

Miracles:

Your Impossible is Possible!



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Miracles: Your Impossible Is Possible

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Author's Note

The miracles described in this book really happened. I don't write that to convince you. Either you will believe, or you won't. I want you to know upfront that I write fiction novels, and this is not one of those. Occasionally, the supernatural things that have happened over the decades make a cameo appearance in my novels. This is on purpose to stir up hunger in this hurting world for the amazing power of God.

This book is not an in-depth study or theological dissertation about miracles. It is an account of the things my loving Father did for me.

Gary

Contents

Preface: Telling a Story

Chapter 1: A Miracle

Chapter 2: Ears to Hear (Gary)

Chapter 3: Church Mice (LeeAnne)

Chapter 4: The Light Switch (Gary)

Chapter 5: Money from Heaven (LeeAnne)

Chapter 6: Open Womb (Gary)

Chapter 7: Please, Not My Baby (LeeAnne)

Chapter 8: When Things Collide (Gary)

Chapter 9: Heaven (LeeAnne)

Chapter 10: Angel Transport (Gary)

Chapter 11: Angels (LeeAnne)

Chapter 12: A House for Us (Gary)

Chapter 13: Taking Miracles to the Street (LeeAnne)

Chapter 14: I Am the Whoever (Gary)

Chapter 15: My Dream for You (Gary)

Conclusion (LeeAnne)

Preface

Telling a Story

While we were still debating whether we should put our miraculous experiences down on paper, my wife and I were visiting some of her relatives in California. They are lovely Christian people. I had met some of them decades before, and some were new to me.

A bunch of the family was together for Easter dinner, and we chose to eat outside so we could enjoy the springtime weather. One of the cousins and his wife joined us at the picnic table. As we ate delicious, barbecued salmon and a beef roast done on the rotisserie, we talked about anything and everything.

The women happened to relate that she lost a pair of earrings and found them under the fridge some months later. Then LeeAnne told how God supernaturally returned an earring that she lost for more than a year. You could see her cousin and his wife pull back from us as if my wife had just spoken some great profanity. Spiritually, it was as if they put up their fingers to make the sign of the cross and then closed the door to hearing anything else we had to say.

I get it. Much of the church is terrified there might be more to Christianity than what they've been taught, or perhaps there is more than what they are walking in. The previous Easter, we sat in a church service where the pastor said, "The Easter service is the hardest sermon to preach. At Easter, I ask you to believe the impossible. At Easter, I ask you to believe that a dead person could be alive again."

As a former pastor, a believer in Jesus, and as a person who has seen thousands of miracles, I wanted to jump to my feet and volunteer to preach about the amazing power of God. I almost did. However, it was not my place, and the people in that church were probably not ready to hear.

When my father was barely into his fifties, the doctors diagnosed him with leukemia, and gave him a maximum of 5 years to live. The elders of his church got together for a healing service according to the scripture in James 4:13 where it says their prayers of faith will heal the sick. I felt sick hearing them pray. My wife and I wept openly, not because my father had cancer, but because they had no faith.

One of the elders prayed, “And Lord, be with the family when he is gone.” Like many Christians, the elders of that church believed that God pretty much abandons us to the ravages of this world—and that when we die, we go to heaven where everything is sunshine and happiness. Hang on to the end and hope for the rapture.

That church had been my church, too, so I’d heard the teaching that God sends sickness to test us or to punish us. Perhaps just because we live in this world, or maybe because of genetics, or just bad luck. We pray for miracles but know it is up to the doctors to save us.

It baffled me that God sends sickness to teach us something, yet in all the years I’d seen people struggle with illness, not one of them could tell me what God taught them. Besides, we take pills or have surgery to get better—to try to undo the sickness God sent us. We seek medical help, so we don’t have to learn whatever God wants to teach us. I sure I’m not the first person to say I don’t comprehend this logic in this.

Why would God, the Creator of the Universe, tell the elders to pray for miracles if there were no such things? Although my father was not cured of cancer, he lived for another twenty years after that prayer service. I like to believe he outlived every expectation because my Father in heaven loves to show his power. As an aside, every one of the men that prayed for my father that day, died before he did, many of them not as old as he was.

Now are you ready to hear the story that had my wife’s cousin recoil?

A Miracle

Gary

My beautiful wife, LeeAnne, had a favorite pair of gold-hoop earrings that she wore for special occasions. They were a gift to her. One evening she came home from ministering at a Women's Aglow meeting to discover she had an earring only in one ear. We searched the car, the sidewalk from the car to the house, and all through her clothes. She even emptied her purse onto the bed and searched through it with the off chance the earring fell into it. She turned her Bible upside down and flipped through the pages.

The earring was gone. And the meeting was at a hotel, so it was not like LeeAnne could look in the lost and found the next Sunday. She did phone the hotel, but no one had turned in an earring. Because it had sentimental value, and because she thought we might someday collect enough gold pieces to take them to a jeweler to craft some new jewelry, LeeAnne kept the single earring in her jewelry box.

Over a year later, we were having Bible study at our house. Almost twenty people were sitting in our living room, listening to Malcolm Smith's *The Blood Covenant* about how we are in covenant with the Almighty God and how he is much more than just someone we meet when we die. Suddenly, about eighteen inches above LeeAnne's Bible, an earring appeared in the air. It hung there for a moment as if held by an invisible hand, then it dropped with a thud onto the open pages of her Bible. Not everyone saw it in the air, but everyone heard it fall.

LeeAnne whooped and hollered, "It's my earring. It's my earring." She was rejoicing as she ran down the hall to our bedroom where she kept her jewelry case. Her smile was bigger than the day I asked her to marry me as she came back a few moments later with an earring in each hand. She went person to person, showing the earring she lost, and God returned to her.

So why would Bible-believing, church-going people recoil at hearing this story? Perhaps because of these beliefs:

- Miracles can't happen because they are impossible.
- God is not concerned with things like lost earrings.
- Miracles happened to prove Jesus was the Son of God and are not necessary today because we are to believe by faith.
- God doesn't intervene in our lives.
- I've never seen a miracle, so miracles don't happen.

Miracles can't happen because they are impossible.

A miracle is a too-good-to-be-true, impossible event that cannot be explained by laws of nature, human reasoning, or chance. Therefore, miracles reveal the hand of God.

God is not concerned with things like lost earrings.

Jesus told a story about a shepherd who lost one sheep, left the ninety-nine other sheep, and hunted for the lost one. He rejoiced when he found it. In the same chapter of the Bible, Luke 15, Jesus also tells a story about a woman who lost a coin, searched diligently for it, and rejoiced when she found it.

Now people from traditional religious upbringing might say, "The sheep and the coin were not really lost. These are just stories Jesus told to show that God searches for his lost children. It wasn't about lost things." Here is what I would answer: in 2 Kings 6, some men were cutting down trees by the Jordan River and an ax head flew off the handle and landed in the river. The man who lost it was very upset because he had borrowed the ax. And in those days, a metal ax head was a very expensive commodity. Elisha the prophet cut a piece of wood, threw it in the river and the ax head floated. (Sounds a bit like an earring floating in the air.) He told the man who lost it to pick it up. God was concerned enough about a lost thing to return it supernaturally.

Miracles happened to prove Jesus was the Son of God and are not necessary today because we are to believe by faith.

The miracles Jesus did were to show an unbelieving world that God loves them absolutely. Our Father sent Jesus to the world to perform the biggest miracle, to make a way for lost people to find him. My argument is the second part of the objection, that miracles are not necessary today because we have faith. There is nothing in the world that strengthens our faith and reveals the personal love God has for us than seeing God do supernatural things for us. God wants you to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that he loves you. Miracles don't nullify faith; they build it.

God doesn't intervene in our lives.

What a sad concept. Without meaning to sound heretical, what is the point of a God who doesn't help, doesn't answer prayer, and doesn't care? We might as well pray to a golden calf. The scriptures are full of stories of God doing miraculous things like water from a rock for people dying of thirst (Exodus 17) and splitting the Red Sea so the Israelites could escape an army that was pursuing them (Exodus 14). What do you think about never-ending oil poured out from a jar (2 Kings 4) or a handful of flour that never diminished through years of famine (1 Kings 17)? The salvation message is that God steps into our lives and changes everything.

I've never seen a miracle, so miracles don't happen.

Unbelief is often based on personal experience or lack thereof. When people ask God for a miracle and it doesn't happen, they may think miracles never happen. I assure you that our Heavenly Father wants to show you the impossible is possible. He wants you to know that you are so deeply loved and that he is concerned with the smallest details in your life. He is breaking into your unbelief to prove it. You will see miracles!

Ears to Hear

Gary

I went to a miracle-healing meeting when I was a teen. This meeting was not part of the church or denomination that I attended. In fact, we were told that the so-called evangelists, the Happy Hunters, were doing the Devil's work. I went anyway. Why? Because I was hungry for more of God than I had experienced.

A couple of things happened that night. I saw many people claim to be healed right there at the service. I had no way of knowing if they were actually healed or not or whether it was some sort of mass hypnosis. However, no one had ever claimed to be healed in all the years I had attended my church.

Charles Hunter asked everyone who had back problems to stand. I had often gone to chiropractors, so I stood. He said, "God is healing you right now. Receive it." I never felt any different, but my faith was built up, thinking that God might intervene in my life supernaturally.

The next morning, I was driving across the Old Man River valley to the University of Lethbridge, and my car got a flat tire. I pulled over to the shoulder right at the bottom of the hill, took the jack out of the trunk and tossed the spare on the ground. Then I shook my fist at God. "Where are you, God?" I screamed.

He never answered but, at that moment, I realized that as much as I had a bump up in faith the night before, seeing people claim they were healed, at the first sign of adversity, my faith was in the toilet. I was scarcely different from an unbeliever. Despite years of church, I barely believed that God loved me—or perhaps I believed God barely loved me.

However, seeing the miracles shook me to the core. Seeing the miraculous forced me to look at my own beliefs about God, who I was in his eyes, and what he wanted to do if only I was willing. Standing on the shoulder of the road as cars sped by, I realized if I really stretched my faith, I might believe that God would do something good for someone else, perhaps even a miracle. I doubted that He would do anything for me, although I hoped he would.

With the tire iron in my hand, I prayed, “Father, help my unbelief. Reveal yourself to me.”

If miracles are a foreign concept to you like they were to me, then I encourage you to pray this prayer:

Heavenly Father, you sent Jesus so that I could have my sins forgiven and be part of your family. I want to know what it is like to be your child. I admit my belief level is low, and I ask you to reveal yourself to me including through signs, wonders, and miracles.

So, in case you are wondering, many people who attended the Hunter’s healing service went to their doctors in the following weeks to find that they were 100 percent cured. This included a woman from my church who had been diagnosed with terminal cancer some months earlier. Although many of the church people were happy for her, many also wondered how long the miracle would last—as if it might wear off after a day or two. Others accused her of going to the Devil for help. But no one could convince her that the Devil wanted her healed, and no one could convince her that God did not love her.

As for me? I never noticed for months, but I never had a backache. You don’t notice something you don’t have. My back was healed.

I started this book with a simple story about an earring. Here are two stories related to that one, but first I need to give you some background. I sometimes find bits of gold like a piece of a broken

necklace or a single gold earring. I was gathering these odds and ends together, and LeeAnne threw in a few pieces of old gold jewelry that she never wore anymore, so eventually we could have a jeweler melt them down and make something.

Our anniversary was coming up, and LeeAnne had no idea that I had gathered up about a fair number of gold pieces over several years. When she was out one day, I took the assortment of broken gold jewelry out of the bag I was using to collect it and looked at each piece to make sure they were solid gold, not just gold-plated. I pulled a tissue from my pocket and put the solid gold pieces into it and the garbage pieces back into the bag and threw them into the trash.

I had just finished sorting when I heard LeeAnne come home, so I left the gold where it was on a cupboard in the family room in the basement and ran up to meet her. I did not want to let her know what I was up to, and I planned to go down and put the gold away after she was in.

The next day was garbage-pickup day, and I heard the garbage truck coming down our street, so I grabbed a black garbage bag and ran through the house emptying the garbage cans. I started by emptying the kitchen trash, then ran through the upstairs madly emptying garbage pails into the trash bag. Then I ran down to the basement bathroom. As I stepped out of the bathroom after collecting the garbage, I looked out the window and saw the garbage truck at the neighbor's house.

It was then that I noticed a crumpled-up tissue on the shelf. I wondered why someone hadn't put it in the garbage when they were done with it, and I swept it into the trash bag. I ran up the stairs and out the door and waved for the garbage man to stop. He did and I tossed the bag right into his truck. He waited as I ran back to the trash bin beside the house to bring the remaining bags of garbage to the street.

Two days later, I decided I would make a trip down to the jeweler with the gold and went to the cupboard in my workbench where I had stored it. The cupboard was empty. Suddenly I realized what I had done. The gold I had gathered for six years was gone. I felt sick.

That evening I took out the kitchen trash and, when I lifted the lid to the garbage bin, I saw a black garbage bag. This couldn't be possible because I had carried all the trash bags out to the street. I gave my head a shake, but the garbage bag was still there. I grabbed it, tore the top open and dumped it out onto the sidewalk. There, amidst the garbage I had gathered up as the truck was coming down the street, I found a crumpled-up tissue with the gold still inside it.

I had thrown this very bag of trash through the air and saw it land in the truck, but God brought it back. The jeweler made some custom gold-nugget earrings and a pendant for LeeAnne out of the three ounces of gold. I never look at them without being amazed at the goodness of my Father.

Did I deserve to lose the gold? Yes, I was stupid. It was my fault entirely for putting it into a crumpled tissue to start with, and my fault for not remembering that I put the tissue on the cupboard. It was my fault for sweeping it into the trash without looking at it.

If God treated us according to what we deserve, then we would all be doomed. But Jesus took the punishment of our sins—and our stupidity. The full punishment was on him, so we can be fully righteous. More than that, Father God wants to bless us, and his blessing is not dependent on whether we deserve it—or on how smart we are.

Do you want to move from a realm where you've heard about miracles somewhere in a foreign country to where miracles happen to you? Then I'd suggest that you pray the following prayer. Feel free to use your own words. This is not a magic formula or five steps to your miracle.

Father, it is wonderful that you are my Father. Thank you that your blessings are not based on how much I deserve them. Thank you that your blessings are because you love to give to me more than you love to receive from me. Thank you that I am worthy because of Jesus.

You might ask, “Why would God do miracles around earrings?” Perhaps it is because earrings have to do with the ears. Ears are about listening and hearing what God has to say. Maybe, because it made God happy.

