



L I F E C H A N G E B O O K S

THE
POWER
OF CRYING
OUT

WHEN PRAYER BECOMES MIGHTY



BILL GOTHARD

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of
CRYING OUT



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Multnomah Books

THE POWER OF CRYING OUT

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*To all those who are of the household of faith
and to the goal of knowing more of the love
and power of God as we experience
His responses to our cries and fervent prayers.*

—BILL GOTHARD

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I am greatly indebted to my godly father and mother who are now with the Lord. Their daily prayers kept me aware of the reality and power of God.

I am also grateful to a praying Board of Directors and thousands of staff and friends who have invested so much into my life. I especially appreciate Dr. Bruce Wilkinson whose faith and counsel initiated this book, the special encouragement of Don Jacobson, and the insightful and skillful work of Larry Libby and Thomas Womack who made this book a reality.

Introduction



IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE

*In the day of my trouble I will call upon You,
for You will answer me.*

PSALM 86:7

THE WORLD WILL LONG REMEMBER SEPTEMBER 11, 2001.

Most people will remember that date for the horrific terrorist attacks against the Pentagon and the World Trade Center towers that claimed thousands of innocent lives. Twenty-year-old Anna will remember the day for another reason as well. On that very day, she walked into a medical clinic and began treatment for a deadly cancer that had invaded her body.

The oldest daughter of ten children—in a single parent family—Anna began experiencing excruciating pain in her hip early in August. On September 11, while the world reeled over the news of the attacks on America, Anna began chemotherapy for Hodgkin's lymphoma—which had spread to her bones.

Yes, the doctor had recommended a treatment plan...

but prospects were not at all hopeful. Anna struggled with side effects from several pain medications—including morphine. Her weight had plunged, and she experienced so much pain that she needed assistance just to walk across the room. Her cancer was so far advanced that there was little likelihood of turning it back.

Anna had worked on the headquarter's staff for the Institute in Basic Life Principles. She had also spent time in Romania, serving students and orphans in that impoverished nation.

Stunned and grieved by the shocking turn of events in her young life, Anna called for her church elders to anoint her and pray for her. Here at the ministry, we too were devastated. Gathering as a staff, we cried aloud to the Lord: "O Lord, Abba Father, deliver Anna from cancer and raise her up for Your glory, in the name of Jesus!"

On Christmas Day, Anna recalled the account of the widow pleading her case before the unjust judge,¹ and spent the day crying out to God.

Two days later, she and her mother returned to the doctor. After reviewing the tests used to monitor the cancer, the astounded oncologist declared that she was cancer free! According to the tests, there was no trace left of an aggressive cancer that had already reached stage 4B, the final stage before death. Soon after that appointment, Anna returned to the ski slopes!

What had we done? We had cried out to God. We lifted our voices together, seeking His mercy, His power,

and His healing. And He heard and answered with a true medical miracle. (Just ask her doctor.)

Did it matter that we *cried out* to God, calling on Him with *loud voices*?

That is what this little book is all about.

One



LOUD AND CLEAR

*Lift up your voice with strength,
lift it up, be not afraid.*

ISAIAH 40:9

AFTER KNOWING THE LORD JESUS CHRIST and teaching and studying His Word for many years, it was only recently that I made what was for me a life-changing discovery.

I saw that the Bible makes a distinction between “prayer” and “crying out to God.”

What I have noticed since that time is that He will arrange or allow circumstances to arise that seem to have no solution—and then do nothing to remove the problem.

Until I cry out.

And not one second sooner!

Each situation seems so hopeless, and sometimes a cry seems so futile. Yet this is precisely the setting God wants in order to demonstrate His loving care and His powerful hand of protection.

Sometimes a cry will bring freedom from emotional

bondage; in other cases, God will provide healing from a dread disease, help in a moment of grave danger, or clear direction in a season of deep perplexity.

In every circumstance, the need to cry out is a humbling reminder of my total inability to accomplish anything significant for God. And the result of crying out is a wonderful demonstration of His supernatural power to achieve all that is needed.

His promise to the prophet so long ago is just as true for us in these uncertain days of the twenty-first century:

“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”
(Jeremiah 33:3)

Incredible as it seems, the Creator of the universe desires an intimate, loving fellowship with the people He created. Responding to His love, we long to have the kind of “effective, fervent prayer” the apostle mentions in James 5:16. Sometimes, however, that fervency is hard to find.

In moments of fear, anxiety, and trouble, the right step toward experiencing God’s powerful deliverance and protection is to simply cry out—to use our voice in fervent appeal for His help.

All of this may be something of a surprise to you. You may be thinking, *But why is that necessary? Doesn’t Scripture tell us that God knows our hearts? When we utter a prayer in*

our heart or mind, surely there's no critical need to express aloud what God already knows.

