**Everyday Miracles**

**Chapter 1**

Today we want to start discussing a book by Bruce Wilkinson, called *You Were Born for This.* We will be looking at keys to a life of predictable miracles and invite you to encounter the miracles that God does do on a regular basis. Some might call them divine coincidences, or miracle moments or supernatural provisions that God wants us to be to others.

But we want to consider a few questions:

* Why are these experiences of the miraculous so rare for most people?
* What if Heaven actually wanted you to experience them on a regular basis?
* What if ordinary people like you and me are invited to partner with God to deliver miracles to others?

Last week I bumped into a friend who used to deliver meals when I popped into a store. This friend had faced many difficulties in his life before. But a few months ago his employment hours were cut back in the business he was working for. He began sharing about his problems of ill health, car troubles, as well as financial difficulties. My heart went out to him. I began to share some of God’s promises and saw him visibly encouraged. But I felt a prompting to give him some of the money I had in my bag, although I knew it would not be enough to meet all his needs. But I prayed God to use it as seed and multiply it to him. So I slipped him a few notes and was deeply touched at his surprise and delight, and I just knew in that moment that God used me to be a small miracle in his life that day. He had been praying for a miracle for his pressing needs, and unbeknown to him, I was prepared to meet some of those needs. As I walked away I felt the joy of being part of a miracle, that outweighed the joy of receiving the miracle he felt he’d just received. I sensed God’s presence and power in that moment, and knew that I wanted God to use me regularly to deliver a necessary miracle to someone.

When it comes to miracles, most people see the world as divided in two. On the far left is a region we could call the Land of Signs and Wonders, where miracles seem to happen occasionally, but only for a select few in a few unusual churches and in faraway places. In this region the blind regain their sight and invalids begin to walk.

On the far right is the Land of Good Deeds. Here good people are watching out for each other and doing good works. And God is pleased with that. In this Good Deeds Land, people may believe in miracles and perhaps even study them, but they don’t expect to actually see any, much less be a part of them on a regular basis. God rarely shows up here in a supernatural way. Why should He? No one is expecting the miraculous. And this is where the majority of believers live.

But we have overlooked the land in between – where people believe that God wants to intervene – and He does - in supernatural ways in human affairs on a regular basis. Here unmet needs are seen by us ordinary people as golden opportunities for God to show up, and to do so through us, at almost any moment. In this land we are not waiting for rare, special times for God to part the skies, but we expect daily miracles for ourselves and others like us, right here and right now.

We call this Every-Day-Miracle-Territory. Here there is great hope and in every situation, we see potential for an unforgettable “God-incidence” – not a coincidence, but when God steps in to meet a real need through us in a way that only He can. Few believers live in this territory; where the focus is not on what God can do, but what He is able to do through us.

We want to learn to reclaim the miraculous as a normal way of life. Everyone we encounter has an unmet need that God strongly desires to meet, very possibly through you and me, as we do God’s work by God’s power. We need to partner with heaven to deliver a miracle to someone in need today.

It might be timely word, it might be meeting a need of finances. It could be a miracle of forgiveness, or even healing when we pray for someone’s pain or sickness. Someone might be open to give their lives to Jesus as we share the good news.

Now Jimmy was a practical down-to-earth guy. He struggled to come up with even one time in the past 10 years when he could say with certainly that the supernatural had clearly showed up. When he heard this teaching, he committed himself to being God’s delivery agent when and where he was called upon. The next morning he was dropping off windows at a job site, and struck up a conversation with a carpenter name Nick. Nick shared how his marriage was on the rocks and he had no more hope. Normally Jimmy would have expressed sympathy and quickly steered away from such a sensitive topic. This time though, he hung in there and sensed the man’s heart was open. So he asked a miracle-inviting question, “*I really want to help you. What can I do for you?*” Without hesitation Nick said, *“You could tell me what to do next. I’m tied up in knots, but I really want this marriage to work.”* Jimmy panicked, but took a courageous step of faith. He told the man to fetch something to write with, to buy time, and remembered to relax and give God a minute – the miracle was God’s to do. When the man returned, Jimmy heard himself saying, “*You need to go home and make your bed. That’s all I have to say”*, he said apologetically. The carpenter stared at him and gasped, “*How did you know? That is a giant source of conflict for us! I’m the last one up and I never make the bed. My wife says it’s a sign of everything that’s wrong with the marriage.”* He decided to drive home at lunch and make the bed before his wife got home. This story shows us how Jimmy didn’t think he had help to give, but he was ready to say what God prompted him to say. And that was the beginning of God saving Nick’s marriage.

Would you be willing to open your heart to God to use you to deliver a small miracle to someone in need today? Firstly, you need to believe that God wants to use you to partner with Him to be that divine appointment for someone. Ask Him to use you as a delivery agent of what He tells you to do, and you will regularly see the lives of many people touched by God through you.

God bless you as we learn to expect God to fill our lives with predictable miracles.

**Everyday Miracles**

**Chapter 2**

Last week we started a new series, teaching us to become delivery agents for small miracles in the lives of others. God wants to perform these God-incidences, or everyday miracles though us as we learn to partner with Him. It could be a God-word for someone, or a financial miracle, or a prayer for healing when God shows up. But we need to be open and expectant that we can be used at any moment to bring the power of God to meet anyone’s need.

But why do we continually fall into a rut of trying to help others on our own, or avoid situations where we would be forced to depend upon God for success? The heart of the problem is that we do not actually partner with Him in delivering these miracles, even though we know His power.

