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CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

MIRACLES HAPPEN!

—And can happen to you!

THE HOW-TOS OF HEALING

God can heal anything
—but how?

THE ANTICHRIST AND TECHNOLOGY

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Personally speaking

If you were to ask 100 people if they believed in miracles, you would probably get some firm yeses and nos, but the most frequent answer would most likely be, “I’d *like* to.” Most people like the idea of something impossibly wonderful happening to them when they expect it least and need it most, but they figure it probably never will. They either take an if-it-happens-it-happens approach, or they think they’re too bad or that their lives and problems are too insignificant to warrant supernatural intervention. The sad thing is, as long as those people don’t *expect* miracles, they probably won’t experience the miracles they could if they understood how miracles work and did their part.

Yes, there are cases where impossibly wonderful things happen to people with seemingly no effort or through no will of their own.—A stranger appears out of nowhere to warn of impending danger; a toddler is lost in a blizzard, wandering helplessly and freezing, when suddenly she comes to a house and is safe. But most miracles, believe it or not, come to those who *make* them happen. They are the result of someone’s faith in a loving, caring, interactive God for whom nothing is impossible.

“Okay,” you may say, “so miracles are a result of faith. That doesn’t help me, because I don’t have that kind of faith.” Well, you *can* have that kind of faith—anyone can—and it’s not as hard as you might imagine. In fact, faith is a *gift*. It’s not something you have to try to work up or earn through your own goodness. It’s a gift from your loving heavenly Father who is just waiting for you to reach out and receive it so He can begin working miracles for you.

Do miracles happen? I pray this issue of *Activated* makes a believer—and a receiver—out of you!

Keith Phillips
Keith Phillips
For the *Activated* Family

Debbie, who one month ago prayed with me to receive Jesus as her Savior, is overcoming a supposedly incurable disease—hepatitis C. Her condition was complicated by more than 10 years of heroin addiction. Her doctors couldn't promise that she would live from one day to the next. Since I prayed with her for her healing, her blood has normalized to the point that her doctors have discontinued her medication. When I first met her, she couldn't make it through a short conversation without nodding off a few times. Now she's a picture of energy! She gets up at 5:45 each morning, takes her little girl to school, makes it through the entire day without a nap, and does many other things that were impossible for her before.

—T.R., USA



MIRACLES HAPPEN!

The day of miracles is not past! God is still in the business of transforming bodies that need it. **He's still the Great Physician.** He still says, "I am the Lord who heals you" (Exodus 15:26), and "who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases" (Psalm 103:3 NIV). **God can heal anything!**

—DAVID BRANDT BERG

After suffering severe abdominal pain and missing my period for two months, I went to see a doctor. He found a tumor the size of an orange on the right side of my uterus and told me that I had two alternatives: surgery or strong drugs. Even after asking others to pray with me for my healing, the pain got worse. My faith was being tested!

On my next visit, the doctor did another sonogram. "Have you had an operation?" he asked. "I see only a scar on the right side of your uterus where the tumor was. But how can that be? There is no sign of an incision!"

Then I realized the Lord had performed a miracle and healed me without surgery or medication. I told the doctor about the prayer and my life of faith. He was not only amazed, but prayed with me to receive Jesus.

—A.M., BRAZIL

A couple that my husband and I have known for a few years asked us to pray for a friend of theirs, a policeman who was diagnosed with incurable cancer and given only six months to live. At that time the man had already been forced to leave his job, and was being sedated because of extreme pain.

We prayed together for his healing, and the Lord answered! When the man went for his next checkup, his doctor told him that "something very unusual" had happened. Six months later, the man has returned to the police force and all those who knew of his illness are calling his healing a miracle.

—P.L., CHILE

It took a miracle to put the stars in place.
It took a miracle to hang the world in space.
But when He saved my soul,
Cleansed and made me whole,
It took a miracle of love and grace.

