



A
TREE *of* LIFE

*Meditations
for Men*

TIM CRUSE

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Meditations for Men
Volume 1

TIM CRUSE


SHINING LIGHT
P·U·B·L·I·S·H·I·N·G
Shining the Light

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Dedication



This booklet is dedicated to my father Kermit L. Cruse. He taught me the value of hard work - “Son, if you’re ever going to have anything in life, you’re going to have to work for it.”

Raised on a farm, my father has never been afraid of hard work. I thank God for the work ethic I saw in him.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Cruse". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

THE HOLD OF HEAVEN

“Behold my servant, whom I uphold”

Isaiah 42:1

*I*t is of great comfort to know that we are in the hold of heaven. God’s grip of grace clings to us through the trials of life and leads us day by day.

There are times when all human support is taken from us. As with Job, the joy brought by his children, the encouragement his wife gave, and the understanding that long-time friends provided was gone. Though tossed about on the sea of deep discouragement, God somehow buoyed him up time and again.

Perhaps the boisterous winds of weariness or the thunderclouds of temptation are bearing down upon you today; dread within, sinking without. The moment Peter cried, “...*Lord, save me.*” “*Immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*” (Matthew 14:30,31) The Lord admonished Peter while he was still in the water and *then* pulled him into the boat.

You have cried to the Lord and you are still in the water. Let Him teach you something while you are dangling between victory and defeat. You are in His hold. He will pull you aboard the boat of deliverance before long - after He has deepened your faith.

“...for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.”

Psalm 37:24



TAKEN ACHAN

“I saw...coveted...and took.”

Joshua 7:21

The sin of covetousness has hastened many men toward needless loss. Their habits and hobbies have taken them away from their responsibilities in the home and the local church. The sweetness of the fruit of their momentary enjoyment ends in bitter aftertaste as they often sacrifice the eternal on the altar of the temporal.

The direction of Achan’s look determined the outcome of his lineage. His eyes drifted. His desire wandered. His hedge dropped. His heritage cried, “Why, daddy, why!?” They all died.

Who or what are you looking at? What are you longing for? Is your family safe?

“Transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness.”

Proverbs 11:6

“He that is cruel troubleth his own flesh”

Proverbs 11:17

“He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind”

Proverbs 11:29

“He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house.”

Proverbs 15:27

THERE SHALL BE A PLACE

“Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there...”

Deuteronomy 12:11

*I*n a world of darkness, there should be a place where one can go to find the light of life. There should be a place where the seeking can find understanding, the hungry-hearted can find manna from above and those bound by sin’s chains can be set free.

With volume and vice on every hand, there should be a place providing refuge for the weary soul. There should be a place where holy things are still holy and the worship of God goes beyond a cheap imitation of what the world already offers.

There should be a place of sacredness, sanctuary and service in a world profane and self-absorbed. This place should be a place where God is still great and His ways are higher than our ways. A place where thanksgiving translates into thanksgiving. A place where Christ is high and lifted up and the Scriptures are sufficient.

Is there such a place to be found? Are there such blessings to be had? Where should we look? What should we expect? How shall we know?

Examine God’s Word dear friend. For the New Testament Christian, there is a place for all the above. According to I Timothy 3:15, it is “...*the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*” Read also Psalm 26:8; 89:7.

THE DAVID PRINCIPLE

“And the king said, Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him?”

II Samuel 9:3

David was a man after God’s own heart. He wanted to have the heart God has, to see things as He sees them and treat others the way He treats them. As a result, God’s character of loyalty and kindness was demonstrated through David’s life.

Hebrews 6:10 states, *“For God is not unrighteous to forget your works and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”* This aspect of God’s character is summarized by the David principle: *“It’s not, What have you done for me lately? But, What have you done for me ever?”*. Every act of faith carried out in God’s name has never nor will ever be forgotten. He not only remembers the kindnesses we have shown unto Him, but will return them upon our own heads and those of our children.

Who has shown you some kindness that you need to acknowledge? Who does God want you to initiate kindness toward? We demonstrate the loyal character of God when we remember and return the kindnesses of others toward us and the ones we love.

“Thine own friend, and thy father’s friend, forsake not.”