Sometimes we invite God to use us, and we sense a nudge in a certain direction, but we hold back from stepping out in faith, because we are afraid we will be made to look foolish. God wants to do something supernatural, but we limit God by protecting ourselves with the predictable. We can begin to explain away God’s nudges and proceed with our own plans, but His glory and power will only be released by our faith in His ability. Many of us long for more of the Spirit and yet resist actively partnering with His power. One day when we were ministering in a visiting church, I sensed a word for someone I was praying for. First I felt foolish, as the thought crossed my mind that it was just my own imagination. But I decided to share the word with the person, and he began to weep. It was a confirmation of what he was facing and was a great encouragement to him; that God understood his situation and had an answer for his need. Sometimes we might see a picture of some kind or a Scripture for someone, although we do not know their circumstances. The Holy Spirit is so keen to want to use us as his prophetic voice or agent far more often than we give him opportunity to do so.

The point we need to see, is that ordinary men and women really can actively partner with God to accomplish the miraculous. Let us have a new expectation and hope that God truly wants to use us in a way that shows His hand and power to others. Nothing compares to the wonder of seeing God’s goodness and glory break through – and knowing that we played a part in it.

One of the last things Jesus did to His friends before He returned to Heaven, was to hand out their new job description: “*Go into all the world for Me …. And do the impossible”* in Matt 28 and Acts 1:8. They might have felt, “*Please Lord, no! We can’t possibly. Look at our limitations and failures*.” Or they might have felt that they could not wait to get started. But Jesus’ instruction was, “*Wait … You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses … to the ends of the earth*.” This power is not potential power, like still water, but power in motion, like a gale-force wind. In other words, He was saying, “*I’m sending you to do what you cannot do in your own power. You can only do it as My power moves through you.”* And that is what happened in the book of Acts, as God used them to do what they could never have done on their own.

These were not special people, but as one apostle wrote, “*I, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God… I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*” 1 Cor 2;1,3-5. In fact Paul saw that his weakness actually made room – created a miracle opportunity – for God to demonstrate His miracle power.

Bruce Wilkinson tells of his friend, John, with a big heart, and involved in a prison ministry each week. He challenged the inmates to invite God to use them in supernatural ways there behind bars. The question, “*How may I help you?”* began opening so many doors as they began to take risks inviting God to work through them. They began leading hardened convicts to Christ as Saviour. One inmate was so keen to see his child, whom he had not seen for many years, as the child’s mother would always destroy his letters of request. John then prayed that God could intervene and bring the inmate’s child for a visit. So the inmate decided to write once more, asking the mother for a visit. The very next Sunday she came, and he saw his daughter for the first time in years. And since that day he was able to see her regularly. The truth is: helping other people to experience personal miracles is the most wonderful encouragement in the world. What opens the door for God to work through us?

* We intentionally partner with God’s Spirit, and depend on Him for success.
* We step out in faith to do His work in a context where failure is certain, unless He acts.
* We take risks based on our belief that God WANTS to show up and WILL show up in miraculous ways.

These *personal* miracles are usually completed in a person’s heart as well as some tangible evidence of His power. God takes the time to intervene in our day to day needs in a special way that’s meaningful to us in particular, and shows how intimately He knows and loves us.

We can see it like this: our good works for God = ministry, but our ministry + God’s supernatural power = miracles. And we weak humans have all been invited to partner with an extraordinary God to touch lives in His time by His power for His glory. We can end up deciding it’s perfectly natural to expect miracles and be prepared to go to the ends of the earth. As we live every day in active co-operation with the Spirit, we recognise the life that God intended for us. Paul prays, *“that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened; in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and His incomparably power for us who believe.… like the working of His mighty strength, which He extended in Christ when He raised Him form the dead.*” Eph 1:17-20. It is not feeling good about what you’ve done to help others, but feeling astonished by what God has done for others through you. Depend on Him step out in faith. He wants to and will show up in supernatural ways through you. God bless you as we learn together, to expect God to fill our lives with everyday miracles.

**Everyday Miracles**

**Chapter 3**

Last time we spoke about intentionally partnering with God’s Spirit and depending on Him for success. We step out in faith to do his work in a context where failure is certain, unless He acts, and we take risks based on our belief that God WANTS to show up and will show up in miraculous ways.

We’re studying Bruce Wilkinson’s book, “*You were born for this”,* and today we want to look at our being a link between Heaven and earth. If we were to ask you what you think is happening in Heaven at this moment, there would be many different answers. People mention angels, harps, lot of praise and worship, God sitting on His throne. But does Heaven have an agenda for the day? Most of us think that what happens there doesn’t really affect what happens on earth. We want to pull back the veil of Heaven to reveal what God is doing right now to connect with people in need on earth. And He is at actively at work on tasks that matter greatly to Him and that He’s constantly looking for volunteers to help Him.

We see some of this in 1 Kings 22 when a ruthless king Ahab was ruling Israel. His advisors worshipped idols and he was trying to decide whether to go into battle against Syria or not. Eventually Ahab brought in the prophet Micaiah who saw directly into heaven. He said, “*I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of Heaven standing by, on His right hand and on His left. And the Lord said, “Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?” So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, and said, “I will persuade him.” The Lord said to him, “In what way?”* When the angel tells God his plans, God approves and sends him on his way. “*You shall persuade him, and also prevail.”* He says, “*Go out and do so.”*

This could almost be seen as a business meeting. God wants to rescue Israel from its evil king, but He’s open to ideas on how to accomplish it, and when the spirit (or angel) proposes to mislead the king through his advisors, God not only approves, but promises him success in the end.

From this extraordinary glimpse in Heaven we have 2 insights: Firstly, God has work to do and he is working right now on a kind of daily to-do list. It says, on God’s right and left are hosts of Heaven, which seems as though they’ve been summoned to a meeting with God.

