

GREAT RESOLUTIONS

Program Fourteen

His Source of Supply Part Four on the Life of George Müller

In the last few podcasts we have been considering the life of George Müller.

Thus far we have seen: 1) how as a corrupt, sinful young man George Müller encountered the living God when he attended a simple meeting in a home in which the word of God and prayer predominated (2), how the Lord produced a dynamic change in him as the new life he received began to grow and operate, and 3) how his prayer life was one of simple trust in a faithful God, and some of the principles of prayer that he learned over the course of his life.

Now we will consider how the word of God became a rich, constant and practical source of supply to him in his life and work for the Lord.

His Inner Life

Many Christians have been inspired by George Müller's testimony of faith in a prayer hearing God, but some may wonder how this servant of the Lord had the endurance to continue to serve from day to day and from year to year. How did he remain faithful to persevere in prayer? How did he know what to pray for according to God's will? How did he keep from expressing his own natural desires in his prayer? Where did he get the words for his prayers and the strength to continue? How did he obtain the measure of faith needed to see him through the many trials he encountered? These are questions we will take up in this program.

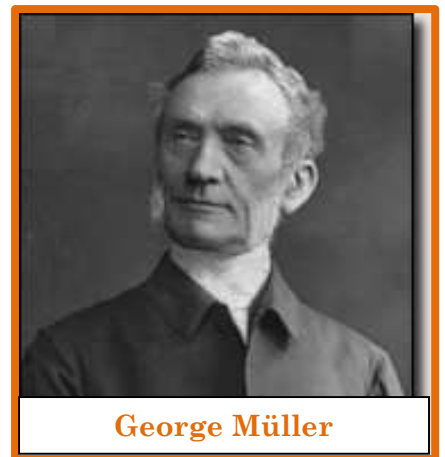
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Witness Lee

Although the things accomplished by George Müller were truly remarkable, in looking into his life we are reminded that "the things that are impossible with men are possible with God" (Luke 18:27). In reading about his life, it becomes evident that the things that were accomplished through him were but the issue of his close walk with the Lord.

Witness Lee affirms this, commenting: "When I read his [Müller's] journal, I did not feel that he was operating a large business. I only felt that I was touching a person who lived before God, fellowshiped with God, allowed God to rule in him, allowed God to have a place in him, and was filled with God inwardly. Every time I read his journal, I was brought before God and given the sense of God's presence. This made me feel that Müller was one who lived in the light and who lived before God. You touch God when you read his writings. This is the life of George Müller; it is not a life that emphasized a successful enterprise but a life that knew God and flowed out His divine life."

George Müller's heart was that all God's children would learn to appropriate the riches of their rich Father. He was grieved if others considered him as an extraordinary believer who had some special gift of faith that other believers did not. In fact, the primary motivation of his

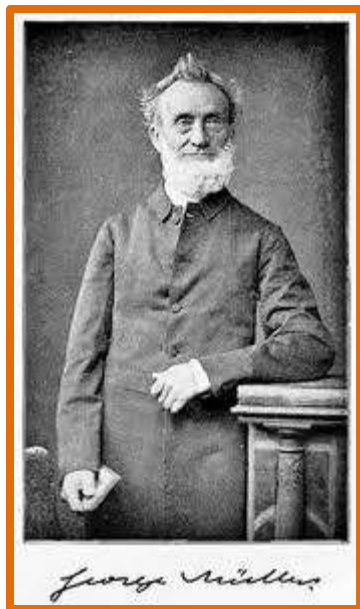


George Müller

establishing the orphan homes was to provide a visible testimony to believers that God is

faithful and can be depended upon to answer the prayers of His children. George Müller was burdened that “all the children of God may be led to increased and more simple confidence in God for everything which they may need under any circumstances, and that these many answers to prayer may encourage them to pray, particularly as it regards the conversion of their friends and relatives, their own progress in grace and knowledge, the state of the saints whom they may know personally, the state of the church of God at large, and the success of the preaching of the Gospel. Especially I affectionately warn them against being led away by the device of Satan, to think that these things are peculiar to me, and cannot be enjoyed by all the children of God; for though, as has been stated before, every believer is not called upon to establish Orphan-Houses, Charity Schools, etc., and trust in the Lord for means; yet all believers are called upon, in the simple confidence of faith, to cast all their burdens upon Him, to trust in Him for everything, and not only to make everything a subject of prayer, but to expect answers to their petitions which they have asked according to His will, and in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

