

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO MIRACLES

This is a course in miracles. It is a required course. Only the time you take it is voluntary. Free will does not mean that you can establish the curriculum. It means only that you may elect what you want to take at a given time.

The course does not aim at teaching the meaning of love, for that is beyond what can be taught. It does aim, however, at removing the blocks to the awareness of love's Presence, Which is your natural inheritance. The opposite of love is fear, but what is all-encompassing can have no opposite.

This course can therefore be summed up very simply in this way:

*Nothing real can be threatened
Nothing unreal exists.*

Herein lies the Peace of God.

Principles of Miracles

1. There is no order of difficulty among miracles. One is not "harder" or "bigger" than another. They are all the same. All expressions of love are maximal.

2. Miracles as such do not matter. The only thing that matters is their Source, Which is far beyond human evaluation.

3. Miracles occur naturally as expressions of love. The real miracle is the love that inspires them. In this sense, everything that comes from love is a miracle.

4. All miracles mean life, and God is the Giver of life. His Voice will direct you very specifically. You will be told all you need to know.

5. Miracles are habits and should be involuntary. They should not be under conscious control. Consciously selected miracles can be misguided.

6. Miracles are natural. When they do NOT occur something has gone wrong.

7. Miracles are everyone's right, but purification is necessary first.

8. Miracles are healing because they supply a lack in that they are performed by those who temporarily have more for those who temporarily have less.

9. Miracles are a kind of exchange. Like all expressions of love, which are ALWAYS miraculous in the true sense, the exchange reverses the physical laws. They bring MORE love both to the giver AND the receiver.

10. The use of miracles as spectacles to INDUCE belief is wrong; or, better, is a misunderstanding of their purpose. They are really used FOR and BY believers.

11. Prayer is the medium of miracles. Prayer is the natural communication of the created with the Creator. Through prayer love is received, and through miracles love is expressed.

12. Miracles are thoughts. Thoughts can represent lower-order or higher-order reality. This is the basic distinction between intellectualizing and thinking. One makes the physical and the other creates the spiritual, and we believe in what we make or create.

13. Miracles are both beginnings and endings. They thus alter the temporal order. They are always affirmations of rebirth, which seem to go back, but really go forward. They undo the past in the present, and thus release the future.

14. Miracles bear witness to truth. They are convincing because they arise from conviction. Without conviction they deteriorate into magic, which is mindless, and therefore destructive; or rather, the uncreative use of mind.

15. Each day should be devoted to miracles. The purpose of time is to enable man to learn to use it constructively. Time is thus a teaching device, and a means to an end. It will cease when it is no longer useful in facilitating learning.

16. Miracles are teaching devices for demonstrating that it is more blessed to give than to receive. They simultaneously increase the strength of the giver and supply strength to the receiver.

17. Miracles are the transcendence of the body. They are sudden shifts into invisibility, away from a sense of lower-order reality. That is why they heal.

18. A miracle is a service. It is the maximal service one individual can render another. It is a way of loving your neighbor as yourself. The doer recognizes his own and his neighbor's inestimable worth simultaneously.

19. Miracles make minds one in God. They depend on cooperation, because the Sonship is the sum of all the Souls God created. Miracles therefore rest on the laws of eternity, not of time.

20. Miracles reawaken the awareness that the Spirit, not the body, is the altar of truth. This is the recognition that leads to the healing power of the miracle.

21. Miracles are natural expressions of total forgiveness. Through miracles, man accepts God's forgiveness by extending it to others.

22. Miracles are associated with fear only because of the fallacious belief that darkness can HIDE. Man believes that what he cannot see does not exist, and his physical eyes cannot see in the dark. This is a very primitive solution, and has led to a denial of the Spiritual eye. * The escape from darkness involves two stages:

A. The recognition that darkness CANNOT hide. This step usually entails fear.

B. The recognition that there is nothing you WANT to hide, even if you COULD.

This step brings ESCAPE from fear.

(*The term "Spiritual eye" is later replaced by the Holy Spirit and the physical eye becomes the ego. The emphasis on the two ways of seeing, however, remains throughout.)

23. Miracles rearrange perception, and place the levels of perception in true perspective. This heals at ALL levels, because sickness comes from confusing the levels.

