
The Prayer-filled Life of George Muller

George Muller did not start his ministry or establish orphanages in order to glorify his name or to fulfill his desires. He only hoped to witness to the world that the unbound power of God is granted to those who believe His Words and follow Him. As he did the work of God that pleased Him, he only sought after the Lord and experienced His power. Such a faithful life and biography of George Muller is acclaimed as a true exemplary Christian life until even today.

The Whole Chain of Sins and Lies

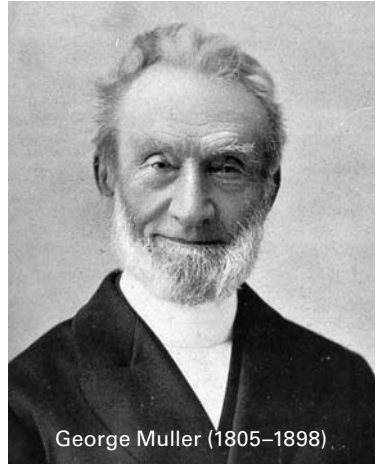
The man of prayer, George Muller, was born on September 27, 1805 in Kroppenstedt, Germany. Since his father was a tax collector, his family lived a relatively comfortable life. Hoping to teach his sons to be prudent in spending and saving money, Muller's father gave them a lot of money ever since they were young. But they, whose hearts were yet naive to the world of the spirit, began to go astray from their father's expectations, like the prodigal son in Luke 15. Especially George, the eldest son, habitually wasted money on gambling and other vile things, and he falsely reported his expenses in the entry book. Although Muller was often punished for his deception, his heart became callous in sin and there

was no prospective change in him.

As he grew older, Muller became more indulged in corruption. At age 10, he habitually stole and lied. He even attempted to steal government funds managed by his father. Still, his father desired his son to pursue theological studies and become a clergyman. Thus at age 11, he sent Muller to Cathedral Classical School in Halberstadt. Although his father was fully aware of his son's status, he wanted the comfort of a parsonage that would follow his son becoming a clergyman. During the time when churches were run by the state, people deemed gospel ministry as a means of living rather than a divine vocation.

Muller, who had an obdurate heart that nobody could tame, only found himself indolent in school work. Rather than studying, he was more attracted to reading novels, playing cards, or drinking alcohol. Particularly, his propensity for theft and drinking was completely out of bounds. At age 14, on the very night when his mother passed away, he staggered along the street drunk. Even his mother's death could not awaken the dormant conscience that lay asleep at the core of his heart.

In 1821, Muller's father was transferred to the revenue office in Schoenebeck, Prussia. Reverend Nagel, who was also a professor, moved into their old house and the father urged Muller to supervise renovating the house and also to study under Reverend Nagel. But as soon as his father moved to his new post, Muller collected the taxes that were due to his father and launched out on



George Muller (1805–1898)

a journey. Soon after, his money was spent, but he lodged six days in a luxurious hotel pretending to be rich and secretly escaped the hotel without paying the fee. He then spent a week in another hotel, but he was caught by the workers as he was climbing out of the window. Consequently, he was forced to serve 24 days in prison from December 18, 1821 to January 12, 1822.

Upon hearing this news, Muller's father paid his son's bail and sent money for room and board. After his release from prison, Muller enrolled in a school in Nordhausen. There, Muller learned theology, history, and Latin for two and a half years from October, 1822 to Easter, 1825. However, he was yet free from the chains of sin and lies.

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An Unexpected Change

In 1825, when Muller turned 20, he was recommended to transfer to the University of Halle to pursue theological studies. Although he pledged himself to live a changed life, it did not last long. He continued to live a regretful life of sinning and repenting, all to sin again.

Then on a Saturday afternoon in mid-November, he was walking home with his friend when he heard unanticipated news. His friend, Beta, informed him that every Saturday evening he goes to a Christian house to gather with other believers to read the Bible, sing hymns, and read sermons. Muller, Beta, and two

other friends had previously taken a trip to Switzerland. They created passports by forging a letter from their parents and collected money from their friends by pretending to have lost money. Beta, who had been committing sins all along, was now attending a Christian meeting. It did not make any sense. Suddenly, Muller felt, "Perhaps there I may find the spiritual food I have been searching for," and he asked if he could also join the meeting. Indeed, God alone knew that this meeting would be his life-changing moment.

