

Gaming the System

By design, miracles are the exception, not the rule, during our earthly existence. While it is true that we all are spiritual beings with creative abilities, most of us are not very good at tapping into that potential. Some of us seem to be better at the art of prayer and miracle working than others. I do believe that we all have the potential for experiencing miracles, but most of us do not have the specialized knowledge and experience required. While I believe it is possible to "game the system," so to speak, by acquiring this knowledge and thereby bypassing, at least to some degree, the experiences of hardship, suffering and failure in life, I am not at all sure that it would necessarily be in our best interests to do so.

Think about it for a minute. If God wanted us all to be healthy, happy, comfortable, successful, theologically correct, and able to perform miracles upon demand, then that is exactly what would happen. But that didn't happen. As a matter of fact, just the opposite happened. When we pray for help, we most often don't get it. When we pray for healing, most often we are not healed. When we pray for understanding when studying the Bible, we most often remain confused and incorrect about many seemingly important doctrines.

Why is it that only a very small minority gain entrance into the Kingdom of God on earth? Why is the gate so narrow? Why is it that God does not instantly save everyone from sin, suffering and death? Creating Heaven on earth, in my view, would for the most part defeat the purpose of our being here in the first place. We are here so that we might experience something different from Heaven. The joys and bliss of Heaven are appreciated all the more, when contrasted with the negative experiences that we temporarily endure during our earthly sojourn. The development of heavenly, Christ-like, character can only be achieved by experiencing the refining fires of our earthly existence. Another way of saying this is "no pain, no gain."

So, is it possible to "game the system" and avoid some of the pain and suffering. It most certainly is. In the words of Jesus, "*all things are possible to him who believes.*" (Mark 9:23) The Apostle Paul said, "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*" (Phil. 4:13)

Is it OK to pray for a miracle when faced with sickness and problems? Of course it is. Sometimes patience is required, however, because God wants you to benefit from the negative experience before He removes it. Sometimes God will say no, altogether, but give you better things instead, things like love and peace in the midst of trying circumstances.

There are two ways to rise above a negative circumstance. One way is to physically remove the obstacle. The other, perhaps better, way is to rise above it mentally, and use the situation as a means of heightening your experience of God's love and presence in your life and becoming more like Christ. The way I see it, this is a win-win situation. It doesn't matter whether God performs the miracle or not.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28)