

YOUTH PRAYS-GOD ANSWERS!

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Name: _____

Date: _____

Lesson 07

SWEETHEARTS AGAIN

TOM AND Evelyn Black were in trouble—serious trouble, like many other ambitious young couples with the husband seeking an education our Evelyn was the bread winner, the silent partner, so to speak.

Her work was of such a nature that it kept her secluded. She did not make many friends because she just never met many students, When Tom and Evelyn walked together across the campus, or attended the college entertainments, friends would stop and speak to Tom and practically ignore Evelyn. This unfair situation was giving her an inferiority complex, and was also weakening her spiritual life.

Hugh and Lucy James were quite concerned about the situation; so much so that they and another couple met together to discuss what could be done about the unhappy relationship they observed developing between Tom and Evelyn. They concluded that what Evelyn needed was another job where she could meet more people, or perhaps take some class work so as to be exposed to the rest of the student body.

But coming up with some suggestions is one thing; implementing them, quite another. Frustrated as to how to implement their ideas, and realizing it was next to impossible, Hugh and Lucy decided to forget the whole matter.

I wonder—did they ask God for guidance? Did they bring this young couple before God in prayer? Or was this a case of “leaning unto” their “own understanding”, Proverbs 3:5?

Hugh and Lucy may have forgotten Tom and Evelyn’s problem, but God did not; for He says in Isaiah 49:15, 16, “yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.”

“He would have us understand how earnestly and tenderly His heart yearns over us in all our trials and temptations.” Gospel workers, p. 210.

God also says, “I will guide thee with mine eye”, Psalms 32:8. And He did truly guide Tom and Evelyn again straight to Hugh and Lucy's door.

They had heard of the James’ many fabulous experiences of answered prayer. Perhaps among these they might find a solution to their problem.

As Hugh and Lucy shared their experiences and conditions of answered prayer with Tom and Evelyn, they also explained the difference between presumption and faith. For one to claim Bible promises without fulfilling the conditions would be presumption. It would also be presumption for them to use the answer to prayer for selfish purposes, instead of God's cause. An inspired writer states: “Whatever

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we receive must be used in doing His will. The conditions met, the promise is unequivocal." Education p. 258.

After this discussion, the two couples fell on their knees before the open Bible as suggested in "Christ's Object Lessons", page 147. They claimed, through Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of God's promise as found in Philippians 4:19. They ASKED, Matthew 7:7. They BELIEVED, and told God they believed He would do just as He had promised, Mark 11:24.

"Say, 'I will believe, I do believe.'" Testimonies, Vol. 5, page 514. Then they did what "Steps to Christ" suggests: "Thank God that we have received," page 51 (Army-Navy edition).

A few weeks later Tom and Evelyn were seen strolling hand in hand across the wide college campus. "Just like sweethearts again," thought Lucy as she and Hugh were watching them.

"The Lord has surely answered our prayers, commented Hugh.

"I wonder if anything new has developed!" remarked Lucy. "Let's go ask them." Evelyn was first to answer. "The Lord doesn't want me to go downtown to work. He's given me a job in the library for the summer. He wants me to go to college, and I have already registered. Tom has a job too; one that can be fitted in around his classes when college begins this fall."

Then came the most thrilling news of all. Tom was to receive three dollars an hour at a time when seventy-five cents was the usual wage.

Thus had the Lord answered all their Prayers of faith so Evelyn could go to college. She made many friends with both students and teachers.

Evelyn and Tom were now supremely happy. As they walked about the campus, arm in arm, they reminded one of two angels walking on earth.

I think one of the most wonderful marital miracles was the one of which Paul Jones was a part. Truly God "worketh miracles among you." Galatians 3:5.

Handsome, keen-minded, and kind-hearted Paul had seemed to be one who would someday be an outstanding leader. With a devoted wife and four lovely children, he had every prospect of being a strong worker for the Lord.

Then the devil stepped in with an overwhelming temptation. And Paul Jones began to slip spiritually. His young friends became concerned. A group of them met together to claim promises and to pray for him.

