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## **CHRIST'S HEALING METHODS**

***The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works then shall he do because I go unto My Father [Jn 14: 10b, 12]***

***According to thy faith, be it unto you [Matt. 9:29]***

*Kenneth Hagin, Sr., of the Rhema Ministries, has told the story of how he once found himself in a fix during a healing service. A woman with a diseased swollen belly had come forward for him to lay hands on her and pray. Just then, he heard a clear voice from within him, saying, "punch her on her belly." He said that his immediate response was to reject the voice outright as false and unscriptural. But the voice persisted. He found himself fixed on the spot: unable to lay hands on her as his faith and practice had taught him and reluctant to punch her as he was being prompted. His main problem was how to explain such a "ritual" to his congregation and the security officers standing by. As the voice urged on, he had no choice but to draw his audience's attention to what he was hearing and how he was prepared to err on the side of obedience. He then gave the lady a harmless punch as directed, and lo, the abdomen went flat! That episode changed his healing ministry forever: from then on, he was going to do whatever the Holy Spirit led him to do.*

*Anxious to do only what is "politically correct" before their congregations, church leaders wrestle with that type of problems on a regular basis. It is worse if there is no verse in the Bible to justify their action. After all, where in the Bible can you find "punching" as a healing method? Can we use methods not specifically mentioned in the Scriptures?*

*To answer those questions, it is better to go to Jesus Himself, the "author and finisher of our faith"[**Heb. 12:2**]. By studying His healing methods during His 3-year earthly ministry, we might be able to learn a few things to guide our healing ministry. That is the purpose of today's lesson.*

## 1. More from Kenneth Hagin's Survey

Following the story reported above, Kenneth Hagin went ahead to research the healing methods used in the Bible and published his findings in a *Rhema* monthly magazine. I can't remember the exact details of the publication because I must have read it over five years ago.

Hagin's reasoning was as follows: the "Bible" during the time of Jesus is what we now call the Old Testament, and the "Bible" during the era of His Apostles would be the Old Testament plus the Four Gospels [Matthew, Mark, Luke and John]. His findings were very instructive:

- (a) Some methods used by Jesus actually came from the Old Testament. For example, Elisha had healed Naaman of leprosy by 'stream-bath' in the Jordan River [**2 Kgs 5:14**]. In the same way, Jesus healed the man born blind by getting him washed in the pool of Siloam [**Jn 9:7**]. Just as lepers were referred to the priests in the past [**Lev. 14: 1-9**], so did Jesus ask the 10 lepers to do [Lk 17:11-19].
- (b) However, a *majority of His methods are not found in the Old Testament*. For example, there is no where in the Old Testament that a healer spat on blind eyes [[**Mk 8:22-25**] or made clay to put on them [**Jn 9:6**].
- (c) *Many of the practices used by the Apostles come neither from the Old Testament nor from Jesus*. For example, healing by Peter's shadow [**Acts 5:15-16**], or with aprons and handkerchiefs worn by Paul [**Acts 19:11-12**] cannot be found elsewhere.

Hagin concluded that those who believe in using only those methods that have been documented in the Scriptures, especially in the New Testament, might be in danger of limiting or disobeying God. Let us add to this important study by doing a more in-depth analysis of the methods that were used by our Master Himself.

## 2. Christ's Healing Methods

In the box below, I have classified all the healings of Jesus (as recorded in the Gospels into three broad categories: *by the Spoken Word* [**Jn 6:63; Jn 15:3**], *by Touch/Laying of Hands* [**Mk 16:18**], and *by Rituals/Combined Methods* [**Jn 9:6**]. Immediately, we can see that He used *all three methods* quite often. Let us take a few cases for in-depth analysis.

