate with the Holy Spirit.

I know the first time that a gift of tongues was manifested through me I thought it was just for myself. I was with the group. I felt this need and I began to pray in tongues and then suddenly I realized that I was not even concerned about myself. I was concerned about others. I felt like I had my arms around them. I felt like I was reaching down and putting my arms beneath them and lifting them up to God. It was the sense of the feeling I had as I was praying in tongues. When I ceased I waited a moment and I was able to interpret. I interpreted the need of the people and the response that God had brought back.

Tongues, Like Prophecy, Is More Confirmational Than IT Is Directional

You remember when I talked to you about prophecy that I said prophecy usually confirms a direction that God has already begun in your life. It's not a directional thing. If it happens it would be very rare. You'd have to be very careful about it. The Holy Spirit is not going to send me to you and have me say, "I want you to pack up and go to Pakistan." That would be about the rarest thing the Spirit would ever do. The gift of tongues is more confirmational than it is directional. It deals with something that God is already dealing with you about. The prophecy or the interpretation will come in the form of a confirmation.

We prayed recently with a very anxious and ill woman who may lose her life. We prayed quietly in tongues and the interpretation came and we gave it. She said, "That's exactly the way I've been feeling. The Lord has been talking to

my heart but I needed to hear it from you.”

You see, it was a confirmation. If I hadn't been there and someone else could have prayed for her and done the same thing, she would have felt the same way. She would have responded in the same way. . . "I needed to have this confirmed in my heart by someone else who is close to God." Tongues is often a confirmation or it may trigger something else. You may go directly into prophecy.

Tim to Acts 19:6 and you will notice, "They spake with tongues, and prophesied." They prophesied.

Prophecy Often Follows Speaking In Tongues.

As a matter of fact, what many people think is an interpretation is sometimes prophecy. The interpretation can trigger off other gifts, particularly prophecy.

Now let's spend a moment or two on...

The Responsibility of A Person Manifesting The Gifts of Tongues And Interpretation Of Tongues

A person is probably more responsible for these gifts than for any other. Why? Because, first of all, it's his spirit and the Holy Spirit cooperating. It's so simple and yet so profound that sometimes we let it frighten us. We say, "Just to think that God would bring me so close to Him that I could talk to Him directly in another language." Some people find that awesome. I find it thrilling, myself, to think that I could get close enough to God that I could interpret.

In the first place . . .

YOU ARE NOT GIVEN A GIFT BECAUSE OF WHO YOU ARE OR HOW SPIRITUAL YOU ARE — YOU ARE GIVEN IT BECAUSE GOD LOVES YOU.

It's given out of God's love. The only one He can give a gift to is a human. And I don't know any perfect humans. So everyone who gets a gift is an imperfect person, an imperfect vessel. That's a real good put-down for us. We don't have a gift exercised in us because we're perfect, because we're super superspiritual.

Some people hear a tongue and interpretation from a person who they don't think may be as close to God as he ought to be, and they get judgmental. They think that speaking in tongues is kind of a reward. .. that God is rewarding

the person for super spiritual living. Well, I'm afraid you're on the wrong track because even in our Lord's life He faced things that were not His will but were God's will. In the garden He prayed, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39). There are things of God that are not our will. We don't want them. We often are disobedient but if we follow Jesus we will will God's will. We will finally come to the point we will submit ourselves.

Another thought on that — don't ever think that because you pray in tongues that you're superior. You're really praying in tongues because you are inferior, because you don't know how to pray through your understanding. You're praying in tongues because you need help. God has baptized you in the Holy Spirit to help you. If you didn't need the help He wouldn't have baptized you. If you were beyond the point of needing supernatural help, you wouldn't have gotten the gift. If it were given on any other basis, it wouldn't be a gift.

How The Gift Of Tongues Is To Be Exercised In The Church

Turn over to 1 Corinthians 14 and notice that when the gift of tongues is in operation in the Body of Christ — when the Church comes together — that you are exercising the gift of tongues in rotation. Two or three messages are given and no more. There is not to be a constant flow of tongues in a meeting. I'll tell you one thing. You would have to be awfully far from God, the need would have to be terrible every time you met, in order for the tongues to continue right on through the meeting. If this happens you are kind of making a plaything out of it.

Some people like to exercise the gift of tongues because it makes them feel so good. It's like they said, "It feels so good I want to do it again. I want to do it again." But remember, you have a ministry gift and anybody who ministers to other people is under regulation by the Scriptures.

If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. . .

Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge (1 Corinthians 14:27,29).

You have to submit yourself to judgment by other Christians. Notice also that your spirit is to be subject to yourself:

The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets (1 Corinthians 14:32).

You have to have self-control. You have to time it. For example, right now would not be a good time to speak in tongues because you'd be interrupting the teaching of the Word and you don't try to teach anybody through tongues. Paul said in this same chapter:

Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding . . . than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue (1 Corinthians 14:19).

That is, when he's up teaching, when he's up instructing people, he would use his own language — a language that the audience would understand. I wouldn't dare to use tongues as I teach. You wouldn't understand a word I'm saying so I use my own language, my own understanding, as the Spirit helps me.

Let me bring this first part to a climax by saying that...

The Gift of Tongues Like Any Other Gift Makes You Enter A Position Of Ministry

The moment you minister to other people you come under rules and regulations. You can't govern yourself. For example, if you're in your own room you can do things that you don't do out in public. The same is true with speaking in tongues for your own edification. You don't have to interpret that. You can but you don't have to. You can be edified just by the tongues. But if you exercise a gift of tongues in behalf of someone else, then you come under regulations. They have to test you. Who are you? What kind of life are you living? The same as with the pastor of the church, they must investigate your life.

That is why I would be very reluctant to let someone I didn't know try to give a gift of tongues in a meeting when I am in charge. I'd have to know something about the person. I think that right here in the church we have broken down and the leaders have not always been responsible and strong enough.

They're afraid to have the gifts at all for fear they can't control them. On the other hand, some are afraid if they control the gifts, they will disappear.

But, my friends, if a gift is genuine it acts better under control, just like everything else does. Look at the beautiful rain water coming down in sheets. It can either flood the countryside or you can build dams and control it and irrigate land with it. It's according to the control of yourself, to the way you regulate your life under God.

As for my own self, I feel very much at home in a meeting where a gift of tongues or a gift of interpretation or a gift of prophecy is manifested in the right way, in the right place. I feel much at home.

I believe there should be much more informality in the meeting of God's people. We don't get that very often and we're not going to change the institution, so we quit trying to butt our brains out about it and go on about our business. If we get in our own groups and have our tongues, our psalms, a doctrine, a revelation, an interpretation, and have it done under self-control, under discipline and order, it is marvelous. If you've never been in a group like that, find one that is spiritually led and under the control of God and join it. You'll be blessed by it.

Chapter 7, What Does The Bible Say To You About The Occult And Exorcism?

Suggested Scripture reading for this lesson: Acts 19:13-20

Paul had a very urgent desire that the followers of Christ would be reinforced by the Holy Spirit and the nine gifts of the Spirit. . . each of which is a manifestation of the life of Jesus . . . each of which is a reproduction of that much of the life of our Lord through us in the NOW.

Paul began in 1 Corinthians 12 by saying:

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant (1 Corinthians 12:1).

In other words, Paul is saying, "I would inform you. I want you to know because being forewarned is to be forearmed." Our very strength that we have as Christians derives from Jesus Christ and these gifts of the Spirit. These gifts are reproductions of the life of Jesus . . . of His Spirit, of His power, of the way that He lived, of the way that He faced life and delivered humanity.

Now we will discuss that particular gift called the gift of discerning of spirits. The gift is exactly what it says it is:

THE GIFT OF DISCERNING OF SPIRITS IS A MANIFESTATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH WHICH YOU OR I, AS CHILDREN OF GOD, CAN DISCERN OR DETECT OR RECOGNIZE A SPIRIT.

This statement of Paul's — among many others in the Bible — is a confirmation of the existence of spirits in the world. There are both good and bad spirits. There is the Spirit of God that is in a person and there are satanic spirits, or demons, that either oppress a person or take dominion over him and make that person like themselves, transferring their characteristics to that human so he becomes like the demon.

Paul's statement particularly refers to the spirits of the world that encloses us. It refers to the world beyond the senses, that is, our five normal senses — touch, taste, smell, sight, hearing — the world beyond that.

Now according to the Bible there are three ways by which information is received by the human being:

FIRST, he receives information through his own human spirit.

SECOND, he receives information through satanic spirits or demons.

THIRD, he receives information from God the Holy Spirit.

Let's begin with the first: receiving information directly into our minds by our human spirit. We are made in the image of God as we've already studied in the book of Genesis. We were made a spirit. After God created the human body out of the earth, He breathed the spirit into this piece of clay and man became . . . MAN BECAME. He became a living being ... he became a living soul... he became a total personality.

Man was made with the power of choice. Were God to have denied man the power of choice, He would have made a robot. Man would have worshiped God all right, but he would have worshiped God by force and coercion. God made man incurably spiritual, incurably religious, always reaching out for God, but He also put the power of choice within man's heart so that man could choose God or choose the devil. He could choose right or he could choose wrong.

Man chose to rebel against God. He willed his own will rather than God's will, and there was a fall. Something happened inside of man. The image of God which had been implanted in him was erased and now we have only the shell left. Man may look more or less the same as he did then — we do not know — but the outer man, however much it might resemble the former beauty of the man, is only a shell because the inside has collapsed. The inner man surrendered to the satanic forces.

In this rebellion against God, God drove man out of the Garden of Eden. God had angels there at the gate of the garden with flaming swords to prevent man's return. Man went out into the earth. He went out under a curse placed upon him because of his rebellion. He was a fallen man. However, it is apparent — at least to me and I believe to many other Christians — that traces of man's Edenic perfection still remain in him. There's a rather peculiar verse in the New Testament written by Paul which says:

The gifts and calling of God are without repentance (Romans 11:29).

That is, when God gives something He never recalls it — never. This would apply, to some extent, to the beginnings of man in his fallen state when he went out from the presence of God to the earth that was now also cursed. Everything was changed. The beauty was turned to ashes, to use a poetic term. But man apparently never completely lost it all. There seem to be resident in each of us some of the gifts which man originally had.

Extrasensory Perception

There are outstanding traits in each of us. This is where I personally think that ESP comes from. I think that ESP is neither divine nor satanic. I think it can be put to a divine use. I think it can be put to a satanic use. But I think within itself extrasensory perception, the ability to perceive beyond the five senses, goes all the way back to the way God originally made man.

There are some rather outstanding people in the world who apparently have ESP. They might not call it ESP. They might call themselves a prophet or prophetess or seer but they are not in the sense that the Bible talks about a prophet of God or a prophetess of God or a seer of God. But it is more of a throwback to Eden, a trace of that extra power to perceive, to detect, to recognize things that exist beyond the physical, to see into the world of the spirit.

Sometimes such individuals can predict—they say — with an accuracy of 50 percent or an accuracy of maybe even as high as 80 percent. Of course, no one knows how accurate they really are. It has never been scientifically checked that I know about. Let's just say for a moment that the accuracy of their predictions over a period of months or years would be 50 percent. Well, that would be an amazing human being. That would be quite a tribute to an individual to have that kind of perception.

The difference between that and being a prophet or a prophetess of God would be this: When the true prophet of God predicts, he's always accurate. When the prophetess of God predicts, she is always accurate. The prophet or prophetess of God deals from God's standpoint and can never be swayed as long as he or she is true to their calling. They can never be swayed by money, by fame, even by death.

