

THE POWER OF PRAYER





The Power of Prayer - Caring for Orphans

Excerpted from Ron Beckham, Pastor
Sunday Sermon - 7/22/01, "The Joy of the Lord - I
John 5:14-15

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*"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him,
that if we ask anything according to His will,
He hears us, and if we know that He hears us,
whatever we ask, we know that we have the
petitions that we asked of Him."*

(1 John 5:14-15)



Caring for Orphans

Somehow, what we call “confidence” is bound up with “joy.” I think we can’t have the one without the other. When I told the computer to give a “thesaurus” definition of “confidence” - it surprised me by providing words like “faith,” along with “belief, trust (and) hope.” It suggests you have to have trust IN Someone, in order to feel and express the CONFIDENCE that is so attractive (but also so rare) in people. For years, I wondered about George Mueller. This was a great, confident man of God, who lived and worked in His service, about 200 years ago. At a time when orphans were poorly treated just about everywhere, he cared for orphans. He took them in, fed them, provided for them, and was directly involved in the conversion to Christ of almost 3,000 orphans. He never asked people for money, but instead prayed for every need. His meticulous records reveal that through answered prayer, he provided schooling for thousands of pupils, distributed 281,196 Bibles, 1,448,662 New Testaments. And this man, who had no resources except prayer,

financially supported missionary operations in 26 countries. As stated earlier, for years, I wondered about this man, and during the same years, I met so MANY who were “Christians” but knew NOTHING of answered prayer. And I tended to be in the same “boat” myself.

There are many wonderful examples of answered prayer in George Mueller’s life, but the one I recall vividly is when he was on a ship bound for Canada, where he was to have an important speaking engagement. The ship was traveling very slow and he went to the captain, asking for more speed. “I have to get to Canada” (by a certain date). The captain responded, “It’s the fog... we cannot go any faster... we have safety to consider... we won’t get there on time,” etc.

Mr. Mueller immediately knelt in prayer in the captain’s cabin, and the captain knelt with him. The captain later said “I never heard a prayer like that one - it was so clear and simple...” George Mueller just asked that the fog would lift and they would get to Canada on time. The captain started to pray also, but Mr. Mueller stopped him, with the words, “I believe, captain; but you don’t.” With that, he arose and left the cabin. Troubled, the captain also raised himself from the floor, and thoughtfully walked to the door. He opened it, and was startled - the dense fog was gone!

George Mueller arrived in Canada, on time for his speaking engagement. Have you experienced answered prayer? Most have few such experiences, and I suspect many are like the captain, who believed God is God and Christ is the Son of God, but his prayers were perfunctory, lacking the BELIEF demanded by the Word of God. I have been just as surprised by George Mueller as the captain was, but I have also been finding answered prayer, and I know this: answered prayer carries with it JOY in the Lord.

George Mueller's own words reveal the HOW of answered prayer. In an address to ministers and ministry workers after his ninetieth birthday, he said of himself: "I was converted in November, 1825, but I only came into the full surrender of the heart four years later, in July, 1829. The love of money was gone, the love of place was gone, the love of position was gone, the love of worldly pleasures and engagements was gone. God, God alone became my portion. I found my all in Him; I wanted nothing else. And by the grace of God this has remained, and has made me a happy man, an exceedingly happy man, and it led me to care only about the things of God." He LOVED the Lord. He sought and worshiped his Christ, and the fact that he opened orphanages was not some kind of accident! He didn't say, "What will I do with my life? - I know; I'll open orphanages!"

No, he sought the Lord Himself, and what he subsequently did was in response to the discovered will of God for His life. 1st John 5:14-15, says, "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us, and if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we asked of Him." He was precisely in the center of God's will for his life. When George Mueller prayed for his orphans, he was asking for God's will, for he KNEW caring for them was God's call. That hope you have, to be a missionary, to distribute Bibles, to tell others about Christ, to comfort those who are in need --- that CONCERN you have; the need to express SOMETHING in the lives of other people - may be precisely God's will for your life. It was in his.

So he opened an orphanage, and then another, and another. He prayed for their needs, and he prayed WITH them for their needs. People sometimes don't know what to pray for, but often the need is quite obvious. As for him, he had orphans. What do orphans need? Why, they need milk, they need food, they need to learn, they need clothing - and often, while still in prayer, the knock would literally come on the door, with exactly the answer that was required for the time. A heart sold out to Christ. Not my needs but His. No longer annoyed by what I don't have, but

excited by what I have discovered is His call for my life. In the will of God, willing to pray; in fact, praying for the specifics of His will. And, He answers! Such CONFIDENCE. And then, of course, JOY in the Lord, as we see His will unfold.

In Isaiah 61:10, the prophet exults “I will rejoice greatly in the Lord”. “Rejoice” or “joy” here, is the Hebrew word which Jack Hayford relates, is like “twirling about with a happy expression on the face, or of a leaping horse romping in the meadow with complete ABANDON.” It talks about a rejoicing that is the complete opposite of sadness; it is a “pervasive, irresistible joy.” George Mueller found that by giving up the superficial and TRUSTING in God, He became “a happy man, an exceedingly happy man.” He found the will of the Lord, and the JOY of the Lord – *and so can you.*

orphan
sunday

ONE DAY. ONE VOICE. ONE PURPOSE.

