

PRAYING FOR THE SINNER



1 John 5:14-16



The apostle John wrote his first letter to the church while in his nineties. The first coupe of generations of Christians had come and gone, and some strange ideas and heresies were affecting the church. John reminded Christians of the confidence we have in our salvation and in God' s transformative work in them.

At the end of his first letter, he

became very practical about sin (1 John 5:14-21). And He taught something very relevant to those who wish to know how to pray for the sinner.

Let's look on our first text for Today, 1 John 5:14-16

PRAYING FOR THE SINNER

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

1 John 5:14-16



PRAYING FOR THE SINNER

¹⁶ If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. ¹⁷ All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death.”

1 John 5:14-16



The First two verses of the last portion of 1st John give the instruction, and the last verse give us the context of such instruction. We are told to pray for those whose “ sin does not lead to death” (vss 16). Don’t all sins lead to death? Does not Romans 6:23 says that “ the wages of sin are death” ? Yes, and no.

Sins that are forgiven do not lead to

death. Earlier in the same letter, John said
(flip)

PRAYING FOR THE SINNER

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

1 John 1:9



(read text)

And Jesus said decades earlier, in Matthew 12:31, that “every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven,” and he added, “whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit ... will not be forgiven” (Matt 12:31).

Many Year ago I read one of Roger Mourneau books about prayer and I through enjoy it. (Flip)

PRAYING FOR THE SINNER

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

1 John 1:9



Morneau wrote three powerful books on God’s answers to his prayers. One of my favorite stories has to do with Henry. Henry was a thirty-two-year-old who, since age twenty, had apparently lost his mental faculties due to heavy drug use. The son of a faithful Adventist couple, he spent most days silently smoking and staring at a wall. Occasionally, he would violently strike his face, arms, or legs until he turned

black and blue. At other times, he would explode into a livid rage, yelling that no one should speak to him. Obviously, this behavior was due to demon oppression. He let his hair grow to the middle of his back and allowed no one to touch it. Most of the time, he couldn't recognize his parents, and his speech was unintelligible. Medical science was unable to help. The parents were at a complete loss about how to help him.

One day, Henry's mother read one of Morneau's books and managed to locate him and connect with him by phone. She described the desperate situation of her son and pleaded for Morneau to help them pray for him. Morneau encouraged her and repeated some wonderful

promises about God's ability to do the impossible. A few months later, Henry's speech became clearer, and he requested a haircut. A few months after that, he stopped smoking, and he did so overnight. His mind began to function better and better. However, the devil would not give up so easily.

One day, out of the blue, Henry became extremely violent and threatened to kill his father. His parents had to call the police and take their son to a mental institution. His mother was just heartbroken. She was devastated by what happened, especially after such good signs of improvement had taken place in Henry's life. She was ready to give up hope. What became clear to Morneau is

that the forces of darkness would not give up Henry without a mighty struggle. But only days later, Henry woke up in that mental institution completely lucid and healthy, and he couldn't remember anything about the past twelve years of his life! He loved his parents. He visited old friends. He was a new man.³ (Incredible Answers to Prayer, 38-41).

Jesus said, "Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven," and forgiveness brings healing (James 5:15, 16). God listened to the prayers of Brother Morneau and Henry's parents to forgive Henry's sins, even if he was unable to request it himself!
(flip)

PRAYING FOR THE SINNER

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

1 John 1:9



One thing that Morneau discovered, after many years of feeding on God’s Word (and the Spirit of Prophecy) while praying for others, was the role of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit (and we can learn too). Consistently, he prayed for others asking God to apply the merits of the shed blood of Christ for the forgiveness of their sins and for the power of the Holy Spirit to give people a new life.

Anything can be forgiven as long as it can be confessed (1 John 1:9). The problem is with this other sin against the Holy Spirit; that is, the persistent sin people engage in, which is not confessed and that the person does not want to give up. That sin, the sin against the Holy Spirit, will not be forgiven. Why? Because the person has turned deaf ears to the voice of the Spirit on that particular sin. God can no longer influence the person for good.