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## CHRIST'S HEALING METHODS

### A. BY THE SPOKEN WORD

1. *The Centurion's Servant (of paralysis)* [Matt. 8:5-13]
2. *The Sick at Evening* [ Matt. 8:16]
3. *A Paralytic* [Matt. 9:2-7]
4. *A Devil-possessed Dumb Man* [Matt. 9: 32-33]
5. *A Devil-possessed Blind and Dumb Man* [Matt. 12:22]
6. *A Man's Withered Hand* [Matt. 12: 9-13]
7. *The Syrophenician Woman's Daughter* [Mk 7: 24-30]
8. *Casting out an Unclean Spirit* [Mk 1: 23-26]
9. *The Noble Man's Son (of fever)* [Jn 4:46-51]
10. *Raising Lazarus from the Dead* [Jn 11: 43-44]

### B. BY TOUCH/ LAYING OF HAND

1. *Cleansing a Leper* [Matt. 8: 2-3]
2. *Peter's Mother-in-law (of high fever)* [Matt. 8:14-15]
3. *Raising Jairus' Daughter from Death* [Mk 5: 21-23, 35-43]
4. *Two Blind Men* [Matt. 9:27-29]
5. *Two Blind Men* [Matt. 20:30-34]
6. *Raising of a Widow's Son at Nain* [Lk 7: 11-15]
7. *The Infirm, Bowed Woman* [Lk 13: 10-13]
8. *The Man with the Dropsy* [Lk 14: 1-4]
9. *Restoring a Servant's Ear* [Lk 22: 50-51]
10. *An Infirm Man at Bethesda* [Jn 5: 1-9]

### C. BY RITUALS/COMBINED METHODS

1. *The Epileptic Boy (by prayer and fasting)* [Matt. 17:14]
2. *Healing a Deaf and Dumb Man (word + touch + ritual)* [[Mk 7: 31-35]
3. *Healing a Blind Paralytic at Bethsaida (ritual)* [Mk 8: 22-25]
4. *The Man Born Blind (ritual)* [Jn 9: 1-7]
5. *The Woman with the issue of Blood (touched His garments)* [Matt. 9: 20-22]
6. *The Ten Lepers (sent to the priests)* [Lk 17: 11-19; Lev. 14:1-9]

(a) Raising the Dead

Elijah and Elisha raised people from the dead by lying on them [**1 Kgs 17:21-22**; **2 Kgs 4:32-35**]. In the case of Jesus, He merely touched the widow's son [**Lk 7:11-15**] and Jairus' daughter [**Mk 5:21-23, 35-43**]. With Lazarus, He merely spoke [**Jn 11: 43-44**]. *Both methods are new and different from the practices before His time.*

(b) Healing the Blind, Deaf and Dumb

There is no evidence from the Old Testament of this type of healing. No wonder the church leaders of His day accused Him of using Satanic powers to open eyes [**Matt. 11:22-24**]! We find that while Jesus used the *spoken word* to heal the devil-possessed blind and dumb [**Matt. 9:32-34**], He *touched* two different sets of blind men [**Matt. 9:27-29**; **Matt. 20:30-34**].

*Three other cases were by rituals.* In the case of the deaf and the dumb by the coasts of Decapolis [**Mk 7: 31-35**], what the people asked for was for Him to lay hands on the sick man [**Mk 7:32**]. But, what did He do? He took the blind man away from the crowd, put His fingers into his ears, spat and touched his tongue. Then, He looked up to Heaven, sighed and said to the blind man, “*Ephphatha,*” i.e., “Be opened” [**Mk 7:33-34**].

Compare that with the case of the blind man at Bethsaida [**Mk 8:22-25**]. First, He took his hand and led him *out of the town*. Next, He spat on his eyes. When the man could not see clearly, He laid hands on him and told him to look up. After that, his sight was fully restored. Then, He instructed him not to go back into that town or tell the miracle to any one *in that town* [**Mk 8:26**]!

Let's take the third case, the man born blind [**Jn 9:1-7**]. He spat on the ground, made clay with the spittle and plastered the eyes of the blind man with the mud. Then, He asked him to go and *wash* in the pool of Siloam. He didn't say, “wash your eyes” but “wash.” That suggests a full bath, just as Naaman did in the Jordan River at Elisha's command [**2 Kgs 5:14**]. With the possible exception of spitting, Jesus performed three different rituals for three similar cases.