When you have become willing to hide nothing, you will not only be willing to enter into communion, but will also understand peace and joy. Your commitment is not yet total, and that is why you still have more to learn than to teach. When your equilibrium stabilizes, you will be able to teach as much as you learn, which will give you the proper balance. Meanwhile, remember that no effort is wasted, for unless you remember this, you cannot avail yourselves of MY efforts, which ARE limitless. Only eternity is real. Why not use the illusion of time constructively?

24. Miracles enable man to heal the sick and raise the dead because he made sickness and death himself, and can abolish both. YOU are a miracle, capable of creating in the likeness of your Creator. Everything else is only your own nightmare, and does not exist. Only the Creations of Light are real.

25. Miracles are part of an interlocking chain of forgiveness which, when completed, is the Atonement. This process works all the time, and in all the dimensions of time.

I am in charge of the process of Atonement, which I undertook to begin. When you offer a miracle unto any of my brothers, you do it unto YOURSELF and me. The reason YOU come before ME is that I do not need miracles for my own Atonement, but I stand at the end in case you fail temporarily. The purpose of my part in the Atonement is the cancelling out of all lacks of love which men could not otherwise correct. The word "sin" should be changed to "lack of love," because "sin" is a man-made word with threat connotations which he made up himself. No REAL threat is involved anywhere. Nothing

is gained by frightening yourselves, and it is very destructive to do so.

26. Miracles represent FREEDOM from fear. "Atoning" really means "undoing." The undoing of fear is an essential part of the Atonement value of miracles.

The purpose of the Atonement is to restore EVERYTHING to you; or rather, to restore it to your AWARENESS. You were GIVEN everything when you were created, just as everyone was. When you have been restored to the recognition of your original state, you naturally become part of the Atonement yourself. As you share MY inability to tolerate lack of love in yourself and others, you MUST join the Great Crusade to correct it. The slogan for the Crusade is "Listen, learn, and DO;" - Listen to my voice, learn to undo error, and DO something to correct it.

The power to work miracles BELONGS to you. I will provide the opportunities to do them, but YOU must be ready and willing, since you are already able. Doing them will bring conviction in the ability, since conviction really comes through accomplishment. The ability is the potential; the achievement is its expression; and the Atonement is the Purpose.

27. A miracle is a universal blessing from God through me to ALL my brothers. It is the privilege of the forgiven to forgive.

The disciples were specifically told to be physicians of the Lord and to heal others. They were also told to HEAL THEMSELVES, and were promised that I would never leave them or forsake them. Atonement is the natural profession of the Children of God, because they have professed me. "Heaven and earth shall pass away" simply means that they will not continue to exist as separate states. My word, which is the Resurrection and the Light, shall not pass away because Light is eternal. YOU are the work of God, and His work is wholly lovable and wholly loving. This is how a man MUST think of himself in his heart, because this is what he IS.

28. Miracles are a means of organizing different levels of consciousness.

Miracles come from the below or subconscious level. Revelations come from the above or superconscious level. The conscious level is in between, and reacts to either sub- or superconscious impulses in varying ratios. Consciousness is the level which engages in the world, and is capable of responding to both. Having no impulses from itself, and being primarily a mechanism for inducing response, it can be very wrong.

Revelation induces complete but temporary suspension of doubt and fear. It represents the original form of communication between God and His Souls, involving an

extremely personal sense of closeness to Creation, which man tries to find in physical relationships. Physical closeness CANNOT achieve this. The subconscious impulses properly induce miracles, which are genuinely interpersonal, and result in real closeness to others. This can be misunderstood by a PERSONALLY willful consciousness as impulses toward physical gratification.

Revelation unites Souls directly with God. Miracles unite minds directly with each other. Neither emanates from consciousness, but both are EXPERIENCED there. This is essential, since consciousness is the state which induces action, though it does NOT inspire it. Man is free to believe what he chooses, and what he DOES attests to what he believes. The deeper levels of the subconscious ALWAYS contain the impulse to miracles, but man is free to fill its more superficial levels, which are closer to consciousness, with the impulses of this world, and to identify himself with them. This results in DENYING himself access to the miracle level underneath. In his actions, then, his relationships also become superficial, and miracle-inspired relating becomes impossible.

