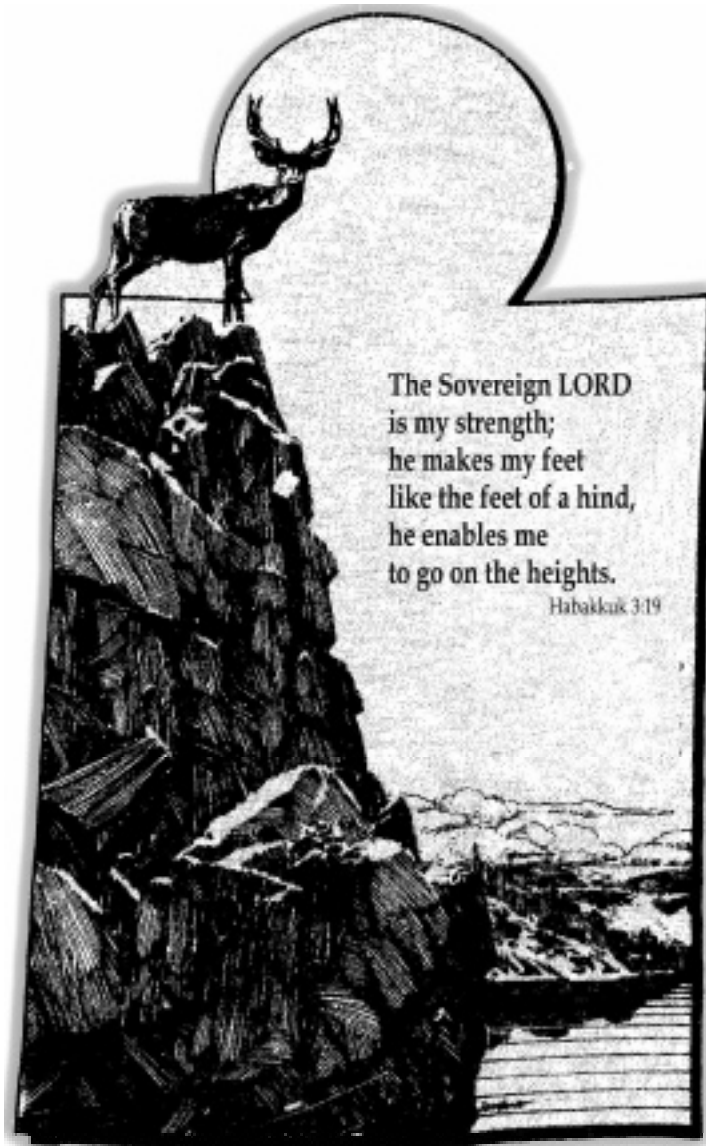


# Going to the High Places

Chapter 2 *Fearing Invasion*

Chapter 3 *Flight in the Night*



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## Introduction

In this section of our study of *Hinds' Feet* we'll be moving toward the edge of the valley of our earthly familiarity. All that seemed adequate before in your spiritual walk will melt into dissatisfaction. If you have spent a long time in the Valley of your strongholds and co-dependent relationships, this journey is going to be filled with dramatic changes in your life!

One particular difficulty confronts every human being: We all enjoy the comfort of the *known*. But this "comfort zone" is a hindrance when it comes to transformation into Christlikeness. The unknown, especially a life of obedient trust through the Spirit of God, becomes a threat to your comfort.

Never mind that you don't know where you are going. The bigger hindrance in your transformation process into Christlikeness is that you'll face your sin nature in ways you've probably never had to before.

Let's face it. The transformation process is painful. For instance, what if all you had to do was read through this guide and God changed you. That would be easy! But we know this isn't the way He works.

In order for your mind, will, and emotions to take on the character of Jesus, you must go through His process of repentance. As you venture along the journey of sanctification, you'll be confronted by the dark parts of your soul, that is, your sin nature. This is also when the demonic voices will do all they can to convince you that you are unworthy of God's love. Snide whispers will torment you that you can never be changed because you fail so often.