(c) Healing of Lepers

When a leper came to Him and prayed for healing, Jesus simply touched him and he became well [**Matt. 8:2-3**]. Compare that with the case of ten lepers whom He asked to go show themselves to the priest [**Lk 17:11-19**]. Again, the methods differ.

What lessons can we learn from all those cases?

### 3. Lessons

#### (a) Methods

It appears that it is God Himself Who chooses the method that He wants healers to use [Jn 14:10]. That explains the variety of methods used by Jesus or by those before and after Him. What is also instructive is that a method can evolve over time. For example, in the Old Testament, olive oil was first used to anoint worship items [Ex. 30: 26-28] and priests, notably Aaron and his sons [Ex. 30:30], and finally kings [1 Sam. 8:4-22; 1 Sam. 10:1; 2 Sam. 2:4]. *It was forbidden to use it on man's flesh [Ex. 30:32]!* But, when Jesus sent out His 72 disciples on their internship programme, they anointed the sick with oil to heal them [Mk 6:13]. Later, it became a widespread practice among the early Christians [James 5:14]. It is, therefore, not surprising that rituals not mentioned in the Bible now feature in various congregations as the Holy Spirit directs. **No human being can limit God.**

#### (b) The Role of Faith

Faith in the healer and his God has a great deal to do with healing [Matt. 9:29]. For example, the spoken word was most effective with those who had great faith, such as the Centurion [Matt. 8:5-13], or the Syrophenican woman [Mk 7:24-30], or the woman with the issue of blood [Mk 5:25-34]. That suggests that rituals (or a combination of word + touch) are likely to be used with people of little or no faith, or where there are serious demonic dimensions. We see examples in Christ's healing of the deaf and dumb man [Mk 7:31-35], the paralytic man at Bethsaida [Mk 8: 22-25], and the man born blind [Jn 9:1-7].

#### (c) The Role of Obedience

Obedience is better than sacrifice [1 Sam. 15:22]. Much as obedience is crucial to the sick, as we have seen in the cases of Naaman [2 Kgs 5:14], the ten lepers [Lk 17:14] and the man born blind [Jn 9: 7], it is even more so for the man of God. He must do *whatever* the Holy Spirit directs. Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it and he was denied access to the Promised Land [Num. 20:7-12]. You cannot call "common" what God has "cleansed" [Acts 10:15]. Once God has sanctified a healing method, it becomes acceptable to Him. That is why the same God who commanded the Israelites not to make the graven image of anything on earth and in heaven [Ex. 20:4] was to later instruct Moses to make *the brazen serpent, which the people looked upon and were saved*, from the fiery snakes [Num. 21:6-9]!

(d) When God's integrity is at stake

Lazarus' faith was not available because he had died four days before Jesus arrived. Therefore, on such occasions where God's integrity is at stake, He can empower the man of God to heal without counting on the sick person's faith. Interestingly, Elijah **1 Kgs 17:20** and Elisha [**2 Kgs 4:33**] prayed earnestly to God before attempting raising the dead. Jesus invoked His divine power to raise Lazarus but He still thanked His Father before doing so [**Jn 11:41-42**].

4. Conclusion

What the healing ministry of Jesus Christ has demonstrated is that **God is the God of variety**. He does not owe any explanation to us as to why and how He heals those who have asked Him for it. He can prescribe a **medical solution**, as in Isaiah's treatment of Hezekiah's boils with a lump of figs [**2 Kgs 20:7**], or the **spoken word** as in the case of Lazarus, or **prayer and fasting**, as in the case of the epileptic man [**Mk 9:29**], or an elaborate **ritual**, as in the case of the man born blind. *The bottom line is that the leaves of the tree of life which lines the pure river of living water proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in Heaven are the source of the "healing of the nations" [Rev. 22:2].*