

WEEK 9 . ANSWERS TO PRAYER

DAY 1

We have now learned about many different parts of prayer. But we know that learning these things in your head is quite different from putting them into your life. You may be able to tell everything about prayer, but not pray faithfully. You may know all of God's promises and still not use them so that you have answers to your prayers.

This week we want to try to help you make prayer a part of your life. There will not be questions to answer in these lessons. Instead, we, as writers of this book, want to tell you how prayer has worked in our lives and in the lives of people we have heard about. You will read one of these answers to prayer each day, and then you will have a request to pray for for that day. This is your work for this week.

It may be hard for you to believe that one of the writers of this book was once such a drunkard that he slept in the street, not knowing how to get home.

I, Fred Holland, was taken to drink beer by my uncle before I was six years old. When I was thirteen I ran away from school. I became friends with some older boys, who drank and stole. As I grew up I worked at many jobs. I continued to drink and tried to enjoy life. Another boy and I stole cars and sold the tyres and other parts. I was in jail many times. Once I was in the hospital because of drinking so much beer, but I ran away.

All during this time my older brother was trying to help me. This brother had become a true Christian and was preaching for a small church. Sometimes I would come to my brother's house drunk, but he would wash me and put me to bed.

Then I joined the army. In the army I had two jobs. One was to teach other soldiers how to shoot guns and the other was to serve beer at the beer hall. Sometimes my friends would take me home from the beer hall and put me to bed because I was too drunk to find the way.

One day I broke into a store and stole expensive things from the store. Then I was put into a big prison for a while. Finally in October, 1948, it was time for me to come out of the army. I was drinking very much, but my brother and the people of the church were praying for me in every service. I began to think about my life and how it looked before God. The people of the church heard that I was coming home. They prayed in a special way.

On the first Sunday night after I had arrived home, special meetings were beginning in the church. I went to the evangelistic meetings at the church. During the meeting, my heart was very much troubled. While the meeting was still going on I went outside and tore up a pack of cigarettes I had in my pocket. At the end of the meeting I went forward to pray. I cried as God showed me all the sins of my life. Then I received Christ as my Saviour, and I knew that my heart was changed. From that day on I never drank again. Instead I went to Bible school and became a missionary.

All this happened because my brother and his church prayed.

As you think about this answer to prayer, remember someone in your family who needs to repent and leave the way of sin. Stop and pray for that one now. Ask God to show him his sin. Ask God to show him how Jesus died to free him from sin. Ask God to help you keep on praying until that one in your family becomes a Christian.

2 Corinthians 5:17:

When anyone is united to Christ, there is a new world; the old order has gone, and a new order has already begun.

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DAY 2

The second answer to prayer comes from Nigeria, Africa. You may read the complete account of this story in the book called *New Life for All* by Eileen Lageer.

As the New Life for All teaching was given to the people of Nigeria, there was an old man named Makafo who wanted to help with the work. But he was old and blind and not even able to leave his house. He could not go out and preach, but he could pray. He decided to ask the leaders who were preaching to give him the names of those who would not listen to the message. He would pray for them in a special way.

The leaders agreed that they would bring names to him. In the end they brought him the names of 11 men. These were the people who were hard in their hearts and seemed least likely to repent.

Makafo prayed for them faithfully day by day as he was alone in his house, unable to see and unable to walk. He prayed for them one by one and by name.

Months passed. Makafo must have felt discouraged at times, but still he prayed. And then the prayers began to be answered. Can you imagine how he felt one day when one of the men he had been praying for came to visit him in his house? The man did not just come to talk. He came to ask Makafo to pray for him and to pray himself that his sins would be forgiven.

After that another of the men came. And another. And another. Before a year had passed every one of these eleven men had come to Makafo's small house to pray and receive new life in Christ.

Would you have been willing to pray for the hardest men in the village as Makafo did? Would you have continued to pray for a year until all of them had repented? This is the kind of prayer that God answers.

As you think about this answer, remember someone in your village who refuses to listen to preaching about Christ. Perhaps he is very hard. It seems he could never repent. Perhaps your faith is small as you think about him, but remember that faith like a tiny seed can do miracles.

Stop and pray now for this hard man or woman in your village and ask God to keep you praying for him until he repents.

Matthew 17:20b

I tell you this: if you have faith no bigger even than a mustard-seed, you will say to this mountain, "Move from here to there," and it will move; nothing will prove impossible for you.'

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DAY 3

The following answer to prayer shows how good it is to agree with one or two others in asking for a certain thing. This answer to prayer is written in the book, *Quiet Talks on Prayer* by S. D. Gordon.

Mr. Gordon the writer of the book, had a friend who told him the story of how he became a Christian. This is what happened. Mr. Gordon's friend was a big man both in height and in importance. He was very clever and had become a lawyer. Later he was elected to serve in the Congress, which is an important part of the Government of the United States.

But this man was not a Christian. He said that he did not believe there was a God, and he had other friends in the government who talked and agreed with him.

Suddenly one day while the man was in an important government meeting he had a feeling that God was there with him and was not happy about the way he was living. But the man did not believe in God and did not like to think that God was there. He decided that he must be working too hard and that he was not thinking straight. He got up and left the meeting to rest by walking around outside.

But this did not help. It still seemed that God was speaking to him and he could not get away from God. This continued for more than three months, until the work of the government at that time was finished and the man went home for a time. When he reached home he found that his wife and two other women who were Christians had agreed to pray for him to become a Christian. He asked his wife when they had started praying in this way. She told him, and he knew that this was the very day when he was sitting in the meeting and God began to speak to him.