George Müller recommended reading and praying or meditating upon the Scriptures as a practical way to strengthen our faith: “You ask, ‘How may I, a true believer, have my faith strengthened?’ The answer is this: the following means ought to be used – the careful reading of the word of God combined with meditation on it. One may learn from the Scriptures what a kind, good, merciful, gracious, and faithful being God is, and also see in the word of God how, in a great variety of instances He has proved Himself to be so.



And the consideration of this, if God has become known to us through prayer and meditation on His own word, will lead us, in general at least, with a measure of confidence to rely upon Him: and thus the reading of the word of God, together with meditation on it, will be one especial means to strengthen our faith.”

Reading the Bible

This then – Müller’s practice of being in God’s word in a daily way – became the secret of his believing faith and of his daily supply of strength to live a life depending upon God.

It is interesting to note that even though he was a divinity student, before he was saved George Müller did not read the Bible, or even own a Bible. But faith comes out of hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ (Rom. 10:17). When George heard a chapter of the Bible read in a brother’s home, his heart was opened to the Lord. He admits, however, that after his salvation the word of God did not initially have the importance that it should have had in his life. “The first three years after conversion, I neglected the Word of God. Since I began to search it diligently, the blessing has been wonderful.” Once he began to enjoy the word in a daily way, he could not understand how he ever treated “God’s Book” with such neglect.

From then on, George cultivated the habit of reading the word habitually and consecutively over time. In this way he was brought into an “intimate acquaintance with the Author.” He said, “The most intimate knowledge of God is possible on one condition – that we search His Holy Scriptures prayerfully and habitually.”

Throughout the rest of his life, he proved over and over that the one “fountain of wisdom and strength” was found in the Scriptures, this divine roadmap which guided him through many a time of crisis.

Müller’s appreciation of the word grew as he advanced in years. During his last twenty years, he read the Bible four to five times annually. It is estimated that he read the entire Bible through approximately 200 times in his lifetime. Surely he loved the word of God!

Brother Müller felt that reading the Bible and prayer should never be laid aside by any excuse: "It is a common temptation of Satan to make us give up the reading of the Word and prayer when our enjoyment is gone; as if it were of no use to read the Scriptures when we do not enjoy them, and as if it were no use to pray when we have no spirit of prayer. The truth is that in order to enjoy the word, we ought to continue to read it, and the way to obtain a spirit of prayer is to continue praying. The less we read the word of God, the less we desire to read it, and the less we pray, the less we desire to pray."

Studying the Bible

George Müller also studied the Scriptures. He was strong to maintain that "the Word of God alone is our standard of judgment in spiritual things." How did he learn this principle? One might say – the hard way.

One occurrence of his learning took place when he was in a conversation about believers' baptism with three sisters. They asked his opinion on the subject. George quickly responded that he had been baptized as a child and saw no need of being baptized again. One of the sisters asked him if he had ever prayerfully searched the word of God as to its testimony in this matter. He admitted that he had not. She therefore spoke to him saying, "I entreat you then never again to speak any more about it till you have done so." Brother Müller took this word from the Lord, and began to honestly search the Scriptures on this subject. After his study under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he came to the conclusion that only believers should be baptized (hence, not infants), and that baptism should be by immersion. This experience had a great impact upon him. He later insisted that all teaching of truth and Christian practice must be subject to the test of the word of God. Although he became convinced that baptism by immersion was according to Scriptures, he nonetheless did not insist upon it, since it was not a matter of the common faith.

George's way of study was rather simple. He first prayed that his eyes would be opened and his mind would be illumined as he came to the word. He sought to be pure of all bias, opinions, or prejudice. He did not want to be bound by the influence of traditions. He realized that it is easy for Christians to eventually promote doctrines and practices that have no basis in the word of God. His practice was to ask, "What do the Scriptures teach?"