To give you an example: Elisha, the prophet in the Old Testament, perceived a condition in the heart of a man by the name of Naaman — a general in the Syrian army who had leprosy. He had made a long trip to Elisha to be recovered of his leprosy and Elisha told him what to do in order to be healed. He told Naaman to go wash seven times in the River Jordan and his leprosy would be cleansed and his flesh would return to him — it would be like the flesh of a newborn babe.

Well, the general had a lot of difficulty accepting that because he wanted to be received more royally. He didn't want to go and jump in a muddy river. His ego was hurt but eventually reason prevailed. He obeyed and was completely healed.

Naaman came back to give gifts to Elisha. The prophet refused them but Elisha's servant, a man by the name of Gehazi, was listening in. When the

general left he followed him. He caught up with Naaman and said, "My master has changed his mind. We do have some needs." So the general was glad to give him the gifts.

When Gehazi came back Elisha discerned (or perceived) what he had done, with total accuracy. When Gehazi lied to Elisha there came upon Gehazi, apparently, the leprosy that Naaman had been cured of. It struck him and Gehazi turned white as snow. He became a leper.

The True Prophet of God Has Total Accuracy

Now it's true that a prophet of God can stray. This is possible because he has the power of choice. He can choose to use his gift rightly or he can choose to use it wrongly. If he chooses to use it wrongly he will not have total accuracy. That is, he might get into his own knowledge rather than God's. While he might be able yet to have a high degree of accuracy because of the inherent calling within him, his getting into his own flesh or into his own knowledge and his human wisdom would knock out the total accuracy.

We have to face it that there are people today who have extremely keen powers of perception from that standpoint. You just cannot lump them all together and say they are of the devil. I know there are Christians who believe that everyone like this is of the devil. I don't think it's necessarily so. They could be if they turned that power over to the devil. The thing I fear is that whoever feels in himself this extrasensory force — this ability to detect, to see, and to understand beyond the senses — if he is not careful he can open up himself to demons or to the occult.

The Origin Of Evil Spirits

There are many fallen angels resident in this world. Another name for them is demon or devil or tormentor. The word devil means "tormentor." While the naked eye cannot see them there are certainly hundreds of thousands — perhaps even millions of these spirits. No one knows how many but they are numerous. Jesus speaks of these fallen angels in Matthew 25:41. He said:

[Hell is] prepared for the devil and his angels.

Now turn to 2 Peter 2:4 and you will read that. .. God spared not the angels that sinned.

Then turn to Jude 6 which says . . .

The angels which kept not their first estate. ..

That is, these angels fell from their first estate. They fell from their heavenly position. They fell.

Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 are two very important chapters in this regard. I'm not going to take time to read all these verses but you should. I have read them hundreds of times and I will discuss them briefly.

In Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 we have a description of the fall of an archangel by the name of Lucifer. Now the fall of this archangel — and there were only three: Lucifer, Michael, and Gabriel — caused him to become known as the devil. The devil is a former archangel.

This former archangel by the name of Lucifer was the top of the three. We are told here in these two chapters that he was created in perfect wisdom and perfect beauty. If you read closely you will notice that he was given power over all the flashing stones, over all the diamonds, over all the precious gems, over all the gold. Actually he became the covering cherub or angel that hovered over God at all times. He was the most beautiful of all creatures.

Then pride entered his heart and he desired not just to hover over God but to be God ... to shove God off His throne. . . and to take God's place. That's when the war in heaven happened. When that happened, we don't know. It's in the infinite past. It may have been before the earth was made. Maybe after it was made. Lucifer said, in essence, "I will ascend above God." That is, "I will actually take God's place. I will be God" (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:12-19).

And God told him, "You shall be cast down to the sides of hell" (Isaiah 14:15). Then in poetic language He describes the fall of Lucifer, how he struck the earth and the earth trembled.

Some believe that's when the earth was filled with chaos and became without form. It appeared to be a void in the universe. We don't know. In Luke 10, Jesus indicated that He was there when it happened. He said:

I beheld Satan [Lucifer] as lightning fall from heaven (Luke 10:18).

Jesus said that He saw him and that he fell like a streak of lightning. He fell. Well, each archangel had his own angels and it's apparent that the angels of Lucifer fell with him, because Jesus speaks of the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41).

It's a solemn fact that hell was never created for man. Jesus himself said in Matthew 25:41 that hell was prepared for the devil and his angels. This is why no man is ever sent to hell by God. He goes there by his own choice.

When he repudiates God he's doing exactly what Lucifer did when he repudiated God, when he shoved God out of the way, as it were, when he tried to take God's place . . . when He wanted to become God. Hell is prepared for that kind of being.

When a human being does this, there's only one place for him. He certainly wouldn't fit in heaven. He would be as unhappy in heaven as he would be in hell. Because in heaven Lucifer was extremely unhappy. He was unhappy while he was in the presence of God.

This partly explains the story of Judas Iscariot who betrayed our Lord for 30 pieces of silver. He did not do it until a demon entered him. When the devil entered Judas, Jesus said, "That thou doest, do quickly" (John 13:27). In other words, "Go on and get it done."

Jesus saw that Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve apostles, had chosen the devil over Him, he had chosen Lucifer over Jesus Christ as his lord. Jesus had seen this choice crystallize.. .firm up. . .and become a way of life for Judas. So Jesus said, "Well, all right; if this is your choice, follow it to the end."

Judas immediately went out and it was night. He made a bargain with the chief priests to deliver Christ into their hands for 30 pieces of silver, which he did. This is how man finally got Jesus Christ and laid his hands on Him and put Him on the cross.

The Battle Between Christ and Satan

This brings up a whole new interesting line of truth. That is, what is this battle all about anyway? This battle that's going on in the world between nations, ideologies, doctrines? Is it between men or is it between Lucifer and Jesus Christ?

There is a very interesting idea put forth by some Bible scholars that the three archangels formed a trinity and each one of the three was attached to a member of the Holy Trinity. Lucifer was attached to Jesus Christ. Michael, I believe, was attached to the Holy Spirit and Gabriel to the Father. It was the archangel of the Son, Jesus Christ, that fell, and this is why God the Father chose the Son to come to earth, to be born of a woman, to become a human being, to face the devil, and to take him on.

When Christ, the Son, agreed to come to the earth, to lay aside His kingly glory, to limit himself by becoming a human being and living on the sense level, the sensory level, He was guaranteeing the Father and the Holy Spirit the

redemption of man. He was coming down to face Lucifer himself on Lucifer's own territory.

To carry this a little further. . . there is a very interesting line of speculation among some Bible scholars that this is what the cross was all about. That Lucifer, the devil, saw, or believed he saw, that he could defeat God once and for all by having Jesus Christ killed. These scholars believe that every demon — every fallen angel — was present at the crucifixion. That all of the forces of the devil, or Lucifer, were marshaled there to see to it that Jesus would be put to death.

If this is true — and it's just speculation — then that is when the devil made his greatest mistake. (His first mistake was when he tried to ascend above God's throne and was cast out of heaven.) Lucifer must have forgotten the Scriptures ... or he didn't believe them ... for at the fall of man, as is discussed in Genesis, God spoke to the serpent, or the devil, and said:

I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed [descendants]; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel (Genesis 3:15).

When God said to the devil that he would bruise the heel of the descendent of Eve — Jesus Christ, the Son of God — He was saying, "You will kill His body. You will bruise His heel. You will put human flesh to death. You will be successful in that. But while you are doing that He is going to bruise your head. He will stomp your brains out. He's going to touch you at the core of your total personality. . . the core of your existence. And the cross is ultimately going to blot you out of existence, devil."

As I say, it's an interesting line of speculation. And there may be a lot of truth in it.

Christ Destroyed The Works Of The Devil

I know this, that Jesus Christ will blot the devil out. And that is not speculation. The Bible says:

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

When Lucifer fell, the angels fell with him. It's evident that they moved from a celestial heavenly realm to an earthly terrestrial realm. They moved from heaven where it's incorruptible and immortal .. where there is no death . . . where there is no imperfection . . . down to the earth where there is chaos . .

where through man's power of choice he hates and makes war. . . he kills and destroys. Lucifer and his angels moved and they moved not by invitation only, but by force. I mean, they were kicked out.

This is how man is tempted. In order to give man the power of choice, God voluntarily limited himself. He had to limit himself in order to give man the power of choice. In order for the power of choice to be exercised, there was God on the one hand and Lucifer, or the devil, on the other. Man had two choices. God or the devil. . . heaven or hell.

The Fallen Angels Are In Chains Of Darkness

The fallen angels — having left their first estate, where not even God would spare them in their sinfulness, and having been cast to the earth — evidently lost something else. They lost not only the environment of heaven and the presence of God, but both 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 say that these fallen angels are reserved in chains of darkness.

Now don't think of these as chains — steel chains — in which they are bound. The chain itself is darkness. Darkness is the chain. That is, they are now devoid of all spiritual illumination and understanding. In one stroke the light they had was turned to darkness. Now they are creatures of darkness. That is to say, they no longer can have any light. They no longer can worship God. They no longer can be angels of God. They are reserved forever, awaiting judgment and hell.

If you read your New Testament, especially the four Gospels, and read it carefully, you'll notice that sometimes when Christ would cast out a devil from a person that the devil, or a group of devils, would say to Him. "We know who thou art, thou holy Son of God. Hast thou come to torment us before our time?"

The Angels Lost Their Celestial Bodies

In Mark 5 when Jesus Christ was facing the man whose name was Legion, referring to the uncounted number of demons in him, these demons begged Jesus not to send them prematurely into hell. They wanted Jesus, when He cast them out of the man, to allow them to enter the hogs. They wanted to have some kind of embodiment. Why? Because it's evident that when they were cast out of heaven they lost their celestial ness.

We don't know what the bodies of these angels had consisted of, but we do know that they were celestials. They were heavenly, they were not earthly. They were not human, they were not flesh, as you and I are flesh. Their bodies

were not made out of the earth. In fact, they were a group of creatures made higher than man.

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

Thou madest him a little lower than the angels . . . But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death . . . (Hebrews 2:6, 7, 9).

The writer of Hebrews asks, "If man is made lower than angels, why is God so concerned about him? If he's a lower order of creative being, why is God so concerned about him?"

Then the writer goes on to say, We see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. He does not say we see Christ, because Christ was not made lower than the angels. Christ refers to the Son of God. Jesus refers to Him as the Son of man. Christ is the divine, Jesus is the human.

The human part of Jesus was born of a woman and He was born with the kind of flesh you and I have. He was tempted and tested the same way I am and the same way you are. He was.

... in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15).

You name it and Jesus was tempted and tested by it. Yet He did not yield to sin. Why was Jesus made lower than the angels? He was made lower than the angels because man was made lower than the angels. In order to redeem man, to come down on the devil's territory, to face and defeat him, He had to become a man. Therefore, He voluntarily limited himself and became Jesus Christ, man-God and God-man, Son of man and Son of God.

JESUS FACED THE DEVIL WITH THE SAME WEAPONS WE HAVE: THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE WORD OF GOD,

AND FAITH.

Now it's interesting that Jesus used only three methods, three avenues, of receiving knowledge. I said there were three ways that information enters the mind. First, through the human spirit which goes all the way back to Eden. Second, by satanic spirits. And, third, by the Holy Spirit. Let's look at Jesus himself — Jesus the man, the human being — who felt what we feel, who suffered what we suffer, and who was tempted like we are tempted.