Proverbs 27:10



THE NATHAN PRINCIPLE

“...and Zabud the son of Nathan was the principle officer, and the king’s friend”

I Kings 4:5

Why was Zabud so honored by King Solomon? Why was he such a close friend to the wisest man who ever lived?

Trace it back in God’s Word and you will find that his father Nathan was a true friend to Solomon’s father David. By honoring God, Nathan always came down on the side of right and of that which God ordained, whether it was popular or not. Zabud was the friend of God’s anointed for Israel because his father was the friend of God’s anointed.

In his early days, King Solomon rallied men and honored loyalty. Those who followed Adonijah, the one not ordained by God, were scattered and so were their children. Many a man has lost his children for Christ’s sake because he dishonored the servant of the Lord.

The Nathan principle is thus - *“Always on the side of right.”* May we recognize what is right before God and come down on the side of right in whatever issue we are grappling with at present. Our children will be glad we did.

“Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.”

Psalm 92:12,13



THE HOSEA PRINCIPLE

*“Go yet, love a woman...according to the love of
the LORD toward the children of Israel.”*

Hosea 3:1

God’s prophets often suffer as a testimony to the sufferings of divine love spurned. Hosea was commanded to marry an adulterous bride who would picture the unfaithfulness of God’s people to Him and His undying love toward them.

Hosea’s heart, as God’s, was broken and deeply wounded repeatedly by one who was blinded by pleasure and could not see the cords of love which kept his heart tied to hers. The many waters of disagreement and disappointment could not quench the fire of love and loyalty kindled within him.

Always remember that your marriage sustains your love versus your love sustaining your marriage. While the emotion of love ebbs and flows, your commitment to God to stay together through better or worse keeps your union afloat. Desire and delight return just as sure as the high tide.

Pray to God that He will preserve you in the face of fleshly enticements and enable you to practice the abiding devotion of the Hosea principle - *“Many waters cannot quench love.”*

*“...and thou shalt not be for another man:
so will I also be for thee.”*

Hosea 3:3

THE SOLOMON PRINCIPLE

“Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for it is his portion. Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God.”

Ecclesiastes 5:18, 19

*A*ll-gotten gain always comes with the attached string of eventual guilt. That is why there are many who are increased with goods yet decreased in their ability to enjoy them.

A known principle we see and illustrated by Solomon is: “Contentment is not having all you want, but wanting all you have.” Only the Lord Jesus Christ can give us the capacity to rejoice over what God has given us already. Thank God today for what you have. Contentment and gratitude are opposite sides of the same coin.

One preacher said this about marriage, “If you ever leave your wife, you will not leave her on the same day you are on your knees thanking God for her.” A grateful heart is the foundation of contentment in life.

ARE YOU AVAILABLE?

“The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.”

Judges 6:12

God oftentimes sees more in us than we see in ourselves. While we see our own insufficiencies, He sees His ability to do mighty things through the lives of those who will take Him at His Word.

Gideon thought that he did not have the lineage, the standing among men, nor the possessions to do something eternally significant with his life. What he learned was that God was looking for a man who would trust Him completely to do what only He could do through him. It was not about ability; it was about availability of life and nobility of character.

Many are those who have made themselves available to defend the freedoms of our nation. Some gave the ultimate sacrifice of their lives. God give us more men who will make themselves available to fulfill their duties toward Him, their families and our country at all cost.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

Romans 12:1

I CANNOT DO IT

“How shall I give thee up?”

Hosea 11:8

*T*his chapter begins with God recounting His love for His people. As a father deeply loves his newborn son, so doth the Lord love His own.

Though their Father had taught them and cared for them, these children were bent on doing their own thing. Failing to be drawn back by His goodness, the time had come for Him to deal with their sin. He was wroth. They were deserving. The clouds of provoked wrath brooded over them.

At the height of His anger, with His heart wrangling within, God declared, *“How shall I give thee up?”* - or *“How can I cut you off?”* *“How can I forsake you?”* *“How can I give up on you?”* Our covenant-keeping God could not break His promise and walk away from His people.

What He has promised us - *“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,”* *“Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it,”* *“He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ”* - He will fulfill.

May this text ring in our ears and spring from our lips when pressures increase in our family life, our hearts become weary in our church life and we feel that the pain of leaving could not be greater than the pain of staying - *“How shall I give thee up?”* And, may our answer be, *“I cannot do it; by God’s grace, I will not.”*

A LIFE THAT MATTERS

“Therefore their days did he consume in vanity”

Psalm 78:33

We only pass through life but once. Many of us already have a number of miles under our feet. We do not know the measure of our days and surely do not want to waste the ones we have remaining.

