

GREAT RESOLUTIONS

Program Thirteen

A Testimony to the Prayer-Hearing God

Part Three on the Life of George Müller

Luke 18:1 tells us that men ought always to pray and not lose heart. Practically speaking, what does this look like – and is it even possible? To answer these questions, we can look to the life of George Müller.

Regarding George Müller, Andrew Murray said: “When God wishes anew to teach His church a truth that is not being understood or practiced, He mostly does so by raising some man to be in word and deed a living witness to its blessedness. And so God has raised up in the nineteenth century,

among others, George Müller to be His witness that He is indeed the Hearer of prayer. I know of no way in which the principal truths of

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To this end, we consider here the prayer life of George Müller. Out of his prayer over 10,000 orphans were cared for, Sunday schools and day schools were established and many foreign missionaries were supported. In these and other undertakings, man was never asked for money, nor was any hint given of needs – though often the needs were urgent and pressing – but rather earnest prayer was offered to the Father who cares for and hearkens to the prayers of His own. His confidence was in God, not in human prospects, and he knew that “He will give me, in His own time every shilling which I need;

yet I also know, that He delights in being earnestly entreated, and that He takes pleasure in the continuance in prayer, and in the importuning Him, which so clearly is to be seen from the parable of the widow and the unjust judge.”

Over the course of his life, he learned to cast burden after burden upon God, and thus was kept in and enjoyed the peace of God, no matter what the outward circumstances. As an example to believers of an intercessor, he truly came to know God as “You who hear prayer (Psa. 65:2).” George Müller’s life and work are a testimony to both believers and unbelievers that the living God hears and answers prayer, and that it is safe to trust in Him at all times.

First Impressions

At the time of his salvation, George Müller witnessed, for the first time, a person praying on his knees before God. This must have made a deep and enduring impression upon the young Müller. For the next 70 years, George Mueller’s practice was to come to the Lord for divine guidance in all matters, from asking the Lord’s help in finding a misplaced key, to beseeching the Lord of the harvest to thrust out workers into His vineyard.

Though George Müller had a heart to care for orphans, the main reason for starting the orphan work was to provide a testimony that God hears and answers prayer and to encourage believers to come to God in faith. As he explained: “Sometimes I found children of God tried in mind by the prospect of old age, when they might be unable to work any longer, and therefore were harassed by the fear of having to go into the poorhouse. If in such a case I pointed out to them, how their Heavenly Father has always helped those who put their trust in Him, they might not, perhaps, always say, that times have changed; but yet it was evident enough, that

God was not looked upon by them as the LIVING God. My spirit was oft-times bowed down by this, and I longed to set something before the children of God, whereby they might see, that He does not forsake, even in our day, those who rely upon Him.”

Five Conditions of Prevailing Prayer

George Müller learned that in order for his prayers to be heard he must keep certain principles as laid forth in the Word. He enumerated these principles as follows:

1. Entire dependence upon the merits and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only ground of any claim for blessing (See John 14:13-14; 15:16).
2. Separation from all known sin. If we regard iniquity in our hearts, the Lord will not hear us, for it would be sanctioning sin (Psalm 66:18).
3. Faith in God's word of promise as confirmed by His oath. Not to believe Him is to make Him both a liar and a perjurer (Hebrews 11:6; 6:13-20).
4. Asking in accordance with His will. Our motives must be godly: we must not seek any gift of God to consume it upon our lusts (1 John 5:14; James 4:3).
5. Importunity in supplication. There must be waiting on God and waiting for God, as the husbandman has long patience to wait for the harvest (James 5:7; Luke 18:1-8).

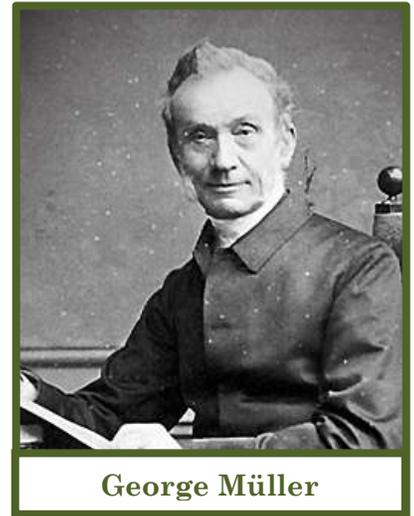
His Requests

Prayer for Fruit-bearing

George Müller was not ashamed to bring even the smallest matters to the Lord in prayer. In his *Narratives*, he tells how when the first orphan home was being established, he prayed for needed Christian helpers, for furniture, and for many other details, but he forgot to pray for children to fill the home! Realizing this, he then did ask the Lord to send children and the house was filled.

Over time he learned that God would have him place prayers for others as the number one priority, and he began to

pray for the salvation of many people. He would write names of people on his prayer list and remember those people before the Lord daily until they were saved. He learned that to bear fruit was not a quick matter. In some cases, his prayers were answered in a short time, but in other cases it took a long time, even decades. He understood that although our Savior God desires all men to be saved, He waits to save ones until we pray.