He was filled with the Holy Spirit without measure (John 3:34). That was the first thing that happened to Jesus when He entered His ministry. He was

filled with the Holy Spirit.

The second thing that Jesus did was to have knowledge of, and apply the Word of God. Third, Jesus used His faith.

Let's see how Jesus did this. After He came out of the waters of baptism Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. The devil gave Him three major temptations:

One, to turn the stone into bread if He were God.

Two, to jump off the temple and if He didn't get hurt that would show that He was the Son of God.

Three, to bow down before the devil... to take the easy way out (Matthew 4:1-11).

The third temptation was the big one. In so many words the devil was saying to Jesus, "I know what You want. I know what You came down here for. I was in heaven when You were up there. I know all about You. I know that You want the world. Well, I have it and I'll give You the world ... all its kingdoms and powers and riches. I just ask one thing (it's the same old record ... he was just playing the other side) just bow down and worship me."

This was the same thing that Satan had said to God in heaven ... "God, move over. I want Your throne. I want You to worship me. I want men to worship me."

So Satan says to Jesus, "I'll give You a shortcut. You won't have to go to the cross. You don't have to wait .. even a moment. You don't have to wait for the triumph of God. You can have it right now."

And Jesus Christ said:

It is written (Luke 4:8).

He said, "[Devil,] it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve," or, "Devil, Lucifer, I just remind you of what's happened to you up in heaven. It's written that you shall worship God and you shall not be worshiped yourself; you shall be a worshiper of God."

Jesus used the Bible. That's why every Christian must study the Bible and learn the Scriptures, learn the Word of God, because it's your shield, it's your sword that you fight the devil with. People who don't know the Bible are much more open to satanic spirits, to the occult, than people are who know the Bible.

You can say things to the devil all you want to but he knows that he's stronger than you are. But when you quote the Bible to him — the Word of God — that's what he heard up in heaven. That's what he heard from Jesus. There's no way that he can withstand, "It is written."

How did Jesus use His faith? Jesus Christ believed in the ultimate triumph of God. He believed that the devil could not win. He believed that the forces of evil would be ultimately destroyed. He believed that knowledge would prevail and would cover the earth like waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:9).

Therefore, with that faith in God and the ultimate triumph of truth and righteousness He could say, "I will not accept your shortcuts. I will not compromise."

I will will the will of God. I will obey. I will take the way of God and ultimately I will gain not only what you are offering Me, but I'll also gain the love and the truth of men."

So Jesus used being filled with the Spirit, He used the Word of God, and He used His faith in God. Now the gift of discerning of spirits was extremely strong in Jesus. He even knew the number of demon spirits that were in a person and He knew their names. He knew what they were, they were fallen angels who had lost their celestial bodies.

The Occult

One of the reasons why the gift of discerning of spirits is so important to us today is because of the rise of the occult. Now I do not accept the term "occult" as it generally is accepted by society and as it is described in the dictionary sense of the word. I do not believe there is any such thing as black magic or white magic or sorcery or witchcraft or Ouija boards or horoscopes or anything like that. I do not accept them unless and except demon spirits are behind them. A lot of these things are manifestations of man's mind and, generally speaking, they don't go very deep. When they go deep, when they affect the personality of a human being, then there is a demon behind it.

My Personal Experience With Demon-Possessed People And Exorcism

Now we're going to get into the Bible, into some of my own personal experiences in the healing ministry and bring you face to face with some individuals that I have dealt with. We'll also talk about some individuals that Christ dealt with and some individuals that Paul dealt with. Through it all we'll

be weaving a thread of the way the Holy Spirit manifests the gift of discerning of spirits in and among us for our own security.

Demon-Possessed Girl Delivered In Raleigh, North Carolina Crusade

In the early '60s I was in a crusade in the municipal auditorium in Raleigh, North Carolina. At the close of the preaching service I gave an invitation to men and women there to come forward and accept Christ as their personal Savior. Then I began my prayers for the healing of people . . . that is, the healing of their body or the healing of their mind or the healing of some problem or need in their lives.

I was asked by a family to go outside and pray for their daughter who was in an automobile because she was not in condition to be brought inside the building. She was of a rather dangerous nature.

I asked a friend of mine, John Wellons, to go with me. I've always made it a rule, if possible, never to pray for a demon-possessed person when I'm alone. I always try to have somebody with me. I recommend that to any other Christian or minister. You remember that when our Lord sent them out, He sent seventy two by two (Luke 10). Two went, rather than one, and they returned with great joy saying that even the devils were subject to them in the name of Jesus. They went out two by two.

We wound our way through the automobiles in the parking lot and as we came near a certain car we heard a voice. This voice spoke in a very distinct, clear, rather loud way and said, "He's approaching from behind the automobile." We took a few more steps and this voice said, "It's Oral Roberts." Then the voice said, "He's coming on the left side of the automobile."

By this time I didn't know whether my friend John was going to go on with me or not. I put my hand on him and I said, "Just hold it," because I had been through this type of thing before.

You remember in the Bible that when the demons in people encountered Jesus Christ they always knew who He was. Sometimes they would say, "Jesus, we know who thou art, thou holy Son of God" (Luke 8:28).

The Seven Sons of Sceva

In Acts 19 there is the record of the seven sons of Sceva, a Jew, who observed the ministry of Paul. They had seen Paul casting out devils through the

name of Jesus so they undertook a ministry of casting out devils. But they were not followers of Jesus Christ.

They came to a certain individual who was possessed with a demon and they said, "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth . . . that you come out of this man." They recognized the man had a demon and they were calling the demon out by the Christ that Paul knew — not the One they knew but the One that Paul knew.

The demon used the man's voice and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" (Acts 19:15).

Then the man, whom the demon possessed, leaped upon these seven men and singlehandedly tore their clothes off (Acts 19:16). The last we heard of them, they were still running.

Those of us who have been in this ministry long enough to have dealt with a large number of people know how knowledgeable demons are.

Well, as we kept approaching the car the demon — using the girl's voice — said, "Now, whatever you do, don't let him put his right hand on you."

When I came to the left side of the car she was in the front seat on the right side. I put my head in the open window and she began to cower and to draw herself over against the other side of the automobile. Her head was down. Her eyes were shut. Her hands were over her eyes. She had not physically seen me. There was no effort to operate on a sense level of seeing, feeling, hearing, tasting and smelling — the sense level upon which we all live. There was no effort of that. Here was a woman whose eyes were completely covered, whose head was down and yet was able to see me coming. She knew my name. She was able to discern what I was there to do. This demon was telling her, "Whatever you do, don't let him touch you with his right hand."

When I reached my hand in, this demon said, "Don't you touch me!"

Now her head is still down, she still hasn't seen me. I reached out with my other hand to feel for my friend, John Wellons. And he wasn't close enough to touch. I said, "Come here, John. Come here."

And he said, "Oral, I've never been with anything like this."

And I said, "Well, it will be a great experience for you."

I wasn't feeling overly confident myself. You could feel something going up and down your spine. I was aware that this girl knew who I was — that I was a servant of God — and that fact encouraged me because I knew now that I was

on the right track.

When I reached forth my hand to touch her it was like a dozen invisible hands grabbed my hand and manhandled it. Now, something that I could not see took my hand and shoved it back. Apparently, this girl was not moving a muscle — at least that we could see. I kept pressing my hand in until I put it on her forehead. The moment I touched her forehead I spoke in the name of Jesus to the demons.

THROUGH THE GIFT OF DISCERNING OF SPIRITS I WAS GIVEN THE NUMBER OF THE DEMONS IN HER ... I WAS GIVEN THEIR NAMES, HOW LONG THEY HAD BEEN IN HER, AND WHAT THEY WERE DOING TO HER.

All this came in a flash. Immediately I spoke to the demons, not in my name or in my strength but in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. I told them to take their hands off God's property, that this human being was God's. I began to call them out. Now it took three or four minutes because they didn't all come out at once. It appeared that one would come out, then two or three others would come out.

When the prayer was over and Jesus Christ had delivered the girl, she looked up and opened her eyes. I asked her to look at me and when she turned and looked at me, there was a smile, a flood of relief, on her face. I said, "Let me have your hand. I want you to shake my hand." She acted like she was coming out of a coma — out of a trance. I said, "I want you to shake my hand. I am Oral Roberts."

And she said, "You are?"

I said, "Yes."

You see, it wasn't the girl who was recognizing me as I was coming behind her. The recognition was in the demon that was in her so I introduced myself to her. Then I led her gently out of the car, took her into the auditorium, and gave her to her parents. Later we had her to give a word to the audience of a part of what had happened to her.

This Century Has Produced A Generation Of Pseudo-Intellectuals Who Deny The Supernatural

This century has produced a generation of pseudointellectuals — so-called intellectuals, people who really believe that they know. As a result they have become materialistic and through materialism are trying to live completely

on the sense level, denying the intuitive, denying the supernatural — either evil or good — denying the existence of anything supernatural. There has been a repression of belief in spiritual things, a repression of belief that we ourselves are spirits, that the real me, the real you, is not the physical at all. It's the spirit that indwells human flesh.

That kind of thinking is having this kind of repercussion: although it represses the belief in man concerning spiritual beings it does not eliminate the spiritual beings. It merely weakens the ability of a person to resist the devil or to resist the demon spirit. It causes a person to be more open, to have less resistance.

The rise of the occult that we have coming now like a cyclone in this country and throughout the world is a direct result of man's repression of his belief, of this normal belief, in the supernatural.

Wherever I Have Gone On All The Continents I Have Found Belief In The Supernatural

I've traveled in all the continents and many nations. I have dealt with thousands and thousands of people of virtually all walks of life and nationalities. Wherever I have gone I have found the belief in the supernatural. I have found the belief in spiritual creatures. I found a belief in something outside of man. I found it in the American Indians as I have preached to thousands of them. I found it in India. I found it all over Africa. I found it in Russia. The place that I felt more satanic power, more demon power than any other place in the world, was in Moscow. There was a spirit of bondage. It was all over that city.

A beautiful young Communist girl, brilliantly educated, was assigned to me and my group as a personal guide for several days. During that time she and I began to talk about God. She said she was a Communist and an atheist and did not believe in God, she did not believe in the supernatural, she did not recognize that this is a world of spirits. She did not believe that man was a spirit.

She believed man's entire base of existence is an economic base. It begins with a classless society. She began to go into all the things that she had against capitalism and so on.

Then she was very courteous and let me talk. I gave my testimony of healing from tuberculosis, of salvation by Jesus Christ, of my belief in the supernatural, my belief in the Resurrection.

Immediately, she wanted to know about the Resurrection. She asked me

what I thought happened when a person died and I gave testimony of the resurrection of the dead and how I expected to be raised from the dead when my body died. She said she didn't believe that, that she could not accept it.

I said, "What do you think happens to you when you die?"

She said, "I'll just be dead, that's all."

"Well, what do you mean, you'll just be dead?" "Well, I don't know, I'll just be dead."

You see, she was repeating what somebody had said to her. Then there was a flash of inspiration in my heart and I said to her, calling her by her first name, "Sister, you may think you'll be dead and just dead, but you're going to be more alive after death, either as a person indwelt by God or indwelt by Satan, than you've ever been alive on a sense level. As for me, when I die, God's going to raise my body from the dead. I'm going to live in newness of life. I'll have a new body, a glorified body, without any pain or weakness, my mind will be perfect. My body will be perfect. I will be — for the first time — a perfect human being, the way God originally made man."

