

# AMAZING MODERN-DAY MIRACLES

SUZANNE FREY



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*To my incredible family:  
Ron, Stephen, Lauren, and Katie*



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## God's Amazing Love for Us

When my three children were very young, our family traveled to Washington, DC, to visit its famous monuments and memorials. In preparation for our trip, we checked out picture- and historical-fact books and immersed ourselves in the history of each memorial and its significance to our nation. We felt this was one way we could truly appreciate what our eyes would be beholding. We recognized that these monuments tell important stories.

The idea of building monuments to remember past events is nothing new. In the Old Testament of the Bible, God told His people to build memorials around significant events and miraculous deliverances He had orchestrated. These memorials not only served as significant reminders to the nation of Israel, but they were also meant to bear witness to the surrounding tribes and countries, in essence stating, “This is who our God is.” Many references to the monuments include, “And that stone is still there today.” Psalm 145:4-6 says:

Generation after generation stands in awe of your work;  
each one tells stories of your mighty acts. Your beauty and  
splendor have everyone talking...Your marvelous doings  
are headline news; I could write a book full of the details of  
your greatness. (MSG)

These verses—and the desire to share how amazing God is—became the basis for *Amazing Modern-Day Miracles*. It is my hope

that as you read these stories, you'll walk with the contributors through their unique, challenging, and poignant circumstances as they talked with God and trusted Him for the outcome.

My heart for this book is to echo the placing of monuments by God's people. I value these testimonies of God so much that I wanted to write them down so we could pause to reflect and remember Who loves us and note the marvelous ways He answers our prayers.

I pray that you'll be encouraged by the stories of each of these contributors and let their journeys lead you to better know and love the Miracle Maker.

May God bless you in your own journey.

Suzanne Frey

In the final stages of this book project, after the fifty-two stories were set and ready for publishing, the unexpected hit our family. What quickly unfolded was one of the most challenging and faith-stretching seasons of my life. After seeing how God provided for countless others, we were about to see Him work in our lives. Here is the story.

## RARE, COMPLICATED, AND DEADLY

"Hey, I've had a health issue and need to explain it to you. Can we talk?" announced the text message from our twenty-five-year-old son. Ron, my husband, immediately phoned Stephen, whose voice was barely audible: "I've got a sore throat and they say I need surgery."

Stephen handed the phone to the emergency-room doctor who explained the diagnosis: "He's got necrotizing fasciitis, and we're going to have to operate. We'll put a tracheotomy in his throat so he can breathe, and get him into the first operating room available."

*Necrotizing what?* I quickly looked it up online at WebMD and read that it's an aggressive, "flesh-eating" disease that destroys soft tissue. Then I saw... "Can lead to amputation and death." My heart stopped. *He's got this in his throat?*

*How can this be?* The weekend before, we were together at a wedding, and Stephen was healthy, energetic, and dancing the night away with his sisters. But now, while out of town, he came down with a terrible sore throat. Unable to shake it, Stephen checked himself into the emergency room at the nearest hospital.

I was terrified. Stephen was in a very precarious position. A few hours' delay, and he may die. My husband and I pleaded with God to save his life, and we immediately sent text messages to family and close friends informing them of Stephen's condition, asking them to join us in praying for his survival.

The next morning we were on the first plane flight out to see him. As we walked into the intensive care unit, Stephen greeted us with his good-natured smile. He was hooked up to a spaghetti maze of tubes coming out or going into just about every body part. A five-inch horizontal incision across his neck combined with a tracheotomy tube in his swollen throat, displayed the result of his infection and emergency surgery the night before.

We learned the bacteria infection was streptococcus anginosus. We all carry normal bacteria in our mouths, but every once in awhile it can get infected. This is what happened. The infection grew rapidly and made abscesses of pus and bacteria like a ball. Antibiotics alone can't fix it because the blood vessels don't penetrate the pocket of pus, so it needs surgery to be drained. There is nothing Stephen did to contract this disease, nor was it contagious. But the severity of his condition was very rare and complicated.

Two days later he had another neck surgery. A CT scan showed the infection had spread to his chest, and the only way to get rid of it was for the doctor to open up his chest and clean it out. The following day, they washed the infection out of his heart sac, lungs, and sternum.

After four surgeries in seven days, we expected Stephen to improve. Instead, his skin was ashen, and he looked like he was dying. The doctor told us he was in extreme danger, and cases like his have a 50-percent chance of survival. With this news, I crumpled over Ron in tears. We called out to God to save Stephen's life.