Charles Spurgeon said, “None live so fruitlessly and so wretchedly as those who allow sense and sight to override faith, and their reason and appetite to domineer over their fear of God.” Unbelief, pride, and self-will when added together equals emptiness and multiplies sorrow.

“What a nothing is our life” apart from divine grace and purpose. God help us to get a hold of His will and live a life that matters. Every day spent in His service can be filled to overflowing.

“According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

Philippians 1:20, 21

SOME BETTER THAN NONE

"...but I will grant them some deliverance"

II Chronicles 12:7

*R*ehoboam was lifted up in pride. He thought he was strong enough without God and His Word. His own strength became his greatest weakness.

After God pronounced judgment, Rehoboam humbled himself. The consequence of his sin, however, was not totally removed. The mercies of God prevented his utter destruction as God gave him *"some deliverance."*

Be reminded that some mercy is better than no mercy. Some blessing is better than no blessing. Some health is better than no health. Some family is better than no family. Some companionship is better than no companionship. Some opportunity for God is better than no opportunity for God.

I would rather dwell on and work to strengthen the one percent I do have than to complain about and make excuse because of the ninety-nine percent I do not have. Instead of brooding over some loss, let us rejoice and thank God for some gain.

"For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

Psalm 84:10, 11

SPEAK UP

“Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace”

II Kings 7:9

How long has it been since you told someone how to be saved? Have you made any attempts of late to obey your Lord by declaring the good tidings of salvation by grace through faith?

The contemplations of the weightier matters of life are bearing down upon many in this day of political instability and economic uncertainty. There are people all around us that God is dealing with and are open to consider the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A noted preacher once asked, “Why should anyone hear the gospel twice when there are those who have never heard it once?” God help us to shine the light of gospel knowledge to the ones who will cross our path today.

“But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

Proverbs 4:18

LIGHT'S DELIGHT

*“The Jews had light, and gladness,
and joy and honour.”*

Esther 8:16

The happiest people I know are those who walk in the light of God's Word. They have purposed to obey God by faith and find themselves pursued by gladness, joy, and honour.

Many want God to reverse His order, however. They want Him to give them gladness, joy, and honour first. If so, they will consider walking in His light. If not, they conclude, “God missed out on all I could have done for Him,” as though He was at their mercy instead of they at His.

Friend, we must realize that God is not on trial in our lives; we are! As we walk in the light He gives, He gives us more light. We must “*believe to see*” gladness, and joy, and honour as we walk according to the light He has given.

*“... to him that ordereth his conversation
aright will I shew the salvation of God.”*

Psalm 50:23

*“Order my steps in thy word: and let not any
iniquity have dominion over me.”*

Psalm 119:133

UNCOMMON BLESSINGS

“I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city”

Amos 4:7

*A*ccording to Job 37:16, the balancings of the clouds belongs to God. Because of His goodness, He allows it to rain upon the just and the unjust alike. However, there is a principle in this passage of scripture we must understand.

God can give rain or withhold rain according to the determinate counsel of His own will. He has the sovereign power and ability to give to some that which He withholds from others. Not everyone is going to be directly blessed by Him beyond the common blessings experienced by all.

“Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed” was the prayer of Jabez. More of us should long for the uncommon blessings of God in our lives. Though many are spiritually barren, we can *“be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river; and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit”* (Jeremiah 17:8).

URGENCY BEGETS FERVENCY

“It is time for thee, LORD, to work:”

Psalm 119:126

There comes a time in the life of every Christian man wherein he needs God to do what only He can. Our prayer to God then goes beyond a mere form or routine. As in James 5:16, it becomes fervent, urgent, heated.

I think of the needs in my own life and family, the needs of many dear people within our church family and the need of our community for Christ. Praise God we have a Savior who is greater than our needs!

Purpose today to draw nigh unto God in prayer. Plan a daily time to seek the Lord or lengthen the time you are seeking Him already. Set aside an extended time to immerse yourself in the scriptures and in prayer for guidance or provision.