—JOHN W. PETERSON

FINDING FAITH FOR MIRACLES

BY VIRGINIA BRANDT BERG

*The power of
God hasn't
changed, so
whenever that
power is met
by the faith of
some sincere
believer, you
can expect to
see a miracle.*

I CANNOT UNDERSTAND HOW ANYONE CANNOT BELIEVE IN MIRACLES, when the Bible contains so many accounts of miracles. Of course, you meet some intellectuals who contend—often in an inflated academic style and supercilious language—that the miracles recorded in the Bible either never happened or can be explained scientifically, or if they did happen, such miracles are impossible today. Well, those miracles *did* happen just like the Bible says they did, and in every case it only took two elements: the power of God and someone's faith. The power of God hasn't changed, of course, so whenever that power is met by the faith of some sincere believer, you can expect to see a miracle. It happens all the time!

Faith in the Bible creates faith in the miraculous. The Bible not only reveals the acts of the supernatural God, but it also imparts faith to anyone who reads it with an open heart (Romans 10:17). The Bible has a miraculous, transforming effect on our lives, and that gives us faith for other miracles. Faith in God and His

Son Jesus Christ, faith in the Christ of the Bible, makes for faith in our everyday lives. That's because real faith believes in the changeless Christ, and His power brings the same results today as it did during His earthly ministry and through His original followers.

Shortly before His crucifixion Jesus promised, "He who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father" (John 14:12). Then after His resurrection, when He appeared to His disciples, He said that signs (miracles) would follow those who believed in Him, and miracles *did* follow (Mark 16:17–18, 20). It wasn't long before others were saying of the first Christians, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too" (Acts 17:6). Those first followers and the ones who were to come had such confidence that the supernatural power of God was at their command that they dared to challenge the mighty Roman Empire and shook it to its very foundations.

If Jesus is “the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8), why is it so hard to believe that He, in answer to prayer, will do the same kinds of miracles today? Wherever you find real faith manifested, you will find miracles. God’s faithfulness to His Word absolutely *compels* Him to perform miracles.

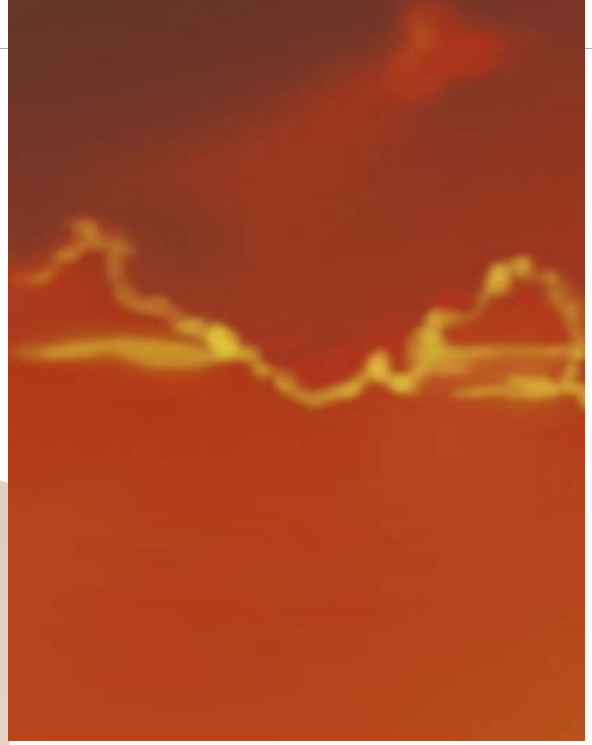
So when you don’t see miracles it must be due to an absence of faith, not because Christ or His promises have changed in the very least. If you live in His Word, if you dig out His promises and build your faith on them, if you trust Him to keep His word even when it seems impossible, you’ll see things come to pass that *are* impossible in the natural realm. You’ll see God at work in the realm of the supernatural.

I pray that God will help you discover a sense of the supernatural and learn to have complete confidence in the reality of divine power that’s yours through the miraculous Word of God. “With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible” (Mark 10:27).

It’s been my practice for many years, whenever some desperate need arose, to trust God to work a miracle. I didn’t always get the miracle I was praying for, but that was never through any fault of God’s—and He *did* send miraculous answers to prayer many more times than He kept me waiting or said no.

“The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect”—full of faith—“toward Him” (2 Chronicles 16:9 KJV). His compassion and love for you, His willingness to come to your rescue in times of need, and His faithfulness to His promises are just the same today. He longs to see faith and meet your needs.