When I finished, she brushed her tears back and she said, "Mr. Roberts, you're a happy man. You're a fortunate man." Then she changed the subject.

We Are Created Spiritual Beings

There's no way that she could get away from a belief in the supernatural because she's made to believe in the supernatural. We're surrounded by a world of spirits, by the angels of God of which there are at least twice as many as there are the angels of the devil. I've always liked that little thought because it is just another evidence that we're on the winning side, you know. You always like to know you're on the winning side of anything.

Brazil: Demon-Possessed Person Delivered

The second incident I want to bring to your mind will illustrate something else about demon spirits. We were in Brazil in 1967 with a group of our own Oral Roberts University students World Action Team. We were in Rio de Janeiro in a large auditorium where we were having thousands of people come both day and night.

We had two services a day. This presented a problem in praying individually for the people because there were so many of them. Eventually — before the eight or ten days were over — I pressed my students into service and

began to try to train them — right on the spot — for the laying-on-of-hands, the praying for the sick.

One night while a long line of people was coming toward us, I had two students down on the floor in front of the platform upon which I was standing. I was directing them as they would pray for the people. They were getting some real good results.

As I stood there, just sort of hovering over them and guarding and guiding the best I knew how, I looked over to my left as though pulled by a magnet. There was a man bringing a woman which turned out to be his wife. Immediately through the gift of discerning of spirits, I discerned that she was possessed with many demons.

Now I had dealt with something in this crusade on a larger scale than I'd ever dealt with before. We had a little card on which the person would put his name and address and what he thought was wrong with him — if he were ill spiritually, or physically, or mentally or whatever need there was. Over half of the people would write on their cards nervousness.

I'd never had that number of people to say they were nervous before, but all through the crusade I kept discerning something I couldn't put a name to. That is, I discerned or detected the existence of it but I couldn't put a name to it.

Later I learned that more than half the people of Brazil are spiritists who believe in satanic spirits. In one way or another they give themselves to these satanic spirits. It is a religion to them and this had created a nervousness or a condition of imbalance between spirit, mind, and body that they could only term nervousness. They had no other name for it.

So I had prayed for them. I had asked God to heal the nervousness but I wasn't getting enough knowledge to do as good a job as I thought I should until now.

This man brought his wife and in a flash I discerned, through the Spirit, what it was that was destroying the people. I just simply jumped down from the platform and asked these students to move over to my right. I intercepted this man and woman. When she came within four or five feet of me, the demon spoke. The language there is Portuguese and I was using an interpreter and the demon in this woman began to express itself in Portuguese. She was waving her hands at me and my interpreter was just standing there like he was struck dumb. I said to him, "Interpret to me! What is she saying?" He was so badly frightened at first that he couldn't open his mouth so I said to him, "Don't be afraid."

I knew it was the demon using her vocal cords but I couldn't get what the words were, so he began to repeat. "You will not cast me out. I will not come out. You cannot cast me out."

She Was Like A Wild Beast

Now after she said that she lunged toward me. When she lunged toward me she let out a sort of bloodcurdling scream. It was such that the people who were in the line all around her just fell back. Her husband grabbed her and couldn't control her. She was like a wild beast. I mean, this husband of hers, as big as he was, couldn't hold her body. She made several lunges at me and each time would fall back. There we stood.

I can never be grateful enough, in situations like this where I have normal fear, for the gift of discerning of spirits because where there's danger, the Spirit usually brings a calmness. The gift of discerning of spirits just sort of brings light. It opens the area up and the person that is anointed by the Spirit at that time — who is in charge of that meeting — just seems to know. He just knows what's happening when he ordinarily would know nothing.

I saw the condition she was in and I just stood there. She would lunge and fall back, lunge and fall back. Finally I was able to touch her and pray for her. I asked the crowd to bow their heads because when we're dealing with a person who is possessed as much as this person was, we urge people to bow their heads. Not that bowing of the head is any great thing, but we ask them to do something that will get their mind on God because when a demon comes out, he makes two types of efforts:

One, is to get back in the same person.

Jesus teaches in Matthew 12 that when the evil spirit comes out of a man he walks through dry or uninhabited places and then he returns with seven more demons — more powerful than himself— to try to reenter, and often does. When he does, then the last fate of the person is worse than the first.

The second thing that the demon tries is to enter someone else.

I was in the big tent one night in a certain city. We were having a night when it seemed like every third person was demon-possessed. It's like that in the ministry. There'll be nights when there'll be none and then the night comes when it seems like the whole demon world erupts on you. I was urging the crowd, sometimes saying, "Touch the chair in front of you as though you were touching the person. Pray with me. Pray for the person. Pray with me. Fill this room with

your faith.”

When the demon came out of one person I had prayed for, all of a sudden over to my right at the edge of the tent a man let out a bloodcurdling yell and ran. The demon had struck him and had entered him. The police ran after him, caught him, and brought him back. We had to pray for him and were able to help him.

I don’t want to overdramatize what I’m saying, but if I say less I’m not really telling it like it is.

I guess I’d better just tell the whole story of the woman in Brazil. I had my hand on this woman praying for her. The presence of the Lord — the anointing of the Lord — moves through me so that I can detect the presence of the evil spirit, to know what his name is, or the number of them. Now sometimes it doesn’t work that clearly but when it does work that clearly I know their number and their name and usually have the power to cast them out. I don’t always.

The Gift of Discerning of Spirits Is Not Always The Power Of Exorcism

It doesn’t always carry with it the power to cast evil spirits out. It always carries with it the power to detect the demon, to distinguish the presence of the demon that is there. You can discern the spirit, whether it’s a good spirit, whether it’s a spirit of God or whether it’s a spirit of a demon, the spirit of the devil. That gift will reveal that. But it may take a gift of faith or gift of healing to bring the healing to the individual.

The Gifts Usually Work In Clusters

Usually in the work of the nine gifts of the Spirit, there are more than one present. They usually work in clusters. They don’t ordinarily work just one at a time. The whole group may be there. I’m for that. But one thing that the gift of discerning of spirits will do, it will tie all the gifts of the Spirit together. The gift of discerning of spirits is to help us know the spirit that is in a person, to know what is motivating him.

Well, this demon in the Brazilian woman spoke directly to me and told me, "You cannot cast me out. I will not come out."

I admit there was a struggle. We would try and apparently we were defeated. Then while I was praying and calling on the name of Jesus Christ and

asking Jesus Christ to command this thing to come out, I saw something that explains a lot of things that are going on today.

In a moment's time her feet flew out from under her. I mean literally flew out from under her so quickly that for a moment her body was perfectly suspended horizontally between me and the audience. There her body was and we could hear something like sledge-hammer blows on her body. Her husband screamed. The crowd screamed. You could cut the atmosphere almost, you would say, with a knife.

Then in the same instant that we saw her suspended, this invisible power jerked her to the floor with a force that would have ordinarily burst or cracked her skull. I mean you could hear the sound of her body hitting the floor. You could hear that sound throughout a building that seated 14,000 people. She lay as though she were dead and my first human thought was, this devil has killed her.

But you know, the Scripture is usually the thing that will save every situation. That's what Jesus used. I remembered in Mark 9 where it says that devils tore a little boy's body. It tore his body and rent him sore and the little boy fell to the ground. Read the 9th chapter of Mark's Gospel about this little boy that the father had brought to Christ. He first brought him to the disciples and they failed. When Christ appeared, the father said, "If thou canst, help us."

And Jesus said, "That's not the question. The question is, if you can believe."

The fact is that the demons, as they were being called out of this little boy, rent him sore. I mean they beat this little boy's body and tore his flesh.

Now when you read of a human body being suspended like that it could be a trick, it could be a human manipulation, but whenever it is not that, it's always a demon. And wherever a demon is, Jesus Christ's Spirit is not at work. It's a satanic atmosphere. It's an atmosphere of destruction.

Then we reached down. Precisely as Jesus in the Bible took the little boy's hand, we took her hand and lifted her. We just lifted her in the name of Jesus. With the same force that she went to the floor, she bounded up. It was a complete transformation of a human being by the Spirit of God. That crowd stood to their feet and clapped their hands and shouted for joy. It was a complete change of the spirit of the crusade. In fact, that crusade ended in a blaze of glory that I'll never forget as long as I live. That woman's healing was the key to all of it.

Can A Christian Have A Demon Spirit?

Now, I'll tell you a story that has to do with the question, can a Christian have a demon spirit? I was in Denver in the big tent in a crusade and Pastor Blair of Calvary Temple was the chairman of the sponsoring pastors. He brought this woman and asked me if I would pray for her. He said he'd had a rather difficult time with her — which was the understatement of a lifetime. He stood by her side. I later knew why he stood there — he knew I was going to need help.

She was a rather large woman, maybe 5' 9" tall and apparently very, very physically strong. She had been a missionary to Africa. She had been sent home by the mission board. There were times when she was uncontrollable. She was very destructive. This, of course, had not been told to me. Pastor Blair had just told me that he had a woman whom he'd been having a difficult time with, who had been attending his church.

I put my hand out to touch her head and to start praying. When I did she erupted. She just took my hands and arms and threw them up. She reached over, took me by the coat . . . Now, I'm sitting on a chair on a platform. She's standing down on the ground in front of me. She reached up and got me and in one motion she just physically lifted me off my chair. I weigh over 180 pounds but she physically lifted me and just threw me on the ground. The buttons just flew in every direction. Well, I picked myself up and looked around. I tell you, I've heard of some mean church members but this is the worst.

It was at that moment that I realized what I was up against.

The Gift Of Discerning Of Spirits Was In Me Like A Flash

I looked at her and this all began to come out. In Africa she had been alone. Somebody had made a mistake and put her with a tribe where so-called witchcraft was highly practiced. The witchdoctors were extremely powerful and she had gotten involved, probably through curiosity.

EVERYBODY IS CURIOUS ABOUT SPIRITUAL THINGS — WHETHER IT'S GOD OR THE DEVIL — WE'RE JUST INCURABLY RELIGIOUS . . . WE ARE MADE AS SPIRITUAL BEINGS.

Probably she had gotten curious and had taken a step or two to see what it was all about and got involved to the extent that she got carried away with the power of this witchdoctor. After awhile the power of Jesus Christ was not working in her. Apparently this is what happened. As a result she had this urge to

destroy people. It was an overwhelming thing. It was like a hex had been put upon her. It was like a spell had been cast on her. It was a spirit.

It's really a puzzling question when I'm asked, "Can a Christian have a demon spirit?"

My first answer is, "No, absolutely no! There's no way a demon can cross the bloodline!" Yet, if a person turns away from Christ, he leaves a void. It's like Jesus taught in Matthew 12 that when the demon comes out the house is empty, swept, and cleaned up. But then the devil tries to come back and he comes back with reinforcements. Unless the person goes on with God, he apparently opens himself up again. So I don't know that I can give you as good an answer as I'd like to give.

Anyway, when I walked toward this woman to put my hands on her the second time, she just picked me up and tossed me back as though I were a 10-pound baby. I have never felt such superhuman strength in my life.

Then she ripped my coat off me. I'm now in my shirt. My cufflinks are gone. She's tearing the clothes off my body. There are thousands of people watching this. There's a gasp in the crowd. I mean, people are frightened to death.

Then there was a moment when it was so quiet you could almost hear the quietness. I was all alone, or I felt I was, dealing with a power that apparently was going to rip my body apart. The main thing the demon was doing was not letting me touch the woman. Every time I would move my right hand toward her, she would just toss me back. The Spirit cleared my mind and gave me presence of mind to where I knew what was happening.