It is not God who is unwilling to continue working with the sinner; it is that the sinner has for so long ignored the counsel of God that he has become immune to the Holy Spirit.

(Story of me and the train in Mt Pleasant, which I got used with the sound)

PRAYING FOR THE SINNER

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

1 John 1:9



(Story of me and the train in Mt Pleasant, which I got used with the sound)

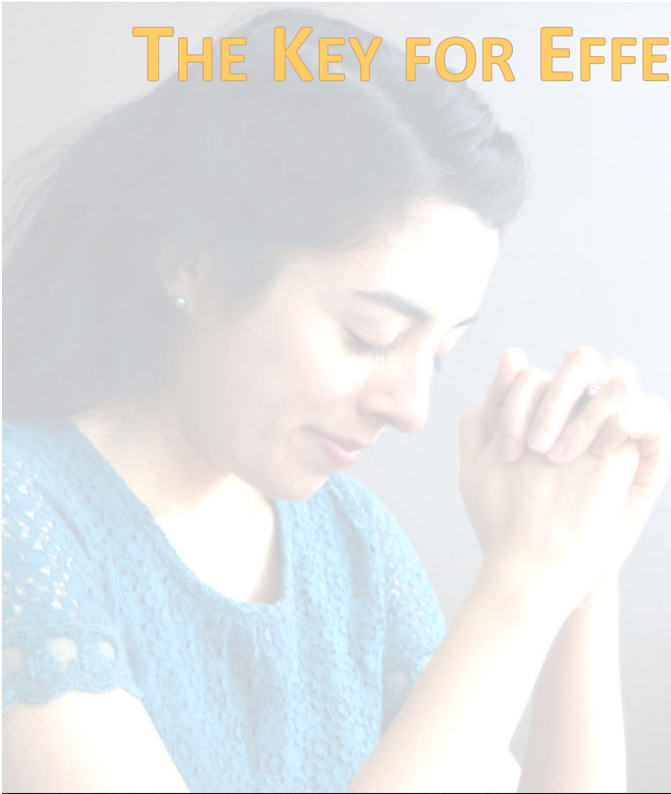
That is how the sin against the Holy Spirit works. If we are conscious of doing wrong but we continue to do it, ignoring the whisper of the Spirit to stop or to give it up to God, eventually it leads to sin against the Holy Spirit. The sin that leads to death—or the sin,

literally, that goes toward irreversible death—is the one we hold to, no matter how many times the Spirit convicted us we should abandon it.

And how we know whether a person we wish to pray for had already committed that sin against the Holy Spirit or not? We don't know. And that is the point: God wants us to pray for every sinner, regardless of their circumstances, since we cannot possibly know whether that person is beyond redemption.