29. Miracles are a way of EARNING release from fear.

Revelation induces a state in which fear has ALREADY been abolished. Miracles are thus a means, and revelation is an end. Miracles do not depend on revelation; they INDUCE it. Revelation is intensely personal, and cannot actually be translated into conscious content at all. That is why any attempt to describe it in words is usually incomprehensible. Revelation induces ONLY experience. Miracles, on the other hand, induce ACTION. Miracles are more useful now, because of their interpersonal nature. In this phase of learning, working miracles is more important because freedom from fear cannot be thrust upon you.

30. Miracles praise God through men. They praise God by honoring His Creations, affirming their perfection. They heal because they deny body-identification and affirm Soul-identification. By perceiving the Spirit, they adjust the levels and see them in proper alignment. This places the Spirit at the center, where Souls can communicate directly.

31. Miracles should inspire gratitude, not awe. Man should thank God for what he really is. The Children of God are very holy, and the miracle honors their holiness.

God's Creations never lose their holiness, although it can be hidden. The miracle uncovers it, and brings it into the light where it belongs. Holiness can never be really hidden in darkness, but man can deceive himself about it. This illusion makes him fearful, because he knows in his heart it IS an illusion, and he exerts enormous efforts to establish its reality. The miracle sets reality where it belongs. Eternal reality belongs only to the Soul, and the miracle acknowledges

only the truth. It thus dispels man's illusions about himself, and puts him in communion with himself AND God.

32. Christ inspires all miracles, which are really intercessions. They intercede for man's holiness, and make his perceptions holy. By placing him beyond the physical laws, they raise him into the sphere of celestial order. In THIS order, man IS perfect.

The Soul never loses its communion with God. Only the mind NEEDS Atonement. The miracle joins in the Atonement of Christ by placing the mind in the service of the Spirit. This establishes the proper function of the mind, and corrects its errors.

33. Miracles honor man BECAUSE he is lovable. They dispel illusions about him, and perceive the Light in him. They thus atone for his errors by freeing him from his own nightmares. They release him from a prison in which he has imprisoned HIMSELF, and by freeing his mind from illusions, they restore his sanity. Man's mind CAN be possessed by illusions, but his Spirit is eternally free. If a mind perceives without love it perceives an empty shell, and is unaware of the Spirit within it. But the Atonement restores the Soul to its proper place. The mind that serves the Spirit is invulnerable.

34. Miracles restore the mind to its fullness. By atoning for lack, they establish perfect protection. The strength of the Soul leaves no room for intrusions. The forgiven are filled with the Soul, and they forgive in return. It is the duty of the released to release their brothers.

The forgiven ARE the means of Atonement. Those released by Christ must join in releasing their brothers, for this is the Plan of the Atonement. Miracles are the way in which minds which serve the Spirit unite with Christ for the salvation, or release, of all God's Creations.

35. Miracles are expressions of love, but it does NOT follow that they will always have observable effects. I am the only one who can perform miracles indiscriminately, because I AM the Atonement. You have a ROLE in the Atonement, which I will dictate TO you. Ask ME which miracles you should perform. This spares you exhaustion, because you will act under direct communication.

36. Christ-controlled miracles are part of the Atonement, but Christ-guidance is personal. The impersonal nature of miracles is an essential ingredient, because this enables ME to control their distribution. Christ-guidance leads to the highly PERSONAL experience of Revelation. This is why it involves PERSONAL choice. A guide does NOT control, but he DOES direct, leaving the following up to you. "Lead us not into temptation" means "guide us out of our own errors." "Take up thy cross and follow me" means "recognize your errors and choose to abandon them by following my guidance."

Remember that error cannot really threaten truth, which can ALWAYS withstand it. ONLY the error is really vulnerable. You are free to establish your kingdom where you see fit, but the right choice is inevitable if you remember this:-

The Soul is in a state of grace forever.

Man's reality is ONLY his Soul.

Therefore man is in a state of grace forever.

