

YOUTH PRAYS-GOD ANSWERS!

Glen A. Coon

Name: _____

Date: _____

Lesson 10

YOUTH LEADS THE WAY

JOHN ASH and his daughter, Helen, were having problems. At first they were small differences; then they grew larger. Communication deteriorated until there was open hostility. Finally, Helen could not stand it any longer and moved to an apartment a few blocks away.

Helen and her parents attended the same church and consequently met at Sabbath School and the worship service, M. V. services and the like. But the estrangement continued. John Ash was a painting contractor. His business was going from bad to worse and his wife was becoming increasingly worried over their financial embarrassment. Bills were not being paid, and she knew this could not go on for long.

About this time John heard about the prayer classes being conducted in a nearby town. On several occasions he heard about people who had had unusual answers to prayer as the result of the class. His curiosity was aroused to the place that he made the one hundred-mile round trip to investigate for himself, in the hope that it might be the answer to his problem.

As John sat and listened to thrilling testimonies of answered prayer, he became aware of one fact: "To every promise there are conditions." (Education, page 258). But it was very clearly emphasized that, "The conditions met, the promise is unequivocal!" (Ibid,)

John Ash was not unlike many others who attended the classes on prayer. That is, he was unhappy with himself, because, although he was happy that he was learning how to pray, it meant that he was going to have to meet the conditions if he expected to get an answer. One of the conditions presented was found in Matthew 5:23-25 that says if there is trouble or a misunderstanding with someone, it is our duty to go and make it right and then come and make our request.

John kept coming to the class each week. He was always thrilled to hear the youth and older people tell of answered prayers. As yet he had not felt he could conscientiously make the request of God he knew he had to because the conditions had not been met. It was a frustrating situation.

During this time, his business continued to deteriorate. It looked as if he was going to have to declare bankruptcy. If he did, it would mean losing much of his furniture he had recently purchased on the time-payment-plan. In his desperation he was ready to blame the class for some of his plight.

He felt that perhaps the instruction was misleading. John was grasping for some excuse, something to blame for his situation. He realized that none of his prayers were being answered. Every day he could see himself sinking deeper and deeper into debt.

As John thought about his problems, the Holy Spirit impressed him with the stark truth that he had not obeyed the simple command to make wrongs right before expecting God to answer his prayers.

Youth Prays . . . God Answers

It was time for some action. John decided to write to several people with whom he had had problems and quarrels which had left bitter feelings. He decided he would apologize for his part of the problem and ask for forgiveness.

After starting to write, John realized that it would take days for the letters to reach their destination and for a reply to return. In a moment John knew what he would do—he would 'phone them.

Before he made the first call, John fell on his knees and surrendered his heart to the Lord as best he knew now. Then he called the three people involved in the problem. To each he apologized and received their forgiveness. John began feeling the thrill of forgiveness. It was great! But just as he was enjoying the exhilaration of forgiveness, he remembered there was one more call he must make—he and Helen were still not speaking to each other.

He decided he would take care of that problem a little later in the week. There were other problems that demanded his immediate attention.

John had been troubled for some time about being a card-carrying Union member. Since he was making things right, he thought he ought to clear the slate. With that, he picked up the telephone and notified the Union that he was pulling out of the organization. Several other minor matters were adjusted, and John realized that very little remained left to do before he had met the conditions to answered prayer.

Now that he was no longer a Union member, he could not rely on them for work leads. So he went to the printer and had a "flyer" printed up, that advertized the fact that he was an experienced painter and was anxious to do good work at a fair price. The printing was promised for Friday afternoon, which meant that he could distribute the leaflets early Sunday morning. Things were beginning to look good again. John's faith was growing, in spite of the fact that there was no work in sight.

That Friday night he found himself sitting next to his daughter, Helen. He thought several times that he would make things right and ask her forgiveness for the way he had treated her. But each time he attempted to speak, he could not find the words. The program was about over and he still had not found the courage to settle the matter with his daughter.

After the program Helen was engaged in conversation with some of her friends. And before he knew it, she was gone.

