

Chapter 25: The Imperfect Life Miracle

Life Application Verses:

Hebrews 4: 12-16. For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Several years ago, or what seems to be eons ago now, I was stationed in Rota, Spain, from January 1976 until December of 1978. That was a 3-year tour with the U.S. Navy, where I was in the ‘intelligence group’ serving as one of many in the defense of our nation and our allies across the world at the time. If you have served in the military and traveled, you will know that you collect stuff and the Navy (or other branches) will move your household goods and professional items. In order to accomplish this, you contact the ‘movers’ on base for an appointment or you can go by the location and have one set up. Today, it’s probably like an Intranet or something similar—as I have been a Veteran for a looooooong time now.

In about October of 1978, a friend and I went to the ‘mover’s’ offices on Rota Naval Base and I selected a number to wait in line. I don’t remember the number I had, but when it was called, I smartly jumped up and proceeded to the desk to discuss the process of shipping my household items to Homestead Base Air Force Base in Homestead, Florida (Yep, Sunny Florida). When I informed the Sailor who was helping me that I had orders to Homestead AFB and needed to schedule a shipping date, he looked at the schedule and informed me that they had no open dates for the next three months due to the heavy transfer of soldiers and sailors transitioning to their next duty stations at the end of the year—including replacements arriving to Rota. He informed me that I would be delayed by approximately 3 months due to the massive movement of troops and sailors at the end of 1978. I was informed that I may need to have my orders modified for this event. At this point, I was a bit overwhelmed as I had not seen

any of my family in almost two years. I began to Pray almost immediately after being informed of this potential delay to return stateside. It was one of those Prayers where you close your eyes while the physical appearance is that your eyes are open, and I remember this as clearly as I remember anything: I quietly and Prayerfully said, “God, what am I going to do?” The sailor helping me was waiting for me to respond as to what to do about a later appointment, going on a stand-by list, or simply going AWOL (This is a joke!!! I didn’t say it was a funny joke! AWOL is a serious business. Do NOT LOL). Before I even finished my Prayer, “God, what am I going to do?”, right about on the word ‘going’, the sailor’s phone rang. I heard him say a few ‘yes-sir’s’ and then he looked at me like he had been the lead character in a miracle! And he had!

That phone call was a cancellation of one of the rush orders for stateside and overseas shipments; the call opened a date for a pick-up in late November, which would put my household items in Homestead in time for me to pick them up without delay, factoring in some Leave time with family in Georgia. I could not control the Joy that I had at that moment and to this day, I am **convinced** that God gave me this miracle. Even with my imperfect life, God gave me a miracle. When I say ‘imperfect life’, I had been through a divorce while stationed at Rota; my former wife and I had separated under—shall we say—other than a mutual understanding. That is a “whole ‘nother story”, and God worked in my life even then. He was preparing me to meet the woman of my dreams and my wife of 35 years at this writing. In the ordinary lives of Christians, there are mistakes made and I think that we are not exempt across the spectrum of humanity—that is, Christian humanity. I make no excuses, but my first marriage was an exercise in which I took the lead away from God to do as I thought it should go in my life. When we take our eyes off God, we tend to see things as WE see them, not as He sees them for us. All of you know precisely what I am talking about here...

After the household items had been shipped, and my orders provided transportation stateside, I said my ‘so-longs’ to friends and boarded that little 747 aircraft. When I arrived at JFK, I transferred to another flight to Jacksonville, Florida, where my parents picked me up for the trip to a little town in Georgia. The following Sunday, I was sitting in the pew of my parents’ church while on leave and there she was singing in the Choir. You may think this is an exaggeration, but when I returned to my parents’ home after that Church service, I told my

brother: “I’m going to marry that woman.” I didn’t even know her name, but this was another ‘The Imperfect Life Miracle’, as God was working out our futures together as He was shaping my life to move from my imperfections to His Will. (BTW-this process does not end until we reach Heaven!)

Here’s what is so Heavenly Minded about this Earthly Good story: after my divorce, I began to listen to God as I had never listened to Him in all of my life. I accepted Christ when I was 11, and in the years that followed, I had times of closeness and times where I practiced “prodigalism” (that time in life when you become rebellious, but you learn that it hurts like fire to kick against the thorns!). I think that for the most part, there is more proclivity for Christians growing up to be in these two areas of life, unless you are the type of person that God calls and you are ‘sealed’ by the Holy Spirit for His Service. If not, then you also may have experienced The Imperfect Life Miracle. This ‘miracle’, however minor or major it was to you, is something that God did for you even when you did not deserve The Merit of His favor. Read the following words from Charles Swindoll in his book, *Moses: A Man of Selfless Dedication* (p. 311):

But that’s the way God’s grace works, isn’t it? Have you ever acted in rash unbelief, and yet God went ahead and opened up the door in spite of you? Talk about super humiliation. It happens when you’re out to lunch spiritually, when you’re walking in the flesh and you know it. You knew when it began and you knew that depth and intensity of your carnality, but God graciously gives you what is best anyway. It’s remarkable, isn’t it, this thing called grace? It was grace that brought forth that clear stream of fresh water for the rebellious Israelites, as well as for ill-tempered Moses.