We created an Internet health journal and posted regular updates and prayer requests asking family and close friends to pray for Stephen's survival and a turnaround in his infection. Soon there were more than 160 people praying for him every day. The next day was Sunday, and five churches prayed for Stephen. One church even stopped their service for thirty minutes to pray for him! Many people around the city and our country joined us in prayer that day too. We later learned that this was the very day that his necrotizing fasciitis and streptococcus anginosus no longer showed up in the lab work. A major answer to prayer!

Each day there were positive signs, but by the end of the second week, Stephen was still in very serious condition. Seeing our six-foot-five, strong, independent, and determined son confined to a bed with a maze of tubes coming out of him became the new normal. The days ran together as I stood and sat by his hospital bed twelve, thirteen, sometimes even fourteen hours each day.

While gazing at his precious face and stroking his arm, I realized it had been years since I had spent this many hours with my son. I wished it were under different circumstances. Still, as his mom, I cherished being near him, watching him sleep, praying for him, and holding his hand. I was thankful for the comfort it seemed to bring him, and grateful my voice and my touch could calm him.

I typed copious notes on my laptop as his medical teams continually passed through his room, reporting his status and vitals and their concerns and treatments.

Then I was told a second life-threatening bacterial infection, *klebsiella pneumoniae*, had invaded his lungs and was growing near his heart, causing his condition to worsen. He had many

moments of coughing and uneasy breathing while hooked up to a ventilator. His blood pressure, temperature, and white blood count all were abnormal.

I prayed several short prayers over him.

Lord, heal Stephen. Remove every infected cell in his body. Revive him in every way. Destroy and eliminate all the infections. Keep them from spreading. Let the antibiotics do their job. Give the surgeons supernatural wisdom and ability to wash, clean out, and remove everything contaminating his body. Restore his body to wholeness.

It brought me comfort knowing that I was not the only one praying these prayers. Our family and friends joined us in praying intently for his discharge from the ICU, and eventually the hospital. They continued to reach out, praying, sending texts, e-mails, and posting comments on our health journal. I read these comments over and over, and they sustained me. God embraced me through our family and friends; I was carried by love.

The thoracic surgeon said it was not safe for a chest to be opened for more than a week. But after several clean-out surgeries that week, she decided it would be best not to sew up his chest because of all the infection remaining. As Stephen went into surgery that night, we sent out a call to pray for the infection to be completely gone.

As the red bar on the medical board signaled that his surgery was in the closure stage, I waited and waited for the doctor to come out of the operating room. Normally it doesn't take so long. I wondered—could it be possible that she was actually sewing him up? Several minutes later, the doctor came out and said, "I sewed up his chest after all! I felt it was the right thing to do and the right time. There was less infection than I originally thought." I told her that's what we had been praying for. She grinned and said, "Well that's what you got."

The next day, Stephen felt heavy pain in his chest from the surgery closure. He said it felt like a cage was pushing in on it. Two of Ron's friends (who had never met Stephen) drove twelve hours to the hospital, sensing God was leading them to pray for Stephen. When they arrived, Stephen explained the pain in his chest, so they laid their hands on him and prayed for him and for that pain. The next morning I asked Stephen, "Do you have any pain in your chest?" He shook his head no. I asked him the same question in the evening, and his answer was the same—no pain! Two days later, Ron asked the physician to take him completely off of pain medication. The chest pain never appeared again. It was gone the day after Ron's friends had prayed.

Three days later, a CT scan showed Stephen still had some infection directly above his heart and behind his sternum, the very place where he had been sewn up the week before. We asked people to pray that there would be no infection. That evening, as he went into his eighth surgery, we prayed Psalm 51:10 over his body: "Create in me a clean heart, O God" (NLT). That evening the doctor came out of the operating room and said there was no infection—no pus! Nothing. It was gone.

Stephen spent two more weeks in the hospital after this surgery for observation and infection monitoring. Overall he had eight surgeries in twenty-five days; he had spent twenty-one days in the intensive care unit and seventeen days in the hospital for a total of five weeks.

One of the incredible ways God took care of me while Stephen was in the hospital, was through a family who lived close to the hospital. I had never met them before. They graciously opened their home for me to stay with them. They even let me borrow their car to drive to and from the hospital each day. Then when Stephen was released from the hospital, this family let him stay with them as well for rehabilitation and so he could be near his doctors.

It is said that normally, rehabilitation takes three days for every

one day spent in the hospital. That would add up to 114 days in rehab, but Stephen's recovery was only 31 days!