The next time you need a miracle, claim this promise in utter confidence: “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32). His power is just the same today, and it’s there for you. God is still on the throne, and prayer—wholehearted, full-of-faith prayer—changes things! •



THE FAITH CONNECTION

A certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment; for she said, “If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.”

Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, “Who touched My clothes?”

But His disciples said to Him, “You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, ‘Who touched Me?’”

And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.”

—MARK 5:25–34

THE HOW-TOS OF HEALING

BY MARIA FONTAINE

FOR THE LONGEST TIME I tried to figure out the how-tos of divine healing. I had wanted to be able to boil everything down into a step-by-step, one-two-three healing formula so I could say, “If you want to get healed, all you have to do is follow these steps.” But I finally concluded that it doesn’t work that way.

If two people followed the same steps, one might get healed and the other might not. The more I studied various cases, the more I saw that each situation was different. The Lord seemed to handle each individual differently and tailored their healing to their particular needs and His will for them. No two people are exactly alike, and the Lord works differently in each of our lives—not only in the matter of healing, but also in our circumstances, the lessons He teaches us, the tests He puts us through, and the blessings He gives.

Trying to give univer-

sal counsel on how to get healed is just not possible, because the Lord doesn’t follow a set pattern.

That’s why, if you read many accounts of healing, some seem to conflict or even contradict each other. Sometimes the Lord heals without any help from anyone or anything, sometimes He uses natural remedies, and sometimes He uses doctor’s prescriptions and skills.

When we realize the Lord works differently in each of our lives, we can better understand why in some cases He heals us and in other cases He doesn’t—at least not right

No two people are exactly alike, and the Lord works differently in each of our lives.

away. If we can grasp this point, it will help us to not feel condemned when we pray to be healed from whatever is ailing us and

it doesn’t happen immediately. It will also help us to have more compassion and be less judgmental of others when they’re sick or suffer long-term afflictions.

DIVINE WISDOM AT WORK

Each of us is a complex physical and spiritual being. The Lord has bestowed on each of us different abilities, physical and spiritual attributes, and strengths and weaknesses. No two of us are alike. The Lord, our Maker, knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows everything about us—our every thought, our every weakness, our every joy, our every need. He knows exactly how to teach us the lessons He wants us to learn. He knows what tests and trials we need to endure to make us into what He wants us to be, and He measures these things out to us in just the exact portion that He knows we need—never too much and never too little—and so it is with our afflictions and our healing.

Two people could have precisely the same affliction, they could both pray to be healed, and one could get healed immediately and the other could

continue to be afflicted for years. Does this mean that the one who gets healed immediately is stronger spiritually or closer to the Lord than the other? Not necessarily. The reasons the Lord allowed these two people to be afflicted in the first place may have been completely different. If His reasons for allowing the afflictions are different, then His reasons for healing or not healing are different as well.

Perhaps the first person needed to be more humble, so the Lord allowed them to be afflicted. When the affliction had accomplished its purpose, the Lord healed them. In the second case, maybe the Lord knows the person needs to endure the affliction longer in order to learn patience or accomplish some other purpose He wants to bring about. Whatever the case, afflictions are good things in disguise because they have the potential to bring about spiritual blessings in our lives.

FAITH FOR HEALING

I suffer from a serious and supposedly incurable eye problem, yet I consider that I have faith for healing. I have faith that the Lord is going to heal my

eyes in this life, because He's given me His personal promise that He would and I believe Him. Faith is a gift from God that comes from hearing the Word of God (Ephesians 2:8; Romans 10:17), and I've heard the Word and believe it. I don't know when my healing will happen, because the Lord hasn't told me that, but I have no doubt that He will do it sooner or later. If He doesn't want to heal me right now, then He's not going to give me the gift of faith for *immedi-*

It's not just a question of having faith for healing; it's a question of having faith to accept the Lord's design for your life.



ate healing, but I *do* have faith for *eventual* healing. I know the Lord will heal me when He's ready.