Continually remind yourself that our Lord loved you *before you ever knew Him!* He hung on the cross for each one of us when we were lost sinners. As you will glean from the Shepherd's loving response to Much-Afraid, He is delighted to see her time and again *choose to continue* the journey. This is the same joy our Lord Jesus takes in you. He knows where the journey of your life will lead you, and it delights Him to know that you're willing to press on.

Don't listen to the voices of discouragement along the way. There is a preparation lesson for us in Paul's words, "*You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons*" (1 Cor. 10:21). Personalize this admonition: '*You cannot listen to both the voice of the Lord and the voice of demons too; you cannot have a part in both walking in the Lord and believing demonic lies.*'

The quicker you "*take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ*" (2 Cor. 10:5b), the easier you make the journey for yourself. We'll be repeating this verse often on the journey: TAKE CAPTIVE EVERY THOUGHT TO MAKE IT OBEDIENT TO CHRIST! Bringing your thoughts into conformity with Jesus will help to speed up your transformation process.

- Some people are more susceptible to demonic voices than others. Do you find yourself succumbing to demonic lies and altering your outlook based on their agitation? Discuss this with whoever is going on the journey with you.
- What specific instances can you recall in which you entertained these voices and responded in a way that Jesus wouldn't have?

Your heavenly Father delights in seeing you grow in *child-like dependency* on Him. This will be especially crucial if you've been successful by the world's standards. Our Father wants all of us to experience His Kingdom on earth. That Kingdom unfolds in the hearts of His children like the gradual opening of petals on a bloom.

Our Father is revealing His Kingdom to people like you and me so that His light in us can penetrate the darkness of those still struggling in the world's system. "*This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven,*

*hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”* (Matt. 6:9,10). Our Father wants your prayers and your life to reveal your child-like dependency on Him. The older you are in the Lord, the more child-like you become in your joyful trust and reliance on Him. *“I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it”* (Luke 18:17).

## Chapter 2 *Fearing Invasion*

### 1. Much-Afraid woke early... through 4. Oh, I am afraid...

It’s wonderful of God to give us those times of “mountaintop” experiences in which we are especially aware of His presence or His work around us. Often during these times the Holy Spirit brings us to tears of joy and uncontrollable exuberance!

It’s also at these times that the Destroyer takes special notice of you. He’ll do everything within his power to rob you of fully enjoying that moment. In particular he’ll exert painful or distracting pressure to keep you from bearing witness to others about your wonderful experience of our Lord’s grace.

We’ve often experienced extreme demonic attacks close to or just after a time of tremendous spiritual exhilaration. Other followers of Jesus have shared similar experiences of attacks just as they were rejoicing in a wonderful move of God. When you read the Gospels you see this same pattern happening to Jesus. Consider the confrontations in Matthew 12 for example:

- Jesus’s disciples are hungry on the Sabbath and gratefully pluck grain from the field. The Pharisees ridicule our Lord for their “sin” of working on the Sabbath.
- Jesus enters a synagogue on the Sabbath and heals a man with a shriveled hand. His loving act of mercy so riles the Pharisees that they *“went out and plotted*

*how they might kill Jesus”* (v.14). Talk about the “blind” refusing to see...!

- Jesus delivers a man from demons, and the Pharisees accuse Him of deriving His power from Satan.

Sue and I have a pet phrase we tell people who are attacked while experiencing the wonder of God: “Keep your eyes on the *doughnut*, not on the doughnut hole.” Focus on Jesus and the reality of what He has done for you. Fight to keep the Destroyer from robbing you of what our Lord has done. Jesus’s words apply to you: *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33). Keep your focus totally on our Lord Jesus — on His unfailing love, His sovereign power, His boundless grace — as the Destroyer attempts to darken your experience.