One example was recorded by Müller in 1841. He wrote, “During this year I was informed about the conversion of one of the very greatest sinners that I ever heard of in all my service for the Lord. Repeatedly I fell on my knees with his wife, and asked the Lord for his conversion, when she came to me in the deepest distress of soul, on account of the most barbarous and cruel treatment that she received from him, in his bitter enmity against her for the Lord's sake, and because he could not provoke her to be in a passion, and she would not strike him again, and the like. At the time when it was at its worst I pleaded especially on his behalf the promise in Matthew 28:19: ‘Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.’ And now this awful persecutor is converted.”

In November 1844 George Müller began to pray for the conversion of five individuals. He testified, “I prayed every day without a single intermission, whether sick or in health, on the land or on the sea, and whatever the pressure of my engagements might be. Eighteen months elapsed before the first of five was converted. I thanked God and prayed on for the others. Five years elapsed, and then the second was converted. I thanked

God for the second, and prayed on for the other three. Day by day I continued to pray for them, and six years passed before the third was converted. I thanked God for the three and went on praying for the other two. These two remained unconverted. The man to whom God in the riches of his grace has given tens of thousands of answers to prayer in the self-same hour or day in which they were offered has been praying day by day for nearly 36 years for the conversion of these individuals, and yet they remain unconverted. But I hope in God, I pray on, and look yet for the answer. They are not converted yet, but they will be.”

Müller believed that the Holy Spirit lays on one's heart for prayer those who are to be saved. When asked if he really believed that these two men for whose salvation he had prayed for over fifty years would be converted, George Müller replied, ‘Do you think God would have kept me praying all these years if He did not intend to save them?’ Both men were converted, one shortly before, the other after, Müller's death.

Prayer for Spiritual Blessing Among the Saints

Besides praying for the lost, George Müller also at times prayed for the growth among his fellow believers. At one point he shared, “I began to ask the Lord for greater real spiritual prosperity among the saints, among whom I labour in Bristol, than there ever yet had been among them; and now I have to record to the praise of the Lord that truly He has answered this request; for, considering all things, at no period has there been more manifestation of grace and truth, and spiritual power among us, than there is now while I am writing this for the press (1845). Not that we have attained to what we might; we are far, very far from it; but the Lord has been very, very good to us, and we have most abundant cause for thanksgiving.”

SOME OTHER LESSONS LEARNED

Prayer out of His Touch with the Lord

Witness Lee noted that although George Müller prayed for many matters, he rarely

begged God for anything. “He lived before God and fellowshiped with Him continually. When he mentioned a certain matter to God, he first asked God whether He would do it. After he sensed that a matter was of God's will, he would say, ‘Since this is Your will, I ask You to accomplish it.’ His prayer was spontaneous, easy, and effortless because he was a man who touched God in fellowship.” In our next program we will consider his fellowship with the Lord more in depth and find out the secret of his supply and strength for his prayer life.

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~Witness Lee

Prayer Together with His Wife

Not only did George Müller bear a testimony of child-like dependency upon the Lord in his individual prayer life, but he also depended on his fellow workers and his wife to bear with him matters before the Lord. He felt believers should not forget the Lord's promise that if two are in harmony on earth concerning any matter for which they ask, “it will be done for them from My Father who is in the heavens” (Matthew 18:19). Müller considered that “it is a blessed preparation for such habitual symphony in prayer to be found in the union of a husband and wife in the Lord.” He considered his wife a fellow heir together of the grace of life. Their testimony bore to the fact that their prayers were not hindered (1 Peter 3:7).



Mrs. Müller

Persevering Prayer

One of the lessons George Müller learned was the need to persist and to persevere in prayer. It was his feeling that too many believers start out to pray for matters, but do not continue on until they obtain that which they seek from the Lord. Müller said, “One great fault of the children of God is that they are not

persistent in prayer. It is not enough to begin to pray, nor to pray aright; nor is it enough to continue for a time to pray; but we must patiently, believingly, continue in prayer until we obtain an answer.”

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It was his understanding that God is often moved to delay that we may be led to come to Him for more prayer. He learned again and again that answers to prayer are sometimes deferred so that the natural and carnal spirit may be kept in check and that believers may bow to the will of God. He was hesitant to take definite steps regarding any matter without first seeking counsel and guidance from Him. It was his practice to patiently wait to learn the clear will of God before undertaking anything; he knew that only then can one be blessed in his requests.

Despite many trials of faith, Müller was not discouraged or disappointed. He was kept in peace knowing that “at the proper time the Lord will answer our prayer and fulfill His word to us.”

May we follow the example of our brother George Müller and exercise our priestly function to bear before God all the persons and matters that He puts upon our hearts. May we be saved from the sin of prayerlessness (1 Sam. 12:23) and give ourselves to prayer (Psa. 109:4). In all our asking, seeking, and knocking (Matt. 7:7), we can let our requests be made known to God (Phil. 4:6). And may we learn afresh from our

brother’s testimony, not just to begin to express burdens in prayer, but to persevere in prayer until our prayers are answered and the Lord’s will is accomplished (Col. 4:2).

Marty Robert and Bill Lawson

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