God answered many prayers, not just for Stephen's health but also for all of our financial needs. Stephen's student health insurance covered the majority of medical bills. The portion that was not covered was paid through generous gifts from family and friends and a financial-aid grant from the hospital.

And Stephen, having just graduated from college, was in the middle of projects that were leading to income. While he was in the hospital, one of his colleagues, who had no idea Stephen was in the hospital, asked him to join a project team that offered paying work. Stephen started working on neuroscience research part-time while he was still in recovery!

We prayed Stephen out of the ICU, then out of the hospital, then out of recovery. As people prayed, his circumstances changed. Today Stephen is a walking miracle, back to his adventurous, inquisitive, and productive life!

Never before had we experienced so profoundly the power of prayer. Our network of prayer warriors carried our burden with us. They rejoiced with us. They walked with us through some of our darkest days; and because of them, we have never felt alone. We are so grateful for the power of prayer and for the community of Christ.

Shout joyful praises to God, all the earth!  
Sing about the glory of his name!  
Tell the world how glorious he is.  
Say to God, 'How awesome are Your deeds!'  
Come and see what our God has done,  
what awesome miracles he performs for his people!  
Psalm 66:1-3, 5 NLT





# The Jungle Horse

JERRY LONG

One day my ten-year-old daughter, Lori, came to me and said, “Daddy, when I grow up, I want to raise horses. Can I have a horse?” At the time, my family and I were living in Limoncocha, the jungle center of operations for Wycliffe Bible Translators in Ecuador.

*A horse?* I thought. Living in the Amazon, Lori already had every animal imaginable. One day I counted seventeen critters in, around, under, and swinging from the rafters of our house. A calf from a local farm project was staked in our backyard, and there was an alligator in my shower stall.

“Honey,” I said, “first of all, we can’t afford a horse. Even if we could, the only way into our community is by boat or airplane. So the only way a horse could get here is either by flying or swimming. Besides, I don’t know if horses can adapt to the jungle. They don’t strike me as jungle animals.”

Lori cried. She *really* wanted a horse.

So I said, “Honey, if you want a horse that badly, you need to talk to God about it. He’s the only one I know who can arrange it.”

So Lori took my advice and talked to God.

A few weeks later, I was handed a teletype message from Quito,

the capital city of Ecuador. It was addressed to our neighbor, Otto Rodrigues, who had a hacienda—a large estate—about thirty miles upriver. The letter was from his attorney telling him he needed to get into the city as soon as possible for some business transactions. It looked urgent enough that I asked one of our pilots to fly me over to Otto's place so I could do a message drop.

As we flew over Otto's property, I noticed a horse grazing among his cattle. I thought, *How about that! There's a horse that survives in the jungle. I'll have to tell Lori.*

About a week later, one of our Indian workers came to my door.

"Señor Long," he said, "you won't believe what is coming down the river. There is a raft made of two dugout canoes with a platform on them—a platform with a *horse* tied on it."

A little later that day, a man came to my door leading the horse. He said: "Don Otto so appreciates his friends here at the mission that he sent this horse, thinking the kids would enjoy having him."

For the rest of our time at Limoncocha, Lori spent nearly all her days with that horse. This was God's gift to her!

Today Lori boards, breeds, and trains Arabian horses on her property in Oregon. Better yet, she still believes in prayer.

*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. (Matthew 7:7)*

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**Jerry Long** served forty-three years with Wycliffe Bible Translators as a writer, administrator, and international training consultant. In his retirement he founded Kingdom Come Training, which uses live, interactive videoconferencing to train and coach missionaries to achieve their full funding quickly.

## The Occult Store

PRISCILLA SHIRER

Jaye Martin is a mother who lives in Houston, Texas. When I met her, I was captivated as she shared the story about a store that opened near her child's elementary school. The shop was known for selling merchandise connected to the occult. In addition, Jaye and others in the community were fairly certain that illegal drugs were being sold there.

At the time, Jaye was a part of a moms' group that prayed for the protection of their children. And now these children were spending much of their day close to that store. When the moms discovered that some of the children were wandering over to it after school and becoming interested in its wares, Jaye went to see the store owner to express her concern.

The store owner assured her there was no harm in what he was offering and, besides, he was breaking no laws. Despite her request that he find a location better suited to his products and the community, he refused to consider leaving.

Undeterred, Jaye called the leasing agent and asked him to reconsider the lease because of the close proximity to the elementary school. He explained that he didn't see a reason not to allow the store owner to rent the space. Jaye, fed up with the

obvious spiritual opposition, replied matter-of-factly, “Well, then, we will just have to pray them out.”