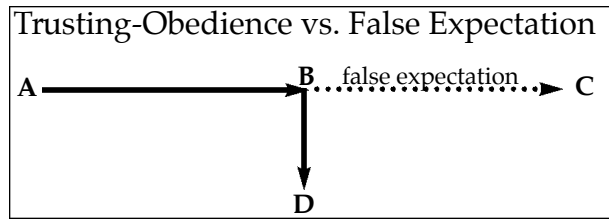
- Call to mind some of your own experiences of our Lord’s mighty intervention coinciding with a spiritual attack. Which memory, the joy or the accusation, prevailed in your thoughts?

### 5. The morning wore on and still he had not come...

When God delays His response or answers in a different manner than you expected, your *false expectations* can be your ruin. False expectation is an indicator of your lack of trust in our Lord. From a heavenly standpoint, times of seeming delay are opportunities for you to fully prepare yourself both in focus on our Lord and in worshipful, trusting prayer.

One of the joyful aspects of prayer is that it reminds you to depend on Him. If your lifelong quest is to truly follow Jesus, your path is made easier if you grow in your trust of Him and obey without regard to the outcome. In other words, *cherish obedience* rather than concerning yourself with where

the path will lead. *False expectation* can function like pride, seeking a particular outcome and growing frustrated and discouraged when things don't end up as you expected.



For instance, say God has planned for your path to go from point A to point B in the diagram above. *You* want to go to point C, and since initially the journey heads that way, you keep focusing on C as the goal. Yet, at point B God turns the path toward D.

If you've kept your focus on Jesus in obedient trust, you're free of frustration. You're not overcome with concern about the outcome because you're eager to obey what God tells you. On the other hand, the outcome-based person is frustrated due to false expectation. This happens to Much-Afraid several times on the journey, and we all need to learn from her lessons. Happily, as she gets closer to the High Places and focuses her trust on the Shepherd's faithfulness, her false expectation evaporates.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins in Matthew 25:1-13 offers key wisdom for all of us. The pivotal element in this parable is the *oil*. We know from other parts of Scripture that oil often refers to the Holy Spirit. In the parable we're told, "*The bridegroom was a long time in coming...*" (v. 5). But the wise virgins had prepared themselves. Like them, we too need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The foolish ones squandered their time — they lacked oil when it was needed.

No one can vicariously share their "oil", the Holy Spirit, with another person. *Now* is the time on your journey to the High Places to secure your trust in the Holy Spirit in all areas of your mind, will, and emotions. No, you don't need to scour the town for Him as the foolish virgins did. You just need a trusting heart to *ask!* "*If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your chil-*

*dren, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!*" (Luke 11:13).

Yield your soul, that is, your mind, will, and emotions, to the Holy Spirit's control. "*Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit*" (Gal. 5:25). He leads, strengthens and empowers you when you choose to follow! If you're used to tossing up a quick prayer and then running off to bring about the answer, expecting God to catch up with you, you'll be disappointed.

Sadly, many denominations negate the vital work of the Holy Spirit in the daily lives of Jesus followers. Often during our morning prayer time I place my hand on Sue and pray for a greater filling of the Holy Spirit for both of us to walk in boldness to fulfill His purposes for that day.

- How do *you* understand the work of the Holy Spirit in your daily life? How does He reveal His will for you?
- How has your *reliance* on Him caused you to make changes in your life plans or circumstances?
- Would you say that you expect the Spirit to interact in your life during the day? What anecdotes could you relate that would evidence your awareness of His intervention?

**6. They were to determined to overrule...,  
7. However, they knew Much-Afraid's timidity and weakness...**

The enemy determined to make a "bold attack while she would be alone in the cottage and the Shepherd far away." Often your most vulnerable time comes when you entertain doubt about our Lord's loving concern for you, or when you're plagued by

false expectation. A successful attack needs just a smidgen of doubt about God's promise, an unfronted fear of someone else's opinion, or a touch of self-pity.

When you are being targeted by any of these torpedoes, it's time for you to RESIST. Can this command be any clearer? *"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you"* (James 4:7).

Peter repeats the refrain of your personal responsibility to, first of all, detect the enemy at work, and then to stand firm in your identity as one of Jesus's family. Look to your Father for wisdom to rightly discern the nature of the attack. Then turn away from those confusing thoughts and temptations, and focus on Jesus and *His* mighty power.

