

GIFTS
FROM
HEAVEN

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True Stories of
Miraculous Answers to Prayer

COMPILED BY
JAMES STUART BELL



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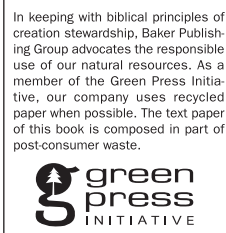
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To Margaret:

How beautiful, then, the marriage of two Christians, two who are one in hope, one in desire, one in the way of life they follow, one in the religion they practice. They are as brother and sister, both servants of the same Master. Nothing divides them, either in flesh or in spirit. They are, in very truth, two in one flesh; and where there is but one flesh there is also but one spirit. They pray together, they worship together, they fast together; instructing one another, encouraging one another, strengthening one another.

—Tertullian (to his wife)

The best and sweetest flowers of paradise
God gives to His people when they are upon
their knees. Prayer is the gate of heaven.

—Thomas Brooks

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Introduction

Do you ever have doubts that God answers or even really hears some of your prayers? The truth is that God responds to any and every prayer of the heart. Oftentimes, however, we may not be aware of how He responds to our praises, our requests, or our frustrations. We only know by faith that He is actively and lovingly responding and working through those prayers, as He tells us in Scripture.

Sometimes we have doubts because we don't physically see results from our prayers that we would like to see in our lives. Some of us wonder if we have prayed hard enough or sincerely enough, or if there were obstacles in our lives that prevented His positive answers. Yet most of us can recall certain times in our walk with God when He came through for us with flying colors, when we just knew it could only be His doing. He is the God of the impossible and the miraculous, and there are times when His power is so evident that all we can do is marvel and break out in praise to Him.

This volume is a collection of stories of believers who needed God to come through in a big way and He did just that, sometimes in a much bigger way than they expected. Everything we receive from God is truly a gift, whether it relates to our health, our talents, our families, or the provision of some particular need. There are other gifts of His grace that can only be described as supernatural. They go beyond the norm in our lives, displaying His power and distinct presence, His divine intervention when we're desperate. These answers are truly "gifts from heaven" that stem from His abounding love and generosity.

I hope this volume will encourage you, the reader, to persist in seeking all the precious gifts God has to offer. My prayer is that knowing how His everlasting love has blessed others, you will seek Him to fulfill your dreams and supply your needs. But above all, may you see Him manifested clearly as the Great Gift Giver, and cherish the Giver more than His gifts. For as it says in James 1:17, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (ESV).

God desires to give you good and perfect gifts from heaven, as these contributors herein attest. I hope today that you can see the radiance of His glory, where no wavering exists, because He is for you—yesterday, today, and forever.

James Stuart Bell

God's Intrusion

BRENDA DILLON

Whether it was shock, relief, or unexplainable awe that put me in a state of speechlessness, I'll never know. I do know, however, that while my tongue was silent, my mind and heart were having a very serious emotional conversation with the Lord Jesus.

Seven years had passed since I had been diagnosed with an abnormal tricuspid heart valve. The doctor explained that a normal tricuspid valve was round and had three flaps, making it look like a peace sign. Mine, however, was oval with two flaps, making it look like an egg with a smile.

At the time, I thought, *No big deal—it works*. But the doctor told me I needed to have it checked every year—which, of course, went directly to the bottom of my to-do list.

Moving ahead seven years, I went to see my family doctor for a checkup, and he asked how the bicuspid was doing. When I told him I'd never had it checked, he immediately sent me to

the other side of the building to see the heart doctor—who immediately sent me downstairs to radiology for an ultrasound.

It was a little unnerving when a technician asked to witness my test because she had never seen such an abnormality in real life.

Why not—bring in the whole crew!

I had second thoughts about that as more technicians began to hover over me, and the test seemed to go on and on. I remembered the earlier procedure only taking ten to fifteen minutes. I lay there watching the hands on the wall clock tick off the minutes, while the confused technicians took turns looking at the ultrasound screen connected to my heart and checking it against my previous films.

I'm sure they must have seen a slight jolt on the monitor as I remembered the doctor holding up my films, pointing to the “smiling egg,” and explaining to me that the flaps on a bicuspid valve were more apt to wear out than the flaps on a normal tricuspid valve.

I began to think about all the time I had spent hiking the peaks and canyons of our friend's ranch in the Big Horn Mountains. With every remembered step I thought, *I was wearing out my flappers . . . I was wearing out my flappers!*

Being one week away from my next trip to the ranch, a foreboding melancholy came over me. There would be no hiking this fall—maybe never again. As I lay there, feeling darker and darker, I heard a technician use the word *suspicious*, and in my mind, that sealed my fate. Heart surgery was surely going to keep me from my annual adventure—perhaps permanently.

No, Lord, please! You know how much I love the mountains—you put that love in me. You and I have had wonderful times together scaling the peaks and creeping through the

canyons. I feel so close to you when I stand on those rocky heights. Besides, I already have my plane ticket purchased. You know that I dearly love you and that my faith in you has a strong foundation. I believe that your heart always desires the best for me. So if this is what you want to use in my life for continued growth and blessing, I surrender it to you. But please let me go to the mountains one last time.

I was finally told they were finished, but that I needed to see the doctor before I left. I said a quick prayer and stepped into his office.

He stood there with all my films hanging on the examination wall. He slowly pointed out the “smiling egg” of seven years ago—I remembered it well. Then, with a shaking hand, he pointed to the perfectly shaped “peace sign” they had recorded that day.

He must have said a dozen times, “I can’t understand this! I’ve never seen anything like this.”

I asked if I had somehow grown another “flap,” and with irritation in his voice he said, “No! You’re born with these things, you don’t grow them.”

If I hadn’t seen the tests with my own eyes, I might have thought the films had gotten mixed up. But those were all my films—with my name, my birthdate, and the calendar date of each test printed on the corners.

There was only one answer to the mystery. For whatever reason, God had chosen to turn my bicuspid heart valve into a perfectly working tricuspid valve.

The doctor said, “You don’t have to come back,” and I couldn’t get out of the building fast enough.

When I reached my car, the tears cut loose. Not just tears of joy over the new miracle valve, but tears that came from the

recognition that my God had chosen to lovingly intervene in my life in such a way that I couldn't doubt the source. One week later, I was worshiping God on top of a red-rock ridge in the Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming.

This miraculous intrusion by my Father God was a faith-building tool that He used to strengthen my spiritual foundation and increase my ability to trust Him in any situation.

Eleven years have passed since God performed a miraculous surgery on a heart that has been Christ's home for many years. His welcomed intrusions and constant presence have continued to build my faith and make Him very dear to me.

James 4:2 says we have not because we ask not. Matthew 13:57–58 says Jesus did few miracles in His hometown because of their unbelief. My desire is to never limit God by not asking or by not believing He can do something if He so chooses.

Each time He and I go hiking in the mountains, we have long discussions about how He renovated His home—both spiritually and physically.