John returned home with a heavy heart. He could not understand why it was he had not just taken the situation in hand and spoken to his daughter. It was going to be such a simple thing. Now it loomed before him as the one thing that prevented him from claiming the promises of the Bible. As he lay in bed, tossing and turning, not being able to go to sleep, it became an ever-increasing problem. It was growing bigger by the minute.

Suddenly, in the stillness of the night, he heard a rap on the front door. He wondered who could be calling at that hour of the night. He stumbled to the door and unlocked it. There, before his eyes, stood his daughter.

"Oh, Helen," he said, "Come on in. I was just thinking about you."

Helen had barely crossed the threshold when she burst into tears and said, "Daddy, I couldn't stand it any longer. I've come to apologize to you for my bitter feelings I've held toward you for so long."

What a sight that was! Sitting there on the sofa, Helen and Daddy embraced, each forgiving the other and both so thankful for the effecting reconciliation. It was a wonderful experience that brought peace to both hearts.

Youth Prays . . . God Answers

Sabbath was a joyous day! How good it felt to be at peace with the world, thought John. The sun shone brighter, the birds sang sweeter, and everyone was so much friendlier it seemed as they enjoyed the day together.

Early Sunday morning John and his son distributed the leaflets that told of his desire for work. All day they worked passing out the news.

That night John prayed the prayer of reception and felt the assurance that God had heard his prayer. He went to sleep in complete confidence that the morrow would bring an answer—and work.

He did not have long to wait. The telephone rang early that morning, inviting him to come to work. By noon he was hard at work.

Just after he left for work, one of the finance companies called to say that they must have their money by that evening or they would have to come and pick up the refrigerator. Mrs. Ash did not want to, but finally decided she must take the word to her husband.

John had done sufficient work by that time to make it possible for him to ask the man for whom he was painting, for an advance on the job. This request the employer gladly granted. Mrs. Ash went to the finance company and was able to make the payment just minutes before the office closed. It was split-second timing, but God had answered their prayer in time.

By Wednesday of that week, John had received contracts to the tune of five thousand dollars, and was a very happy man!

A few days later, after prayer meeting, he related his experience to Hugh James; and then asked the question: "Why do you suppose God let me get so low before He answered me?"

Hugh James answered the question, after a moment's silence, with: "Do you suppose it is because we are stubborn, sometimes?"

John did not reply to this question, for he knew all too well how long it had taken him to make things right. He knew he had been very stubborn about his situation.

I wonder how much longer it would have been had not Helen responded to conviction and taken the first step toward reconciliation.

Once again, Youth Leads the Way! Thank God for dedicated youth!

The prayer class was a blessing to Ivan Rash too. He had become very discouraged. In fact his faith was at its lowest ebb--so low that he had been contemplating giving up his faith in God and leaving the church.

About this time, the Lord directed his steps to the prayer class. Word had gotten around about the marvelous answers to prayer that people were realizing and relating at the meetings. Ivan and his wife decided to attend a class meeting.

Ivan was there with his burden and problems; and his wife sat there listening to the answers to prayer, with a burden on her heart, too. She was concerned about her husband and his spiritual condition. She knew how Ivan would often become annoyed over some of the attitudes and actions of his employer, who was also a member of the church. She had been praying for her husband for a long time before they had ever heard of the classes being taught on the Prayer of Reception.

In Psalm 119:165 God promises: "Great peace have they which love they law; and nothing shall offend them."

Ivan's wife prayed most earnestly that her husband might find this peace, and that, no matter what happened at work, he would not become offended.

At the third class meeting Ivan stood up to speak. His words were measured and full of meaning as he spoke of his discouragement. He felt ashamed to admit how far away from God discouragement had led him. Then he said, "Today my troubles are settled. When I approached the Lord this morning, I claimed the promises of His Word, and the Lord helped me to go to my boss today, and I've made things right with him." Then he told of his new relationship with Christ and his settled determination to stay close to the Lord in everything. "With God's help, I want to be faithful until Jesus comes," he concluded.

This was more than his wife expected. She could stay in her seat no longer, and so rose, and with tears in her eyes said: "I've been praying for my husband for a long time. God has heard my prayers and I'm deeply grateful."

There were problems that arose from time to time, but Ivan held fast (Hebrews 10:23), and God used him to be a blessing to others. His working partners recognized a change in him. His friends noticed the change in his attitude toward life in general. It was so contagious that many of his friends came to him with their problems and sought his counsel.

