

“HAVE I NOT COMMANDED YOU?
BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE;
DO NOT BE AFRAID, NOR BE DISMAYED,
FOR THE LORD YOUR GOD IS WITH YOU
WHEREVER YOU GO.”

JOSHUA 1:9

As Jesus Christ prepared to send the disciples for the first time throughout Israel with His message, He included in their instructions this admonition: *"Freely you have received, freely give,"* Mat 10:8. This six-word summary of grace explains the financial policy of the publications and audio ministries of Basic Training. All audio materials and publications are provided without charge to anyone who requests them. For a catalog of available materials write:



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"You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." (2 Timothy 2:3)

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DEDICATION

“Who Dares—Wins,” is the motto of the elite Australian SAS forces. Formed in 1957, the SAS is dedicated to superior performance under the extreme demands of combat environment by intensive training—intellectually and physically. These soldiers are required to push back the envelope of personal limitations so as to develop stamina, endurance, and tenacity far beyond normal boundaries, maintaining the ability to THINK under severe stress.

With the pursuit of excellence exemplified by this elite unit, their motto was chosen as the theme for the Crossroad Ministries Youth Camp, 1995. It is a privilege to dedicate this booklet to the youth of Australia, and the faithful people of Cross Road Bible Church, Perth, Australia.

My prayer is that you will be challenged to excel in your own life and to pursue the objective of becoming "*a good soldier of Jesus Christ*," 2Ti 2:3. You are living in a crisis generation. You will face tests and trials of courage and endurance, which have never been faced. Yet you can prevail, and you can make a difference. Stand firm in the faith of Jesus Christ. Prepare through the study of God's Word and prayer. Be as spiritually and physically fit as you can be. Be willing to risk everything on the plan of God for your life. For one axiom rings true and you may prove it to the world:

WHO DARES—WINS!

THANKS

My special thanks to my mother, Ruth Cunningham, for typing the original manuscript and for a lifetime of serving others.

—Gene Cunningham

Before you begin any study of the Word of God, take a few moments to make sure that you are in fellowship with God, filled with the Holy Spirit. Comprehension, like everything else in the Christian life, is a gift that can be appropriated only by faith. The Bible clearly lays out three requirements that must be met before we can expect to understand God's Word. All three require nothing from us but faith.

1. *We must be believers in Jesus Christ* (Joh 3:16).

It is impossible for unbelievers to understand the Word of God (1Co 2:14). Jesus declared to the leading religious leader of His day that apart from spiritual birth man is blind to the things of God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit ... You must be born again" (Joh 3:6).

2. *We must be filled with the Spirit* (1Co 2:12).

Only the Spirit of God knows the thoughts of God. As believers we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but when we sin, we break fellowship with God and cease to function in the power of the Spirit. When we confess our sins, God is always faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1Jo 1:9). The moment we confess, we are restored to fellowship and are again under the control of the Holy Spirit and, therefore, able to learn.

3. *We must approach in faith* (Heb 11:6).

Only when we approach in humility, with child-like faith, will the Word of God make sense to us (Mat 18:4; Heb 11:3). Where we find Scripture at odds with our ideas or our desires, we must submit to the authority of the Word. Intimacy, understanding, and power are reserved for those who are willing to do God's will (Joh 7:17).

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Citations

THE GREATEST WARRIOR OF HISTORY

C. M. Bryant, Maj. Ch. Paarng

Citation given: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty, while serving with the Special Forces on maneuvers in the Middle East in the face of hostile forces and certain death.

While on a recon mission, this soldier encountered twelve of the enemy. Without firing a shot, he was able to persuade them to defect to the friendly side and serve as liaison to higher command. Having a thorough knowledge of language, customs, tactics and strategy, he then led his men into enemy territory where for months they infiltrated enemy forces at all levels, including top-echelon command.

Their PSYOPS mission of turning enemy forces into friendly forces was so successful, literally thousands were saved from sure death. His indomitable spirit and incredible feats of courage against overwhelming odds, were nothing short of a miracle.

As the enemy became aware of his true identity and operational success, they closed the net around him. He was finally caught outside the ancient holy city of Jerusalem, having been betrayed by one of his own men. He was unjustly tried as a P.O.W., convicted, tortured, and then publicly executed at first light. His unwavering loyalty to his God and his

country in making the Supreme sacrifice represents the highest tradition of commitment and noble achievement, reflecting great credit on his cause and those he served. A Jew by birth, of the nation of Israel, his Hebrew name translated into English, is JESUS.

THE SON OF MAN

Philip Schaff

Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon. Without science and learning, He shed more light on things human and divine than all the philosophers and scholars combined. Without the eloquence of the School, He spoke words of life such as were never spoken before, nor since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet.

Without writing a single line, he has set more pens in motion and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, works of art, learned volumes, and sweet songs of praise than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times.

Born in a manger and crucified as a malefactor, He now controls the destiny of the civilized world, and rules a spiritual empire, which embraces one-third of the inhabitants of the globe.

