

YOUTH PRAYS-GOD ANSWERS!

Glen A. Coon

Name: _____

Date: _____

Lesson 06

AGNOSTICS AND DRUNKARDS TOO!

"LETTER for you, Dick, the mail carrier announced as he passed the open door.

"Great! Thanks a lot." Dick closed his book and reached for the envelope. He looked at the return address, and what he saw sent a twinge of anxiety through him. It was from his friend Charles, a young man who had spent his Easter vacation with him at La Sierra College.

Charles was an agnostic, and Dick had wondered on more than one occasion since that visit just how some of his answers had gone over with Charles. "But," he thought to him-self, how do you answer a fellow who asks questions like: 'Why do you want to be a minister?' 'What can you give the world that a humanist can't?'

Dick remembered that he had told Charles of some personal answers to prayer in trying to answer these questions. He had told him of Dynamic Bible Living classes he had attended, and of some of the marvelous answers to prayer many of the students had experienced. For a solid hour-and-a-half they had bantered back and forth. He wondered if he had spoken too pointedly, or perhaps been too abrupt.

With growing concern he opened the letter and began to read:

"Dear Dick:

"I have a strange feeling that I must write to you tonight. So here goes! It's about my visit with you over Easter.

"It was really a pleasure to talk with you, and the first time I've discussed religion in a long time. Since then I have thought about our conversation often.

"But what I really want to say is that I admire you. Your dedication to your convictions is something I have rarely seen in any young person.

"Although I don't agree with your beliefs, stick by them. I'm sick of all the superficiality in young people like you.

"In his book, 'You Can't Go Home Again', Thomas Wolf wrote, 'We in America are lost, but I believe we shall be found,' or something like that. Dick, I believe (and this has come to me recently) that there must be a God. This is something I really wasn't sure of at one time. But I want to find Him. I'm not sure how to do it.

"I detest salvation by works, and despise fear as a motive for serving, or trying to serve, God."

As Dick finished reading the letter, he sensed a feeling of hope. He sensed also that Charles was searching for spiritual help, and felt that with God's help he might be used to help Charles. He resolved to keep in closer touch with his friend.

He reviewed again the visit he and friend Charles had had. He rehearsed in his mind the conversations and tried to think of anything that might have been left unsaid. He had merely witnessed to the experience he had had since he had learned the prayer of reception. He remembered the statement made in "Christ's Object Lessons", pp. 299,300:

"Far more than we do, we need to speak of the precious chapters in our experience. . . . No more effective means can be employed for winning souls to Christ."

He had done his best. Now God was doing the rest. Each day he remembered Charles in prayer, confident that the Holy Spirit would continue to have His way in his heart.

Dick had another soul-winning problem now, that was absorbing much of his time. He was worried about his buddy, Don. For years they had been very close to each other, but lately Don was "goofing" around, and not realizing how it was affecting him or where it was leading him. "I wish I knew how I could help him," Dick thought as he lay on his bed.

Dick and Don had been buddies through high school. They both played the trombone and had spent many pleasant hours playing and practicing together. Often they would get together just to "fool" together on their horns.

During the summer they often camped out and hiked up the mountain trails. They skied together too and played ball--just everything two young fellows enjoy doing.

Don lived with an uncle and aunt who had loved him as their own. He attended Sabbath school and church regularly, and was quite a likeable, straightforward young fellow. It was always nice to have him around. They had come to La Sierra College together and had both applied themselves diligently to their studies. But as the year progressed, Dick began to sense a change in Don. It soon became apparent that worldly influences were gradually and steadily creeping in and crowding out the high standards that had been a part of Don's character.

This troubled Dick and finally he could stand it no longer and took the problem to the Lord in prayer. He asked God to impress Don with the direction in which he was going and effect a change of Don's heart.

As it often happens, some things seem to get worse before they begin to get better. This proved true in Don's case. Before the year was over he was no longer a student, had been fired from his first job, and was planning to join the Air Force. Apparently very hopeless and forsaken, he felt he had nothing to lose.

In the meantime Dick had joined a Dynamic Living Prayer class conducted on the college campus. The wonderful answers to prayer that were related by other college students gave him courage to pray the prayer of reception for his wayward friend.

Although Don went ahead with his plans and took a four-year-hitch with the Air Force. Dick was not discouraged. He was claiming the Bible promise found in I John 5:16, that God would give Don life. And "according to" his "faith" (Matthew 9:29) his prayer was to be answered, but not in the immediate future.

