

The Greatest Secret I've Learned About Prayer

I'll never forget where I was sitting in the Orlando airport in Florida several years ago when I heard an unusual announcement on the public-address system. A male voice said: "George Mueller. George Mueller. Please contact a service desk for a message."

George Mueller? I suppose there really was a man by that name in the airport at that moment. But I couldn't help but think about the George Mueller of history, a courageous Christian leader from England who died in 1898. I had his biography but hadn't read it in a while.

In that moment I felt as though the Holy Spirit were tapping me on the shoulder. God used that announcement to remind me to go back and read Mueller's story again.

He lived a life that we need to remember today.

Mueller is best known for his work with orphans. During his lifetime he fed and cared for more than 10,000 orphans—yet he never once asked anyone for money. He trusted God for the funds to feed those children. He also exercised enough faith to establish 117 Christian schools during his lifetime.

He was also an amazing preacher. At age 70 he embarked on a 17-year-long missionary journey that took him from England to other parts of Europe to Canada and the United States, then back to Europe, then back to the United States, then to Egypt, Russia, India, China, Japan, Australia and then back to Europe. At a time before airplanes, he traveled more than 200,000 miles and preached the gospel in English, French and German.

But Mueller's greatest legacy was what he did on his knees

when no one else was listening. He expected God to answer his prayers. That is why he kept prayer journals, in which he recorded more than 50,000 answers to prayer. He claimed that 30,000 of those answers came in the same day or the same hour that he prayed them!

It is believed that Mueller raised more than half a billion dollars in today's currency to manage his ministry work. And all that money came in answer to prayer. He said of his success in prayer: "The joy which answers to prayer give, cannot be described; and the impetus which they afford to the spiritual life is exceedingly great."

How did Mueller see so many answers to prayer? What was his secret? He wrote that for many years he would struggle to pray, and his mind often wandered. But then he learned to approach God as a Father and friend, and he would talk to God about what he was learning in the Scriptures.

The result was a deep intimacy with the Holy Spirit. This led Mueller to share with God his requests—and he quickly learned that God was eager to respond. The blessings began to pour in—enough to fill notebooks and notebooks with answers. The more answers he experienced, the more he desired to pray.

His prayer life changed. It shifted from a rote religious routine to an exciting adventure.

Would you like to experience this same joy of answered prayer? I recently began an in-depth study of the book of Psalms. I've read the psalms many times, but this time, I've been struck by how many times the word "answer" appears in that part of the Bible.

Our God is a God who hears and answers. He responds when we cry to Him. David said: "I cried to the Lord with my voice, and He answered me from His holy hill" (Ps. 3:4). Psalm 17:6a says: "I called on You, for You will answer me, O God." Psalm 38:15 says: "For in You, O Lord, do I hope; You will answer, O

Lord my God.”

The word “answer” appears 27 times in Psalms. God does not tune us out or ignore us. He’s listening! He is waiting for us to share our burdens and requests. He is ever ready to demonstrate His goodness. And even on our worst days we can experience answered prayer. Psalm 86:7 says: “In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, for You will answer me.”

You may feel distant from God. You may be tempted to believe God has given up on you because of your failures. Or maybe prayer has just become a boring routine. Go back to the Psalms and discover the secret of George Mueller. You too can experience an adventure in prayer.

I have started my own “answered prayer journal,” and I’m already recording the miracles. I encourage you to do the same. Don’t put a lid on your prayers. Don’t be shy to bring your requests—come before the Lord with the boldness to ask. Dare to be a George Mueller in this generation.