Both the gift of healing and the effecting of miracles were spiritual gifts possessed primarily by the Apostles. In a number of instances, these two gifts have much overlap and are difficult to distinguish from one another. As we will see, God used these gifts as a springboard to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is in these gifts that we can further understand the character of the Holy Spirit.

**Gifts of healing (1 Cor. 12:9, 28, 30)**

1. Marks of the genuine gift of healing?
   a. *Healing of an individual is independent from their faith.* Both Jesus and the Apostles could heal anyone. Ironically, it seems that those who were most likely to be healed are those who were unbelieving (cf. Acts 3:1-11). The failure to heal is not placed on the sick individual but on the one who attempted the healing. “When the disciples failed [to heal someone], Jesus blamed the failure on their faith” [Thomas Edgar, Satisfied by the Promise of the Spirit (Kregel: 1996) p. 92].
      
      See Matt. 17:19-20 and Mark 9:17-20. It is not until Acts 9 that a miracle of healing is done to another believer!
   
   b. *The healings usually took place in public.* All but a few instances of healings took place in private. Even those were common knowledge to the populous (Acts 9:36-42).
   
   c. *The healing took place immediately and fully.*
   

2. Is it God’s will that all be healthy?

   *Exodus 4:10-11.* Moses learned an important lesson about God’s sovereignty. Notice the uses of “makes” (“to place,” or “to set”) in v. 11, showing God’s active agency in it all.

**Effecting of Miracles (1 Cor. 12:10, 28, 29)**

Points to remember about the effecting of miracles:

1. *Many different types of miracles are included.* The effecting of miracles is a very general and broad gift. It includes unspecified miraculous actions, demonic exorcisms, healing paralytics and raising the dead (this can fall into the area of healing as well). Paul was known to blind a critic (Acts 13:8-12) and Peter was used by God to actually end the lives of Annanias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-12; possibly attributed to Peter in v. 12).

2. *Authentication of the Apostolic message.* As in Hebrews 2:3-4 and Acts 14:3 with the miracles of the Paul and Barnabas, signs were used to authenticate the message of Christ. Because God’s plan for redemption made radical changes with the inception of the church, the signs authenticated this ‘new era’ of God’s plan. Once the transition was made during the Apostolic era, there was no need for this authenticating means of
outreach. Ironically, “Good health was only an incidental benefit from the gift. Its principal purpose was that of authentication” [Robert L. Thomas, Understanding Spiritual Gifts (Kregel: 1999) p. 184].

3. **It was primarily the Apostles with this gift.** Although non-Apostles were used to do miraculous things (Stephen in Acts 6:8; Philip in 8:7), Paul states in 2 Cor. 12:12 that signs, wonders and miracles authenticated one’s Apostleship, and was primarily a gift given to these men. Cf. Acts 2:43 and 5:12. It is not until Acts 6 that any non-Apostle is seen with the gift of miracles. Throughout the book of Acts, there is little evidence that the gift of miracles was common to churches. “The book of Acts bears out the fact that miracles were almost entirely restricted to the apostles” [Edgar, p. 242].

4. **As with the gift of healing, it opened the door for the preaching of the Gospel.** Philip’s miraculous works in Samaria (Acts 8:7) resulted in a listening audience (v. 6) and ultimately ‘many believers’ (v. 12). Paul praises God for the mighty things He has done through himself, especially the inroads made with Gentile conversions with the help of miracles (Romans 15:18-19). Paul may have used miracles instead of the intellectualism of the day to get the Gospel out in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5. Acts 14:3 is especially clear on this issue.

Evidence that healing and effecting miracles was not a permanent gift

1. **Means of healing changes (James 5:14-16).** In this local church body, there were obviously no faith healers available at this time (50-60 AD).

2. **History of the church at Ephesus.** Although Paul effected many healings in Ephesus in Acts 19:11-12 he doesn’t even mention miracles or healing in recounting the three years he spent there (see Acts 20:17-38) nor does he seek the continuation of these miracles (even for the weak, v. 35)!

3. **Paul’s associates.** Both Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25-27) and Trophimus (who Paul “left sick at Miletus,” 2 Tim. 4:20) were unhealed by Paul. His advice to Timothy is interesting to note (1 Tim. 5:23).

4. **Biblical silence.** The major epistles that deal with the functioning of the church (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus and Ephesians) make no mention of either gift.

5. **Historical silence.** “The age of miracles continues, but the age of miracle workers has ceased” [Thomas, p. 185].

Application of the two gifts

In 1 Corinthians 12, important statements of Theology introduce the pericope on spiritual gifts. A simple listing of the subjects of verses 4-7 will suffice. The first three verses place the emphasis on “varieties” and on the “Spirit,” “Lord,” and “God” respectively. This makes-up the corporate emphasis in verses 4-6. However the mode changes into a personal emphasis in verse 7 that builds off the lone subject of “manifestations.” The mood changes from the distinctions of the gifts (4-6) to the uniformity in verse 7. The character of God, especially the Person of the Spirit, is the background for any study of spiritual gifts. This is where we find present-day application for the gifts of healing and effecting of miracles. All spiritual gifts manifest the character, concern and power of the Holy Spirit. The nature of the term “manifestations” (φασιν ὑπερ γνώσεως) is one of disclosure. Paul consistently uses this term for the idea of bringing to light what formerly was unknown (i.e. 1 Cor. 4:5; 2 Cor. 4:2). It is in the works of believers and their spiritual gifts that the character of the Spirit is understood. We can learn much of the Spirit by understanding the two gifts at hand.

The same power that worked in the healings and effecting of miracles is the same that works in all gifts (mercy, teaching, helps, etc.)!