To Dare is to Risk

To dare to run is to risk defeat

To dare to train is to risk the pain

To dare to gain is to risk losing

To dare to love is to risk rejection

To dare to heal is to risk being hurt again

To dare to lift is to risk being burdened

To dare to bring joy is to risk grief

To dare to stand is to risk standing alone

To dare all is to risk losing all

But to risk the dark is to dare for the light

To risk being wounded is to dare for hope

To risk a broken heart is to dare for love

To risk personal discomfort is to dare to
comfort others

To risk facing weakness is to dare the path of strength

To risk the unknown is to dare to learn

To risk persecution is to dare for reconciliation

To risk the dust of the arena is to dare for the
victor's stand

Because to risk the world is to dare for Jesus Christ

—Gene Cunningham

FIVE DARING PURSUITS

“But the people who know their God will display strength and take action. And those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder, for many days. Now when they fall they will be granted a little help, and many will join them in hypocrisy. And some of those who have insight will fall in order to refine, purge, and make them pure, until the end time; because it is still to come at the appointed time.” (Dan 11:32b–35) NASB

This passage is a prophecy of the daring exploits of the Jewish evangelists of the Tribulation Period—the dark ages yet to come (Rev 7:4–8). They will be elite, spiritual commandos of Jesus Christ.

However, the passage also reflects the actual experiences of Daniel and his friends. Taken as prisoners-of-war when Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem in 606 B.C., they became extremely effective in covert and unconditional spiritual warfare. They led daring lives and won the greatest of prizes—the approval of God.

1 THEY KNEW THEIR GOD

In a time of apostasy and degeneracy very much like our own, they dared to seek a true knowledge of God. For them, it was not enough just to know **about** Him—they wanted to know Him personally.

2 THEY DEVELOPED SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

It is a basic principle of life that strength can only be developed by repeated exertion against opposing force. They consistently stood against the temptations and the moral climate of their day. They were committed to daily routine of study, prayer, and obedience.

3 THEY WERE MEN OF ACTION

The Scripture says, “*faith without works is dead*” (Jam 2:17, Jam 2:26). The convictions they held demanded investment in the lives of those around them. They were gladiators, not spectators, in life’s arena.

4 THEY EXERCISED LEADERSHIP

It is the duty of “*those who have insight*” to “*give understanding*” to others. The best leaders first must be good students. Those who have no respect for authority are unfit to exercise it upon others. Those who know the way must lead those who do not.

5 THEY SUFFERED, YET PREVAILED

All men suffer. It is part of life. But the suffering here is persecution arising from unjust hatred. This is “*persecuted for righteousness’ sake*” (Mat 5:10–12; 1Pe 3:14). By meeting their undeserved sufferings with the courage and tenacity of faith, they actually became even greater men.

It is the purpose of this little volume to challenge the teens and young adults of Australia and around the world to dare to be different, to dare to stand alone if necessary. For only he **who dares, wins!**

I. DARE TO SEEK GOD AND WIN LIFE— ETERNAL AND ABUNDANT

*“But the people who know their God
will display strength and take action.”*

Dan 11:32 (NASB, emphasis added)

To truly know God in a personal sense is the highest goal to which man can aspire. The great adventurer-missionary, the Apostle Paul, summarized the objective of his life with these five words, “*That I may know Him,*” Phi 3:10. Yet the knowledge of God is frightening to man. In confronting His absolute righteousness, we come face-to-face with our own unrighteousness. It has been said by someone:

*We laugh at the fears of a child
afraid of the dark.*

*What can we do but weep over grown men
who fear the light?*

Unbelieving men will often ask, “How can I know there is a God?” When this occurs, unfortunately Christians fall all over themselves trying to offer proofs, and in so doing take a weak defensive position doomed to defeat.

Instead, we should take an offensive position of strength, based on the Word of God. Jesus’ response

to a similar foolish question by religious leaders was, “*you are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God,*” Mat 22:29. He did not play into their hands.

What does the Word of God have to say about how we can first know if there is a God, and then how we can know Him personally? Note our passage says, “*The people who know their God.*” You must take Him as your own—if you dare!

CREATION TESTIFIES OF GOD

First, the Bible declares that men are inexcusable in not knowing God. This is because all creation is a visible witness to His existence. Note Rom 1:19–20, which says, “*because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse*” (NKJV emphasis added).

Five truths are found here:

1. Creation reveals God’s existence **to** men.
2. The evidence is **clearly seen**.
3. The truth of the evidence is **understood**.
4. Therefore, the knowledge is **within** them.
5. Consequently, they are **without excuse**.

The next time someone poses the question, why not point these things out to them? **Dare to be bold!**

CONSCIENCE TESTIFIES OF GOD

Secondly, and confirming the fact that the truth is **within** them, Scripture teaches that God has imprinted His existence upon man's conscience.

"He has put eternity in their hearts." Ecc 3:11b

"For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things contained in the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them."

Rom 2:14–15 (NASB, emphasis added)

Society today is defeated because we have allowed moral degenerates to convince us that they do not know the difference between right and wrong. Yet Scripture teaches that a guilty conscience is a reminder that we are all accountable to a Holy God!

EXPERIENCE TESTIFIES OF GOD

In Acts 17, Paul addressed some of the most subtle and brilliant minds of the ancient world in Athens, the center of philosophy at that time. In the

midst of countless hundreds of altars dedicated to various gods, Paul saw an altar “*TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.*” He spoke straight from the shoulder on the strength of Scripture when he said:

“Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: ‘TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘for we are also His offspring,’” Act 17:22–28 (emphasis added)

Also in Act 14:16–17, on another occasion, Paul said, “*who in bygone generations allowed all nations*

to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”

From these passages, it is evident that man knows there is a God, and has all necessary evidence to seek Him and if man does not, he is without any excuse!

HOW CAN WE FIND AND KNOW GOD?

This is an honest question, whereas “how can I know God exists,” is not! The prophet Jeremiah recorded God’s own answer, “*you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for me with all your heart,*” Jer 29:13.

