

# A Stiff-necked People



## Let's read the Bible

**Deu** 30:9-18  
**Jos** 6:11-20  
 14:5-15

## We consider together

Ask your parent if they have prayed a lot because of you. Did this help your parent grow in their faith in God?



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Our God is alive, and even now He is hard at work. He listens to His people's prayers, and goes to people to help. This is to His many people around the world, of course.

This is the true story of something that had happened to a Balangao father living in the mountainous areas of the Luzon island in the northern Philippines. Five of his children had died, and in order to save his daughter, Tekla, the father decided to sell his soul to a demon. The demon caused much trouble for the father and Tekla, but one day Tekla decided to become a Christian after hearing the sermons of a travelling pastor who came to the village time to time.

God answered Tekla's prayers, and sent a Bible translation missionary from the United States. When Joanne Shetler came to the village, Tekla became a language helper (a person who teaches and helps with the local language for Bible translations). Joanne Shetler was in a terrible airplane accident one day, but through this accident, God was actually able to bless Tekla and the Balangaos.

Tekla prayed as she passed over the last hill. "Heavenly Father, may it be as You will. Like those people who say bad things about us, maybe it is shameful that we would make a Bible in our own lowly language. If this is so, then we will accept our punishment. It is okay if Juami (Joanne) dies. But Lord, if this is not true, and if you really wish for us to translate a Bible into our own language, then let Juami live, and not die. Give us proof that Juami will live. When I call out her name, 'Juami', and if she replies, 'Tekla,' then I will trust that you will save her."

The room Joanne lay in was full of people. They

were keeping Joanne company as a present to her until her last hour. Joanne could make out Tekla's voice in the midst of all the noise. "Juami, Juami!"

"Tekla, Tekla, I am okay. I will be okay!" Joanne did not have an ounce of strength in her voice, but she said it in a small whisper. Tekla faced all the crying people in the room and said, "Juami will come alive again. Juami will live!"

The Balangaos people did not take Tekla seriously, as they looked upon Joanne's bloody body and her bulging eyes. "Tekla, she is already on her deathbed... she is barely breathing." Tekla replied. "God will save her; she will be fine! I know this to be true!" And Tekla stayed by Joanne's side all night. (Joanne Shetler story, pp. 26-27)

Tekla was not the only one to keep Joanne company; other Christian Balangaos believers stayed by Joanne's bedside. They prayed, "Lord, please do not let Joanne die. The Bible translations are not finished yet. Please let her live. Please, Lord, let us finish the Bible translations."

While in great pain because of her accident, Joanne was very happy that her prayers had been answered. This was because Joanne had prayed for the Balangaos people to be able to experience a sincere prayer to God. The Balangaos people prayed like fire that night. Gideon was not the only one to receive an answer from God. Even today, many missionaries and new believers of Christ experience their prayers being answered by God. Let us praise His holy name!