

New Man Story

Barry Lunney — The Power of Prayer

Barry Lunney Sr, a legendary Arkansas high school football coach, retired from Bentonville High School in 2015 after a highly successful career. His combined eight state championships at Bentonville High and Southside High in Fort Smith tied him with former Barton coach Frank McClellan for the second-most in Arkansas' state history.

However, all of that would likely not have happened had it not been for the encouragement and support of Bill Stencil, Barry's football coach at Northside High in Fort Smith. It was Bill's influence which led Barry to decide that he would one day become a high school football coach. It was also Coach Bill's life as a Christian that led Barry to accept Christ at the age of sixteen. Barry refers to those two decisions as "defining moments" in his young life.

Later, everything was going along well for Barry, his wife and his three children at home until his daughter (the middle child) began making bad choices and became unmanageably rebellious at home. As Barry says, "I was losing my daughter...there were tears, lost sleep and struggles every day". It eventually got so bad that Barry and his wife had to ask their daughter to leave the house because of the effect her lifestyle was having on their whole family. After that, Barry and his wife prepared to receive a phone call that their daughter was dead. That's as bad as it gets.

Thankfully, Barry had become involved with a small group of Christian men some years earlier. He finally shared with them what he was going through with his daughter. He confessed he needed their help because he couldn't handle the problem on his own. Barry no longer cared about keeping up the appearance of a normal and happy family life. All bets were off as he stood helpless and in need of prayer with them before God.

Barry even felt helpless in prayer, not knowing how or what to pray. At his most broken moment he asked the Lord, "what should I pray?" That's when he heard the Lord directing him to pray that his daughter would be "miserable in her sin." As hard as it was for him to pray that prayer, he did so obediently for five months.

The rest of the story is an amazing testament to the power of prayer. Watch it unfold in the 7 minute video clip at vimeo.com/409066576.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever felt helpless in your ability to straighten out a wayward child?
2. Have you ever needed the help of praying friends more than keeping up appearances?
3. Have you experienced the power of prayer in your life (in no uncertain terms)?
4. Have you interceded with a friend in prayer when they were helpless on their own?