The search to know God will necessarily lead to His fullest revelation and greatest witness—Jesus Christ. Consider the following statements from the Gospel of John:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Joh 1:1

“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” Joh 1:4

“That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.” Joh 1:9

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Joh 1:14

“And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.” Joh 1:16

“No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” Joh 1:18

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Joh 3:16

“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” Joh 3:19

From these passages some simple conclusions can be made:

1. Jesus Christ is God.
2. His earthly life brought light to all men.
3. This light has enlightened all men.
4. He became flesh to fully reveal God to men.

5. Those who receive Him by faith have eternal life.
6. Those who reject Him do so in full knowledge of their error—but love darkness rather than light.
7. Rejection of Jesus Christ is the only basis for eternal judgment.

Is it any wonder Jesus said in Joh 14:6, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me*”? Will you dare to seek God? Will you dare to know Him through Jesus Christ? If so, you will win not only eternal life, but also abundant life on this earth. Jesus said, “*I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly,*” Joh 10:10.

“*God is preparing His heroes. And when the opportunity comes, He can fit them into their places in a moment. And the world will wonder where they came from.*” A. B. Simpson

Will you dare to be one of them? **Who dares—wins!**

Questions for Further Study

1. Note the evidences in the lives of Daniel and his friends that they knew Him as their God. (Dan 1:8–9, Dan 1:20, Dan. 2:17–18, Dan 3:12, Dan. 6:1–10)
2. What is the promise of Heb 11:6 to those who seek God?
3. How can one gain faith according to Rom 10:17?
4. What is the nature of faith based on Heb 11:1?
5. What is the assurance of those who believe in Jesus Christ, from reading 1Jo 5:11–13?

II. DARE TO DEVELOP SPIRITUAL STRENGTH—WIN VICTORY IN LIFE

*“But the people who know their God
will display strength and take action.”*

Dan 11:32 (NASB, emphasis added)

FAITH IS POWER

A life of faith is a life of power. How can this be, since faith is essentially an admission of helplessness? The secret here is that God's perfect strength takes the place of our weaknesses. Paul states it this way:

“And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me ... for when I am weak, then I am strong.” 2Co 12:9–10b

It is in acknowledging our own frailty and helplessness, then turning to God for the supply of His power, that we are able to “display strength” before the world. In the Hebrew, the phrase “will display strength” is in the *hiphil* stem. Literally it means, “to cause to display.” The power is not their own, but God's. The verb *chazak* means, “to become strong, strengthen, prevail, be courageous.” This word speaks

of inner strength of the soul. Since it is also in the imperfect tense, it could be translated, “to keep on causing to become strong.” In other words, it is progressive. They are getting stronger and stronger! How does this happen? They keep meeting their trials with faith!

“Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, whose heart is set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a spring; the rain also covers it with pools. They go from strength to strength.” Psa 84:5–7a

Genuine spiritual power is the result of trusting God both in dependence and obedience. Unless we have faith to depend upon Him (our weakness), we will not have faith to obey Him (His strength). This is why if we are to go “from strength to strength,” we first must pass “from faith to faith,” Rom 1:17. And since “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God,” Rom 10:17, we can only increase faith if we grow in the Word of God.

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightfully dividing then word of truth.” 2Ti 2:15

“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” 2Pe 3:18

The method of building strength is to apply God's Word to your daily problems and pressures. We often wish we could live someone else's life, or change our circumstances for those of another. No doubt, Daniel often felt the same way. However, God plans our life, and if we are to build strength it must be done in our world.

It takes great strength to stand for high principles, for if you do, you will likely stand alone. Remember that your strength will never be any greater than the goals and principles to which you dedicate yourself.

"The sight of a man saying 'no' with his bare hands is one of the things that most mysteriously and profoundly stirs the hearts of men." Andre Malraux

"An individual is more than just himself—he is himself, plus what he stands for." H. E. Fosdick

SPIRITUAL MUSCLE BUILDING

Always remember that in any arena, increasing strength demands meeting challenges greater than you are. You can only grow to the level to which you aspire, or **Dare!** In taking the risks of great challenge, you will inevitably fail. We will deal with this more fully in section V. But keep in mind, it is not how often you fall, but how many times you get back up that counts! In fact, it is often by falling in the struggle of life that we come to see our need for greater strength. Consider the following passage:

“And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”

Rev 12:11

The real test when we are under trial is whether we have the inner concentration and poise to focus on the promises of God's Word. We must learn to **think** victoriously.

Thinking

If you think you're beaten, you are.
If you think you DARE NOT, you don't.
If you'd like to win, but you think you can't,
It's almost a cinch you won't.

If you think you'll lose, you're lost,
For out in the world we find
Success begins with a fellow's will,
It's all in a state of mind.

If you think you're outclassed, you are.
You've got to think high to rise,
You've got to be sure of yourself before
You can ever win the prize.

Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster man,
But soon or late the one who wins
Is the one who THINKS he can.

—Walter Wintle

Questions for Further Study

1. Consider the sources of strength Daniel relied on in Dan 2:20–23. What were they?
2. What kind of strength was required of Shadrack, Meshach and Abed-nego in facing death, Dan 3:16–18?
3. How do you think this stand “caused power” to be added to their faith in light of Dan 3:25–30?
4. Do you think it is possible to develop or display this kind of faith without taking risks?
5. How many Christians do you know who are consistently taking risks because they are sure of their faith?
6. Why do you think so many Christians today choose instead to “play it safe”?
7. Which of these two will you choose to be?

