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Introduction



Word of Faith - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg discusses the controversial teachings of Kenneth Hagen and the Word Faith movement in this lecture. He explores how Hagen's ideas were influenced by E.W. Kenyon, and how he presents a different concept of faith. Gregg highlights the importance of positive confessions and the belief that one's words have the power to shape reality. He also argues against the idea that sickness is always the result of lack of faith and discusses the teachings on healing within the movement.

Transcript

In this series, this short series of lectures, we will be talking about what is a fairly common movement. When I say common, you run into it fairly commonly. It's not rare, it's not real fringe.

In fact, it's been more or less mainstreamed into at least Pentecostal circles to a large extent. The movement has gone by different names, and so I want to acquaint you with the various labels for it, because if you know it by whatever name I call it by, you may talk to somebody in the future who uses a different name for it, and you might not know that they're talking about the same thing. I'm calling it the Word of Faith teaching, and I believe that most of the teachers of this view would feel comfortable with that label.

Some have simply called it the Word Movement or the Faith Movement. Obviously, Word of Faith embodies both of those labels and is really a quite accurate description of it. Some have called it, and as far as people who are not in the movement, those who are critical of the movement or simply not part of it, may refer to it as the Faith Formula Movement, which is a pretty descriptive label for it, or the Hyper-Faith Movement, which I think is a bit of a misnomer, depending on how we understand hyper-faith.

Some people call it the Name It and Claim It Doctrine, the Health and Wealth Gospel. Some even call it Blab and Grab It or Name It, some of those kinds of names. So if you've heard any of those labels, then we're probably talking about the same thing here in this series.

And it's also possible that you've never heard any of the labels, or at least you haven't

heard them associated with the people who are the teachers of this view, because it's not always the case that they advertise themselves as proponents of a particular idea. Some of these people are very well known. They're on the Christian media, especially in the full gospel circles.

I think there's three major national TV networks that are Christian-owned, and if I'm not mistaken, all three of them are owned and operated by people who are of the Word of Faith Movement. Some of them are more focused on that, and some of them just kind of accepting its tenets without promoting them full scale. So it has certainly an audience, even though you might not realize it is not a mainstream doctrine in the sense of having credentials, of having historic adherence in church history.

You know, on many issues, if you say, well, I'm premillennial or postmillennial or amillennial, regardless of which view you take on that, you can point to historical antecedents going back to fairly early in church history. There were early premillennialists, there were early amillennialists, and there were fairly early postmillennialists. If you are taking a view on the controversy between, say, Calvinism and Arminianism, that controversy goes back very far too, and you'll find Christians going way back who were Calvinistic in their thinking, even before the time of Calvin himself, and you'll find Christians in the church fathers who predate Arminians by many centuries, who we would have to describe as Arminian in their thinking.

What I'm saying is, in many controversial doctrines, both sides of the controversy can say, our side has had its representatives going way back, and that it's been a mainstream viewpoint in the church at some point or another. That is not the case with this particular teaching, although it has been mainstreamed only by the media, by the fact that the main teachers of it are on television, are on the radio, and do publish a great number of tracts and books. It has become mainstreamed only in the sense that it has become well known and largely widely accepted, but it does not have great roots in historic Christian thinking, and its roots in fact come out of the mystical and occult branches of religion, rather than out of Christianity.

This has been demonstrated beyond question by many scholarly studies of the movement that have been made. I want to let you know the names of some of the leading teachers, just in case the term Word of Faith is a new term to you. If you have watched Christian television or have listened to Christian radio, there's a good chance you have heard a fair bit of teaching along these lines without knowing the label.

The earliest proponent in the church of this doctrine that is known historically was a man named E.W. Kenyon. However, it's not likely, unless you've read his books, which are not that easy to find anymore, it's not likely you've heard E.W. Kenyon preach or been exposed to his teaching. There are many people who have, because some people still have copies of his books and read them, but he was the one who introduced, basically

fathered, the so-called Word of Faith teaching that we're talking about here.

However, in the public and popular notions of the view, there is a different person looked to as the father of the movement, Kenneth Hagen, Sr. He is sometimes called Dad Hagen by others in the movement because almost all of the popular Word of Faith teachers today receive their indoctrination in this from Kenneth Hagen, who was an early pioneer in it, but not as original as he sometimes leads one to believe. Kenneth Hagen, by his testimony, was suffering from a crippling disease when he was in his teenage years. He was a Baptist, he says, and I guess he was bedridden with the disease, weakened by a heart deformation, he says, and so he was so weak he couldn't get out of bed for, I think it was 18 months or some extended period of time, over a year.

So, obviously, if his testimony is to be trusted, it was definitely a very serious illness. And then, according to his testimony, he read in the Bible that God said in Mark 11, verse 25, I think it is, that whatsoever you desire when you pray, believe that you receive it and you shall have it. And he realized that this was something he had never done.

He had prayed that he would someday be healed and he had believed that he might someday be healed, but he had never, up to that point, believed that he received it. And so, at that point, he laid a hold of this healing by faith. He just believed that he received it and he got out of bed.

And let me read just a few words of his own testimony so I don't misrepresent it. It's always easier to get it right if you get it from the person's own mouth. In his book, Words, Kenneth Hagin said, Forty-five years ago, I was a Baptist boy lying on a bed of sickness.

When I received the revelation of God's Word, I began acting on Mark 11, 23 and 24. So, I stand corrected. I thought it was Mark 11, 25.

Mark 11, 23 and 24, saying, I believe. Words were spoken. I said, I believe I receive healing for my deformed heart.

I believe I receive healing for the incurable blood disease. I believe I receive healing for the paralysis. I believe I receive healing from the top of my head to the soles of my feet.

He says, and within an hour, I was standing on my feet. I had learned the secret of words, faith words, or words of faith. Forty-five years have come and gone and I haven't had a headache, not one.

But if I had a headache, I wouldn't tell anybody. And if somebody asked me how I was feeling, I would say, I'm fine, thank you. I would speak the right words because Jesus said in Mark 11, 23, He shall have whatsoever he sayeth.

So, this is Hagin's testimony and his doctrine couched into the context of his testimony.

He learned these principles, he says, by reading his Bible as a teenager. Now, he does in some of his writings acknowledge an appreciation he had for E.W. Kenyon.

As I said a moment ago, the real father of this teaching is E.W. Kenyon. Kenneth Hagin does not acknowledge any dependency on Kenyon's writings for his belief. To read Kenneth Hagin's testimony, you get the impression that he got this on his own, just reading the Bible.

And it just so happens that he later found out that E.W. Kenyon taught some of the same things before him. And so he sometimes says positive things and recommends E.W. Kenyon's books. But, in fact, a very interesting study has been done and published not very long ago by a man who is a professor at Oral Roberts University.

And I forget his name, unfortunately, I think it was McConnell or something like that was his last name. And he published a book called A Different Gospel, which was a... It was not the first important analysis of the Word of Faith teaching to come out in recent times, but it is, in my opinion, one of the best that I've read. And one of the chapters in this shows exact, direct plagiarisms from E.W. Kenyon in Hagin's writings.

When I say plagiarisms, I don't mean just to say that he used some of the same terms that Kenyon used, or that he made some of the same kinds of statements that Kenyon made. But in the book A Different Gospel, you will find, if you happen to look in it, many things set in two columns. Where you've got in the left column the actual words from a publication by E.W. Kenyon, and in the right column the actual words from a publication by Kenneth Hagin, where he represents, of course, as authors do, the words as his own.

But in many cases, there are as many as two or three running paragraphs where you set Hagin and Kenyon side by side. And the two are verbatim, with the exception of some very minor and very occasional word changes. You know, changing one word to its synonym, or maybe changing the word order of a sentence, but the clauses are the same.

They're just put in a different order in order to not look exactly alike. But this is not just something that's done a few times. This is done widespread in Kenneth Hagin's writings.

Now, by the way, if he was quoting Kenyon and said so, this would not be the least bit scandalous. People quote other authors all the time, and after all, Kenneth Hagin does admit that he likes the writings of Kenyon. The problem is, he actually copied Kenyon right from Kenyon's own books, made very small alterations in some cases, and then indicates he had no dependency on Kenyon for his beliefs.

