

GOD'S CONSTANT PRESENCE  
*True Stories of Everyday Miracles*

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# Strengthened *by* His Touch

**FREE  
EXCERPT**

EDITORS OF GUIDEPOSTS






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CHAPTER I

# Occurrences with Divine Timing

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# Nothing to Fear in God's Hands

By Cheryl Anderson Davis



I can pinpoint the exact moment my family stopped going to church.

There was no casual drifting away. There was an abrupt end to formal, religious observance of the Sabbath in our household.

My parents had regularly attended services until I was six years old. My brother and sisters had all been baptized on schedule—once a child hit a certain age, it was time to make a commitment. When I turned six years old, my father became convinced I needed to be baptized.

My father did not listen to my mother's argument that I was terrified of water and that baptism by submersion for a very young child was not a good idea. I had almost drowned when I was four years old, resulting in my fear of water. My mother wanted to wait until I was a little older before requesting baptism.

But my father insisted that it was time for me to be baptized. When I went in front of the church, I panicked. I started to struggle and wanted to run away. I had no idea what baptism really meant. All I could think of were those Sunday school stories about how Abraham had almost sacrificed his son Isaac on an altar.

My father continued to insist that I be baptized. The pastor had to intervene. The deacons also got involved. Apparently, there was quite a scene. Ultimately, I was not baptized. And my family stopped attending that church—or any church.

As I a teenager I had the feeling I was running away from something. Driven by my hunger to resolve nagging spiritual questions, I visited numerous churches with friends. Eventually I accepted the Lord into my heart, but I only attended church services on a regular basis after

I married. I wanted my children to grow up in a church. I wanted them to have mentors and godly people to teach them the basic tenets of God's Word—something I struggled to comprehend.

Then my sons asked to be baptized. They wondered why I had never been baptized. Excuses seemed hollow and lame.

I was thirty-nine years old. Something felt “undone.” I knew I needed to make a public profession of my faith. I could have settled by just being sprinkled, but it seemed cowardly not to be baptized by submersion. However, I was still that little girl cringing inside... still terrified of water.

But I stepped out in faith and requested to be baptized.

I decided to take a hands-on approach to the problem. I practiced putting my head under water in the bathtub. That did not help. In fact, I just grew more apprehensive. I could

**Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.**

—JOSHUA 1:9 (NIV)



never get my head below water level. As the scheduled date of my baptism grew closer, I grew extremely afraid I was going to panic and embarrass myself in front of another church congregation.

**When you pass  
through the waters,  
I will be with you;  
and when you pass  
through the rivers,  
they will not sweep  
over you.**

—ISAIAH 43:2 (NIV)



of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”

But I was not the only person who was going to be baptized that dazzlingly brilliant Sunday morning. A young boy who was around nine years old joined me backstage. The associate pastor who was going to perform the rite of baptism introduced me to my fellow initiate into the Christian faith.

I don't remember the boy's name. In fact, I never recall our paths crossing again in the hallways of our megachurch. I know it is a ridiculous notion, but sometimes I wonder if this excited boy, his eyes aglow with enthusiasm, truly existed. His joy was

The morning I was finally baptized is very vivid in my memory. Jaw set with determination, I grudgingly trudged into the baptistry dressing room and donned my white robe. I was going to do this—force myself to be firm and unflinching. Fists clenched in my resolve, I would be the epitome of the Christian soldier marching as to war. I drew strength from the scripture 1 Timothy 6:12 (NIV): “Fight the good fight

unbounded—almost surreal—as if he had been asked to attend the best party ever. He begged to go first. Smiling, bare feet bouncing on the carpeted floor. Ecstatic.

And here I was, dreading the moment like a criminal awaiting execution.

One dunk. Done. The boy did a jig as he danced up the stairs on the far side of the baptistry.

My turn.

Strange how life-changing events are often suspended in the ether of memory. They're like grainy, aged snapshots you review later in life and wonder if such an event truly happened to you.

I will never be able to explain how the fear and trepidation completely lifted off my bent shoulders and did not accompany me down the stairs into the baptistry font. Maybe because at that moment I was not a scared little girl facing the test of my faith alone. Something, or someone, stood beside with me at the height of my fear. It was almost as if a protective bubble engulfed me. I cannot recall my head going under water. I experienced no gagging, no thrashing about, no panic.

I was elated. Not because my ordeal was over and not because I had not embarrassed myself in front of the congregation. I knew something amazing had occurred. And I was extremely grateful. Like the innocent little boy, I, too, danced up the stairs on the far side of baptistry.

I continued to dance with joy as I changed clothes in the dressing room. I still recall standing in front of a mirror, hairbrush in hand, marveling that my hair was wet and not having any recollection of how that had happened.

I am still afraid of water. I will never jump into a swimming pool. I cannot force my head below the water in the bathtub, but I don't have to worry about overcoming that fear. I over-



## GOD'S GIFT OF TOUCH

— By Tez Brooks —

WHETHER ROSE PETALS or kittens, sandpaper or hot coals—the Creator wanted humankind to experience His creation intimately. So, the skin contains several types of touch receptors. Some parts of the body have more receptors than others. For instance, fingers are more sensitive than the shoulders and back. When touching something (hot, cold, pain, or pressure), the touch receptors speed information to the brain. The brain receives the signal and reports how something feels, so the person knows to pull away or pause and enjoy the sensation. The sense of touch is a precious but underappreciated gift from God.

came a worse terror when I made my confession of faith before many witnesses. And I did not have to face that challenge on my own power.