Miracles, signs, and wonders are not always what you might expect. They aren’t churchy. Acts chapter 8 says that Philip did “great signs and wonders.” Acts 19 says that Paul performed “extraordinary miracles.” I think most people would be astounded by ordinary miracles and ordinary signs and wonders.

Here is something that happened where we were totally blown away. LeeAnne was given a set of nice gold-hoop earrings as a gift from a person who was a new friend, and who had come to our church recently. It was odd that she gave LeeAnne a gift as we did not know her well, but LeeAnne received them as a blessing from God.

LeeAnne was wearing those earrings the night we went out to a fancy restaurant to celebrate our anniversary. After we finished eating the main course, and before the dessert came, I pulled a gift out of my pocket and gave it to LeeAnne. It was the earrings and pendant made from the found gold, the gold that God had miraculously returned. The earrings and matching pendant are rather impressive gold nuggets, and I would hate to have to pay for them at today’s gold prices.

LeeAnne took off the gold hoops, took the new earrings and pendant out of the jeweler’s box, and put the gold-nugget earrings in her ears. She put the pendant around her neck. Then she put the gold hoops she had been wearing into the box on the table and closed the lid. Over

dessert, I told her the miracle of the lost and returned gold, and we rejoiced together at the goodness of a loving Heavenly Father.

Then we talked about how our Heavenly Father's refining fire burns the impurities out of our lives like the refining fire necessary to turn the gold I had found into gold that would be usable. We prayed together that the Lord would burn out of our lives anything that was not supposed to be there, including any gift that might have been given to us with ulterior motives.

After we paid for the meal and were ready to leave, LeeAnne reached for the jewelry box, flipped open the lid to have a look at the hoops, and they were gone. Even though we had never opened the lid since LeeAnne put them, or moved the box, or left it unattended, the earrings were gone. We searched the table, the seat, and the floor. The waitress came and helped look, and the next day the restaurant took the bench-style seat apart in case, somehow, the earrings had fallen in behind the seat. They were never found.

Perhaps one of the miracles you need is for our Father to remove some things from your life. Then pray:

Father God, the way I've understood how you work has kept me in a box. I admit that I've tried to keep you in a box. Burn out of me wrong beliefs, thought patterns, and bad teaching. Remove the bad from my life and put your gold in my heart.

Church Mice

LeeAnne

When Gary and I were first married, we were poorer than church mice. In those days, it was not unusual for couples to get married young, long before they had careers on the way, or the down payment saved up for a house, or a new car. It was also a time when, once you moved out of your parent's house, you were on your own. You did not look to your parents for help, and it was rare that they would offer any. It was a time to grow up fast.

We were one of those couples. We were madly in love, happy to be together, and pretty much penniless. Gary was still in university, and I was working a couple of jobs to keep us afloat.

Shortly after we were married, I was trying to finish a dress I was sewing, so I could wear it to church the next day. When I got to the last seam on the sleeve, I realized I didn't have enough thread to finish. It was Saturday evening, and the stores were closed. We lived in West Lethbridge, and there were no convenience stores close by. And even if we drove across the river, it was doubtful that a convenience store would have the color thread I needed.

I sewed until there was only one inch of thread between the needle and the cloth, just barely enough to turn the needle around, but I still had a few inches of the sleeve left to sew. I said, "Gary, pray that this thread will grow, so I can finish this sleeve."

Even as I write these words, I am amazed that I asked. You must realize that I didn't come from a home where God stepped into our world and did things. The closest thing I had ever seen to a miracle was the day Gary asked me to be his wife.

Perhaps the following story will show you what my Christian upbringing was like. During the time Gary and I were engaged, a

person was hired at the nursing home where I worked, and I was assigned to train her. She caused trouble at work, and she repeatedly hit on Gary when he came to pick me up after my shift. She even told him to phone her and gave him her number right in front of me.

When Gary took me home to my parents' place that night, my father saw that I was upset, so I explained the bad work situation to him. He said something like this, "I don't know what can be done. You could ask your employer to assign this woman somewhere else. If that doesn't work, you might have to ask to be reassigned."

Gary laughed out loud, and said, "Don't worry. I prayed about it." He spoke with confidence as if it was already settled.

"Prayer does not work like that," my father replied, condescendingly.

Then he launched into a thirty-minute-long theological explanation that I had heard my times. The gist of it was this, God hears your request and adds it to the list of everything else you've prayed. Then he compares your request with the requests of everyone else in the world (in case there are conflicts). Then he prioritizes all the prayers in the world. Oh yes, he also examines your life to see how much Bible reading, church going, giving, and praying you've done to see if you are worthy—all this, presupposing there is no sin in your life. Even one bad thought, and you could be assured that your prayer would not get past the ceiling.

My fiancé replied, "Wow. I never knew prayer was that complicated. Usually, I just ask, and God does it."

After Gary left, my father told me, "Gary has a lot of growing up to do spiritually."

The funny thing was, the next day when I got to work, the new person had been fired. And it had nothing to do with me going to my boss about her.

So, I was holding a needle in one hand and my nearly finished dress in the other hand with just enough thread to turn the needle around. You'll notice that I didn't ask for the thread to grow. I didn't think God would answer me but, if he answered anyone, it would be Gary.

Gary didn't beg or plead. He didn't sound doubtful or tell me to wear something else and finish the dress for next Sunday. He just simply asked God for the thread to grow so I could finish.

Just the tiniest bit of thread was through the eye of the needle, and I was pinching it tight as I pushed the needle through the cloth. Then I had just enough thread to turn the needle around. I did it again, and again and again. I think my hands were shaking after the fourth turn around because it had moved passed the explanation that I was bunching up the cloth or that there was more thread left than I had originally thought.

Gary says my eyes were as big as saucers as I sewed inch after inch. When I reached the end, there was barely enough thread to turn the needle around to tie the knot. I wore the miracle dress to church the next day, absolutely blown away that the God who made the entire universe cared that I had enough thread to finish my dress.

A common saying is, "Seeing is believing." It isn't true. When you see the impossible happen, it does weird things to your head. Your head says, "I see that." At the same time, your head says, "That is not possible, so I can't be seeing that."

Growing thread is a very little thing, yet I chose to believe, and it built my faith tremendously. I think many people see miracles, but their doubt takes over. Then they don't give God credit, and they don't expect more. In case I'm talking about your level of faith, pray:

*Thanks Father that nothing is impossible, whether small or great.
Open my eyes to see the miracles you do for me.*

We lived in an apartment on the west end of Lethbridge, right across from a lake. It was a popular place for people to walk or fish. In the winter, people would go there to skate, so people would spend time at the lake and then pop in on us. Many arrived at our door right around supper time. This happened so often, we joked that we should eat supper at the lake and save people the walk.

One of the first people to come by our apartment was a woman I had gotten to know through work. I had just taken spaghetti and sauce off the stove and was about to dish it up when the buzzer for the apartment rang. Of course, I invited her to stay for supper.

Gary was a big eater in those days, and I hadn't cooked a lot of pasta so, rather than give everyone a little bit, I decided that I would not have any supper. I dished spaghetti for the woman, then for Gary, but there was still spaghetti in the pot, so I had some, too. Our rather plump visitor was a big eater, and both she and Gary had seconds. And there was still spaghetti in the pot.

From that time on, we had food grow so often that, to this day, we consider it normal. Do you know how we could have stopped the spaghetti miracle? We could have refused to answer the buzzer. We could have invited the woman in for a quick visit then hurried her out the door without offering her supper. If we had the finances, we could have run out to buy fried chicken. You see, many people shut God out. They stop the miraculous.

When we first moved into the apartment, we had prayed, "God, our home is open to whoever you bring by." So, when the Lord brought people, we tried to treat each one as his beloved child. Our empty wallets taught us to depend on God's supply.

A few years after the first time we saw food grow, we were living in a tiny starter home. One Sunday after church, an assortment of people followed us home for Sunday dinner. I had put a chicken in the oven

before we left for church, and we ended up with eight people crowded around our table. When everyone was done eating the main course, and knowing that the food had multiplied, I asked, “Who had a chicken drumstick?”

Five people said they did. “Everyone, please show me the bones,” I asked. Five people held up leg bones.

“That must have been one funny-looking chicken,” I exclaimed. Then I explained the miracle and showed the single chicken carcass.

Another time I put a little meat pie in the oven. It was about seven inches round in a tinfoil pan and was only meant to feed our little family. Our boys were four and two years old at the time. Gary was peeling potatoes for some mashed potatoes to go with the meat pie and asked, “LeeAnne, how many I should peel?”

I answered, “I’m on a diet so I’m not having any, and the boys won’t each much. Only peel two.”

Well, you know two potatoes don’t make a lot of mashed potatoes. I had just finished mashing them when Bill E., a friend from Coutts, Alberta, knocked at the door asking if he could stay for the night, so we invited him in. I was just about to dish up the food when two of my brothers were at the door, wondering if they could come in for supper. My parents were away traveling, so my brothers had been fending for themselves.

Gary’s eyebrows went up when I served up the first plate as there were as many mashed potatoes on the plate as there had been in the pot, and the piece of meat pie on the plate was a quarter of the pie. The second plate I served looked just the same. Then Gary realized that it was the “fish and loaves” miracle again at our house.

Everyone ate as much as they wanted. My brothers had seconds of everything, but at the end of the meal, there were still as many potatoes

in the pot as Gary had mashed. I put the empty pie tin on the table and told Bill and my brothers I had only cooked one meat pie. It was very funny to watch everyone trying to figure out how you could possibly get more than four quarter-pie size pieces out of one pie.

Over the years, we taught many people to expect miracles. One time, we had a single mom and her two teenage kids staying with us for a couple of months. They were moving out of Lethbridge about the same time we were moving, and they were crashing at our house to save money. The teenage son was into body building and wanted a special diet of high-carb food, not the meat and vegetables I had prepared. His mother insisted I cook a separate meal for him.

I admit I felt ticked. We opened our home to them, and they were not contributing anything toward the cost of keeping them. And now they demanded a special diet. But I relented and put on a pot of pasta for Ryan while everyone else waited to eat.

His mother looked at the noodles rolling in the boiling water and said, “You did not make nearly enough. Ryan can eat four times that amount.” The son agreed.

But I refused to make any more. I drained the pasta, put the penne noodles into a small serving bowl. It was about two soup-bowls worth of noodles. We had one small can of pasta sauce that wasn’t packed for the move, and I opened and microwaved it when the pasta was almost done. I poured the sauce on top of the noodles. Smiling graciously, I said, “If you eat all of this, I’ll make you some more.”

The mother answered, “You should put the water on to boil now. He’ll gobble that down in a minute.”

The moment Gary finished saying grace for the meal, Ryan started wolfing back the pasta to show how much and how fast he could eat, and to prove how wrong I was for not cooking more.

But the amount of pasta in the bowl did not go down. He ate for half an hour, and it looked like he had not touched his food. When he could not hold another bite he asked, “Can I save this for later?”

He pulled the bowl out of the fridge the next day and ate until he could not hold another bite, but still the amount of pasta in the bowl did not go down. The day after that, I put the bowl of pasta at his place at the table, and he tried again to empty the bowl, with the same result. The following day he ate about six bites, set the fork down and admitted, “No matter how much I eat, the bowl stays full. I’m sick of pasta.” I threw the rest out.

Nothing is impossible with God. We’ve probably all heard people say it, but it takes a bit to get your head around it. When extras show up at our house, we just smile and say, “Looks like we’re feeding the 5,000.” Then the food always grows.

During the same time, just a few days before we moved, I had gone to the garden and picked two hands full of lettuce, a pepper, some chives, a few tomatoes, and a couple of carrots for a salad. I washed and cut the vegetables and put them in the only serving bowl that wasn’t packed, the same one in fact that held pasta for so many days. I asked Shelly, the single mom, to toss the salad while I got the rest of the meal put together.

She tried to mix the salad, but pieces fell out onto counter. “Do you have a bigger bowl?” she asked. “I’ll make a mess if I try to toss the salad in this small bowl.”

The only large bowl I had not packed was the green thirty-two-cup Tupperware bowl I use for kneading bread dough. I had not packed that one as I had just made loaves of bread to help feed everyone. I set the bowl on the counter beside the four-cup serving bowl. Shelly laughed at how ridiculous it was to use such a big bowl and then tipped

the salad bowl upside down to empty it into the bread-kneading bowl. Instantly the thirty-two-cup Tupperware bowl was filled to the top.

Shelly screamed as she jumped back, shocked. Her mouth hung open, and her eyes bulged. Then she started shouting, “It’s a miracle. It’s a miracle.”

Then, I think, some doubts crept in. Perhaps she thought that the salad in the small bowl was packed in tight, and now it was fluffed up with lots of air space, because Shelly put her hand on top of the greens and gently tried to push the salad down. It did not squish.

She used a couple of wooded spoons to toss it, and pieces of salad spilled over onto the counter.

I could tell you many, many more times when food grew in the pot or on the plate. I often say, “Food multiplying should be the first miracle in any home.” In case you think multiplying food is limited to my house and in seemingly small amounts, keep reading.

Some years before the growing salad, we attended an interdenominational prayer group in Lethbridge. At that time, the People of Praise were meeting on Wednesday nights in the basement of St. Patrick’s church, close to downtown. We were having a potluck supper and, as it sometimes happens, very few people brought food.

A couple of hundred people came for the event, and all the food people brought fit onto a single 6-foot by 3-foot table. Perhaps there were seven crockpots, a bag of buns, and a small tray of deli meat. To make matters worse, word had gotten out on the street that there was a free meal at St. Pat’s, and about 50 homeless people showed up.

Will, the person in charge of the meeting, looked really worried. He came to Gary and me wringing his hands and asked, “What can we do? We can’t possibly feed all these people.”

We answered with confidence, “There is lots of food. God will supply.”

With effort, Will got everyone quiet and prayed what I call the world’s most pathetic prayer. It went something like this, “God you know there is hardly any food, and, well, I pray that the people at the front of the line will think about the people that are coming behind them so that at least everyone will get a taste. Thank you for the little food we have.”

When he said “amen,” the homeless people stampeded their way to the front, pushing people out of the way, and then piling their plates high with food. The more Will protested, the more they grabbed. Tears ran down Will’s cheeks as many people behind the homeless people piled their plates high, too, making sure they got their share.

Gary and I were not watching the amount of food people were taking. We were watching the miracle.

