

FAITH HEALING
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I was recently asked by a friend what I thought of a man named Smith Wigglesworth. I had heard the name before and had a vague idea he was a preacher many years ago. I had no other opinion or knowledge of the man. I became curious enough to wonder why such a question would be asked. Was there some controversy surrounding him, his life, or ministry? The facts I uncovered led me to believe the question really related to faith healing.

Smith Wigglesworth was a British evangelist who lived from 1859-1947. In 1907, he received the Holy Ghost evidenced by speaking in tongues. He began speaking in churches, teaching that healing came through faith, however that faith was exercised. Most of his recorded ministry involved faith healing. Many books have been written about the many people miraculously healed under his ministry. Between three and twenty-three people are claimed to have been raised from the dead by this man. Yet, he himself felt it more important to see the souls saved through preaching than for bodies to be healed.

After reading briefly of Wigglesworth's life, I had to wonder. Was this man for real and is such an ability to heal still possible today? I want to explore this briefly from a personal, then a Biblical, and then a somewhat metaphysical standpoint.

On a personal level, I absolutely believe in God's power to supernaturally heal today. I have hard medical evidence of a miraculous healing of my spine, as well as several testimonies of God healing my wife and children. In conjunction with other believers, I have prayed for many who have also been healed beyond the ability of science or medicine to explain. I have achieved absolute certainty on this subject. Many friends recently sent me testimonies of miraculous healings in their own lives and families. In two cases, I heard from people who personally witnessed someone declared dead by medical personnel, then raised back to life by God after prayer had been made for them. Miraculous inexplicable healings have even been captured on news cameras. There is no real doubt such healings actually occur.

I also find nothing in the scriptures precluding supernatural healing from still occurring. There are at least five ways healing is made possible by God for believers. One is through laying on of hands to transfer the power of God. Another is through one of the nine gifts of the Spirit, the gift of healing, which manifests only when God wills. A third is the prayer of faith by the elders of the church, made upon request for a specific need. A fourth comes from personal faith, with the hurting one speaking against infirmity and disease with God given authority. The last is accomplished by our continual forgiveness of others increasing our faith. An exhaustive Biblical study on this subject has been compiled by Pastor Chris McMichael in my town. I will be glad to forward his document to anyone requesting the study.

On a metaphysical level, I find an interesting phenomena speaking to the likelihood of supernatural healing. There is a branch of science labeled quantum physics. One of its theories argues that light travels in the form of a wave until we perceive it; however we do so at that point. Then the energy of our thoughts, added to the light, transforms it to particles which strike the backs of our eyes, recording the image. In other words, the light contains almost enough energy to convert to a particle form, and our thoughts supply the finite amount of power necessary to get it past the tipping point.

I have a personal testimony of the ability of thought to affect light. Outside of my home, a street light on a photocell sensor lights the cul-de-sac on my street. The photocell must have a very sensitive tipping point. From my home, about half of the time I have tried, I could turn the light off by looking at it and thinking about it. When I looked away and thought about something else, it came back on. The

minute energy in my thoughts must be enough to make the sensor think dawn is coming and turn the light off. Some people have more power in their thoughts than others do. It is a documented fact that some can bend metal with their minds. Beyond the shadow of a doubt, our thoughts contain some measure and forms of energy, including electrical.

Here then is my question. Is there a universal form of energy, made available by God, available for healing were enough additional power added to change it to another form? When we choose to believe in it, does our absolute faith transform that power from God into a form that heals? Remember how the scriptures tell us, not that Jesus would not, but that He could not, do many miracles in his home country? They lacked faith in God because they absolutely knew in their minds he was just the son of Joseph. What a tragedy, if such power is available, but we lack faith to convert it into what we need. How does this idea relate to scripture?

The more faith present in prayer, the more power would be transformed for healing. We are told “the fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Apparently fervency, or intensity of prayer, affects the outcome. So too does righteousness, or lack of iniquity. If iniquity or sin were present, it would hinder us from touching the presence and power of God.

If the concept were accurate, the power released through personal faith, and /or the faith of others could cause healing power to flow in several ways. Laying on of hands by believers would be an instant transfer of power. Prayer from a distance could increase the faith of those present with the infirmed. The power of prayer, if the energy it transforms is part of an omnipresent God, could be transferred around the world to act on a specific need far away. Even the dead could be raised through the faith of the living, since obviously the corpse would be unable to participate.

If this concept held any validity, a group could generate more transforming power than an individual. Perhaps this is why we are told if any two agree together touching any one thing, it would be done. Sometimes this would be the agreement and faith of both the recipient and the one praying for them. Perhaps it is unusual for the faith of one person alone to generate enough power to convert available power to a healing power. Those with great faith would need less assistance, just as some minds generate more energy. But often in the scriptures, we are reminded of the power of unity.

What do I think about Smith Wigglesworth and others who have the “gift” of healing? I believe they have discovered that absolute faith in God, released in intense prayer, releases power capable of altering reality. I have no doubt that faith healing is possible, and even the will of God, in almost every case.

I just usually need the help of other believers adding their faith to mine, before we can tap into what God has made freely available.