

King James Bible Study Correspondence Course

An Outreach of Highway Evangelistic Ministries
5311 Windridge lane ~ Lockhart, Florida 32810 ~ USA

Heroes of the faith - Lesson 8**Amy Carmichael**

Missionary to India

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“Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.” (Jeremiah 33:3) We are commanded to pray; God says He will answer. We know God answers prayer because Scripture affirms it, we have seen examples throughout history, and we remember examples in our own lives. There are times, however, when we don't get the exact answer for which we are praying. When this happens, we might claim that God *didn't* answer our prayer. But...do we ever consider the fact that not getting what we prayed for is still an answer? It is much like a child who asks for something, and the father says, “No, you may not have that.” Did the father give the child an answer? Yes, it just wasn't the answer the child was hoping for. The same is true with our prayers – ***“Call unto me, and I will answer thee...”*** When we call unto God and request something, He will either say “Yes” or “No” - They are both answers. The question for us is whether we will rest in His answer, understanding and believing that He knows what is best for us. Isaiah 55:9 says, ***“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”*** God sees the bigger picture. His wisdom and knowledge of every situation in our lives is far greater than our own. ***“Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.”*** He knows what is best for us and answers our prayers accordingly. If we will accept that, we can be assured that He will show us ***“great and mighty things.”*** In this lesson, we will look at the life of a woman who, as a child with full confidence in God, prayed for something, and God said, ***“No”***. The lesson she learned was – ***“No”*** is an answer.

Amy Beatrice Carmichael was born on December 16, 1867 in a village on the northern coast of Ireland. Her father helped manage a family-owned flour milling business there. Amy was the oldest of seven children. Their home was filled with much love, joy, and fun yet balanced with discipline and faithfulness to God. They had daily family prayers and Scripture reading time, and whenever the church doors were open for services, Amy's family was in attendance.

Amy learned the aforementioned lesson about prayer when she was just a young child. Her parents had taught her that God hears and answers our prayers, and there was one thing she desperately wanted – blue eyes.

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Blue was her favorite color, and she wanted God to change her brown eyes to blue. Later in life, she recounted the story, ***“Without a shadow of a doubt that my eyes would be blue in the morning, I had gone to sleep; and the minute I woke, I pushed a chair to the chest of drawers on which there was a looking-glass and climbed up full of eager expectation and saw – mere brown eyes. I don’t remember how the words came...“Isn’t No an answer?” – “Call unto me, and I will answer thee...”***

Some might think, “How silly, of course God didn’t answer that prayer.” But the point to be gleaned from this is not the practicality of the request, but rather that she learned a valuable lesson, even at that young age – ***“No”*** is an answer. Years later Amy would learn just how crucial it was for her to have brown eyes...***(“and will shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.”)***

When Amy was about fifteen years old, she got saved. All her life she had heard the Scriptures, attended church, and listened to the many conversations her mother had with her about the Lord Jesus Christ. It all became very real to her one day at the end of a church service. When the preacher was finished speaking, he had the congregation sing “Jesus Loves Me This I Know”, and then he asked the congregation to sit quietly for a few minutes. Amy said the following about those minutes of silence, ***“During those quiet few minutes, in His great mercy the Good Shepherd answered the prayers of my mother and father and many other loving ones, and drew me, even me, into His fold.”***

Not long after getting saved, Amy’s life became more difficult. The family began facing financial struggles after her generous father had lent much money to a friend in need who, in turn, did not repay the money. Shortly thereafter, her father passed away from pneumonia. Amy was just 17 years old, with six younger siblings and a grieving mother. She became an invaluable help to all of them, and though they had suffered a great loss, they all stayed faithful to God.