Jesus also said, *“My Father is always at His work to this very day, and I, too, am working.”* (John 5:17) Also “*The Son can do nothing of Himself; but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.”* So during Jesus’ lifetime on earth, Father and Son were hard at work on Heaven’s do-to-list. But we can ask, who is God looking to now to complete His agenda?

Could it be that Heaven today should be thought of as Mission Central, where God is actively looking for and sending out volunteers who will carry out His agenda on earth? The 3 ways God gets things done on earth is a) in Person, as when he dictated the 10 commandments, b) by an angel (eg Gabriel) and c) through human beings.

How many of us in our lives have been clearly nudged to stop and help a person, but we didn’t? Most of us have had that happen to us. Everywhere around us God has urgent work to be done and at all times He is looking for volunteers who will partner with Him. He is actively, constantly and passionately sending out requests.

We might be praying that God would deliver a miracle in a friend’s life. We actually believe that God is reluctant to do miracles, and that we need to try to persuade Him day after day, to relent and decide to act. But remember the verse, “*The eyes of God run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those who heart is loyal to Him.”* 2 Chron 16:9. NIV says, “*whose hearts are fully committed to him.”* Why? So He can reveal His supernatural power in their lives!

So God is constantly at work in supernatural ways in our world. He has much He wants to get done, and is actively looking for loyal partners who care about what He cares about. He is regularly nudging people to respond, but most people miss His intension or simply say, “no”. What would our lives be like if we started saying “yes”?

Years ago my husband had a dream of an animal attacking my parents and it was trying to destroy them. He shared the dream with me and we prayed earnestly for their protection from any attack on their lives and remembered the next day to pray for them. Later in the day we received a phone call from them telling us that they were travelling to a nearby city and due to some problem, the car went out of control and rolled into a ditch. Both of them were miraculously unhurt, but for a few bruises, and we knew that the nudge to pray for them was God’s plan to protect them from the enemy who wanted to destroy them.

Perhaps many people facing dangers in different places, have died, because someone, or perhaps dozens of people said “no” to Heaven’s nudge to pray or help someone in need. A friend shared with me about a young man who used to go to his church, but had been absent for a long time and became involved in many devious practices. My friend dreamt one night that this young man was facing dangers in his life. He felt the nudge from God to try to find this man living in the same township and share with him again about the love of God. But he kept putting it off and never obeyed that nudge. Two weeks later, he saw a police van nearby and on enquiry heard that this same young man had been stabbed to death. Imagine how my friend felt at that moment.

A miracle-filled life is not a special existence reserved for a select few, but is God’s will for every one of us. When we settle for less, our lives lose fulfilment, and purpose and extreme needs in our communities and around the world go unmet. We were born to be a living link between heaven and earth, to be God’s ambassador, making Him visible in unforgettable ways. God passionately desires to show Himself strong for us and through us, and because every person we meet has a significant need that only God can meet. Let’s obey those nudges He gives us to reach out to someone today.

God bless you as we learn together, to expect God to fill our lives with everyday miracles as we rely upon Him.

**Everyday Miracles**

**Chapter 4**

Last week we spoke about the agenda of God in heaven, and how we can partner with Him to accomplish his plans and purposes here on earth. He is constantly at work in supernatural ways in our world and is actively looking for loyal partners who care about what He cares about. Often we sense a nudge to reach out to someone, and yet often we ignore that nudge and miss an opportunity that God was asking us to bring his love or power into the life of someone.

Today we want to look at one of 4 keys that are based on biblical insights and will lead to breakthrough in our potential to partner supernaturally with God in His work on earth. Naturally other spiritual disciplines like Bible study, regular fellowship, acts of service and prayer are also indispensable to Christian growth. But if these 4 keys can become a habit, they will radically change how we see the world and how we partner with God in the supernatural realm.

Bruce Wilkinson tells how while driving, he prayed that God would use him miraculously, and minutes later, he saw a man wearing a turban, waving his arms next his broken down van on the highway. Bruce stopped and the man came running, asking for help as no tow-in truck was willing to help without cash in hand. He had been stranded there for hours, while passing motorists shouted abusive slogans at him. His family of small children were waiting at home. Bruce apologised on behalf of those who shouted abuses, and reached out for an envelope in his dairy and gave him enough for the tow-in truck as well as something towards having his van fixed. The man was speechless, then, thanked him profusely, and asked for details to repay him. “*No need for that at all*,” Bruce said. When he started walking back to his van, he returned and asked, “*Sir, are you an angel?”* “*No*”, he said, but agreed that God had set up this meeting with him. When you really volunteer, your task may also be only minutes away.

We know Jesus’ last command to us all, “*Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.”* But have you noticed? Millions of believers agree that it is important, and million are willing and available to go, but few actually go.

So the first key is called the **Master Key**, which unlocks the invisible door to Every Day Miracle Territory, which is full of miracle opportunities. This Master Key is an urgent prayer to ask God to send you to do His work. You regularly enter the throne room of Heaven and ask God, “*Please send me*!”

With this key we are turning his command into our heartfelt request, “*I heard Your command, but I realise that hearing and agreeing are not enough. Therefore, I am sincerely asking, “God, please send me today on a miracle mission. And I’m letting You know, when you send me, I will go*!’” When we pray this way, God knows that He can call on you. Whether it is a nudge or He simply puts you at the scene of something he wants done, He knows you have committed to act on His behalf.

We look at Isaiah who also saw behind the veil of heaven. *“In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: ‘Holy, holy , holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!” And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.*” This was just another day in heaven, but on this particular day, a witness from earth was invited to watch. And Isaiah sees that God is at work, focused on Heaven’s agenda for earth and is looking for a volunteer to carry it out.