III. DARE TO TAKE ACTION—WIN GOD’S APPROVAL

“But the people who know their God will display strength and take action.”

Dan 11:32 (NASB, emphasis added)

The word used here in Hebrew is *asah*, meaning “to produce from existing material.” Their developed strength in faith provides the foundation for taking action. To have strength without action is to display cowardice. The courageous Apostle Paul said, *“We then who are strong ought to bear with the weaknesses of those without strength, and not just please ourselves,”* Rom 15:1 (NASB). Paul was a man of action. He was able to take appropriate and necessary action because he first disciplined himself to develop strength.

TOTAL FITNESS

Paul knew that a winning attitude was the result of **working** to win (1Co 9:24–27). He was disciplined spiritually, mentally, and physically. On one occasion, he sent his missionary team ahead by ship so that he could go 25–30 miles overland by foot (Act 20:13). Possibly, he needed to get off by himself for prayer and reflection—but he did this while moving!

Many Christians excuse their lack of physical fitness by quoting 1Ti 4:8, “*for bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things.*” However, they do not understand the passage. The previous verse (1Ti 4:7) says, “*exercise yourself toward godliness.*” God made us whole people—spirit, soul, **and** body. He is at work to use the total person for His glory.

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1Th 5:23

There is certainly nothing glorifying to God in a lazy, unfit body! Furthermore, when it comes time in your life to “*take action,*” you will need a fit body to do it. Read over the list of Paul’s trials in 2Co 11:23–33. Don’t you think in addition to a great faith, these events required some mental and physical stamina? In the daring story of the shipwreck in Acts 27, Paul, a prisoner in chains at the time, actually took charge over both the ship’s captain and the centurion, saving the lives of all the passengers.

Throughout the terrible ordeal, Paul displayed a calm attitude, was encouraging to others, and displayed survival skills he had learned on his many mission journeys. This courage and skill did not just appear, it was developed through discipline, preparation, and practice. It is the attitude of the world

that Christians in general are timid, weak, and inadequate in dealing with life. One reason for this is that Christians tend to erroneously think that God will somehow miraculously endow them with wisdom and skill in time of crisis. Christians too often try to substitute words for action.

“For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.” 1Co 4:20

“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” Act 14:22b

“Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love.”
1Co 16:13–14

“Not the cry but the flight of the wild duck leads the flock to follow.” Wells

PREPARE FOR ACTION

Paul, like other biblical heroes, could take proper action because he was prepared ahead of time. Again:

“God is preparing his heroes. And when the opportunity comes, he can fit them into their places in a moment. And the world will wonder where they came from.” A. B. Simpson

Are you willing to be prepared? Will you be one who is able to display your spiritual, moral, and physical power by taking action? If so, you will need to be realistic. Avoidance of poor performance demands three things:

1. Planning

You must plan, not for the easy path, but for the difficult one. My philosophy to life is: “hope for the best, prepare for the worst, be ready for anything.” Consider possible tests to which you may be put, and plan realistically on how to overcome them.

2. Preparation

In addition to planning, you must prepare. In other words, “plan your work, then work your plan.” In today’s world, you will be faced with crises, some of them critical. Often the first one to five seconds will determine how you will respond, and may mean the difference of joy or sorrow, even life or death.

3. Practice

But planning and preparation, while vital, are not enough. There must be repetitious practice. How do you think David got so good with a sling? Do you think God suddenly zapped him with skill?

Look at 1Sa 17:34–37 and you will see that David had been prepared for that victory by realistic practice.

TAKE ACTION

Too often, it is easy to daydream about how you would handle a situation or deal with a test. But remember, “our business is not to see what dimly lies at a distance, but **to do** what clearly lies at hand.”

Many young people today complain of boredom and succumb to depression and even suicide, when we are living in the most thrilling time of history!

“Adventure is not outside a man, it is within.” David Grayson

The lives of great men and women of the Bible were thrilling and rewarding, not because they were different from anyone around them, but because they were motivated by faith to be prepared and then to seize the opportunities.

“Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much because they live in the grey twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat.” Teddy Roosevelt

Consider for just a moment your own local newspaper. In it you will find a realistic illustration of potential tests in life. How would you deal with each scenario, if the plan of God saw fit to place you in it?

*“Everyone thinks of changing the world,
but no one thinks of changing himself.”* Leo
Tolstoy

As I scanned through the paper one morning, I read the following headlines and stories:

- Residents Gather to “Stand Up and Stand Together” Against Crime
- Small Child Injured in Car Wreck, Mother Dies
- Several Injured in Fire
- Woman Robbed of Valuables on Street

BE DECISIVE

We never know when a crisis may strike. But the odds are that we will face such tests as above. When this happens, doesn’t it seem sensible to be prepared? And isn’t it right that when others are oppressed or afflicted that it should be prepared Christians who step forward to give aid and help? Perhaps if more Christians would prepare, our witness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ would be more effective.

Once to every man and nation
Comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of trust and falsehood,
For the good or evil side.

—J. R. Lowell

Epitaph for Hireling Soldiers

These, in the day when heaven was falling,
The hour when earth's foundations fled,
Followed their mercenary calling,
And took their wages, and are dead!

—A. E. Housman

Be a hero, not a hireling. Be prepared for crisis.
Dare to take necessary action, and win divine approval
as the heroes of the Bible have done!

If I Have Strength

If I have strength, I owe the service of the strong.
If melody I have, I owe the world a song.
If I can stand, when all about my post is falling
If I can run with speed, when needy hearts are calling,
Or if my torch can light the dark of any night,
Then I must pay the debt I owe with Living light.