I can trust my life and my health and my eyes to the Lord, because I have faith in His love and know that His ways and thoughts are far above mine (Isaiah 55:8–9). I believe that He knows what's best for me, and that He will heal me according to His plan and His timetable. To me, that's the best kind of faith—knowing that the Lord is in complete control, trusting Him to make it all turn out the way He wants it to, and expecting Him to carry me through till it happens.

It's not just a question of having faith for healing; it's a question of having faith to accept the Lord's plan and design for your life, whatever that may be. Those who suffer long-term illnesses or injuries have to keep believing even though they aren't healed. When the affliction persists month after month, they have to hold on and trust the Lord to either heal them eventually, or to give them the grace to continue to bear the affliction and try to learn whatever He wants them to learn through it. They have to find and accept the Romans 8:28—

Walking two kilometers through snow is normally about as difficult for Victor as walking across the room, but under these circumstances, it meant almost certain death.



AVALANCHE!

A TRUE STORY,
AS TOLD TO
MICHAEL
SHARP

VICTOR WAS A *CARABINERO*, or police officer, stationed at the remote Chilean customs compound known as *Los Libertadores*, high in the Andes on the border with Argentina. Since Victor had received special training in mountain rescue work, he was usually assigned to dangerous areas like this one. He enjoyed the mountains, but missed his family.

It was July 3rd—the heart of winter in the southern hemisphere—and a snowstorm raged outside. With winds of 100 kilometers (over 60 miles) per hour and the temperature at -15°C (-5°F) before the windchill factor, Victor and the 57 other people in the camp were bunkered in for the night.

Suddenly, Victor heard a deep rumbling and instinctively looked at his watch. It was 8:38 PM. Since small tremors are common in that part of Chile, Victor didn't think much of it at first, but the shaking grew stronger. Then the lights went out.

Seconds later, the roof collapsed and Victor found himself trapped between a wall and large piece of furniture. The temperature around him

dropped quickly, and Victor wondered how he would ever come out of this alive.

As Victor would find out later, the high winds had caused an avalanche at the top of a nearby peak and sent a mountain of snow down on the customs complex.

Victor managed to pry himself free from the rubble, found his way out of the collapsed building, and carefully dug his way up through the snow till he reached the surface. Other buildings had also collapsed under the weight of the snow, killing or trapping most of the others.

Moving quickly through the buildings that hadn't been completely buried, Victor found a few other survivors. One was his good friend, Eduardo. So much skin had been torn from Eduardo's face that Victor hardly recognized him at first. Victor found a needle and thread and managed to stitch Eduardo's face back together. Eduardo's wife, who was staying at the compound, had been killed—instantly, it seemed.

Then Victor heard a child's cry and





dug through the wreckage until he found the baby daughter of another colleague who had been killed. The child was wearing only a diaper and a T-shirt, but was otherwise unharmed. Victor quickly put her inside his warm police coat, where she could receive warmth from his chest.

With no heat and almost no shelter, unless help came soon, the survivors would all freeze to death. Before the avalanche, the camp's only means of communication with the rest of the world had been a two-way radio, and now it was damaged beyond repair. Victor quickly realized that it might be days before anyone else would even know of their predicament. Their only hope was for someone to walk to the nearest neighbor, a ski lodge about two kilometers away, and organize a rescue.

Walking two kilometers through snow is normally about as difficult for Victor as walking across the room, but under these circumstances—through a storm and huge snowdrifts, in the dark, and carrying a baby—it meant almost certain death. Victor asked for volunteers to go with him. No one came forward, so he set off alone, carrying the baby under his coat.

He managed to find some snowshoes, which helped him stay on top of the deep snow banks, but the high winds whipped up the fallen snow until it seemed like a blizzard. Most of the time Victor couldn't see more than one step ahead. He knew the general direction of the lodge when he set out, but in the dark and with near-zero visibility, he also knew there was a very good chance that he could walk right past it without even knowing.

Eight hours later, Victor stumbled into the lodge, exhausted.

After turning the child over to others, and then getting a hot shower and a quick meal, he was ready to lead one

of the three rescue teams that went for other survivors. Victor risked his life twice, but 31 people were saved as a result.