The man was so surprised when he heard this that he began fighting within himself. He said that he did not believe in God and all his friends knew what he had said. But he could not deny that God had been working in answer to his wife's prayers. For several days he fought with himself and then one night he went along with his wife to church. Afterwards he remained to pray and receive Christ. From that time on his life was changed. He felt he should leave the work of the government and become a preacher for God.

As the man and his wife told this story to Mr. Gordon, the wife said that she too had heard God's voice. While she was praying one night for her husband to be saved, it seemed a very quiet voice inside her said, "Are you willing to

accept what will happen?" At first she did not know what this meant, so she just kept on praying. But then the words came to her again, "Are you willing to accept what will happen?" These words kept coming until she prayed and told God that she was willing for whatever would happen if only her husband would become a Christian.

Perhaps you are wondering what it was that happened to her. As the wife of a government man, this woman had plenty of money and an important position, but after he became a preacher she did not have this place any more. Instead she had to live on a small amount of money which a preacher gets. She had to move her home often when her husband was called to preach at a new place. But she was happy to do this because God answered her prayers.

Today as you think about how God answered the prayers of this woman and her two friends, choose some leader in your village or government who is not a Christian. Take time now to begin praying for this important person.

Matthew 18:19:

'Again I tell you this: if two of you agree on earth about any request you have to make, that request will be granted by my heavenly Father.'

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DAY 4

Even as we have been writing these lessons God has been answering prayer at the mission where we live.

Last year the Bible school students here visited a woman near the mission who was not a Christian and told her the way of salvation. She said that she wanted to repent and she prayed a prayer of confession and faith on that day when they visited her. From that time on, the students and teachers of the Bible school prayed for her to walk on with God and become a strong Christian.

God heard our prayers. She began coming faithfully to church. Each time we visited her she listened carefully to the word of God. She learned how to pray with feeling and she began to tell other people what God had done for her.

As we prayed, God began to talk to her about her past life. She had stolen seven chickens from a woman who lived near her. God showed her that she should take chickens back for the ones she had stolen, and she did. God reminded her of things which she had stolen from the store, and she went to the storekeeper to confess these.

Then one day a strange sickness came to her. We do not know why this sickness came. Perhaps some day we will understand. But this woman was unable to talk. Sometimes she could say only a few words. Sometimes she could not even greet people. The sickness continued for a whole week.

On Sunday she came to church, but she could not speak to those who welcomed her. After the meeting, eight of the Christians took her back into the church to pray for her. We believed that an evil spirit was keeping her from speaking. We remembered what Jesus said about evil spirits. We prayed and commanded the spirit to come out of her in the name of Jesus. Then we asked her to pray, but she could not. We sang songs about the name of Jesus and then we prayed again. We asked her to say the name of Jesus but she could not. We continued praying and at last she could say "Jesus", but she could not say that he was the Son of God.

We continued to pray for her for about two hours until at last the spirit left her. Then she smiled a very big smile. She thanked God in the name of Jesus as God's Son. She sang and prayed. She shook hands with all of us and began to talk freely to us. All of us praised God together for answering prayer.

Perhaps you know someone who is troubled with evil spirits. It is not God's will that they should be troubled in this way. It is the work of us Christians to pray in the name of Jesus that they may be delivered. Today ask God to show you someone who is troubled in this way. Take time now to begin praying for this person to be delivered.

Matthew 17:21:

But there is no means of casting out this sort but prayer and fasting.

WEEK 9 - ANSWERS TO PRAYER DAY 5

Here is another answer to prayer which came through the work of New Life for All. It happened in Zambia.

As the teaching of New Life for All began in Zambia, many people started small groups for prayer. Some of these groups met early in the morning. Others met in the evening.

Some women in the Solwezi District of Zambia formed a prayer group. They felt they should agree in prayer for the salvation of a witch doctor who worked around them. It was said that this man had several camps and three helpers to smell out sicknesses and give medicines. The women prayed for him every day by name, that God would deliver him from his sins and from his evil work.

After some weeks, the women felt that they should speak to the man about becoming a Christian. They were afraid to do this, but at last they went to visit him. They told him how God could deliver him from his sins and give him new life. He asked many questions. Some they could not answer. They told him that they did not know these things, but they were sure he needed new life and God could give it to him. At last he agreed to what they said and he prayed a prayer of repentance.

When the women came home and said that the witch doctor had repented some people did not believe them. But later on, Mr. Samuel Kasonso, the national leader for New Life for All in Zambia went to visit in this area. As he was driving along in his car he stopped to pick up a man and his wife who were asking for a lift. As they talked together in the car, Mr. Kasonso asked the man's name. When he told him, Mr. Kasonso recognized that this was the name of the witch doctor. He asked him about his work. The man answered, "I used to be a doctor, but these days I have become a Christian. I have received Christ as my Saviour and I am no longer doing that kind of work."

Later Mr. Kasonso asked some other people about him. "Yes," they said, "he has repented and is not treating people any more. Now he comes to church."

Perhaps there is someone like this doctor in your community. Perhaps it seems hard to pray for him. Do not be afraid. Remember the women in northern Zambia who were not afraid to pray. Stop now and begin to pray for the witch doctor who is nearest you, that he will find new life in Christ.

Pray also for the one who repented in Zambia. He is being tempted to go back to his old work. Pray that he will give it up forever.

Acts 19:18-19:

Moreover many of those who had become believers came and openly confessed that they had been using magical spells. And a good many of those who formerly practised magic collected their books and burnt them publicly.