Atonement undoes all errors in this respect, and thus uproots the REAL source of fear. Whenever God's reassurances are experienced as threat, it is ALWAYS because you are defending misplaced and misdirected loyalty. That is what projection always involves. Error is lack of love. When man projects this onto others, he DOES imprison them, but only to the extent that he reinforces errors they have ALREADY made. This makes them vulnerable to the distortions of others, since their OWN perception of themselves is distorted. The miracle worker can ONLY bless, and thus undoes their distortions, and frees them from prison.

37. Miracles are examples of right thinking. Reality contact at all levels becomes strong and accurate, thus permitting correct delineation of intra- and interpersonal boundaries. As a result, the doer's perceptions are aligned with truth as God created it.

38. A miracle is a correction factor introduced into false thinking by me. It acts as a catalyst, shaking up erroneous perception, and reorganizing it properly. This places man under the Atonement principle, where his perception is healed. Until this has occurred, revelation of the Divine order is impossible.

39. The Spiritual eye is the mechanism of miracles because what It perceives IS true. It perceives both the Creations of God and the creations of man. Among the creations of man, It can also separate the true from the false by Its ability to perceive totally, rather than selectively. It thus becomes the proper instrument for reality testing, which always involves the necessary distinction between the false and the true.

40. The miracle dissolves error because the Spiritual eye identifies error as false, or unreal. This is the same as saying that by perceiving light, darkness automatically disappears.

Darkness is lack of light, as sin is lack of love. It has no unique properties of its own. It is an example of the "scarcity" fallacy, from which ONLY error can proceed. Truth is always abundant. Those who perceive and acknowledge that they have everything have no need for driven behavior of ANY kind.

41. The miracle acknowledges all men as your brothers and mine. It is a way of perceiving the universal mark of God in them. The specialness of God's Sons does NOT stem from

exclusion, but from inclusion. ALL my brothers are special. If they believe they are deprived of anything, their perception becomes distorted. When this occurs, the whole family of God, or the Sonship, is impaired in its relationships. Ultimately, every member of the family of God must return. The miracle calls him to return, because it blesses and honors him even though he may be absent in spirit.

"God is not mocked" is not a warning, but a reassurance on this point. God WOULD be mocked if any of His Creations lacked holiness. The Creation IS whole, and the mark of wholeness is holiness.

42. Wholeness is the perceptual content of miracles. It thus corrects, or atones for, the faulty perception of lack anywhere.

Here we begin to make the fundamental distinction between miracles and projection. The stimulus MUST precede the response, and will also determine the kind of response that is evoked. Behavior IS response, so that the question "response to what?" becomes crucial. Since stimuli are identified through perception, you first perceive the stimulus and then behave accordingly. It follows, then, that:

*As ye perceive
So shall ye behave.*

The Golden Rule asks you to behave toward others as you would have them behave toward you. This means that the perception of BOTH must be accurate. The Golden Rule is the rule for appropriate behavior. You cannot behave appropriately unless you perceive accurately, because appropriate behavior DEPENDS on lack of level confusion. The presence of level confusion ALWAYS results in variable reality testing, and therefore in variability in behavioral appropriateness. Since you and your neighbor are equal members of the same family, as you perceive both, so you will behave toward both. The way to perceive for Golden Rule behavior is to look out from the perception of your OWN holiness, and perceive the holiness of others.

The emptiness engendered by fear should be replaced by love, because love and its absence are in the same dimension, and correction cannot be undertaken except WITHIN a dimension. Otherwise, there has been a confusion of levels. Death is a human affirmation of a belief in "fate," or level confusion. That is why the Bible says, "There IS no death," and why I demonstrated that death does not exist. I came to fulfill the law by REINTERPRETING it. The law itself, if properly understood, offers only protection to man. It is those who have not yet "changed their minds" who entered the "hellfire" concept into it.

I assure you that I will witness for anyone who lets me, and to whatever extent he permits it. YOUR witnessing demonstrates YOUR belief, and thus strengthens it. Those who

witness for me are expressing, through their miracles, that they have abandoned the belief in deprivation in favor of the abundance they have learned BELONGS to them.

43. A MAJOR contribution of miracles is their strength in releasing man from his misplaced sense of isolation, deprivation and lack.

