

Hand of **HELP**



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The Truth for Today

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Little Prayers



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Little Prayers

A few years ago I sat in the back pew of an old church in southern Tennessee and listened to a little girl pray for God to bring her daddy back safe from “the rack”. It was an honest, heartfelt prayer, something she did, not knowing that anyone was listening in, and all I was able to do was join my prayer with hers, and agree with her petition that God bring her father back from war, safe and sound.

It was all I could do, and at the same time, it was the least I could do. I could not get on a plane and go find her daddy in Iraq, nor could I go and be his human shield. All I could do was pray and agree, echoing her petition that God watch over this man I’d never met, and answer the prayers of this little girl for his safe return.

Sometime later, I was in a church service in Romania, and I happened to overhear a little boy praying for a pair of shoes so the kids at school wouldn’t make fun of him for not having any as they’d done the previous year. I tapped the person I was with on the arm to get their attention, asked if they knew the little boy and his family, then promptly left the service, drove to the nearest city, bought two pairs of shoes, two pairs of pants, two shirts and a jacket, and went back to find the little boy’s family.

In this instance all I could do wasn’t just to agree with the boy’s request for a pair of shoes. I realized rather than just agree with him in prayer, I had the wherewithal to be an answer to his prayer.

My life changed dramatically for having lived these two experiences, and they caused me to understand that although sometimes all we can do is agree with someone in prayer, there are instances when we can be the answer to someone’s prayer if we choose to make the extra effort, go the extra mile, and exert ourselves a little.

The idea that God can use me to be the vehicle by which He answers someone’s petition is a humbling one. The idea that you or I can be the instrument by which God delivers an individual or a family from their desperate predicament and manifests His love for them is so

utterly profound that just the contemplation of it makes one acknowledge the boundless affection God has for His creation.

If someone is praying for healing, all I can do is pray with them and for them.

If someone is praying for food, I can go and buy the food and be an answer to their prayer.

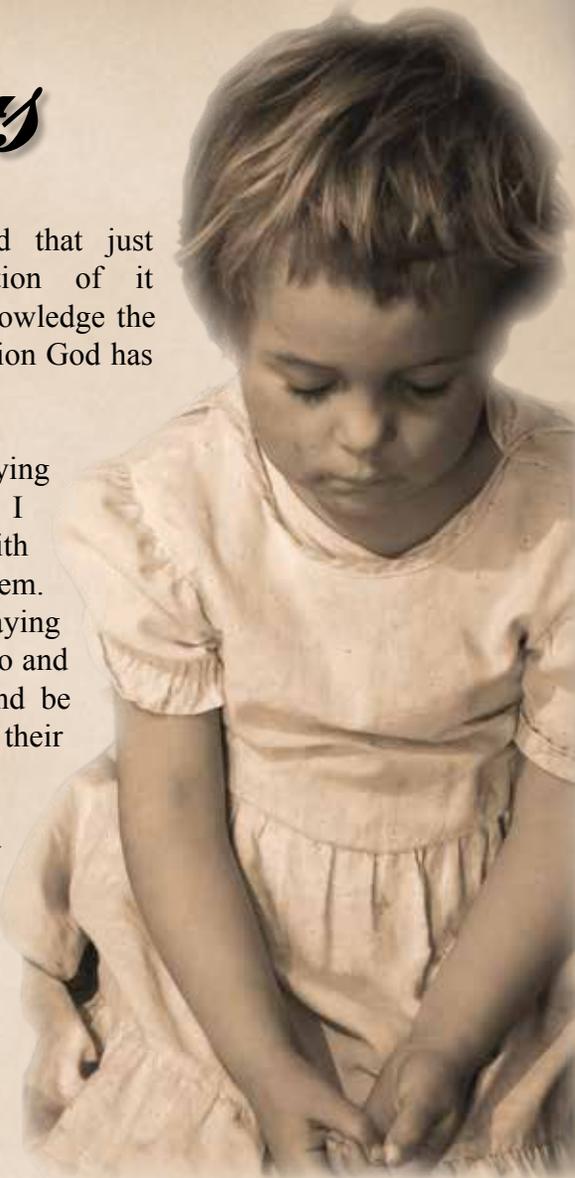
There are few places in the world wherein you will begin to understand the art of prayer better or deeper than in the prayers of the young. I would

rather listen to the prayers of a child than the bloviating prayers of an adult who feels the need to perform rather than be honest with God, any day of the week.