And does not acknowledge that it's Kenyon that he's quoting. He writes it as if this is the things God has revealed to him. It's a little bit like Ellen G. White, the founder of the Seventh-day Adventist movement.

She claimed to be a prophetess, and the things she wrote are believed by the Seventh-day Adventists to be prophetic, things that God revealed to her. But back in the early 80s, there was a great falling out among scholars of the Seventh-day Adventist colleges, because it was publicized and discovered that at least half of the things Ellen G. White had written were actually plagiarized, almost word for word, from other authors, though she claimed to be writing as a prophetess. Now, again, I will not deny that I sometimes quote other people, but I'll tell you when I'm quoting them.

And if I claim to be speaking prophetically, if I claim that I'm giving you something that's been revealed directly to me from Scripture, but my words are found to actually be just a very slightly altered restatement of actual words and pages and paragraphs from another book, it certainly raises questions about my honesty as to the real origins of my beliefs. I don't know, and nobody knows except Kenneth Hagen himself, the degree to which the writings of Kenyon formed these opinions in Kenneth Hagen. It is possible that some of these views did come to Kenneth Hagen on his own.

I mean, if Kenyon could come up with them, someone else could come up with them, and Hagen might be that someone else who did. However, it doesn't seem like, let's just put it that way, from the degree of plagiarisms from Kenyon in Hagen's writings, it appears that Hagen was very heavily dependent on Kenyon for his ideas. And so we've got E.W. Kenyon was the founder of the movement.

Kenneth Hagen is the popularly known granddaddy of the movement, and among those that have studied under him and are now fairly prominent faith teachers themselves, we have, and most of these actually trained under Kenneth Hagen, either formally or informally. They look to him as sort of the apostle of this movement. Kenneth Hagen Jr., obviously the son of Kenneth Hagen Sr., is now an adult minister in the movement.

Kenneth Hagen established a Bible college in Oklahoma called Rhema Bible College, or Bible Institute, I forget what it's called. Rhema is spelled R-H-E-M-A. It's the Greek word for word.

It's the other word for word besides Logos. Rhema. And so his college is called Rhema Bible College, and he and his son, I guess Kenneth Hagen Sr. founded it, but his son is fairly prominently involved there.

And some of the, quite a few of the Word of Faith leaders have studied there and have picked up Hagen's ideas and now perpetrate them themselves in their own name. By the way, there is not a denomination formed. This is more like a consensus.

It's not like there's an organization, the Word of Faith organization. It is more that there's just, within many different denominations, there are persons who hold these views and in many cases promote them. Among the other well-known leaders of this movement would be Ken Copeland and his wife Gloria Copeland.

Kenneth and Gloria Copeland have both written books promoting these doctrines, and probably, apart from Kenneth Hagen himself, Kenneth Copeland may be the best known leader in the movement. There is a distinct difference in the temperaments of these two men. If you've ever heard these two men, I think you'll know what I mean.

Kenneth Hagen is sort of a good old southern boy who's just kind of, he just strikes you as sort of a good natured, winsome, humble, almost like a farm boy growing up. He's very non-intellectual, probably would be called anti-intellectual. He probably doesn't have much respect for intellectual Christianity, but he does seem like a winsome character and a humble character.

I don't know the man. I can't vouch for him actually being a humble man, but that's how he comes off. Kenneth Copeland, his disciple, who in some lines and some quarters is better known than Kenneth Hagen now because he's the younger man and is very prominent in television, Copeland's temperament is very different than that of Hagen, it appears.

He comes off as much more caustic, much more biting, criticizing his theological opponents, very great arrogance, very showy kind of a guy. Pretty powerful speaker, but if I were to be a follower of one of the two, I'd be much more attracted to Hagen than to Copeland myself, and I think that there's others who would say similar things, but Ken and Gloria Copeland are definitely well-known leaders in the movement. Fred Price is another well-known preacher.

I forget, I think he's down in Los Angeles, has a large Word of Faith church down there if I'm not mistaken. Jerry Savelle is another fairly well-known name in the movement. Charles Capps is another writer of this movement.

Norval Hayes, John Osteen, Robert Tilton, Lester Sumrall, who is not living any longer, I believe he died a few years ago. By the way, Lester Sumrall I have a fair degree of respect for on other grounds. His ministry came to prominence as the man who received a lot of publicity even in the secular media when as a minister or missionary in the Philippines, was instrumental in casting a demon out of a notable situation that had made the news, and his success in casting this demon out of this girl actually was, I believe, became a story covered in Life magazine back in, I can't tell you when it was, I think it was in the 50s.

But that's how I first heard of Lester Sumrall. I later learned by being more acquainted with his writings that he was a Word of Faith leader also. Marilyn Hickey, a fairly well-known woman leader in the movement, and Roy Hicks, who I believe is right in Oregon as a leader in the movement.

These are some of the better known names in the Word of Faith movement. In fact, you would be acquainted probably with all of these names, or at least most of them, if you

read Charisma magazine or if you have the Spirit-Filled Life Study Bible, published by Thomas Nelson. Many of the notes and the sidebars are written by these people.

So these people are reasonably well-known, and their voices are being heard. Charisma magazine is no small organ of communication, and the Spirit-Filled Life Study Bible is a reasonably widespread use also. And I'm not saying that everything in Charisma magazine or everything in the Spirit-Filled Life Study Bible is going to reflect the Word of Faith teaching, but anything that these people write will certainly be springing from this particular worldview called the Word of Faith.

So I haven't yet told you exactly what the teaching is, and that's what I want to do, but I wanted to acquaint you first of all with the various labels by which you might encounter it and the various persons who unashamedly teach it. I was a while ago, when was that? Probably a couple of years ago now, I was teaching in a YWAM DTS in Honolulu. By the way, my teachings on this subject are very well received over there in YWAM Honolulu.

But I was teaching about foundations, and among other things in the foundation series I talk about faith, what the Bible teaches about faith. And I simply made the comment in the course of my lecture that some people may think of faith in terms of the so-called faith movement. And I began to share what I believed was different between the concept of faith in the faith movement and the concept of faith as taught by Scripture.

I did not do so with any hostility, I didn't do so with any sarcasm or anything like that, but I just was presenting the differences in how I felt like the Word of Faith teaching on this subject was incorrect biblically for these reasons and so forth. In the course of doing so, I named some of the teachers, who I just named for you just now. Well, one girl came up to me afterwards, very offended.

Her mother was a pastor of a Word of Faith church somewhere back in Oklahoma or somewhere, and she said that these people I had named had been in their homes, were personal friends and so forth, and she was very offended that I had named them. And this girl herself, I don't think she would become the poster girl for the Word of Faith movement if the leaders had their say. She had a cute little spike through her tongue and dressed very immodestly.

I certainly don't want to suggest that she's typical of the Word of Faith people, but she was their defender on this occasion. And I said to her, well, you know, I didn't say anything about them that they wouldn't say about themselves. You know, what I told you about these people, they say on record all the time.

I didn't tell you they're bad people. I don't even think necessarily that they're bad people. All I told you is that they believe faith means this, and I think they're mistaken.

And she was so offended, this was early in the week, probably on Monday or Tuesday,

she never came back to class. It's the first time I've ever taught in all the DTSs I've taught in, where somebody got so offended the first or second day that they never came back for the rest of the week. And they're supposed to, it's required to go.

I don't know how they handled that in the school. But this girl really had a very rebellious spirit, but she was particularly offended because I named these people. Well, there's nothing wrong with naming people if they name themselves.

I mean, these people are not at all shy about being associated with this teaching. If I tell you that these people teach such and such a thing, and I do not misrepresent what they say, I'm entitled also to tell you what I think is mistaken in their views, and they, as far as I'm concerned, they're welcome to do the same thing about me. If they think they want to critique my views from Scripture, I certainly welcome them to do it.

I hope they may, if they ever notice I exist, which is not likely. But the fact of the matter is, there's nothing wrong with saying these people teach such and such a doctrine. I pointed out to this girl, she said, you shouldn't name names.

I said, well, the Apostle Paul named names. He said there was Hymenaeus and Alexander were teaching something in the church that wasn't right, and he named other names as well. And she said, well, that was Paul, not God.

