

# INTERSECT

## *College Chat Discussion Starters*

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### College Chat: A Look at Miracles

#### SESSION 1: WHAT IS A BIBLICAL MIRACLE?

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### Intersect the Word

Deuteronomy 6:20-23; 13:1-5; 28:45-46; Acts 2:22-23; 5:12-16; 2 Corinthians 12:11-12

- Does Deuteronomy 13:1-5 change how you view miracles? If so, how? Can you think of a modern-day example of something miraculous that has happened and that perhaps led people away from God?
  - Read Acts 2:22-23 and 5:12-16. What seems to be the purpose of miracles (signs and wonders) in each of these passages? How do these purposes relate to each other?
  - Read 2 Corinthians 12:11-12. Paul speaks of the signs and wonders of a true apostle in this passage. How do we measure the genuineness of any miracle worker?
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### You Choose

People often have very different definitions and uses for the word “miracle.” Below are a few quotes on miracles taken from various viewpoints. Circle the one that best fits your understanding of miracles before today. How is it different now?

- “If we could see the miracle of a single flower clearly, our whole life would change.” —Buddha
  - “Miracles, in the sense of phenomena we cannot explain, surround us on every hand: life itself is the miracle of miracles.” —George Bernard Shaw
  - “Mysteries are not necessarily miracles.” —Johann von Goethe
  - “For the truly faithful, no miracle is necessary. For those who doubt, no miracle is sufficient.” —Nancy Gibbs
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### A Question of Miracles

Jesus miraculously healed many people during His earthly ministry, answering many cries for help. However, it is also clear that every one of the people whom Jesus healed eventually died, possibly

under worse circumstances than when Jesus healed them. Because of the nature of life, which God created, Jesus’ physical healing was only temporary.

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- What does this perspective on miracles, especially healing miracles, offer our discussion on the *nature* and *purpose* of miracles in general?
- Does the fact that miracles may only be tempo-

rary make them any less miraculous? Does it make them pointless?

- What purpose might a temporary miracle have? Can you think of any examples?

## The Miracles of Jesus

Read the miracles of Jesus recorded in Mark 4:35—6:6. Note what these miracle stories say about Jesus. How do these stories about Jesus help us in our Christian living?

Is there any reason why Mark arranged these stories in the order in which we find them? For example, is there some analogy between calming the wind and sea and calming the raging storm within the heart and life of the demoniac?

Note how the two stories of the woman with hemorrhage and Jairus's daughter are intertwined.

Note the feeling of anxiety, fear, and helplessness in both cases.

- What do these stories, which may help us face our own uncertainties with faith and confidence, tell us about Jesus?
- What do these stories say about miracles and how Jesus used miracles in His ministry?
- How does that compare to the purpose and definition of miracles you learned?

## Putting It to a Test

You will need to decide what a miracle is in order to study them further. In the session you've seen the Church's stance on what a miracle is and how to discern a miracle:

1. Miracles are used at significant junctures in the history of salvation (i.e., the Exodus).
2. Believers should have awareness that humans or demons can also perform signs and wonders.
3. Believers must carefully evaluate signs and wonders.

Having read these three criteria, create your own list of criteria, based on what you have learned

and your discussion, to use when discerning whether something is a miracle or not.

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- How does your list compare to the one listed above?
  - Where are the differences or similarities?

## Egyptian Odyssey

The film, *The Prince of Egypt*, is an animated version of the Exodus story, telling of God's miraculous rescue of the Hebrew people. Listen to the song in the film about miracles titled, "When You Believe."

- What does the understanding of miracles seem to be in this song?

- How does that compare/contrast with your definition of miracles?
- What subtle messages come across concerning miracles? Do they stand up to the Bible's definition?