At the next prayer meeting, she introduced the concept of not just praying for their children’s safety, but praying the occult store out of the neighborhood. The other mothers were stunned at the thought of using prayer as a direct weapon. It was a new concept for many of them. But together, in faith, they prayed fervently that heaven would intervene on their behalf.

Two months later, the occult store was gone.

*Truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. (Matthew 18:19)*

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*Priscilla Shirer*, a speaker and author, has spent more than a decade addressing corporations, organizations, and Christian audiences across the United States and around the world.

## Scandalous Love

JAY A. BARBER, JR.

**I**t was the early winter of 1983. I was headed south from Portland, Oregon to California on business in our recently acquired used Chevy custom van—you know, the kind with the captain chairs, the swing-up table, and, in the back, a bench seat that collapsed into a bed. I was nearing Cottage Grove, Oregon, when all of a sudden the alternator warning light began burning brightly. I'd just noticed billboards along the highway advertising Uncle Bud's Chevrolet dealership. I still had a long trip ahead of me, so I decided to go there to have the alternator checked out.

As I turned over the keys to the manager, he invited me to sit down in the waiting room. It was going to be awhile because others were in line before me. I didn't think about it at the time, but I'd left my briefcase in the car. I could have been doing some work while I waited, but instead I picked up a magazine that had been left on the table for the customers to read. Little did I know how important reading that magazine would be.

One week later, on a dark and cold December night, I was heading north to Portland, anxious to get home to my wife and family. Ice and snow lined the roadside and snow flurried about.

I drove through Weed, California, and was just beyond the

final exit to the town when I saw two figures standing on the roadside. One of them had a thumb out as I passed by. I could tell they were wrapped in a blanket that was shielding them from the ice and snow.

Now, I had a policy that I would never pick up hitchhikers. But to my own amazement, I found myself slamming on the brakes and pulling to the side of the freeway. In my rearview mirror, I saw the two figures I assumed were a man and a woman running toward me through the snow. I was at least a hundred yards down the freeway, so I backed up to meet them. When they got close, I stopped and turned on the overhead light in the van. I then stepped outside into the freezing wind, walked around the car, and slid the old van door open.

As they approached, I got the surprise of my life. It wasn't a man and a woman, but two men wrapped up in the blanket. One of them thrust a small bundle from their arms into mine. I looked down at the bundle in the overhead light and saw a small child—a little girl. As I looked into her angelic face, terror struck my heart. Her face was blue. Without thinking, I cried, "This child is dead! This child is dead!"

One of the two men began to cry and scream hysterically. The other man climbed into my van. I shouted orders to the man who was crying. "Get her cold and wet clothing off! You!" I pointed to the other man. "You take off your coat, your shirt—get down to your bare skin. Put her body next to yours! There's a bed in the back where you can lie down. I'll head for the hospital!" I didn't realize it at the time, but we were on a lone stretch of highway and the next exit where we could get help was many miles away. As I drove, it looked hopeless.

"O God," I prayed, "save that precious little girl." As I sped down the freeway, praying every mile of the way, I began to hear the most beautiful sound in the world—whimpering. Pretty soon, the child began to scream and cry with gusto. She was alive! She was going to be okay.

As we traveled north, I discovered that the father and his friend lived in Corvallis, Oregon. The father had only recently discovered he was indeed the father of the child. He'd also received the news that the mother of the child was going to prison. Unless he went to Texas to claim his parental rights and responsibilities, the child would be placed in long-term foster care. When he got this news, he and his buddy decided to hitchhike all the way to Texas to get the child. Then they planned to hitchhike back to Corvallis.

To this day I often think about and pray for that little girl, who would now be in her thirties. I wonder what she's done with her life. I especially think about her at Christmastime, and not just because the story of Christmas is also about a small child on a cold and blustery night. No, it's because in many ways the little girl with the blue face, in the late stages of hypothermia, represents you and me.

Like the little girl, we were without hope. We were “dead in our trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1) until Jesus, the Son of God, came to save us. Through His Son, God took us into His scandalous love. He rescued us into the warmth of His arms. He knew exactly what we needed in order to be saved.

And God knew exactly what that little girl needed to live too. What was in that magazine I read in the waiting room at Uncle Bud's Chevrolet dealership? The article was all about what a person needs to know and do to treat hypothermia.

*Put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. (Psalm 130:7)*

---

**Jay A. Barber, Jr.** is president emeritus of Warner Pacific College, Portland, Oregon.