And that let me know where she stood, so I figured we don't really have a very good basis for communication here. I'm basing what I believe on the assumption that the Bible is the Word of God, and she doesn't share that assumption, which is ironic, because the Word of Faith people insist that they are the Word people. They are the people of the Word.

But if Paul says something about women not being pastors, that word is not quite acceptable. They won't confess that. That would be a negative confession to them.

But it's a biblical confession. Anyway, off of that little tangent, you now know who we're talking about and what the labels are, but you may not be very much aware of what the teaching is. And therefore, I would like to present it to you.

I'm going to present it to you more or less as if I were a teacher of it. It's easier that way. And then I will, of course, tell you what I disagree with about it.

I should give you this background, however. Like Kenneth Hagan himself, I was a Baptist until I was up into my teen years. And I also, in my teenage years, discovered the power of the Holy Spirit, became a believer in divine healing and so forth.

In that respect, he and I had a little bit of parallel in our testimony. I was not incurably sick when I was a teenager, although I was incurably sick when I was two years old, and I believe I was healed miraculously of that. So we even have something like that in

common, although certainly when I was two years old, I didn't get healed by making any positive confessions or by getting special revelations about the scripture or from reading E.W. Kenyon either.

I was healed by prayer, and more specifically, more accurately, I was healed by God. Hagan believes he was healed by confession and by faith. And you know, you will sometimes hear the expression, faith healers.

And if you're a full gospel person, as I am, if you believe in healing, and you believe in miraculous healing, as I do, you might just think, well, faith healing, I believe in faith healing. But we have to be careful about that. It's probable that it's okay to say we believe in faith healing, depending on how we mean that term.

But to say you believe in faith healing suggests that you believe that healing through faith is what you believe in. I personally believe in God healing. I believe that God is a healer, and I believe in miraculous healing.

But I've seen people get healed who were not expecting to be healed. I've seen people healed who had very little faith, or apparently none at all. I've been in the meetings of Catherine Kuhlman when she was alive, in Denver and in Los Angeles and Anaheim.

I must confess I was never a great fan or follower of hers, but she was reputed to have tremendous healing ministry, and I was always eager to see if there was any real healing going on. And so I attended her meetings, and sure enough, if the testimonies given are correct, and I have no reason to doubt them, there were tremendous healings in her meetings. But she would often call the people who felt themselves healed and come up and give testimony at the end of the meeting to their healing.

And again and again and again, I heard the people say, I came here skeptical, I didn't even believe in this kind of stuff, a friend of mine brought me because they knew I needed healing, and I was resistant, I wasn't thinking it. And as she was preaching, I felt myself get healed, and I realized that my withered hand is no longer withered, or my appendicitis is no longer hurting, or they give these testimonies. But it seems to me, more often than not, the people got healed who weren't expecting to get healed.

They didn't exercise some great faith in healing, and therefore I don't know if we could properly say that their healing was a faith healing. Now someone could say, well, it was their friend's faith or Catherine Pullman's faith or something like that. Well, this may be true.

I don't know. But I'd rather just say that God healed them. There were other people there who really did expect to be healed, who probably did have friends praying for them too.

And Catherine Pullman's faith was there too, for them, but they didn't get healed. And there's a lot of mystery that surrounds the whole issue of healing, why some get healed

and why some don't. Kenneth Hagin and those of his camp do not think there's any mystery about it at all.

Healing can be had as soon as you determine to have it. As soon as you do the right thing and say the right thing, you can have it. In fact, you can have not only healing, but prosperity and anything else you want.

You can have whatever you want by simply saying it. Now, I said I had experience similar to Kenneth Hagin's in one respect, that I was a Baptist. And in my teenage years, I discovered the power of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

And I became aware of the supernatural realm, became a believer in such things as modern day miracles and healing and so forth. And even I had something else in common with him, his views, because I actually read Kenneth Hagin a great deal. I was not brought into the full gospel or charismatic experience through the ministry of any Word of Faith people.

It was rather through Chuck Smith, who is very antagonistic to the Word of Faith teaching, that I came into the charismatic experience. Though I did encounter Kenneth Hagin's books at that time, early on as a teenager. And he wrote a lot of little books like the ones I have right here.

These are just some samples. I used to have a whole bunch of them. I only have a few of them that have remained around.

These little books, about 30-something pages each, 36, something like that. I had probably a couple dozen of these, different ones. And I remember there was a period of my life where I read through one Kenneth Hagin book per day.

And probably no one was discipling me at that period of time more than Kenneth Hagin was. And I was quite drawn to his teaching for several reasons. There are several things attractive about it.

One is it's very user-friendly. I mean, he's not heady. He doesn't get into deep intellectual issues.

And as a youth, I found it very accessible, his ideas, in the way he presented them. He's very down-home, very likable kind of a guy. He tells humorous stories.

Perhaps that's one of the greatest things, one of the great appeals of this man's writings, is that the stories he tells are frequent and seem to confirm what he's saying. Almost every point that he makes in his books, he gives at least one illustration, or maybe a string of illustrations from his own ministry, that seem to confirm what he's saying to be true. As a youth reading these books, I was quite influenced.

I thought, well, here's a guy who's not just talking, he's doing it. I mean, everything he says, he has experienced. And thirdly, his books were appealing to me because they had the appearance of being very biblical.

He quoted a lot of verses of the Bible, and I always had a high respect for the Bible, and it appeared to me that he was presenting the biblical truth. It seemed to be a very radical biblical truth, because what he was saying was not taught widely in the church that I was in, and therefore I was drawn to it. And as I say, I used to read Kenneth Hagin's books one a day.

I got saturated with his teaching when I was 16 or 17 years old. And I became a true disciple of his for a while. Now, many of you know, and that's even been evident even during this lecture, that I have more than ordinarily active sinuses.

During certain seasons of the year, I'm terribly afflicted by hay fever. Sometimes I'm practically reduced to impotence to do anything but sneeze in the worst times of the spring. But according to Kenneth Hagin's teaching and that of the others in this movement, I really don't have any problems in this area.

No one does. No one really has problems. They just think they do.

And the way to get over the problems is to confess positively that you are well and that you don't have any problems in this area. Well, I was a good disciple of this teaching, and so whenever spring came around and I looked like I was about ready to die from constant sneezing and runny nose and sniffing and all that kind of stuff, I faithfully confessed. People say, oh, you seem to have bad allergies.

No, I don't have any bad allergies. I'm healed. Jesus healed me.

I'd make the right confession. And believe me, as a young and naive teenager, I just had enough sincerity and simplicity to really have my faith in those confessions. I really believed that's what the Bible taught, and I really confessed it with genuine faith.

I dare say, if it takes more faith than I had to get a healing, then few people would ever be able to be healed, because I had a childlike faith, it was wholehearted, based on what I thought was Scripture, and very faithful in making positive confessions about this kind of thing, which is what you're supposed to do to get the results. And I must confess, I never did get over the allergies. I would confess them all through the whole allergy season, that I didn't have them, but they ended about the same time they would if I hadn't been making any confessions, when the season ended, and then they came back the next year or two.

And actually, I must confess that there was no change. That may sound like a negative confession, but it's a true confession. And you might think, or a person who is of the Word of Faith teaching might think, oh, Steve, I see where you went wrong.

You don't believe in the Word of Faith anymore, and the reason is because you didn't get over your allergies, and that disillusioned you with it, etc., etc. And Steve, your problem is that you were basing your belief on sense knowledge, and not on revelation knowledge, and you believed the symptoms, which were a deception. You didn't believe the Word of God, which says you're healed, etc., etc.

No, that's wrong. If someone thinks that I gave up the Word of Faith teaching because I was disillusioned, because it didn't work for me, that is not the case at all. I have actually, I must confess that although I'm an opponent of the teaching of Kenneth Hagin today, I must admit that I have some benefit that I've derived from having read him in my early years, and that is simply the benefit of his emphasis that you believe the Word of God, no matter what it says.

That's what he says. He says you believe the Word of God, whatever it says, even if all the evidence seems contrary. Now, the way he interprets it, he believes the Word of God says you're healed.