That evening, Muller followed Beta to attend the meeting led by Dr. Wagner. When he opened the gates at Dr. Wagner's house, he felt that he was entering a new world. Although everyone was a new face to him, the warmth and leisure that circulated around the room seemed to open its arms to embrace him.

"You are welcome at all times. The doors of this house and our hearts are always open."

These were warm-hearted words of Dr. Wagner. Muller realized that they were filled with joy that was unknown to him. The assembly sang hymns. Then Brother Kaiser, (who later became a missionary in Africa under the sponsorship of London Missionary Society) knelt down and prayed that the Lord should bless their meeting. It was a custom in Prussia that people give public prayers standing. Thus witnessing a prayer on knees was an unforgettable sight for Muller. While he prayed, Muller thought,

"I am smarter than him. But how is it that I cannot pray like him?"

After the prayer, someone stood up and read the Bible and recited the sermon. During that time, it was against the law for one to preach without becoming an ordained clergyman. After the recital, they sang hymns once more and concluded the meeting with Dr. Wagner's prayer. When the meeting was over, Muller was able to feel that an indescribable happiness was springing

from the heart of his spirit. Vowing to come back to the next meeting, Muller told Beta, “Nothing we have seen in Switzerland or any pleasure we have cherished in the past would equal the happiness I’ve gained tonight.”

After returning home, Muller knelt down to pray like he had seen in the meeting. He did not remember what they said. Anyhow, he concluded his prayer and lay down in bed, but he could not sleep due to the new and mysterious peace and delight. Indeed, God had begun to work through His grace in his heart.

Afterward, he continued to attend the prayer meeting that was held in the Christian brother’s house. Aspiring to learn the Word and pray with other believers, he always waited for Saturdays to come. Gradually, he became distant from his sinful life. He no longer mingled with bad company and stopped going to bars. He also stopped the habitual lies and abusive words. Now George Muller was no longer the same George Muller of the past. Some strange power began to work in his heart, moving him from sin to holiness.

Through the help of those whom he met at the prayer meetings, he began to open his eyes toward the Bible as well. He, who only enjoyed reading novels, began to indulge the Bible deeply. Whenever he read the Bible, Muller felt as though he was mining for a gold vein step by step by solely relying on a small piece of a map. Then one day, he discovered the hidden treasure in the Bible, Jesus Christ.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

The entire plan of God, to save him from sin, was contained in this single verse. Why and how our Lord Jesus Christ bore our sins and hung on the cross, and how much God loves us and desires us to love Him—that same Christ not only cleansed our

hearts of sin but also changed our lives and empowered us to overcome trials and temptations of the world. With this single Scripture, God sealed Muller's heart with clear and distinct salvation.

Following the Guidance of the Lord

After becoming born again, Muller read letters sent by missionaries and felt that God was calling him as a missionary.

Muller was full of the heart to serve only God. He wanted to share the newly-found happiness with other people. He wrote a letter explaining the gospel to his family members who were not yet saved, especially pitying his father, who was very attached to money. However, the only thing he received was an angry reply from his father.

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During that time, a prominent professor, named Dr. Friedrich Tholuck, was newly appointed as a professor of theology at the University of Halle. Under that influence, many Christian students transferred from other colleges to Halle in order to study under Dr. Tholuck. By their help, Muller grew stronger in his life of faith, and he decided to enroll in a mission school in Germany and commit the remainder of his life to mission work. He informed his father of his decision by writing a letter, but his father threatened him that he would stop supporting his tuition and

living expenses and never see him as his son. It was his father's dream to raise his son to be a clergyman and spend the rest of his life in a comfortable house together.

Should he please God or his father? After much struggling in his heart, Muller finally decided to walk the path that would please the Lord, and accordingly, God opened the way for him. He opened the way for him to teach German to American professors who came to do research at the University of Halle and translate reference books for a set price. Although he was young in faith and naive in many things, Muller hoped to lead many souls to the Lord. He passed out mission reports and pamphlets and wrote letters to witness to his friends who were indulged in sin.