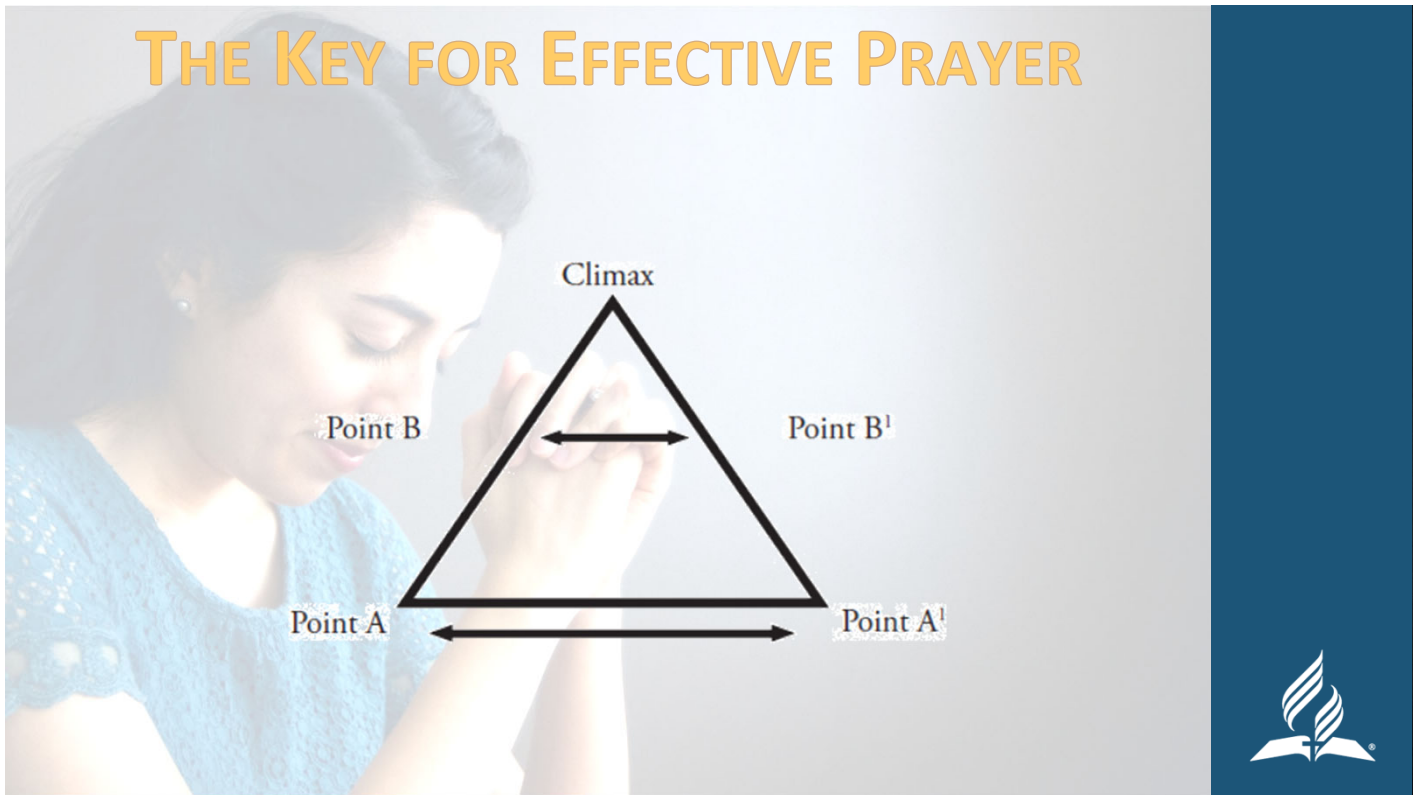
While there is life, there is hope.

THE KEY FOR EFFECTIVE PRAYER



That is the context of the promise of
Jon found in 1st John 5:14-15. Now
let's look to the rest of it.

THE KEY FOR EFFECTIVE PRAYER



What you seeing on the screen is what Bible scholars call a chiasm (explain it)

At the center of the chiasm, it is the climax, the most important point of the passage. Let's read 1st John 5:14-15 again:

THE KEY FOR EFFECTIVE PRAYER

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.”

1 John 5:14-15



Do you see the parallelism between the first statement in verse 14 and the last in verse 15?