I don't believe the Bible says that anymore, but he had me convinced that the Bible said that at one time. And so if the Bible says I'm healed, but all my symptoms say I'm sick, who do you believe? God, who wrote the Bible, or do your symptoms? Obviously, as a faithful, simple follower of Jesus, I knew I had to believe the Bible and not my symptoms. Frankly, I still believe that it's the right thing to believe the Bible more than you believe any other thing.

I disagree, however, with Kenneth Hagin as to what the Bible actually says on some of these issues. Now, that's where I change my view. My view did not change because my allergies didn't go away.

I'm sure I would still be confessing I'm well now, 27, 28 years later, going through terrible allergy seasons every year, but I'd still be saying God is faithful, let God be true and every man a liar. I do not believe my symptoms. His symptoms are a lie of the devil, and I am healed in Jesus because by his stripes I'm healed, etc., etc., all the right confessions.

I would still be saying that today, if not for one very little thing, and that is I read my Bible more. And as I read my Bible more, and I ran out of Kenneth Hagin books to read, I ended up reading more Bible than Kenneth Hagin, and what happened is I found out that the things I was confessing are not biblical. The things I was saying were not taught in Scripture.

They were taught in the Word of Faith literature, but they were not taught in the Bible itself. And I began feeling a little silly making confessions that were contrary to apparent reality. That is, I don't have allergies, but everything looks like I do and feels like I do, and I'm suffering about as badly as if I did.

I can't understand how I'd be any better off, or worse off, if I did have allergies, given the fact that I don't have them and I have all the symptoms. I'm not sure that I have any advantage in this healing, you know, since I have to have all the symptoms anyway. But it wasn't that.

It was that I began to realize that I was arguing against truth, that in favor of making consistent positive confessions, I was making false confessions. And that is my experience, and that is where I come from, my background. I'm acquainted with the Word of Faith teaching very intimately.

I read it, I absorbed it, I believed it, I acted on it, and I later found it not lacking only in terms of its working. It doesn't work. But I also found it not to be biblical.

And it is for this latter reason that I critique it today. Now, let me sort of put myself into, put on the hat of a Word of Faith teacher for a few moments here. I want to, if you're not acquainted with what this teaching is, I want you to know essentially what it is and what its basic thoughts are.

So I'm just going to, I'm just going to, off the top of my head, I don't have any notes or anything on this, but I remember it well. And I can be the Word of Faith teacher for a few moments here. And then I want to go back and tell what's wrong with this picture.

Okay? The universe is governed by laws. There are physical laws, like the laws of physics, the laws of thermodynamics, the law of gravity, aerodynamics, and other kinds of laws like this. They govern the physical world.

There are also spiritual laws. And these spiritual laws govern the world as surely and as irresistibly as do the physical laws. One of the most important and perhaps the most basic law in the spiritual realm is the law of faith.

That all things operate through faith. God himself operates through faith. God created the world and the universe through his own faith.

And he made human beings as people or beings of his own class. We are not like the animals, we are like God. We are beings of the God type, of the God class.

We are faith beings. God himself is a faith being. And he is subject to the law of faith.

He always operates in agreement and with accord with the law of faith because he knows it best. He knows that things get done when you tap into and appropriately use this law of faith. And he wants us, as God type beings, to learn the law of faith also.

And to turn it to our advantage. It is through the law of faith and its proper manipulation, its proper application, that we get things from God. And we can get anything we want from God because faith is all powerful.

Faith is omnipotent. And if you learn how to tap into the law of faith, it's like knowing the laws of physics. If you act in accord with them, they will work for you.

God has made the law of faith work for him. And he wants us to know how, as his children, to make the law of faith work for us. And once you know how to do that, you can have whatever you want.

You can write your own ticket with God. You can have whatsoever you will. That is because the law of faith is the universal foundation of all spiritual reality.

It is so much universal that even a person who does not know God, even a person who is not a Christian, can operate it and get the same results. Just like a Christian or a non-Christian can operate a machine by pushing the right buttons and doing the right things, and it will work because it works on certain laws, and it doesn't matter who the operator is, so the law of faith works for anybody. If you know the techniques, you can make it work for you.

And that even goes for non-Christians. Kenneth Hagin himself said it used to puzzle him, how come in Pentecostal churches people get prayed for for healing and they didn't get healed all the time, but he noticed that in cults like Christian Science and some of these other groups, people seem to get results. And he wondered about that, and he asked God about that, and God said, well, the reason that they get results and these Pentecostal people are not getting results is because these cultists who don't even know God know the law of faith, and they operate the law of faith more effectively than many Christians do.

So you have to realize that it's like having electricity in the walls. Whoever plugs the plug in and turns the switch on is going to get the power, is going to get the results, and it doesn't matter who you are or what it is you're using the power for, it's just there and it's available. And just as God operates under the law of faith, we operate under the law of faith.

We need to understand that the law of faith is operated through the medium of confession or words. Words are the most powerful things in the universe, and a word of faith, a faith-filled word, can accomplish anything if that word is uttered with absolute, undoubting confidence and faith. Now, many Christians live way below their privileges because they don't know this.

There are many negative things, sickness, poverty, pain and suffering and loss, these things, these are negative things. Now, God is not in these things. God doesn't believe in sickness.

God doesn't believe in poverty. God is, God's a good God. And there are many Christians who think that God wants them to suffer, who actually think, and you believe this, that

God would use suffering to bring some benefit in the life of the believer.

Well, this is practically blasphemy of God. The devil causes all of these things. God doesn't want you sick.

God doesn't want you ever poor. It's the devil who's the, he's the one who's the enemy who came to rob and to kill and to destroy. And if you are getting, if you're poor, it's not that God wants you poor, it's the devil is robbing you of your inheritance.

And you need to overcome him by your positive confessions. You see, you will have positive circumstances or negative circumstances according as you confess positively or negatively, because you will have what you say. Because the most powerful thing in the world, in the universe is words.

And what you say is what you will get. And this is how the law of faith is turned to your advantage. Because if you believe that you are well, and you confess that you're well, your confession is what activates the law of faith and puts it into use for you.

And brings about the results that you want. Now, a bunch of people don't know this, and they go around making negative confessions all the time. They say, oh, I do believe I'm getting a cold, or I do believe that we're going to have a hard time paying these bills.

And that's just going to guarantee that they're going to get a cold, and just going to guarantee that they don't get their bills paid because they're making negative confessions. And therefore, to operate as a faith creature like God, you have to put your faith in positive things and confess only positive things. If you confess negative things, you're going to bring negative things upon you.

Because you are the ruler of your own universe, by your faith and by your confession. You will have whatever you say. Now, some people feel a little weak in the matter of faith.

And if you're weak in faith, obviously you won't really be able to get things done. So, if faith is kind of a vague concept to you, you've got to realize that if you have a little trouble believing in God, you can always put your faith in faith. In fact, that's what you need to do.

You need to put your faith in your faith. In fact, Kenneth Hagin has actually said that if you don't have enough faith to put in your own faith, you can put your faith in his faith. Kenneth Hagin says that if you don't have enough faith in your faith to get a healing, then you can put your faith in my faith.

Because I have faith-free healing, just trust in my faith. And so, you need to just get on this faith thing. You need to realize that you've got to always believe what you want will happen and confess it.

If you ever let a negative confession slip out, you've doomed yourself to have the thing that you confess. And so, make sure you put a watchman at your mouth and make sure you only confess faith-filled words. And then it will come to pass.

Now, in particular, there are a couple of areas where Christians definitely live way below their privileges and where the devil really rips them off, and I think we need to get a handle on this. And that is in the area of health and in the area of material prosperity. There are some people out there who think that there's something virtuous about being poor.

They just think it's more spiritual to drive a Volkswagen. They don't realize that Christians should be... Well, Christians are kings' kids, right? I mean, whoever heard of a king having his kids drive Volkswagens? It just ain't going to happen. Let me give you a good quote here from somebody who really knows this doctrine.

Oh, where'd it go? It fell out of my notes. Oh, here we go. This comes from Fred Price in the book, Faith, Foolishness, or Presumption.

One of those is found in the book, maybe two of them. But here's what Fred Price says. If the mafia can ride around in Lincoln Continental town cars, why can't kings' kids? Kings' kids ought to ride around in Rolls Royces.