Particularly call to mind our suffering family in the persecuted church around the world to help you count yourself privileged to be suffering trials for His sake. *"Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings"* (1 Peter 5:9).

Over the years we've encountered people who failed to resist Satan's schemes, and their situation only got worse. The devil knew they wouldn't resist — that's why he attacked! Satan doesn't have an unlimited supply of fiends at his disposal. If you have a reputation in the heavenlies of resisting spiritual assault, he won't waste as much time on you as he will on the ones he knows will give up and listen to his demons.

Again, the key to resistance is the Holy Spirit and your ready willingness to call out for His help. The Spirit's empowerment and your complete dependency on our Father make you less vulnerable to attack.

- Are you able to discern a demonic attack and resist it by submitting to our Father and turning from the assault?
- Are there certain areas you have a more difficult time resisting than others? Are you

willing to ask someone to help you be accountable in that area?

- What activities act as a stimulus for uncapacitive thoughts to prevail in your mind? Will you give up these activities in exchange for the joy set before you?

## 8. The old Lord himself was actually with them..., 9. When he had finished...

When the battle line of resistance has been breached, the enemy will turn the tables on you. Unclean spirits using the mouths of those who refuse to leave the Valley will make it seem like *you* are the one at fault because you're the one who's departing. Remember, Satan is the source of false accusation. As the apostle John discovered, the attack is unrelenting: *"Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: 'Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down'"* (Rev. 12:10).

Words of false accusation can take many forms, and some may actually sound plausible to your wavering heart: "You're unloving." "Aren't you being judgmental?" "You only care about yourself." Any scheme or deception it takes to put you on the defensive will occur, and this verbal assault will continue until you resist and call out to God for help.

Look at the misperceived motivations that justified the verbal attacks on Much-Afraid:

*"there must be some extraordinary misconception in her mind."*

*"that she had cut herself off from her relatives"*

“she had *all kinds of strange notions* about their feelings and intentions toward her.”

“giving them the opportunity of proving that she had *misjudged and misunderstood* them.”

Any time you choose to follow the higher road of wholehearted obedient trust in Jesus as His loving lamb, you’re going to stand out in stark contrast to those who are content with complacent religious practice. People who are operating from old tapes of tradition and generational religious practices are astonished that you might actually be hearing from the Holy Spirit and walking in His power. You must be deluded!

You need to be particularly careful at this stage of your preparation. We’ve received phone calls from people who are already going through the trial of having the tables turned on them. Sadly, a few have given in to the false accusation and derailed their journey to stay in the bogs of the Valley.

#### **10. Craven might not be..., 11. The whole gang talked on and on...**

The whole disgruntled family of Much-Afraid appealed to her that she could change Craven Fear if she married him. The most diabolical appeal is when you are told how much *you are needed*. This subterfuge is designed to either make you feel guilty or to appeal to your vanity. The ‘vanity attack’ is used most effectively against people who have been in ministry or leadership positions in the church.

The ‘guilty attack’ generally succeeds against women, and against people-pleasing men. You’ll discover soon enough that when you are devoted to pleasing God rather than people, those who are “horizontally focused” will be offended by your apparent “fanaticism”: *“Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ..The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the*

*Spirit will reap eternal life*” (Gal. 1:10; 6:8).

Have you ever found yourself knuckling under the sort of pressure that Much-Afraid faced? The ‘guilt attack’ leaves you with awful feelings. We call it “shlucked”. If God in His great love for you didn’t intervene when you failed to resist, you and we both would still be prisoners to the false accusations and ugly sense of failure!

If you recognize that you’ve failed at times to resist the enemy’s tactics, know that our Lord hasn’t turned His back on you. Much-Afraid’s situation seemed grim. The Fearings were about to crack her feeble defenses. But then we are told, “Suddenly there came an interruption...”

In the same way, our Lord will extend help to you. You may have rejected all His previous offers and found yourself in hopeless despair. When you finally do call out for help, you may find yourself embarrassed for not calling out earlier. But it’s not our Shepherd who is embarrassing you. Your own feelings of humiliation that come when you finally cry out for and receive His help are an indicator of the *pride* in your heart that has kept you from calling on His Name.