*“And the voice of the Lord, said, ‘Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”* Then Isaiah said, *“Here am I! Send me.”* Isaiah was asked to speak for God in the courts of kings and deliver striking visions. God asks, “*Whom shall I send?”* and *“Who will go for us*?” Both questions are important, because not all who are sent will choose to go. God is looking for volunteers who have committed to go without any preconditions when He asks.

God is looking for men and women who will use the Master Key, who want to do Heaven’s work so much that they earnestly request to be sent. The wonderful thing is that when we ask to be sent by God, he matches each of us with people we can help. Just like the story of the man on the highway that Bruce Wilkinson helped. He’ll do it for us, too. It is not chance. God will send us on different missions, and they will all have God’s fingerprints all over them. And we will both know we were set up for a miracle by the King of the universe.

There are often 2 responses from people: A) Some believe God just wants them to be available and are willing for Him to work through them in miraculous ways. Or B) Some believe that God wants them to ask proactively to be sent on miracle missions. The first is a passive response without any results. The second believes that God’s miracle agenda for them is primarily their responsibility to fulfil by the power of the Spirit. Where do you see yourself in these belief statements? When you and I purposefully ask God to send us to do His work, we take on a completely different role in our day - we are now His delivery agents for anyone we meet. Because God knows and cares about every need, He loves to send servants who are passionate about delivering visible proofs of his goodness and glory to people.

You might think that you must somehow make yourself more worthy before He would favour you with a miracle mission. But he will send us as we trust in His power, and it may surprise you that God will use anyone, because so few volunteer, and there is a backlog of divine missions waiting to be delivered.

Here a few steps: 1) In your mind consciously enter the throne of Heaven, and come like Isaiah. 2) Volunteer with the words, *“Here am I. Send me!”* 3) Pre-commit to act when you are nudged. “*As You lead, Lord, I will respond.*” 4) Actively put your faith in God to deliver His miracle through you. Just depend on Him. Write on your mirror, to remind you, *“Lord, today I will be your delivery person. Send me!”* And you will become part of God’s adventure. God bless you as you volunteer and go and bring God’s miracle to someone in need today.

**Everyday Miracles**

**Chapter 5**

Last week we spoke about the first of 4 keys that will lead to breakthrough in our potential to partner supernaturally with God in His work on earth. This Master Key is an urgent prayer to ask God to send you to do His work. When God asked, “Whom shall I send?” and “Who will go for us?” Isaiah volunteered. So when we ask God, “*Please send me*!”, He will trust us with many miracle missions to help others.

You and I set out with the best intentions to serve God. But we bring with us expectations of how God is going to work through us, and how they should respond to us once the miracle has been delivered, etc. But God’s agenda for us rarely matches our expectations, and when the miracle appointment arrives, we are often forced to choose between something good and something miraculous. In other words, if we are not careful, we can miss our miracle appointment altogether.

Bruce Wilkinson tells of being on a flight and needing every minute to proof-read a book that he had to deliver for printing. He did not want to talk to anyone, but a drunk man came and sat beside him, much to his dismay. After short greetings, he gave his attention to his book, as the man ordered and consumed more and more alcohol. After a long time, Bruce yielded to the Lord’s prompting and said, “Ok, Lord, *send me to serve You even to this man.*” He had no more prayed that prayer when the man began asking him if he were a priest. Thinking of being called a “*royal priesthood”,* he said, “*I guess you could say I am a priest.*” This man was on his way to a sold-out rock concert in Hollywood, that he was in charge of, and he began to tell how his best friend had been killed in a car accident the day before. He kept thinking, “*If that was me, I don’t know where I’d go after I die.”* And on the airport he had prayed, “*If you are there, God, please send me to a priest*!” Bruce said he was so grateful that God interrupted what he thought was important that day on his flight, and he led him to Jesus in his inebriated state. What would have happened if he’d said no?

We can see how easy it is to miss our miracle appointment when we mistake our agenda for God’s. Our plans might seem perfectly logical, even spiritual. The point is, every miracle starts with a person in need. As obvious as it might sound, that fact is what makes this next key so critical.

The People Key is how you make God’s agenda and heart for people your own. And you must prepare for the inevitable collision between your preferences and God’s by yielding your rights in advance. That way He can deliver a miracle through you to anyone at any time. The Key is simply people, and our personal agenda must surrender to His, our heart must be His heart to serve people – anyone, anytime, anywhere He directs. On earth Jesus’ top priority was Heaven’s agenda.” He said, *“The Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”* Also *“I have come down from Heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*”

We tend to increasingly look for the kind of mission we enjoy most and ask God to bless our busyness for him instead of asking Him to send us on the miracle mission of His choice. So we should surrender in advance that the person, place, nature and timing are up to God, and not up to our wisdom.

Jesus was ready for the unexpected connections with Zacchaeus, the Samaritan woman at the well, the lame man let down through a hole in the roof, the late-night visit from Nicodemus, and a desperate woman suffering from a haemorrhage. So also our delivery opportunity is likely to come at the time or in the manner we’d least prefer, eg at the store when we’re running late, or when every last bit of our energy is used up, or in the middle of important work we’re doing for God, or when we finally settle in for a long-awaited Sunday afternoon nap.

So the 2nd part of the People Key is knowing that God’s miracle appointments for me will often collide with my plans and preferences. But I pre-commit to yield my rights to Him whenever he asks me to serve those in need.