One Sunday, a few years later, Amy, her mother, and brothers and sisters were walking home from church when they noticed a very poor, elderly lady walking and carrying a heavy bundle. Amy and her brothers felt such pity for her. They carried her bundle and took her by the arms and escorted her to her home. Society in those days was very different from now. Respectable people weren’t normally seen doing such things, and they felt the cold stares from those around them. In spite of the stares, they continued on. All of the sudden from out of the blue, these verses came to Amy’s mind, ***“Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall***

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declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."(1 Corinthians 3:12-13). Those verses spoke to her heart, and she was never the same again. She began serving the Lord in any way she could. She started Bible meetings with children and young girls in the slums. The numbers who attended these meetings grew and grew. Amy worked tirelessly to serve these needy ones by sharing the gospel with them and teaching them God's word.

Eventually, Amy's health took a toll. She was diagnosed with neuralgia, a condition marked by severe pain due to damaged or irritated nerves, and was told she must get out of the city, to a place where she could breathe better air and get some rest. She and her mother decided she should go to the home of a dear family friend, an elderly man named Robert Wilson. While staying at his manor in the country, Amy was provided an abundance of healthy food, clean country air, and time to rest. That was exactly what she needed, and soon she began to feel better.

Robert Wilson was the chairman of the Keswick Convention in his area. The Keswick Convention was an organization that arranged special preaching meetings throughout Great Britain. Amy had attended many of these meetings over the years. At one of them, the speaker had been Hudson Taylor, a missionary to China. Something he had said had really struck Amy. Mr. Taylor said that every hour, four thousand Chinese people die never having heard the gospel. She had thought of these words often, but now, with so much extra time on her hands, she found herself pondering them unceasingly. Then, on January 13, 1892, God's word was markedly impressed upon Amy, ***"Go ye..."***. Amy told her mother in a letter, ***"I never heard it just so plainly before; I cannot be mistaken, for I know He spoke. He says, 'Go', I cannot stay."*** She dedicated her life to be a missionary; and while they would miss her dearly, her mother and Mr. Wilson gave her their full support.

A little over a year later, on March 3, 1893, Amy found herself aboard a ship heading for Japan. The past year had been one of much prayer, seeking God's direction as to where she should serve Him. In answer to this prayer, God had directed her to join the Buxtons, missionaries to Japan.

She arrived in Japan on May 1, 1893. It didn't take Amy long to learn some important lessons about missionary service. First, serious prayer is imperative in order to have the Lord's blessing on the work. Second, wearing the native dress of the country helps the missionary be more accepted by those he or she is trying to reach. Third, actions must match words. The people need to not only hear about the Lord Jesus, but they must also see Him through the lives of the missionaries. This lesson came to her straight from the lips of a Buddhist man to whom she was witnessing. He said to her,

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“If this be so [the gospel she had shared with him], you are as an angel from heaven to us; but if it be so, we want to see it lived; can you show it to us? We have heard much preaching. Can you show us the life of your Lord Jesus?” Amy asked herself if she were answering this twice-asked question.

Unfortunately, Amy’s health struggles returned. The Japanese climate was not suited to her, and she was forced to leave Japan after just one year.

She went to Ceylon (current day Sri Lanka) briefly, then back to England for a short time.

On November 9, 1895 she arrived in the country where she would remain a missionary for the rest of her life, India. In fact, Amy Carmichael never left India after her arrival there that year; and it was in this country that God would show her ***“great and mighty things...”*** – the purpose of her brown eyes.

There was much to learn about the culture and language. Amy dove straight into the work, with all her might. She quickly discovered the existence of the Hindu caste system and the difficulties it posed for missionary work. There were four castes, or classes of people, and these castes were forbidden to intermingle. There were also people who were considered to lowly to even belong to a caste. They were referred to as “untouchables”. All Amy could think of was that the people in every one of these castes and the untouchables needed to hear about the great Savior, Who is not a respecter of persons.

Longing to be accepted by the people, Amy wore the native Indian clothing, the saris, and quickly became adept in the language. After a time, she began working closely with the Walkers, missionaries already established in Pannaivilai, India. Amy, the Walkers, and some of the Christian natives, traveled to the villages surrounding Pannaivilai spreading the gospel wherever they could. Their traveling group was called The Starry Cluster.