The gifts God gives to me I can't repay,
His gifts are most mine, when I give them all away.
True wealth cannot be found in mines or
gold estates or marts.

The greatest wealth is found
in loving Christian hearts.

—Author Unknown

Questions for Further Study

1. Do you see evidence of preparation and practice in the life of the Hebrew hostages? See Dan 1:4, Dan 1:17, Dan 1:20.
2. Is it realistic to believe that spiritual preparation should involve practical areas of life? Compare 2Ti 2:25 with Heb 11:2, Heb 11:6, Heb 11:39.
3. Would practical skills in displaying God's love add to the effect of one's witness? See Mat 5:16, Mat 5:22.

IV. DARE TO TEACH WHAT YOU KNOW— WIN OTHERS TO CHRIST

“And those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many.”

Dan 11:33 (NASB, emphasis added)

This phrase “will give understanding” comes from the word, *biyn*, meaning “perception or discernment.” Here we find it in the *hiphil* stem, which is “causative active.” It means “to teach, instruct, explain, to cause others to come to understanding.” There is a parallel here with Dan 11:32 where the action taken originates in the strength developed. Here the instruction given comes from the insight they have from knowing God and His Word. The point is, you can only lead others if you know the way. We are not to be the “*blind [leading] the blind*” Mat 15:14.

TRUE WISDOM

The wisdom of the Bible does not explain all questions about medicine, economics, science, or technology. What it gives is answers for life. The Word of God, in the Gospel, provides what no other volume or learned mind has ever given—the clear and simple way of salvation. Every believer in Jesus Christ has a grasp of wisdom far surpassing the greatest philosophers and scientists of history. Of what value

are all the facts of the universe, if one dies, never knowing the God of the universe? As Jesus said, “*For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*” Mar 8:36–37.

Each and every child of God has wisdom to offer the world, because he has Christ. “*But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption,*” 1Co 1:30.

“*Tis not in knowing much, but what is useful, that makes a wise man.*” Thomas Fuller

And every believer should be prepared to explain the Gospel of Jesus Christ to any unbeliever. You may not answer all of their questions. You may not overcome all of their arguments. This is not your task. You are simply to proclaim the message with power and confidence. “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved,*” Act 16:31.

PREPARATION—ACTS 16:31

Jesus said, “*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses ...*” Act 1:8. Whereas the disciples were to wait for the coming of the Spirit, we receive the Holy Spirit the moment we believe (Rom 8:9). We further enhance the power and effect of our witness by keeping Jesus Christ daily in the preeminent position in our life. “*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear,*” 1Pe 3:15.

From this passage, it is evident that people will not ask about the hope in us, unless they first see hope in us! A downhearted, gloomy Christian makes a poor witness. Therefore, our lives need to consistently display what our words say. The Spirit of God will add power to our witness as our life reflects His inner working. “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law,*” Gal 5:22–23.

Look carefully at the qualities listed above. What you will see is that these are the things most absent in this world. These are virtues the world longs for in others—if not in itself. Here we see the solutions to crime, violence, prejudice, injustice, and tyranny. Yet these marks of character cannot be legislated, neither

can they be instilled by education. They can be found only in a vital, living relationship with Jesus Christ!

In the Gospel—the good news of salvation—we hold the answer to the world's dilemma. But it can be received only by faith, and only by one person at a time.

BE A PATHFINDER

When Paul wrote the Philippian epistle from a Roman prison, he saw himself as one blazing a trail for others to follow.

“Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel ... and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.” Phi 1:12, Phi 1:14 (NASB, emphasis added)

The word translated “*progress*” is from *pro*, “ahead, before” and *kopto*, “to cut, blaze a trail.” Paul was like an advance scout, finding the path for others to follow. Later in the passage, as he wrestled with his desire to depart through death to be with the Lord, and his need to remain behind (he was facing possible execution), he wrote:

*“Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your **progress** and joy of faith.”* Phi 1:24–25

In other words, by Paul blazing the trail for them, they would become the pathfinders for others. This is the dynamic behind every believer being a witness for Christ. With the Thessalonians, Paul found a willing force of volunteers for his “pathfinder” school.

“And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.” 1Th 1:6–8

Paul used the word *prokopto*, a Roman military term, just as “pathfinder” is used in some military units today. This word has always had a great meaning to me. When I was sixteen years old, after being a Christian only a year, I went with missionaries to the Apalai tribe in the Amazon. The chief’s son, Alenka, took me deep into the jungle and then told me to find my way back to the village. When I succeeded, he named me “Pathfinder.” The task of every believer is

to be a pathfinder for others. This was Paul's focus in his training of Timothy:

"You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

2Ti 2:1–3

Are you willing to teach what you know? As a Christian, you will be a witness—good or bad—for Jesus Christ. "*He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad,*" Mat 12:30.

You are writing a gospel, a chapter each day,
By the deeds that you do and the words that you say.
Men read what you write, whether faithless or true,
So what is the gospel, according to you?

You are writing each day a gospel for men.
Make sure that the writing is true.
For the only gospel that many men heed,
Is the gospel according to you.