THE KEY FOR EFFECTIVE PRAYER

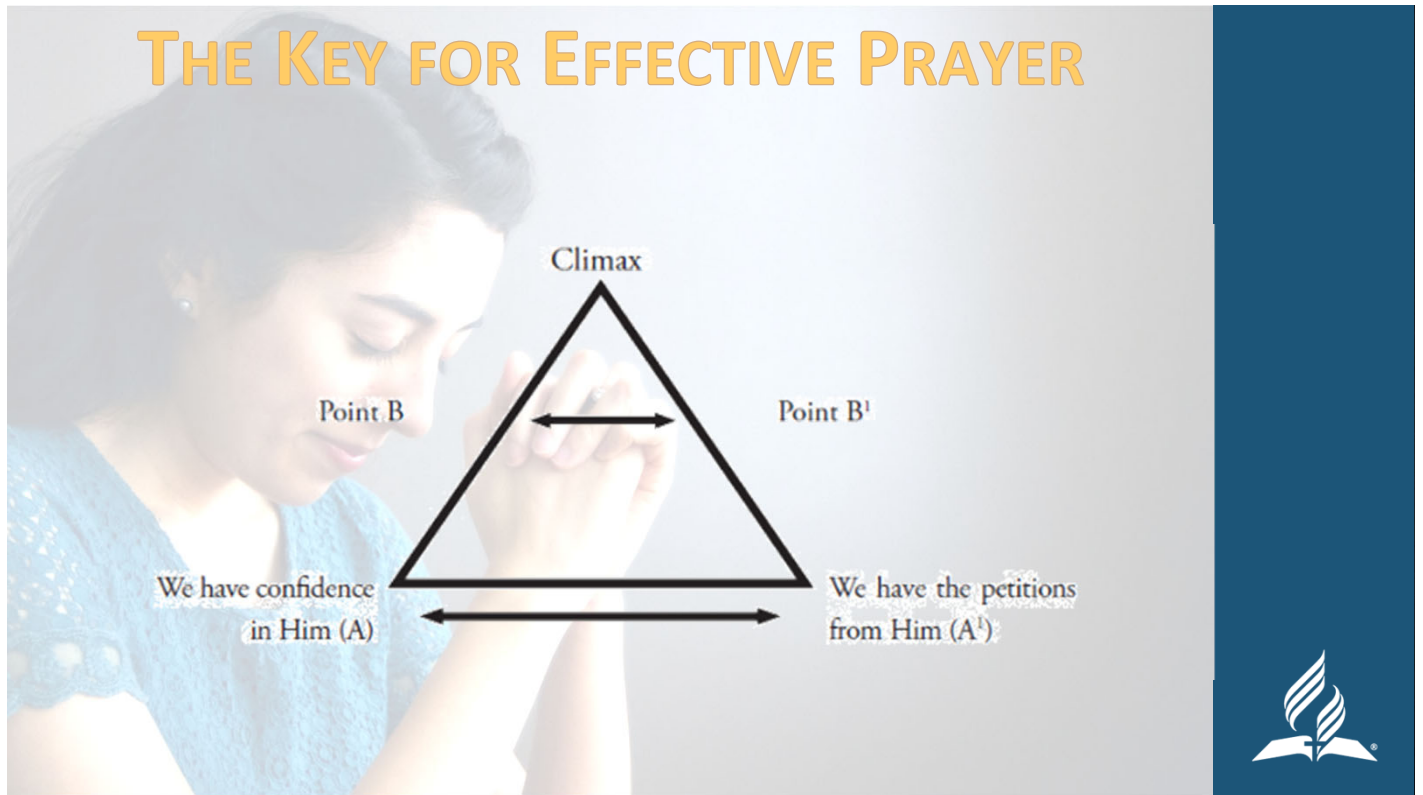
“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.”

1 John 5:14-15



So, the first statement is about having confidence in God and the last about knowing we have petitions we made of God. Both statements are about having something. It looks like this:

THE KEY FOR EFFECTIVE PRAYER



What you seeing on the screen is what Bible scholars call a chiasm (explain it)

At the center of the chiasm, it is the climax, the most important point of the passage. Let's read 1st John 5:14-15 again:

THE KEY FOR EFFECTIVE PRAYER

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.”

