

☞ We saw that in several places the Body or the Church is referred to as a building or temple, of course it isn't talking about brick and mortar but flesh and blood as the dwelling of God on earth. With that in mind, let's think about a brick and mortar building like ours, and what part of it do you see the most? Not the brick and mortar! What you see is what the brick and mortar supports: paint, trim, lighting, furnishings, fixtures, carpet, etc. Those things are the reasons for building a building so that we can have the supports for the visible, outward parts of the building. The building that I am in is mostly cement, wooden studs, and sheetrock—if we broke this building down into its respective parts, those things would make up more than 95% of it. But we don't see the cement, wood, and sheetrock when we stand inside of a building; we see the remaining 5% of what goes into a building. This will help us understand God's building, the Church. Last week I spoke to you about the more obvious and upfront gifts, the speaking gifts of knowledge, wisdom, teaching, evangelism, prophecy, tongues, and exhortation. I like to think of these as the paint and furnishings gifts of God's building, they are the things you see the most readily in the service of the ministry of God's Church. Of course, these are the point of the spear of the work of the church throughout the ages Matthew 28:19-20. But just as much as literal paint and furnishings do not hold up a physical building, so, these speaking gifts do not hold up God's church. The service gifts are the ones that hold up and provide the structure for the speaking gifts, and like the brick and mortar in a physical building, they make up majority what goes into God's church and its work. These gifts are the superstructure of God's work, they quite literally hold everything up.

1. For the next couple of weeks, I will be speaking to you about these structure gifts. Think of them as the cement and the wood and the sheetrock of God's building. These are the service gifts as outlined for us in 1st Peter 4:11. We can learn a lot about them just from observing our building here:
 - 1) They are unseen or not readily seen gifts. They are behind the scenes gifts often overlooked, but they provide the basic support for the ministry of the Body. Think about our bodies for instance, the most recognizable parts are all on our heads (mouth, nose, eyes, ears, hair), but they are supported by the rest of the body.
 - 2) These gifts make up the majority of the church, just like the cement, wood and sheet rock make up the majority of a physical building. The paint, carpet and furnishing actually make up a very small percentage of a building, but they are the things you see the most. Speaking gifts make a small percentage of the overall giftedness of the Body of Christ but they are the gifts we most often recognize and see as important. The service gifts are in the vast majority but are not readily seen.
 2. What are some of our service gifts? The Gift of Faith, 1st Corinthians 12:9. Doesn't every Christian have that? Yes, but not in the fashion that is being spoken of here. Faith is a threshold that everybody has to cross to come a saving knowledge of Jesus, we have to believe in Him as Savior. Every Christian has faith, but some are gifted with an extra dose of it. Gifts are an increased expression given by the Holy Spirit to do what everybody is expected to do. We are all expected to teach on some level, all are evangelist, all serve, all give, all have faith, etc.; a gift is a special increased expression of one of those things. A definition of the Gift of Faith, the God given ability to see with extraordinary confidence the will and purpose of God for the future of His work and to act upon it. Think of it as the gift of vision, faith is seeing what is unseen or yet to be. Again, they aren't the only ones with faith, but they lead out in faith because of their gift. That is a good way to think of the gifts: they are leadership abilities; each gifted person is a leader in the Body in the area they are gifted. The person with the gift of teaching isn't the only teacher but he is leader for us in how to teach and what to teach. The person with the gift of wisdom isn't the only wise person but they are a leader to us in how think and act wisely. The person with the gift of faith isn't the only person with faith but they are a leader to us in how to have faith.
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3. Gifts of Healings, the special enabling by the Holy Spirit to serve as a channel through which God cures illness and restores health apart from natural means. It is unique among the gifts because of the syntax of the Greek words that are used for it, the three times it is mentioned here in 1st Corinthians 12 it is in the double plural form, literally "gifts of healings" This may indicate that each healing is separate gift, because of how it appears in the Greek. This may indicate that no one has the gift permanently, but that it comes and goes as God so chooses. This also seems agree with how we see healing administered throughout the church's ministry in the New Testament. Paul was a teacher; that was his gift to the church, but he occasionally was enabled to heal, but not every time, 2nd Timothy 4:20. Jesus didn't heal every time, Matthew 13:58. God does not, as opposed to a lot of false teaching today, heal every person or in every situation. Both the appearance of how healing was administered in the New Testament plus the construct of the Greek rule out having a healing ministry per se. In fact, there is no such thing in the Bible as a healing ministry, there is only, the Body of Christ only has, a gospel ministry, Matthew 28:19-20. We were not commissioned to heal, work miracles, speak in tongues, have a faith ministry, or a prophetic ministry as so many false teachers today seem to think and teach. We were commissioned to bring people to faith in Christ and make them followers of Christ. As Healings, miracles, tongues, prophecy, faith, etc. are useful to that end, they are employed and distributed in the Body as God so chooses.

Nowhere in the Bible does anyone including Jesus have a healing ministry or a miracle ministry. God's people in the Bible had Gospel ministries where healings and miracles were incidental not healing and miracles ministries where the gospel was incidental!