—Author Unknown

USE YOUR COMPASS

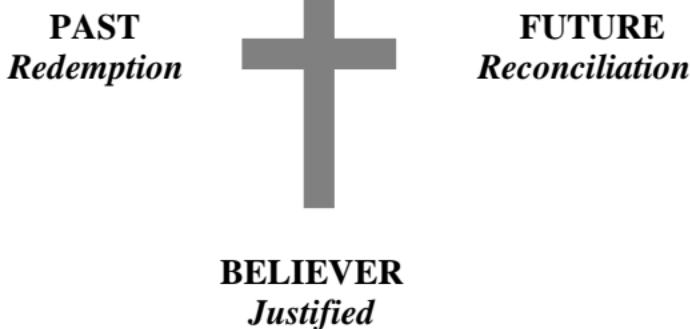
A pathfinder needs a compass and must be familiar with its use. Together with an accurate map, it will guide him quickly and safely to his destination. He must know that there is a difference between “True North” and “Magnetic North,” to which the compass points. The variant is called the “angle of declination.” It may be a few or several degrees off, depending on where you are in the world. Unless you adjust for the angle of declination, you will find yourself off-target.

Christians also have a spiritual compass, as well as a map. Our compass is the cross of Jesus Christ, and our map is the Bible. Like the compass, the cross has four points. North, or top position, points to God. South, the bottom position, points to you as a believer. West, the left arm of the Cross, points to the past. East, the right arm, points to the future. Since Christ paid the penalty for all our sins (past, present, and future), He has brought us into adjustment with God.

By dying in our place, He satisfied God’s righteous demand for penalty. We call this satisfying of God’s demands **propitiation**. By believing in Jesus Christ, we are declared **righteous** (Rom 4:3; 2Co 5:21; 1Jo 2:2). This is what the Bible calls **justification**. Since the price for sin is paid, we are set free from our debt. This is called **redemption**. As a believer, we have a new relationship with God, and a new future.

This is called **reconciliation**. This is how the compass works:

GOD
Propitiation



These words can be found in Rom 3:21–28 and Rom 5:1–11. Keeping our eyes on Jesus Christ and His finished work (Joh 19:30), puts us into adjustment with God—our past and our future. But we must always align the compass with the map (Bible) so as to beware of the “magnetic pull” of this world that can lead us off course. As the “angle of declination” differs in various part of the world, so each believer faces a different “magnetic pull” or “angle of declination”! The author of Hebrews put it this way:

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight [magnetic pull], and the sin which so easily ensnares us [angle of declination], and let us run with endurance the race that is

set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Heb 12:1–2

Even as the Lord set His eyes on the cross as the goal of His life, refusing to be swayed from His objective (Mat 16:23), so must we. I believe this is the true significance of our Lord’s command to “*take up [the] cross.*”

“Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.’” Luk 9:23

In essence, Jesus is challenging us to take up our **compass!** Only by sighting at life from the cross can we follow the path He blazed! The word “*author*” used in both Heb 12:2 and Heb 2:10 is another military word for a commander who blazed the trail for his men. The demand to “*deny himself*” simply means, “trust in your compass, not in your own sense of direction.” How many pilots have crashed, or soldiers been lost because they trusted themselves instead of their compass? They followed their natural “magnetic pull” down the “angle of declination” to their own destruction. Don’t be like them! **DARE** to lead the way! **DARE** to be a pathfinder! Keep your eye on the compass of the cross, and **win others to JESUS CHRIST!**

The Bridge Builder

An old man, going a lone highway,
Came at the evening cold and gray,
To a chasm vast and deep and wide,
Through which was flowing a swollen tide.

The old man crossed in the twilight dim;
The rapids held no fears for him;
But he turned when safe on the other side,
And built a bridge to span the tide.

“Old man,” cried a fellow pilgrim near,
“You’re wasting your time in building here.
Your journey will end with the closing day;
You never again will pass this way.
You have crossed the chasm deep and wide;
Why build you this bridge at even-tide?”

The builder lifted his old gray head.
“Good friend, in the path I have come,” he said
“There follows after me today,
A youth whose feet must pass this way.

This stream which has been as naught to me,
To that fair youth may a pitfall be.
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim—
Good friend, I am building this bridge for him.”

—Will Allen Dromgoole

“One ship drives east, another west
With the self-same winds that blow,
‘Tis the set of the sails, and not the gales
Which tells the way to go.
Like the winds of the sea are the ways of God
As we voyage along through life,
‘Tis the set of the soul, the decides its goal
And not the calm or strife.”

—Author Unknown

Keep your eyes on the compass!

Questions for Further Study

1. Does the Scripture teach that we are all to be teachers? Read Heb 5:11–14.
2. How does Jesus' statement in Mat 6:21 relate to the idea of "declination"?
3. Paul was a daring leader of men. What can we learn about leadership from his words in 1Co 9:19–27?
4. How does the above passage relate to the command to "deny self"?
5. List some practical ways the illustration of the compass and its application, might help solve daily problems.
6. Note Daniel's influence on King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 4:1–3, Dan 4:34–37).

V. DARE TO FALL, YET RISE AND PRESS ON—YOU WILL WIN ETERNAL GLORY

*“... yet **they will fall** by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder, for many days. Now when they fall they will be granted a little help, and many will join them in hypocrisy. And some of those who have insight will fall in order to refine, purge, and make them pure, until the end time; because it is still to come at the appointed time.” Dan 11:32b–35 (NASB, emphasis added)*

The story of God’s people is a story of persecution and affliction. Jesus said, “*If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you ... These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*” (Joh 15:18, Joh 16:33).

In the words of Daniel, I see two different falls. The first, in Dan 11:33, is persecution from the world. The second, in Dan 11:35, is from personal failure resulting in divine discipline. I believe it is when we keep rising after falling, keep being refined through God’s discipline, that we meet persecution from the world.