Another school year was well under way, and most of the students were away for the New Year vacation, when Don showed up on the college campus. During his first month's leave from the Air Force he had decided to look up his old buddy and pay him a visit. Dick was delighted to see him. As they

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talked, Dick darted a silent prayer to heaven. "Dear Lord, if I'm to help Don, and if it be Thy will, please let him stay with me tonight."

As if Dick had spoken aloud, Don said, "I'm going to spend the night with my uncle and aunt, but I'll see you again. It's so good to be back home." And with that he was gone.

Dick returned to his room and again claimed the promise of I John 5:16. He also prayed, thank You, Lord, for showing me how to approach Don about his need of Thee. Thank You for giving me the wisdom You have promised in James 1:5."

He had hardly finished his prayer when a light tap on the door was heard. Dick opened the door and there stood Don. His first question was, "May I stay the night with you?"

"You surely may, Don. Come on in!" As the two of them again began to reminisce about old times, Dick thought, God is certainly answering my prayer."

When it was convenient Dick said, "Don, I'd like to tell you about a recent experience I've had that's really dynamic. It has made Christianity come to life for me. Would you like to hear it?"

Of course," Don replied, still interested in his pal's plans.

"You know," Dick said, "I used to think that Christianity was sort of a 'mamby-pamby' thing: but I've had a change of heart about it all. I've found something that's really great!"

Then he went on to relate some of the thrilling experiences he and others had had in answer to the prayer of reception.

Don was visibly impressed. "You may not believe me, by the way I've acted lately," he said, "but I've always been interested in religion. But like Felix in the Bible, I just never found the 'convenient season' to actually yield to it."

Then Don shared some of his problems and struggles and how all of these frustrated him. "Really, I'm quite discouraged. I'd like to know how to be a real Christian, Dick, but I am so sinful. I don't think there is much hope for me anymore. How can God forgive a sinner like me?"

Without saying a word in reply, Dick reached for his copy of 'Steps to Christ' and shared a couple passages with Don:

"You long to be forgiven, to be cleansed, to be set free. Harmony with God, likeness to Him--what can you do to obtain it?"

"It is peace that you need--Heaven's forgiveness and peace and love in the soul. Money cannot buy it, intellect cannot procure it, wisdom cannot attain to it; you can never hope, by your own efforts, to secure it. But God offers it to you as a gift, "without money and without price." Isaiah 55:1. It is yours if you will but reach out your hand and grasp it." SC 49

Then Dick read from the chapter entitled 'The Privilege of Prayer', 'Steps to Christ' pg. 95, dealing with conditions to answered prayer.

Then from the book, 'Education' page 258, he read: "For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; then we are to believe that we receive, and return thanks to God that we have received."

Dick turned to Don and asked, "Wouldn't you like to claim this promise for forgiveness, right now? I'll help you."

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Don agreed, and so the two of them knelt together with the Bible opened to 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

At first Don found it hard to ask for forgiveness and cleansing. But when he let the Holy Spirit take charge, he was thrilled. And the words, "I thank You for forgiving me", came from a sincere heart.

As they arose from their knees, both young men had a deeper appreciation of the Bible and for the wonderful love of a wonderful savior.

"I'm so glad I came to visit you Dick. I know my life is going to be different as a result of it," Don said gratefully.

"You're not half as glad as I am, Don. Let's determine now, that if we don't meet again on this earth, we will meet each other in heaven, OK?"

"It's a deal, Dick," And the two of them shook hands, both beaming with Christian happiness.

Then there was Alicia, another youthful soul-winner and a member of the prayer-class. Her enthusiasm and smiling face greatly encouraged the other members of the prayer class as she related her experience in the Lord. A definite answer to prayer for her sister was just realized, and Alicia was bubbling over with enthusiasm. She wanted to share her experience.

Alicia had been concerned over her sister June's lack of interest in the church. She virtually never attended. And lately she had expressed much doubt in regard to the validity of the Bible, and its account of the miracles.

"It's ridiculous," she told Alicia, "for anyone to believe that a sea could open up and make a path for people to walk through. It's just a fairy tale. You'll never get me to believe all that stuff in the Bible."