She And! Began A Duel

I mean I would put my hand forward and she would put hers forward. I would jerk mine back and finally I was able to get my hand between her arms and quick as a flash my hand was on her forehead. She had her hands on my hand but she could not pry my hand loose. When she could not pry my hand loose, I knew that the Spirit of God had taken control. I mean I knew that battle would soon be over. Through the Spirit I was speaking (the microphone was near enough where the crowd could hear me and later they told me that words like this were coming out). The Spirit was telling me how many years this had been going on and the type of demon it was, etc.

I Began To Call The Demons Out

There was a demon of sadism, a demon of destruction, whose only satisfaction was to destroy, to hurt someone. When the demons came out it was probably the most dramatic moment of my entire ministry. You could hear them come out. You could hear the gurgling sound in her throat. You could hear them in the atmosphere as they were moving about. The crowd knew it. I knew it.

Then all at once her face shone like an angel. She looked at me and she said, "Brother Roberts, Brother Roberts, I'm free. I'm free. Jesus Christ has set me free."

I don't know whether you believe in old-time shouting religion or not, but I'm telling you we tore that place up. We shouted for joy. I mean it was great. I said, "Brother Blair, here she is."

They walked off triumphantly together. I was spent so I had to close the service. There wasn't anything I could do for anybody else.

I still haven't answered to your satisfaction, I'm sure, the question, can a demon enter a Christian? My answer is, certainly not if a Christian is a Christian and follows Christ. But if we turn away from God ... if we get involved in things that are not of God, apparently things like this do happen.

Paul's Thorn In The Flesh

I wanted to tell you something about Paul and his thorn. The gift of discerning of spirits in Paul helped him to discern a demon that was trying to destroy him. In 2 Corinthians 12 he speaks of this continual harassment. It was like a pricking thorn in his flesh. Some think it was partial blindness, that he couldn't see well. Some think it was a form of epilepsy, that he would have convulsions. All kinds of theories are put forth — none of which I accept. I don't believe them at all because finally Paul discerns what the thorn is. He says that it was a messenger of Satan (2 Corinthians 12:7).

"Messenger" in the Greek is angelos, or angel of the devil. It was not a demon inside him but a demon outside him. Wherever he went this demon stirred up the people against Paul and against his ministry, against the gospel. Paul was in danger everywhere he went. He was persecuted everywhere he went. He never got any release. No matter how much good he did he was always thought of as some terrible evil person, a blasphemer. It bugged him. It weakened his body. It psychologically upset him. It became a thing to him.

Paul prayed ... he prayed twice ... he prayed three times. He, who could bring miracles for others, could do nothing to get his prayers through. God

wouldn't remove it. God wouldn't take it away.

But God revealed His purpose to Paul in letting this outside satanic influence buffet him till it was like a pricking thorn in his flesh. God told him what it was ... a messenger of the devil to buffet and persecute him. Its purpose was to weaken him physically, psychologically, every way, so he would be a humble man. God said to Paul, "In the weakness that this produces, My strength will be made perfect, Paul."

Then suddenly it was a new ball game because through the discerning of spirits Paul saw that God had pulled the devil's fangs and had covered that weakness with glory and power. And he became a tremendous apostle. It was a great experience.

The devil can never be saved and he still has that same urge to destroy God. The only way he can strike back at God is through the highest order of creatures which is man. Because man has the widest powers of expression. He's the only one who has a soul. By entering man, through whom Christ died, the devil can strike back at God and satisfy those lusts. The Bible calls him the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4). The Bible calls him the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2). The Bible recognizes that the devil, Lucifer, looks upon himself as the god of this world and that men worship him and that this world lies in the wicked one. This is why Ephesians 6 says:

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but Against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (Ephesians 6:12,13).

OUR FIGHT IS NOT WITH MAN... OUR BATTLE IS WITH POWERS AND PRINCIPALITIES AND THE KINGDOMS OF DARKNESS, THE RULERS OF THE SPIRIT WORLD.

Our fight is really with them because the fight that's going on in the world is between Lucifer and Jesus. In order for Jesus to become our Redeemer, He was born of woman and was made lower than angels. But in His resurrection He ascended above the prince of the powers of the air. He ascended above the god of this world, the devil. He ascended far above all kingdoms and powers and principalities and the rulers of darkness of this world (Ephesians 1:20,21). And once again He is above the angels. Now Ephesians 2:6 says:

And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly

places in Christ Jesus.

By following Christ we who were made lower than the angels — even the fallen angels — are lifted far above any angel because we sit with Christ. In 1 John 4:4 the Bible says:

Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

We have one living within — the Holy Spirit — who is greater than the prince of this world. We have at our disposal the gift of the discerning of spirits to assist us in our spiritual warfare. Jesus Christ has conquered Satan! This is our triumph. .. our victory!

Chapter 8, The Gift of The Working of Miracles

Suggested Scripture reading for this lesson: John 11:40

The gift of the working of miracles has to do with all the gifts of the Spirit. Whereas each one of the nine gifts is a miracle, this gift is a miracle in itself. The working of miracles as a gift deals with a larger issue . . . with a more complete picture. For example, the gift of the word of wisdom is the Holy Spirit's supernatural power telling you what to do in a moment when you are indecisive or you have less knowledge upon the subject than you should have . . . you are unable to find a solution to a problem. The Holy Spirit supernaturally implants in your mind a wisdom, a knowledge of God, a way to do it, and gives you a word which you would speak. That word spoken would be a word of wisdom that would deal with a specific situation you are facing.

The working of miracles might include a word of wisdom. A word of wisdom is a miracle but if the gift of the working of miracles were present at the same moment, this gift would deal with a larger issue, a larger picture. It would have larger ramifications. It would be like you would throw a stone or a small rock into a pool of water and the ripples would start spreading and going out. That's the way the gift of the working of miracles happens. It is always a larger move of the Holy Spirit.

The Gift Of The Working Of Miracles Is A Stream Of Supernatural Power

You will recall in John 7:38,39 that Jesus said:

He that believeth on me . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit...)

Rivers of living water will flow out of the inner man. A stream of continuous supernatural power. This is a very beautiful description, in my opinion, of the gift of the working of miracles. More than any of the other gifts, the working of miracles would be more continuously present in your Christian experience, in your ministry gift, in your witness.

There are many miracles mentioned in the Bible.

There are some 60 great miracles mentioned in the Old Testament and there are some 40 major or mighty miracles mentioned in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now there may have been many more, and probably were, but these were recorded in the Old Testament and in the life of Jesus. Then there

were several mighty miracles recorded in the New Testament, beyond the physical lifetime of Jesus, that were wrought through the apostles, the deacons, and the believers in the Early Church.

The Difference Between The Creating Of Miracles And The Working Of Miracles

Paul calls this gift the working of miracles. Notice it is not a gift of the creating of miracles but a gift of the working of miracles. Now that's a very important point to remember. This can be well illustrated through an example in the Old Testament. Elijah, the prophet, the servant of God, was confronted by the prophets of Baal, a false god. Elijah brought them to a moment of decision in which he said:

The God that answereth by fire, let him be God (1 Kings 18:24).

So they built an altar and put on it the sacrifices. All day long the prophets of Baal called upon their god to send fire and consume the sacrifice. Well, it did not happen. It did not happen because Baal did not really exist. He was not really a god. He was a figment of people's imagination. He was something physical that men's hands had created.

When Elijah called upon the Lord God of Israel, God sent the fire streaking down out of the heaven to consume the sacrifice. That happened because God is. God did, because God is. He created the fire because GOD IS. Baal could not because he was not. God could and did, because GOD IS.

God created the fire but the worker of miracles was Elijah. THE CREATOR OF THE MIRACLE WAS GOD. THE WORKING OF THE MIRACLES CAME THROUGH THE FAITH OF THE PROPHET ELIJAH. So there is a difference in the working of miracles and the creating of miracles. God is the Creator of the miracle, while He has to have instruments, such as you and me, through whom to work these miracles.

The Gift Of The Working Of Miracles Is Perhaps The Most Sovereign Of All The Nine Gifts

That is to say, we would be less able to influence the gift of the working of miracles happening in our lives than we would, perhaps, any of the other gifts. God, more or less, sovereignly moves through miracles. In other words, there are times that God just simply decides that He's going to do something extraordinary. He's going to let this world or a group of people know who's in

charge . . . that He is still running this universe. There are times God will step into a situation, stretch out His mighty arm, and do a work so great it just settles the whole issue. There's nothing more to be said or done. God has done it.

I don't mean to say that God doesn't work sovereignly through the other gifts. He does. We are told in 1 Corinthians 12 that the Holy Spirit gives all the nine gifts as He wills. As the Holy Spirit desires them to be manifested through a believer's life, He manifests the gifts. But in my experience the gift of the working of miracles seems to be less continuous. I would suppose this is because it deals, as I indicated a moment ago, with the bigger issue.

When the gift of the working of miracles comes, a home run is hit. I mean, when the working of miracles takes over, ladies and gentlemen, that's all there is to be said about it. It's done and God has cleaned the place out and established a new order. He has brought about a basic change. In my own experience . . .

The Working Of Miracles Changes Things More Than Any Other Gift

For example, when Jesus turned the water into wine at the wedding at Cana of Galilee, it was a miracle. The Bible says that this beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory (John 2:11).

Water is very commonplace; wine is not. As a result of a miracle Jesus changed the commonplace into the miraculous. He touched something secular — water — and changed it into something special — wine.

But the process was supernatural. When it became supernatural, a working of miracles, it changed the entire situation at that wedding. They had run out of wine. The wine was the symbol of the festivity of the occasion. It was a symbol of the success of the marriage.

This miracle of turning water into wine showed these young people and all couples and all people that Christ can change the basic things of life. He can change the commonplace into the miraculous. He can bring in a new situation all together where there has been nothing but futility, failure, and trouble.

I think we have every scriptural right to expect a miracle ...

- to expect a new miracle every day...
- to expect some wonder of God. We have every right to expect God to step in and change things ...

- to turn darkness into light...
- to turn mourning into joy...
- to turn ashes into happiness...
- to turn poverty into our financial needs being met...
- to transform our desire to do wrong into a burning desire to follow God ...
- to change our sickness into health...
- to change our failure into glowing success so we can expect miracles.

We Can Look For Miracles To Happen

In that sense, miracles are continuous in the life of a believer. Many believers don't know that. Many Christians may never have been taught that God performs miracles in the NOW, but He surely does.

There's something else about the working of miracles. Let's compare it to the gifts of healing.

THE HEALING IS A MIRACLE BUT THE WORKING OF MIRACLES IS NOT LIMITED TO A HEALING —

IT TOUCHES A BROADER ISSUE.

To illustrate this point let me tell you about a healing that took place in Wichita Falls several years ago through one of our television programs. I picked up the newspaper one morning here in Tulsa and right across the top of the page was the headline: WOMAN IN WHEELCHAIR WALKS. Later we discovered — as people sent us their newspapers from the various cities of America — that this headline was in virtually all the newspapers of the United States.

We sent a representative to Wichita Falls who met a young woman by the name of Anna Williams, the wife of a U.S. soldier stationed there at the base. Anna Williams had had polio for several months. She had a little child and could not tend it. Her husband had to do that. Well, one Sunday she tuned in our telecast, and while I was praying for the people she felt the healing power of Jesus Christ enter her body. Suddenly she stretched her hands toward her husband and said, "Honey, lift me up. I'm going to walk." Well, he lifted her, I mean just physically dragged her out of the wheelchair and held her up. Then the power of the Spirit struck her body, her legs, her ankle bones, and suddenly she was able to stand. She said to her husband, "Honey, step across the floor. I'm going to walk." And she walked to him. Then she said, "Give me my baby." And she hugged her baby and carried him around and had a glorious time.