The whole long line of people went by the food table, and everyone took as much as they wanted. By the time the last people in line loaded their plates with food, people started lining up behind them for second helpings. And many went back for thirds. The food in the pots never went down, and we never ran out of buns. At the end of the meal, Will gave away food. That day, he became a firm believer in miracles and many times afterward saw God work outside the normal order of things.

Do you know situations where miracles would make a difference? Then pray this pray,

Father, I want you to show up big in my life and in the lives of those around me.

The Light Switch

Gary

Jesus announced that he is the light of the world, and his followers do not walk in darkness (John 8:12). However, over the years, LeeAnne and I have seen our share of dark times and scary places. Of course, you can always find someone who is much worse off, but that is little comfort when it feels like God has abandoned you.

That is one of the funny things about miracles; seeing one, or a handful, or a thousand doesn't mean that people's lies don't hurt you. When friends betray you, it still tears your heart. When ministries and ministers are not what they claim to be, your soul still feels damaged.

In the midst of heartache, I have often prayed, "Lord have mercy on us." I've heard preachers say that it is wrong to ask God to be merciful because God is Mercy. But then, that would mean it is wrong to ask for healing because God is the Healer and wrong to ask for forgiveness because he is the God who forgives, and so on. I've heard it taught that, instead of asking, I am supposed to thank God for the things I need because he is the Supplier.

I rather see myself as a baby bird with its mouth open, screeching as loudly as it can so that it will get fed. Psalm 81:10 uses this imagery where it tells us to open our mouth wide, and God will fill it. So, I am not silently waiting for the food to drop down my gullet and then chirp my thanks. I know I am helpless without the Father's intervention in my life, so I ask and keep on asking, often. I'm not only helpless, I'm doomed without his intervention.

And our God wants to intervene. He is my loving Father, more concerned about my wellbeing than I am. He is my Papa-Eagle, bringing more than enough. Even before I know I am in need, the answer is already on the way, so I ask with confidence. I long to see

his face, and he longs to see me recognize his goodness and love. Therefore, I am overflowing with gratitude.

Not many years after we were married, LeeAnne and I were visiting my aunt and uncle in Creston, British Columbia. My relatives did not live in the town but on a farm half-way up the mountain. It was a beautiful, cloudless summer evening, and the sun had been down for over an hour. It was a lovely night for a walk, so we borrowed a flashlight and walked up the country road toward the mountain peak. It was a dead-end road, there was no traffic, and it was pitch black.

It was a new moon, so there was little light to see by, but the stars were spectacular. We were talking about the future and about what things we hoped God had in store for us, when suddenly the whole sky lit up. It turned as white as snow. Our first thought? “Jesus is coming back.”

I’ve seen shooting stars, and this was not one of those. I’ve seen meteors fall so close that I watched the ball of fire fall into the trees a half mile from where I stood. I know how they throw light and make long shadows. But this was nothing like that. It was like God peeled the sky back, and the light of heaven filled the earth. The light did not just come from above like a giant spotlight shining down on us. It came from everywhere.

We looked around, and there were no shadows. None. The trees were perfectly exposed with no shadows on the ground and no shadows between branches. Our own bodies did not leave shadows. The mountain valleys were not in the shade. We were up on the mountainside, so we had a spectacular view of Creston valley below us and mountains in the distance, and there was no haze or dust or fog. Everything was clearer than we had ever seen it before or since. There was nothing hidden in the entire world.

We stood there expecting the trumpet of the Lord to sound and for us to be caught up into the air to meet Jesus face to face. Then everything

went black. Overwhelmingly dark. Disappointingly dark. It took our eyes a few minutes to adjust, and our flashlight beam looked pathetic as we walked the twenty minutes back to my uncle's house.

We asked my relatives what they thought of the light, but they hadn't seen anything. Believe me, you could not have missed it even if you were indoors. Do you know what it is like to have a bright flash of lightning, so bright that even if you are indoors, you see it? This was a thousand times brighter than that, and it lasted for an entire minute.

We have found many scriptures about light, but I'm not trying to put this story into a scriptural box. To us it meant that nothing is hidden from our Father. Nothing takes him by surprise: not sickness, not bad news, not anything in our lives. My spirituality and my faith are like a pathetic flashlight beam on a dark mountain road. I don't know what lies ahead, but I know Someone who does.

An interesting thing about the light that night is that we didn't feel frightened or condemned. We weren't busy repenting or even praying. We were not running to find a bush to hide under. We felt the presence of God yet didn't feel unholy or unworthy. We had a wonderful expectation of good.

LeeAnne said afterward, "Heaven was cheering because someone on earth got a glimpse of the Light of heaven."

Is this the kind of walk you want? Are you ready for God to show up anytime, anywhere? Then invite Him.

Father, thank you that nothing is hidden from you. Thanks that I don't need to be ashamed or afraid because Jesus paid the full price for my sin. So, I welcome you to show up anytime anywhere in my life.

Money from Heaven

LeeAnne

Miracles are happening all around us every day. God is waiting for us to take our eyes off what we don't have and to thank Him for the daily miracles. As we do, the miracles become more and more obvious.

When I was pregnant with our first child, Gary broke his arm. We were in Creston, and Gary was helping his uncle build a log cabin out of the cedar logs that had been on the original homestead. Gary had been up on a ladder, not a nice safety ladder, but a cherry-picking ladder. I was in the garden picking raspberries when I heard him scream.

Fortunately, only his arm was broken. Unfortunately, his elbow was shattered. If the doctor put it in a cast, the bones would fuse together in that shape, and his arm would be permanently locked. It was eleven pain-filled days before he slept because, every time he started to fall asleep, he would try to straighten his arm.

Because he was not hurt at his job, he had no income. A couple of interesting things happened. I was leaving work, and the gale-force wind blew a fifty-dollar bill against my leg. It wrapped around my leg and held on like it was glued there. Coincidence? Luck? It wasn't luck or coincidence when the authorities told Jesus that he had to pay the temple tax, and Jesus told Peter, "Cast a fishhook into the sea and the first fish you pull up will have a silver coin in its mouth."

A couple of weeks after we were back home from Creston, Gary got a letter from the bank stating an account in his name had not been used in five years and the bank was going to close it unless he claimed the money. The statement said there was \$5.43 in the account.

Gary admitted that he started the account so he could squirrel away a little bit of money without me knowing about it to buy me a Christmas present. Five years earlier, he had withdrawn almost everything in the

account, but had left a couple of dollars to keep the account open. Then he had forgotten all about it.

The next day, Gary went to the bank with the letter and asked to close the account, thankful for the \$5 and change. He joked to the teller that it would at least be enough to buy a loaf of bread and some eggs. The teller just raised an eyebrow, had him sign on the dotted line, and started counting out twenty-dollar bills. Gary stopped him, “There must be some mistake . . . the letter says I should only get \$5.43.”

The teller replied, “Computers are never wrong.”

Gary came home with \$78.62. Now \$78 isn’t a lot of money, but it is much better than \$5. The point is that God can even change computer results.

During that time, I spent my last five dollars on groceries. Later that day, I opened my wallet and there was a twenty-dollar bill in it. It is not like anyone had access to my purse. Over the next weeks, money appeared in my wallet over and over. Sometimes it was a five-dollar bill and sometimes a ten. You see, nothing is impossible.

I was telling Gary how more money had appeared in my purse, and he reached into his jeans and turned his pockets inside out. They were empty. “It must be your miracle,” he said. As he shoved the empty pockets back into his jeans, he got a surprised look on his face and pulled out a five-dollar bill.

We’ve had well-meaning Christians tell us that if God printed money, he would be a counterfeiter. “God would be breaking the law, and that would be sin,” they said. We have also heard, “If God multiplied money, it would destroy the economy of our country. God would never do that.” Or in translation, “God doesn’t do miracles.”

So, let’s say they have a point that God doesn’t print money. Then I would argue that, perhaps, God is just making lost money appear in

my wallet. Seriously, I don't need an explanation of how it happens. Either way, I'm good with receiving from my Father.

The thing that makes a miracle miraculous is God stepping supernaturally into the natural order of things. At least for me, miracles don't happen when I depend on myself and what I can supply. When I am hoping for good luck and chance, I am not looking to the King of the Universe. I am looking at the natural order. I am looking at what I have in my hand or at what others might be able to give me. People become my source.

Please understand the natural order of things isn't wrong. It just isn't all there is. Pray this prayer:

Father, I repent of looking to my job as my supply. I'm sorry for looking to people as my suppliers. Help me take my eyes off natural sources and look to you as my only source and supply.

I should tell you that Gary's elbow healed in such a way that he had good mobility but, when he held his arm out as straight as he could, it still looked like it had a 15% bend in it. Ten years later, we were at a church conference. We were praising God during the singing and Gary suddenly felt God's presence and power all over him. He could no longer stand and slid down onto the floor.

He reached up with his right arm and grabbed the top of the pew above him and pulled himself up to his feet. I looked at him quizzically because he was rubbing his elbow. He whispered to me, "My elbow is sore." Then he held his arm out straight.

I watched the reality hit him. His arm was perfectly straight after being bent for all those years. No one laid hands on him. No one prayed for healing. Gary told me later, "I wasn't even thinking about my elbow. God just did it." Miracles are heading your way.

Open Womb

Gary

When LeeAnne and I were first getting serious in our relationship, she confided in me, “I’m messed up inside. I cannot have children. You should find someone who can give you a family.”

But God had already told me that LeeAnne was the woman for me, so I was not worried. In prayer, I again took our relationship to God, and he told me we would have children. Sometime later we were married, and as the years passed, LeeAnne’s health issues grew, and we did not make a baby.

It was heart-breaking to hear of fourteen and fifteen-year-olds getting pregnant and of women aborting their children. Meanwhile, every doctor that LeeAnne saw told her she would never have children and that she needed a hysterectomy. LeeAnne would not go back to a doctor that gave her that report, so it wasn’t long before there were no doctors for her to see.

If we didn’t believe in miracles, it would have been easy. She would have had surgery, we would have come to grips with never having children, and life would have moved on. In fact, during those years, a relative had a baby out of wedlock, and our extended family pressured us to adopt the child. From their point of view, it was God answering our prayers. Believe me, it looked like an answer.

Please understand that we have nothing against adoption. I have a brother and a sister who my parents adopted.

It was LeeAnne who said, “Every time I convince myself we should adopt this baby, I have an overwhelming feeling that the child’s parents will take her back eventually, and we’ll be heartbroken. My heart can’t take any more hurt.” We said no.

It was not very long after that, we were at a People of Praise prayer meeting, and a monk was ministering who was known to minister the gift of healing. He said healing comes by faith, and faith comes from hearing the Word. He did not preach or teach; he just opened his Bible at random, put down his finger, and started reading. He was not a good reader. I believe his Bible opened to one of the letters of Paul.

After he read for about a half-hour, he asked, “Does anyone have a praise report?” A lot of people put their hands up. After hearing testimonies for a while, he instructed everyone who had testified of miracles to get the healings confirmed by a doctor, and then he continued reading.

Suddenly, LeeAnne said to me, “It feels like a hot beam of light is shining through me,” and she had her hand on her abdomen.

A few months later, LeeAnne met a new doctor. He was a funny little man, past retirement age. He told LeeAnne, “You don’t need a hysterectomy. You just need surgery to make you ovulate.” So LeeAnne had surgery to remove cysts and turn her ovaries inside out to induce fertility. During the surgery, the doctor checked out LeeAnne’s fallopian tubes to make sure they were not blocked.

When LeeAnne went to see him for the post-surgery appointment, he said, “Your fallopian tubes show scarring but there is a perfectly clear path through them. Where did you get the laser surgery done? I’ve heard that this procedure is still only in the experimental stage.” LeeAnne got to share with him what God had done during a prayer service.

It was not many months after that that LeeAnne conceived. However, the pregnancy was rough right from the start, and her body threatened to miscarry the baby the whole time. The doctor suggested not telling anyone because the pregnancy might not last. We told only our

parents, asking them to pray. The proviso was they keep our secret even from our siblings.

The pregnancy was not very far along when LeeAnne ended up in the hospital for ten days. On the day she was discharged, a minister from the Texas was at our church, so we decided to stop at the church for a little while and then go home.

We had not been at the service for very long when Don Morrison called us forward, and had me place my hand on LeeAnne. Then he gave a prophetic word that started with the following words, “The life that is growing and maturing inside of you is a gift of God’s grace. Through him many will come to know that Jehovah is the Lord.” Our secret was now very public.

The baby threatened to miscarry for most of the pregnancy and then, when it was time for him to be born, the December 8 due date came and went. Christmas and New Year’s Day rolled by. When LeeAnne’s doctor came back from vacation and discovered LeeAnne still hadn’t delivered the baby, he was very concerned. On January 8, our baby was born by emergency C-section. He was a ten-month baby.

We had planned to call him Jason, but the nearer his birth came, the less the name seemed to fit. We picked Nathaniel Joel. The day we brought him home from the hospital, we listened to a recording of the words Don had given many months earlier. We both began to weep because Nathaniel means “gift of God’s grace” and Joel means “Jehovah is the Lord.” The Lord had named our baby boy before he was born.

Why did we struggle for years, trying to conceive, when God could have healed LeeAnne instantly? Why was a doctor and a surgery involved? Why, when she finally got pregnant, did she almost lose the baby multiple times?

Because of our years of struggle, many people knew we wanted children and were unable to conceive. I think praying for a baby was about the only prayer request we had for years. Many well-meaning friends told us things like, “Some people are not meant to have children. Just accept that God’s plan for you is to be childless.”

When we finally held our baby boy, hundreds of people rejoiced that nothing is impossible with God. If God given us a child the first time we tried, no one would have recognized the power of God. I cannot tell you of how many infertile couples came to us for prayer because of the struggles we went through, and the miracle God did for us. We prayed many miracle babies into the world.

Because surgery was part of the healing, we can encourage those going through health issues to get medical help, but also to look to God for healing. They are not diametrically opposed. As LeeAnne says, “Let the doctors practice medicine on you, but look to the Healer who doesn’t need to practice.”

In the book of Isaiah, eighth chapter and 18th verse, it says I and the children God has given me are signs to the people. That verse is for you, too. When you go through struggles, hardships, and problems, the world is watching. When Father God provides the answers for you, the world recognizes there is a loving God.

Prayer:

Father, thank you that doing the impossible is easy for you. Thank you that through the miraculous answers to our struggles, you show the world that you are real. I want to be a sign to the world. I want my children to see your miraculous, undeniable intervention in their lives.

By the way, the family member who had the baby out of wedlock married the father of the child a few years later. They took their child back from the family that had adopted it.

