

## **Laurie**

My prayer began when I was ten years old...

My father and mother divorced when I was four. At age 7, my mother remarried. Her kind, caring fiancée turned into an evil, abusive spouse less than a year into the marriage. The words “stupid”, “ungrateful”, and “ugly” were screamed at me day after day. I was repeatedly slammed up against walls or pushed to the ground. Nothing, however, compared to the abuse my mother endured. I would cower in the corner with my younger sisters, watching helplessly while she was punched, kicked, and even stabbed. After years of abuse, I began to pray. “Please God, I just want a normal life. The average American family is suppose to have loving spouses, a house, two cars, 2.5 kids, and a pet. Please let me live through this so I can get married and have that family.”

At age 17, I married. Then, I gave birth to our daughter a year later. I was ecstatic! Maybe God was finally answering my prayers. Unfortunately, now must not have been the time. While we were house sitting for family, my 12 month old daughter got up in the middle of the night and fell into their swimming pool. Even though the paramedics managed to revive her, there was no brain function left in her tiny body. Ten days later, we took her off life support and let her die.

The darkness that overcame me was unbearable. The only comfort I had was knowing that my baby was in the arms of Jesus. Then a gift from God gave me hope once again. I found out I was pregnant, and nine months later my son was born. Regrettably, my marriage didn’t recover from the tragedy. My husband and I divorced when my son was four years old. Several years later, my ex-husband committed suicide.

At the age of 27, I remarried. I was blessed even further with the birth of a daughter. When she was three, I returned to school and completed my degree, got a job, and bought a house. Now, my prayer was finally being answered. God had given me everything I had prayed for so long ago. The only problem was that I wasn’t happy! I worked in a very unchristian environment, didn’t go to church, had very little time with my family, and was depressed and tired. It was then that I changed my prayer. “God, you have given me everything I prayed for and I’m still not happy. I have been working so hard on my own happiness, that I forgot you. Now, let your will be done.”

The changes that occurred over the next year were mind boggling. My son met a wonderful Christian girl, Becky. (He had gotten sick and was a semester behind in college. It was a miracle that he was in her class at all.) Becky was attending Grove City Alliance Church and talked my son into attending there also. He enjoyed it so much that he asked me to attend a Sunday service. Not only did I attend the service, I became part time secretary for the church. I then applied for the substitute nursery attendant position and was hired. I found that being with children fills a void deep inside me.

And God, in his infinite wisdom, has given me a gift that I hadn’t even thought to pray for. He has surrounded me with people who show me the qualities of a true loving Father. In Pastor Dick and Pastor Ed, I see God’s guidance and wisdom that helps me grow every day. In Pastor Paul and Pastor Dave, I feel God’s compassion and support in all I do. And in Valerie, and so many people at GCAC, a kind word or smile shows me God’s love and kindness.

Yes, God does answers prayers. But it was only when I let his will be done, did he take my life and show me what would truly make me happy.