There is sincerity in the prayer of a child that goes to the heart of the matter. Theirs are not long-winded prayers, nor are they overly complicated, theirs are prayers of immediacy, and longing, and need, and oftentimes desperation.

I’ve heard enough prayers prayed by both young and old to convince me never to ask God for frivolous things. I’ve also heard enough prayers to rightly and adequately define the notion of need and differentiate it from the notion of want.

Back in the day, when churches actually sang hymns and not pop ballads, we used to sing “my God shall



provide all my needs according to His riches in glory". It was a Biblically sound song, one we would do well to reintroduce into our repertoire, and a song which served to remind us that God never said anything about our wants, but He promised He would provide for our needs. The means by which He provides for our needs varies, but whenever God can incorporate His servants to facilitate an answer to prayer, He does it.

As always, you have my thanks for faithfully praying for those needs which we cannot affect in our capacity as mere humans, as well as for doing your utmost to be an answer to those prayers which we have the ability to affect, and for being willing to be used as the instruments by which God answers them.

With love in Christ,
Michael Boldea Jr.

What May Have Been

I am not one to dwell on the past. I am not one to exert my mental faculties on thoughts of what may have been, what could have been, the path not taken, or the path taken too soon. I believe my steps are ordained of God. I believe that as long as I walk in obedience to His will my life is what it was supposed to be, and I am content, not because I've had no hardships, trials or setbacks, but because I know that through it all, I am still walking in the Father's will, and eventually all things will work together for good because I love Him.

That said, there are times I find myself dwelling on what would have become of the children under our care if Hand of Help had never been, if our presence had not been felt, and if we had not positively affected the lives of countless souls going on 20 years now.

Especially when the road gets rocky, and the sacrifices we make on behalf of the work grow in number, one can't help but take stock of the situation as a whole, and assess whether it is worth it. I think if we are honest with ourselves, to a greater or lesser degree, we all have our George Bailey moments in life. All of us have those moments wherein we wonder what the world would be like without us or what would have been had we not been.



As I said, on a personal, individual level, I very rarely, if ever, go down this particular rabbit trail, but as far as the ministry and the work we do in Romania is concerned, it is a thought which pops up unbidden from time to time.

One such instance took place shortly after I had a conversation with my brother Daniel, wherein he told me he'd visited some of the homes our children used to live in before they came to Hand of Help.

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Little



Prayers



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“You wouldn’t believe this even if you saw it with your own eyes, Mike” my brother said, “but I took some pictures just so you’d understand.”

There is no doubt in my mind that hundreds upon hundreds of children are better off today because Hand of Help was there at the right time, than they would have been had we not been present. It’s the extent to which their lives would have been different that oftentimes leaves me stunned, because we’re not just talking about less of an education, or less opportunity, we are literally talking life and death.

I am convinced that had we not been a presence in Romania throughout the years, many of the children that have come through our doors, children who are now adults with families of their own, would be no more, long gone, and likely forgotten by all, except for a sibling or two.

Even those who would still be among us would have very different lives than they presently do, because even intact families have a hard time keeping their children on the straight path nowadays, never mind children from broken homes with abusive parents who are easy prey for the predators that seem to be an ever present reality no matter where you go in this world.

A moment’s thought as to what may have been had we not been a ministry with a heart for the orphan and widow is enough to make one realize that even the smallest of



works, even the smallest of ministries, even the smallest of callings can have an immense impact, an impact that reverberates from generation to generation.

Because we are here, not only were the lives of the children who were in our care bettered in every way, the lives of their children are also bettered, because they grew up learning to love, and be present, to show emotion and give affection.

They grew up understanding that there was a better way than the way of violence, abuse, addiction and self-loathing. Most of all, however, they grew up knowing there is a God who loves them, and cherishes them, who prizes them above all of His creation, and who gave His only begotten Son that they might be reconciled unto Him.