"Dear Lord, we claim the promise of I John 5:16. And according to this promise, we ask You to give Paul Jones life, We believe You are giving backslider Paul life, and we return thanks that You have given Paul Jones life, In Jesus' name, Amen.

And was Paul Jones given life? Of course!

When God says, "I will", He always keeps His word. "There hath not failed one word of all his good promise," I Kings 8:56.

But it took time. Instead of Paul Jones turning his back and fleeing from evil, he became completely infatuated with the wife of a fellow church member.

Content to be with each other, Paul and Della were so blinded by the wiles of Satan that they left their families and went to another state. Paul actually appeared to be going from bad to worse, until some of his friends gave up all hope for him.

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Others decided they could no longer pray the prayer of reception in his case, their faith wavered as they looked at appearances and not at the promise of I John 5:16. Of them God said, "He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." James 1:6, 7.

Paul and Della entered another country for a quick divorce from their former mates. Living together as man and wife, they both declared to their saddened Christian friends that they never felt so near to God. The love they felt for each other, they said, was divine.

I do not know when I have witnessed a more apparently hopeless case. In spite of the hours I had previously taken to dissuade Paul from plunging in to this life of sin, this serious condition worsened so fast that some questioned me: "Why has this happened when we were claiming I John 5:16?"

My answer to them was, "Keep claiming the promise."

Although the case of Paul Jones appeared utterly hopeless, not all who knew him declared it to be so. His faithful friends, Mary and Lynn, continued to pray, "Lord, we return thanks that You have given Paul life according to the promise of I John 5:16."

With great faith in their heavenly Father they also opened their Bibles and claimed the promise in Genesis 3:15, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman." Then they did as we are told to do in Christ's Object Lessons, page 147: "With your Bible in your hands say," We "have done as Thou hast said. We present Thy promise."

At least three times a day Lynn claimed both promises, and occasionally he added Isaiah 42:16, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight, . . . and not forsake them."

Although most of Paul's friends considered him as "incurable", Lynn would not give up. How could he when he had already returned thanks to God that he had received the answer?

His faith and confidence had so grown by this time that he even went so far as to say, "I'll guarantee that Paul and Della will not stay together. The promise I'm claiming is Genesis 3:15. It has never failed. That's why I can guarantee that Paul and Della will not, can not, stay together! They may even marry, but they won't stay together!"

Do you think Lynn was presumptuous in making such bold statements? Before you answer in the affirmative, let me share with you the following from S. D. Gordon in his work "Quiet Talks on prayer":

"One of the questions that is more often asked in this connection than any other perhaps is this: may we pray with assurance for the conversion of our loved ones? No question sets more hearts in an audience to beating faster than does that. I remember speaking in the Boston noonday meeting, in the old Broomfield Street M. E. Church, on this subject one week. Perhaps I was speaking rather positively. And at the close of the meeting one day a keen, cultured Christian woman whom I knew came up for a word. She said, 'I do not think we can pray like that.' And I said, 'Why not?' She paused a moment, and her well-controlled agitation revealed in eye and lip told me how deeply her thoughts were stirred. Then she said quietly, 'I have a brother. He is not a Christian. The theatre, the wine, the club, the cards--that is his life. And he laughs at me. I would rather than anything else that my brother were a Christian. But,' she said, and here both her keenness and the training of her early teaching came in, 'I do not think I can pray positively for his conversion, for he is a free agent, is he not? And God will not save a man against his will.'

"I want to say to you to-day what I said to her. Man is a free agent, to use the old phrase, so far as God is concerned; utterly, wholly free. And, he is the most enslaved agent on the earth, so far as sin, and

selfishness and prejudice are concerned. The purpose of our praying is not to force his will; never that. It is to free his will of the warping influences that now twist it awry. It is to get the dust out of his eyes so his sight shall be clear. And once he is free, able to see aright, to balance things without prejudice, the whole probability is in favour of his using his will to choose the only right.