They reported it to the newspaper. A reporter came out and interviewed

her. Then Paul Harvey, the noted news analyst from Chicago, flew down to Wichita Falls and packed the auditorium of the high school that night, with Anna Williams as the guest. He introduced her and presented her to the crowd. She gave her testimony. We then got her picture and her story and carried it in the Abundant Life magazine.

The point I want to make is this: Anna Williams was healed and that was a miracle, but the working of miracles was present and it touched the much larger issue. It touched the newspapers of the entire United States, most of which carried the healing as a headline. None of them mentioned our name but the people of America knew whose telecast it was. They didn't have to mention my name. Thousands of people wrote us and talked to us about it. It also touched the radio and television stations of America in their newscasts, and they reported it. Then it touched a noted newscaster, Mr. Paul Harvey of Chicago, and the ripples of it spread across the land.

Finally, it really touched me. It touched me to the extent that suddenly I realized, here is my image on a TV screen, my hands reaching out, words being spoken in the name of Jesus for the healing of people, and there is a miracle of the restoration of a woman's body.

The gift of healing is restorative. It has more to do with restoring something in a human body or human life while the working of miracles is more creative. Here Anna was restored through healing in her body but a creative force was released throughout that city, Wichita Falls, Texas, and throughout the United States, touching hundreds of thousands of people. God had released the gift of working of miracles and the creative force of it spread far and near.

THE GIFT OF HEALING IS RESTORATIVE . . . THE WORKING OF MIRACLES IS MORE CREATIVE THAN RESTORATIVE — IT DEALS WITH BIGGER ISSUES.

There's only one place where Jesus had what is known as a failure in miracles. That was in his hometown of Nazareth. There were other cities that rejected Him, that's true, but it was only in Nazareth that it was said:

And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them (Mark 6:5).

He could only heal a few sick folk because of the unbelief. Therein lies an explanation of the working of miracles. These people in Nazareth had known Jesus since He was a child. When He came back on one of His visits they wanted Him to perform some of His great miracles like they had heard He had

done in other places. They did not ask this because they believed in Him. They had nothing but cold unbelief. They knew Him as the carpenter's son, as Jesus. They had heard about the miracles He had done in various other cities of the Holy Land. Now the hometown boy has returned and they said, "Show us." The Bible says He could not do many mighty miracles. It did not indicate that He did not try. It indicated that He tried.

Many people have said Jesus never failed but unbelief can tie the hands of God just as effectively as it can tie the hands of a human being. He could not, the Bible says, do mighty miracles. He could only heal a few sick folk.

There was not present this gift of the working of miracles, because of unbelief, but it was present in a larger sense. Not only did they have unbelief concerning His power to heal and His miraculous powers, but the people decided that they would kill Jesus. The mob surrounded Him and carried Him to the brow of the hill, upon which the city was built, and attempted to throw Him over the hill to sudden death but Jesus Christ bound that audience. In some invisible way there was a force going out from Him and the crowd was unable to lay a hand on Him. They could not touch Him to injure or kill Him. The Bible says He escaped out of their hands (Luke 4:16-30).

When we think of the ramifications of Jesus being thrown over the hill and killed in that early part of His life, we can see what could have happened to the salvation of our souls. Here is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, on earth preparing ultimately to go to the cross to rise from the dead and become our Lord and Savior. Right in the midst of it a mob of men attempt to kill Him before His time had come. You see, the issue of His appearing in Nazareth and healing those few sick people was a larger one. The miracle of it all was His escape, the saving of His life. The miracle was the invisible force between Him and that mob which they could not penetrate. There was a real safety factor of physical deliverance of the Man, Jesus Christ.

A Personal Example Of The Working Of Miracles In Protecting This Ministry

Let me give you a personal incident. It's so personal that I scarcely ever refer to it. It happened in the first few days after I began this ministry in 1947. I knew beyond any doubt that I had the call of God to take His healing power to my generation. I could feel it. I knew it. I could see the results of the ministry taking place all around me. There were healings. There were miracles. There was a stirring of the people.

Then all of a sudden two men began to oppose me. They did not oppose me in the normal sense of the word in which people do who don't understand your work and are antagonistic about divine healing, or simply don't believe that God heals anymore. Instead, they began to lie and to cast doubt upon my integrity.

One day these two men approached me and said, "We know that God is with you. We know that God heals through you and we want in on it."

I was thrilled at first. I thought they were excited because God was healing and God was working through me and that they wanted to have a part of the ministry.

They said, "You don't understand what we mean. We want to be in on the financial end of it. We believe that a lot of money is going to come to you personally and we'd like to have our cut."

And I said, "What are you talking about?" I had gone into this ministry because I was called. I prayed for people, regardless of their circumstances. I always have. I was praying because of what I felt inside but they saw something financial. And I said, "Well, this thing is not of God that you're talking about. This is not the right spirit."

The first thing I knew there was doubt and suspicion all around me. I mean even among people who had been my close friends. It dawned upon me that a satanic spirit was at work and that my ministry of healing could be destroyed before it ever got off the ground.

As I was thinking about it the Holy Spirit came upon me. It was the working of miracles and the Spirit moved through me. As I was alone and the Spirit was moving upon me, those two men came before me as clearly as if I were seeing them with my two eyes. I was able to discern the spirit by which they were motivated. The Holy Spirit gave me these words which I put into a prayer to God: "These two men will be bound by the Spirit. They will have no peace or rest until you release them and they will not be able to hurt you or to stop your ministry."

I had never had an experience like that before. In fact, I had never done enough to be opposed that much before. Of course I shared this with my wife Evelyn and we were rather frightened at first because we realized the Holy Spirit was dealing with two human beings, both of whom had been our friends.

We moved from that particular place, came to Tulsa, and established our headquarters. I was preaching here in the city of Tulsa in a crusade. One night

the younger of these two men came to the crusade. He just fell in my arms and cried like a child. He was crying so hard his body was shaking. I called him by his name and I asked him what was wrong.

He said, "You've got to release me. I'm bound."

Now remember this, I hadn't said a word to him. Not a word had passed between myself and those two men. They had no way of knowing from a sense perception what had happened. He said, "I've been bound, I've had no peace or rest. I'm bound in my spirit. You must release me by the power of God."

It was a great pleasure to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to set him free, to release him. And he was released. That was more than 25 years ago. Today, after all these years, he's one of the closest friends I have. He loves this ministry.

The other man just faded away and then passed away. I had no more contact with him, never saw him again until I heard of his death.

Now that was something I didn't do. That was a gift of the working of miracles to put up an invisible shield between me and their power to hurt this ministry, just as the shield was put up between Jesus and the mob in Nazareth. It was a working of miracles that dealt with the larger issue. I keep repeating that because most incidents in our lives are within the framework of a bigger picture. A lot of times what we think is hurting us is not the real issue at all. It's something bigger. It takes the Holy Spirit to know what the larger issue is, to move in and clean the thing out.

The Working Of Miracles And Our Crusade In Formosa

To illustrate this further, we were in a crusade in Formosa which was then known as Free China. We were in the municipal auditorium in Taipei, having packed out crowds every night. We had quite a lot of success but we had two difficulties.

One of them was I had to use three interpreters. There were two Chinese languages spoken on that island, plus the language of the original Formosan people. So on my right were three interpreters. I'd make a statement in my message and this first interpreter would put it in one Chinese dialect. The second one would put it in the other Chinese dialect and the third one would put it in the dialect of the natives of the island. When they got back to me, I'd forgotten what I was talking about. You can imagine how long your sermon would be if you preached 20 minutes. It would take over an hour because it took more words to

say in Chinese what I had said in English.

The second difficulty was that as I laid hands upon the people I didn't know that I was doing something that they violently reacted to. You just don't touch the Chinese people. You don't touch them with your hands. But I didn't know that. They were coming in the prayer line and wanting to be healed. But when I would put my hand on them and say a prayer of healing they would pull back. Some would tremble. Some would just feel like they had turned to ice. For three or four nights this went on. We weren't getting very good results.

I was absolutely puzzled because the Lord hadn't shown me what was wrong. Finally, one of the missionaries whispered in my ear that the Chinese people, as a rule, do not like to be touched. They felt that it was an act of humiliation, that you were putting them down, particularly a person from America. We are physically bigger people here in America than the Chinese are. Most of them that I prayed for were around five feet tall. And they just somehow felt they were being put down. Yet they were filling the building. They apparently were responding to my sermons. They wanted my prayers.

These two big difficulties were seemingly defeating the crusade. The next night I got up and preached, and through my interpreters I began to explain why I put my hands on the people. I quoted the Scripture, "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:18). I said, "I have flown 10,000 miles at my own expense. (I received nothing from my ministry while I was there from a financial point of view.) I came because I love you. I came because I was sick and God healed me. I was lost without Christ and He saved me. I came here because I love you. When I put my hands on you, it's the highest form of honor that I can confer upon you. It's the opening up of my heart. It's the giving of my compassion. It's the releasing of my faith. It's my point of contact."

I went on and on and these interpreters were rapidly saying it. We got caught up with one another until it was like one voice as we were speaking to that crowd.

When we had the healing line that night we could feel a perceptible change in the attitude of the people.

Now there was a third thing that I had forgotten about. On this little island there were hundreds of thousands of soldiers. It was like an armed camp because they were expecting to be invaded by Communist China. There were many soldiers in my audience. By this time in the crusade they were lining the walls with their guns strapped over their shoulders. It was like they were waiting for something to go wrong and they were going to take me in.

Chinese Woman Healed Of Goiter

Well, this night I'm talking about, the healing line started. A woman came up with a large goiter on her neck. When I started to put my hand on her, I pulled my hand back and said to the interpreter, "Tell her again. Tell the audience again why I'm laying hands upon people. Tell them it's an act of faith. It's a point of contact for the releasing of your faith. When I touch you let your faith go to God. Expect God to give a healing and remove that goiter. I'm praying for you and touching you because I love you in the name of Jesus."

When the interpreters finished saying that, I looked up and the soldiers had left where they were standing at the walls. They had completely encircled us. Now you've heard the saying about being between the devil and the deep blue sea. I don't know just how I felt, but I knew that we had to have a miracle and we had to have it soon.

I touched her neck in the name of Jesus and I prayed in an outward voice but let me tell you, my inner voice was praying a lot more than that outer voice was. Not only was I praying for God to heal that goiter in that woman, but I was praying for God to save the whole situation. When I prayed for her I asked her to swallow and that goiter vanished.

There was a stampede. I mean a stampede. The soldiers near me and those all around the building stampeded toward the platform. I jumped to my feet. I had been sitting in a chair. The lady who was healed was right down there in front of me. I didn't know what was going to happen.

Their leader, a lieutenant, ran up and chattered at this woman. I say chattered because he spoke Chinese and I didn't know what he was saying. I didn't have the gift of interpretation of tongues that night, I assure you. He put his hand on her neck and he felt of her neck. Then he would ask her something else. He'd put his hands back on her neck and finally he relaxed and smiled. He said something in Chinese. The interpreters repeated it. When all three got through everybody relaxed and smiled. Then they all wanted to get in the healing line.