Well, what are you driving today? You know, if you're not driving a Lincoln Continental or a Lincoln town car or a Rolls Royce, you are definitely living not like a king's kid. What an insult it is to God for you to be living that way. Just think when people look on and you tell them you're a child of the king and they look how poorly provided for you are, how sick you are.

Just think what a poor testimony that is. It's an insult to God. What you need to do is not be satisfied with little.

You need to not be satisfied until you are living in perfect health and perfect prosperity. Only then, really, is your testimony a good testimony. Actually, anything less than this is not only a bad testimony, it's wrong.

It is wrong to be sick. It is wrong to be poor. I'll tell you why.

First of all, because God is a good God. And God would never allow or permit or agree with or prefer for his children to experience pain or suffering or poverty or sickness. It's just not like God to do that.

Let me confirm this to you from some authorities. This comes from Kenneth Hagen in the book, Word of Faith. I'm sorry, it's not the book, it's the magazine, Word of Faith.

And the article is called Healing the Father's Provision. Now, Kenneth Hagen wrote this in

1977. He says, I believe that it is the plan of God our Father that no believer should ever be sick.

That every believer should live his full length of time and actually wear out, if Jesus carries, and fall asleep in Jesus. It is not, I state boldly, it is not the will of God my Father that we should suffer with cancer or with other dread diseases which bring pain and anguish. No, it is God's will that we be healed.

Okay, well, he's certainly got a good God that he believes in. He doesn't believe in a God who ever afflicted him with cancer or pain or anguish or anything unpleasant. And that's because God is too good for that kind of thing.

Kenneth Copeland, in the book, *The Troublemaker*, said, One major deception Satan is sowing in the church today is that our problems, our trials, and our temptations are sent to teach us and develop us spiritually, mentally, and physically. That's certainly a major deception of the devil. I mean, if that's a deception of the devil, it's a major one because I've heard that very recently.

I think I heard it in here, in this classroom. Copeland also said, in the book, *The Troublemaker*, Kenneth Copeland said, I refuse to believe that my Heavenly Father would hurt me. Well, that's because he has so much faith.

But, maybe I even have more faith than him because I believe something he can't believe. He refuses to believe that the Heavenly Father would ever inflict pain. In the same book, *The Troublemaker*, Kenneth Copeland sort of really takes to task those who think such insulting things about God.

Oh, I forget where it is here. I'm leafing through it and I don't see the passage or what. But, he does say that to say that God even allows Satan, or for his purposes, to afflict you for any reason, that's like saying that a father takes his Doberman Pinscher and when his son disobeys him, just turns this attack dog on him to tear him to shreds.

And, certainly, God's not that way. God's a good God. Furthermore, there's other reasons not to accept sickness or poverty as normative for the Christian life.

And, that is because, and this is a very important key to a Word of Faith understanding, of the nature of redemption. That is, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. Let me show you where it says that in Scripture.

In Galatians, chapter 3, in verse 13, it says, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us. So, when Jesus died, he died to redeem us from the curse of the law. Well, what is the curse of the law? Well, back in Deuteronomy, chapter 28, there are a whole bunch of blessings and curses associated with keeping the law or not keeping it.

If you would read that chapter carefully, Kenneth Hagin has pointed out, you will find that the curse of the law basically distills down to three things. Poverty, sickness, and death. Poverty, sickness, and death is the curse of the law.

And therefore, if Jesus has redeemed us from the curse of the law, it follows that we are redeemed from poverty, we are redeemed from sickness, and we are redeemed from death. With reference to the redemption from sickness in particular, we know that Jesus carried our sins on the tree when he died, but the Bible also says he carried our sicknesses, and that by his stripes we are healed. Therefore, if Jesus carried our sicknesses, and if by his stripes he acquired our healing, then it is no more right for us to accept sickness in our life than to accept sin in our life.

If Jesus redeemed us from sickness and sin, then both sickness and sin are totally inappropriate, and no Christian needs ever to suffer from either of them. Therefore, Christ has redeemed us from the curse, and has therefore purchased for us our healing and our prosperity and our life, because the curse of the law from which he redeemed us is of poverty, sickness, and death. Then again, of course, we have a lot of promises in the Scripture that make it clear that God intends to heal, and that God intends us to be prosperous.

Perhaps one of the most clear statements along these lines is in 3 John, verse 2, where John said, Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. Now notice, he says, this is God's intention, that you may prosper in all things and be in health. Health and prosperity.

This is the will of God. I remember reading years ago in Oral Roberts' book about seed faith, that he once thought that God could get some glory out of being poor, out of being sick, but he later read this verse, this very verse. He said, hey, it's like the light went on in his head.

God is a good God. He wants me to be healthy. He wants me to be prosperous.

And from that day on, he never did believe that either sickness or poverty could be from God's hand, because God has expressed his desire for us to be prosperous and in good health. Furthermore, there's a lot of things in the Bible that indicates that God wants people healthy. In Exodus 15, 26, God said, I am the Lord that healeth thee.

Jehovah Rapha, the healing Jehovah, the healing Lord. In James chapter 5, verses 14 through 15, it says, is anyone sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick and the Lord will raise him up.

And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. So, we've got the prayer of faith saving the sick. If anyone is sick, they should call for the elders and have the prayer of faith

prayed over them.

Over in Psalm 103, another good example of God's provision of healing. And there are others. Psalm 103, David says, bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me.

Bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases. God heals all your diseases.

Is this not a promise from God? Now, on the basis of these and other similar texts, we know that there are promises that God has made. To provide all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To heal when you cry out to him.

And if you have faith and believe and do not doubt that you can have whatever you want. One of the most important scriptures along those lines is John 15, 7. Where Jesus said, if you abide in me and my words abide in you, you will ask what you desire. Notice it doesn't say what God desires, but what you desire.

And it will be done for you. Let me close this brief presentation from the word of faith standpoint before I bring any kind of criticism of it. Let me close this little segment by giving you some actual quotes from the men themselves.

In the book, *The Force of Faith*, Kenneth Copeland wrote, Faith is a power force. It is a conductive force. It will move things.

Faith will change things. Faith will change the human body. It will change the human heart.

Faith will change circumstances. The force of faith is released by words. Faith filled words put the law of the spirit of life into operation.

E.W. Kenyon in his book, *Two Kinds of Faith*, made this statement, Faith filled words brought the universe into being. And faith filled words are ruling the universe today. So it's not, as you thought, God who is ruling the universe.

It's faith filled words, yours and mine, that are ruling the universe. After all, we are little gods according to the leaders in this movement. We are just little god-like, god kind of creatures.

And therefore, if God brought the universe into existence by faith filled words, we rule the world and govern the universe by our faith filled words. Kenneth Hagen, in his book, *Having Faith in Your Faith*, wrote, Did you ever stop to think about having faith in your own faith? Evidently God had faith in his faith because he spoke words of faith and they came to pass. In other words, having faith in your words is having faith in your faith.

That's what you've got to learn to do to get things from God, to have faith in your faith. Charles Kapp said in the book, *The Tongue*, Faith will work without prayer. Now, by the

way, this is not unusual.

In many cases, they consider that if you pray, that's an evidence of lack of faith. It's almost, and especially if you pray in any way saying, God, if it be your will, then you're definitely expressing lack of faith. Let me read what Kenneth Hagen said in his book, *Words*, on pages 9 through 10.

He said, I have never prayed in my life that either of my children would be saved. Not a single prayer. I never prayed a prayer that either one of them would be filled with the Spirit.

They're 30-some years old today. And I don't believe I prayed more than half a dozen times for both of them in all these years. Why? Because you can have what you say.

And I had already said it. If I were to pray about it now, it would mean that I didn't mean it then. Hagen also said in his book, *Words*, You won't get the blessings of God just because you have faith.

You won't get healed or baptized in the Spirit just because you have faith. You won't get answers to prayer just because you have faith. Most Christians think you will, but they're wrong.

The Bible does not teach it. What he means is, having faith is enough and praying is enough. Saying it, confessing it is what will get all this for you.

And as Charles Capp says, faith will work even without prayer. Well, I frankly am going to suggest that there's a sense in which that could be true, but not the sense in which he means it. What he means is that you can confess things and get things done.