Please, Not My Baby

LeeAnne

When our son, Nathaniel, was 18 months old, he stopped eating one day. He was fussy and running a fever. The next morning, he refused to drink and just kept sucking his thumb. His temperature was still climbing. When I managed to pry Nathaniel's mouth open, I discovered the inside of his mouth was covered in red blisters and peeling skin like someone had poured acid into his mouth.

Our pediatrician was away on vacation, so I took him to the hospital emergency department. His temperature was slightly over 103 F. When the doctor looked into Nathaniel's mouth, he diagnosed his condition as herpes and admitted him. The staff treated us poorly, presuming we had given our son a sexually transmitted disease.

Despite the medicine they gave him, Nathaniel's temperature continued to climb. By the next day it was 104 degrees, and the day after it reached 105. The doctors told us, with a temperature of 105, we should expect our son to go into convulsions and die. They also said that the few children that survive such a high temperature usually have permanent brain damage.

For three days, Nathaniel's temperature stayed at 105 degrees regardless of how much Tylenol they gave him, the tepid baths, the cool washcloths that we wiped him down with every few minutes, and a fan blowing air over his damp body. Our promised child lost one-third of his body weight in the first three days and continued to decline.

On day five, our pediatrician returned from vacation. He had one look at Nathaniel and said, "This isn't herpes. This is internal chicken pox. It is not just his mouth that has blisters. Blisters are down his throat and throughout his stomach and intestines. Likely all his internal organs are covered in blisters. This disease is extremely rare and

considered fatal for any child under six years old. There is no treatment.”

Our pastor, Bill Roycroft, told us to give Nathaniel to the Lord and walk away. To this day, it is the hardest thing we have ever done. We released our son to the Lord and then walked out of the hospital. We returned after a couple of hours, but we knew that our baby’s life was the Lord’s.

Then his temperature dropped to 104 degrees for the next two days, and for the three days after that it was at 103. Then the doctor said to us, “Take your baby home, so he can die there.”

Nathaniel was thin and weak, with the energy of a rag doll.

Another doctor, who was a friend, suggested that we take our son on a holiday so that he might see something that would inspire him to live. I suspect this friend did not want us to have our son die in our house, but we took his advice. We traveled to the west coast, praying all the way, and stopping at the side of the road many, many times to tend to our very sick child.

We also stopped at several hospitals along the way. Every time, the doctors wanted to know why our dying child wasn’t in the hospital. We told them that the doctors in Lethbridge sent our baby home to die.

Finally, in Chilliwack, British Columbia, his fever broke, and the little food Nathaniel ate stopped passing straight through him. Our son survived a fatal disease because God intervened.

Throughout school, including university, he was an honor student. Today he is a husband and a father.

Just because we see miracles doesn’t mean we don’t go through hard times. It is because of hard times that we need the miraculous, and miracles aren’t always instantaneous.

I share this story because it had a huge bearing on events that happened a few years later. In case you have not noticed the pattern, one miracle often leads to many others.

I want to emphasize the importance of the next sentence.

God wants to prepare you for what is coming because he wants you to come through every circumstance rejoicing.

Please pray this:

Father, show me your miracles along the way so I can face any situation with confidence.

When Things Collide

Gary

The events that took place on August 18, 1988, were perhaps just a series of random incidents, but God received glory from what transpired. It started when a friend from Medicine Hat stopped by our house to visit LeeAnne. LeeAnne was running a day home, so she could be home with our two young boys and, that day, she was looking after someone's twin boys.

The mother of the twins was supposed to pick them up at 3:30 but had run into some sort of problem and had not picked them up, and it was almost 5:00 p.m. LeeAnne had promised to pick me up from work at 5:00, so she left a note for the mother that she would be right back and headed out the door. The visitor from Medicine Hat suggested that everyone ride in her minivan; that way she could see where I worked.

LeeAnne drove, as she knew the way. The visitor sat in the passenger seat, the twins and our eldest, Nathaniel, sat in the back seat, and Timothy, our youngest, rode in the back compartment (like the back of a station wagon). This was in the days before child restraint legislation. When LeeAnne pulled into my workplace, she told Nathaniel, "Move into the back compartment so Daddy can have a seat."

I said, "No, just stay there. It is not every day that I get to ride in the back of a van." So, I crawled into the back and was having a conversation with my three-and-a-half-year-old. I was asking Tim about his day as LeeAnne drove home. Then LeeAnne screamed.

I looked to the front and only saw wheels. I was whirling around to grab Tim when our van hit the tractor of the semi-trailer. A fraction of a second later, the semi's trailer hit us, and Tim disappeared. LeeAnne was unconscious as the van bounced through a farmer's field. I

scrambled over the seats to find Tim, but to my horror, he was not in the van.

Then I realized that the back window was gone, and Tim was lying on the road. I catapulted myself out of the back window as the van continued to roll. When my feet hit the ground, I realized I had no feeling from my chest down. I willed my body to run.

I said to God as I ran, “If Tim’s head is all in one piece, his brains not spread out over the road, I will pray that you give his life back.”

When I got to Tim’s body, I collapsed. My legs would not hold me up any longer. I lifted my dead son’s battered head and slipped my hand underneath. His skull was in one piece. At that moment, LeeAnne gained consciousness, looked into the back of the van and saw that both Tim and I were gone. She looked onto the road and saw our bodies lying there. Her scream of agony at seeing us broken on the road is unlike anything I have ever heard before or since. She ran to us, her head bouncing off her shoulder at ninety degrees to her body.

When she got to us, it was easy to see Timothy was dead. Part of his forehead, between his hairline and his eyebrow was crushed in. He was not breathing. The skin was shredded from his legs, arms, and face.

A crowd had gathered around, but we prayed out loud, thanking God for Tim’s life and releasing his spirit to our Heavenly Father, just as we had done with Nathaniel when he was so sick. Then I prayed the following, “Father, if there was ever a time to breathe life into a child, now is the time.”

Immediately we heard a sound like a wind, starting about twelve feet away and perhaps eight feet off the ground. The wind sound turned into a deep moan. Everybody heard it and turned to look. Then the sound zoomed toward us and into Tim’s body. Immediately, Tim

began to thrash like a rodent does when it is struck by a car. We held him down so he wouldn't hurt himself further.

As we waited for the ambulance to arrive, LeeAnne's prayer was, "Father, how do we let your people know we need prayer?"

The first paramedic on the scene was a friend of ours and a member of our church. He told us later that the ambulance crew had been instructed to bring a body bag, so they were very surprised to find everyone alive. As soon as he got a chance, this friend phoned his wife and told her we had been in a serious collision and asked her to call people to pray.

As the paramedics carried Tim into the ambulance, I crawled behind them like a soldier crawling over open ground. I could not feel my legs. When I reached the ambulance, I started to pull myself in, the crew tried to stop me. "Another ambulance is on the way for you," they said.

But I was not going to be separated from Tim. I crawled in, put my hand on him and prayed out loud all the way to the hospital. The paramedics strapped a board onto LeeAnne's neck, and she traveled in a police car to the hospital. As they brought us into emergency, we saw a friend there. Her son had broken his arm, and they were in the waiting room. She told us she would call our parents and get people praying.

We were all taken to separate rooms for x-rays, and LeeAnne and I were desperate to be with Tim. The doctor told us each separately that our son was dying. We both assured him the same thing, "I've seen him dead. He is not dying; he is coming to life."

The doctor let us know that, even if he did live, he would be nothing more than a vegetable because his brain injuries were substantial. Finally, on our insistence, the doctor let us into the room with Tim. Although the hospital had called for STARS air ambulance to take him

to Calgary to a children's hospital, they had not cleaned him up at all because they believed that he would die.

Tim had lost skin from his legs, shoulder, arms, and half his face. Dirt, glass, and gravel from the road were ground into his wounds. His left ear was almost ripped off, but they had not stitched or bandaged it. His head was caved in just above his left eye, like a child's ball looks when some of the air has leaked out. They had not given Tim any intravenous fluids or even covered him with a blanket to help fight off shock.

STARS air ambulance left Calgary (two hours away by car), but there was an accident right below them on the highway so, by law, they had to land and attend to that collision, fly the wounded back to Calgary, then refuel for the trip to Lethbridge. In the meantime, several Christian friends arrived at emergency. The hospital staff told them only family members were allowed in to where we were. Of course, they were all Christian family, so they came into the room to pray.

At one point, we were introducing the "family members" to our parents who had also come to the hospital. Bill Roycroft came to emergency and asked to see us. He was in his typical jeans and Willy Nelson tee-shirt. His leg was in a cast. The head nurse said to him, "Don't tell us that you are family!" Bill just smiled and said, "No, I am their pastor." So, they let him into the very crowded room.

A nurse posted the x-rays of Tim's head on the back-lit board, and one of our friends, who was a nurse, confirmed what the doctor had told us. Tim had a fractured skull and a massive pooling of fluid at the base of the brain. The best we could hope for was that he would be extremely handicapped. But our hope was not in doctors or in what we could see.

I could not stand and was sitting in a wheelchair. LeeAnne's neck was in a brace, and she was obviously hurting as she stroked Tim's face

and spoke to him non-stop. She told him to look to Jesus. She told him of God's love for him and how much we loved him. Tim was unconscious most of this time.

The rest of us were praying. And as we prayed, the skin started to grow back over the areas of Tim's body that had been sanded away by the road. Tim's ear, which had been dangling and bleeding, slowly went back to where it belonged. The depression on his forehead began to fill out and return to normal.

Our friend, Greg, started pinching himself on the arm. LeeAnne asked him, "What are you doing?"

He answered, "If I wasn't standing here with the rest of you, I would never believe what I am seeing. I'd think I was dreaming."

STARS air ambulance arrived and flew Tim to Calgary. They had an operating room prepped for brain surgery. Because of our injuries, we could not travel. LeeAnne had severe neck injuries. Later they discovered one of her vertebrae was fractured. I had back injuries. Fortunately, the twins that LeeAnne was looking after were unhurt in the crash, and Nathaniel's cheek was just grazed with some flying glass. The woman who owned the van had a bruised leg.

Because there were no empty rooms in the hospital, they sent us home. Or perhaps they sent us home because they did not want to deal with us. We bless the friends who stayed with us overnight to care for us.

That night at 11:00 p.m., the head doctor from the children's hospital in Calgary phoned us. She said "I do not believe in God, but something happened that medical science cannot explain. I have two sets of x-rays of your son's head in front of me. One indicates your son is dying, and the other shows that there is nothing wrong with him. The only way to explain this is to call it a miracle."

When Tim arrived in Calgary, they did a CT scan, an MRI, and a head x-ray, so they'd know how much brain surgery he needed and where to start. Everything came out clean. Then they x-rayed him head to foot and only found a broken collar bone. The hospital spent several hours cleaning the gravel out of Tim's wounds and stitching up what had not healed before they got to him.

The doctor told LeeAnne that they would keep him overnight for observation, but we could come get him the next day. Don Morrison was pastoring in Calgary at that time. This is the man who had given the prophetic word to us before Nathaniel was born. LeeAnne called, and Don went to the hospital, sat with Tim, and prayed for him all night.

The hospital would not release Tim to anyone except a parent, so I made a very painful trip to Calgary stretched out in the back seat of my in-laws' car. It took me twenty minutes to hobble down the hospital hallway to the room where Tim was. When he saw me, Tim asked, "Daddy, where did you go?"

I told him, "We are in Calgary, and you flew here in a helicopter." He was not happy because he did not remember looking out the helicopter window.

The crash had been reported in the Lethbridge Herald newspaper, and we had the chance to share with hundreds of people the miraculous works of God. Many unbelievers said, "There must be a God," or "Someone upstairs must love you." Then we could share about Jesus's love for the world and for them.

To our dismay, it was church people who said things like, "Your son wasn't really dead," or "Things always look worse to parents than they really are," or "Little kids bounce back," or "Wow, this just goes to show that the x-ray taken in Lethbridge was flawed. Your son was never really injured."

We discovered that unbelief in the church is an epidemic while the world is crying out for a God who does the miraculous.

LeeAnne and I took years to heal from the injuries we sustained. We asked a lot of “whys.” We had been miraculously healed previously but not this time. We had also seen God take us miraculously through some near collisions without a scratch.

In fact, one time when we were driving north on Mayor Magrath Drive in Lethbridge, we were on the inside lane when the half-ton truck that was in the lane to our right and a half-vehicle length ahead suddenly turned left in front of us to turn onto 12th Avenue. We literally drove right through his truck.

LeeAnne’s mouth was open in shock as we continued north. When she finally could speak, she asked, “Are we dead?”

I answered, “I hope not. Heaven is supposed to look better than Lethbridge.”

We have often joked that when the driver of the truck gets drunk, he tells the story of how a Honda Civic drove right through his truck.

However, the van LeeAnne was driving that day in August 1988 never drove through the semi-trailer. Still, we will never cease praising Father God for giving us our son’s life as a gift. We still share this story of the Lord’s great mercy to us.

Tim healed so fast that his skin grew right over rocks and glass. After the crash he endured many plastic surgeries to remove the debris from his face. All told, he had close to 300 stitches on his face, yet you would never know it by looking at him. He became a handsome man, got a 4.0 grade-point average in college, and is married. He does have a few pieces of gravel you can see in his left arm and in his hand. I asked God about that, and he said it is so Tim always remembers he is alive for a purpose.

In fact, in 2010, Tim had a shard of glass removed from right beside his left eye, a left-over from going through the window. The doctors had known something was there and presumed it was a pebble. They did not remove it earlier because it was so close to the eye and in the middle of the area where the oculomotor nerve is. The surgery was risky. However, the pain persisted, especially if Tim got bumped on the side of his face. When they finally did the surgery, they were amazed the shark-tooth shaped piece of glass hadn't done serious damage in all those years.

Do you want faith to raise the dead? Here is a newflash for you: raising the dead has nothing to do with you or your faith. It has everything to do with Jesus's faith. Raising the dead is no different than having potatoes multiply in the pot. Neither is possible naturally. Neither happens through wishful thinking. God does miracles, not you.

Prayer:

Thank you, Father God, that miracles are not up to me. Thank you that miracles don't show how religious or righteous I am. Thank you that miracles show how loving you are.

And yes, I want to see the dead raised when I pray. Please raise my trust in You from the dead.

Heaven

LeeAnne

I sometimes wonder how different our lives would be if Gary had not prayed for God to restore Tim's life. I don't say this as judgment or to put condemnation on anyone who has lost someone. I can assure you that for believers in Jesus, being absent from this world means you are present with God. You are in Heaven.