As I listened to Victor tell his story some months later, one important detail was missing. I asked about it, but Victor kept evading the question.

The next day Victor's wife showed me her scrapbook of newspaper clippings about the avalanche and how Victor received a hero's commendation from the president of Chile. I combed the articles for the answer to my question, but not one explained how Victor had managed to find the lodge in a blizzard and near total darkness.

At last I persuaded Victor's wife to reveal his secret. "He doesn't talk about this," she explained, "because he thinks people will say he's crazy." She paused for a moment—probably wondering if I would say the same—then continued.

"As Victor was walking through the blizzard, a bright light appeared off to one side, almost like a streetlight. But as Victor trudged through the deep snow, it moved with him and it lit the way, more like a spotlight than a streetlight. The light led Victor straight to the lodge. Many times along the way, Victor sank so deep into snowdrifts that he couldn't free himself, but each time he felt someone grab him from behind, pull him up, and set him on his way again.

"And there's one more thing. The light that guided him was no ordinary light. When Victor looked directly into it, instead of radiating from some sort of bulb as he expected, the light was coming from Jesus' face." •

MICHAEL SHARP IS A FULL-TIME VOLUNTEER WITH THE FAMILY, AND IS NOW IN CHILE.

*With no heat
and almost
no shelter,
unless help
came soon,
the survivors
would all
freeze to
death.*

FROM FRANÇOISE CORTICELLI

A WALKING MIRACLE

TWO YEARS AGO, Nivo, one of our neighbors here in Madagascar, started suffering excruciating pains in her back. Local doctors prescribed heavier and heavier doses of painkillers after vaguely diagnosing “some problem” in her back. When we took her for a thorough checkup in one of the city’s best hospitals, she was finally properly diagnosed: advanced bone cancer!

The head doctor recommended that Nivo start radiotherapy treatment immediately. Even with that, he only gave her a few months to live. But Nivo told the doctor that she believed her life was in God’s hands—that He had

allowed this to happen to her and that He could heal her if He wanted to. And if she only had a short time to live, she wanted to spend it at home with her 10 children, she said.

Soon Nivo was in so much pain that she was unable to walk and had to be helped anywhere she went. In addition, the biopsy had left a large wound on her spine that soon got infected. Nivo’s condition was getting worse.

We prayed about her situation again and suggested she reevaluate her decision regarding radiotherapy. We also assured her we would do our best to help her, whatever her decision. She again chose to

leave her life in God’s hands, but reminded Him that her children were still small and needed her, so she needed to be healed. We continued to pray desperately for her healing.

One day not long after this prayer, Nivo needed to get out of bed to go to the bathroom, and nobody was there to help her. So she prayed for strength and went ahead and got up by herself. She was so happy that she was able to get up and walk on her own that she went to her front door. One of her neighbors saw her and spread the word. Soon all the villagers surrounded her humble abode, shouting, “Thank You, Jesus! It’s a miracle!” It was quite a sight!

Little by little, Nivo regained strength and got back on her feet. She started to get around with two walking sticks, then with one, and eventually without any. The wound on her back also healed completely.

We met her doctor a few weeks later, and he was surprised to hear that she was still alive. “Is she paralyzed then?” he asked. When we told him she was up and about and caring for her children, he was speechless.

Today, two years after the pain started, Nivo takes care of her children, tends her garden, washes her large family’s laundry, and gets around like anybody else in the village.



Tiny woman, giant faith!
Nivo (second from right) with 9 of her 11 children and Françoise in front of Nivo’s house.

FEEDING READING

Sometimes we have to chide her when we see her carrying heavy loads on her head, to which she replies with a laugh, “*Ça va bien! Merci Jésus!*” (“I’m fine! Thank You Jesus!”)

And that’s not all! Nivo recently gave birth to a beautiful baby girl—her 11th child. The delivery was difficult because the baby was in the breach position, but otherwise it went well, despite Nivo missing some vertebrae in her lower back. When the Lord does miracles, He does them well! •

FRANÇOISE CORTICELLI IS A FULL-TIME FAMILY VOLUNTEER IN MADAGASCAR.