You can just bypass prayer altogether. You don't have to talk to God about this at all. Just talk to the sickness.

Just talk to the universe. Just talk to the forces that be out there, the faith force out there. Just activate it by your confession.

You don't have to go through God. Just go right to the source. The law of faith.

Even God is under it. Even God is governed by the law of faith according to this teaching. God is not the sovereign of the universe, if you thought he was.

Faith, the law of faith is the sovereign of the universe. Also Charles Capps, in the same book, *The Tongue*, on page 70, said, Words are the most powerful thing in the universe. I always thought God was, but no, words are the most powerful thing in the universe.

In the same book, *The Tongue*, Charles Capps said, You have to believe that those things you say, everything you say, will come to pass. That will activate the God kind of faith

within you. And those things which you say will come to pass.

Kenneth Hagen, in his book, *Exceedingly*, page 10, said, It is unscriptural to pray if it is the will of God. When you put an if in your prayer, you are praying in doubt. So in other words, if you pray something and say, Lord, if it is your will, you've suddenly done something unscriptural.

Because by saying, if it is your will, really what you've done is suggest that maybe it won't happen. You're kind of leaving yourself an out. You're giving your doubt credibility.

If something doesn't happen, then you can always say, well, I guess it wasn't God's will, and then you've bailed out of your responsibility to have believed it. And never mind the fact that Jesus prayed, Father, if it be thy will, or that James said, for this you ought to say, if the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that. He said anything else is presumption.

Yet we're told by the Word of Faith teachers that to add an if it is the will of God, although Jesus did in his praying and James said we should in our talking, that is actually unscriptural because you're adding the element of doubt by saying if. There's only a few more quotes of this kind I want to give you, but I just want to make sure that you're aware that I'm not making this up in any way, shape, or form. This is the mainstream teaching of the Word of Faith.

In the book *Right and Wrong Thinking* by Kenneth Hagen, I'll read a few quotes from it. He said, people who have been involved in the past with metaphysical mind science religions often get this teaching about right and wrong thinking confused with those religious teachings. Now why do you suppose that is? People who are familiar with Christian science, for example, which is a metaphysical cult, and then they hear this Word of Faith teaching, they sometimes get the two confused.

Well, there's a very good reason for that. They are identical with very, very, very, very little and inconsequential differences. The fact of the matter is that Christian science is a cult that teaches the same things.

A little differently, though. Christian science teaches that sin and sickness and hell and suffering, that all those things are an illusion. They're not real.

And you overcome this illusion by positive reckoning, by positive thinking. Now, by the way, there's, in my opinion, a cult of positivism in the church today. It's not just the Word of Faith people.

Sometimes this group is called the Positive Confession. I mean, that's another label for the Word of Faith teaching is the Positive Confession movement. Because you have to confess positive things or you're in trouble.

You'll get whatever you confess. Never mind that this isn't true. Never mind that anyone can prove it isn't true right now.

I can prove it isn't true. Will I have what I say? Will I have what I confess? Let me confess to you right now that I'm going to, in today's mail, going to receive a million dollars. I'm confessing it.

Now, of course, a Word of Faith person hearing me say it would say, well, you'd be surprised. Maybe it will come. But actually, the fact of the matter is if it doesn't, it's because they know that I didn't really believe that.

That was a confession, but it wasn't a confession of faith. Okay, let me tell you something else. I have many times confessed that it appeared to me that I was getting sick.

And I really believed it, but I didn't get sick, as it turned out. I've often confessed that I was getting well, and I believed it, and it didn't happen that way either. Anyone knows from experience, if they've ever paid attention, that they don't get everything they say.

They don't even get everything that they say believing it. It just, frankly, isn't true. It's not biblical, and it isn't true to life.

It isn't so. It's amazing that this teaching can be as popular as it is because it doesn't work. But Christian science has been around a long time too, and it doesn't work either.

Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of the Christian, well, she's not the founder, but the leader of it, maybe she was the founder, she died sick. She didn't believe, she died of cancer, but she believed that sickness and death were an illusion. They didn't exist.

She may have lived in a happy delusion, but she died just the same as if she had believed the same things I believed. She might as well have believed she was sick. It wouldn't have made any difference.

And it's not what you believe, it's what's true. You see, the problem with the Word of Faith teaching is that the Word of Faith teaching indicates that you believe first, and it becomes true as a result of your believing. The Bible teaches that something is true or untrue, and it is our responsibility to set our faith on what is true, to believe what is true, and to reject what is not true.

We're never called upon to confess something that isn't true just because it's more positive to do so. Paul confessed that he had a thorn in the flesh. Paul confessed that his friend, Trophimus, was sick.

In Melitim, according to the Word of Faith people, you're not supposed to say anyone's sick, it's not true. You were healed back at the whipping post 2,000 years ago when

Jesus received your sickness. You're not sick.

If you confess that, you're making a negative confession. Well, Paul apparently didn't know that because he did confess himself and his friend, Trophimus, both to be sick or afflicted or to have infirmities. These are things that would never come out of the lips of a true Word of Faith devotee because that would be a negative confession.

But Paul made a lot of negative confessions. In fact, he told the truth all the time, as far as we know. We don't know of any case of him lying.

To be committed to positive confessions only puts a tremendous bondage on a person. It makes them unable to tell the truth at times. And it forces them to tell things that aren't true because they believe they're obligated to say whatever is positive even though the truth isn't always all that positive.

The Bible itself doesn't say only positive things. The writers of Scripture certainly, if they were inspired by God, as I believe they were, they certainly knew how they should confess. And when they confessed, they confessed what was true.

And the Bible requires us to confess anything other than what is true. And nor does the Bible put a stigma upon what is not positive. But our modern thinking does.

Not only the Word of Faith people do this. I mean, there's the positive possibility thinking movement, the appeal, the power of positive thinking. And that preacher of that large church, who I won't identify, who's popularized the word possibility thinking.

And all of this is just another way of saying positive, positive. Just be positive. Just be optimistic.

Just have faith. But you see what this all misses is that faith in the Bible is not a force. Faith is not a law.

Faith is not a thing. Faith is just believing. That's what faith is.

Faith is just believing. And Jesus said, have faith in God. In the same chapter that got Kenneth Hagin out of bed when he was a teenager, Mark 11, Jesus said, have faith in God.

Now, unfortunately for Kenneth Hagin, he thinks that that should be translated, though he doesn't read any Greek and no translator agrees with him, but he believes that line should be translated, have the faith of God. Now, that's a big difference. Have the faith of God.

Kenneth Hagin believes that the faith of God means the faith that God has. God has faith. God created the world through faith.

And therefore, we should have the faith that God has. But that's really a wild and twisted translation, the Scripture says, and should be translated and is correctly translated in almost all Bibles, have faith in God. Faith is not a thing to look at.

Faith is the look at God. Faith is the vision of God. Faith is putting one's, setting one's sights on something, in our case, on God.

You see, everyone has faith. A lot of people have positive faith, in fact, who aren't Christians. A lot of people have faith in their natural talents, in their ability to make a living, in their good looks, in their physical strength, in the gun under their pillow, or whatever.

They've got a lot of faith. They feel real secure. They're real positive.

No one's going to get any of their money from them. No one's going to be able to bring trials into their life. They're very positive about this, and they've got a lot of faith, but it's not faith in God.

It's faith in their own resources, or it's faith in somebody else. It's faith in the system. It's faith in the law enforcement.

It's faith in something. It's not faith in God. Everyone has faith, because faith is nothing else but believing.

There's no law of faith that God... Who does God have to believe? How could God operate... How could God have faith-filled words? How could... What makes words faith-filled? What is faith? Is it some kind of a liquid you just... And a word is a container, and you just kind of fill it up with as much faith as you can get in there? No, faith is nothing else but believing God. A word of faith, biblically speaking, in the true sense of the word, would simply be confessing what you believe. And if it's true, a true word of faith would be believing what God said, and speaking according to that.

But it's not as though faith is some kind of stuff, and God's got a big quantity of it. That's a good thing, too, because he's subject to the law of faith, and if he didn't have a lot of faith himself, the law of faith would probably... he'd probably take a beating from the law of faith, because... I mean, what if God made the mistake of doubting something? What if God had a defect in his faith? Then the law of faith would penalize even him. Now, I hope you understand what I'm saying.