My wife and I have been married 35 years now. We’ve been together through the ‘starvation-times’ to the ‘we-can-pay-our-bills-times.’ Our 35 years have gone by so blink-of-an-eye-fast, yet these years have been the miracle of my life on this Earth. Salvation in Jesus Christ is the pinnacle of an Earthly Good life; a Christian wife and life-long friend and love is like nirvana in this Life, and our children are our most precious gift. To me, as one of the many ordinary people who believe in a God that cares for us and has given us the MOST PRECIOUS gift of all, Christ Jesus, my life remains The Imperfect Life Miracle. I remain imperfect, yet God has Blessed me with miracles that I cannot repay. For example, when we think of miracles, we

think of the extraordinary in our lives. What I propose is that you consider life a miracle; your family is a miracle; your children are special miracles; your ability to work and earn a living is a miracle. You see? Then when God gives you (and I) a MIRACLE—the type of miraculous event in life that only God can provide and it is so clear that it is a MIRACLE—you (and I) should fall on our knees and sing Praises to God beyond the everyday prayers we pray. You will never convince me that meeting my wife in that little church in that small town in Georgia was anything other than a MIRACLE. What if I had made the decision to stay home that day instead of attending that church service with my mom and dad? Only God will ever know that outcome, but I believe that He provided this MIRACLE even in the midst of The Imperfect Life that I was living.

After my divorce, I discovered the Life Application Verses. Read them again, but really READ them this time and think of the deeper meaning of what these verses are telling you and me:

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Wow! These Holy Words of God are directed to The Imperfect Life Miracle. What does it mean in this context to be ‘imperfect?’ Does it mean that we are miserable failures at life, marriage, and work? Not at all. Imperfect here means that we have not been made Perfect in our Physical Lives, which will occur at the time God receives us into our Heavenly Bodies and Home. So, I live my life knowing that I am not perfect (imperfect) and while I am yet a sinner, God has Blessed me time-after-time. **Oh, don’t get me wrong here—God has also dealt with me in my sinful nature.** When I was stationed in the Philippines, I practiced “prodigalism” as if it were a Badge of Honor. Now, I didn’t say I was PROUD of this lifestyle, but when we become rebellious, we sometimes are oblivious of God’s voice in our Spiritual ears and we go our own way. Well, my friends, He dealt with me in a harsh way. I was brought low in my physical body

and was laid up in the hospital for a time; my Naval career was in jeopardy; and, I believe that God was calling to me to repent and turn from my ways. In fact, if you sifted my life at that time through the Life Application Verses, The Imperfect Life Miracle was being played out in my life—but my ears were so full of ‘me’ that I had difficulty in hearing God calling out to me. I’ll skip the gory details, but suffice it to say, I was a mess. Oh, I did my job for the Navy to the highest caliber of performance. But the Navy frowns on their super-top-secret people being so ‘wild and free’ outside the confines of the spaces in which we worked. Too many prying eyes made us easy targets for espionage or something like that, the Navy said. True enough. Even in all of this, God spared me from disaster. As I look back on those days, I see His Hand of Mercy at work. Without Mercy, I do not know whether I would have survived my ‘blind disobedience.’ I **was** The Imperfect Life Miracle. God, thank you for Your gift of Mercy in those days. How foolish I was and how Gracious a God You are!

Are you living The Imperfect Life Miracle? You bet. As it is expressed in Hebrews 4: 12-16, God sifts our lives through His Word, which is “sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” If you compare your life to these verses in its totality, how does your life stack up against this truth? For me, my life remains imperfect when seen through this filter. Yet, God loves us, cares for us, and Holds fast to His promises. The point of this chapter is to ask you to consider your life as God sees it. Be Heavenly Minded at all times of God as a Holy God, as Our Personal God, the one who gave us the means to escape His judgment; the Most High God who gave us His most precious gift, Christ Jesus; and remember every moment of your waking hours, that The Imperfect Life Miracle is what you see when you look in the mirror. YOU are the miracle! You get it?! Excellent, my brother and sister in Christ!

Life is a miracle, Salvation is a Holy Miracle, my wife is a miracle, and so on. Just the ordinary events in our Christian lives are miracles of the ‘ordinary and Blessed kind’; and when God steps in and delivers us from serious health problems, or saves our child from a disease, or guides us back to Himself...these are MIGHTY MIRACLES. Think back over the life that you have

lived: do you see what The Imperfect Life Miracle says to us? The answer is found in the second half of the Life Application Verses: “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” I don’t know about you, but these verses give me hope. They give me hope that because I live The Imperfect Life Miracle, I have a God who doesn’t and hasn’t given up on me. We have a God that has seen our actions and heard our words—remember, nothing is hidden from Him—yet, He desires for us to confess our sins and actions and words, repent, and return to Him in Service, Praise, Prayer, and giving Him the Glory and Honor He deserves.

When I do my very best in this life, it is not enough. It is not enough before God because I am imperfect. But, my hope is in My God because He knows that I am imperfect, that I am a sinner saved by Grace. If we would consider that we Christians are prime examples of The Imperfect Life Miracles, we might better seek our God to enable us to live the most productive=extraordinary lives that we can—before Him in all things, looking to the day when we will become The Perfect Life Miracle in our Heavenly Body.

A Question of Curiosity:

Did you take this chapter to heart or did you find it ‘insulting’ to be counted among The Imperfect Life Miracles? Is Salvation a Miracle? Are you saved? Are you in your Earthly body still? Think about this one before you make a final decision...

<>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <><

“Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.” ~ *Philippians 3: 12-15* ~

“Does it hurt when people don’t trust you? Imagine how God feels.” ~ Grantley Morris ~

<>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <>< <><