If you haven’t yet met the Miracle Man and Great Physician, you can right now by praying a prayer like the following:

Dear Jesus, I know I’ve done wrong and don’t deserve the blessings You want to give me, but I accept Your sacrifice on the cross as payment for my sins, and I receive Your love, forgiveness, and salvation now. Please come into my heart, give me Your gift of eternal life, help me to get to know You, and let me experience Your miracle-working power in my life. Amen.

Eight steps to healing and other miracles

1. Begin with a clean heart; unconfessed sin in your life will hinder faith.

Psalms 66:18–19
Proverbs 28:13
James 5:16
1 John 3:21

2. Prepare by memorizing promises; find authority in God’s Word and faith will follow.

Romans 10:17
Joshua 23:14b
1 Kings 8:56b
Proverbs 7:2–3
Matthew 24:35
2 Corinthians 1:20
2 Peter 1:4

3. Be definite.

Isaiah 45:11
James 1:6–8

4. Expect from God; know you are entitled to His promises.

Mark 11:23–24
Hebrews 4:16
Hebrews 11:6

5. Accept from God; there comes a time to cease praying.

Joshua 7:10
Luke 1:38

6. Stand your ground in faith and trust, even if you don’t see the answer immediately.

Numbers 23:19
Psalm 112:7
Acts 27:25
Romans 3:4
Romans 4:19–21
Galatians 6:9
Ephesians 4:27
Ephesians 6:13,16
Hebrews 10:23
Hebrews 10:35–36
1 Peter 1:7

7. Put your faith into action.

2 Kings 5:1,9–14
2 Chronicles 20:21–22
Matthew 14:28–29
Mark 2:11–12
Mark 3:1,5b
Luke 17:14
John 4:47–53
2 Corinthians 5:7
James 2:17–26

8. Thank Him for hearing and answering your prayer.

Psalms 30:11–12
Psalm 107:2
Romans 4:20



Continued from page 7

“All things work together for good to those who love God”—in their situation. In each and every case where they trust the Lord and hang on and don’t give up, it bears good fruit in their lives through the lessons they learn.

Who really has the most faith?—The person who is instantly healed of an affliction, or someone who has to bear that affliction and still carries on loving and trusting the Lord even though they may not understand why they haven’t been healed? They both have faith, but the one who has had to suffer long-term affliction has had to have *enduring* faith—not necessarily for healing, but faith to trust the Lord day by day to take care of them and bring them through.

IN GOD’S TIME

Sometimes the Lord may not heal you right away because He knows you’re more useful or more yielded or more open to

His lessons when you have an affliction. If the Lord isn’t ready to heal you, then how can you have faith for healing? If He intends your infirmity to be long-term, if He’s made you that way and wants you to stay that way, should you be condemned because you don’t get healed? No, because under those circumstances, the Lord doesn’t *want* you to have faith for it. Faith is a gift of God, and He’s not going to give you the faith for your healing until He’s ready to heal you. In a case like that, what He wants to give you is faith to endure it, faith to praise and thank Him for it, and faith to be a good testimony to others in your affliction. Then, when He’s ready to heal you, He’ll give you the faith for that.

Sometimes people don’t

Real faith is doing what the Lord tells you to do for your situation and trusting that He knows best.

have faith to be healed because it’s not the Lord’s time, but other times it’s because they’re not immersed in God’s Word, they’re not claiming His promises in the Word or meeting His conditions. Without taking in and obeying the Word, it’s impossible to have faith for healing or anything else.

But if you’re doing your part and the Lord doesn’t choose to heal you, you shouldn’t feel condemned. Perhaps you *are* weak in faith for healing, but that can be remedied through the Word. Or perhaps it’s not yet the Lord’s time to heal you because there are things He wants to teach you first. Or perhaps He wants to use you as an example of someone who is very strong in faith that He’s going to help carry through the difficult times, because He knows you’ll remain cheerful and positive, come what may. Whatever the case, real faith is doing what the Lord tells you to do for your situation and trusting that He knows best, whether you get healed or not. •

MARIA FONTAINE IS THE CO-LEADER OF THE FAMILY, ALONG WITH HER HUSBAND PETER AMSTERDAM.