This is metaphysical. The reason that people get it mixed up with Christian science is an interesting thing. E.W. Kenyon, who brought this teaching into the church, studied in New England at a place called Emerson College.

Emerson College, by all accounts, is a hotbed of metaphysical, cultic thinking. And, interestingly enough, the main thinkers of the mind science cults, including Christian

science and so forth, came out of that same school. You see, the word of faith and Christian science come out of the same school, Emerson College, which was led by metaphysical cultists.

Now, the fact is that somehow E.W. Kenyon was able to dress up his beliefs more in Scripture than the other metaphysical cults were, so that Christians have become more gullible to accept these ideas. Metaphysical cults mean that the world is ruled by metaphysical forces and laws out there. Anyone who wants to can learn to tap into this.

This is occultic thinking all the way. That's what witchcraft is based on. That's what magic of all kinds is based on, if it's real magic, not stage magic.

The idea is that there's power out there, there's forces, there's a law of some kind, and if you know how to manipulate, if you say the right words, the right incantation, the right spell, then the power works for you. Now, I'm not saying that those who are into the word of faith are into witchcraft, I'm just saying the same spirit seems to be there. The problem with the word of faith is that God is no longer the sovereign in his universe, you are.

You're sovereign. God himself has to defer to you if you have enough faith in what you're asking. Let me read you some more quotes, just so you won't think I'm being unkind and misrepresenting the teaching.

This is also in Kenneth Hagin's book, *Right and Wrong Thinking*. Page 6, he says, Confessing it creates a reality of salvation in the human spirit. So, it's not God's Holy Spirit that creates the reality of salvation, it's confessing.

It's the phenomenon of confessing. Now, I realize he's referring to a verse that Paul wrote in Romans chapter 10, which says that if you will believe in your heart, if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved. And therefore, you've got believing, you've got confessing with your mouth.

But it does not mean that somehow confession is a device which creates salvation in you. God's Holy Spirit creates salvation and regeneration. Confession is something that you simply do because it's a normal thing to do when you believe something, to talk that way.

Whatever your words are, unless you're deliberately lying, reflect what you really believe. And if you believe that Jesus is Lord and you confess that with your mouth, you'll find yourself saved. But your confession didn't save you.

It's a sad thing that we take one verse and suddenly make one thing that's mentioned only in that verse, and it's not mentioned in any of the other verses about salvation, and make that the thing that creates salvation inside. But it only works if you've already

decided that confession is somehow the most important thing in the universe anyway. In page 7, Kenneth Hagin says, Our confession will either imprison us or set us free.

Our confession is the result of our believing, and our believing is the result of our right or wrong thinking. It is our confession of it that creates the reality, and then it becomes real in our lives. We believe it first, we confess it next, and then of course it becomes true afterwards.

It becomes a reality. It's not a reality until we've believed and confessed it. See, I believe the biblical teaching is just the opposite.

We believe and confess things because they are in fact true. They don't become true because we believe them. We believe them because they are in fact true, and they've been revealed to be true from scripture.

On page 10 of the same book, Hagin says, A promise from God's word must be confessed as a reality before it ever becomes so. According to the word, it is already so, but to be made real in your life, you must confess it to be so. Now, it seems like a book like this would have a lifespan of about two days.

The day it's published and the day someone reads it, the same day they throw it in the trash. Simply because, I'm not trying to be cruel, I'm just saying because it is so evidently not true. The promises of God must be confessed as a reality before it becomes so.

I live in the benefits of the promises of God every day. I don't spend my day confessing everything I believe. A lot of it is in there, and God answers prayers for me.

God is faithful to keep His word to me. God does all the things He says He's going to do, because He's faithful, not because I confess it, but because of who He is. Not because of what I'm doing to manipulate it.

The promises of God are true, and they're true in my life, even on days that I don't confess anything about them. I have not lived my life taking care to make positive confessions, but the promises of God are as true to me as they are to Kenneth Hagin, if they are true to him at all. I don't know his personal life, but I will say that it is certainly wrong.

It's self-evidently wrong to say that positive confession is necessary to make God's promises be faithful. It may be, in fact, appropriate for us to confess agreeably with what God has promised. I would not deny that.

If something is true, if God said it's true, and I believe it's true, and for me to confess it's true is quite appropriate. The problem is that little twist that changes something from a Christian idea to an occult idea. All the words and all the concepts are still there.

You've still got faith, you've still got confession, you've still got truth, you've still got reality. All those things exist in the Christian belief, and they exist in the Word of Faith belief. But there's this twist.

In the Christian belief, God is sovereign, He is true, He has revealed reality in His Word. Reality is what it is. It's not something else, and it's not malleable.

Reality is what God has created and has revealed. And we, therefore, because it is real, and because He's told us it's real, we believe Him and our words express our beliefs. But the little tweak there that makes this occultic rather than Christian is to say, no, the reality is entirely malleable.

The reality is not really determined. In fact, reality may not be objective at all. Because to you, your reality, because of your confession of belief, may be that you're well.

But your doctor who's giving you a checkup doesn't have that kind of belief, and therefore, to him, the reality is you're really sick. Now, you know, faith is what makes it so. So your doctor's faith that you are sick makes you in fact sick.

As far as he's concerned, in his world, in his reality, you are sick. In your reality, though, you don't believe you're sick. You confess that you're well, and you have what you say.

And therefore, your reality is that you're not sick. You may be dying. In fact, any number of doctors could give the same verdict.

But you are not sick, because you've created your own faith reality by your confession. And this is wild metaphysical nonsense, really. It makes reality not objective.

It makes reality whatever you perceive and believe and confess it to be, and nothing else but. The only trouble is not everyone in your world believes and confesses the same things. So whatever they're believing and confessing about the temperature in here is true.

But whatever you're believing, you might say it's uncomfortable in here, a little too hot. Well, that's true then. You're not saying it is to you.

You're just saying it is. That's reality. Someone else may not find it so at all, and they may confess the opposite.

Well, to them, that's true too. Now, you might say, well, Steve, your example, that's a fair thing for someone to say. It may be hot to me and not so hot to someone else.

That's not what I'm saying. We're not talking about what you perceive it to be. If you happen to enjoy a temperature of whatever it is, 70 degrees or something like that, it's not too hot to you, because your perception, your subjective judgment as to what is too hot does not place 70 degrees in that category.

Someone else who likes it 60 degrees, it feels like 70 degrees is too hot. Both of us would agree that it's 70 degrees. One person would think it's too hot, one person would think it's not too hot, depending on preference.

But none of us is creating a reality by what we believe or what we prefer. The reality remains the same. Our reaction to it differs.

Our enjoyment or lack thereof differs by our perception. And if someone says it's too hot or it's not too hot, they're really talking more about their reaction to the temperature. They don't really change the reality.

They may change the way that they react to the reality, but that's different than saying you create something by saying it. You don't create things by saying them. In his book, Words, Kenneth Hagin said, Words make us or break us.

Words heal us or make us sick. Really, I thought sometimes germs and viruses and injuries make us sick. He said, Words make us sick.

According to the Bible, Words destroy us or make us full of life, happiness, and health. I'm not aware that the Bible says that, but he says that's according to the Bible. I'd be interested in seeing a verse of Scripture that says something like that, that Words destroy us or make us full of life, happiness, and health.

And I realize he's aware, and he probably is in the context of quoting, you know, there is one that speaks as the piercing of a sword and another, the words of the wise are health, or something like that, which does not mean in any way that Words make us sick or Words make us healthy. That's a total misunderstanding of what that verse is saying. But that's what the teaching of Word of Faith says.

In fact, Hagin goes on in the same book, Words, and says, Children are the product of Words. And that's interesting. I had a different opinion about where children came from.

I suppose sometimes it may well be a result of Words, you know, but I don't think Words are the functional creative force that creates children. He says, Words heal us or make us sick, Words bless us or curse us. Learn to make Words work for you.

Learn to fill Words with power that cannot be resisted. The way you fill Words with power that cannot be resisted is to fill Words with love and faith. Hmm, okay.