- What is your perception of our Father’s response when you feel you have failed Him?
- Compare your perception with that of biblical revelation of our Father’s character. What are the differences?
- Sometimes we view God through the lens of how our earthly fathers treated us when we failed. Does this misperception apply to your view of the Father? If so, repent and ask our Father to help you love and thank Him for Who He is.

**12. The Fearings carefully closed..., 13. It seemed as though all other sounds...**

How did Much-Afraid know that it was the Shepherd who was passing alongside the cottage? She knew His voice! She recognized the words of the song from the "old book" because those treasured words were so much a part of herself. All of the clamor going on around her ceased as she focused her heart on Him. Is *your* heart attuned to the words of truth so that you're able to discern His voice in the middle of your busy day?

Sue: We used to raise sheep, and visitors to the retreat center loved to bring food to them in the pasture in the hope that they'd come closer. The sheep were always ready to scarf down the treats, but as soon as a tentative hand reached through the fence, they'd scatter. Yet, when Mike or I approached with the familiar call, "Sheep, sheep!", they'd come at a gallop, crowding around for attention. Every eye was fixed on us to see where we'd lead them next. The younger ones at first eyed the older ewes to observe their response. But eventually they, too, learned to trust us as their shepherds and listen for our call.

- Who stands out as a man or woman of God who has fed your soul and nourished your spirit with tasty spiritual food? Who are you currently discipling with the spiritual food you've received?
- How do you escape the clamor around you to find unimpeded quiet times to hear your Shepherd's voice?

**14. As she sat listening... through 18. When this plan...**

Make a habit of reminding yourself that your relationship with the Shepherd is always a *heart* issue, not a cranial issue. When the Shepherd passed by, "Much-Afraid knew with a pang of *agonizing pain* that the Shepherd was calling her..." This is

crucial for all of us to grasp. The pain in your heart that you've hurt someone or let him down is crucial, "*because your sorrow led you to repentance For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death*" (2 Cor. 7:9,10).

We see again that Much-Afraid's advance on the journey was borne on the hurt in her heart because of her love for the Shepherd. Real repentance isn't a question of *what* you did wrong as much as taking responsibility for the *hurt you caused*. The sorrow in your heart is the foundation of your repentance.

*When you grieve over the hurt you caused, your confession gives the offended party hope that your heart is now right.* The heart that grieves and is willing to change is a heart that is acceptable to our Father: "*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise*" (Psalm 51:17).

- How do you feel when you realize you have hurt or let down someone?
- What action does that realization cause you to take?

**19. Gradually Much-Afraid regained... through 22. The effort of her words...**

The frantic young lady called out for her neighbor, "Valiant! Valiant! Come and help me. Come quickly. Help!" There is much behind this desperate call that all of us can learn from. Let's suppose that Mrs. Valiant is a follower of Jesus who has a mature understanding of God's requirement for righteousness. Walking in righteousness produces a valiant heart: "*The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion*" (Pro. 28:1).

Often during times of demonic attack people reach out to others for help.

Consider this:

If a Christian who cries out while undergoing demonic assault seeks *sympathy*, then he or she is not looking for real help. These people want your empathy. Their excuses and rationale will shift the focus of blame onto the individual they perceived has hurt them. The person seeking sympathy will usually call on a “merciful” person. Sadly, the real fruit of this spurious call for help will be unsubstantiated slander and gossip.

If a Christian under attack seeks encouragement to press on and even welcomes admonition, they’re looking for help that will produce godly fruit. They’re willing to accept responsibility for their part in the situation, and to follow through on what God would have them do. This person is likely to contact an exhorter or someone gifted prophetically so that they can hear a sure word regardless of the possible discomfort when they hear the truth.

A good friend found that the telephone was weaving a web of discontent in her home. Under the guise of seeking help, countless women poured out diatribe against their husbands, children, bosses, in-laws. Our friend thought she was extending mercy by listening patiently and offering comforting words.