Personal comfort in times of illness

PRAYER FOR THE DAY

Jesus, You know me inside out—every detail of my life, my every thought and every desire. It's no wonder You always know exactly what I need and have the answer to every problem that comes my way. You know what I need even better than I do. Thank You for loving me like You do. What incredible love! To think that You know everything about me, and still love me. You take me just as I am. You never give up on me. It's a miracle of love!

ONE THING THAT CAN MAKE YOUR PHYSICAL AFFLICTIONS EASIER to bear is knowing that you can go to the Lord and receive His personal, specific, Heaven-sent words of love and encouragement. It's a marvelous comfort and relief to be able to hear from the Lord in prophecy. You don't have to be in the dark about what the Lord is doing in your life, or be plagued by unanswered questions, or under a cloud of condemnation sent by the Devil. You can pour out your heart to the Lord and receive His help in the form of personal messages that will be exactly what you need at the time.

He can show you why, in His love, He has allowed you to be afflicted, as well as what He wants you to do about it—how to go about securing His healing. Faith comes by hearing the Word, and that is true not only of His recorded Word, the Bible, but also the words of specific encouragement, instruction, and guidance that your loving Shepherd can give you personally through prophecy.

Take your heartaches, burdens, and questions to Him. He's eager to speak to you. He wants to lighten your burdens and make your afflictions easier to bear. He loves you and He will never suffer you to be tempted beyond what you are able to bear, but will always make a way to escape (1 Corinthians 10:13). That way of escape often comes through His personal words of comfort and love and encouragement that will lift you over the storm and bring you to the light of a brighter day.

Sometimes one message from Jesus is all it takes, but if you're fighting a serious or long-term illness, you'll want to go back to the Lord often for any further instruction or encouragement He may have for you, because circumstances and conditions change. And if you ever have questions about the words, promises, or explanations He gives, just ask Him about them. He never grows weary of answering your questions. He delights in making it as easy as possible for you, because He loves you so. Let Him bear your burdens, ease your pain, and lighten your load by letting Him speak to your heart through prophecy.

(FOR MORE EXPLANATION OF THE GIFT OF PROPHECY AND HOW YOU CAN BENEFIT FROM IT, READ *HEARING FROM HEAVEN*, A BOOKLET IN AURORA PRODUCTION'S *GET ACTIVATED!* SERIES.)

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE ANTICHRIST, the future world dictator whose coming is foretold in the Bible? Is he living now?—Probably. And what about his new world order? Is the Antichrist already working behind the scenes to bring about his plan for world economic and political domination?—It seems so.

From all indications, the Antichrist's satanic, technology-based system is already being set in place—"satanic" in that the Antichrist will be Satan-possessed (Daniel 8:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:2-4; 12:9), and "technology based" in that he will use technology to achieve and enforce his near total control of the world and its people. A key Bible passage about this is Revelation 13:16-17:

He [the Antichrist's right-hand man, the False Prophet] causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on [or "in"] their right hand or on [in] their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Imagine what the apostle John must have thought when, in about 90 AD, he saw a vision of this taking place in a futuristic world. People ever since have been baffled as to how any such universal, totalitarian economic system could be established or policed. But now the age of technology has arrived. With electronic commerce rapidly replacing cash and virtually everything that is bought and sold being identified and tracked by bar codes and other means, it is no longer inconceivable that the financial transactions of everyone in the world could one day be monitored by a centralized agency.

Most of the technology already exists, but before the Antichrist's plan can work, it needs to be more powerful and widespread. It stands to reason, then, that the Antichrist would get behind research and development in such fields as microchip technology, biotechnology, and the Internet.

Also, the technology is not enough in itself. The Antichrist also needs to sell the world on it. It appears that he is busy at that, too, and he is not alone.

He works through others—mostly unwitting accomplices who are helping to further his agenda by developing and marketing the technology, including some of the world's brightest minds and biggest financial powers. A scripture that goes along with that point is Daniel 11:21b KJV:

He shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.

Some versions of the Bible translate this as "seize the kingdom by intrigue"—by secret scheming or plotting. Either way, it sounds as though the Antichrist is going to rise to power through cunning salesmanship rather than solely the strong-arm tactics that the leaders of most past empires depended on.