At the next class meeting Ivan had a different kind of a problem. "What do I do when my prayer list gets too long? Do I read each name separately and pray about each name individually? Or do I ask God to do for these people what needs doing, as a whole? These people have come to me for help as the result of hearing about my experience."

He told about some of the people who had come to him for help. One was a high school senior who had been in trouble with the law several times. This boy's driver's license was about to be revoked, and his fines would amount to more than a week's wages. He had been a very belligerent young man, and had found himself in serious trouble on repeated occasions. Now, after having had a long talk together, this fine young man was dedicating his life to the Lord and was seriously thinking of preparing for the ministry.

Some of the class members responded to this by saying, "Wonderful!" "Praise the Lord!" Ivan finished his story with the words, "I was really impressed. It was all the Lord's doings and not mine."

There are some experiences related here which have taken place so recently that we can now report only a part of the answers. The following experience is one of this type. It also has to do with our witness to Jesus Christ before others.

Every true child of God who obeys the unction of the Holy Spirit and finds sweet Communion with Jesus is filled with the compelling desire to have his loved ones share in his wonderful discovery.

Wayne was one of these. He had been attending the classes on prayer and had come to know something of its power. He immediately began praying and working for his mother who had a very bad smoking problem.

In speaking to her about her problem, Wayne said, "Mom, are you willing to give it up?" "No, Son," she said, "I've tried too many times. Three packs a day is an awful lot, but I guess there's nothing I can do about it now."

Wayne had learned some important things from the classes he had attended, and he knew that there was something that could be done. One of the things he had learned was that "God stands back of every promise He has made." (Christ's Object Lessons, p, 147). He quickly sent up a silent prayer for wisdom (James 1:5), confident that it would be given.

Youth Prays . . . God Answers

"Mom, would you be willing to claim a promise about smoking?" Wayne asked.

"Claim a what?" his mother responded, a little puzzled.

"Claim a Bible promise, Mother". And then Wayne sat down and for nearly two hours patiently explained the wonderful method of ASKING, BELIEVING, and CLAIMING the promises of God's Word.

To his great delight, his mother agreed to try the program, including a ten-point program of thanksgiving which he told her about which involves finding and listing ten things each day for which we are thankful, which is a wonderful way to calm jittery nerves.

Wayne carefully wrote out what she must do on a slip of paper which she could have handy.

A. Ask—Matthew 21:22.

B. Believe—Matthew 21:22.

C. Claim—and return thanks to God that you HAVE received the gift. I John 5:14, 15; I Cor. 15:57.

He gave her also three promises to claim:

I Corinthians 10:13—for smoking.

II Corinthians 10:5—for her nerves.

1 John 5:16—for life.

Two weeks later Wayne's mother told him, "Son, I'll have to admit this program really does work. I'm already down to only one pack a day, and I'm feeling so much better.

This was happy news! But there was more wonderful news to come. When he invited her to hear a tape that he had recorded of one of my sermons, she said: "Elder Coon? Why, yes. I want to hear it. I heard him speak at the Inglewood Seventh-day Adventist church just yesterday."

Wayne had not known of her interest in the church, nor of her attendance. His testimony at the next class was a complete confidence in the God of heaven that his mother would not only gain complete victory over the tobacco habit, but that she would soon be in regular attendance at the house of God. His heart was full of praise and thanksgiving.

God still lives! He is still answering the prayers of those who will fulfill the conditions. He is waiting to hear from you!

Why not take your problem to Him right now in prayer? He has answered others—He'll do the same for you.

Quiz 10

1. Complete: "To every promise there are _____."
2. Complete: "The _____ met, the promise is _____."
3. What condition to answered prayer is stated in Matthew 5:23, 24?

4. Complete: John felt that as yet he could not conscientiously make the request of God that he needed because _____.
5. Multiple choice, thought question (circle one): We fulfill the conditions of answered prayer by:
 - a. Ourselves.
 - b. God's help.
6. When John decided it was time to act, what did he do before he made his first phone call?

7. What made the difference for Ivan, regarding his new experience? _____
_____.