

BE THE ANSWER



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by [Kim Butts](#)

"For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead" (James 2:26 NASB).

Years ago I met a young woman in a Bible study whose family was struggling financially. Her husband was in prison and she had four young sons at home. They were crammed into a very small little house, but were very content and happy. Every day she prayed a simple prayer for God to provide for their needs. She never made a big deal out of the fact that they had very little and were barely getting by on her meager paying job.

Another friend and I began regularly praying for and with

“Beth” after Bible study each week. She was so grateful for our prayers, and would let us know how we could be praying for her. It wasn’t long before God began to speak to my heart that I needed to become the answer to the prayers I was praying for her financial situation. I began to argue with God, for I was a fairly new believer and hadn’t yet learned why this principle was vital to my spiritual growth and health. God began to show me that if He was calling me to be the person to meet Beth’s need and I did not, the separation of my faith from my works would get me what the Message version of James 2:26 calls “a corpse”: “The very moment you separate body and spirit, you end up with a corpse. Separate faith and works and you get the same thing: a corpse.” When there is “a seamless unity of believing and doing” we are exercising faith as God intends.

My friend Nancy shared that she had been sensing a nudge from God as well. So, the two of us decided God wanted to use us, and hatched a plan of blessing for Beth’s family. It began by leaving an anonymous envelope with some money in it on the front seat of her car shortly before she would be heading to work after getting her boys off to school. That night at Bible study, Beth was praising God and thanking Him that the exact amount she had needed for groceries that day was in that envelope. She was astonished at how anyone would have known her need but God, the One she had brought her need to. Nancy and I were just as amazed at how God had given us just the right amount to meet her needs, and so thrilled that He had used us to meet this need. This ignited our spirits, and we wanted to do more!

It was close to Christmas and Beth was going to visit her husband, who was due to be released from prison in just a few short weeks. Nancy and I offered to watch the boys that day for her so she didn’t need to hire a babysitter. After she left, we took the boys to get a Christmas tree, as Beth had sadly told them there wouldn’t be a tree this year. The boys

were so excited to get it home and set up in the living room. Next, we made ornaments with paper, markers and glue. We cut out snowflakes and decorated everywhere (I was reminded of this after watching the movie *Elf* years later). Nancy and I also took them to purchase some simple gifts for their parents. Their eyes were shining as they wrapped the gifts. We prayed with them several times that day, asking God to show us all what He wanted us to do to make Christmas one of the best they had ever celebrated. They all knew the Christmas story well, and were excited to rejoice in the birth of Jesus as a family.

Beth's children were breathless with excitement waiting for their mother to come home later that night. When she did, she brought a surprise. The children's father had been released early and would be with them for Christmas after all! What a joyous reunion this family had when their daddy walked in the door...and what fun when they were able to show their parents the lovely tree they had decorated themselves. Nancy and I quietly slipped out and had a time of worshiping God and thanking Him for letting us be the answer to the prayers we had prayed.

Over the years, it has given me and my family much joy to continue to listen to God's urging to "be the answer," trusting Him to show us how to meet the needs of those for whom we pray. It isn't always a financial situation. Sometimes it is simple things such as bringing a meal that's needed, or offering words of encouragement...or going to the hospital to pray through a surgery. It was an important lesson to learn that praying for others is vital and important; however, if I don't pair this with listening and responding to the voice of the Father urging me to become the answer to the prayers I pray, I am only going half way in my faith that He will answer. When the burden is placed upon me to pray, He often will also give me a burden to respond. What a privilege that God chooses to work through His people to be the answer to

