

Some Answers to Prayer

Crede, ut intelligas (“Believe, so that you may understand,” St. Augustine (Bishop of Hippo in modern Algeria), *Tractate on the Gospel of John*, 29.6)

My undergrad degree was in philosophy and religion from Presbyterian College in Clinton, SC, a school whose faculty in the Department of Religion bounced somewhere around Paul Tillich back then, though there was a professor nearing retirement who leaned toward Karl Barth. Anyhow, one of the courses that I found of particular interest was the Philosophy of Science because it left me with a sense of skepticism about any attempt to establish a firm philosophical system by reason, even the existence of God or even so-called facts.

However, I eventually concluded that in the final analysis, people believe what they want to believe. It is a matter of the human will, not the intellect, nor even the emotions. Somewhere along the way, I chose to change my mind about how the universe works, and I began actually to pray with expectation that God would intervene in my circumstances.

Over these years, I have seen God physically heal people, sometimes literally in seconds: on April 21, 1982, after our mid-week service, a woman who had been diagnosed with degenerated disks and was awaiting surgery as the only solution, was instantly healed as a group of elders laid hands on her. As far as I know, she is still healthy and free from pain today.

Another time, God healed a woman of chronic, debilitating neck pain that she had in spite of several unsuccessful surgeries. A member of our congregation brought her for prayer. As one of our elders and I prayed for her, I was impressed that God wanted to say something to her—I had never seen her before—and I spoke: “I do not know whether or not God is going to heal your neck. But you have great bitterness in your heart. In a moment the power of the Holy Spirit is going to come in this room, and God is going to give you the ability to forgive the person who has hurt you so deeply.” As soon as the words came out of my mouth, the woman began to weep so convulsively that tears and mucous ran down her face and dripped on the floor. When she stopped crying, she looked up and said, “My neck doesn’t hurt!” She was healed—literally, actually, permanently. She also forgave her mother. What I did not know when I spoke those words to her was that her mother had forced her into a terrible, traumatic situation that had left her wounded for years. But now she was released in a moment of time in front of her friend and one of our elders. This woman, too, is still healthy today.

People have been diagnosed with cancer and gone back for more tests only to discover that there was no tumor. Of course, I still perform funerals and visit people in the hospital—I don't have all the answers as to why one person is healed supernaturally and another is not other than that God always deals kindly with his own.

However, I have seen the effects of God causing people to conceive after all human efforts had been exhausted: on one occasion, exactly nine months after our elders anointed the couple with oil. Most did not give birth nine months later; sometimes it was a year later. But we have had almost a dozen such pregnancies in our congregation over the decades.

Before I kept a journal, I prayed for the money to fix my transmission and the next morning, I found \$900 in an envelope pushed under my door. Several years later, a young, Southern Baptist man told me that God told him to give that amount to the pastor of the Presbyterian congregation on Jackson Street in Alexandria, anonymously. After I began keeping a journal, I recorded the following:

- On September 14, 1996, I wrote check #817 for \$250.00 to ____, compensating him for _____ bumping his car in the Louisiana College parking lot.
- On September 15, 1996, I wrote check #819 for \$110.00 to Grace Presbyterian Church, crying out that God would bless me as he had Isaac with a hundred-fold return (Genesis 26:12; Mark 10:30).
- On November 16, 1996, I received the Hundred Fold Increase Gift: \$110.00 to \$11,000.00, by means of 200 shares of Wachovia Bank Stock that closed @ \$55.00 per share that weekend.

God has always provided for us in amazing ways. These are some to the things that my children witnessed personally, sometimes individually.

- On March 26, 1999, I received an envelope in the mail containing \$15,000.00; I had been asking the Lord for \$22,000.00 since January.
- In August 1999, as I continued to pray for the money that I needed, knowing that the deadline for dealing with _____'s car was coming at the end of September, I began to beg God for \$25,000.00 more.
- On October 11, 1999, I learned of over \$990.00 in traffic fines on _____'s car in the city of _____. This was in addition to the state fines. I intensified my prayer for the \$25,000.00 and solicited the prayers of _____ and _____ for the solution to the problem of _____'s car (never mentioning that cash was needed).

- On October 12, 1999, our children all joined us to be with Sandy's parents. I pulled out \$1,000.00 from our Y2K reserve cash and fixed part of the problem and committed to paying off _____.
- That same day, October 12, 1999, I receive a gift of \$25,000.00 from _____.
- The next day, October 13, 1999, in view of the outstanding traffic fines in _____, I informed _____ that he could not drive the car back, even though I had paid it off that morning with a wire transfer to _____ for \$5,806.97. After the Oasis Board meeting at Stalnaker's Restaurant, I again apologized for having to keep the car, and he told me, "It's okay, Dad, I've given it to the Lord."
- The next day, October 14, 1999, _____'s grandfather, Andy Price, bought a new car and gave _____ his 1992 Ford Crown Victoria. He returned to _____ in his own car.
- On September 8, 2014, Sandy prayed for wisdom, and God impressed her to ask for \$10,000; later that day I was given an envelope with nothing on it except, "Please give to Bob and Sandy." It contained 100 one hundred dollar bills.

This is not financial, but it really drove home the truth to my child that God can do anything we ask according to his will.

- On May 24, 2000, _____'s life was spared as he and his friend _____ rescued three Mexican women from drowning in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Mazatlan. He had telephoned me from the beach, begging me to pray for one of the women because it appeared that she had died. Several hours later, he called back to tell me that she had revived. Had God raised her from the dead, or had she simply been unconscious and revived? Either way, God acted in a wonderful way.

Bob Vincent