“For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again.” Pro 24:16

DIVINE DISCIPLINE

All believers fall, and all believers are disciplined by God. For anyone to say otherwise is to deny the clear statement of the Word of God:

“If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.” Heb 12:7–8

God disciplines all believers to purify and refine their lives, to make them more like Jesus Christ. It is not failure, but quitting, that makes the loser.

Don't Quit

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all up-hill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but don't you quit!

Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As every one of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about,
When he might have won had he stuck it out,
Don't give up, though the pace seems slow,
You may succeed with another blow.

Often the goal is nearer than
It seems to a faint and faltering man.
Often the struggler has given up,
When he might have captured the victor's cup,
And he learned too late, when the night slipped down,
How close he was to the golden crown.

Success is failure turned inside out,
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are
It may be near when it seems afar,
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit—
It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit!

If you take time to read through the “Hall of Faith” chapter in Hebrews 11, with careful reflection you will find that all these “heroes of faith” were great—not because they never failed, but because they never quit! In fact, Paul, one of the greatest of biblical heroes, after his own failure, put it his way:

“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Phi 3:13–14

Here is the attitude of a winner! A man who understood the ministry of failure, coupled with divine discipline. It is through God’s corrective discipline for our weakness that we become stronger.

“... My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” 2Co 12:9

It has been said, “In every defeat are the seeds of victory.” This is true only if we learn from the defeat and make necessary corrections. It is to this end that God disciplines us.

“Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” Heb 12:11

God’s discipline works like the fire of the goldsmith. As he melts the raw ore, the impurities rise to the top and are skimmed away. By turning up the heat, deeper impurities are released until finally, the gold is pure. In ancient times, the goldsmith would purify the ore until he could see his own reflection in the pure, molten metal. This very picture is captured by Peter as he reveals how God works through life’s trials:

“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ ...” 1Pe 1:6–7

An unknown author put it this way: “Don’t be afraid to fail. You’ve failed many times, although you don’t remember. You fell the first time you tried to walk. You almost drowned the first time you tried to swim. Did you hit the ball the first time you swung a bat?”

English novelist John Creasy got 753 rejection slips before he published 564 books. Babe Ruth struck out 1,330 times, but he also hit 714 home runs. The heavy hitters—the ones who hit the most home runs—also strike out a lot. Don't worry about failure, worry about the chances you miss when you don't even try.

PERSECUTION

When you keep getting up from life's pitfalls and defeats, you will begin to develop endurance and character. These are qualities the world claims to admire, and honors once they are developed. Yet, in almost every case, the world will try to defeat those who persevere. This is especially true for those who persevere in the faith. Though the Apostle Paul is honored around the world today, people of his own time did everything possible to try to keep him down. The book of 2 Corinthians is a chronicle of his valiant struggle. Consider the following excerpts:

"We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—" 2Co 4:8–9

"But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings." 2Co 6:4–5

“... in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often ... in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—” 2Co 11:23b, 2 Co 11:27

In the midst of such trials and sufferings, this great adventurer for Christ not only continues to rise up after each fall, but to maintain a positive, hope-filled attitude:

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and external weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” 2Co 4:16–18

Jesus taught the disciples to anticipate persecution, and even to rejoice in it. After presenting in the Beatitudes (Mat 5:1–9) the attitudes that characterize discipleship, He had this to say:

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile

and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” Mat 5:10–12

Whether by personal failure or persecution, you will be cast down in life. To fall and rise again is not only the mark of genuine faith, but the path to true greatness.

*“If what shone afar so grand
Turns to nothing in your hand,
Go on again, for virtue lies
In the struggle, not the prize.”*

—Author Unknown

Remember that the path of pain and persecution is also the path of purification. Suffering refines our faith and gives it depth and strength. Suffering produces in us a compassion for others who suffer, and teaches us how to comfort and encourage them.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” 2Co 1:3–4

*“They cannot heal, who have not suffered much,
For only suffering, suffering understands.
They will not come for healing at our touch,
Unless they see the scars upon our hands.”*

—Author Unknown

All suffering can be turned to blessing as it equips us to minister to others who also face their trials and tribulations. Especially as we remember:

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” Rom 8:28

As we go to the gymnasium or follow a program of exercise to maintain physical fitness, so our heavenly Father has a training program designed to build muscle in our faith. His program is perfect, because He knows just how much we are capable of, and He knows it is always more than we think we can handle.

“No temptation [or trial] has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” 1Co 10:13

“You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” 2Ti 2:3

The evangelist, Philips Brooks, said,

*“Ask not for easy lives—
Ask to be stronger men.
Do not ask for burdens equal to your strength,
Ask for strength equal to your burdens!”*

The believer in Jesus Christ is created for greatness. But you will never grow beyond the challenges you accept. You will never achieve the spiritual greatness for which you were designed, until you—by faith—attempt the impossible:

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ... in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” Rom 5:1, Rom 5:2b–7

DARE to risk by faith; **DARE** to fall and rise again, and again, and again. For if you learn from your failures, if you press on through persecutions, you will **WIN Eternal Glory!**

“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” 2Ti 3:12

“There’s no defeat in life
Save from within—
Until you’re beaten there,
You’re bound to win.”

Greatness

The heights by great men seized and kept,
Were not attained by sudden flight.
But they, while their companions slept
Were toiling upward in the night.

