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## TRIALS OF FAITH AND HELPERS TO FAITH

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*Sept. 13. No help has come yet. This morning I found it was absolutely needful to tell the brethren and sisters about the state of the funds, and to give necessary directions as to not going into debt, etc. We prayed together, and had a very happy meeting. They all seemed comfortable. 12s 6d. was taken out of the boxes in the three houses, 12s. one of the labourers gave, and 1l. 1s. had come in for needlework done by the children. One of the sisters, who is engaged in the work, sent a message after me, not to trouble myself about her salary, for she should not want any for a twelvemonth. What a blessing to have such fellow-labourers!*

*Sept. 14. I met again this morning with the brethren and sisters for prayer, as the Lord has not yet sent help. After prayer one of the labourers gave me all the money he had, 16s., saying that it would not be upright to pray, if he were not to give what he had. One of the sisters told me, that in six days she would give 6l., which she had in the Savings' Bank for such a time of need. God be praised for such fellow-labourers!—Up to this day the matrons of the three houses had been in the habit of paying the bakers and the milkman weekly, because they had preferred to receive the payments in this way, and sometimes it had thus been also with the butcher and grocer. But now, as the Lord deals out to us by the day, we considered it would be wrong to go on any longer in this way, as the week's payment might become due, and we have no money to meet it; and thus those with whom we deal might be inconvenienced by us, and we be found acting against the commandment of the Lord, "Owe no man anything." Rom. 13:8. From this day, and henceforward, whilst the Lord gives to us our supplies by the day, we purpose therefore to pay at once for every article as it is purchased, and never to buy any thing except we can pay for it at once, however much it may seem to be needed, and however much those with whom we deal may wish to be paid only by the week. The little which was owed was paid off this day.—When I came home I found a large parcel of new clothes, which had been sent from Dublin for the Orphans, a proof that the Lord remembers us still. We met again in the evening for prayer. We were of good cheer, and still BELIEVE that the Lord will supply our need.*

*Müller, George. A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller. Vol. 1. London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1860. Print.*

Proverbs 18:1 states, “*Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment.*” Though Müller had to this point sought to keep the financial state of the orphanage a matter only known to himself and a few select individuals, the severity of the trial experienced in 1838 (and many times thereafter) no longer isolate this knowledge, but to inform the brethren and sisters who were engaged in the work.

Is this a violation of Müller’s principle of only making his requests known to God? Why or why not?

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What advantage is there in a group of believers praying for a need as opposed to a single person praying for that same need?

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How might the need to involve others, not just in the work of the orphanage, but also in the supplication for provisions, have been of a spiritual benefit to Müller personally?

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Have there been instances in your life where you have solicited the prayers of fellow believers? How did God answer those prayers?

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How might the need to be involved in prayer for provisions have benefited the workers in the orphanage as well?

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Have you earnestly joined with a brother or sister in the Lord in praying for a particular trial they were experiencing? What effect did that have on you?

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Pierson notes that there were occasions where the workers themselves sacrificed to meet various financial needs. This was done both through the donation of money as well as goods. These workers were not well paid to begin with, so, in giving, they frequently gave according to their means, and sometimes beyond their means. Which group of early believers exhibited this same capacity for giving?

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What enables a person, or group of people, to give in such sacrificial ways?

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In the autumn of 1838 Müller once again had to seek refuge away from Bristol because of his health. The Lord, in so afflicting him physically, had, as always, lessons for him to learn. It was during this time away from the busyness of his ministry in Bristol that Müller became convinced of the great necessity of “*early rising*.”

Müller is quick to state in his autobiography at this point that he does not set down any rule “*of universal application*” with regards to how much sleep a person ought to get. Nevertheless, he is convinced of the benefits of rising early.

He lists three such benefits:

II. If it be asked, but why should I rise early? The reply is, to remain too long in bed is

1. waste of time, which is unbecoming a saint, who is bought by the precious blood of Jesus, with his time and all he has, to be used for the Lord. If we sleep more than is needful for the refreshment of the body, it is wasting the time with which the Lord has intrusted us as a talent, to be used for his glory, for our own benefit, and the benefit of the saints and the unbelievers around us.

2. To remain too long in bed injures the body. Just as when we take too much food, we are injured thereby, so as it regards sleep. Medical persons would readily allow, that, the lying longer in bed than is needful for the strengthening of the body, does weaken it.

3. It injures the soul. The lying too long in bed, not merely keeps us from giving the most precious part of the day to prayer and meditation, but this sloth leads also to many other evils.—Any one need but make the experiment of spending one, two, or three hours in prayer and meditation before breakfast, either in his room, or with his Bible in his hand in the fields, and he will soon find out the beneficial effect which early rising has upon the outward and inward man.