In March of 1901 an event occurred that changed the direction of Amy’s missionary service. She and the Starry Cluster had just returned home to Pannaivilai after a year of traveling and witnessing. Early in the morning on March 7, Amy was having tea on the veranda when she saw a Christian woman approaching with a little girl. This little girl, aged seven, was a temple child. Her name was Preena. A temple child was a child offered to the Hindu gods for service in the temple. For the young, this service involved cleaning the temple, fanning the images, carrying lights, and dancing and singing. Once the child was older, she would be “married to a god”, resulting in unspeakable immorality. Preena’s mother had offered her to the temple in order to appease the gods after her husband had died. Preena had escaped once before this and ran home (20 miles from the temple), only to be returned

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to the temple by her mother. The temple women punished her by branding her hands with hot irons. This did not stop her from escaping again, and this time she was found by the Christian woman who had brought her to Amy. When Preena saw Amy, she ran to her, climbed onto her lap, and said, "I want to stay here always. I have come to stay." Amy held her close and kissed her, making her feel safe and loved. Preena had been followed by some of the temple workers and efforts were made to force her to return to the temple, but to no avail. God had his hand of protection upon the little girl, and she would remain safely with Amy.

Through Preena's stories Amy learned about the wickedness of child trafficking and the appalling treatment of the Hindu temple children. There existed both emotional and physical cruelty that horrified her. Amy had a new mission...to rescue children from such an abominable plight. This required more knowledge about their situations, and the only way to learn more was to go there herself.

Years later, a rescued boy described how she did this, ***"When she was discovering the facts about temple children, she used to stain her hands and arms with coffee, and visit places to which foreign women would never be admitted. Of course, she wore Indian dress, but if her eyes had been blue, someone might easily have penetrated the disguise."*** God's all-wise ***"No"*** to Amy's prayer as a child (or even the fact that He had made her eyes brown in the first place) allowed Amy to enter the temples and gather the information necessary to help her rescue nearly one thousand children before her life came to an end! – ***"great and mighty things"***. Not only were they rescued, they were cared for and lovingly taught about the one and only true God and His way of salvation. Amy loved the children, and the children loved her. They called her Amma, which means "mother".

Caring for children was quite an undertaking, especially as the numbers grew throughout the years; but God always provided. Many things were needed – food, clothing, buildings, supplies, helpers, medicine, etc. It could seem like an overwhelming impossibility. But here is what Amy said about that, ***"We rely upon the verses which assure us that our Father knows our needs, and we take it that with such a Father, to know is to supply."*** Amy, her helpers, and the children would never lack a single necessity. God does indeed answer prayer! Over time He provided land and buildings. He provided men and women to help in caring for and educating the children. So many little children were not only saved from a wretched life, but also, through hearing about and receiving Jesus as their Savior, were saved from a wretched eternity – ***"great and mighty things."***

Amy took her duties very seriously. She provided an atmosphere of love and joy, without compromising on work and education. Work was often mixed

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with play for the very little ones (children of all ages had been rescued, including infants). She taught them songs to sing while they worked to help them along. She was particular and impressed upon them the necessity of doing a good job. She told them, ***“A little thing is a little thing, but faithfulness in little things is a very great thing.”***

She made sure the children were educated also. They were taught all the basics, but her objective wasn't to make scholars out of them. She said, ***“Our goal is service. It is not worthwhile to spend time, strength, money, and energy on anything else. Settle it in your minds: our way of education is planned so as to prepare in spirit and mind our boys and girls for the Service of the King of kings. It must therefore from first to last be spiritual education. And the result? No one need fear about that. I could give many proofs that an education such as our children have is indeed true education.”*** In addition to schooling, there were regular church services and prayer meetings in buildings specifically built for such gatherings.

Amy and her large family of helpers and children were called The Dohnavur Fellowship, and a loving fellowship they truly were. Amy made a point to know every single child personally, even when the numbers grew into the hundreds. She always celebrated the anniversary of each child's day of arrival. None of them ever doubted Amy's love or devotion.