Mingling the Word with Prayer

George Müller practiced mingling the reading of the word together with his prayer in the mornings. This is according to Paul's encouragement in Ephesians 6:17-18. Witness Lee says "He [George Müller] would rise up very early every morning and read the Bible and pray while taking a walk outdoors. This was his morning watch. I believe this was most beneficial. Because he fellowshipped with God in such a way, he had joy and rest."

George himself testified regarding his times with the Lord in the mornings saying, "I saw more clearly than ever that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord. The first thing to be concerned

about was not how much I might serve the Lord, how I might glorify the Lord; but how I might get my soul into a happy state, and how my inner man might be nourished. For I might seek to set

the truth before the unconverted, I might seek to benefit believers, I might seek to relieve the distressed, I might in other ways

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seek to behave myself as it becomes a child of God in this world; and yet, not being happy in the Lord, and not being nourished and strengthened in my inner man day by day, all this might not be attended to in a right spirit.”

Over the years, George advanced in his approach in coming to the Lord in the word. He said, “. . . my practice had been, at least for ten years previously, as a habitual thing to give myself to prayer, after having dressed myself in the morning. *Now*, I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the word of God, and to meditation on it, that thus my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warned, reprov'd, instructed; and that thus, by means of the word of God, whilst meditating on it, my heart might be brought into experimental communion with the Lord.”

“I began therefore to meditate on the New Testament from the beginning, early in the morning. The first thing I did, after having asked in a few words the Lord’s blessing upon his precious word, was, to begin to meditate on the word of God, searching as it were into every verse, to get blessing out of it; not for the sake of the public ministry of the word, not for the sake of preaching on what I had meditated upon, but for the sake of obtaining food for my own soul.”

“The result I have found to be almost invariably this, that after a very few minutes my soul has been led to confession, or to thanksgiving, or to intercession, or to supplication; so that, though I did

When thus I have been for a while making confession, or intercession, or supplication, or have given thanks, I go on to the next words or verse, turning all, as I go on, into prayer for myself or others, as the word may lead to it, but still continually keeping before me that food for my own soul is the object of my meditation.

not, as it were, give myself to *prayer*, but to *meditation*, yet it turned almost immediately more or less into prayer. When thus I have been for a while making confession, or intercession, or supplication, or have given thanks, I go on to the next words or verse, turning all, as I go on, into prayer for myself or others, as the word may lead to it, but still continually keeping before me that food for my own soul is the object of my meditation.”

“And yet now, since God has taught me this point, it is as plain to me as anything; that the first thing the child of God has to do morning by morning is, to *obtain food for his inner man*. As the outward man is not fit for work for any length of time except we take food, and as this is one of the first things we do in the morning, so it should be with the inner man. We should take food for that, as everyone must allow. Now what is the food for the inner man? Not *prayer*, but *the word of God*; and here again, not the simple reading of the word of God, so that it only passes through our minds, just as water runs through a pipe, but considering what we read, pondering over it, and applying it to our hearts.

“When we pray, we speak to God. Now, prayer, in order to be continued for any length of time in any other than a formal manner, requires, generally speaking, a measure of strength or godly desire, and the season, therefore, when this exercise of the soul can be most effectually performed is after the inner man has been nourished by meditation on the word of God, where we find our Father speaking to us, to encourage us, to comfort us, to instruct us, to humble us, to reprove us. I dwell so particularly on this point because of the immense spiritual profit and refreshment I am conscious of having derived from it myself, and I affectionately and solemnly beseech all my fellow-believers to ponder this matter. By the blessing of God I ascribe to this mode the help and strength which I had from God to pass in peace through deeper trials, in various ways, than I had ever had before; and after having now above fourteen years tried this way, I can most fully, in the fear of God, commend it.”

Thus we see the secret of supply and strength of our dear brother in all his prayer and service before God. He was richly supplied by taking in the divine food of the word of God through his prayer in order to live and work with strength from day to day (Matt. 4:4). May we also learn this secret from our brother as we continue on in our life following the Lord. Thank the Lord for giving us such pattern as our brother George Müller!

Tune in to the next program as we will see something of Müller's living by faith in his life's work, which included the establishing of five large orphan homes operated by appealing to God alone for funds and in which over 10,000 children were cared for over the course of more than 60 years

Marty Robert and Bill Lawson

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