I beseech all my brethren and sisters into whose hands this may fall, and who are not in the habit of rising early, to make the trial, and they will praise the Lord for having done so.

Müller, George. *A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller*. Vol. 1. London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1860. Print.

What do you make of his rationale?

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If you agree with Müller in principle, you may wonder how to best go about developing this habit. Müller goes on to give the following advice:

III. It may lastly be said, but how shall I set about rising early? My advice is,

1. Commence at once, delay it not. To-morrow begin to rise.

2. But do not depend upon your own strength. This may be the reason why, before this, you may have begun to rise early, but have given it up. As surely as you depend upon your own strength in this matter, it will come to nothing. In every good work we depend upon the Lord, and in this thing we shall feel especially how weak we are. If any one rises that he may give the time which he takes from sleep, to prayer and meditation, let him be sure that Satan will try to put obstacles in the way.

3. Do trust in the Lord for help. You will honour him, if you expect help from him in this matter. Give yourself to prayer for help, expect help, and you will have it.

4. Use, however, in addition to this, the following means:

a, Go early to bed. If you stay up late, you cannot rise early. Let no society and no pressure of engagements keep you from going habitually early to bed. If you fail in this, you neither can nor ought to get up early, as your body requires rest. Keep also particularly in mind, that neither for the body nor the soul is it the same thing, whether you go to bed late and rise late, or whether you go to bed early and rise early. Even

*medical persons will tell you how injurious it is to sit up late, and to spend the morning hours in bed; but how much more important still is it to retire early and to rise early, in order to make sure of time for prayer and meditation before the business of the day commences, and to devote to those exercises that part of our time, when the mind and the body are most fresh, in order thus to obtain spiritual strength for the conflict, the trials, and the work of the day.*

*b. Let some one call you, if possible, at the time which you have determined before God that you will rise; or procure, what is still better, an alarum, by which you may regulate almost to a minute the time when you wish to rise. For about 12s. a little German clock with an alarum may be bought almost in every town. Though I have very many times been awakened by the Lord, in answer to prayer, almost to the minute when I desired to rise; yet I thought it well to procure an alarum, to assist me in my purpose of rising early: not indeed as if it could give the least help, without the Lord's blessing, for I should remain in bed, notwithstanding the noise of the alarum, were he not to give me grace to rise; but simply looking upon it as a means.*

*c, Rise at once when you are awake. Remain not a minute longer in bed, else you are likely to fall asleep again.*

*d, Be not discouraged by feeling drowsy and tired in consequence of your rising early. This will soon wear off. You will after a few days feel yourself stronger and fresher than when you used to lie an hour or two longer than you needed.*

*e, Allow yourself always the same hours for sleep. Make no change, except sickness oblige you.*

*Müller, George. A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller. Vol. 1. London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1860. Print.*

Considering point 1 above, how does it comport with Müller's approach to applying any principle to which he becomes convinced of its Scriptural warrant?

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What Scriptural argument convinces Müller of the necessity of early rising?

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How do points 2 and 3 relate to point 4? How have we seen this relation played out before in Müller's life?

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If you are not an early riser already, are you convinced by Müller's rationale and Scriptural argument for such a practice? If so, will you begin tomorrow?

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## NEXT LESSON:

# NEW LESSONS IN GOD'S SCHOOL OF PRAYER

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*Sept. 21. Monday. By what was in hand for the Orphans, and by what had come in yesterday, the need of to-day is more than supplied, as there is enough for tomorrow also.*

*To-day a brother from the neighbourhood of London gave me 10l., to be laid out as it might be most needed. As we have been praying many days for the School—Bible—and Missionary Funds, I took it all for them. This brother knew nothing about our work, when he came three days since to Bristol. Thus the Lord, to show his continual care over us, raises up new helpers. They that trust in the Lord shall never be confounded! Some who helped for a while may fall asleep in Jesus; others may grow cold in the service of the Lord; others may be as desirous as ever to help, but have no longer the means; others may have both a willing heart to help, and have also the means, but may see it the Lord's will to lay them out in another way:—and thus, from one cause or another, were we to lean upon man, we should surely be confounded; but, in leaning upon the living God alone, we are BEYOND disappointment, and BEYOND being forsaken because of death, or want of means, or want of love, or because of the claims of other work. How precious to have learned in any measure to stand with God alone in the world, and yet to be happy, and to know that surely no good thing shall be withheld from us whilst we walk uprightly!*

*Müller, George. A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Müller. Vol. 1. London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1860. Print.*