God broke that crusade wide open. I was invited to speak to the army and then a messenger from the General and Madame Chiang Kai-shek asked me to come to the palace and pray with them. Brother Robert F. DeWeese (my associate evangelist for more than 30 years) and I went.

The healing of the woman with the goiter was a miracle, but there was a miracle greater than the healing. There was a working of miracles that created a

new situation. It dealt with the basic issue on that island, a basic issue between nationalities — between Americans and Chinese.

I've always felt that if we ever get an opening into China with the healing ministry that the healing ministry would have a larger impact upon China perhaps than any other nation in the world, because I saw there an opening up of the Chinese heart. You know, they seem to be an undemonstrative people, very stoical, but let me tell you, when the healing power of Jesus began to fall these people came unglued. They rejoiced in a loud voice and they hugged each other. They completely opened up and I began to see in a new way the value of the gift of the working of miracles.

The Working Of Miracles And The Destruction Of Our Tent In Amarillo, Texas

Another incident that has to do with the working of miracles dealing with a larger issue happened in 1950. We had our big tent in Amarillo, Texas. Seven thousand people were present on a Sunday night. I had finished preaching and several hundred people had come forward to accept Christ.

I was starting to pray for the healing of the sick when a violent windstorm came sweeping across the plains. In a matter of seconds it touched the tent and it lifted — poles and all — like a balloon into the sky. I was carried through the air. I mean I was picked up by this wind from where I was standing on the stage, and I was flying through the air. This is a fact. I was laid down on my back just as gently as you would lay a baby down. There I lay on my back looking up. The tent was disappearing and 7,000 people were stunned. Most of them couldn't say a word.

I jumped up and the first thought I had was my wife. Richard was a baby at that time. I found them safe under the platform. Evelyn saw me coming and said, "Oral?"

I said, "I'm all right." When I knew she and Richard were all right I began to go through the crowd and out onto the parking lot. By this time people were getting out of the tent, working their way through the part of it that remained. The fire department had come. They were chopping holes in the canvas trying to find out if any people were imprisoned. Only two people could be found who had been hurt and they were not hurt seriously.

One of the most interesting — serious and yet funny — things happened. There was a man there in a wheelchair. He had been waiting his turn for prayer

when the wind picked up the tent. He began to yell for help. His people had run off from him. A woman came by, saw him, and she ran back. He said, "I'm crippled. I can't get out of this wheelchair."

She said, "In the name of Jesus Christ, get up and walk."

This is the truth, so help me. He came out of that wheelchair and away he went. I can't say that was a healing, but I know it was a miracle. The last they saw of him he was running.

But that's really not the thing I wanted to emphasize. The next morning the Amarillo newspapers came out with a headline —

Saving Of 7,000 Called A Miracle

I have that in my files. In a long well-written article they described the audience in the midst of the storm. They told of the big tent being ripped to pieces, of the big poles supporting the tent whipping back and forth in the wind. (If one of the poles were to strike you it would probably kill you instantly. They told how there was no panicking, how there was a quietness. They said, "Only where God was working could this happen." They told of the two people who had been taken to the hospital but not seriously injured. In fact, they were soon released.

Now I want to tell you two or three of the spinoffs of this to illustrate the gift of the working of miracles. This divine power, sometimes sovereignly given by God, seems to step in like a stream of power at a moment when a basic issue dealing with God and humanity is raised and there seems to be no way to resolve that issue. There I was without a tent and not sufficiently covered by insurance to replace it.

I received a telegram in the mail as I was standing out there surveying the wreckage. The boy came on his bike. He handed me a telegram from a partner in Colorado, and it said just one sentence. It was the title of one of my sermons:

You Can't Go Under For Going Over

That was just worth everything. As I stood there looking at the wreckage I was wondering if my ministry was over only a year and a half or two years after it had begun. I wondered what was going to happen.

My good friend, Lee Braxton, who had just become acquainted with us, heard about it. He flew from North Carolina to my side in Amarillo, Texas. Lee and I talked. Newspaper people came out to interview me, talking about the

miracle, and way down deep inside I felt something rising. I turned to Lee and said, "I'm going to contact people all over this country. We're going to find a way to build a tent that can stand an 80- or 90-mile-an-hour wind. We're going to build a better tent. We're going to have a greater ministry than we've ever had."

My wife Evelyn and I then got on a plane and flew up to the Pacific Northwest. At that time we had only heard of Billy Graham. This was 1950 and he had begun in 1949. While we were there a friend of his sent word to Billy that we were there. He sent word up that he wanted to meet us, and asked if we would come down to Portland, Oregon, where he was holding a crusade. We flew down.

As we entered the hotel he and his wife Ruth were leaving for the crusade, so they just took us by the arm and said, "Oral and Evelyn, come with us to this crusade." On the way he was telling us how he had sat in the back of our tent in Florida and watched the healing and believed. He told how one of his aunts had been healed. He said, "Oral, I want you to lead in prayer tonight."

Well, my ministry was very controversial. I say it was ... it still IS. But it was seemingly more controversial then. I said, "Billy, I don't think you would want me to lead in prayer tonight. I'd be glad to, but a lot of people here might not understand my ministry who understand yours."

He said, "No, sir!" He stepped up to the microphone and presented me and asked me to pray.

After the service was over I walked outside with my wife, and a woman came up to me and said she was dying with cancer and wanted me to pray for her. I said, "No, I'm in another person's crusade. This is not my meeting. I don't believe I can do that."

She looked at me and said, "I believe God will heal me through your prayers. If you refuse to pray for me and I die with cancer, God will hold you accountable." So I said, "Would you just step off this rented property, out into the street." We got out into the street where I knew I wasn't on anybody's territory, not that Billy would have objected. But I knew there were some there who might not understand the prayers for the sick, so I prayed for the woman in the middle of the street. Then as I finished, one of the leading pastors of that city came up, took my hand, and said, "We want to sponsor you in a citywide crusade in Portland, Oregon."

When Evelyn and I got back to the hotel and went into the restaurant to

have a bite to eat, Billy and Ruth were there and they motioned for us to join them. So we sat down. There began a friendship that has been priceless, more precious than gold. Although we're in different types of ministry, we have the same Lord and the same love for humanity. The things that Billy has done for me personally in this ministry I could never repay.

I just wanted to point out that the working of miracles seems to me to deal with bigger issues. It steps in when things are out of control, when the situation appears hopeless or when the disease is beyond hope, I have the greatest appreciation for miracles. I'm always saying, "Expect a miracle . . . expect a miracle."

Expect A Miracle

I suppose that the gift of working of miracles has had the greatest influence on me, even more than the gifts of healing. The gifts of healing, as powerful and precious as they are, are more restorative. They can restore, that's true. But the working of miracles can change a whole situation. It can completely enlarge your life.

I believe that without this gift from time to time in my ministry, we never would have had the Oral Roberts University, which we had to start with nothing and from nothing. We still have to have miracles that are so huge and great that if we think about them, we get scared. We have to refuse to think, and get into believing.

Believing Is Seeing

Some people say, "Show me a miracle and I will believe." The Bible doesn't teach that. You cannot see . . . you have to believe. Jesus said in John 11:40:

If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God.

To have a miracle, to see one, you first have to believe. Believing is seeing. Really this world of the spirit . . . the world of faith in God ... is a more real world, as far as I'm concerned, than this physical world that we move in.

Now let's move to a more personal level in the gift of the working of miracles. I believe that. . .

The Working Of Miracles Embraces Even The NEW BIRTH

The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:17:

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

The new birth, to be born again by the Holy Spirit, is a miracle. It's a stream of miraculous power flowing into your innermost being, forgiving and cleansing your sins and transforming your spiritual nature, restoring you to the divine image of God, making you an entirely new being, a new creature.

THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT AND SPEAKING IN TONGUES ARE PART OF THE WORKING OF MIRACLES.

When you pray in tongues or sing in tongues it's a living miracle. You can only do it supernaturally. You can only do it as the Holy Spirit gives you utterance.

The Working Of Miracles Is Involved In Agape Love

Agape is a Greek term for the kind of love that is brought into the Christian heart by the Holy Spirit. The Bible says this kind of love is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). That is, to love without knowing the value of the object. You love your own baby because it's yours. But to be able to love a baby that's not of your flesh, to love when you're not loved, to do good for evil, to pour back holy compassion and love — to have this kind of love takes a miracle. One cannot do it within himself or by himself. It takes a miracle of the Holy Spirit.

The Miracle Of Seed-Faith

I believe the working of miracles permeates the entire area of faith in which you and I live. Jesus said in Matthew 17:20:

If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove.

Jesus is speaking of putting a seed of faith in. Of loving and giving. And it's transformed into a miracle. God multiplies it back. To me, the most exciting thing about being a Christian is this whole possibility of miracles . . . particularly through Seed-Faith . . . that whatever I give, whatever I do in loving and giving, God will multiply that back in the form of my need.

He could take the five loaves and two fishes of the little boy's lunch and multiply it and feed 5,000 hungry men (John 6:1-14). In the same way when I give myself, even though it's little — small — God will multiply it back 100

times, 1,000 times, or more, to meet my need. It is a miracle. It is a continuous miracle.

How May I Find My Own Personal Ministry Gift?

Again, there's no way I can separate this from myself. As someone has pointed out, "Truth divorced from experience isn't truth at all." How did I know my own personal ministry gift? And how may you know yours? How may you even know that you can have a personal ministry gift? How may you know that one or more of these nine gifts of the Spirit will work in you more or less continuously? Is it possible?

Paul points out in 1 Corinthians 12:7 that it IS possible.

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

This means that these gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to every man, to every person, to every child of God, to every believer, to EVERYONE. The spiritual gifts are in Jesus, who lives in the believer's life. And by the indwelling Holy Spirit the believer has access to any or all of the gifts when the Spirit sees fit to manifest one or more in the individual.

God gives as He wills but the gifts are divided to every man, to every believer. That is to say, every believer will have one or more of these gifts manifested in his or her life and that will become, in essence, his or her ministry gift. It is a gift through which he or she will express the power of Jesus Christ more than in any other way.

How Do We Know That A Gift Is Present?

How can we know that God is going to manifest a particular gift in our lives? That it'll be a stream of power working through us?

In my own experience I paid no attention to God or to the gifts of the Spirit until I had a great need in my life . . . until I was losing my life through tuberculosis. I was about to die.

Very few people go to that extreme before they think about God. I thank God that is true, but the fact remains that most people don't respond to God until they face some need that they can't handle. Then they begin to think about God. I think we're more or less made this way.

When God revealed that He was going to heal me and spoke inside my heart that He was going to send me with His healing power, I had to have more than that. I had to have more knowledge than that.

After I was converted and healed and called into the ministry and was preaching for several years, this is what began to develop in me. I felt a continuous ache in my heart for people who were sick . . . people in trouble.

When I was a young pastor, I was a visiting person. I would visit people, particularly the sick. Many times I'd go to the hospital as many as five days a week to visit people who were ill. When I was there, others who were not members of my church would ask me to come to their room. I had an ache.

There were no dramatic healings through me. Once in a while I would believe maybe a healing was happening, but there was no real visible proof. Still, I had this ache. It seemed that there was an inclination within me.

I TEND TO BELIEVE THAT EVERY PERSON HAS AN INBORN INCLINATION TOWARD ONE OR MORE OF THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT AND IT BECOMES MORE PRONOUNCED. IF YOU WILL WATCH FOR IT, IT WILL GROW AND DEVELOP.