No doubt, there is a need for God to do what only He can in your life. The more urgent the need, the more fervent the prayer. It is time to seek the LORD.

“Ask, [and keep on asking] and it shall be given you; seek [and keep on seeking] and ye shall find; knock, [and keep on knocking] and it shall be opened unto you.”

Matthew 7:7

HE IS NEAR

“The Lord is at hand”

Philippians 4:5

There are times in the Christian walk when the Lord seems far away. The dew of His conscious presence no longer saturates the contemplations of our heart. The clouds of unbelief hide the Son from us and we feel all alone.

God, however, clearly tells us in His Word that He is ever present. Because He is at hand we know He is near. He is looking on. He could come at any moment and take us home with Him in heaven.

We also know that He could change our present circumstances if He willed. For them to remain means He has a purpose in our difficulties. There is a greater good to be realized beyond our immediate deliverance.

Perhaps you are expending much energy grappling with why you are facing something today. Know that the Lord is at hand. His hand is not shortened that it cannot save and His ear is not heavy that it cannot hear. Accept where you are and trust God to guide you from here. Let patience have her perfect work.

*He is near when He seems so far,
Our blessed Saviour knows where you are.
With nail-pierced hands to hold and to guide,
The tempted and touched will stand by your side.*

MAN VERSUS MEPHISTOPHELES



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This is a portrait of a young man about to lose his soul to the Devil. Satan has declared, “*checkmate.*” Famous U.S. chess player Paul Morphy examined this picture in 1861 and according to legend pronounced, “*Young man, you have one move yet!*” Apparently, the painter had overlooked one possible move.

Satan whispers to us, “*Checkmate, you are finished!*” Always remember that with the Lord Jesus Christ, “*you have one move yet!*”

JUST ENOUGH

“Be ye holy; for I am holy.”

I Peter 1:16

*W*ould you consider yourself a consecrated Christian? One who is wholly given to God, seeking to honour Him in body and spirit in every way possible? Or, is there an area of your life that still belongs to yourself; some area that you “sort of” honour God in, but do not want to go “too far” in or “miss out” because of?

Churches abound with “casual” Christians in this hour. Those who are careless in their walk with God, in the way they live, in the work they do, in the witness they give and in the words they say. “Just enough” to soothe a quickened conscience, but not “too much” to satisfy self. “That’s not my personal conviction” or “I don’t look at it that way” or “I’m not called to full-time service” or “I’ve got a life apart from serving God all the time, you know” serve as umbrellas to shield the half-hearted. “*Rich and increased with goods,*” we have need of nothing - not even God. Who are we kidding, but ourselves?

While we withdraw from the call to consecration, we readily devise ways to discount the commitment of others. Be reminded that “like character attracts like character.” If you walk in the counsel of the unconsecrated and stand in the way of the lip-servers, it will not be long before you are sitting in the seat of the contemptuous. Be careful in developing a contempt for the holy things of God. He will not hold those guiltless who do.

MIGHTY IN THE MIDST

“The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty”
Zephaniah 3:17

The capitalized name “LORD” means “Jehovah - the self-existent One.” Our God is the true and living God. In His omnipresence, He is everywhere at the same time. In His omniscience, He is all-knowing. In His omnipotence, He is all-powerful.

Psalm 113:5,6 declares, *“Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high. Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!”* What a wonder to think that the mighty God of heaven can be known personally and, as our text indicates, is in the very midst of the lives of His people.

God is with us in the midst of our circumstances, our fiery furnaces, our storms, our times of want, our loneliness, our sickness, our family stress.

Praise God that He is not on the outside of our lives looking in, but on the inside looking out for us.

“He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.”

Daniel 3:25

A FOUNDATION OF FAITH

*“...that ye may possess this good land,
and leave it for an inheritance for your
children after you for ever.”*

I Chronicles 28:8

A wealthy businessman once stated, “I started out with an awful lot handed to me.” He took the work his father left him and turned it into a billion dollar enterprise.

King David reminded his son Solomon in I Chronicles 26:27,28; 28:8,20 and chapter 29 of all that he and others had provided for him to use in building the Temple of God. Children being reared in Christ-honouring homes where the foundation of faith is being laid are so much further down the road in accomplishing great things for God than they realize sometimes. The shoulders of those before them are providing a launching pad into life many do not have.

