

VOLUME I



TEXT

CHAPTER 1

Principles of Miracles

*You will see miracles
through your hands through me.¹*

1. The first principle of miracles is that there is no order of difficulty among them. ²One is not “harder” or “bigger” than another. ³They are all the same.

2. Miracles in themselves do not matter; they are quite unimportant.

3. Miracles occur naturally as expressions of love. ²The real miracle is the love that inspires them. ³In this sense, everything that comes from love is a miracle.

2 This explains their lack of order. ²All expressions of love are maximal. ³This also explains why miracles in themselves do not matter. ⁴The only thing that matters is the source,² and this is far beyond human evaluation.³

3 Please read these three principles as often as you can today, as if there were going to be a quiz this evening. ²This is merely to introduce structure, if it is needed. ³It is *not* to frighten you. ⁴Do not feel guilty if you are doubting these principles. ⁵Just reread them and their truth will come to you. ⁶My strength will support you, so don't worry and leave the rest to me.

4 All miracles mean life, and God is the giver of life. ²He will direct you very specifically. ³“Plan ahead” is good advice in this world, where you

1. See Cameo 1: “This Is *Not* a Selfish Gift.”

2. Based on the context, the source of miracles is love (since they are *expressions* of love). However, Helen originally spelled “Source” with a capital “S,” and if that spelling reflects the intended meaning, the Source would most likely be God. If so, “source” here refers to both God and love, or to God *as* love.

3. See Cameo 2: “My Strength Will Support You.”

should and must control and direct where you have accepted responsibility. ⁴But the universal plan is in more appropriate hands. ⁵You will know all you need to know. ⁶Make *no* attempts to plan ahead in this respect.

4. Miracles are habits and should be involuntary. ²Otherwise they may become undemocratic. ⁴ ³Selective miracles are dangerous, and may destroy the talent.

5. Miracles are natural. ²When they do *not* occur, something has gone wrong.

6. Miracles are everyone's right, but purification is necessary first.⁵

7. Miracles are a form of healing. ²They supply a lack, and are performed by those who have more for those who have less.

8. Miracles are a kind of exchange. ²Like all expressions of love, which are always miraculous in the true sense, the exchange reverses physical laws.

9. A miracle is a reversal of the physical order because it brings more love to the *giver* and the receiver.

10. The use of miracles as spectacles to induce belief is wrong. ²They are really used for and by believers. ³A miracle is misunderstood when it is regarded as a spectacle.

11. Prayer is the medium of miracles. ²Prayer is the natural communication between the created and the Creator. ³Through prayer love is received, and through miracles love is expressed.

4. "Undemocratic" means they would not be expressing social equality. They would not treat everyone equally, but would be given specially to some. In other words, they would be given out "selectively," as the next sentence says.

5. The "purification" necessary is not of the body or soul, but of our thoughts, as we see in this line from Lesson 151 of the Workbook: "Your ministry [which consists of giving miracles] begins as all your thoughts are purified" (W-151.15:2).

12. Miracles are the effects of thought. ²Thought can make the lower order or create the higher order. ³This is the basic distinction between intellectualizing and true thinking. ⁶One makes the physical, and the other creates the spiritual. ⁵And we believe in what we make or create.

13. A miracle is a beginning and an ending. ²It thus abolishes time. ³It is always an affirmation of rebirth, which seems to go back but really goes forward. ⁴It undoes the past in the present, and thus releases the future.

2 Yet there may still be one more thing: your fear of punishment for what is done now. ²Everybody makes mistakes. ³These errors are completely trivial. ⁴When the past has been forgiven, these minor infractions are very easily altered.

14. All miracles attest to truth. ²They are convincing because they arise from conviction. ³Without 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. ²Time was made so you could use it creatively, and convince yourself of your own ability to create. ⁷³Time is a teaching device, and a means to an end. ⁴It will cease when it is no longer useful in facilitating learning.

2 Have a good day. ²Since only eternity is real, why not use the illusion of time constructively? ³You might remember that “underneath are the everlasting arms.”⁸ ⁴You should begin each day with the prayer “Help me to perform whatever miracles you want of me today.”

6. “Intellectualization” is not just engaging in intellectual activity. It is a defense mechanism that uses reasoning to block out emotional stress and conflict.

7. “Creative” and its cognates in the early dictation refer to expressing the power to create—creating something—rather than to being imaginative or original. It is thus similar to “productive.” In this miracle principle, you are creative (productive) when you perform miracles. This also explains the word “constructively” in the next paragraph.

8. Deuteronomy 33:27 (KJV): “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” The injunction to “remember” this seems to be a reference to reminding yourself of it throughout the day, similar to the kind of practice that will be taught in the Workbook.

3 Notes on this course should be read only under good learning conditions. ²They should also be reviewed, with the same rule applying to review periods. ³I'll tell you when, but remember to ask.

16. Miracles are teaching devices for demonstrating that it is as blessed to give as to receive.⁹ ²They simultaneously increase the reserve of strength in the giver and supply the lack of strength in the receiver.¹⁰

2 I have forgiven you and that means all hurt and hate you have ever expressed is canceled. ³I need the children of light now. ³You who live so close to God must not give way to guilt. ⁴The karmic law demands abandonment for abandoning, but you have received mercy, not “justice.” ⁵Help the children because you love them and love God. ⁶Remember, a miracle is a spark of life. ⁷It shines through the darkness and brings in the light.¹¹ ⁸You must begin to forget and remember.