Tim was 3 1/2 when he died. He came back with the most amazing stories. Many times, in that first while, I'd go to his room to watch him sleep. He'd have the biggest smile on his face, and his face glowed. When he'd wake, he would look around bewildered and say in a very sad voice, "Oh, I'm here. I thought I was in heaven."

Every time he had a pencil or crayon, he would draw angels. And he was a good artist even then, but the angels never had any faces so one day I asked him, "Why don't you ever draw their faces?"

He looked at me incredulously and replied, "Don't you know? Angels' faces are so bright you can't see them."

Another time he was talking about how big angels are, so I asked him, "Are they as big as your dad?"

"No," he replied. "Much bigger. They are taller than buildings."

Gary asked him, "What did you do in heaven?"

"My favorite thing was playing with the children that don't have moms and dads. We played musical chairs."

I asked, "Weren't the children sad when they didn't get a chair?"

"No, that was the best part. When I didn't get a chair to sit on, Jesus threw me up in the air and then caught me. Then we rolled around on the grass while he tickled me. Then it was someone else's turn."

You must understand Tim's version of heaven was very different from our limited churchy version. So Gary asked him, "Where did the music come from in the musical chairs game?" Now a child who is making up a story about heaven might reply with something he knows like a stereo, boom box, or someone playing the guitar.

Tim answered, "Don't you know? Jesus is the music."

He would talk about the amazing light, and we asked him, "Where did the light come from? The sun?"

And he started his answer in his usual utterly amazed way at our ignorance, "Don't you know? Jesus is the light. All the light comes from him."

Shortly after his heaven experience, Tim told me about my grandmother. She had died before my first child was born. Tim pointed her out in a picture collage we had in the family room and said, "Your Oma is a very nice lady, and we had fun together. But she does not look old like that. She is much younger and has long, dark hair." In the picture, my grandmother's hair was grey, and up in a bun. He had no way of knowing that she always had very long hair or that it had been dark brown.

I paged through an old photo album with Tim, one he had never seen, and he pointed out other people he had met in heaven. He had no way of knowing who was dead or who was still alive, yet he only pointed out those who had already passed.

Tim told us of flowers that sang and fruit that grows everywhere. He said his favorite fruit was a color we don't have on earth but was kind of like purple. He said you could drop whatever you didn't eat, and it would instantly disappear.

Tim told us he wanted to swim in the river. He always was our water rat, so this was not a surprise. He said, "People could swim in the river

and not get wet. I wanted to swim, but Jesus would not let me. He said if I swam in that river, I would never go back to earth. I sat on his knee, and he told me that I had something on earth he wanted me to do. Then he asked me to choose. He said heaven would be waiting for me. I told him that I wanted to do his will.” He added with some disappointment, “Then suddenly I was back here.”

He told us many other things. I’ve given you only a few highlights. I pray that you never go through what we went through. However, I also pray for you that whatever happens, Jesus will get glory.

No matter where your children are or what they are doing, and no matter where you are spiritually, Isaiah 8:18 is still true. It applies to you. You and your children are created for signs and wonders.

One of the many un-fun things we did when we were pastors was to be with a couple as they unplugged the life support from their ten-day-old child who had been brain damaged at birth. The doctors said the child would die almost immediately; however, she breathed on her own for hours. The parents were hoping and praying for a miracle. So were we.

During our conversation, we relayed many stories our son had told us of heaven. Gary told them of Jesus giving Tim the choice between heaven and returning to earth. Gary asked them, “If Jesus is giving your daughter a choice to be with him or to live on earth, would you give her permission to choose? Would you let your daughter decide?”

The baby’s father nodded yes. The child’s mother looked down at the baby in her arms and said, “You choose. You can go to Jesus if you want.” Instantly, the baby died. And Gary asked, “Did you hear that? I heard a baby girl laugh with delight.”

You see, the things you go through, and the miraculous, are not just for you.

Angel Transport

Gary

When things are mysteriously transported over distances, we affectionately call this angel transport. Here is an example of what I mean. We were on the return jaunt of a vacation to the Vancouver area of British Columbia when we stopped for breakfast at a cafe in Hope, a small town not far from the coast. Our oldest son was three and our youngest one, so breakfast in a restaurant was an event akin to a small circus. We still had a nine-and-one-half-hour drive ahead of us to get home that day, and that doesn't account for the time we'd spend letting the kids run around at rest stops or in parks in the small towns we passed through along the way.

LeeAnne left the restaurant with Tim in her arms, a bag of toys and story books, and a diaper bag over her arm. I had Nathaniel, my camera bag, and a tray with two coffees to go.

Needless to say, the back of our little green Toyota station wagon was packed. Anyone with young children knows we probably packed more things for them than we did for us. We had diapers, toys, stroller, playpen, and enough changes of clothes to account for any emergency. So, we never noticed we left something behind until LeeAnne reached for her purse when we pulled into Osoyoos.

It was not where she usually kept it at her feet. She reached behind the seat and tried to feel where it was, then asked, "Did you put my purse in the back?"

"No. I haven't seen it since breakfast. You set it on the floor when we first sat down at the booth."

"It must be in the back," she said, not sounding 100 percent positive.

I pulled the car into a parking lot, and we got out to look in the back. LeeAnne opened the door where Tim sat in a car seat and looked between the seats and then over the seatback behind him, thinking maybe she put the purse there when she strapped Tim in. She opened the diaper bag, thinking perhaps she had put it in there when we were packing up at the restaurant. Meanwhile I scanned our pile of belongings through the side window and popped open the back hatch.

“Is it back there?” LeeAnne asked. “It is not on the floor between the seats or in the diaper bag. And it is not behind Tim or Nathaniel.”

“I don’t see it.”

“I don’t remember taking my purse out of the restaurant,” she admitted. “But maybe it is buried underneath some of our things.”

We pulled everything out of the station wagon and spread it across the parking lot like we were having an impromptu garage sale. We looked under every seat. We did not have the purse. I put everything back in the car as LeeAnne stood in the phone booth talking to the restaurant. No one had turned in a purse, but they said they would go check the booth where we had sat for breakfast three hours earlier.

I stood beside the phone booth as LeeAnne came out with tears in her eyes. “It’s gone,” she said to me. And to Jesus she cried heartbroken, “I can’t afford to lose my purse.”

When we turned around to get into the car, we both saw the purse on the top of our mound of things like the point of a pyramid. It was exactly in the center of the belongings I had just put back into the station wagon, above the level of the back seat. It was not something you could miss.

Angel transport happened to us more than once when we were making frequent trips from Edmonton to Lethbridge, a 312-mile trip. When

we travel, we always pray the God rolls up the miles underneath us, so the five-hour journey is not wearing on us. On one trip, we had people waiting for us, and we had given them the time when we expected to arrive. When we pulled into the prairie city, we looked at the time to realize that we were two hours early. We thought the clock must be wrong. It wasn't. We did the five-hour trip in three-and-one-quarter hours.

Even considering that the Queen Elizabeth Highway is a fast road, to do the trip in just over three hours, our average speed would have to be ninety-six miles per hour. We remember the whole drive, so it was not that we were zapped from one location to another; God just bent time. He can do this for you.

Our dear friend and mentor, Alecia Warren, found the Lord in Hawaii. Her story would be a book in itself, but she had been a nightclub singer. She had a heart attack in a bar, was declared dead in the hospital, and then prayed for by the bar owners who were recent Christians and had not been able to sell their bar. They prayed, "Father, this woman does not know you. Bring her back."

Alecia sat up in the hospital, screaming in terror, "I'm in hell. I'm in hell. I feel the flames. Don't let me go back to hell."

Hospital staff came running. The bar owners told Alecia to cry out to Jesus, and she did. She promptly died and was declared dead for the second time that night.

Then, when the bar owners prayed, "Lord, this woman has not fulfilled her purpose," Alecia came back to life after her new Lord showed her heaven. She became one of the greatest soul winners I have ever met. Her double resurrection caused quite a stir in the hospital.

I tell you this greatly abbreviated story to say that many years later, LeeAnne and I traveled to Hawaii. It was a vacation, but we also felt

God telling us to go to certain places and pray certain things. For years, Aleciah's health had been deteriorating, and she was in the hospital in Lethbridge when we made our trip to the Islands.

To say that Hawaii reminded us of her would be an understatement. We heard her unique laugh and turned around to look behind us. Of course, she was not there. We heard her voice several times and felt her presence as we prayed in spiritual high places, like the place on Kona where the Hawaiians used to do human sacrifices.

So, we decided to send her a postcard via a friend and a person who looked after Aleciah. Why a postcard? Perhaps it was because our oldest son collected postcards, and we were sending cards to both our boys. So LeeAnne wrote cards, and I mailed them from a post office on Kauai. Before I ran across the street in the torrential downpour, LeeAnne prayed that the card to Aleciah would reach her before she died. "Send it by angel transport," she prayed.

Two days later, Sherry, her caregiver, sat beside Aleciah with the postcard in her hand. Before she read it, Aleciah opened her eyes from the comma she had been in for a few days and said, "I've just had the most amazing time in Hawaii with Gary and LeeAnne."

Then Sherry read the card to her that said we felt her with us in Hawaii.

The postcards we sent at the same time to our boys in Edmonton, and to LeeAnne's parents in Lethbridge, did not arrive for two-and-a-half weeks after we returned.

Our Father is not limited by time or distance. Ask him to show you.

*Father, please amaze me with your goodness. Reset my thinking.
Show me you are without limits.*

Angels

LeeAnne

My grandfather became a believer in Jesus because of an angel. He was a young man in Russia and was walking toward the town when he saw the pastor from the local church putting the wheel back on his wagon. A great, strong man was holding the wagon up as the pastor struggled to lift the wheel into place. As my grandfather got closer, he only saw the pastor and the wagon was held up by some sticks and rocks, so my grandfather asked him, “Where is the man, who was holding up the wagon?”

The pastor replied, “There wasn’t anyone else. I was praying that God would send me help, and he sent me you.” Then my grandfather explained that he had watched a very large man holding up the wagon. The pastor got to share with him the love and power of Jesus.

Gary’s youngest brother was born with Infant Crib Death Syndrome. He’d just stop breathing. Many times, an angel would shake my mother-in-law awake to say, “Mary, your baby isn’t breathing.”

When my father-in-law was dying and was waiting in the emergency ward of the hospital for a room, a man walked through the curtains into the examining room. He said hello to my parents-in-law by name and told them God had everything in control. Then he told them of events in their lives where their Heavenly Father had guided and helped them. At first Dad Dyck thought the visitor must be someone Mom knew, and Mom was thinking it was someone Dad knew. They soon realized this was a supernatural visitor.

When the man walked out between the curtains, my mother-in-law followed him into the hallway, but he was gone. She asked at the desk and was told that no one had come or gone. Both my mother-in-law and father-in-law related this story to us separately.

I could tell you many other stories I've heard of angels stepping from the invisible to the visible realm to help. I've relayed these to say that it should not surprise us when signs and wonders include angels. I'll relate a few personal ones. The hamlet we were living in was called Hardieville. Before that, it was called Georgetown. In the coal mining days, it was the community closest to the mines. It was the place bad people lived. The saloons and brothels, which weren't allowed in respectable Lethbridge, flourished in Georgetown. When we lived there, it had been annexed by Lethbridge. The saloons and brothels were long gone, yet it still had a reputation as the place where rebels and the poorest of the poor live.

We saw many miracles there, and we had some spiritual opposition. One night, we were jolted awake with what felt and sounded like a freight train hitting the house. The house shook with the impact. We heard the wooden frame of our house shatter, screeching metal on metal, steel plates crumpling and tearing, and the multiple concussions of one train car after another coming to a sudden stop.

We bolted from our bed and ran through the house, but nothing was damaged, and our children were safe. We went out to the front lawn, but there was no crashed vehicle against our house and no damage. And we knew there wasn't a train track within four miles. It was a spiritual attack, and we presume whatever it was hit a wall of angels.

Not long after that, right around supper time, we heard a crash on our roof right above our heads like the sound of a sword hitting a metal shield. Then we heard heavy footsteps like a scuffle and sounds like swords hitting each other. Everyone in the house ran out to the balcony and looked up onto the roof. We could hear a swordfight right in front of us, on our side of the roof, but we couldn't see the combatants.

The roof sagged under the feet of the warriors as they moved about, sometimes right at the edge of the roof in front of us. The crashing and banging sounded deafening. We knew an angel was fighting for us,

and we prayed for more angels to come help. Then we heard one set of footsteps run across the roof away from the battle, and all was silent.

People often get freaked out when we mention spiritual battle. If you are relying on your own righteousness and spiritual strength, you should be freaked out. Our help comes from the Lord. Our own righteousness is filthy rags, but we are the righteousness of God in Jesus the Messiah. The battle is the Lord's. Besides, battles are not scary when you know who fights for you.

Because we lived in a tiny hamlet away from the city, we saw the northern lights quite regularly. One night the green shimmering light hung right to the ground like an arch at the edge of the hamlet. As we walked beneath the arch, I said to Gary, "It feels like we are walking through a doorway into a new part of our lives."

We walked north, away from the houses and out into the country. Ahead of us in the northern sky, colors danced like waves of green and red light. It was beautiful, and we kept walking toward it. We were about three quarters of a mile from the houses, when suddenly light appeared right above us. This was not dancing green mist. It was angels.

They were fifty feet tall and in a circle 200 yards across. They were dancing, not quite shoulder to shoulder, in a clockwise direction, something like a Jewish vine dance or aboriginal circle dance. Behind them was a circle of angels dancing in a counterclockwise direction like a wheel inside a wheel. We could see the shoulders and heads of the angels in the second circle appear behind the closest circle as the angels moved. There may have been angels behind them, too.

Gary and I were holding hands, staring up wide-eyed, as angels danced and rejoiced above us. They seemed to be made of light. We could see their arms out at their sides, almost as if they were holding hands, but their hands seemed to overlap like they could exist in the same place

at the same time. They wore robes of light, or perhaps that is what their bodies look like. We could make out vague facial features, but mostly their faces were too bright to see.

Then the circles of angels wove in and out of each other in the most amazing and intricate dance.

I strained to hear the music they were dancing to; however, all I could hear was my own heartbeat. Looking up the center of the circle between the angels wasn't like looking at the night sky. It was like looking into a world of light. We watched angels dancing for an hour, then they faded. It was not like they went away, but like our eyes stopped comprehending their light.