But even though People are the reason God does a personal miracle, one of the biggest challenges to delivering those miracles is … people. They can be so demanding and difficult, so unworthy and ungrateful. Of course we can be all those things too. But God doesn’t seem to factor any of this in when He sends us on a mission, like with Jonah. Being a prophet he had already said “yes” to being sent. But his collision moment came when God asked him to go to Nineveh in Assyria, to warn them to repent, else God would destroy them. But Jonah ran in the opposite direction, every step shouting, “No, no, no”. He bought a passage aboard a ship and they faced a huge storm at sea. The crew threw cargo overboard as they were about to go down. At his request they threw Jonah overboard and the sea became calm. But God did a miracle for him and 3 days later a big fish deposited Jonah onto dry land, and God asked him again. So Jonah obeyed this time and all 120 000 people repented – another miracle. We would think he would be thrilled and motivated to continue serving God. But Jonah was displeased and he became angry, as He could not accept that God’s mission for him was to show God’s compassion to people he did not like. Jonah knew he had been sent, but failed the “*people’s test*”. And if you today are on the run from your miracle mission, God will patiently pursue you, so you make God’s self-sacrificing passion for people your own.

But why do many well-intentioned sent ones not use the People Key? Because we choose the appointment God has for us, or only if they are worthy and grateful. Or once we experience a miracle we allow our personal motives and priorities to get in the way of God’s plans. So let’s serve Him in “*the least of these*”. Decide in advance to surrender your rights to choose your own miracles, or make your own plans to serve your own preferred people. Say to God, “*I willingly take up my role as a servant, and view every person I meet as a potential miracle opportunity, no matter how surprised or unprepared I feel. I agree in advance to yield to You my own preferences. I place my busyness for You, God, and other good work in second place to Your leading. Amen”.*

What God cares about most is people. He said, “*Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me*.” God bless you as you bring God’s miracle to someone in need today.

**Everyday Miracles**

**Chapter 6**

Last week we spoke about the 2nd key to partnering supernaturally with God in His work on earth. We said it is the People Key - how we make God’s agenda and heart for people our own. And we must prepare for the inevitable collision between our preferences and God’s by yielding our rights in advance. We said how Jonah was sent, yet failed in making God’s agenda and heart for people in need, his own.

But now that we have been sent (the master Key) and share God’s agenda (people’s key), we come face to face with the question – how exactly are we supposed to deliver a supernatural event when we are so completely human? That brings us to the third key, the Spirit Key – when we formally align ourselves with our heavenly partner, the Holy Spirit, to do God’s supernatural work through us every day. We are telling God, “*Without You, I can’t do what you have sent me to do.”* With the Spirit Key, we partner with the Holy Spirit to deliver a miracle by God’s supernatural power, and pre-commit to cooperate with him at every opportunity.

The fact is that while you and I can deliver a miracle, only God can do a miracle. In fact, it is impossible to accomplish anything without Him.

Well, how does the Holy Spirit go about God’s work in us and in the person we’re talking to? And how do we cooperate?

Jesus reassured his friends that He would soon be leaving, but would send a Helper, the Spirit of Truth. *“It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.”* John 16:7. He said it would be better for the Holy Spirit to be released to do the work of Heaven on earth. In all times and all places, He would communicate with people’s hearts, convicting them of their need of salvation, changing their destiny forever. And the disciples experienced the astonishing advantage of the Spirit as their divine Partner, resulting in lame men walking. Peter explained to the crowd watching, “*Don’t misunderstand what just happened. I’m not super-powerful. And I’m not super-holy. In fact, I didn’t and couldn’t heal this man. God did it through me by His power, not mine.”*

I know a Pastor friend, called Marc, who one day was at an airport overseas and in the men’s room, he saw a man mopping the floor. He greeted the man and felt nudged to ask him his name. *“Don’t ask me my name. I’m just a nobody, a cleaner here. No-one even notices me. They don’t even say hello.*” This Pastor put in arms around him and told him that God knows him by name and loves him very much. The man began to weep as his heart was touched by the Spirit of God, and Marc shared with him how because of God’s love, He sent his Son who came to save us. This man’s life was changed in that encounter, through Marc, who was filled with the love of God and who partnered with the Holy Spirit. This story shows the kind of heart-specific miracle that God can deliver through any one of us when we are sensitive to the direction of His Spirit.

But let’s consider some ways the Spirit does what we cannot do during a miracle encounter. 1) The Spirit knows the other person. He who “*searches all things*” has intimate complete knowledge of everyone, including the people He sends us to help. He knows what they were thinking when they woke up, what happened to them yesterday, and what secrets they plan to keep until they die. And he knows what kind of gesture will go straight to their heart.

2) The Spirit knows us. He knows our strengths and weaknesses, our fears and limitations, and leads us purposefully to a person in need. He is a Person who knows everything about us, yet loves us perfectly, and can perfectly match us with the right person at the right time to deliver the right message.

3) The Spirit guides us. “*When He, the Spirit of Truth has come, He will guide you into all truth*.” When you have asked to be sent and you are passionate about partnering with God to accomplish His agenda, you will know what God wants, because he promises, “*I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will guide you with My eye*.” Ps 32:8. The Spirit will guide us while we are in motion to serve Him. Our part is to begin doing as much as we know He wants from us and then to keep expecting further guidance.

4) The Spirit speaks of the Father and the Son. Everything the Spirit does is directed by God the Father, and it’s for one purpose: to accomplish Heaven’s agenda and to bring glory to Jesus. So when He works in the heart of the other person, he is communicating the truth to that person about his or her need, about God’s character and about the Person and work of Christ.

5) The Spirit empowers us. He fills us with boldness, as were the disciples when they were filled with the Spirit, who previously were cowering when Jesus was arrested. Yes, the task is too big for us, but we are not alone, but in partnership with God’s Spirit.