—Longfellow

Questions for Further Study

1. Look at the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11. Consider how some of them fell, yet pressed on:
 - a. Noah: Heb 11:7, contrast Gen 9:20–21
 - b. Abraham: Heb 11:8, contrast Gen 12:10–20
 - c. Jacob: Heb 11:21, contrast Gen 27:5–29
 - d. Moses: Heb 11:24–27, contrast Exo 2:11–14
2. Consider how Daniel and his friends suffered in Daniel 2, 3, and 6. How would this strengthen their faith?
3. List some forms of persecution you have seen or experienced.
4. When we fall through personal failure, what is necessary to get back on track spiritually? See 1Jo 1:9; 2Ti 2:19–21.

CONCLUSION

The following poem can illustrate the challenge of a courageous commander or, in the greatest sense, the call to press on in the spiritual battle for the cause of Christ. Our Lord won the victory at the cross. Let us follow His light and never allow that victory to be in vain in our life.

“Close ranks and ride on!
Though His saddle be bare,
The bullet is sped, now the dead
Cannot care!

Close ranks and ride on!
Let the pitiless stride
Of the hosts that He led,
Though His saddle be red,
Sweep on like the tide.

Close ranks and ride on!
The banner He bore
For God and the right
Never faltered before.

Quick, up with it, then!
For the right, for the light!
Lest legions of men
Be lost in the night.”

—Harold Trowbridge Pulsifer

“You have given a banner to those who fear You, that it may be displayed because of the truth.” Psa 60:4

My constant prayer is that God may raise up from among the youth of Australia, America, and the world courageous and steadfast soldiers of Christ Jesus, who will bear His banner of truth to victory!

DARE—AND WIN!

When I teach the Bible, I often use poems and quotes to illustrate points of Scripture. Many times, people have come to me afterward and asked for copies of these. For this reason I have “salted” this volume with some of my favorites and would like to include a few more here. Most of these were learned at the feet of my father, Glenn Cunningham. He and my mother Ruth, are the two greatest heroes in my life. The debt which I owe them can only be repaid by a life of service to others. Their example of a lifetime dedicated to building bridges for teens over troubled waters, is a continual challenge to me.

1. The Anvil
2. The Lost Sheep
3. Who He Is
4. Two Travelers
5. A Kingdom in My Heart
6. My Neighbor's Bible
7. Dare I?

The Anvil

Last eve, I paused beside the blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil sing the vesper chime.
Then looking in I noticed on the floor,
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had?" said I,
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he, and then with a twinkling eye,
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

And so, I thought, the Anvil of God's Word,
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon.
And though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The Anvil is unchanged, the hammers gone!

—attributed to John Clifford

The Lost Sheep

'Twas a sheep, not a lamb that went astray
In the parable Jesus told.
A full-grown sheep that wandered away
From the ninety and nine in the fold.

Out on the hillside, out in the cold,
'Twas a sheep the good shepherd sought.
And back to the flock, safe into the fold,
'Twas a sheep the good shepherd brought.

And why for the sheep should we earnestly plead,
 And as earnestly seek and pray?
If the sheep go wrong, it won't be long
 Till the lambs are as wrong as they.

For the lambs will follow the sheep, you know,
 Wherever the sheep may stray.
If the sheep are lost, what a terrible cost
 Some lambs will have to pay!

—Author Unknown

Who He Is

“He comes to us as one unknown, as of old by the seashore He came to those who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same words, ‘follow Me,’ and sets us to tasks which He has to do in our time. He commands, and to those who obey Him, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the sufferings and the conflicts which they pass through in His fellowship. And, as an ineffable mystery, we shall all learn in our own experience who He is.”

—Albert Schweitzer

Two Travelers

A traveler crossed a frozen stream
In trembling fear one day,
A teamster later drove across
And whistled all the way.

Great faith and little faith alike
Were granted safe convoy.
One had the pangs of needless fear,
The other all the joy.

My Neighbor's Bible

I am my neighbor's Bible,
He reads me when we meet.
Today he'll read me in my home,
Tomorrow on the street.

He may be friend or relative
Or slight acquaintance be,
But I'm my neighbor's Bible
And he is reading me.

A Kingdom in My Heart

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” Mat 6:33

One day Tauler (a German mystic) met a beggar. “God give you a good day, my friend,” he said. The beggar answered, “I thank God I never had a bad one.” Then Tauler said, “God give you a happy life, my friend.” “I thank God,” said the beggar, “I am never unhappy.”

Tauler in amazement said, “What do you mean?” “Well,” said the beggar, “When it is fine, I thank God; when it rains, I thank God; when I have plenty, I thank God; when I am hungry, I thank God; and since God’s will is my will, and whatever pleases Him pleases me, why should I say I am unhappy when I am not?”

Tauler looked at the man in astonishment. “Who are you?” he asked. “I am a king,” said the beggar. “Where then is your kingdom?” asked Tauler. And the beggar answered quietly: “In my heart.”

—William Barclay

“You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.” Isa 26:3

Dare I?

Dare I set myself aside
And with the Spirit match my stride?
Dare rely alone on grace,
And with endurance run the race?

Dare I focus on the track, and
Never once be looking back?
Dare I drive with pounding heart,
To the finish from the start?

Dare I leave the path of ease,
Dare my Lord alone to please?
Dare I glory in the pain,
Count as loss all earthly gain?

Do I dare His Word to trust,
When I find the world unjust?
Dare I pray that I be humbled,
Dare press on when I have stumbled?

Dare I run so as to win,
And lay aside my weight of sin?
Only if I win this race,
Dare I look upon His face!

—Gene Cunningham, 1991