

Nickels in God's Pocket

As she left a conference in Atlanta, a woman prayed, "Lord, I'll do anything for You. Just tell me what You want me to do, and I'll do it." In that moment she sensed something: *I'm supposed to turn left.*

It almost felt like a whim, but desperately wanting to obey God's voice, the woman turned left. After driving for a little while, she felt as though she was supposed to turn right, so she did. Filled with anticipation, she wondered, *Is God actually directing me to go do something right now? This is so exciting!*

Before she knew it, the woman ended up in front of a little convenience store, which she sensed was the place the Lord was bringing her. Once inside, she couldn't wait to see how the Lord would direct her—but the only thing that kept coming to her mind was, *Go over in front of the clerk and stand on your head.*

Pretty weird, right? How many of us would reach that point and say, "OK, no, that's not God," and get back in our car and drive home? The direction this woman was sensing seemed odd enough that she could've easily discounted it, though it wasn't something immoral or unbiblical.

She prayed, "Lord, are You sure?"

Then she felt nothing. No confirmation.

She hung around, building up her courage and reading chip packages until everybody cleared out of the store. Then she ran up to the register and said, "Hey! Look what I can do!" There happened to be a pole right in front of the clerk, so she did a handstand against it. From her upside-down position, she saw him drop his head and shake it. She swung her legs down and thought, *Man, he thinks I'm crazy—a real freak!* But

she walked up to the register and saw that the clerk was actually crying, so she asked, "What's the matter?"

He told her, "About half an hour ago, I was sitting here working, and I prayed, 'God, if You're real, have somebody come in here and stand on their head.'" The clerk ended up giving his life to Christ as a result of this woman's obedience to God's voice, and he has attended the same church she does ever since.

This is an unusual story, but I love it because it exemplifies obedience. When we look back over our lives, we often can recognize moments when we sensed a tiny nudge to step out and take a risk. It's easy to brush off those nudges and tell ourselves, *Nah, that couldn't be God*. Then we continue on our way, attending to the next 10 things on our agenda and missing out on God-given opportunities.

Think about what this woman would've let slip by if she had just walked away from her nudge. Jesus tells us, "Only those who throw away their lives for my sake and for the sake of the Good News will ever know what it means to really live" (Mark 8:35, LB). The treasure is in the risk. We are willing to die for Jesus, but are we willing to look foolish for Him?

Interrupted and Available For God to use you, you have to be willing to be interrupted and available. He isn't necessarily looking for qualified people; He's looking for available people whom He can use. We should be nickels in God's pocket that He can use in any way He chooses and at any time.

But the truth is, God will rarely grab us by the collar and make us pray for someone or tell someone something for Him. He wants us to desire to step into kingdom work. Our desires need to sync up with His desires.

It's easy to lose your nerve or second-guess yourself at the last minute instead of stepping into an opportunity for God to work. The Holy Spirit's voice was described in 1 Kings 19:12

as “a still small voice” (NKJV). His promptings are often light as a feather that lands on your arm; it would be easy to brush it off and ignore it. Sometimes when we first step into a situation, we don’t get it right away, or what God is doing is not obvious.

God’s gift to you is ability, and your gift to God is availability. Sometimes we fail to recognize that our daily life is filled with **opportunities** for taking risks—for stepping out and trusting that God is with us and is more than able to meet the needs of the people around us through us.

Years ago, when I first began to step out in prophetic evangelism, I went to the music store to buy drumsticks for the church. I was in a huge hurry, but I noticed a guy playing keyboards in the corner of the store and sporting a rock ‘n’ roll look, with cool hair and sunglasses. I felt as if I should say something to him and, after wrestling with my doubts, walked back to him and stood there listening to him play. Though I believed God wanted to say something to him, I had no clue what. He was an incredible keyboardist, so I said, “Man, you’re really mean on those keyboards.”

He lifted his head but didn’t respond, acting sort of like, “I know I’m really good.”

Then I said, “Hey, do you have a minute? Sometimes the Lord speaks to me about people, and I feel as though there’s something God wants you to know.”

Even then, I still had no clue what God wanted to say to him. This guy continued playing but said, “What is it?”

Without having any idea what I would say, I started out, “The Lord wants you to know”—and then I felt the words come—“that He didn’t do this to you. It was the result of sin in the world. The Bible says that the price of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life. His desire is for everyone to

have eternal life, and He wants you to know that He didn't do this to you."

The guy turned his head away from me for a second, and as he looked back, a tear slid down from under his sunglasses. He asked slowly, "Do you know who I am? Did anyone tell you anything about me?" He paused. "Not that anyone here would know me."

I shook my head. "No, I don't know who you are."

I could feel his eyes staring at me through his shades. "*Nobody* told you anything about me?" he asked again.

His chin started quivering, and a few more tears rolled down from under his sunglasses. He told me, "Six months ago, my father died in his sleep. They did an autopsy, and they couldn't find any reason for his death. Then two months later, the night before my fiancée and I were supposed to get married, she died in her sleep. I was called at three in the morning the day of my wedding and was told my fiancée had died. And what you're telling me, what you're saying, is that God didn't do this. I thought God hated me and took my father and then my fiancée the night before my wedding."