6) The Spirit does the miracle. We partner with the God of the universe. And the Holy Spirit has been given to us to do good works by His power. He is the only one who does a miracle – we only partner with him as his spokesperson. So if we are guided to witness, to show compassion, to help the poor and needy, or to give of our resources, then our part is to open our mouth, our heart, our wallet – to get started. The Spirit will give us boldness, guidance, information, and everything else we need in the process.

If you want to respond to the challenge to partner with His Spirit as a delivery vehicle of His miracle power, then pray this prayer with me. *“Holy Spirit, I recognise that every miracle is Your doing. I commit my life to cooperate with You and follow Your guidance every day, especially in every miracle opportunities You bring my way. I open my mind and heart to You. And I ask You to teach me how to partner with You in practical, joyful, and effective ways that bring Heaven to others and joy and honour to God. Amen.”*

He will only ask that you take the next step He puts in front of you. And the more you purposefully partner with the Holy Spirit, the more He will release His power through you. In fact, prepare to become one of God’s favourite delivery people! Because he knows you won’t try to do the impossible alone, but in partnership with His Spirit.

God bless you as you volunteer to go, and partner with His Spirit to bring God’s miracle to someone in need today.

Everyday Miracles

Chapter 7

We are studying the keys how we can be used by God in miraculous ways. The first Master Key is our willingness to be used by God; the 2nd key is the People Key - when we make God's heart for people our own; and then the Spirit key - when we partner with the Holy Spirit to release His power through us to do a miracle in meeting a need in someone. We said the Spirit knows the other person; and knows and guides us his messengers. He empowers us, but does the miracle himself. And He speaks of the Father and Son.

Today we want to look at the 4th key to being used by God in a miraculous way, called the Risk Key. It is all about taking risks of faith. This faith is different from an inwardly focused, comforting faith, but is directly related to how we partner with God for miracles. It is what we do because we believe in God. This faith is active, outwardly focused and usually very discomforting. If we know we are sent, we can take deliberate risks that place us in complete dependence on God for a miracle. We believe He wants to intervene in the situation, and therefore we choose to believe that He will. That way, when He acts, His goodness and glory will shine through. We must pre-commit to act in faith, and depend on God for a miracle.

So the Risk Key is a purposeful action we take, in spite of discomfort or fear, to exercise our faith. Eg in giving a word of knowledge, or a prophetic word, or praying for someone for healing. We are faced with an unbridgeable gap between what we can do and what God clearly wants done. Yet we take a risk to act anyway, depending on Him to come through. Then God supernaturally does a miracle and demonstrates His glory.

A youth group was once challenging the high school young people to step out and to do what they call, "*Treasure Hunting"*. They went to a public Mall and in two's they prayed for direction to approach specific people what God would show them. So my son got a picture in his mind of someone wearing a red T-shirt and suffering from back pain; and his friend got a picture of someone wearing a red-and blue T-shirt and suffered from headaches, and got the name “Melissa”. They prayed together and starting walking through the mall looking for people with those clothes. Obviously they were nervous and realised the risk they were taking. But soon they spotted a couple, the guy wearing a red T-shirt and the lady a red and blue T-shirt. They followed them into a restaurant and saw them sit down for a cup of coffee. Before they lost courage, they decided to go up to them and introduce themselves, saying that they got these words from God. They asked if they suffered from these aches, wondering if they had heard correctly. Amazingly the guy had a backache and the lady was often suffering from headaches. When asked if Melissa meant anything to them, she looked aghast and said that it was her own name! Well, as you can imagine, they had their attention, and could share about the love of Jesus and could pray for them. The back pain left and the girl re-committed her life to Jesus – all because they used the Risk Key.

Now, how necessary is this key of Risk, in the miracle realm? It sounds a bit scary. The truth is that God can't or at least doesn't do a miracle through us anytime He wants. It is our faith that has a direct impact on whether or not a miracle happens.

When Jesus' disciples asked Him why they couldn't do a particular miracle, he told them that they were limited because of their unbelief. And if they had faith the size of a mustard seed, He said, *"You will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.*" So, the amount of our faith is directly related to the size of the miracle we will deliver. He did not say, *"You can say to his mountain,"* but "*You will say to this mountain.*" Jesus is using the pictures of a seed and a mountain to help us grasp the power of faith to exponentially impact the outcome.

We also know that Jesus wanted to do miracles in his hometown, but couldn't because of the people’s unbelief. So clearly if you and I want to pursue a lifestyle where He works through us in supernatural ways, we have to reject our unbelief in our all-powerful God. The difference between passive faith and risky faith is seen in the story of Peter walking on nothing but water. When the disciples were on the sea one blustery night, they saw Jesus walking on the water and Peter said, "*Lord if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."* So Jesus said, "*Come."* And when Peter stepped out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. Interesting that everyone else stayed put. Only Peter took a risk of faith - and only Peter experienced a miracle. But we know that he took his eyes off Jesus and started sinking, but Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him, saying, "*O you of little faith, why did you doubt?* Peter let his fear overwhelm his faith. For us it is the same, we won’t experience miracles as long as we’re still in the boat, staying dry. We need to keep our eyes on what God wants to do.

But let’s be honest; almost everything about this kind of dependence on God goes against our instincts, our experience and common sense. That is why the risk key requires great changes in our thinking.

We might think that fear is the root of not stepping out in faith. But fear is the fruit, and the root is actually unbelief. Unbelief is our unwillingness to believe that God is who He says He is, and that He will do what He says He will do. And the way to rid ourselves of unbelief is by rejecting the lies of the enemy, claiming the truth and acting on it. And we take courage in spite of fear … and step out of the boat. So affirm that God is who He says He is, and admit that unbelief is sin. Recount how God has come through in the past for you and for others. Keep your eyes on Jesus, not on the circumstances or on your emotions. And pre-commit to exercise risky faith when God needs to do a miracle for someone. By faith declare and release the power of God.