1 John 5:14-15



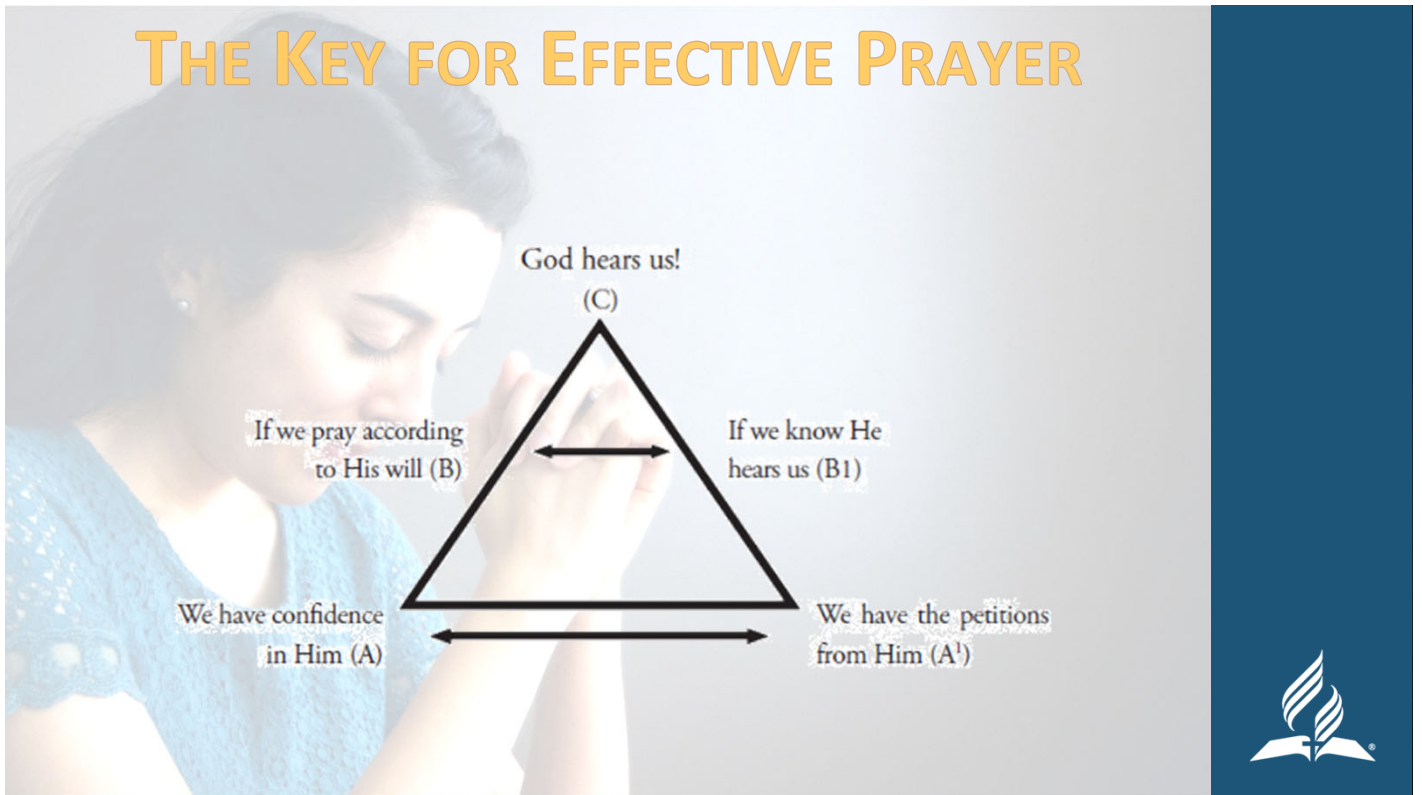
Now let's look to the next statement in verse 14 (if we ask anything according to His will) and the one before the last in verse 15 (if we know that He hears us).

As you can immediately see, both statements are conditionals, they start with a “if.” The whole promise depends on those two conditions: whether we pray according to God's

will (in the context of praying for the sinner) and whether we know that God hear our prayers. Those are two important components every effective prayer need to have: We both have to be praying in accordance to God's will and mission for us but we also Have to be praying knowing that he hears and answer prayer.

What is the final statement them, the heart of the promise? The central statement is "He hear us"