Let us be willing to pay the price to seek a godly seed and a polished shaft as we give our children every opportunity possible to be greatly used in the service of the KING.

*Children for the Master,
His name uphold.
Children for the father,
His name unfold.*

ANOTHER VESSEL

“And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.”

Jeremiah 18:4

Each of our lives has been marred by sin. That is why we need to be made over again. The word *wrought* teaches us that God can take something useless and make it useful. His grace goes deeper than our sin. With one turn of the wheel, our Heavenly Potter can make, unmake, or remake our lives.

Astronomers estimate there are 100 billion galaxies in the known universe. To count the number of stars in the Milky Way galaxy alone would require counting three stars per second non-stop for 2,000 years. Yet, Psalm 147:4 declares God’s infinite wisdom and power: *“He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.”*

God has the power to fix the damage sin has done in your life and restore you to a place of fellowship and usefulness. Do not disqualify yourself because you are weak; God uses us, weaknesses and all. Never leave God out of the equation of your life - *“With God all things are possible.”*

“If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.”

II Timothy 2:21

SOME TO HONOUR

“But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.”

II Timothy 2:20

*O*ur name carries with it a testimony. When others hear our name, they immediately associate it with the character we demonstrate. We are either vessels of honour or vessels of dishonour.

The day is coming when your character will be put to the test by an issue that arises between you and someone else. You can respond honourably by seeking a hearing with this individual and a peaceful resolve or you can stiffen your neck and harden your heart as you dishonour God’s name and your own name.

There are enough burdens to carry in our struggle with the world, the flesh and the devil. Proverbs 6:3 states, *“Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend.”*

God help us to have a testimony of honour and not to carry burdens He never intended for us to bear.

“I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful...”

II Samuel 20:19

ONE MORE TIME

“He brought me up”

Psalm 40:2

*W*hat horrible pit are you sinking in today? Have you been trapped by the quicksand of sin? Perhaps you are in the mire of frustration and wonder if you will ever rise again.

Though Jonah had failed the Lord and was in the deep of defeat, he said, *“Yet I will look again unto Thy holy temple.”* God heard his cry. He then declared, *“Salvation (or deliverance) is of the LORD.”* God not only delivers us when we trust Christ as Savior, but He continues to deliver us throughout the Christian life.

Psalm 40 applies to any time we have lost our song and are waiting patiently in prayer for divine intervention.

The Lord Jesus Christ has sought us out and brought us up many times over. Do not let your last prayer be your last prayer. Do not let the last time you read your Bible be the last time you read your Bible. Do not let the last time you went to church be the last time you go to church. *“Look again”* one more time to Him for deliverance.

*“I waited patiently for the LORD; and
He inclined unto me, and heard my cry.”*

Psalm 40:1

OUR SHOULDERS

"...they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders."

Isaiah 49:22

Our shoulders are held high in praise
for the godly seeds we have seen raised.
Our shoulders are bowed in humble thanks
for the privilege of training you to enter
the Lord's ranks.
Our shoulders, they feel the commitment,
the effort, and wear, of all it has taken to
show you we truly care.
Our shoulders are the solid rocks on which
you sighed, they are the pillars of security
on which you cried.
Our shoulders have been exercised and
strengthened, and the opportunities
of those after you lengthened.
Our shoulders bear the impress of where you
once stood, they have provided a launching
pad into life the way they should.
Remember our shoulders, steadfast and true,
for the responsibility of these shoulders
will one day fall on you.

Stand fast men! Teach your children to do the same.

PAY YOUR OWN WAY

*“Neither will I offer...unto the LORD my God of
that which doth cost me nothing.”*

II Samuel 24:24

*I*t has been said that every tub must stand on its own bottom; which being interpreted means every man must pay his own way. As such, personal responsibility is one of the great lessons of life.

Man has been commanded by God to work by the sweat of his brow and to provide for his own. Each individual must maximize his measure of ability and opportunity in life and remember *“in all labour there is profit.”*

As a young man growing up in a broken home, I learned to work hard to provide for my necessities and to take care of things. I knew that sympathy from others would not feed me when I was hungry nor clothe me when I was cold. I was not to expect others to do for me what I must do for myself, nor assume upon another's generosity by asking for that which should be offered instead.