On October 24, 1931, another event occurred that significantly changed Amy's life. She was walking through the yard at night, and, unaware of a pit that had been dug, she slipped and fell. Her leg was broken, her ankle dislocated, and her spine was twisted. Amy would never be well again. She spent most of the next twenty years of her life confined to her room and often to her bed. During days when the pain was manageable, a few children at a time would be allowed to see her. She did her best to write letters to the children and to the workers in the Dohnavur Fellowship to encourage them and let them know of her continued love and prayers on their behalf.

Twenty years was a long time to live confined in such a manner after a busy life of service, but Amy was not one to be defeated. She used that time to pray and, as often as possible, to write. She wrote extensively about the Dohnavur Fellowship and individual stories of the children. She also wrote poetry. She completed thirty-eight published works; many of them are still in print today. Some of the most well-known book titles are *Gold Cord*, *Rose from Brier*, *Toward Jerusalem*, *Things as They Are*, and *If*. Many people over the last seventy years have been moved and inspired by her writings.

On January 18, 1951, at the age of 83, Amy left the Dohnavur Fellowship and entered into her heavenly home. There, with her brown eyes looking upon her blessed Savior, she found the happy, pain free rest for

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which she had long sought. When she passed away, the bells in the prayer tower, one of the buildings on the Dohnavur Fellowship's property, played the song she had requested. Her children, fellow laborers, and many people from the nearby village came to the service held in the House of Prayer. Those in the Fellowship, who had been so dear to her, would miss her greatly, but they remained faithful in the work to which Amy had dedicated her life. In fact, the work of the Dohnavur Fellowship continues to this day.

In her book, *Toward Jerusalem*, Amy had written the following prayer for her children:

Father, hear us, we are praying, Hear the words our hearts are saying,

We are praying for our children.

Keep them from the powers of evil,

From the secret, hidden peril,

From the whirlpool that would suck them.

From the treacherous quicksand pluck them.

From the worldling's hollow gladness,

From the sting of faithless sadness,

Holy Father, save our children.

Through life's troubled waters steer them,

Through life's bitter battle cheer them,

Father, Father, be Thou near them.

Read the language of our longing,

Read the wordless pleadings thronging,

Holy Father, for our children

And wherever they may abide,

Lead them Home at eventide.

Jeremiah 33:3, ***“Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.”***

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The information for this lesson was gathered from the following books: \*A Chance to Die ~ by Elisabeth Elliot \*Amy Carmichael of Dohnavur ~ by Frank L. Houghton \*Amy Carmichael, Rescuer of Precious Gems ~ by Janet and Geoff Bengé

### Notes

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**Heroes of the faith - Lesson 8**  
**Amy Carmichael - Missionary to India**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. How did Amy enter the temple to get the information she needed?
2. What was Amy's final ministry?
3. What event provoked Amy to become a missionary?
4. Initially, what sickness did Amy suffer from?
5. What are the three lessons you must learn before committing to a lifetime of missionary service?
  - A.
  - B.
  - C.
6. Why was Amy's answer to prayer "NO" so significant in the future of the ministry God had placed upon her heart?
7. How did Jeremiah 33:3 affect Amy's life?
8. What lessons can be learned from Amy's life in regards to finances?
9. "Serving the Lord in any way she could" - What does that statement mean to you?

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10. What words spoken by Hudson Taylor stayed with Amy?
11. When did Amy decide to become a missionary and what two words from God set her in motion?
12. What were the two questions the Buddhist man said to her?
  - a.
  - b.
13. Who was Preena?
14. How did Preena change the course of Amy's ministering?
15. Define Philippians 2:3 *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.* (while reviewing your answer to question # 8)

**True/false**

- Amy did all that she did to please her blessed Loving Saviour.
- God knows what is best for us and answers our prayers accordingly.
- When we trust in the Lord, He will provide for our needs.



Scripture memorization, write out these verses on the back on this page:  
Jeremiah 33:3; 1 Corinthians 3:12-13; Philippians 2:3  
(Must be in KJV)

Any questions?