THE KEY FOR EFFECTIVE PRAYER



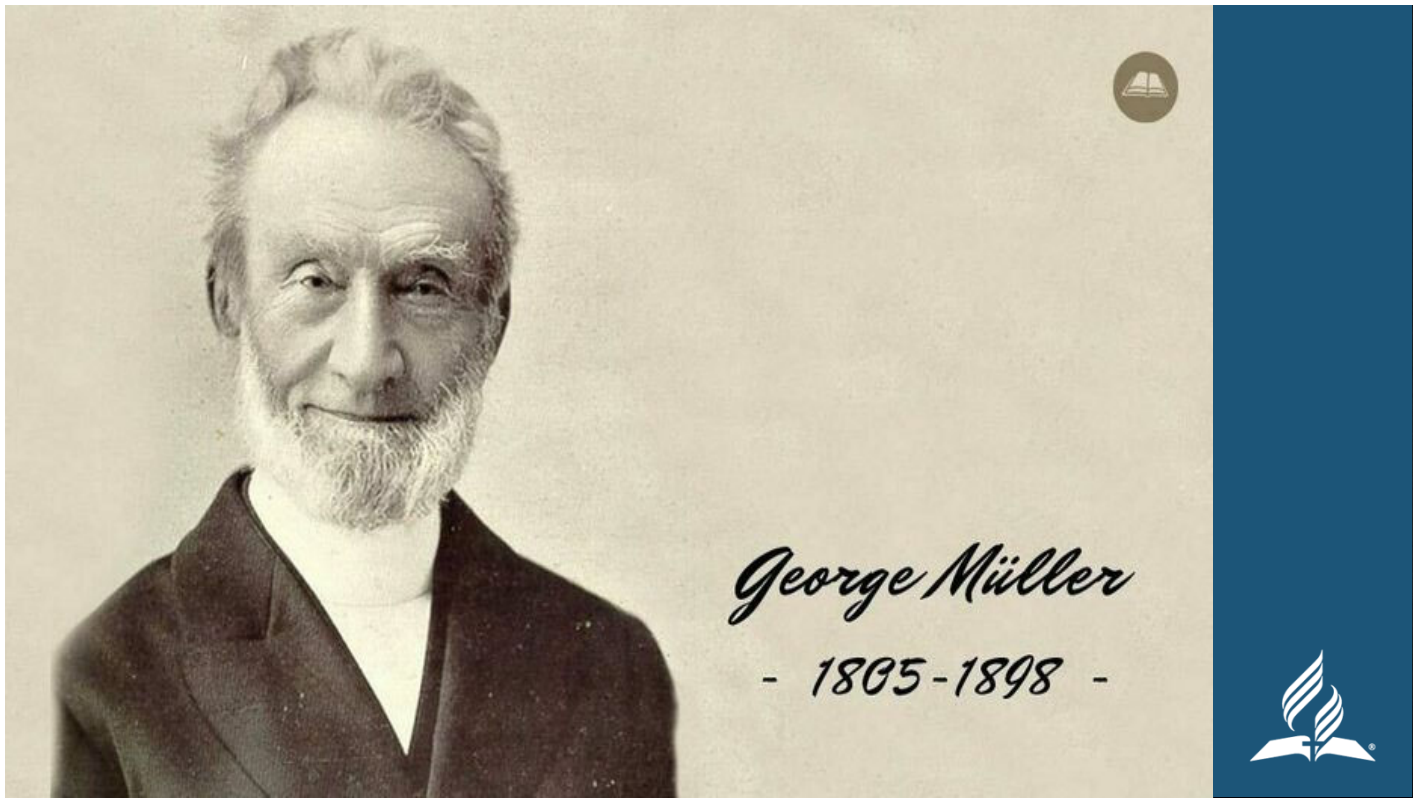
The apostle John is saying here that God's hearing us is the key of the success in praying for others.

In those two verses diagramed above we have the first and the last statement—that we have confidence in God and that we have the petitions we requested of Him—are so because the marvelous power and grace of God.

In other words, it is because what God does that we have confidence in Him and we have the petitions we requested.

The other two statements are up to us, the believer. Have we prayed according to His will? It is always His will, according 2nd Peter 3:9, that people come to repentance, right? Have we come to know for certain that he has heard our prayers?

When I came to understand the wonderful truth, I understood that knowing that God hear our prayer is as important as to praying in accordance with God's will, We need to have this certainty, and when we have this certainty we can stop asking and starting praising God for His answer, even if the answer have not materialized yet.