I'll say again that they were angels, not northern lights. They were white light of differing intensities, not the color of aurora borealis. Their appearance did not change like fog, mist, clouds, or the electrically charged particles that make up northern lights. And their appearance remained constant for the entire time. We don't worship angels, but I know angels are all around, and that comforts me. It gives me courage. It changes how I pray because I know we have warriors.

I could relate many stories that people have told us about angels, but those are their stories. I will relate something we thought was fun from when we were in California, the same trip where I told my cousins the earring story. We had driven in from Kingsburg to Fresno, done a little bit of shopping but decided we were not in the shopping mood. So, we went to the restaurant where we would have lunch. However, it was only 11:00 a.m.—too early to eat lunch. We sat in the car in the parking lot and prayed for an outpouring of God's spirit on California.

It was a great prayer time. We felt God's presence close to us, and the hour flew by. At noon, we walked into the restaurant. There were two young women at the reception stand, and both looked up behind us and their mouths hung open. We looked over our shoulders to see what

they were staring at, but there was nothing. When the hostess could speak, she told us to go in and pick a table.

When we walked in, everyone in the place turned our way. Again, they were all looking above us, like there was an 8-foot-tall shining person with us. We sat at a table at one side of the restaurant where we had a view of the entrance. Every single person who walked in stopped in mid-step and stared, not at us, but just above us.

When we sat down, some people left immediately even though they had almost untouched plates of food. One couple, who had been loudly arguing, told each other, "I'm sorry," and spent the rest of their meal in loving conversation. People treated the waiter and waitress kindly, and the atmosphere became light and friendly. There was laughter and even conversation between tables.

At one point, I made a trip to the ladies' room and had to pass by the front door. As I did, a group of people came in. They stopped dead in their tracks and exclaimed, wide-eyed, "Whoa," as they looked up above and slightly behind me. And in the washroom, a woman came out of the stall and had exactly the same reaction.

Like with my grandfather in Russia, angels can be a sign to unbelievers, too. Our loving Heavenly Father wants to show his lost children that he loves them. He is more than willing to show signs and wonders. If you need encouragement or if you are ready to share God's love in a way you have not experienced yet, pray this:

Father, show me that your angels are with me. And show others that your angels are with me, too.

A House for Us

Gary

We moved temporarily to Edmonton in 1995, and never left. We were asked by the head pastor of a large church in Edmonton to become pastors in one of their satellite churches. As we already had Bible school training and years of church service, he just asked that we spend nine months in his church and attend their Bible school so that we knew how they did things. At the end of the nine months, we'd be commissioned to a church in British Columbia.

So, we sold our five-year-old house in Lethbridge, moved to Edmonton, and lived off of our savings and the little profit we made from selling our house while we attended school and did service for the church. An interesting thing happened on our drive up. I was driving the U-Haul truck, and LeeAnne was driving our van. We stopped at a gas station to fill the tanks. When LeeAnne went in to pay, the person behind the register said, "The guy in the purple shirt paid for your gas."

For some odd reason, I had told LeeAnne while we were packing, "I want to wear my purple shirt on moving day." It was the only purple shirt I have ever had. So LeeAnne presumed that I had paid for her gas, but then I walked in. She looked at me funny and asked, "Did you pay for my tank of gas?"

"No. There must be some mistake." So, I went to the register and tried to pay for both vehicles. They assured me that the other guy in the purple shirt already paid for the van's fill up. We took it as a sign that God was with us.

Moving into a rental place was less than thrilling. It was disgustingly dirty. We thought the kitchen floor was brown until we scraped through a quarter inch of grime with steel wool and a knife blade to

discover the floor was red and had a pattern in it. We found cat feces on top of the kitchen cabinet, and other things too gross to mention.

The landlord was thrilled that we cleaned the place up and told us, “You are such good tenants; I will never sell this place as long as you live here.” Seven months after that, he decided it would be great to sell the house while it looked so good, so he put it up for sale.

I will sidetrack in this story to tell you that we moved our freezer with us from Lethbridge and lived off its contents for a year. When we packed up in Lethbridge, we had one moose roast left in the freezer, and we cooked it the first week we were in Edmonton. We enjoyed every morsel, while bemoaning that it was the last roast.

A week later, LeeAnne opened the freezer to discover a moose roast right at the top. It looked identical in size and shape as the “last” moose roast. We rejoiced as we ate it. A week later, I opened the freezer and found a moose roast right on top. Once a week, a moose roast appeared for a whole year.

Our term of Bible school was ending, and we had not heard anything from the head pastor as to where he was sending us, so we made an appointment. I said, “We’ve spent months praying for God to prepare us for where he is sending us. When you asked us to come here, you said there were several churches asking for pastors. Can you tell us some of the locations, so we can pray about where we should move?”

He answered, “Even if there were churches looking for pastors, and there aren’t, no one leaves from here to start a church or even gets behind the pulpit unless they have served in this church for at least five years.”

LeeAnne and I had the top marks in Bible School and were told throughout the training, “People are waiting for you to graduate, so you can become their pastors.” We were more than a little shocked to learn that we had been lied to.

The pastor's concept of serving in the church was us being there every time the doors were open. We had been jumping through hoops the entire time, including having our boys in the church school and paying full price for that. We attended men's and women's prayer meetings, Saturday evangelism, and Wednesday night service, church twice on Sunday, and any special service.

I had sold our house in Lethbridge, uprooted my family, and moved them away from family and friends for a lie. I think it was the lowest time in my life. To make matters worse, the economy had taken a dive, and it was nearly impossible to find a job. I ended up driving courier and eventually driving a truck to Saskatchewan and back. LeeAnne found a job as a cake decorator.

We resigned from the church and gave notice to the landlord that we were leaving. So, our family moved into a rental home owned by the father of a friend of ours. He was a pastor in Vancouver and was thrilled to have believers in his house. This house had an unfinished basement. It did have a basement bedroom, but the bedroom had an unfinished ceiling. We had not lived there long when the owner asked if I could do some renovations in the basement, and he would pay us for supplies and give us a break on rent to pay for the labor involved.

I learned quickly that he was not forthcoming on paying for supplies, and he kept promising to slash our rent the following month, but that never happened. However, I did finish taping, sanding, and painting the family room. I found used carpet from an industrial complex to cover the floor. I built a bathroom for my boys, but I used a second-hand sink and toilet, because I knew I would never get my money back. I got the bathroom door at a garage sale.

In the meantime, we started attending a small church. Again, the pastors said they recognized the anointing on us and quickly made us pastors. Mind you, we were pastors without pay, so we had full-time jobs and tried to do full-time church work. The long hours I spent on

the road were good for prayer time and for preparing sermons, but they were horrible for family life. For months, I only saw my children on weekends, and then I was doing church work. LeeAnne carried a tremendous load of work, church work, and trying to keep our family intact.

Then I tore a disk in my back and ended up off work and unemployed. Almost at the same time, LeeAnne was injured at work and was off on workmen's compensation. Then, half-way through May, our landlord gave us an eviction notice. He said, "Now that the house has a finished basement, I have rented it out to a family moving to Edmonton from Vancouver. They'll pay almost twice as much as you do."

He gave us six weeks' notice. We could have fought him through the Landlord and Tenants Act and gotten another six weeks, but we just wanted to be out of there. And we did not want to rent again ever, so we started hunting for a house we could buy. With me being unemployed, we did not qualify for a mortgage. Someone pointed us to a real estate agent who specialized in assumable mortgages, and we dragged our kids to every place we looked at. Many of the houses were over 60 years old and in deplorable shape.

Our real estate agent was a nice man, and he tried to be helpful, but he was getting frustrated. "You won't find anything with an assumable mortgage that is better than the houses we have looked at," he finally stated.

We told him, "Not without God's help."

What he didn't know was the house we just moved out of in Lethbridge was brand new when we moved into it. We had put a bid in on a different house contingent on ours selling. We were in a great starter home at a price range that people jumped at, but we never got one offer. Finally, after two months, the owners of the house we bid

on asked us to withdraw our offer. We did, and our house sold the next day.

Then an amazing house came up for sale right across from our kid's school in a hamlet just over three quarters of a mile out of Lethbridge. The owner was a contractor and had built it as a retirement house and decided to sell. It wasn't even finished when we moved in. No one could believe we went from a starter house to an amazing house with a huge yard and a view of the mountains from our front window.

When the real estate agent in Edmonton told us that, "This is the best you will find," we had bigger expectations. But the weeks passed, and we had no home. I had been homeless for a winter when I was six years old. That is a story in itself, but I mention this so you understand it really bothered me that we had no place to go. We arranged for our oldest son to go back to Lethbridge and work for my brother and stay with his family. Our youngest would spend the summer as a counselor at Bible camp. LeeAnne and I planned to put our things into storage, and camp for the summer while we looked for God's direction.

LeeAnne and I were sitting in the front room of the rental house, the room we called the prayer room. LeeAnne just got off the phone with the real estate agent who told her, "You've seen every house in your price range with an assumable mortgage. I'm going home now."

Tears ran down LeeAnne's cheeks as she asked me, "Why doesn't God give us what we need?"

"Perhaps he is waiting for us to tell him what we want," I replied.

"Well, I want a house with a small front yard, so you don't have to shovel so much snow in the winter. And I want a split-level house so there are big windows in the basement so it doesn't feel like a basement, and we can have meetings down there. I also want a finished basement, so you don't have to do it with your injured back. I want a

bedroom for each of the boys with finished ceilings, so they are not staring up at the insulation.”

At that moment the conversation switched from LeeAnne talking to me to LeeAnne talking to God. “And Jesus, I want a house with a vaulted ceiling, so it doesn’t feel like we are living in a box—and an island in the kitchen with lots of cupboards and counter space—and a deck and a south-facing back yard so it is great for gardening. I want lots of windows for light, and the master bedroom built above the garage. I want an ensuite. In fact, I want three full bathrooms in the house. I want a spare bedroom, so we can have company, and an office for our books and computer.”

I’m sure my mouth hung open as LeeAnne went on to list all the things she wanted in a dream home. The very moment she said “amen,” the phone rang. “This is Mark,” the real estate agent said. “I was heading home and realized I forgot some paperwork on my desk. Because I was back in the office, I decided to flip on the computer, and a listing just came up. Do you want to see it?”

He picked us up fifteen minutes later and drove us to a new neighborhood. There were only a couple of houses on the road at the edge of the city. Unfortunately, when we got to the house, another couple was already in it. They came out of the house and got into their real-estate agent’s car. They did not drive away, so it was obvious that they planned to put in an offer. Any houses worth seeing were selling within hours, so you have an idea of how bad the houses were that we turned down.

As we walked to the front door, a woman came up the street to the house. “This is my house,” she announced. Our real estate agent asked if we could see it. The woman said, “Sure. But I hope you don’t mind if I come in. I’ve already been out walking for half an hour.”

So, we walked in together. LeeAnne said my chin was dragging on the ground because my mouth hung open that far. It was as if God took LeeAnne's list and built the house according to her desires. Not one thing of her fifty items was missing, and there were some extras.

We visited with the woman to discover that she and her boyfriend bought the show home together. However, when she moved her teenage children in with his teenage children, all hell broke loose, so they split, and she was selling the house. It was less than a year old.

We sat in our real estate agent's car and wrote our offer. We would have to pull everything out of our Retirement Savings Plan and borrow a little money to make the down payment. We couldn't offer anything more than the asking price. We did have one thing going for us: we needed to move right away, and the woman wanted to sell as soon as possible.

The two real estate agents made their offers to the owner. Our competitors offered \$10,000 above the asking price. We offered only the asking price and no conditions. The owner listened to the offers and said, referring to our conversation, "I don't know this couple. But the other couple I really like. I feel like they belong in this house."

She took a \$10,000 loss, so we could have a home. We brought home photos of our new house and had them at our kids' places at the table for them to see when they got up the next morning.

God gave us a home. That doesn't mean it was free. But not being free doesn't mean it wasn't a miracle and knowing that your Heavenly Father has given you something gives you the confidence that he will also give you the income to pay for it.

We could have looked at my employment situation and given up house hunting. We might still be renting. We could have settled for one of the first houses we saw and paid almost as much for a house that needed a ton of money to fix it.

In the gospel of John, chapter 15, Jesus said to ask for whatever we want. And LeeAnne did.

Are you ready to take a huge leap of faith? Then pray the following words to God:

Father God, Jesus told us to ask for what we want, so I am obeying Jesus when I ask for the things. Please take wrong teaching from my head. Help me believe your Word.

Fun Stuff (December 2023)

We have a leather love seat in our front room that has seen many visitors over the years. Recently, someone noticed a divot out of the leather in the seat cushion, like what might happen when something sharp is in a person's back pocket and they shift their position. Everybody in the room put their finger into the gouged-out part. LeeAnne said, "Lord, we need new furniture."

A couple of days later, after Bible study, when the person in the love seat stood, she exclaimed, "The divot is gone!" And it was. You could not tell that the damage had ever happened. The young woman was astounded, and exclaimed, "A miracle happened under my butt!" She was amazed that God cares about every detail of our lives, and that He does miraculous things.

LeeAnne just calmly said, "Thanks Lord, but I still want new furniture."

The young woman asked, amazed, "How can you be so chill about this? We just saw a miracle!"

LeeAnne answered, "I have bigger expectations."

Taking Miracles to the Street

LeeAnne

Religion teaches that the Bible says, “Ask for whatever you need,” and then religion goes on to tell you that a lot of things you think you need, you really don’t need. It says that God is stingy and distant, and slow to respond, if he ever does. However, religion also says God is never slow to bring judgement on believers. He heaps out his wrath in short order.

Jesus says, “Ask for what you want.”

Asking for what you want means seeing God as a loving father. This is way easier than trying to guess what God desires. If my granddaughters ask me for something, I am overjoyed to give it to them. Sometimes I say, “First this, then you can have the thing you are asking for.” First eat dinner, then you can have dessert. First grow up a little more, then you can go down the slide by yourself. But oftentimes, I answer their requests instantaneously.

I admit I am accused of spoiling them by giving them whatever they desire. I have been told that they have me wrapped around their little fingers. But I have never given them anything or let them do anything that might hurt them. Seeing them happy makes me happy.

I cannot imagine my granddaughters afraid to ask me for something because they think they don’t deserve their request—or worse—that they think I am stingy and mean and my first response is always no. When I do say no, it never causes them to think that I don’t love them. They know my no is for a reason. And a no doesn’t stop them from asking for something else.

Never once have they prefaced their request with, “If this is in accordance with your will.” I hope they never do. I love it when they expect good things from me. I love it when they tell me their desires.