The Risk Key will enable us to be greatly used by God to help those in need. And each time we exercise our faith, it will grow. Tell yourself, “*If my risk of faith is a little scary, I’m probably in line for a wonderful miracle.”* Every act of faith will make you more fruitful. God bless you as you step out in risk-faith to be used by God in someone’s life today.

**Everyday Miracles**

**Chapter 8**

Last week we spoke about the Risk Key - taking risks of faith in order to be used by God in miraculous ways. We need to fight unbelief by rejecting the lies of the enemy, claiming the truth and acting on it. And we take courage in spite of fear … stepping out of the boat, like Peter did when he took Jesus at his word and walked on the water. Every act of faith will make us more fruitful in the Kingdom of God.

Today we want to look at a special delivery key, called the Money Key. This key unlocks biblical insights that prepare us to deliver a miracle of financial provision to a person in need, because God sends us and His financial resources to connect with the person with a specific financial need. We will approach the person with confidence and know that God wants the need met, and we will know how to partner with him to deliver the miracle.

Bruce Wilkinson tells how one late night after a speaking engagement, he and his son David, were returning to their hotel and both felt very much “in need” of some ice-cream. But when they got there, the restaurant had just closed for the night. They asked the waitress if she could possibly do them a favour and find some for them. As she walked away, Bruce felt the nudge to give her big tip if she succeeded. When he shared this with his son, he too was thinking about the same thing. Now Bruce had just been to the bank recently and happened to have a large roll of SA Rands in his pocket. Well, 2 large bowls of ice cream arrived and as they were finishing, Bruce folded the money and thanking the waitress, he slipped the big roll of money into her apron pocket. But he felt awkward and did not want the gift to be misinterpreted. Three minutes later the waitress came rushing back and said, “*You know Jesus, don’t you? This is a miracle!”* She and her baby were going to be kicked out of their apartment the next morning as she could not pay her rent. She had prayed that day for God to send her a miracle. She wiped at her eyes, *“Sir, this amount is exactly the rent I owe – to the rand. That is how I knew you know Jesus*.” You can imagine the joy at being the miracle deliverer for that lady’s need.

God sometimes nudges us to do something that feels excessive and foolish, but He wants to demonstrate His abundant goodness. How you and I manage our money matters greatly to God. Jesus spoke of money often, and he spent much of his time with those who didn’t have much. He fed the hungry; helped his friends deal with taxes, honoured those who gave out of their poverty. And God intends for us to use our money to display His goodness and faithfulness. This Money Key unlocks a miracle of financial provision for another with God’s resources. It begins with a nudge from God, often at an unexpected moment, yet it is so rewarding to partner with God in a practical, visible way. The goal is to switch the spotlight on God, the Giver. 1 Tim 6, “*Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share.”* So prepare yourself to partner with God by being willing and ready, whether it is a R10 note, or a R100 note.

But how does God meet financial needs on earth? Could heaven somehow transfer cash into your account, or drop it out of the sky onto your doorstep or deliver money from the vaults of heaven? While God could do all those things, He usually doesn’t. God gets funds to a person in need when another human being releases some of his or her funds for that purpose. When it comes to financial miracles, Heaven usually depends on people for answers.

But look at Prov 19:17: “*Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord*,” and look at the 2nd part*, “And He (God) will pay back what he has given.”* It is a loan to God for His work that will be paid back by Heaven. Jesus confirmed this principle of divine repayment many times, and said that even a cup of water will be credited to the giver. When you consider how many people need a financial miracle and how few people respond to a God nudge relating to finances, you begin to see why so many opportunities await anyone who wants to partner with God as part of a financial miracle.

The following way will make it easier for you if you want to begin to be used by God in this way. Keep money you specifically devote to God in your wallet to give someone, in a “God-pocket”, to be available when He nudges you. 1) Decide how much you are going to put into your God-pocket – not the funds you give to your church but additional and specifically for God to use in delivering a financial miracle to someone. 2) Devote that amount of money directly to God. *“I will carry it in Your name until you show me who it is for.”* 3) Deposit your devoted money into your “God pocket” in a specific spot in your wallet or purse where you won’t get it confused with your other funds. 4) Determine then that when God nudges, you won’t debate with Him or talk yourself out of the assignment. 5) Remember, you’re not responding to apparent needs, but to a God nudge. Consciously depend on the Lord to nudge you when, where, and to whom He wants His funds delivered. And he will! In the meantime you are “*ready to give, willing to share.”*

And when you give, you’ll do so with freedom, joy, and expectation. Be careful to treat God’s money with respect and not borrow from it when a need arises, or looking at a sale item you just can’t pass up.

Being used by God with the “God-pocket” funds will often open doors to share about God’s love to that person. Don’t make decisions for God, when you see a need but have not been nudged by Him. Use the funds in the God-pocket for the need He has in mind. It is wise to help the person clarify his desire for the specific miracle that God brought you to deliver, to be used for the identified purpose, and that will also bring thanksgiving to God. Ask, “*Why is that important to you*?” Then the person’s heart will open wide toward God. And transfer the credit to God. Think of yourself as Heaven’s bank teller, making a heavenly withdrawal at the Owner’s request. “*When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid*.” So risk getting nothing back, because now you know that God repays those who lend to Him. Prepare in advance to give from your God Pocket. He has so many miracles waiting to be delivered through you to reveal his extravagant goodness and generosity.