Had it not been for people like you, the work we do would not have been possible, and so in whatever measure you’ve been able to come alongside us, be it with your prayers or your finances, your time or your gifting, know that you’ve had a hand in saving lives and making this darkened world a brighter place.

With love in Christ,
Michael Boldea Jr.



December's Child of the Month



2015 marks the year that Valentin Aciobanitei was faced with the beginning of a series of dramatic changes in his life. After tirelessly trying to counsel and help Valentin's parents, the local authorities noticed a total lack of interest and effort on their part, and no longer pursued the rehabilitation of their lifestyle.

Subject to precarious environmental conditions, a noticeable lack of hygiene, nutrition and basic care, in addition to the parents' alcohol abuse and behavioral deficits, Valentin's older siblings were directed to foster care in 2011. In 2015, Valentin, born February 6th, 2012, went through the same sufferings and feelings of neglect and abandonment that his siblings experienced in 2011. His

mother was arrested and there were no relatives found that would have been able to take care of little Valentin.

When we first went to see Valentin, we found an emotional little boy, asthenic and hopelessly looking at us. His tiny body was covered in insect bites while his face seemed to be caught in a past moment- a traumatic moment that he was strenuously trying to get out of.

He found his home after our meeting... Although it took him a while to adjust, after starting Kindergarten, meeting new children and experiencing again (or better said for the first time) the feeling of being taken care of, Valentin is now a happy child!

We know we are but instruments in the lives of our children but we thank our Lord for entrusting us with this task and offering us the support of contributors like you. We could do nothing by ourselves, and we thank you for making stories like Valentin's possible.



Remember those who labor in this ministry, as well as their families, both in the US and abroad, in your prayers as they tirelessly go about doing the work to which we have been called.

Keep the children of Hand of Help in your prayers, as flu season is upon us, and if one gets sick, pretty much all of them get sick eventually.

Pray for God's continued favor upon this work as we continue to grow and help more people than ever with our outreach.

Dear Brethren,

Psalm 46:1-3, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling. Selah”

Looking back on yet another year that has come and gone, it is not a difficult thing to see the Hand of God throughout. Only someone who is abjectly intellectually dishonest would fail to see the countless times God’s grace and mercy have carried us through, and still do to this day.

Although it’s not always easy, and oftentimes the going gets tough, the knowledge that God is ever present is comforting, encouraging, and gives us the wherewithal to press on, press in, and press through.

Ever since the genesis of this ministry, trust in God was a given. We knew we could not do what had been placed on our hearts to do of our own strength, in our own wisdom or solely as a direct result of our attributes. It was a big vision but we have a big God, and we trusted that He would make a way. One thing that has become crystal clear over the years is that God never disappoints. No matter what you are trusting Him for, His faithfulness will be made evident, and His great and mighty Hand will be visible at work.

That the world is on the brink is an undeniable reality. The variables of what can occur given one wrong choice, one heated exchange, one act or action not wholly thought through, are so many as to boggle the mind. If not for the foundation of trust we as children of God have, if not for the innate knowledge that He will see us through, we would surely be walking the high wire between madness and despair as so much of the world is.

Learning to trust God is of paramount importance, especially given the times we are living in. If up until now we’ve had safety nets, and earthly assurances to fall back on, the season is fast approaching wherein the just will live by faith, and faith alone. Although to some it might seem like a frightening prospect, it is, in reality, a most glorious and awe inspiring thing.

If any lingering doubts remain, all you need do is daily remind yourself of God’s faithfulness thus far. If any trepidation about the future is still present in your heart, look back on the road already traveled, and see His Hand keeping you, guiding you, and protecting you throughout.

Trust is something we must constantly build up. With every new manifestation of God’s provision, with every acknowledgment of His presence in our lives, our trust grows, it becomes rooted, and at some point along life’s journey, we come to discover that our trust in God is unshakeable.

Never once have I met anyone who placed the entirety of their trust in God and felt let down. Never once have I met anyone who having trusted God, looked back on their lives and felt as though they had been shortchanged. We have been neither abandoned nor forgotten. We have been neither left defenseless nor rudderless. We serve a God who is an ever present help in time of trouble, a God who has unequivocally proven His love and compassion for us, and a God who keeps His promises, no matter what.