In my religious upbringing, I was taught that God loves me, and He knows what was best for me. Just so you understand, this meant I believed God's best plan meant scarcely ever getting anything I wanted. It meant making do with the bare minimum or perhaps less than that. I was told, and believed, the desires of my heart were selfish and sinful and totally contrary to God. My expectation from my Heavenly Father was lower than my expectation from my earthly father, and that was pretty low. (Sorry Dad).

If you were raised like me, you have years of disappointment in your soul. Perhaps each disappointment has lowered your expectation. Maybe you're at a place where you don't even bother to pray. I get it. I lived that life. If you have not had a religious upbringing, it is actually easier for you to believe your Creator wants good things for you. Seeing you happy makes Him happy.

Here are some stories about expecting good. A friend with rather severe medical conditions decided he wanted to put Christmas lights on his house. He did not ask for help or pay someone to do it because, in his own admission, he wanted to feel like a man. Unfortunately, the ladder slid out from under him, and he fell, breaking his hip. A broken hip is bad enough, but he was diabetic and had a colostomy.

Someone from the interdenominational prayer group organized a prayer session at the hospital. However, by the time Gary and I picked up the babysitter and then made our way there, our friend's room was filled with people from various churches. The nursing staff told us "There are too many people in the room already. You can't go in." So, we waited in the hallway and listened to people pray. They prayed all the right words, but as they left the room, we heard several people whisper that our friend would not live through the night.

When we walked in, he looked up at us and said, "Thank you for coming. Now I know that I won't die."

We rebuked the spirit of death and called on healing that Jesus provides through his death and resurrection. Our prayers were scarcely different from those who were in the room ahead of us. The difference was we weren't looking at the circumstances. We were looking at a loving God and his son Jesus who was willing to die for us and to a God who truly does miracles. Our friend left the hospital a few weeks later.

As an aside, sometime later, this man heard about some of the spiritual attacks against our home, and he and his wife came over to pray. The man had a container of holy salt, and he was praying as he sprinkled salt around the perimeter of our property. His wife had holy water and prayed as she splashed holy water on the four corners of the house.

I ran a day home at the time, and one of the mothers came to get her child right at that moment. She saw the man sprinkling something down the fence line and the woman putting something wet on the side of the house.

“Exterminators?” she asked me.

I almost laughed out loud as I answered, “Yes, exterminators.”

She listened to my friends praying in tongues and said, “They must be foreigners.”

I answered, “They are speaking in a language I don't understand.”

“Well, I wish you luck in getting rid of the ants or whatever.”

Gary and I love to travel. A couple of years ago, we took a cruise in October up the eastern seaboard and up the Saint Lawrence River. At our first stop in Portland, Maine, our guide said, “I can't believe it is so warm today. The forecast was for rain, but you better enjoy today because a big weather system is moving in, and it will be snowing in Halifax when you arrive tomorrow.”

We answered, “We prayed for good weather for our entire trip.”

The guide wished us a skeptical, “Good luck with that.”

Some years earlier, when we were at Peggy’s Cove, south of Halifax, it was raining and I told Gary and my Heavenly Father, “The next time we come here, I want blue sky.”

The weather report did not look like I would get my desire. A black cloud stretching across the horizon followed us as our ship headed north up the Atlantic, but we were in the light. When we got up the next morning, the temperature was slightly above freezing, and there wasn’t a cloud in the sky. By 10:00 a.m., people were shedding their jackets. We had blue sky and seventy-three degrees when we were at Peggy’s cove. And this was halfway through October.

A friend of ours travels extensively and has been to 74 different countries. He was looking at pictures of places we’ve been and commented, “I can’t believe how many of your pictures have blue sky and sunshine. This is way more than good luck. How do you do it?”

We got to share with him that if Jesus could calm a storm in the Bible story, he certainly could do the same for us today—and he does regularly.

What were the objections to miracles Gary mentioned at the beginning of this book?

- Miracles are impossible; they can’t and don’t happen.
- God is not concerned with things that concern us.
- Miracles happened to prove Jesus was the Son of God and are not necessary today because we are to believe by faith.
- God doesn’t intervene in our lives.
- I’ve never seen a miracle, so miracles don’t happen.

In Jesus’s day, some people did not want to believe he did miracles because “miracles are impossible.” Yet he fed multitudes with the

smallest of resources, healed the sick, raised the dead, and instantly calmed a storm. When they couldn't deny the miracles, some accused him of using the devil's power. Others objected that, if Jesus really was from God, He would do miracles in the way the religion of the day would like to see them.

I've had people tell me that miracles don't happen. That makes me laugh, and it makes me very sad for them. They argue the Bible says we are to live by faith as if miracles are the opposite of faith. However, Jesus commended people as having great faith when they asked for and believed in miracles.

If you have had a Christian upbringing, then you can probably, by faith, accept that Jesus did miracles so that people would believe He was the Son of God. The sticking point is when someone tells you that God is concerned with every detail in your life, even down to your dreams, wishes, and desires. That is an entirely different God than many people have heard about. Believing that he cares and will intervene changes everything.

Dreams and desires you've abandoned long ago will bubble up to the surface, and you will dare to believe that God has good things in store for you. You'll go from being a barely believing believer to a person who says and does radical Jesus things.

Before I retired, my career was looking after children that are on the autism spectrum. I had taken one child to get a haircut, and the hairdresser confided in me that she had arthritis so badly in her hands she would soon have to look for other ways to earn an income. She also went on to say that she and her husband had been trying for another child for a long time, but she was not able to conceive.

I asked her if I could pray for her. Sometimes Christians are bold and say, "I'll pray for you." However, the person never hears them pray. I took this woman's hands in mine and prayed out loud even though we

were in a public place and even though it was obvious that she followed a different religion. Everyone in the shop heard me. “Jesus, please heal Shamma’s hands, so she can continue to work. And open her womb so she can have the child you’ve called into the world.”

She thanked me for praying, and wasn’t embarrassed, and I wasn’t either. A few months later I was back in that shop. I had just walked in the door when Shamma shrieked with joy and ran over and gave me a hug. She announced to everyone in the shop, “This is the woman who healed my hands and performed the miracle, so I could get pregnant.” She patted her baby bump. I got to share with everyone in the shop that I didn’t do the miracle. Jesus the Son of the living God did it because he loves her. And he loves them, too.

I pray for waitresses, bank tellers, clerks, and the staff at school—anyone anywhere. When people tell me of their struggles, I ask if I can pray. You see, I have nothing to lose. It isn’t me trying to conjure up a miracle. The answers to my prayers aren’t dependent on my faith. Jesus has all the faith He needs to make the impossible possible.

I don’t try to preach a mini sermon and get people to confess Jesus as Lord before I ask for a miracle for them. I don’t try to get them to come out to a special meeting before I pray for them. I don’t ask them to repent of their lifestyle or to switch religions. I just put Jesus into their situations, and he is perfectly capable of proving his love for them.

In the Bible stories, Jesus healed people because He had compassion on them. He didn’t ask them to repent, go to church, change their lifestyle, or prove their love for God. He just healed them. And Jesus is the same today.

Prayer:

I’m ready for signs and wonders and miracles in my life. Jesus, I want to take you to the lost and wounded and broken people I meet.

I Am the Whoever

Gary

Psalm 77:14 tells us that God performs miracles and displays his power right in front of us. Agree with the Bible and say out loud:

Okay, I agree you perform miracles. And I want to see you display your power. I want to see miracles.

One of the churchy objections to miracles is that they were to prove Jesus was the Son of God, so they are not needed today. What about his disciples (sometimes called apostles)? They did miracles, too. The religious answer might be, “To prove that they were the apostles, the new leaders of Christianity, the ones chosen to carry the message of salvation. Once they proved that, signs and wonders were no longer needed.”

In Mark 9 is an interesting story. Jesus’s disciples were bent out of shape because they heard of someone doing miracles in Jesus’s name who wasn’t one of the twelve disciples or one of the other close followers. Jesus was not upset, nor was he surprised. He told his disciples to do nothing to stop that person.

In Luke 10, Jesus sent out seventy people, not including his twelve disciples. He told them to go into towns, heal the sick, and announce that the kingdom of God has come near to them. Notice Jesus told them to do what is impossible. And they were to do what is humanly impossible before they preached, established denominations, built churches, or had altar calls.

Jesus told them to do miracles, so they did. They didn’t argue that miracles are not for today or they happened only in the past to prove that Elisha or Elijah were prophets. They didn’t say, “Jesus, you can’t expect miracles from mere mortals.” Like us, they knew miracles were impossible.

Notice the difference? They were told to perform miracles and had no problem with it. The Bible doesn't say one or two of the seventy had a miracle happen. All of them came back rejoicing at the mighty power of God poured out to touch hurting people.

However, today the widespread belief is that miracles don't happen. Ever.

So how did it happen that a bunch of people with no Bible school training, university degrees, or church ordination do what most people only dream about? They understood a very simple yet basic principle.

In John chapter 3 verse 16, Jesus said God, his Father, loved the people of the world so much that whoever believes in Jesus will have eternal life. He doesn't love just those who happen upon the "right" church or just the twelve disciples or just those around to see Jesus in person. He doesn't love just good people. He loves whoever.

John 3:16 is probably the foundation verse for much of Christianity. Whoever. Whoever believes in Jesus will not perish but have eternal life because Jesus didn't come to condemn them. He came to save, and he saves not based on how good we are, if our good outweighs our bad, or even based on how sorry we are that we don't measure up. Jesus saves based on one thing alone: his perfect sacrifice for our sins. The most holy person and the vilest sinner come to God exactly the same way and are justified for exactly the same reason.

Whoever. Everyone who comes to Jesus has exactly the same standing with God. They have been made worthy by Jesus alone. Whoever is everyone who believes that Jesus paid the full price for their failure. You can never be judged for the sin Jesus already paid for. You are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:21), and this is not the least bit based on you.

Say this out loud:

I am the “whoever” Jesus was talking about.

When people come to me and ask me to pray about their situations, I ask them, “Why me?” They often answer, “Because you have a direct line to God.”

I do. That doesn’t mean I get everything I want or that I don’t go through struggles. The truth is that everyone who looks to Jesus has a direct line to God. Bad thinking and wrong teaching hide the truth. Satan doesn’t want believers to know they are the “whoever.”

But you know.

In John chapter 14, Jesus says that whoever believes in him will do even greater miracles than he did. He said whoever, not those with the right church, not just the twelve disciples, not just those around to see Jesus in person, and not just the good church-going people. Whoever. The same whoever.

He was not talking about the whoever once they get a theological degree and not the whoever once they have attained a sinless life. The same whoever. You. Me. Brand new Christian. Been in the church 50 years Christian. Whoever.

You agreed that you are one of the “whoever” when I wrote about salvation but, when I say you are the same “whoever” to perform miracles, I hear these objections:

- Miracles are rare occurrences so I shouldn’t expect them.
- Performing miracles are for the specially called, anointed, and appointed.
- I’m not a priest or a pastor.
- I’m not perfect or sinless.
- I need miracles myself.

I need miracles myself.

So back to John 3 verse 16. Do you need Jesus to be your Savior? Of course. Does that make it impossible for Jesus to be anyone else's redeemer? Of course not. So why do you think if you need healing yourself, you can't expect Jesus to pour healing into someone else through you?

Your circumstances have absolutely nothing to do with God's ability. Just because you need a miracle in one area of your life (or 50 miracles), it doesn't mean that our loving Father won't do miracles in other areas of your life or that the miracles you have prayed for aren't already heading your way.

I am not perfect or sinless.

I hope you are not. If you were perfect and sinless, then it would prove that mankind could attain sinless perfection and we wouldn't need a Savior. Jesus's life and death would be for nothing.

Was Elijah perfect? Was Elisha? Or Moses? How about Peter? No, they were like us in every way, yet they still did mighty miracles. It is easy for me to see my own faults, and sometimes others point them out to me. But it is my own faults and weakness that point me to Jesus. I came to him as a sinner, and he forgave me. Am I perfect now? Not anywhere close, but I am forgiven.

I am in right standing with the Almighty despite how I might feel or any shortcomings on my part. All my sins are forgiven. All of them have been forgiven—past, present, and future. I didn't come to Jesus based on my worthiness, and I don't remain in him based on my worthiness.

Sometimes Christians argue with me that my future sins cannot be forgiven until I repent of them. That is an odd concept. All our sins were future sins when Jesus died. The Bible tells me he died for all the sins of the world—all of them. If you don't believe that, you would lose your salvation with every stray thought, the things you should

have done but didn't, and the things you did that you shouldn't have. Anything not of faith is sin. Do you even know what you need to repent of?

When I believed in the finished work of Jesus, I moved from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's son. I'm not living at the border of his kingdom, hoping I'll make it in when I die. I sin, but I am forgiven. I go to Jesus because He loves me, and I have relationship with him. Note that I am not promoting doing whatever you want or sinning freely. I'm telling you that God uses imperfect people. And he blesses imperfect people because Jesus is perfect.

In the gospel of Matthew, chapter 4, it says that all who were sick were brought to Jesus, and He healed them all—all of them. He didn't ask if they were worthy, he didn't expose their darkest sins first, he didn't ask them to make restitution, and he didn't even ask them to believe in Him before they could be healed. Even the sinners were healed—whoever came to Him.

Let me put it a different way. In Bible times, when people brought a lamb as a sin offering, the priest didn't examine the sinners to see how sinful they were. The priest examined the lamb to see if it was without spot or blemish. Jesus is our perfect Lamb. Father God isn't examining you for sin. He is looking at the sacrifice. He is looking at Jesus.

I'm not a priest or a pastor.

The devil has spread the lie that priests and pastors, perhaps missionaries, are the only ones really doing God's will. If anyone deserves God's ear, it's them. If God will do anything for hurting humanity, it is through them. They are the only one's granted God's special favor, like having miracles happen when they pray. Unfortunately, church leaders sometimes believe this lie. If there are miracles, it is to verify that their calling is from God. It is to announce to the world that they have the one right church, the one perfect set of

rules, and the one ministry that God has elevated through signs and wonders. That is so not true. Signs and wonders are for everyone.

In Matthew 15:25 Jesus calls miracles “children’s bread”—A staple, a necessity, and so ordinary.

And like the Matthew 15 story, signs and wonders need to get to where the lost are. And that is outside of the church.

Performing miracles are for the specially called, anointed, and appointed.

In 1 Corinthians 12:28, the Bible tells us that God gave to the church “some apostles, some prophets, workers of miracles.” You might look at this verse and say, “Working of miracles is for the select few.”