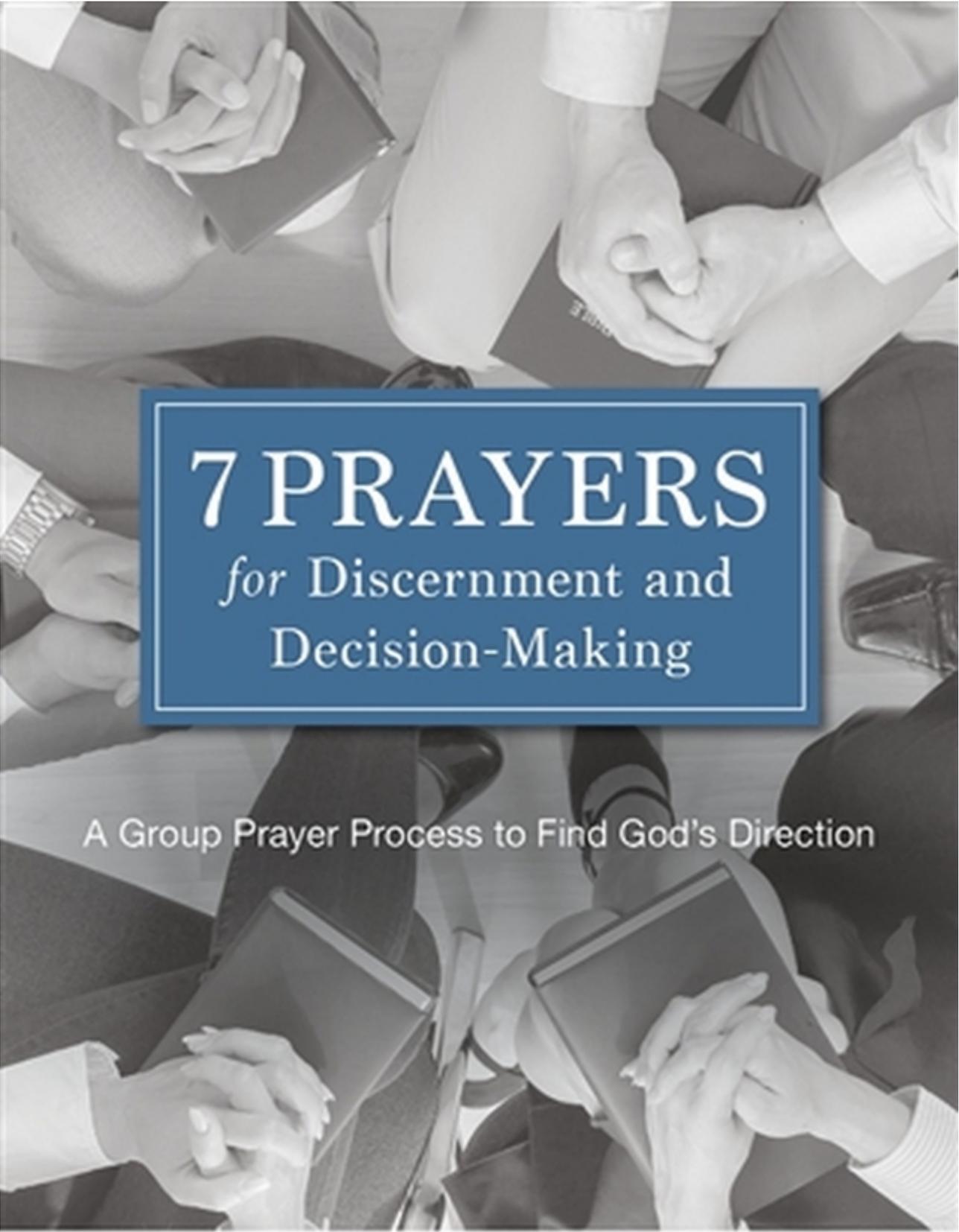
their own prayers. When we respond in obedience, we learn what it truly means to be part of the body of Christ Jesus...and that is life-changing and culture-transforming!

God's people should be those who ask for God's kingdom to come in the midst of their life together as the corporate body of Jesus Christ. One caution – we should find our identities within the purposes of God alone – not in our work or our “causes.” Most of all, may we never think we can be the answer without God.

“...prayer and action can go together; in fact they must. Otherwise we have little more than a bunch of inactive believers or worn-out activists, and neither do much good for the world.” –Shane Claiborne and Jonathan Wilson-Hargrove: *Becoming the Answer to our Prayers: Prayer for Ordinary Radicals*

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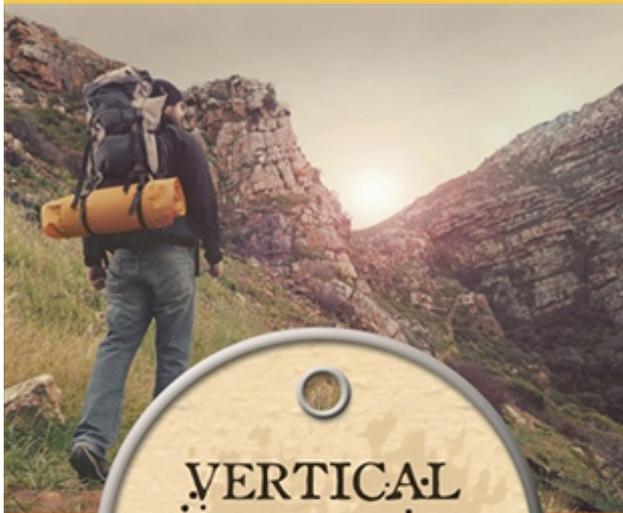
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