

Prayer: The Secret to Transforming Your Marriage, Part II

Your Scars are Beautiful to God

Louise and her daughter began to pray that God would soften Allan's hardened heart. For years they prayed and little by little they witnessed God chisel away at his tough exterior.

"I'll stop drinkin'," Allan said one night, "but I cannot become a Christian. I've done some terrible things in my life and I don't think God could ever forgive me. I could never be good enough."

"Oh, daddy," the young girl replied. "God will forgive you just as soon as you ask. Besides, we can never be good enough. If we could, Jesus wouldn't have had to die for our sins on the cross."

As God began to soften Allan's heart, he did indeed stop drinking – cold turkey. That in itself was a miracle. But there was still a volcano of anger that always rumbled just below the surface and Louise never knew when that anger would erupt and spew the lava of hatred and bitterness in their lives. She continued to pray for her husband and believed God for a miracle.

Three years after Louise had given her life to the Lord and begun her journey of praying for her husband, Allan experienced a symphony of twists and turns that only God could have orchestrated. He resigned from the company where he served as manager to begin his own building supply business with four other investors. However, his previous employer sued him and held him to a restrictive covenant contract that forbade him from working within a sixty mile radius in a company that would be a competitor. He was facing court; exposure for God only knew what, and ruination in the small town in which he lived. Buckling under the pressure, Allan was heading towards a nervous breakdown and total loss of control.

Now God had him just where he wanted him. He hit rock bottom and the only place to go was to reach up. Louise had gone to a business meeting in Pennsylvania and Allan desperately needed to be with her. He drove 500 miles, but didn't go to her hotel. Instead he drove to a church and begged for someone to pray for him.

"What denomination are you?" the receptionist asked.

"I don't know," he replied.

"Here," she said as she jotted down directions on a piece of paper. "Our pastor isn't in today, but I happen to know that Clyde Barnes, pastor of the Baptist church down the street is out doing some construction on their new church building. Why don't you drive on over and find him. I bet he can help."

So Allan hopped back in his car and drove to a church in the country where he found a man with a hammer in his hand and Jesus in his heart.

"What can I do for you?" the pastor said.

"I need you to pray for me," Allan explained with tears running down his weathered face.

"Let's sit down here on this log and you tell me what's going on."

So for several hours, Allan sat on a log with a fellow builder and told him all he had ever done. Amazingly, the very things Allan had felt God could never forgive him of, this pastor had done as well. So after five years of a young girl's prayers for her daddy and three years of a wife's prayers for her husband, Allan knelt in the woods and asked God for forgive him of all his sins, and received Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior. That day, Allan became a new creation in Christ – and it all began with prayer.

Later he explained. "I told that man all I had ever done and he said he had done the same things. I figured that if God could forgive him, and even let him be a preacher, then he could forgive me too."

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound.

For me, this is a sweet story. It is a miraculous memory. Allan was my daddy.

Friends, I have seen the power of prayer change lives. It all began right there in my own home as a teenage girl. You know, my mean ol' dad became one of the sweetest men I've ever known. He died from Alzheimer's Disease at the age of sixty-six and his caretakers were always amazed at the smile on his face and the sweetness of his heart.

Let me encourage you today...don't stop praying for your husband and your marriage. Your job is not to change your husband. That's God's role. Your job is to love him and pray for him and leave the transforming power to God.