She found, however, that listening to all that slander roused up agitation under her own roof! Her children were growing rebellious, and her husband was returning to chaos each evening. When we shared with her the darkness she was inviting into her home through these bad-mouthing calls, she purposed to slam shut that avenue of discord. Make sure *you aren’t entertaining* what James calls a “world of wickedness” through the unbridled tongues of others!

On the other hand, what a joy to field calls from faithful family in Jesus who are pressing on but just need a little “course

adjustment”! How you receive biblical correction, instruction and rebuke indicates if you’re a “Timothy” who is willing to make changes toward godliness.

- Who in your life can you call on who you know won’t cater to excuses or blame? When was the last time you turned to this person?
- Are you currently involved in a relationship in which someone is presenting to you only their side of a conflict?
- Are you a “people-pleaser” who listens to unsubstantiated accusations against a person whom you may not even know? Or, are you a Mrs. Valiant who gently but firmly redirects your friend to accept responsibility for his/her part, and then helps them to press on?

### **23. Mrs. Valiant hardly knew herself what it was to feel fear...**

Armed with reliance on the Holy Spirit, a repentant heart, and a quickness to call out to our Lord for help, your days of fear fall rapidly behind you. The dearly beloved of our Lord Jesus understand this: *“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love”* (1 John 4:18).

Mrs. Valiant was mature enough in Jesus to not feel compelled to climb all over Much-Afraid in her fearful immaturity. Unless you keep in the back of your mind the dreadful pit of sin from which our Lord Jesus drew *you*, you’ll be tempted to respond with exasperated harshness when a brother or sister stumbles. Your admonition and rebuke should be bathed in the same com-

passion our Lord extended to you when you were still a toddler in trust!

The growth of *agape* love in your heart, that love poured out to you by the Holy Spirit, strengthens you to be fearless. *Agape* love ripens in you throughout the journey. It abides in you as you seek to remain righteous, and willing to repent when you fail.

Paul conveys this quest for righteousness on the journey when he writes, “*Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God*” (2 Cor. 7:1).

- Think back to your first months/years with Jesus. Can you recall anyone who came alongside you to gently correct or rebuke you when you tripped up?
- Do you have the loving courage to come alongside and correct the course of someone in Jesus in such a way that they are motivated to press on without condemnation and shame?

### Self Evaluation

#### *Fear or Love*

Circle the number that typifies your motivation. Discuss with your companions on the journey your reasons for placing it where you did.

Fear ← 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 → Love

## Chapter 3 *Flight in the Night*

### 1. For hours poor Much-Afraid lay...

Our human nature often prompts us to project that our Lord thinks and responds to situations the same way that we do. When you fail to follow through and obey Him, you may grieve that His love for you has somehow diminished. This may be especially true if your relational experiences have been based on “conditional love” that

expects a certain level of performance from you in exchange for affection.

Let us assure you from personal experience: *God loves you just as much as He always has! In your distress He even devises more creative means to deliver you.*

Learn from the Shepherd. Our Lord Jesus isn’t focusing on your past, no matter how sordid your choices have been. He’s fixed on your future and the glory our Father will receive from your testimony of His intervention! Can’t you just imagine the firsthand taste of forgiveness the psalmist himself had gratefully experienced that prompted him to pen these verses? “*For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us*” (Psalm 103:11,12).

Jeremiah as well encourages us with appreciative relief that our Father’s forgiveness is complete: “*For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more*” (Jeremiah 31:34b).

God has ordained it within the character of Who He is to forgive the sins of which we repent, and to forget them. So humble yourself, turn from the sins of which He’s convicted you, and receive His forgiveness in grateful peace that those sins are GONE. Then press on in His deliverance so that your own mouth may glorify our Father.

It’s important that you be healed in your spirit of those painful memories so that you can share testimonies of His faithful forgiveness with others who can identify with that past sin. They need *hope* that they too can turn from their sin and find forgiveness and healing. When you realize that the sting is gone from your memory, you can reassure others from your own experience that God will forget their darkneses as well.