I believe there was a reason the wait was long before I was baptized. Perhaps I had to learn there is nothing to fear when I put myself in God's hands and realize His presence goes with me in every fearful situation—even if it's into a baptistry.



# Miracle on Wildcat Mountain

By Janet Sady



When I came to my senses, I realized that I was lying in a crevice between two large boulders, looking up at the sky, which was visible between the treetops. I was crying and pleading with God.

Earlier that morning, the mist had given way to blue New England skies. White fluffy clouds drifted by as we drove up Route 16 to Pinkham Notch, New Hampshire. My husband, Frank, and I had hiked the Jackson Mountain Trail as part of the Appalachian Trail the previous day. We stopped short of our goal because of a rushing mountain stream over which we needed to cross. Snow melt from Mt. Washington had turned the docile little stream into a raging torrent.

We noticed on our map that the Appalachian Trail continued on the other side of Route 16, and that was our goal today.

Frank and I are seventy-six years old. He keeps active by playing golf three times a week. I, on the other hand, spend a lot of time on the computer, though I do go out for walks as often as possible. After scaling Black Cap Mountain and tackling several other hikes a couple of days before, I felt ready. The trails were through the woods, up hills, and were filled with boulder-strewn gullies and bare roots. Sometimes we also had to cross small streams.

As we started on the trail to Lost Pond, I observed many rocks and huge boulders we would have to climb over. We maneuvered with our hiking poles. In between the boulders were pools of leaves, mud, and water. The trail ran parallel to the river, and we soon found the dammed-up area known as Lost Pond.

The trail became even more difficult after the Pond with some boulders reaching almost 8 feet high. We picked our way around and between them. Because of the height of the boulders, I couldn't see Frank, who was several yards ahead of me. I planted my walking stick in a small crevice and proceeded to step between two wide boulders.

**For He shall give  
His angels charge  
over thee, to keep  
thee in all thy ways.  
They shall bear thee  
up in their hands,  
lest thou dash thy  
foot against a stone.**

—PSALM 91:11–12 (KJV)



broken bones and how far we had hiked from the beginning of the trail. I asked God to please not allow me to have serious injuries.

When I finished my petition for God's intervention, I looked to my right and there, folded neatly beside me, were my glasses and walking stick. It was just as if I decided to take a nap, removed them, and laid them down.

I retrieved my glasses and put them on. Then I took stock of my body in an attempt to ascertain the extent of my injuries.

But as I took stock of my body, with wonder, I began to take stock of miracles too.

At this time, Frank came back looking for me when he did not see me coming behind him. He was shocked to see me lying there. We checked for injuries.

Blood ran from my knuckles, and my head and my knee hurt. I was lying in a narrow crevice between two giant boulders. The space miraculously was just wide enough for my body to fit. I am certain the Lord guided the fall exactly straight down.

I had lost consciousness for several seconds. If I had been conscious, I would have tried to prevent the fall, and I am sure would have been more seriously injured. I became aware that I was falling just before my head came in contact with a small outcropping of rock at the base of the boulders.

After we determined that I probably didn't have any broken bones, I rolled over onto my knees and holding on to the boulders, stood up. Frank went to the Pond and came back with paper towels he had soaked with ice-cold water. He placed them on the scrapes on my head and knuckles. I knew God had been with me in preventing serious or fatal injury.

**I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; he that keepeth thee will not slumber.**

—PSALM 121:1–3 (KJV)



We decided that Wildcat Mountain would have to wait. Since we were in the middle of nowhere, I knew that, if at all possible, I would need to walk back to the start of the trail. I drank some water and took some deep breaths. My aluminum walking stick was bent. Frank straightened it and gave me one of his undamaged ones.

At the location where I fell, it would have been impossible for an ambulance or helicopter to rescue me. With God's help, I walked back the way we came—over and around dozens of rocks and boulders

We watched for signs of a concussion, and, except for a slight headache, there were none. I did not even need to seek an evaluation at the emergency room.

Early the next morning, we decided since it was the last full day of our vacation and I didn't have any major side effects from the previous day's fall, we would hike to Glen Ellis and Sabbaday Falls. They were well worth the effort. Both the trails in that area were well-maintained with few rocks and roots. On the elevations, they even had steps and handrails. Giant waterfalls thundered down to the river below in an awesome display of God's power.

Am I willing to try the Wildcat Mountain Trail again sometime? *No!* After the incident, I read the reviews of this trail and found out that experienced hikers classify it as “difficult and strenuous, and in some cases you may need spikes and climbing gear.”

I've decided to stick with trails that are for beginner or moderate hikers. Also, I will remember that it would be extra prudent to read the reviews prior to tackling unfamiliar trails.

My miraculous fall at Wildcat Mountain reminds me that God is in control of my life, watching over me at all times.