

*For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for battle? So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.*

-I Corinthians 14:8, 9

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## In Search of Miracles?

*The Necessity of Trusting God in the Routines of Life*

We live in a sense-crazed age where everyone seems to be crying out, "Touch me. Make me feel good. Thrill me. Move me. Excite me. Entertain me. Satisfy me. Give me a charge. Turn me on!" And this blend of existential/relativism has moved right into the churches and living rooms of many of our Christian homes and has taken up residence in our lives.

Gone are the days, it seems, when we would prove our love and loyalty to God by faithfully sticking by His Word when everyone else was deserting it or twisting it to their own ends. Fading fast are the memories of spiritual giants who would tenaciously endure bitterness and disappointments of life while *joyfully* anticipating that Better Day and that Better Land where all tears and pain will cease.

It seems there's a different kind of wind blowing now. Those who are thrill seekers are busily commanding God to do everything and anything for them that their little hearts desire; while those who are content to be abased or to suffer loss in God's will and for His sake, are considered foolish and are sometimes accused of lacking the faith to overcome.

Today's brand of religious zealot (call him a *Christian* if you like) seems to be able to make it in life only as he or she is moved along from one spiritual high or challenge to another. He's been brainwashed (often willingly so) to believe it is his right to expect, and even demand, a daily miracle from God; to be so "on top of things" that he need never to be disappointed, physically run down, sick or in financial straits. God to him is more his "High" than his Savior and Lord. Such dreamers seem to think that God is somewhat of an all-powerful, all-willing heavenly errand boy, ready to do their bidding according to their own emotional whims.

Such an attitude toward God is awfully close to blasphemy! And, sadly, many who claim

to be firm Bible-believers are falling into this same sense-dominated trap.

## Getting On the Band Wagon

It's appalling how many otherwise good men are now speaking the same smooth language of the zealous charlatans who *use* God to manipulate people. Everyone seems to be involved in a "miracle-something-or-other" and are asking the Christian public to foot the bill. I was always under the impression that a miracle was something *God* did without the addition of our two cents worth. . . or our \$5, \$50, or \$100!

From a Biblical perspective, God is still very much alive and well. And, yes, He is still the God of the miraculous. He is still all-powerful; but, no, He is not stupidly doing whatever the deceived (also deceitful), sinful humans command Him to do. He is not honoring the lives, ministries or movements of those who habitually rip Bible verses out of context to suit their needs and wants, while leading the gullible religious public down a deadend street. He is not the Author of the "name-it-and-claim-it" game. He is not the power behind many of the so-called "miracles" that are claimed in His name (see Mathew 7:22, 23). Nor is He the Author of money-grabbing prophets (or is it "profits?") whose methods turn more unbelievers *away from Christ* in disgust (*and who can blame them!*) than they shamelessly boast of winning to Him.

## A Different Spirit is Found in the Bible

How very different the language and experiences of the apostle Paul: "*...as the minister of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings. . . . We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed. . . . For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble. . . . that we were burdened beyond measure, above*

strength, so that we despaired even of life" Did Paul reach the point in his life where he wished that he was dead? (II Corinthians 6:4,5; 4:8,9; 1:8).

One thing can be said of Paul. He was *faithful*. Through thick and thin, in good times or bad, while healthy or when sick, while being abased or abounding, he was faithful! No wonder *this* is the man God chose to write, "Moreover it is **required** in stewards that one be found faithful" (I Corinthians 4:2). No other word could fill the void that would be left if we removed "faithful" from this verse. Others, perhaps, would like to replace it with words such as *successful, large, charismatic, zealous, intelligent, powerful, popular, prosperous, ecumenical, polished, or dynamic*. But no other word adequately fits. It is the one quality God chose by which to identify true stewards of Christ, His message and all He stands for -- and it is such a rare quality. Solomon said it so well: "Most men will proclaim each his own goodness (or worth), but who can find a faithful man? (Proverbs 20:6).

### God is Able, But is He Always Willing?

It is so important to trust God to see us through the *trying and traumatic situations* of life, being faithful to Him in *the routines* of life -- even when there no indication that a miracle-working God is the least concerned about our plight. Such faith brings much greater glory to Him than our insistence that we must have a miraculous "sign" to verify that He still cares for us.

This attitude was so beautifully displayed by Daniel's three Hebrew friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. They were faithful to their God in not bowing down to a false God. They had *never* done so. They were faithful to the True and Living God day in and day out. They knew God was *able* to deliver them and felt that He *would* deliver them, *yet even if He didn't*, they still would be *faithful* even if it meant dying in the process (see Daniel 3:16-18).

Their refusal to bow down and their willingness to commit the whole situation to God was a moving declaration on their part of how confident they were of *God's faithfulness to them!* And true, lasting faithfulness on our part must be built upon the sure foundation that **the Lord** can *always* be trusted in *every* situation. In other words, our faithfulness to Him ought to be a

natural response to **His** faithfulness to us. This *principle* of responding to God as He has already responded to us, is illustrated concerning His love in First John 4:19: *We love Him because He first loved us*. The little chorus which was popular thirty to forty years ago, says it so well:

*After all He's done for me,  
After all He's done for me;  
How can I do less  
But give Him my best,  
And live for Him completely --  
After all He's done for me.*

### A Testimony to God's Faithfulness

Miracles have always had an overwhelming attraction to the multitudes. It was true in Christ's day. It is true today. But the miraculous, strange as it may seem, does not generally have holding power. By that I mean that seeking miracles is almost like being on a drug; you have to have a fresh fix ever so often, another thrill, a new high. We must not forget that the Lord Jesus Christ stated on two occasions that "*an evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign*" -- or, miracle (Matthew 12:39; 16:4).

On the other hand, what will ultimately attract your unsaved neighbor, your co-worker, your school buddy to Christ will be your genuine trust in your Heavenly Father no matter what comes your way. When others see that through the most severe trials you faithfully trust in your God, they will come to realize that such a God must be worth knowing. The same principle works with wayward, lukewarm believers. Many backslidden Christians are where they are because of the inconsistencies, failures and unfaithful behavior in others who were supposed to be men or women of God, but who caved in when the pressure got too great.

If we who know Christ are to have a lasting impact on others we must settle it once-and-for-all that "*though He slay me, yet will I trust Him*" (Job 13:15). Such faithfulness on our part points directly to the faithfulness of God; otherwise, why would we keep on trusting Him? He proves Himself absolutely dependable; therefore, we trust Him for all things and in all things. ×

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Clarity Trumpet #19

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