Because character is consistent, the same man who does right by his family is the same man who will do right by the church. Good men do not expect something for nothing, and they know that nothing in life is free. The very fact that you must help some men means that you will not be able to help them. Those who do not appreciate the sacrifices of others are those who are unwilling to sacrifice themselves. Where there is increase, you always find someone paying the price.

THE SUN STILL SHINES

“With clouds he covereth the light; and commandeth it not to shine by the cloud that cometh betwixt.”

Job 36:32

Clouds do not extinguish the light of the sun; they simply cover it temporarily. No matter how dark it gets, beyond the clouds we find the sun unchanged in its radiance and warmth.

Spiritually speaking, God allows the clouds of sickness and sorrow to roll into our lives. Our days become long and dark. Our spirits sink low. Our faith begins to waver. Our minds begin to wonder: “Has God forgotten me?” “Has He failed to be gracious?” “Is His mercy clean gone forever?” “Will the sun ever shine again in my life?”

The Apostle Paul was exceedingly tossed with a tempest in Acts 27. The clouds covered the sun by day and the moon and stars by night. While those around him despaired their lives, God told the praying Paul that everyone would survive if they stayed with the ship.

Someone has said, “Sometimes God calms the storms of life, and sometimes God calms His children and lets the storms rage on.” As Paul sought and believed God, so must we. Stay with the ship of your family and church. Beyond the clouds of trial, the sun still shines.

“And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds: but the wind passeth, and cleanseth them.”

Job 37:21



MY PRAYER

“Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer”

Psalm 86:6

O King eternal, Lord of my soul,
Drive out the enemy of my heart and take control.
Thou art my Conqueror, Comfort, and Guide,
In the castle of Thy Word I humbly abide.

Keep by thy Spirit my mind upon the cross,
Reclaim the inward territory I have lost.
I am so helpless - sin's gulf is too wide,
Come quickly, Lord Jesus, and stand by my side.

Lead on Jehovah, I now clearly see,
The overcome overcome only through Thee.
Now empty and bare, my self-will has died,
Refuge of the ages in Thee I hide.

*“The name of the LORD is a strong tower:
the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.”*

Proverbs 18:10



*“But they that wait upon the LORD shall
renew their strength; they shall mount up
with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not
be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”*

Isaiah 40:31

WHILE THERE IS HOPE

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

Proverbs 22:6

The following poem was sent to my wife and I by a dear man of God on the occasion of our tenth wedding anniversary in 1997.

I took a piece of plastic clay
and idly fashioned it one day,
and as my fingers pressed it still
it moved and yielded to my will.

I came again when day was past,
the bit of clay was hard at last.
The form I gave it, still it bore,
and I could change that form no more.

My wife and I took five pieces of living clay,
and gently formed them day by day,
and molded with our power and art
these young boys soft and yielding hearts.

We come now when years are gone.
It is five men we look upon.
And they that early impress bear,
we thank the Lord we took time to care.

May God by His Spirit speak to each of us who have influence in the lives of precious children. Remember, the way for your influence to live after you die is to die to self while you live.

A WORD TO THE WISE

Every father should read one chapter of Proverbs per day in addition to his regularly scheduled Bible reading. Start on the first day of the month with chapter one, then the second chapter of the second day and so forth through chapter 31. To keep your marriage healthy, pay special attention to chapters 5-9.

*“For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb...Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house: Lest thou **give thine honour** unto others, and **thy years** unto the cruel: Lest strangers be filled with **thy wealth**; and **thy labours** be in the house of a stranger; **And thou mourn at the last...**”*

Proverbs 5:3, 8-11

***After the night of sin,
mourning does come.***

“And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her.”

Ecclesiastes 7:26

TREASURES OF TRUTH

*"I rejoice at thy word, as one
that findeth great spoil"*

Psalm 119:162

*A*s the spoils of battle go to the victor, so the treasures of truth go to those who prevail upon the flesh by appropriating the powerful armaments found in God's book of triumph. Proverbs 6:22,23 speaks of the bounty of hearing God's Word outwardly and writing it upon the tablets of our hearts inwardly:

"When thou goest, it shall lead thee, when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law a light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life."

Those discovering God's will for their lives are in His Word daily. Those whose testimonies and opportunities are preserved of God are in His Word daily. Those enjoying communion with God are in His Word daily. The headlights of Bible promises and the guardrails of Bible commandments keep us on the highway of abundant life in Christ (Proverbs 13:6).