17. Miracles are the absence of the body. ²They are sudden shifts into invisibility, away from the physical level. ³That is why they heal.

18. A miracle is a service. ²It is the maximal service one person can render another. ³It is thus a way of loving your neighbor as yourself.¹² ⁴The doer recognizes his own and his neighbor's inestimable value simultaneously.

2 This is why you cannot keep anything you hold against another. ²If you do, your own value is no longer inestimable, because you are estimating it as infinity minus that amount.¹³

3 On sexuality: Homosexuality is lacking in love only to the extent it is based on the principle of exclusion. ²Everybody should love everybody. ³It is wrong to deny the beauty of some souls because of body structures of

9. Acts 20:35 (RSV): “In all things I have shown you that by so toiling one must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

10. See Cameo 3: “You Must Love the Children and Help Them.”

11. John 1:5 (RSV): “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

12. Mark 12:31 (RSV): “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Here, you love your neighbor as yourself by recognizing the “inestimable value” in both.

13. Your value, in other words, now appears to be infinity minus the amount you are holding against your brother.

which you are afraid. ⁴This is essentially an unhealthy attempt to limit fear, but fear cannot be limited, just as love cannot have limits.

- 4 Heterosexual attitudes can be similarly distorted, but do contain a more natural potential. ²Sex relations are intended for having children. ³You have misunderstood sex, because you regard it as a way of establishing human contact for *yourself*. ⁴This has led to body-image problems.¹⁴ ⁵Children are miracles in their own right. ⁶They already have the gift of life, and their parents provide them with the opportunity to express it.
- 5 Nothing physical, mental, or spiritual should be used selfishly. ²The pleasure from using anything should come from utilizing it for God's will. ³You should live so that God is free to arrange temporary human constellations as He sees fit. ⁴If you have not had children, do not interpret this in terms of guilt. ⁵Many children who are already here need spiritual parents. ⁶The poor are always with us, and many who are born have not been reborn.¹⁵
- 6 Human birth, maturation, and development is a microcosmic representation of a much larger process of creation and development of abilities. ²It is subject to error as long as the real purpose of free will is misunderstood and misdirected. ³The real function of parents is to be wiser than their children in this respect, and to teach them accordingly.

19. Miracles make minds one in Christ. ²They are a corporate necessity. ³Industry depends on cooperation, and cooperation depends on miracles.

- 2 “Corporate” refers to the body of Christ, which is a way of referring to the church.¹⁶ ²But the church of God is merely the sum of the minds He created. ³This is the corporate body of Christ.

14. This refers to *body-image distortion*, which is when a person's view of his or her body is significantly different from reality. For instance, an anorexic may see her emaciated body as overweight. In this context, however, body-image distortion may refer to the Course's later idea that we see the body out of proportion by fixating on certain “special” parts, so that those parts loom disproportionately large in our minds.

15. Mark 14:7 (NKJV): “For you have the poor with you always.” This verse is being applied here to the spiritually poor; specifically, to children who need spiritual wealth and spiritual rebirth, and who therefore need spiritual *parents*.

16. 1 Corinthians 12:27 (RSV): “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”

20. Miracles rest on the law and order of eternity, not the arch of time.¹⁷

21. A miracle reawakens the awareness that the spirit, and not the body, is the altar of truth. ²This is the recognition that leads to the healing power of the miracle.

2 Your abilities will be very useful when they come under involuntary control rather than involuntary *lack* of control. ²Following the right involuntary Guide will enable you to recognize both physical *and* spiritual dangers, and will provide the means for avoiding each of them in the most efficient way. ³This is a case in which the end *does* justify the means.¹⁸

3 It is only when means and ends are not of the same order of reality that there is fear. ²This fear arises out of the inescapable awareness, which you were given by God for all time, that only the appropriate means can work for the different kinds of ends you must accomplish before you can achieve your one end. ³This awareness is a built-in check which was necessary if you were to use the temporary expedient of time usefully. ⁴While there is time, communion and bread are both necessary. ⁵Without either, you feel deprived, and you cannot escape this by confusing the two. ⁶All depression and all fear and embarrassment ultimately stem from this confusion.¹⁹

22. Miracles are natural expressions of total forgiveness. ²Through miracles, you affirm your acceptance of God’s forgiveness by extending it to others.

2 The second step is inherent in the first, because light cannot tolerate darkness.²⁰ ²Light, by definition, dispels darkness automatically.

17. See Cameo 4: “An Example of the Shock Effect.”

18. The idea here is that our abilities, which seem to not be under our control, should be placed under the control of “the right involuntary Guide”—probably a reference to God or Jesus. Under this guidance, our abilities will then naturally alert us to dangers to our body and dangers to our spiritual progress, and will also guide us to efficiently avoid these dangers.

19. The essence of this very difficult paragraph is that we should not confuse the spiritual level and physical level. We should not think that physical bread can satisfy our need for spiritual communion, nor that communion can satisfy our need for physical bread. That would amount to using a means belonging to one level to seek an end belonging to another level. When we do that, we feel fear. This fear comes from an inbuilt awareness of which means are appropriate for which ends. This awareness is what allows us to use time properly, in a way that ultimately brings us to our one end.

20. Second step: extension of forgiveness to others. First step: acceptance of forgiveness