That's all true, of course. He does know our hearts. And He can hear the faintest whisper for help rising from the deepest places of our spirit.

And yet it's strange....

As we survey the Bible with our eyes and hearts wide open, we can't help seeing an unmistakable principle and pattern. God's people, in their time of need, cry out *with their voices* for His help, and He promptly answers with His saving power.

This doesn't happen once or twice, but over and over again.

But it isn't just people in the pages of Scripture who experience this phenomenon. It's still happening to this very day.

A BOLDNESS TAKES OVER

The Dallas Morning News recently carried the following article by columnist Steve Blow, under the headline, "Gunman Faces off with Prayer's Power":

Sherman Jackson was a little late for the share service at his church on a recent Sunday night.

But that was OK. He had quite a story to share once he got there.

Sherman, 36, and his 7-year-old daughter, Alexa, had stopped for gas on their way to church....

As they were about to drive away, a 30-ish fellow walked up. “Hey, man, I need your help,” he said. “Could you please help me jump-start my car? I’ll pay you to help me.”

Sherman fretted a moment about being late for church. Then he chided himself for thinking of that over helping someone.

So he invited the fellow to get in the front seat. Alexa was in back. And they drove off.

They hadn’t gone far when the man reached into his pocket. “I thought he was trying to get out some change to pay me for helping him,” Sherman said. But no.

“He pulled out a revolver with his right hand and placed his left hand on my shoulder. He pointed the revolver into my rib cage and said, “OK, man, this is for real. You give me all of your money right now, or I’m going to unload this gun on you.”

Sherman was terrified, of course. And mad at himself for putting his daughter in danger.

“OK, look, here’s all I have on me,” he said, pulling out his money clip.

“Take it all.”

But the robber didn’t believe him. “That’s not all. Give it all to me,” he said, shoving the gun harder into Sherman’s ribs.

Sherman, a Garland insurance agent, keeps

Gideon Bibles in his car with a dollar bill tucked in each one. He gives them to the homeless. The gunman spotted one of those bills sticking out and began to scream at Sherman:

“You lied to me! There is more money here.”

Something came over Sherman just then, and he began to pray out loud. “Father in heaven, hear my cry and deliver me from this present evil...”

He felt a sudden calm. “I lost all consciousness of concern and worry,” he said. “A boldness took over.”

He slowed the car and began to make a U-turn. The gunman screamed, “What are you doing?”

“This car is being turned around,” Sherman replied, “and I am not taking orders from you anymore.”

The man put the gun against Sherman’s chest. “You don’t get it, man. You mean nothing to me. I’ll pull this trigger.”

“No, you don’t understand,” Sherman cut him off. “Greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world. My Jesus is stronger than your gun.”

He could see the gunman tug on the trigger. The hammer drew back. But Sherman didn’t flinch. He pulled over and stopped.

“I want to tell you about Jesus,” he said to the gunman.

The man wavered a moment, lowered his gun, and then dropped his head. When he looked up, he was crying. "I'm so sorry, man. I'm so, so sorry," he said. "I was going to shoot you."

"Don't worry about it. I forgive you," Sherman said. And then he began to tell the man about new life through belief in Jesus.

Sherman urged the man to go on to church with him, but he declined. He asked Sherman to drive him to his car at a store.

Along the way, the man began to tell Sherman about all his problems. He said his name was Mike and reached out to shake Sherman's hand. Sherman continued talking to him about starting life anew with God.

As they neared the grocery, Sherman said, "And by the way, Mike, I want my money clip back."

"Do what?!" Mike exclaimed. But then he meekly handed it over.

"And," Sherman went on, "you are keeping this New Testament, and you are going to read it like you never read anything else before. And I'm going to be praying for you, Mike, that God will come into your life."

They pulled alongside Mike's car. "He got out," Sherman said, "with the revolver in one hand, the Bible in the other hand, and tears in his eyes."

And Sherman drove on to church.²

Some readers wrote to the columnist to say they didn't believe this story. A follow-up article in the same newspaper, however, revealed that "Mike" was suspected of involvement in "a rash of 15 or so nearly identical robberies in the area." Police officers informed Sherman that he was the only one who got his money back. A few weeks later, Mike was captured and is now in regular contact with Sherman.

In that frightening moment when a gun was thrust into his chest and Sherman Jackson uttered his cry to God, he was following a pattern repeated throughout God's Word—and throughout history. God heard and acted—just as He has responded again and again to His people's cries.

And just as He longs to respond to you.

Points to Ponder

Does your prayer life have the power that you want it to have? Do you ever wonder why some of your prayers don't seem to reach "the ears of God"? Do you want to experience greater results from your prayers?



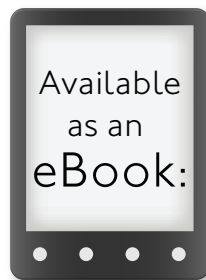
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