When God promises He will be with us, then He will be with us. When God promises He will protect us, then He will protect us, no matter the circumstance, no matter how impossible it might seem to human reason or the human intellect. We serve a God of the impossible. We serve a God who can do all things and with whom all things are possible.

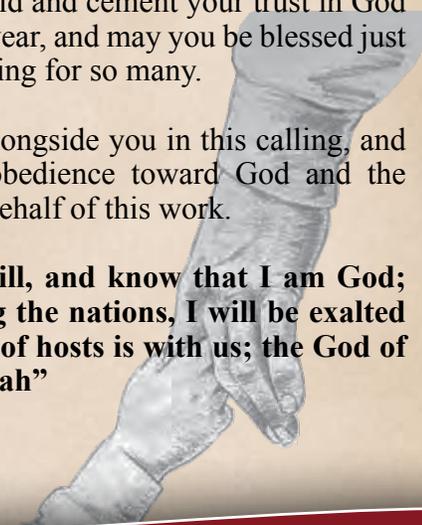
Take strength in the knowledge that God is with you, and fear not. No matter what your eyes may see, no matter what your ears may hear, no matter how perturbed the world might get, fear not. You are in His embrace, you are His beloved, and nothing will by any means harm you.

May you continue to build and cement your trust in God throughout this coming year, and may you be blessed just as you have been a blessing for so many.

It is an honor to serve alongside you in this calling, and I thank you for your obedience toward God and the sacrifices you make on behalf of this work.

Psalm 46:10-11, “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah”

With love in Christ,
Michael Boldea Jr.



It's More Blessed To Give...



give an extra few bucks in the offering plate. We may be challenged by a missionary, traveling through our town looking for support, that causes us to dig a little deeper into our pockets, and off we go, without much thought about it. It's easy to send money and certainly necessary, but it is usually void of much emotion or sense of personal affection to those receiving the help.

It is a completely different experience to take the time, and personally go to the poor and needy and give them help from your own hand. It is an experience that God ordained for us all. It's called love. In my case it was visiting those in Romania. In yours, it may be down your street. Finances fail but love does not.

The Apostle Paul recollects the Lord Jesus saying that "It is more blessed to give than to receive". He himself understood that it was not exclusively the financial or physical help that people needed but the spirit of love that was attached to it. We need to know this as well. To see the children smile with joy. To see the tears that run from the mother's cheek when she knows the kids will eat well and to see the fathers humbly bow their heads

*I*t has been a while since I have been able to visit Romania. I had forgotten how much more developed the country had become since becoming part of the European Union. The cities are nicer, the streets are smoother and the highways are safer. The lifestyle has progressed tremendously.

Much of the investment into Romania has been geared toward the growing cities. The villages however, have not received the same attention. Much of them remain the same as they were on my first trip 20 years ago, many with the same characteristics as dirt roads, horses and buggies, public wells, and most notably, the destitution of the poor.

Whether it is food, clothing for the children, a new roof on the house or just firewood to stay warm during the coming winter, one thing remains the same for generations, the needs of the poor.

While I had a fantastic trip and enjoyed the fellowship immensely, one of the highlights was being able to help these poor families. We were able to travel to some villages and visit families in need. As an American, it's easy to forget about those less fortunate. We may hear a message in church that stirs us to



and thank Jesus and you for the help, is something you won't get from a book. Not even from the Bible unless you go out and do it.

This is what Christ meant. It's the love we profess to have, put into action, to help a complete stranger in distress. It's the easing of the burden for our fellow man, in the name of Jesus, that is so fulfilling that you wish you had more money and time to do more. This is the blessing that comes from God Himself when we reach out our own hands to love our brothers and sisters.

I want to thank the Hand of Help staff for their tenacity in this cause. I also want to encourage whoever may read this article to plan out a trip and go to the poor and hungry, and experience the blessing God has for you as you are His hands and feet.

God bless your trip!

Pastor Ken Stolar