Miracles are affirmations of Sonship, which is a state of completion and abundance. Whatever is true and real is eternal, and CANNOT change or BE changed. The Soul is therefore unalterable because it is ALREADY perfect, but the mind can elect the level it chooses to serve. The ONLY limit which is put on its choice is that it CANNOT serve two masters.

The mind, if it elects to do so, becomes a medium by which the Soul creates along the line of its own Creation. If it does not freely elect to do so, it retains its creative POTENTIAL, but places itself under tyrannous rather than genuinely authoritative control. As a result it imprisons, because such are the dictates of tyrants. To change your mind means to place it at the disposal of TRUE Authority.

The miracle is thus a sign that the mind has chosen to be led by Christ in His service. The abundance of Christ is the natural result of choosing to follow Him. ALL shallow roots must be uprooted, because they are not deep enough to sustain you. The illusion that shallow roots can be DEEPENED, and thus made to hold, is one of the distortions on which the REVERSAL of the Golden Rule rests. As these false underpinnings are given up, the equilibrium is temporarily experienced as unstable. However, the fact is that NOTHING is less stable than an orientation that is upside down. Nor can anything which holds it that way be really conducive to greater stability.

44. Miracles arise from a miraculous state of mind. By being one, this state of mind goes out to ANYONE, even without the awareness of the miracle worker himself. The impersonal nature of miracles is because the Atonement itself is one, uniting all creations with their Creator.

45. The miracle is an expression of an inner awareness of Christ, and the acceptance of His Atonement. The mind is then in a state of grace, and naturally becomes gracious, both to the Host within and the stranger without. By bringing in the stranger, he becomes your brother.

46. A miracle is never lost. It touches many people you do not even know, and sometimes produces undreamed of changes in forces of which you are not even aware. That is not your concern. The miracle will always bless YOU.

The miracles you are NOT asked to perform have not lost their value. They are still expressions of your own state of grace, but the ACTION aspect of the miracle should be Christ-

controlled because of His complete awareness of the Whole Plan. The impersonal nature of miracle-mindedness ensures YOUR grace, but only Christ is in a position to know where grace can be BESTOWED.

47. Miracle-mindedness means miracle-readiness. Readiness means that you should always keep your perceptions straight, so that you will ALWAYS be ready, willing and able. These are the essentials for "listen, learn and do." You must be READY to listen, WILLING to learn, and ABLE to do. Only the last is involuntary, because it is the APPLICATION of miracles which must be Christ-controlled. The other two, which are the VOLUNTARY aspects of miracle-mindedness, ARE up to you.

48. Awe is an inappropriate response to miracles.

Revelation is literally unspeakable because it is an experience of unspeakable love. Awe should be reserved for revelation, to which it is perfectly and correctly applicable. It is NOT appropriate for miracles because a state of awe is worshipful. It implies that one of a lesser order stands before a greater one. This is the case ONLY when a Soul stands before its Creator. Souls are perfect creations, and experience awe only in the Presence of the Creator of perfection.

The miracle, on the other hand, is a sign of love among equals. Equals cannot be in awe of one another because awe implies inequality. It is therefore an inappropriate reaction to me. An elder brother is entitled to respect for his greater experience, and a reasonable amount of obedience for his greater wisdom. He is also entitled to love because he IS a brother, and also to devotion if he is devoted. It is only my devotion that entitles me to yours. There is nothing about me that YOU cannot attain. I have nothing that does not come from God. The main difference between us as yet is that I have NOTHING ELSE. This leaves me in a state of true holiness, which is only a POTENTIAL in you.

"No man cometh unto the Father but by me" is among the most misunderstood statements in the Bible. It does NOT mean that I am in any way separate or different from you EXCEPT IN TIME, which does not really exist at all. Actually, the quotation is more meaningful if it is considered on a vertical rather than a horizontal axis. Regarded along the vertical, man stands below me and I stand below God. In the process of "rising up," I AM higher. This is because, without me, the distance between God and man would be too great for you to encompass.

I bridge the distance as an elder brother to man on the one hand, and as a Son of God on the other. My devotion to my brothers has placed me in charge of the Sonship, which I can render complete only to the extent to which I can SHARE it. This may appear to contradict the statement "I and my Father are one," but there are still separate parts in the