

What Did George Muller Think About the Bible?

Steve Burchett

George Muller loved orphans. By the end of his life in the late 1800's, he had housed over 10,000 in Bristol, England. Remarkably, throughout his ministry he made needs known only to God. Muller's ultimate desire for destitute boys and girls was not just to provide shelter and food, though the children were cared for very well. When sharing his dreams for ministry to orphans, Muller said this:

The chief and special end of the Institution will be to seek, with God's blessing, to bring the dear children to the knowledge of Jesus Christ by instructing them in the Scriptures.¹



Muller longed for the salvation of the orphans, and he made the Bible the center of their schooling to achieve this goal. This is not surprising when considering how Muller was brought to faith in Christ. At the age of twenty, he was invited to a meeting where a chapter of the Bible and a printed sermon were read. He kept attending, and later wrote the following:

It pleased God to teach me something of the meaning of that precious truth: 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' I understood something of the reason why the Lord Jesus died on the cross . . . The individual who desires to have his sins forgiven must seek it through the blood of Jesus.

For the rest of his life, George Muller was a man who treasured Scripture. This was evident in multiple ways:

Muller preached Scripture.

For the majority of his ministry in Bristol, he co-pastored two churches with his friend Henry Craik. They both were known for preaching thoroughly biblical messages. One eyewitness said this about Muller: "He strongly advocates and practises expository preaching. Instead of a solitary text detached from its context, he selects a passage. . . which he goes over consecutively clause by clause."

Muller's ministry practices were rooted in Scripture.

He once said, "God does expect us to be obedient children, and will have us practice what He has taught us." The establishment of the orphanage came in part

because of Muller's meditation on this portion of Psalm 81:10: "Open your mouth wide and I will fill it."

Three ladies once challenged Muller's view of baptism. He studied the relevant passages and changed his position.

Muller distributed Scripture.

In 1834, Muller founded (along with Craik) the *Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad*, with the threefold aim of starting schools where Scripture was taught, distributing Bibles, and supporting missionaries. By 1840, over 6,000 Bibles had been circulated. In 1880, 100,000 Bibles were dispersed around the world in multiple languages. Millions of other Bible-related tracts were also published.

Muller encouraged others with Scripture.

Caring for so many orphans was sometimes trying for both his family and fellow workers, but Muller would often quote Matthew 6:31 and 33: "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' . . . But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

When his first wife, Mary, was dying, he read Psalm 84:11 to her and said, "My darling we have both received grace, and we shall therefore receive glory; and as, by God's grace, we walk uprightly, nothing that is good for us will He withhold from us." He preached Psalm 119:68 at her funeral.

Muller was strengthened by Scripture.

He read through the entire Bible four times a year. He said he once learned that "the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was, to have my soul happy in the Lord." How? He understood that after getting ready in the morning, "The most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the Word of God and to meditate on it."

Muller not only started each day with Scripture, but he also rested in God's truth during trials. For example, as he watched Mary die, Muller was comforted by Psalm 119:75: "I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are righteous, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me." When his daughter Lydia died (1890), and also his second wife, Susannah (1894), Muller clung to Romans 8:28.

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105)

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¹ Facts and quotes are taken from Roger Steer, *George Muller: Delighted in God* (Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus, 2001), or George Muller, *Valuable Selections from the Writings of George Muller* (Hannibal, MO: Granted Ministries Press, 2009).