"I want to suggest to you the ideal prayer for such a one. It is an adaptation of Jesus' own words. It may be pleaded with much variety of detail. It is this: deliver him from the evil one; and work in him Thy will for him, by Thy power to Thy glory in Jesus, the Victor's name. And there are three special passages upon which to base this prayer. First Timothy, second chapter, fourth verse (American version), 'God our Saviour, who would have all men to be saved.' That is God's will for your loved one. Second Peter, third chapter, ninth verse, 'not wishing (or willing) that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.' That is God's will, or desire, for the one you are thinking of now. The third passage is on our side who do the praying. It tells who may offer this prayer with assurance, John, fifteenth chapter, seventh verse, 'If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you ask what it is Your will to ask, and I will bring it to pass for you.'" (pp. 191-193.

To go on with our story of Della and Paul. About six weeks later a penitent Della made a long-distance telephone call to her husband Jack. But when she asked, "Honey, will you take me back?" Jack, quite cool and collected, answered, "Well, I'll think it over and let you know."

"Another problem?" thought Lynn when Jack told him the next morning. The Lord has surely answered our prayers, but if Jack won't accept it as such, what have we gained?"

Realizing that the Lord had placed upon him the responsibility of bringing hope to Jack. Lynn determined to learn and follow the seven laws of soul winning. These laws also apply to counseling.

He read "Christ's Object Lessons", page 149; "Personal effort for others should be preceded by much secret prayer, for it requires great wisdom to understand the science of saving souls."

Still claiming the promises in 1 John 5:16, Genesis 3:15, and Isaiah 42:16, Lynn now turned to James 1:5 and accepted the wisdom that was there for him.

He knew he had to be extremely careful, because Jack had already stated, "I don't think I'll take her back."

In the meantime Paul Jones, deeply repentant, wrote to his friend Hugh, who had also been faithful in claiming the promise in I John 5:16. In a sad lengthy letter he admitted his great wrong. He also said, "I am writing my wife Ardyth to ask her to take me back."

Lynn continued to visit Jack, trying to inspire him, with God's help to change his mind and call Della and tell her to come home.

The next three weeks seemed a long time to Lynn while the Holy Spirit was working on the hearts of Jack and Ardyth. They each had a serious decision to make. The future of the children in both families had to be considered, as well as other major problems.

Then, one evening, Jack reached for the telephone. His decision had been made. And a few days later one family was reunited.

Shortly afterward, Paul Jones, a wiser and more humble man, returned to the arms of his wife and children.

When the suggestion is made to me that we cannot with assurance pray for a backslider because he has the power of choice, I reply; "I have never yet seen a backslider who chose to be lost. I have met some crimson sinners like Paul. I have observed many whose attitudes gave one the impression that they

loved sin. But when it comes to choosing to be lost, not even Paul Jones had made such a decision. Paul was a captive, but God sent angels to the battle-ground of his heart and the evil angels were cast out. Then Paul Jones chose, not merely life, but a life of righteousness.

Because "God stands back of every promise He has made," Christ's Object Lessons, p. 147, and because faithful friends held on to the arm of omnipotence, two homes have been salvaged and rebuilt. And what is the testimony of those reunited? "By the grace of God, and with His help, our misunderstandings and problems are being ironed out. We have never been happier in our lives!"

Quiz 07

1. When Hugh and Lucy were frustrated as how to help Tom and Evelyn, why did they decide to forget the whole matter? _____
_____.
2. Name two differences between presumption and faith.
 - a.
 - b.
3. True or false: After the prayer of reception had been prayed for Paul Jones, the answer was seen immediately. _____.
4. Complete: Their faith wavered as they looked at _____ and not at _____
_____.
5. Complete: The serious condition worsened so fast that some questioned, "Why has this happened when we were claiming 1 John 5:16?" The answer to them was, " _____
_____ "
6. At least _____ times a day, Lynn claimed _____ promises.
7. Concerning Genesis 3:15; It has _____ .
8. The purpose of our praying is not to _____ a person's will, but it is to _____ his will.
9. Complete: "Personal effort for others should be preceded by much _____ ; for it requires _____ to understand the science of saving souls."
10. Complete: "I have never yet seen a backslider who _____ to be _____."