I said, "No, the Lord loves you! His gift is life, and He doesn't want anybody to die. It's a result of sin in the world."

He looked at me in silence, then asked, "There's no way that anybody told you all that? Who are you?"

I said, "I'm a youth pastor at a church here in town."

He invited me to come and meet with his band and his friends that same night.

The Ultimate Evangelist

The Holy Spirit is a confident evangelist, even when you and I

are not. When you have a sense that God wants to say something to someone, I would encourage you to step into that in faith. You don't have to consider yourself a prophet or an evangelist; when you have the sense that God wants to reach someone, He will use you to do it.

I walked into that situation in the music store completely blind, not having anything in particular to say to someone but trusting that God did. I was acting in faith when I spoke out.

Many of us expect that the Holy Spirit will sort of apprehend us in such situations, as if He'll come with a megaphone inside our heads or take possession of our bodies.

It's not like that at all. When we approach people, God wants us to go as ourselves and be ourselves.

You might not feel extremely confident in what your spiritual gifts are, and you might not operate at a high level of what you think of as supernatural ministry. You might not even be comfortable with the idea of evangelism, but the Holy Spirit is comfortable with it.

The Holy Spirit is the ultimate evangelist, constantly pointing people to Jesus. As we step out in dependence on Him and follow those small promptings, He teaches us how to reach people.

Push the Limit

All of us have more authority than we realize—and so much more than we currently operate in. The more I've stepped out in this journey, the more incredible things I've seen God do. It has been a process, and often I've prayed for people eight or 10 times before I've seen a change. As I've pressed in, however, I've yet to see the limit.

I want to encourage you to push the limit. No matter what your level of faith, living in the kingdom is still a risk-taking

lifestyle.

Taking risks is the very definition of living by faith. We live not by our past experiences or by what we see but by what we believe and what God's Word says is true about us—that we'll actually do what Jesus did.

One of the biggest reasons we fail to step into Jesus' transferable ministry is that we mistakenly believe we have to be the source for God's miracles. That thinking not only scares most of us away from praying for others in faith, but it's also bad theory and bad theology. The healing and all the other stuff is God's part to do. I'm just supposed to go. I'm just supposed to show up and respond to what He says to do. I succeed because I've obeyed.

God uses us to speak to other people in the same way He speaks to us—sometimes in the most natural ways. Pictures or flashes or impressions may come to mind as we pray. It can be through our bodies, which might involve sympathy pain, unexpected emotions (tears, joy or peace) or a sense of peace in difficulties. It even can be through movies that we watch. We worry that what we're sensing is just our imagination, but who says God can't use our imagination? He invented it. He's a creative and imaginative God.

We shouldn't wait around expecting that God will change us into someone we're not before He uses us. We have a tendency to say, "God, if You'll anoint me, I'll go." God says, "If you go, I'll anoint you." His plan is to use who we already are—the same people He made us in the first place, with the same personalities, giftings and weaknesses. Just be *you*. God wants to work through you and me. We aren't the main act—God is. But He's made us a crucial part of the breaking in of His kingdom.

It Pays to Persevere

My church is filled with people brought to Christ by the reality of God breaking into their lives through people like you and me. One young man brought his friend Jim to youth group. Jim was a Jewish atheist, and both his parents were atheists. He was sitting at the back of the group, laughing at my kids and others during worship. During prayer time, my oldest son, Judah, and his brother Micah (aged 15 and 13 at the time) asked this young atheist if they could pray for him.

Jim replied, "I'm an atheist. You'd just be wasting your time."

My sons said, "If you're an atheist, you've got nothing to lose if we pray for you, right?"

"I suppose you're right," Jim said. "Go ahead, if you really want to waste your time."

My boys started praying for him. They asked that he would be blessed and would feel God's love. In the middle of their prayer, Jim looked up in shock and said, "I hear you!"

My boys thought he was speaking figuratively and responded with, "Yeah, man, we hear you too."

Jim said, "No, you don't get it—I've been deaf in this ear all my life. I've had five surgeries, and it could never be repaired. But when you guys were praying, it just popped and opened right up instantly."

Jim became an usher in our church. I baptized him and his mother on the same day. For years, Jim walked about three miles to church every Sunday and three miles home, even in the winter. You could set your watch by Jim. The biggest atheist in West Aurora High School became a great evangelist there. Nothing my sons could say would've made a difference, but God healed Jim's ear and all his doubts vanished in one pop.

In Romans 6:13, the apostle Paul urges, "Give yourselves

completely to God—every part of you ... you want to be tools in the hands of God, to be used for His good purposes” (LB). Our lives are to be fully given to God to be spent any way that He wants.

We are nickels in God’s pocket, and yet He puts His Spirit in each of us so we can be His priests and the pastors of our workplace, gym, favorite mall, public transportation route or school. As we step into a lifestyle of risky evangelism, we’re simply available to go and do what Jesus did, while the Holy Spirit is the ultimate evangelist as we permit Him to work through us.

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Robby Dawkins shares how to allow the Holy Spirit to lead your evangelism endeavors at .