

In Disney, my parents returned me to the Wills Hospital and the case was transferred to the chief surgeon. He said I would become totally blind in a matter of weeks unless something drastic was done right away. Within forty-eight hours the chief surgeon himself performed emergency experimental surgery on the right eye in an effort to save my sight. I remained in the hospital about a month, both eyes heavily bandaged. At the end of the "waiting" period the bandages were removed. Against all odds, *I could see!* Not well. Not without glasses. But I was not blind. My family and Christian friends had not ceased to pray for me during those dark days.

Extremely strong glasses helped me to see objects very close to me. Thus armed, I bravely returned to school and continued the battle for sight. My teachers used to say, "Little Lillian reads and writes with her nose!"—so closely did I have to keep to my work. But I was a happy child, well-loved at home and school. I was keenly aware of my handicap, but life held so many blessings I was not in any way discouraged.

The first trying days after the operation faded into weeks and months of difficult vision; frequent returns to the hospital; changing lenses. No longer did the right eye roll uncontrollably under the eyelid as it used to do.

As the years passed, at age twelve, the right eye became noticeably crooked. It moved upward to the outside corner of the socket. The lifelong strain on my vision had taken its toll of the left eye also. My vision split focus: the left eye began to move outward and downward. We consulted several doctors outside the Wills Hospital. No one could help. The sight was waning.

By the time I was sixteen years old we had found an excellent specialist, Dr. Michener-Stratton. This doctor took a great interest in the case. One summer I went for daily treatments, undergoing every known help for the eyes. Another operation was out of the question, as the doctors agreed surgery itself could cause total blindness to me in my condition. The right eye had gone completely out of focus. The doctor said I would never have the use of that eye again. Due to strain, the left eye gradually was becoming blind. My case was considered incurable—hopeless. The doctors declared nothing else could be done to help me. This was my lot in life. Accept it. The heavy magnifying lens over the left eye was my dearest friend. Without it I would have to be led as one blind. It contained my entire world of sight. Just beyond was that misty, impenetrable veil.

During the same months when my condition was discovered to be beyond all help, I had made a complete surrender of my life to Jesus Christ. I had been quite active in high school dramas and public speaking. Then Jesus Christ touched my life with his love and I deeply desired to go "all out" for Him. I turned from even the most legitimate activities to full-scale Christian endeavor. The Lord helped me to start a Sunday school class of pupils I gathered off the streets into our lovely downtown church. After being pronounced incurable I

continued in my new desires to serve God and Him alone. Although I was two years under the age requirement, I was accepted as a student at Eastern Bible Institute (now Northeast Bible Institute), Green Lane, Pa. This is a regional Assemblies of God school. Allan A. Swift, was then principal and president. He, along with all our fine teachers, maintained a dynamic application of the New Testament. Christ was no "has been." Christ is the great "I am." Constantly, the reality of the Word was forced into my consciousness. The studies and the activities of choir and missionary work among needy children filled my days to the brim, but, always, there was the gnawing distress of my hopeless eyes and the knowledge that one day I should be totally blind. I became increasingly nervous and was actually very ill as the months went on.

Then I went into my second year at E.B.I.—a year of triumph! My miracle year—1947! That cold February we had been in the midst of a revival of prayer. So forcefully did those days of prayer fall upon us, that a special permission was granted to dismiss classes and major activities. It lasted eight days. At noon on the sixth day of those never-to-be-forgotten prayer meetings, most of us had left the chapel after a morning of prayer. I had lunch. Then I went into the main entrance to the administration building. A wing from that building housed the girls' dormitories. How could I have known I was walking into a miraculous experience? I do know it always pays to be walking with God. His mysterious leading takes us to the right places, at the right times.

As I started down the hallway, I heard two young ladies praying in their dormitory room. I stopped to listen a moment. A couple other young ladies joined me. We sat on a stairway in the hall. The praying girls heard us as we sang a hymn. They joined us. Within minutes the stairway was filled with other young ladies, all of us singing hymns of praise. Soon the hallway, too, was filled. Then, across the entry hall, the door of another wing was opened as many young men streamed in to join this spontaneous service of worship. Our teachers, too, had heard and were there. Altogether, about 165 people were present. I wish you, dear reader, could have seen this wonderful day with us. The atmosphere was so full of the presence of God, it seemed we could touch Him. As I sat inconspicuously on the stairs I was strangely overcome by the sense of God's nearness. My very soul seemed to be opening for God to come in and fill my life. Yet I felt a great burden. I could not then—and cannot now—explain it. A terrible heaviness of spirit, a crying out of my heart, a longing for God. I tried to pray in words but could not express myself. Then—

#### THE MIRACLE BEGINS

Portions of this Scripture came to my mind: "... the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not

*what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God"* (Romans 8:26, 27) "WE KNOW NOT WHAT WE SHOULD PRAY FOR AS WE OUGHT!" This is one of the deep secrets of a Christian faith: our natural inclinations and thoughts do not lead us into the realm of answered prayer. They only fill us with selfish desire. That is why we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit—so God's good things can come to us.

As the words of Romans 8 seared their message into my mind I began to feel the weight of the burden shifting in a purposeful direction. I found words to pray something like this: "Oh, God, let Thy Holy Spirit so control me that my very thoughts and prayers are directed by Thee. Show me how to pray, and what to pray for." Also, I prayed for strength and healing that I might remain in school. These prayers, all so quietly and inwardly spoken, continued to lift my thinking to the power of the Great Physician. Suddenly, I was overcome by the idea that my eyes should be healed. Deep in my heart I wondered how one could believe for such a thing. But the Holy Spirit was leading me.

I stood. There on the stairway I felt a gentle tap on my elbow. A young lady who sang in a trio with me was standing in the hall beside the stair rail. She remarked, "Do you sense God's presence in a marvelous way?" I said, "Yes." As we talked I told her of my consuming desire to be healed. And I expressed my inner doubts and fears. She was reminded of the man in the Bible who believed, yet prayed to Christ, "Help Thou mine unbelief." I was impressed to pray to God to heal my unbelief. Right there on the step, unaware of others present, I prayed, "Oh, Lord, heal my unbelief! Give me Thy faith to believe for my sight." There—on that step—God revealed faith to me. (Hear these Faith Secrets on my "talking record" sermon.)

As the realization of God's faith possessed me, I took off my glasses. I had no outward sign of being healed. But the surging force of faith within spurred me on. I cried out, "The Lord will give me my sight today!" There were various responses aroused in my fellow students that day. Some wept and prayed. Others watched, amazed and wondering, yet believing. John 16:23 then came to my mind. I quoted it aloud: "... Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." "WHATSOEVER?" "In Jesus' NAME?" Weeping and quoting the Scripture I moved along the hall; stopping at the back of the stairway I quietly pondered on my actions that day. For a moment it seemed I was taking part in an unutterable foolishness. But the Lord was with me. I could hear the nearby voices of those who were praying for me. Every doubt passed away. I took a few steps toward a familiar voice. A dear young lady was standing there, praying audibly but softly. I was stand-