Declare war upon your fleshly lusts. Get into God's Word and realize the spoils of the victorious Spirit-filled life!

Appendix

A FATHER'S SHINING EXAMPLE

My dear father walked with me the first six miles of the way. His counsel and tears and heavenly conversation on the parting journey are fresh in my heart as if it had been but yesterday; and tears are on my cheeks as freely now as then, whenever memory steals me away to the scene. His tears fell fast when our eyes met each other in looks for which all speech was vain! He grasped my hand firmly for a minute in silence, and then solemnly said: "God bless you, my son! Your father's God prosper you, and keep you from all evil!"

Unable to say more, his lips kept moving in silent prayer; in tears we embraced, and parted. I ran off as fast as I could; and, when about to turn a corner in the road where he would lose sight of me, I looked back and saw him still standing with head uncovered where I had left him gazing after me. Waving my hat in *adieu*, I was round the corner and out of sight in an instant. But my heart was too full and sore to carry me further, so I darted into the dyke to see if he yet stood where I had left him; and just at that moment I caught a glimpse of him climbing the dyke and looking out

for me! He did not see me, and after he had gazed eagerly in my direction for a while he got down, set his face towards home, and began to return, his head still uncovered, and his heart, I felt sure, still rising in prayers for me. I watched through blinding tears, till his form faded from gaze; and then, hastening on my way, vowed deeply and oft, by the help of God, to live and act so as never to grieve or dishonour such a father and mother as He had given me.

The appearance of my father when we parted has often through life risen vividly before my mind, and does so now as if it had been but an hour ago. In my earlier years particularly, when exposed to many temptations, his parting form rose before me as that of a guardian Angel. It is no pharisaism, but deep gratitude, which makes me here testify that the memory of that scene not only helped me to keep pure from the prevailing sins, but also stimulated me in all my studies, that I might not fall short of his hopes, and in all my Christian duties, that I might faithfully follow his shining example.

From *John G. Paton: Missionary
to the New Hebrides, 1891*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jim Cruse is the pastor of the Shining Light Baptist Church in Monroe, North Carolina. He became pastor on March 7, 1990, after serving as youth director at his home church for almost nine years.

Pastor Cruse trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour while a senior in high school on January 4, 1981. He surrendered to the call of God upon his life to preach forty-nine days later. He enrolled in Bible College that fall to prepare for the Lord's work. While in college, he met his wife Rebekah. God has since blessed them with seven sons and three daughters.

With conviction and compassion, Pastor Cruse stands firmly on God's Word. He is committed to proclaiming the gospel of Christ and to strengthening God's work in the home through the local church. His life's verses are Jeremiah 18:6, *"...cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand..."* and Galatians 6:9, *"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."*

For more information on his ministry, visit his website at StrengtheningTheHome.com.

GOD WANTS YOU IN HIS FAMILY

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." -John 3:16

THROUGH SIN YOU HAVE BEEN SEPARATED FROM GOD

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" -Romans 3:23

GOD IN MERCY SENT HIS SON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST TO BEAR THE JUDGMENT OF YOUR SIN ON THE CROSS

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." -Romans 5:8

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." -Romans 6:23

JESUS CHRIST AROSE VICTORIOUS OVER DEATH AND HELL

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:" -1 Corinthians 15:3,4

BY FAITH, YOU MUST ASK FORGIVENESS OF SIN AND TRUST CHRIST AS YOUR PERSONAL SAVIOUR

"I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." -Luke 13:3

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." -John 1:12

LOOK TO GOD RIGHT NOW AND CALL ON HIM IN PRAYER

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." -Romans 10:9,10,13

"Dear God, I know that I have sinned against you and am truly sorry for my sin. I believe Jesus died for me and rose again from the grave. I now trust Him as my Savior and Lord. Thank you for saving me. Help me to follow you. In Jesus' name, Amen."

- ☪ *Happy is the man that findeth wisdom...She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her:*
- ☪ *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life and he that winneth souls is wise.*
- ☪ *Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.*
- ☪ *A wholesome tongue is a tree of life...*

Proverbs 3:13, 18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4

These meditations for men are written to strengthen and to stir. May God deepen the roots of your faith as you read them.




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