God bless you till next week as we partner with Heaven in being part of a financial miracle to someone in need.

**Everyday Miracles**

**Chapter 9**

Looking at Bruce Wilkinson’s book, we spoke last week about the Money Key, that unlocks miracles of financial provision to a person in financial need. We are encouraged to be *“rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share.”* We prepare to devote money to God, which we set aside in a “God-pocket”. And we are ready when He nudges us to give to someone he wants to help. And He always repays those who lend to Him.

Today we want to look at another special key, called the Forgiveness Key. Many sincere people are prisoners today and don’t even know it. Heart-wounds left untreated will cause devastation in someone’s life and the Forgiveness Key unlocks a miracle of freedom for those who suffer as a result of unforgiveness. When God connects us to someone in need, we partner with the Spirit, draw on Biblical insights, and God works through us with a miracle of forgiveness.

We live in a world where, despite our best efforts, we hurt others accidentally and sometimes intentionally. And others do the same to us. And the world is full of hurting people who keep hurting people – who are full of regrets, pain, anger and bitterness. And the truth is: forgiveness is one of the most difficult responses of human nature. It’s like giving the best gift to the person who just robbed you; or forgiving the drunk driver who killed your son; forgiving your husband for having an affair with your best friend; or your father for deserting you as a child and never making an effort to see you; or forgiving the relative who sexually abused you in secret; or a business partner who betrayed your trust. At those times everything in us cries out for justice, retribution, not forgiveness. Forgiveness is a God-attitude.

But what happens when we don’t forgive? Bruce compares it to you walking on the beach and stepping on a piece of glass. You limp back and try not to think about it. You limp around barefoot doing your daily chores, and walking in your garden, but decide to ignore the pain even though the wound becomes infected, and your foot swells. Walking is difficult, but you still try not to think about it. Infection spreads and you break out in a fever… the more time goes by, the more destructive the consequences. When leaving the wound unclean and untreated, then infection blocks the healing process. You get the picture. But if you wash out the dirt, protect it from germs, God made your body to heal. Similarly, when we forgive others, the wound gets cleaned out and the healing process can start.

Untreated wounds lead to the spiral of unforgiveness: the first level being pain or rejection; then bitterness and resentment; then it spirals into anger and malice, then hatred, and eventually a person is consumed by vengeance, the desire not to simply see justice, but to injure the person.

The Lord’s prayer says, *“Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”* We affirm that we are doing what the Father is doing: forgiving those who don’t deserve our pardon. “*For if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”* Jesus is not referring to “*salvation forgiveness*” which is a gift from God and can’t be earned. But He is referring to the flow of God’s pardon in our lives on earth. When Peter asked Jesus if forgiving someone 7 times was enough, Jesus said in effect, “*No, Peter. Forgive him without limit.”*  Jesus tells the story of the king whose servant owed him a big debt, but when he begged him for mercy, and he cancelled the debt and let him go free. But around the corner his friend who owed him lunch money and couldn’t pay him back, was thrown into jail by this same servant. The kings got angry and called him back, “*I forgave you that debt because your begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant? … And he delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.”* God is the picture of the king, but does not torture anyone, but turns them over to the painful consequences of their own unforgiveness, until they forgive from their heart. He wants us to be released from the prison of torment, and He wants to use you and me to lead other wounded people to supernatural deliverance and healing.

1) Identify the person who has a deep grudge or broken relationship. They might not be on speaking terms with someone, or they display chronic anger, or cover-up attitudes like cynicism, judgementalism and distrust. Ask open-ended questions to bring clarity. *“Are you still feeling pain because of what happened?* *Do you ever feel like some painful things that happened are still holding you back? Would you say that you experience torment from time to time?*” When the person confirms that, he is your miracle appointment. Then transition your conversation to 2) isolating the need. Aim to bring focus: who hurt the person, what the offended did and which injuries are the most distressing emotionally to begin with? Here we need to be sensitive: *“Would you share with me how you were hurt the most and by whom?”* We are representing the Lord to the person, and must allow his sensitive Spirit to lead us. They might respond with, “*I don’t know where this came from*”. That is the Spirit at work. 3) Ask God to open their heart. Share the story of the king in Matt 18 and help them see the need to forgive. Share the 2 J’s: a) Jesus forgave us. We can choose to forgive others b) Justice: vengeance belongs to God, not to you or me. C) Jailer: “*You are your own jailer. Your torment won’t end until you forgive. Then you will be free, and God wants that for you.”* Keep the conversation focussed on the person who needs to forgive, not on the offender, and aim to bring him to a point of readiness to forgive. Sometimes tears will show he is ready. 4) Deliver the miracle. He might say, *“I really want to, but I don’t know if I can.”* You then serve as a bridge by helping him do this. “*Would you be comfortable just repeating the words after me*?” It is not a prayer, but a statement of forgiveness toward the offender. Gently lead him to spell out the offenses, being thorough to forgive each instance. Let the Holy Spirit lead his thoughts to deal with the real injustices. Of course there will be tears, anger and anguish, and then ask them to say out loud, “*Before God, I have completely forgiven ……………. of every wound.”* Allow silence for God to bring more to the surface. The torment ends when forgiveness has been granted. Ask, “*Do you feel lighter inside?”* 5) Transfer the credit. God is the healer of hearts and the terminator of all torment. Remind him that his unforgiveness was sin toward God; and then 6) lead him in confessing his bitterness and vengeance towards God in prayer. Use that Key when God nudges you to someone’s pain today. Forgiveness can restore relationships, broken marriages, even bring healing physically, and in their relationship to God. God bless you as you help free someone locked in the prison-door of bitterness and pain today.