

Brother Word

by Derek Jackson



About the Book

He comes from nowhere?quiet, unassuming. He lays hands on a pastor stricken with a heart attack in front of his entire congregation. He ministers to an injured woman who loses her sight and a child crippled by an incurable disease. Then he vanishes, leaving behind miraculously healed bodies, renewed belief, and the joy of God's power in people's lives.

But Chance Howard, dubbed "**Brother Word**," is a man tormented, running from a tragedy his gift couldn't prevent-and a shattering loss of faith no amount of agonized questioning or human healing can cure. Now those he helped are after the truth, a skeptical reporter is on his trail, and someone from his past is back with a vengeance. The only way to save himself is to reach out for help no matter what the risk-and put his life and his fate in God's hands?

Discussion Guide

1. "Strong faith in the area of healing or not, his present chest pains were real. Painfully real." How does your faith coexist with a painful reality? Does living or speaking in faith mean denying a physical experience? Why or why not?
2. "Ministry and emotional burnout mixed together like oil and water." How do you guard yourself against burnout in ministry-or in life in general? How have you made time and space in your life for Sabbaths such as vacation, recreation, and a day of rest?
3. What do you think-what is the "fine line between anger and stupidity in questioning the Almighty"?
4. Many people share Travis's awkwardness around people with disabilities. What experience do you have relating to children or adults who have special needs? How do you handle interactions with people who have some kind of handicap?

5. What is the worst possible handicap that you can imagine for yourself? What physical (or mental) capacity would be most difficult for you to lose (e.g., sight, hearing, voice, ability to walk or use hands, etc.)? How do you think your faith would respond to such a loss?
6. "It's one thing to believe for someone else's healing," Lynn realized. Why is it different-more difficult-to believe for your own healing?
7. What knowledge or experience do you have of divine healing? What do you think or believe about such miracles?
8. How would you minister to someone in Lynn's situation after the accident? Would you exhort her to greater faith, comfort her in her mental and physical anguish, encourage her to trust, bear her company in silence, or serve her needs in practical ways? Why?
9. Prayer, familiar Scriptures, and recollections of her own faith history-how God had worked in and through her in the past-were an encouragement to Lynn in her darkest hours. What encourages you in such times-and how?
10. Would you allow a stranger to pray over you or someone you loved? Why or why not-or in what circumstances?
11. After the accident, Lynn asked, "Why me, God?" At the healing service, she wondered, "Why not me?" When have you asked one of those questions? Did you feel like God answered you, and if so, how? How did you ultimately handle the question (and answer)?
12. Many of us acknowledge a belief in healing and other miracles-and then we are amazed when we see one take place. Why is that? What does it suggest about the nature of faith and belief?
13. What role do divine miracles have in God's work on earth today? What purpose did they serve in Jesus' ministry?
14. Rev. Gentry regards the newspaper article as "spiritual warfare 101." What does he mean by that?
15. Chance tells Lynn that his healing ministry is "more a principle of obedience than faith." What does he mean by that? What does that idea mean to you?
16. Salvation is free, Chance notes, but everything else God gives has a price. Our anointing is proportionate to our sacrifice. Do you agree? Why or why not? What has your own experience taught you about this aspect of God's empowerment?
17. Nina had thought it would show a lack of faith to go to a doctor to have her healing confirmed. Do you agree? Why or why not?
18. Nina was convinced she would be healed at the conference; Floyd Waters said Nina was healed; Nina herself experienced what she believed was healing. Then she died-and an autopsy revealed the cancer had killed her. How do you deal with such situations where you seem to hear God say one thing-and time seems to prove you (or God) wrong?

