



## George Mueller, Orphanages Built by Prayer

"The children are dressed and ready for school. But there is no food for them to eat," the housemother of the orphanage informed George Mueller. George asked her to take the 300 children into the dining room and have them sit at the tables. He thanked God for the food and waited. George knew God would provide food for the children as he always did. Within minutes, a baker knocked on the door. "Mr. Mueller," he said, "last night I could not sleep. Somehow I knew that you would need bread this morning. I got up and baked three batches for you. I will bring it in."

Soon, there was another knock at the door. It was the milkman. His cart had broken down in front of the orphanage. The milk would spoil by the time the wheel was fixed. He asked George if he could use some free milk. George smiled as the milkman brought in ten large cans of milk. It was just enough for the 300 thirsty children.

### Who was George Mueller?

George Mueller was not always a person of such great faith and good character. As a young boy growing up in Germany in the early 1800s, he often stole money from his dad. As a teenager, he sneaked out of a hotel twice without paying for the room. One time he was caught by police and put in jail. As a Bible college student, George loved going to bars, drinking, gambling, and being the life of the party. He also loved making fun of people, especially Christians.

One day, a friend invited George to go to an off-campus Bible study. He went only because he wanted to make fun of the Christians later. But to his surprise, he liked the Bible study. For the first time, he saw people who really knew and loved God. He attended each evening. Before the end of the week, he knelt at his bed and asked God to forgive his sins.

George's friends saw a change in him immediately. He no longer went to bars or made fun of people. He spent more time reading his Bible, talking about God, and going to church. Soon he found that his friends did not want to be around him anymore.

When George told his father that he had decided to become a missionary, his father became very upset. He wanted George to have a high-paying job and not be a poor missionary. He told George that he would not give him any more money for school. George knew he had to do what God was calling him to do, even if his dad didn't support him.

### George Mueller Prayer

George went back to college without knowing how he was going to pay his tuition. He did something he thought was a bit silly for a grown man to do. He got on his knees and asked God to provide. To his surprise, an hour later a professor knocked on his door. He offered George a paid tutoring job! George was amazed! This was the beginning of George Mueller's dependence on God.

After finishing college, George was ready to begin his missionary work in London, England. But there was one problem: Germany required all healthy men to serve at

least a year in the army. George wanted to get to his mission as quickly as possible; however, he became very sick. His illness was so serious that he almost died. It also made him unable to serve in the army. He was now free to go to England as a missionary.

## **George Mueller - Orphanage Care**

George became the pastor of a small church in England. The church wanted to pay him a good salary from the money it received renting pews to rich church members who sat at the front of the church. (Poor members had to sit in the "cheap" seats in the back.) George told them that this had to stop if they wanted him to be their pastor. Even so, he did not allow the church to pay him a salary. He trusted God to meet his needs, and God did. George and his family never missed a meal and were always able to pay their rent. George began to sense, however, that God had something else for him to do.

Each day as George walked the streets, he saw children everywhere who had no mom or dad. They lived on the streets or in state-run poorhouses, where they were treated badly. George felt God calling him to open an orphanage to take care of the children.

George prayed, asking God to provide a building, people to oversee it, furniture, and money for food and clothing. God answered his prayers. The needs of the orphanage were met each day. Sometimes a wealthy person would send a large amount of money, or a child would give a small amount received as a gift or for doing chores. Many times food, supplies or money came at the last minute, but God always provided without George telling anyone about his needs. He just prayed and waited on God.

More than 10,000 children lived in the orphanage over the years. When each child became old enough to live on his own, George would pray with him and put a Bible in his right hand and a coin in his left. He explained to the young person that if he held onto what was in his right hand, God would always make sure there was something in his left hand as well.

It has been more than 165 years since George Mueller took in his first orphan. His vision continues today as Christians around the world are inspired by his faith to depend on God to meet their needs and the needs of helpless children. You can see the story of George Mueller's life in a video called *The Obstacle to Comfort*.

Make It Real! Questions to make you dig a little deeper and think a little harder.

1. Do you see any similarities between George Mueller's and the Apostle Paul's decisions to follow Jesus? How did George change after he became a follower of Jesus?
2. What did Mueller mean when he told the orphans to "hold onto the Bible in your right hand"?
3. Describe a time when God has answered your prayers and provided for you or your family.
4. What resources do you have that you could use to help others who might be in need of food or shelter?