Through the various forms of mass media, the Antichrist is doing everything he can to convince the world that these new technologies are beneficial and necessary. What he is not saying, of course, is that he will eventually use them to suit his evil purposes. Consider these developments.

SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGIES

Video cameras now monitor and record our faces and movements in many stores and public places. We have learned to accept this intrusion into our lives because of the benefits: It discourages crime and helps apprehend criminals. Likewise, the monitoring of Internet communications helps curtail child pornographers, terrorists, and other threats to our common good.

As electronic databases replace filing cabinets, more and more data about us is being collected, stored, cross-referenced, and shared. Now that nearly everything we do leaves behind a “data trail,” combining information from different sources can re-create a person’s activities with astonishing accuracy and detail. This reservoir of personal information is especially helpful to marketers, and it is big business. Financial privacy has become a thing of the past, as financial institutions and others now routinely put the details of their clients’ lives up for sale.

Other data-gathering technologies help complete the mosaic of information that can be collected on individuals. For example, computerized “black boxes” are being built into cars, and location-tracking chips into cell phones and other electronic devices—innovations that consumers are being told are for their own good. Similarly, microchips are being implanted under the skin of pets for ID and tracking purposes, and pilot

programs are already being done for Alzheimer’s patients and children.

BIOMETRICS

Biometrics is the technology of collecting, processing, and storing details of a person’s physical characteristics through such means as fingerprinting, thumb scans, retina scans, hand geometry, face recognition, voice recognition, and digital macrophotography. Biometric identification has caught the interest of both governments and the commercial sector because it is far more foolproof than more primitive forms of ID, such as photo ID cards or signatures.

CASHLESS COMMERCE

The shift from cash to electronic commerce helps curtail drug trafficking, counterfeiting, and theft, not to mention the greater convenience and security that electronic commerce affords. So-called smart cards now contain microchips that store not only the owner’s financial information, but also medical records and other personal information. The logical next step would be to eliminate the plastic card and embed the chip directly into the owner, say “on their right hand or on their foreheads.”

GLOBAL NETWORKING

As amazing as these new technologies are, the Antichrist will not be able to fully set up his new world order until it’s all pulled together into an integrated network with uni-

versal standards—an obstacle that might *not* be an obstacle much longer. Governments and industry are setting international standards and expanding their electronic networking by sharing information, services, and technology. As more countries turn to the latest technology to help solve their particular social and economic problems, they expand the network’s reach and capabilities. The level of technological development now varies greatly from nation to nation, but the whole system could be “online” in a relatively short time.

Proponents of these new technologies and cooperative efforts always point out the positive aspects, such as convenience, security, lower costs, and improved quality, speed, and efficiency in the delivery of goods and services. Little is said about the negative aspects of this public intrusion into what were once private personal affairs. Under the banner of science and technology, and more recently “the war against terrorism,” the governments of the world are rushing to complete the Antichrist’s economic and political system for him—the very system the Bible warns against.

Don’t be duped into following this false messiah or receiving his mark! Follow the true Messiah, Jesus Christ. Then you’ll be on the right side, the winning side, when Jesus returns to put a stop to the Antichrist’s wickedness and set things right (Revelation 14:9–11; 19:11–21). •

You don't have to be perfect

A lot of people don't pray until they're in some sort of trouble, and then they find they don't have the kind of faith that gets results. Their faith is weak because it's been so long since they last exercised it, and they feel their relationship with Me is strained because they didn't place much importance on it before trouble struck. They feel hypocritical or underserving, and don't know where to start in making things right.

It is much easier to pray full-of-faith prayers when you have a history of praying and receiving My answers, when you feel close to Me because you've opened your heart to Me day by day, and when you know you've done your best to please Me. But even if you don't meet those conditions, there's hope. You don't have to be perfect for Me to answer your prayers. I help all who call on Me in faith and humble desperation.

Simply turn to Me in your time of need, get your heart right by confessing your faults and receiving My forgiveness, believe that I can perform the miracle you need, and I will. Best of all, this can be the start of a whole new life with Me in which you experience more answers to prayers and a greater closeness to Me.