It may be faith. Maybe you have a tendency to have faith, to believe easy. It may be that you have extraordinary intuitive forces within you that would mean that the gift of discerning of spirits could be hovering near. It might mean that you would have a deep level here in your inner man and you want to express that, you want to tell that to God. You are always wanting to pray deeper inside yourself. I would think then the gift of tongues, or the interpretation of tongues would be very near you.

You may be a person who has powers within you so you are able to solve problems. You are able to get out of situations and you are able to get things done. It may be that the gift of the working of miracles is just right at the surface of your life. That may be your ministry gift.

Whatever it is, you will probably have a natural tendency to gravitate toward your particular ministry gift. And as you watch for it, it will grow and develop for you to manifest by your faith and love as the Spirit WILLS for you to do it.

It is very important to know that not any of the nine gifts of the Spirit operate at YOUR WILL, but ONLY at the WILL OF THE SPIRIT who indwells you. The gift of the Spirit is His property, not yours or mine. He dispatches the gift, we are the deliverers of its function to the need at hand. In this sense, the gift is not for the one through whom it is being manifested, but for him or her to deliver to the need of a person or a group or a situation of need.

In a way it's like the milkman. You say, "The milkman came." Are you

talking about a man made out of milk? No, a man who delivers milk. We are no more than the milkman. We deliver a gift of the Spirit, as the Holy Spirit directs us, to someone who needs deliverance or blessing through that gift. Then the gift returns to the Christ living in us.

I have never claimed to have a particular gift, although I am keenly aware of one or more of the gifts working in me from time to time. What I claim is that the Holy Spirit indwells me in the presence of the unlimited, invisible Christ. As long as He indwells my life, any or all the gifts are accessible as the need arises. Yet the gifts I'm more inclined toward are those of healing and of faith. This has been my inborn inclination and the Spirit seems to move through me both the gift of faith and the gifts of healing more than any other, although the other gifts also work in me on occasions as the Spirit wills.

Every gift of the Spirit is given to profit somebody. It's to meet a need. It's not to glorify the person through whom the gift works. We are the instruments, but it is God doing the work of deliverance.

Discussion With Oral And Evelyn Roberts

Oral: My wife Evelyn and I are going to discuss the gift of the working of miracles and how you may find your own ministry gift. Evelyn, do you have a question?

Evelyn: As you were speaking about the gifts I asked myself, "Which one of these gifts do I have a tendency toward?" I thought, well, there might have been a time or two in my life when I had a word of wisdom for someone. Or there might have been a time when faith just seemed to be unusually high.

Oral: Would you let me share one of those moments? Can you tell which one it's going to be? Remember Chanute, Kansas?

Evelyn: Oh, honey, please don't tell that...

Oral: Well, we were in Chanute, Kansas in 1948. This was just a few months after I had begun this ministry. We were in the city auditorium having a very fine meeting but I couldn't raise the money to pay the rent. There I was working, preaching, winning people to Christ. Do you remember the old man who was blind whom God healed? He had been persuaded to come for prayer but he didn't believe. When I started to pray for him, he said, "Take your hands off me." I mean, he said it right out loud in front of the crowd. He said, "I don't believe in this stuff."

I said, "Why are you here if you don't believe?"

He said, "Oh, my folks persuaded me to come up here. I knew nothing would happen."

I said, "Well, it won't do any harm. May I say just a little prayer for you?"

I said a little prayer and went on the best I could praying for the others. The next morning, real early, there was a knock on my door. It was the chairman of the crusade and he said, "You remember that old gentleman last night who was blind and insulted you?"

I said, "Yes."

He said, "This morning he got up just as the sun was coming up. He felt his way out on the porch and it dawned on him that he could see the sun. Brother Roberts, he's healed, he's healed. He's just going from house to house telling about it."

We had him there at the crusade the next night, of course, to testify.

The real issue in that crusade was that we were receiving offerings every night to pay for the rent on the building and we weren't thinking about ourselves. We hadn't got that far. The rent was \$100 a week for the building and in seven days we hadn't raised \$100. So one night, as I recall, I tried and failed again. I walked off the stage. Then, Evelyn, do you remember what I said?

Evelyn: I remember you went behind the curtain on the stage and disappeared. One of the men who was helping us came and got me in the audience and said, "You'd better come around here. Oral is going to quit and go home."

I said, "He's what?"

He said, "Yes, Oral says if the Lord doesn't supply his needs like He promised, he's going to quit and go home. He says if he doesn't have enough faith to raise \$100 a week to pay for this building, then he doesn't have enough faith for anything else, so he's going to quit and go home. You'd better come."

Oral: Exactly what I said.

Evelyn: So I got up and went around there and I said, "Oral, now what is wrong with you anyway?"

And you said, "Evelyn, God's got to keep His promise. I'm out here preaching and praying for these people and if He doesn't help me raise this money to pay my bills, I'm not going to preach. I'm going to give up and go

home.”

And I said, "Why, you are not going to do any such thing.”

And you said, "Well, what are you going to do about it?”

I said, "You just watch me!”

So I went out and I’d never done anything like this in my life. It was so humiliating. Anyway, I went out in the front to the podium. I always did hate to see a woman get up and take over, but that’s what I did that night.

Oral: That was Women’s Lib away back there.

Evelyn: I said to the audience, "My husband has preached the Word of God to you and I know that you don’t want this meeting to close. But in order for it to go on we must pay the bills. We must pay the rent on this building. My husband is very discouraged. I’m going to borrow a gentleman’s hat and I’m going to just come right out in the audience. If the Lord speaks to you, I hope you will just stand up and tell us that the Lord is speaking to you.”

Oral: I remember two people stood up.

Evelyn: I remember it quite well. A Jewish man was one.

Oral: And there was a red-haired woman.

Evelyn: That’s right, I remember that. Then they began standing up all over the audience.

Oral: Do you remember what the two said?

Evelyn: No, I just remember they were there.

Oral: Honey, the Jewish man pulled out his billfold and said, "I’ve been coming to this crusade. I’ve not given anything. Tonight I’m giving a twenty-dollar bill.” Back in 1948, folks, that was an awful lot of money. The red-haired woman, she was quite large and demonstrative, got up and she blessed that crowd out. She said, "I’m ashamed of you. I’m ashamed of you!” Then she said, "Mrs. Roberts, I’m going to help you.” She grabbed the hat and she went across the crowd. I’m telling you when those two women got through we had the money for the rent on that building. But that was a word of wisdom to me. That was a prophecy to the crowd. Really, it was a working of miracles.

Evelyn: Well, no, you know what it really was? It was only the seed of equivalent benefit that we got out of that to start ORU. Because if we had not gone through that experience, you might never have had the faith to believe for something like this. When you couldn’t even believe for \$100 a week for that

crusade, the Lord had to work a miracle in you to get you to believe for something like this. Nothing ever happens to a Christian by accident. I really believe that.

Oral: Are you saying that the working of miracles was dealing with a bigger issue that night?

Evelyn: Oh, I really do. I certainly do. Well, we got off the subject of finding our own ministry gift. It's like you said the other night, it's hard to distinguish which gift is working because I think that several of them work at the same time.

Oral: Well, do you agree that all of the nine gifts are resident in Jesus Christ?

Evelyn: Oh, yes.

Oral: Jesus Christ is in our hearts; therefore, any of these gifts are available to us at any point of need?

Would you say then that in dealing with an individual you are trying to help that you would send it through heaven first?

Evelyn: I would say so. And whatever gift the Lord gives you to use, you would use it.

Oral: What would you say to what I just said?

Evelyn: I'd say, that's hot off the wire.

Oral: What does it say to you, Evelyn?

Evelyn: Well, it says to me, "Lord, which of these gifts or any other gift would You have me use to help this individual?" In other words, let the Lord choose which gift He wants to use through us.

Oral: You'd send your requests through heaven first before you dealt with the person.

Evelyn: I do believe that a person has an inborn inclination toward certain types of gifts. The Lord leads you in the way you were created. For instance, when He speaks to you He doesn't say, "Now, Oral, I want you to do so and so." He commands. He knows the way you are made and a little namby-pamby something wouldn't mean a thing to you. Now the Lord wouldn't talk to me that way. . . He would say it more quietly to me. I think He would impress me inside. He wouldn't give me military commands like He gives to you, because that's just not the way I'm made at all.

God doesn't change the way we are made and He isn't going to change the way the other person is made. He's going to deal with you the way you are.

Oral, one more question: Can we pray and ask the Lord for our ministry gift? The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 12:11 that the Holy Spirit gives these gifts as He wills.

Oral: Yes, it has to be the will of God. I know there are some of us who ask for things that are outside of us. I know that. I've done it. But I tell you one thing, God has never given it to me. I don't believe He will ever give anyone a gift that's outside his inclination. Sometimes we are like the Corinthians. We want the more glittering type of gift, the thing that would make us stand out a little more.

Evelyn: Well, it all goes back to desiring and seeking Jesus, the Giver of the gift.

Oral: Yes. Seek the Giver and not the gift. A person said to me recently, "I've been seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit a long time."

And I said, "I hope you never seek again."

And he said, "Why not?"

I said, "Why don't you seek the Giver of the Holy Spirit? You know there's a great difference. The Bible says, 'He (Jesus) shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit.' So you don't go around seeking a gift. You seek the Giver of the gifts, the Lord Jesus Christ."

I think that's a great and important point to be made here. I often say it to myself because as you think of the nine gifts of the Spirit there may be one you're particularly desirous of in your heart at that moment. But it may not be the one the Holy Spirit would want to manifest through you. So you should seek Jesus and the Holy Spirit would then manifest that particular gift that you need the most.

Evelyn, let me bring up a subject that's a little hard to talk about. Often people approach me and they want to know how to have a ministry of healing. They are seeking help, of course, for themselves. I'm not always responsive, am I?

Evelyn: Hardly ever.

Oral: Now the reason that I don't do more than I do is that I believe in the final analysis that your ministry gift must be revealed to you by God and not by any man. . . that you have to come into it yourself. For example, if someone

could talk you into it, you would soon lose it. If you are not convinced in your own mind that it is there, it won't stay.

Also, I believe your ministry gift has to be tested. You have to test it. You have to see if you are kidding yourself... if you are being idealistic, or if you are trying to be like someone else.

I believe that a person, once he begins to find what his ministry gift is, has to test it. He has to get involved with people and their needs. He cannot hasten the day when God will make him big. He has to work through it. There are no short-cuts. No compromises. Finally, I say to myself, "How can I communicate this?" I don't know so I usually don't say much of anything.

Let's have one more question.

Evelyn: You talked about a miracle being a creative force and healing a restorative force. Do you remember when the mother brought her boy up for prayer? He was born without a hip socket.

Oral: I did not believe that he would be healed because healing restores, and there was nothing to be restored.

But the woman said to me. "I don't ask you to have faith, Oral Roberts, I ask you to touch my child and pray. I will do the believing."

Evelyn: Right.

Oral: See, she believed for a miracle and God restored, or created, I suppose, a new hip socket for the child. At least, the doctors said a hip socket formed there where there had been none before. I was as amazed as anybody was, because it was not my faith that did it.

Evelyn: Then that was more than a healing — that was a miracle.

Oral: Well, yes. A healing is a miracle but the working of miracles is much bigger than a healing. It decides a broader issue. What happened through that miracle has enlarged my vision. After that I began to pray for people who had things that previously I did not believe God would heal. It enlarged my faith and caused me to include a lot more people in my prayers. That had a great effect, and a good effect, upon me.

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