That brings to mind the story of this man. Have you read the story of George Müller? Müller was a thief and a liar. He carried on an immoral life and constantly drank with friends. But one day, at the age of twenty, at a house meeting with other Christians, he understood why Jesus died on the cross for him and “was constrained to love Him in return.” He went into ministry and pastored for a few years

before he decided to live completely by faith in God. He renounced his church salary and simply prayed for God to supply all his needs. Eventually, he began an orphanage in Bristol, England. Over seventy years of ministry, he helped care for ten thousand orphans, sponsored two hundred missionaries overseas, and paid hundreds of staff members without a sponsor or a foundation or any actual source of income. How did he raise today's equivalent of US\$150 million without ever asking anyone for money? He proved God was faithful. He trusted Him implicitly for every need. When he was thirty-nine, he began praying for five of his former partying friends to surrender to the love of Christ. He prayed every day for them. After eighteen months, the first one turned his life to Christ. He thanked God for this and continued to pray for the

other four. After an additional five years, the second one became a Christian. He thanked God, and he continued to pray daily for the other three. After six more years, the third one turned to God. He thanked God again and continued to pray for the last two friends. Decades went by, and those last two friends were not converted, even though Müller had prayed for them every day. Someone finally asked him about this. Did he still believe they would be converted? His response was, "I hope in God, I pray on, and look yet for the answer." Müller lived to be ninety-three. For fifty-four years, he had prayed daily for two of his friends. He was old now, and they were not converted. Yet, he was certain God had heard his prayers. Just before Müller died, the fourth one turned to God. And a few years later, the last one turned to God.

What a joyful reunion Müller will have with these last two men when Jesus comes and raises the righteous to life! God hears our prayers. And when God hears, He acts. Perhaps that's what the psalmist had in mind when he wrote:

THE KEY FOR EFFECTIVE PRAYER

“I love the LORD, because He has heard My voice and my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, Therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live.”

Psalm 116:1-2





Melody Manson tells the story of an Adventist church in Vietnam that decided to pray for perfect strangers... (chapter 7)

This story illustrate a very important point that we can't miss: Prayer works and prayer can no longer take secondary place in the missionary plans of the church. Prayer must be the strategy.

I read something in the book Testimonies for the Church, Vol 7, page 213—the text which is in your bulletin—where the author sums up well why prayer is so important, why prayer should be the strategy we use:

USING PRAYER TO WIN THE WAR

“We do not understand as we should the great conflict going on between invisible agencies, the controversy between loyal and disloyal angels. Over every man, good and evil angels strive. This is no make-believe conflict. It is not mimic battles in which we are engaged. We have to meet most powerful adversaries, and it rests with us to determine which shall win.



USING PRAYER TO WIN THE WAR

We are to find our strength where the early disciples found theirs.

“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.” “And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.” “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” Acts 1:14; 2:2,4.”

Testimonies for The Church, Vol. 7, p. 213



What did pastor Ham and his member do that is instructive for us in the light of the Biblical text we study so far?

USING PRAYER TO WIN THE WAR

1. Set God-sized Goals



First, they set God-sized goals. It is no small prayer to intercede for the population of a Pagan city.

USING PRAYER TO WIN THE WAR

1. Set God-sized Goals
2. Pray specific prayers



Second their prayer are specific. To begin with they prayed that people on the village would turn to the Lord, then Yen turned to Jesus. But when she got sick, they pray for healing not for her sake, but for the sake of the village, for the sake of God's mission and for the Glory of His name.

USING PRAYER TO WIN THE WAR

1. Set God-sized Goals
2. Pray specific prayers
3. Be persistent in prayers



They did not simply pray for a week, and when they saw no progress they give it up. They prayed non-stop and they kept praying until God answered.

USING PRAYER TO WIN THE WAR

1. Set God-sized Goals
2. Pray specific prayers
3. Be persistent in prayers
4. Pray based on the promises of Scripture



They claimed the Bible, God's word, as the source of their authority, in the name of Jesus, to have results.

USING PRAYER TO WIN THE WAR

1. Set God-sized Goals
2. Pray specific prayers
3. Be persistent in prayers
4. Pray based on the promises of Scripture
5. Pray with Faith and God



The continued to pray for Yen after clear evidence she would likely die. They sensed that God was answering their prayer and they refused to quit praying, even after her death, until they saw a favorable result that would give Glory to God and advance his mission.

They believe that Jesus could answer and that He would answer!