Absolutely, there are people called to minister with signs and wonders. The Happy Hunters were people that introduced me to the miraculous when I was a teen. However, there are many evangelists who travel the globe presenting Jesus, their meetings set apart by signs and wonders. I have met many miracle-working servants of God.

But the signs and wonders are not just for them. I hope you noticed that most of the various miracles that we wrote about in this book happened outside of a church building or a church setting. Most did not happen at special meetings. Miracles happen today whenever and wherever we are because the King of Glory is with us.

Not everyone is called to be a church-ordained minister, priest, or evangelist. However, we are all called to carry the presence of Jesus. In fact, in Revelation 5:10 the Bible calls us a nation of kings and priests (there goes your excuse). There are different callings and different anointings. The Bible uses a farming picture when it says one plows, one sows, and another reaps. Spreading the good news about Jesus was never meant to be the job of the church leader alone. Can

you imagine how different our world would be if every Christian let Jesus touch the world through them in miraculous ways?

Miracles are rare occurrences, so I shouldn't expect them.

Unfortunately, miracles are rarer than hen's teeth in some circles. Perhaps you've been in a spiritual desert, a famine, a miracle-void place. Your past experience (or lack of experience) does not dictate your future. This is a time for miracles to break out all around you. Things are changing.

A biblical example is the children of Israel crossing the desert, and there was no water. It was dry, barren, and hopeless. Then God brings water from a rock, not just a bit of dampness or a tiny trickle but rivers in the desert. Manna fell from heaven for their food every day. A cloud protected them from the sun, and their clothes never wore out. (LeeAnne complains that I have that miracle with my tee-shirts).

The desert is a great place to see God's hand outstretched toward you. You know you need Father God's intervention, and you recognize it when it happens. Get ready. An outpouring of miracles is taking place.

Here are some stories that might inspire you. The Live-ins were started by a friend of mine a couple of years before I met him. I'm not talking about the hippy-commune sort of live-in, but the kind where people learned about Jesus. I met Father Claire when I was president of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) at the University of Lethbridge. Father Claire was the university chaplain and a strong supporter of IVCF. When the university was trying to get rid of our Christian club, Father Claire was the one who came to our rescue and secured a spot for InterVarsity that has lasted decades.

I met with him once a week, and we would spend an hour praying for lost souls, that Jesus would be revealed to the university students and staff, and that God's kingdom would come on earth as it is in heaven. He was the first Roman Catholic priest I had ever spent time with, and

his love for people and for God was beyond anyone I had ever known, so when he invited LeeAnne and me to a weekend retreat called a Live-in, I said yes.

The Live-in took place in a Catholic high school on a weekend. I was not impressed when I arrived to discover my nametag read, “Gary Dyck is getting to know Jesus.” I was offended. I already knew Jesus. To my surprise, and despite years of attending church, over the weekend I realized that I knew very little about the Heavenly Father’s love for me. LeeAnne and I became “Live-in converts” and invited many people to attend.

Not only did many unsaved people attend Live-ins because they were not held in a church but, during the weekends, many church people threw away their church prejudices. Over the next years, LeeAnne and I worked behind the scenes with the Live-ins, serving the “sheep” as we called the people making the weekend. Eventually, LeeAnne and I were working as leaders, called Shepherds.

Many miracles, signs, and wonders took place during those weekends. Someone would be walking down the hall, and Jesus would appear in front of them. Angels sang regularly, sometimes joining our praise sessions and sometimes totally drowning us out. The amazing fragrance of Jesus would fill a room or fill the whole school. There are many things I could tell you, but I will relate only two.

I was giving the God’s love talk to a room full of “sheep” when suddenly I saw Jesus standing at the table in front of me. His hand was on a young man’s shoulder. I was drawn to Jesus like metal shavings to a magnet, and I continued to talk about God’s love as I walked to him. Jesus disappeared, and I was standing where he had been. I put my hand on the young man’s shoulder as I talked.

Then I saw Jesus at the next table, standing behind a woman. He was running his fingers through her hair. As I walked to Jesus, he

disappeared. I said to myself, “Jesus said he only did what he saw his Father do, so I am going to do what I see Jesus do.”

Even though it was not something I would ever consider doing, I ran my fingers through this woman’s hair as I told of how God is not angry with us. (And I hoped that LeeAnne would understand and not be angry with me). I was behind the woman, so I never saw her reaction. LeeAnne told me afterward that the instant I touched her hair, tears rolled down her face like a waterfall.

I followed Jesus for an hour, talking the whole time about how wonderful he is, and all the while doing what I saw him do. Sometimes he just stood in one spot. Sometimes he walked around tables, stopping to look at people. Sometimes Jesus put his hand on a person’s shoulder or on their head. He even put his hand under one man’s chin and turned his face up to look up at him. He picked up another person’s hand and talked to her like she was the only person in the room. I did what he did. When I invited people to give their lives to Jesus, or to receive more of Jesus, people stampeded to the front—every single person. Even the “shepherds” cried out to Jesus for more of him. Do you want that? Do you want to see Jesus?

At a different Live-in, when LeeAnne and I were shepherds, we were praying in the school library. It was the room set apart for the weekend to be the chapel for the “backup,” the people serving the sheep. We were standing with our arms raised and praying that our Father would soften hard hearts, so they could hear that Jesus forgives completely and loves them deeply. As we were praying, a cloud formed above our heads. It wasn’t a storm cloud. It wasn’t wet or cold. It looked almost like fog or mist but felt like a super-soft blanket of love.

The cloud grew, filling the room from the ceiling down. As it reached our up-raised arms, we were unable to stand. We dropped to our knees, still with our arms outstretched toward heaven, and the cloud descended to our fingertips.

That is when someone walking down the hall decided to come in. The woman fell in the doorway, unable to lift her head off the floor, unable to crawl in, unable to crawl out. She was overwhelmed by the love of God. A man tried to step over her, and he fell in the doorway, landing beside the woman. While he was having visions of God, a woman tried to leap over both people in the doorway. She dropped like she hit a wall and fell unceremoniously on top of the other two.

The cloud of God's presence dropped lower, and LeeAnne and I slid to the floor. Meanwhile, people were gathering in the hallway wanting to get in. A couple of them decided to grab the feet of the people in the doorway and pull them out so they could get by. When they touched them, they were zapped by God's love and power, and they ended up on the hallway floor, basking in God's love.

Somebody who had never seen that sort of manifestation ran up and put a hand on one of them to ask, "Are you all right?" Then she was on the floor, too.

We learned afterward that light shone from the room, a warm, inviting, beautiful, amazing light. A couple dozen people had gathered by the doorway, all wanting to get in. Then the Spirit of God rolled into the hallway and everyone standing slid to the floor. I guess it was quite a sight to see the hallway strewn with people, their bodies overcome by God's presence, but their spirits wrapped in his embrace.

I share this story because your Father wants to meet you where you are. He wants to invade your life whether you are at a special meeting, in church, or if you gave up on church years ago. He will meet you where you are at. Do you want him to? Then ask Him.

Jesus, Father God, Holy Spirit, I want you and need you to meet me where I am at. I give you permission to do your amazing signs and wonders inside of me, around me and for the advancement of your kingdom.

My Dream for You

Gary

There are so many things I could write about, but I want to bring this book to a close. God is not a respecter of persons. I say that to tell you that miracles are for everyone, regardless of your brand of Christianity. There is only one church.

The church is made up of everyone who believes that Jesus took our punishment on the cross. I explain it this way: we are the sheep and our Father, the Great Shepherd, put under shepherds in place to look after us. One shepherd may say, “We are crossing the desert to the oasis. Once we get there, there will be lots of food and water.” As the sheep cross the desert, they might think they are the only right flock. After all, to be a sheep means to suffer lack.

Another shepherd takes his flock up the mountain with the promise that there is a wonderful valley on the other side with lots of green pastures and still water. From the top, they may look at other flocks and say, “The one true flock is the one that climbs this mountain. To be a sheep means daily pushing on.” Then there is the flock that settles into the nearest valley. “Any real sheep would never leave this place of comfort,” they say. “Anyone other than us are false sheep.”

But they are all sheep whether their leader is called pastor, priest, or bishop. Their real leader is called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. There is one right church. It is made up of everyone that follows Jesus, regardless of denomination.

I’ll explain it a different way. In 1 Corinthians 12, starting in verse 15, the writer addresses differences. He says, the eye can’t say to the hand, “Because you are not an eye, I don’t need you.” Apply this to church groups. Can the Pentecostals say to the Catholics, “because you are

not like us, you are not part of God's kingdom?" Can the Baptists say to the Methodists, "You are not part of the body?"

Miracles happen anywhere Jesus is, and he is with you. He is no respecter of persons or denominations. As a new believer in Jesus, you can expect miracles, signs, and wonders just as much as the minister, evangelist, or priest.

I've heard people say that if they could just have an amazing miracle, they would evangelize the world. Perhaps they would empty hospitals and maybe even raise the dead. Those are great goals or dreams, but many of the signs and miracles I've written about aren't for the masses. They are for a person or two because God loves people so much that he gives them individual proof that he loves them.

If God is calling you to be an evangelist with signs and wonders, or if he is telling you to empty hospitals, go for it. Just remember that miracles are not about you. They are not about the person who prays for the answer. Miracles are completely about Jesus, the Answer. We are just vessels He uses to pour out his love. Having miracles happen around you does not make you more spiritual or holy or special.

When people tell God that they will serve him, they are usually thinking of leading a wonderful team in full-time ministry. They aren't usually thinking that God will say, "I want you to work at this dead-end job for the next ten years with people so vile you'll have trouble staying in the same room with them. But I need you there to love them as I do so that you can shine as a light in a dark place."

LeeAnne spent time with one family for almost fifteen years and been with them through many terrible situations. She was there revealing Jesus. Her love for them is the biggest witness or sign, and there have been miracles along the way, too.

I worked at one job for eighteen years. I was working there when my children were born and when the doctors gave them each a medical

death sentence. The long-time employees knew of those miracles, yet revival did not break out at my workplace. Our company got bought out by a competitor and then closed. In the last three weeks, I had the privileged of leading several of my workmates to Jesus. One of them said, “I’ve been watching you for almost two decades. I want what you have.”

Another employee from that company told me of a time years before when he’d seen a dead child on the road brought back to life, so he knew there was a God. He just didn’t think that God could love or forgive him. I got to tell him that the child on the road was my son, and that God’s love is greater than our sin. You see, God is not willing that any should perish. He has great patience, waiting for his children to recognize their Father.

As we’ve written this account of the things God has done, we have tried to avoid stories that might sound like luck. However, I’ll take a short detour to tell you this. I am a hunter. My reputation for getting game had spread, and people would ask to hunt with me. I prefer to hunt by myself so I can spend the time talking to my Father; however, on occasion I would take someone from work with me because it gave me opportunity to talk to them about Jesus.

I picked up Les, and we drove to the mountains but, just as we got there, a storm blew in. Freezing rain was falling, and the gravel road was coated with ice. My little truck slid off the road into the window-deep, snow-filled ditch. I said to Les, “I guess this is where God wants us to hunt.”

He replied, “You’re kidding?”

He stayed in the truck while I crawled out the window, walked 25 yards into the forest and shot a deer. I dragged it back to the truck and said to Les, “Now it’s time for someone to come pull us out.” Within a minute, a forestry truck came down the road and winched us out.

Les told everyone at work the following Monday, “God goes with Gary when he goes hunting.” You see, God’ blessing and favor on your life can be a sign to unbelievers, too.

Even a dream can be a sign from God. On my mother’s birthday, her first birthday after my father died, I had a dream just before I woke up. I dreamed that, as I walked into my mother’s house, my father was walking up the stairs. He was not old and sick, but young, like he was in his twenties. I exclaimed, “Dad, you are dead. You are not supposed to be here.”

He answered, “I’ve come to bring your mother a present, so she isn’t discouraged.”

That was the whole dream. That night, after I was done work, I called my mother and wished her happy birthday. At the very end of our conversation, I said, “Mom, I had the strangest dream this morning. Just before I woke up, I dreamed that Dad went to your house to give you a birthday present.”

My mother became silent. Then she took a deep breath and said, “I wasn’t going to tell anyone, but Dad woke me up this morning and said he had a birthday present for me. Then he took me on a tour of heaven. He said he wanted to show me what was ahead so that I wouldn’t be discouraged.” She went on to tell me of the amazing things she’d seen, the people she’d met, and of meeting Jesus. My dream was confirmation to her that what she had experienced was real. It was a sign.

At the beginning of this book, I wrote that my prayer for you is that your mind would be open to hearing what Father God has to tell you and that your heart would absolutely vibrate with excitement at the possibilities ahead of you.

As much as I wanted to include the miracles that happened to our friends, I tried to keep this account to the things that God has done for us personally. I know beyond any doubt that Father God will work through you in miraculous ways. He has stirred the desire for more of him in your heart. He won't disappoint. Across the world, our Father is pouring out an anointing for miracles, signs, and wonders. And He has called you to be part of that.

Jesus said signs and wonders follow those who believe (Mark 16:17). However, there are many people who believe in Jesus who, so far, haven't seen signs, wonders, and miracles following them.

This verse has the same meaning as in Psalm 23 where it says goodness and mercy will follow you all the days of your life. It actually means goodness and mercy will track you down. Signs and wonders are part of Father God's goodness. They are pursuing you.

Signs and wonders follow those who believe that our Father longs to reveal himself to them. Miracles follow those who believe God is good. They follow those who believe God's word that says nothing is impossible. Signs and wonders follow those who believe that signs and wonders follow them.

Galatians 3:5 says that God works miracles amongst us because we believe the message about Jesus.

My dream and my prayer for you: *“Lord Jesus, make believers out of everyone who has read these words. Amen.”*

Conclusion

LeeAnne

Have you ever cried out, “Where is the God of Elijah?” Are you longing for a walk with God where the impossible happens? Are you desperate to see God move in your life? Are you crying out for God’s intervention in the broken and wounded lives of people you love?

Nothing is impossible with God.

Mark 16:20 says that God confirms his word with signs. Who is the Word? Jesus is the living Word of God. Father God is continually confirming through signs, wonders, and miracles that Jesus is the Son of God, that Jesus is the Word made flesh, that Jesus is the Messiah, that Jesus is our sacrificial lamb, and that Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Father God longs to reveal Jesus through you.

More than ever, the world around us is looking for something and Someone beyond themselves. Tell your Father you are willing to be his vessel. Then watch what happens. He will set you on a path where the impossible becomes normal!

Now is the time for signs and wonders to follow you. Now is the time to pick up the mantle and cross to a whole new realm.

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