At the first meeting of the prayer class, Alicia learned how to claim a promise for a backslidden church member. She was so impressed with all she heard that she decided to pray for this sister, claiming the promise given in I John 5:16, "He shall ask, and He (God) shall give him life."

One week went by; then two. Twice a day and every night Alicia prayed for June. She loved her sister and wanted so much to see her enjoying a good Christian experience.

Three weeks passed with no apparent sign that God was hearing her prayers. But Alicia never wavered or became discouraged. She had been taught that while God does not force the will, it is part of His wonderful gospel to free the will. This truth is taught throughout the entire Bible.

When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, Satan used a kind of hypnotic power over them. To give them hope, God promised to "put enmity" between Satan and the human race, Gen. 3:15. This is one of the functions of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He promises, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed", John 8:36. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Hebrews 2:14-15.

Jesus was sent "to preach deliverance to the captives; to set at liberty them that are bruised." Luke 4: 18. Therefore, Alicia prayed a prayer of faith. She prayed in Jesus name and by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, supplicating the throne of grace for a backslider, can it be that God will not answer the prayer He Himself has inspired us to offer? Is not the reason Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint praying, because he knows that heavenly angels who excel in strength will drive him off the real

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battlefield of the will of man and leave him free to choose to serve God? She had learned at one of the meetings of the prayer class, general conditions to answered prayer, and one of these was perseverance.

During the fourth week of claiming the promise, Alicia was much encouraged. One night, as she was talking to her father, he said, "You can't imagine how much June has changed! Why that sister of yours is even planning to go back to church!"

Alicia was elated! On Wednesday June came over to see Alicia. "Sis," she said, "when are you going to make another one of my favorite nut roasts? Why don't you make one for this Sabbath? We can go to church and have dinner together afterwards. O. K.?"

"And sure enough," Alicia said as she finished telling her thrilling experience to the class, "she was with me in church last Sabbath! This is a definite answer to my prayer."

We must also share with you the experience of Lila, another soul-winner. Before her experience in Jesus she had been a slave to many evil habits. "I was so ashamed, she wrote, "I could not look my people or my friends in the face. Just think of it! I had been using snuff and coffee since I was five. And for years I had been a drunkard, spending all my earnings for these vices and letting my Lord go.

"I fought myself, trying to stop my degrading habits, but it was useless. Several times I felt like giving up completely. I felt lost without God and without a friend in the world. Then, God sent you and your wife to see me at just the right time. Now God has given me complete victory over everything. How I prayed for a hatred of my sins! and I received it. I have no more desire to use tobacco or drink any kind of alcohol since we prayed the prayer of reception the night you came.

"I am overjoyed with this new way of life. It's wonderful to know for myself that God will answer prayer so quickly! I give my Lord all the credit for the victory! More than this, I'm going to share this wonderful experience and this new prayer life with every one, wherever I go.

"May God continue to use you to share with many others this powerful approach to God.

"Sincerely Lila"

Lila became one of the most successful soul-winners we ever met. Many of her dear friends have testified that Lila is truly a victorious Christian. She continues to be victorious because she is constantly sharing her experience and thanking God for what He has done for her.

From a hopeless drunkard, to a gloriously happy Christian! What hath God wrought! The amazing thing is, that He is waiting to do the same for you! Can you believe that? Let your faith go, and try it!

Quiz 06

1. Complete: "No more effective means can be employed for winning souls to Christ," than to _____
_____."
2. True or false: In the prayer of reception, we always receive the blessing we ask for. _____.
3. True or false: The answer to a prayer of reception is always seen immediately. _____.
4. If a situation apparently gets no better, or even worsens after we pray a prayer of reception, we should take what attitude? _____
_____.
5. What did Dick do here to help Don find forgiveness through Christ? How could you parallel it to help someone you know find forgiveness and cleansing through Christ? _____

_____.

Note: Before Dick ever tried to help Don at all, he claimed several promises for help. One was for wisdom. (James 1:5.) We should never try to witness to others without first claiming a promise for God to help us.

6. Complete: "While God does not force the will, it is part of His wonderful gospel to _____ the will."
7. Complete: "And deliver them who ... were all their lifetime subject to _____." (Hebrews 2: 14, 15.)
8. Complete: "Is not the reason Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint praying, because he knows that 'heavenly angels who excel in strength' will _____ the real battlefield of the _____ of man and _____ him to _____ to serve God?"