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Through the grace of God, Muller safely completed the last two years in college without receiving any aid from his father and moved to England. He hoped to do mission work in Romania or Poland under the sponsorship of the London Missionary Society, but God had prepared another path for Muller. As soon as he arrived in England, he became ill. While he spent two weeks in a sickbed, he realized that only the Bible serves as the standard of judgment for the spirit. From then on Muller kept aside other reference books or religious interpretations. Instead, he only read the Bible and prayed and meditated upon the Words he realized in his heart.

After he recovered his health, a few of his friends advised him to recuperate in a small rural village called Teignmouth. There, he was invited by a church to reside for 10 days and preach the Word, and many people received salvation and experienced change in their lives. The villagers urged him to become their head pastor, and thus Teignmouth became Muller's first ministry site.

Ministry in Teignmouth and Bristol

Muller was overjoyed by the fact that God had given him an opportunity to preach the gospel. But in one corner of his heart, he was also afraid. Did he not commit sin and live a life indulged in corruption? He was the last person who fit ministering over God's work. Although he was joyful, he was also afraid. "Lord, You are the only Lord of my life and ministry."

What Muller feared the most was himself. Whenever he prepared a sermon or prayed, he hoped that the heart of God, not his own, would be manifested through his sermon and prayer. He was always ready to put down his thoughts, empty his heart and commit himself to the Lord. Muller did not rely on his fluent speech or profound knowledge of the Bible. He rather relied on meditation and prayer which channel the will and heart of God to him. In the midst of this, he was able to discover the heart of God, who not only wanted Muller to entrust his sin, but also ministry, finance, marriage, children, and every aspect of his life. Muller did not only rely on the heart conveyed by prayer. Whenever new heart sprung within him, he opened the Bible and discerned whether such a heart derived from his own good conscience or was received from the Lord.

At Teignmouth Church, Muller began to change the smallest things as God pleased. He stopped collecting fees for attending service and made an offering box for those who willed to give offerings could do so before the Lord. He also stopped receiv-

ing monthly salaries after discovering the heart of God in James chapter 2 verses 1 to 6.

By the heart of God, Muller ministered in Teignmouth for two years and three months. Then by the guidance of God and the church, he moved to Bristol in May, 1832. He continued to live the life of inquiring and searching after the will of God through prayer and the Word. Within a year and half, 227 new people became connected to the church and heard the gospel. Among them, 103 people received salvation. Also, those who had their backs turned against God returned to the church to listen to the Words and grew in faith. Since each and every one's soul was very precious, Muller constantly examined and confirmed that believers were indeed born again.

Muller's Secret of Having 50,000 Prayers Answered

Muller is known to have had 50,000 prayers answered to big and little prayers during his 93 years of life. According to an article in *The Times*, Muller received approximately 1.5 million pounds (equaling 2.6 million dollars) through faithful prayer and established orphanages in five locations. Also, he published 64,000 copies of the Bible, 85,000 copies of the New Testament and 29 million copies of religious books. In addition to that, he supported 150 missionaries such as Hudson Taylor. What are his secrets of having about 50,000 prayers answered without doing business or raising funds from government or social service organizations?

First, he did not pray for things to exalt or glorify himself. The only purpose of his life was to manifest the glory of God. Thus he hoped for people to witness how his prayers were answered. He wanted them to acknowledge God's existence, help, and love and believe in Him.

Second, he did not rely on any plausible condition or seek the

help of man. Any good situation can be overturned and people can always fall. (Psalms 146:3) George Muller knew that the only One who can help mankind faithfully is God. Thus he was able to only look onto Him and proceed in faith.

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Third, Muller discerned whether his prayers were pleasing to the Lord. Whether anything was difficult, burdensome, wearisome, or impossible was not important to him. He took steps to do things that seemed difficult and destructive. Because it is God, not Muller himself, who fulfills His work (Philippians 4:13), he believed that “God will surely accomplish what pleases Him” and consequently experienced the great work of God.

George Muller did not start his ministry or establish orphanages in order to glorify his name or to fulfill his desires. He only hoped to witness to the world that the unbound power of God is granted to those who believe His Words and follow Him. As he did the work of God that pleased Him, he only sought after the Lord and experienced His power. Such a faithful life and biography of George Muller is acclaimed as a true exemplary Christian life until even today. 🙏