Hagin says in the book Words, page 21, he keeps it in verse, I never talk sickness. I don't believe in sickness. I talk health.

Now, I remember a moment ago, I read earlier his quote, he says, Forty-five years have come and gone, I haven't had a headache, not one, but if I had one, I wouldn't tell anybody. Now, then why should we believe us when he tells us that he hasn't had a

headache in forty... I confess, I testify to you, I have not had a headache in forty-five years, and I'd say that even if I had had one. That's what he says.

He says, if I had a headache, I wouldn't tell anybody. If somebody asked me how I was feeling, I'd just say, I'm fine, thank you. I'd say the right thing.

He said, I would speak the right words, because Jesus said you'll have whatever you say. So, I mean, this is very problematic in terms of being able to verify whether this is working for anyone. I mean, because on the one hand, those who are not in the Word of Faith generally say quite freely, I'm not feeling very well today, but the Word of Faith people never say that.

They're not allowed to. Even if they're feeling badly, they'll say, I'm feeling quite fine, thank you. And they can testify, I thank God since I was saved back in 1938, I have not been sick one day of my life.

And you say, well, that's an impressive testimony. What you don't know is that they were hospitalized seven or eight times. They lost several weeks of work because they couldn't get out of bed, but they weren't sick.

Because they confessed that they were well. I mean, this is so often true. I'm not really making a caricature, I'm really stating a sober fact.

That you cannot trust the testimony of a man who says, I haven't had a headache for 45 years, and if I did, I would say the same thing, that I haven't had one. In other words, you can't trust me because I'm more committed to positive confessions than I am to telling the truth about things. Now, I mean, that in itself, if there was nothing else to undermine and to make this theology problematic, that in itself would be enough to just put it out of the realm of Christian teaching.

Because any theological system that tells you you must say a certain thing is true whether it is or not, you must always speak this way even if reality doesn't agree with it. In other words, you must lie from time to time because that's what God wants you to do. That obviously lies outside the pale of Christian teaching.

And yet, that's not just some fringe idea of the Word of Faith movement, that is the core of it. You have what you say, therefore you always must speak positive. And they say if you feel like you're sick, if you don't have any strength, if you've got pounding in your head, if you're throwing up and you've got a high fever, you really are not sick.

Don't you believe for a moment that you're sick? That is the devil deceiving you. That's sense knowledge talking. You don't want to believe sense knowledge, believe in revelation knowledge, what the Bible says.

And therefore, you cannot ever confess that you're sick because as far as they're

concerned, that's not true. You're not. You're well.

Now that's a very convenient thing for them to say because many people who have been of the Faith movement have been very sick and have even died. Hobart Freeman was a very well-known Faith teacher. He was pastor of a Faith church.

Very strong, so strong that he forbade the use of medications. He himself died sick. And it is estimated by those who have studied his church that over 90 people in his congregation died sick who could have been healed if they just followed real basic.

I mean, it's not like they need a lot of intrusive medical care, just if they had treated their sickness as if it was sickness. If they take some basic medications, treat an infection properly, and so forth. Now, I'm not a big advocate of the medical profession, believe me.

In fact, if you've heard me teach on other occasions, you might wonder whether I even believe in the medical profession. The fact of the matter is I've been very healthy. Apparently so has Kenneth Hagin, though I wouldn't know by his confession of it, but I'll tell you the truth.

I have been very healthy. I have a headache right now. A slight one.

I don't have them very often, but guess what? Even though I confessed it, I expect it to go away pretty soon. And I'm not going to stop confessing. I'm not going to confess that I don't have it, and yet it's going to go away just as fast.

Why am I not confessing that it's gone as it would go away if I confessed that it was gone? I'll guarantee you that. I've lived long enough and tried this stuff out enough to know that that's the case. I don't have any fear that I'll be proven wrong by experience or scripture.

But there have been people who've died, a lot of people who've died. And arguably they could have lived if they had acknowledged that they were sick and done the basic things that people know to do to take care of an illness. But they didn't believe in it.

They didn't believe they were sick. They confessed they were well. And Hobart Freeman himself, who led these people to their graves, himself died a very sick man, but not confessing it.

So, I mean, it's very convenient for the Word of Faith. Let's face it, the Word of Faith teaching could not ever survive a year in the body of Christ. No one would believe it unless it had this little angle.

The angle is, yes, all evidence to the contrary, you are well. And if you believe the evidence, you believe in the devil. If you look at your symptoms, you are deceived by the

devil.

Here's what E.W. Kenyon said in his book, Jesus the Healer. He said, confession always goes ahead of healing. Not with me.

I've been healed many times without confession. But he says it always does. It's a law of the universe.

It's a metaphysical law. Confession always comes before healing. Is there anyone here who's ever been sick and is not sick at the moment? Raise your hand.

Okay. So, you've been healed, I presume. Did any of you ever get healed without first confessing that you were healed? Okay, I've been... Frankly, to tell you the truth, the times I confessed I was healed, I didn't get healed.

But I've been healed many, many times. I've recovered from many sicknesses over the course of my life without ever confessing it. That in itself should make you wonder about the responsible nature of those people who say what this granddaddy of the Word of Faith movement, the fountainhead of it, his writings say.

Kenyon. He said, confession always goes ahead of healing. Don't watch symptoms.

Watch the Word. And be sure your confession is bold and vigorous. Don't listen to people.

Act on the Word. Be a doer of the Word. It is God speaking.

You are healed. The Word says you are. Don't listen to the senses.

Give the Word its place. God cannot lie. Now, the sad thing about that paragraph is that about every other sentence is true.

Mixed in with sentences that are not. God cannot lie. I agree with that.

I agree God can't lie. You know, act on the Word. Be a doer of the Word.

I agree with that. That's a good sentence. Give the Word its place.

You know, I mean, don't listen to people. Sometimes that's good advice. But the problem is, it's interspersed with error.

And even the true statements are made false by the errors that set them into a context of falsehood. That, you know, you are well. You have been healed.

Therefore, believe that. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Don't let your symptoms tell you otherwise.

Don't believe that you're sick. Say you're well. Make your confession bold and vigorous.

Also, Kenneth Hagen, the disciple of E.W. Kenyon, in his book *Real Faith*, said on page 13, Real faith in God, heart faith, believes the Word of God regardless of what the physical evidences may be. A person seeking healing should look to God's Word, not to his symptoms. Well, I mean, that sounds very commendable.

But what it's really saying is your symptoms are not a reliable source of information. And if you have symptoms, what he's saying is the acknowledgement of symptoms is a de facto rejection of the Word of God. Because according to him, the Bible says you don't have any symptoms.

The Bible says you don't have any sickness. The Bible says you were healed 2,000 years ago. Don't confess that God is going to heal you.

That's not faith, they say. Confess you have been healed, and that 2,000 years ago. You are well now.

You have to believe that. And if you don't believe that, then you'll stay sick. Well, unfortunately, that simply isn't true to experience.

And notwithstanding all their protestations to the contrary, it is not true to the Scripture. We will have three more lectures in this series, and here's what we'll be covering. We'll be talking about whether or not the redemption of the cross, the atonement, purchased our healing.

This is widely held to be so in full gospel circles. Jesus purchased our healing. Healing is in the atonement.

This is even held among non-full gospel people sometimes. We'll look at the Scriptures on that. Then we're going to talk about the issue of whether the Bible offers us healing on demand.

That is, whether God always wants to heal, and now. Whether the Bible actually tells us we are healed and should not settle for sickness. We'll talk about that.

So we'll have two lectures about healing. And then our final lecture will be about prosperity. There's a lot of emphasis on prosperity here, too, because poverty and sickness are two things that they say we're redeemed from.

And they don't want to be sick, and they don't want to be poor. And so we'll talk about the prosperity doctrine, as it's sometimes called, in our final lecture. So I just want you to be acquainted.

This lecture is just to let you know what is taught in the Word of Faith teaching. And I only gave you a little bit of reason why I doubt it. But it'll be in the next lectures that we

go scripturally into the teaching of the Scripture on these subjects.

And we'll see that it's different than what is taught in these Word of Faith books and broadcasts. Okay, we'll stop there.