- 19.** Chance experienced his calling and anointing as a burden. How have you experienced the call of God on your life or the gifts of God to be a burden? How have you responded to that experience?
- 20.** Have you ever met someone like Chance-someone with great gifts who also had great needs? How can you-and the church at large-minister to such a person?
- 21.** Most of us have a family member, friend, or coworker who is a bit like Travis. How do you relate to that kind of "stubborn agnostic"? What strategies have you employed to share God's love and power with him or her?
- 22.** What do you think about the follow-up strategies of Faith Community Church-the prayer calls, the emphasis on continuing in divine health, and on developing healthy living alternatives? Have you ever encountered a church that balanced belief in divine healing with such practical or "earthy" follow-up? What is the value-and biblical foundation-for such a holistic approach?
- 23.** Chance had never felt led to lay hands on his own father to pray for divine healing. Why might a family member not be the best candidate for your ministry? What other reason(s) might Chance have for not sharing his gift with Pop?
- 24.** What gift(s) has God given to you? How is it developing? What are you doing to cultivate it? In what ways has that gift ever made you feel like "some weird traveling sideshow"?
- 25.** Lynn reflects that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had a faith that would believe even if God did not deliver them. Many people would think that foolish. Do you? Why or why not? What is significant about that kind of faith?
- 26.** What do you think: Is it God's will for all people to be healed? Why or why not?
- 27.** As he sinks into the water, Chance figures he's probably dying-and he wonders, "This is my life?" If you were dying today, how would you sum up your life? How would you feel about its conclusion at this point in time?
- 28.** By virtue of being alive, Lynn asserts, we can assume we have some unfinished Kingdom business. What is your part in God's unfinished business? What treasure is God unveiling in you?
- 29.** Chance is startled when Lynn talks about his ministry. He doesn't really think of his itinerant healings as ministry. What gifts are you operating in that might be organized into a ministry?
- 30.** Family, love, money? What would it take to make you happy?
- 31.** Pastor Gentry's Bible study (see chap. 53) deals with a lot of issues related to healing. Which insights or arguments stood out for you? Why?
- 32.** Compose your own litany of God's goodness, based on your own life. Allow that realization of God's grace to bring you to your knees in worship!
- 33.** What do you think Chance meant when he told Travis the greatest healings are those in the heart?

Author Bio

My love for writing is rooted in a lifelong love of reading books. My mom used to take my brother and me to the library all the time when we were kids, and I used to come back with stacks and stacks of books. My father was in the Air Force so we moved to different cities every four years, from Texas to Guam to California to South Carolina and back to Texas, but one of the constants in my childhood were a good book and a lazy afternoon. That's one of the big reasons why I'm such an advocate for children's reading programs --- it really opens up another world to young imaginations.

I attended college at the University of Houston and majored in Communications, with the plan to one day work in the television industry. During my junior year, however, I took both a feature writing and a screenwriting class that whetted my appetite for writing, and I began toying with an idea for a novel. After graduation, I went to work on that novel, writing after work in coffee shops and on weekends for seven months. I guess you could say that the writing bug had bitten me, and as anyone who has experienced this phenomenon knows --- the writing bug has sharp teeth.

The fruit of that labor was a self-published work that eventually opened the door to a book contract. (And the writing bug continues to bite...)

Reading and writing aside, I'm also a huge sports enthusiast, and living in the diverse city of Houston gives me the opportunity to attend just about any kind of sporting event you can imagine. My favorite sport is basketball, although I've taken a recent interest in tennis. And one day, I'll tee off with Tiger at Pebble Beach. He'll beat me rather resoundingly, of course, but that's beside the point.

My favorite authors from childhood are F.W. Dixon and Beverly Cleary. Dixon was the author of **The Hardy Boys** detective series, and I'm sure that I've read every one of those books. (Must've been hundreds)

My favorite authors now are Frank Peretti, Ted Dekker, Brad Meltzer and Vince Flynn. Frank Peretti, who's written **This Present Darkness**, **Piercing the Darkness**, and **The Visitation**, among other books, has had the greatest impact on me as a writer of Christian fiction; his sense of storytelling is unparalleled, and the way he subtly weaves the hope of Christ throughout his stories is something that I strive to do.

Ted Dekker is just as good; his novel **When Heaven Weeps** is probably my all-time favorite book. I throw Meltzer and Flynn into the mix of my favorite authors because I love political thrillers, and those authors keep me turning the pages well into the night.

My Favorite Websites:

<http://www.espn.com>

This is kind of self-explanatory to all of us who love sports; clicking on this website is almost as good as watching "ESPN" on television.

<http://www.google.com>

This site has helped me in ways you couldn't believe when I'm researching information for books. I have yet to enter a

term that *Google* couldn't find correlating web pages on. It especially helped in writing **A Man Inspired**, which is primarily set in Los Angeles. Though I've been to L.A. several times, accessing street names and directions from this search engine was a cinch.

<http://www.cnn.com>

I'm always checking in here to get the current events or news around the world.

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