Sue: I didn’t realize just how powerful my own testimony of our Lord’s healing of our marriage could be until He put us in proximity of a needy couple. A new friend’s husband was packing to leave her, and she phoned me in desperation. As Mike silently prayed, he heard the Spirit say, “Invite the

couple out to dinner." I thought that sounded a little strange but I followed his counsel. She muffled the phone and asked, and to her dismay, he agreed to meet with us.

At the restaurant, the husband immediately launched into a litany of her failures. She erupted from her seat and dashed to the rest room. I followed in close pursuit. At the table, Mike confronted the man with two key questions: "Do you love your wife?" He responded he did. "Can anyone tell you what to do?" He ruefully shook his head, No.

While Mike was dealing with him, I comforted the woman and shared how Jesus had taken our painful relationship and transformed it when each of us owned our own responsibility for tattering our marriage covenant. She began to take hope, particularly when we returned to the table and the husband asked forgiveness for his verbal assaults. She did the same, and they began from that moment to experience His grace of healing. Our healed pain brought the light of hope to a despairing couple. YOUR testimony, like Much-Afraid's, can be the laser surgery that rids the cancerous blame and guilt of their power to sting.

That's why it's so important not to lose the lessons our Lord has been teaching you all along. *Reflection* is pausing to consider the lessons you've learned from your past. This can be a powerful means to acquire wisdom. It can also be a trap of past regret if you choose to cling to unforgiveness.

Study the three questions below. Which of the three best describes you? Discuss your answer with journey partner(s).

- Do you ever reflect on your past to gain wisdom that can help you make changes?
- Do you ever find yourself stung by past regret when you reflect on your past?
- Do you choose to not reflect at all?

## **2. She woke suddenly..., 3. The shock of this thought..**

We are reminded again of the heart issue of our relationship with Jesus: "conscious of an agonizing pain such as she had never known before." You men, in particular, who are steeped in Hellenistic religious teachings to intellectually grasp the "God-out-there" may have to plead with our Lord, "Let following you *hurt* me!"

The agonizing pain in your heart when you sin against someone is a healthy thing. Pain in your heart is there because of love. If your sin and lack of fellowship with our Lord doesn't hurt you, then you are a knowledge-based "Christian." What you know *about* God is more important to you than your relationship *with* Him.

But your situation is not irreversible. Remember, this is a journey of *transformation*. And the one who strengthens you to change is the Holy Spirit. Keep asking Him for help. Ask Him to help you feel the pain that your sin and wrongdoing have brought on others. If you will cooperate with Him, He will soften your heart and remove the callous layer of protection you've erected over the years.

- Do *you* feel any pain in your heart when you hurt someone? Do you ever stop to think that your callousness *grieves* God?

- Do you need to pause at this point to make sure that your *love* for Jesus surpasses your intellectual comprehension of His role as Savior and Lord?

## **4. He had urged her...,5. Of course he would think..**

Again Much-Afraid is so consumed by her own shortcomings that she has no capacity to recall the faithfulness of the Shepherd. She's too busy "navel-gazing" to

remember His character. But thankfully, His thoughts and His ways are so far above our own. Don't let old guilt keep you mired in immobility. Fortunately, there was sufficient love in Much-Afraid's heart to keep her going:

"It was the pain in her heart which was the most awful part of her distress...She could not bear it if he had gone and left her behind." Remember, love is a powerful motivator!

#### 6. On the table beside her... through 8. The page in the little song book...

You've undoubtedly tasted times of despair when it seems you can't even put words together to cry out to Jesus. At times like that, you don't have to think about what to say to Him. He sees the pain in your heart, and His Spirit can extend comfort to you in the midst of your sorrow.

Much-Afraid knew exactly where to reach out for peace — the beloved words of truth on her nightstand resonated with the Spirit's touch. Are you in the habit of marking in your Bible the significant dates of *rhema* when the Spirit breathes out specific words that exactly meet your situation? Those times when the Word jumps off the page into your spirit are a personal message from our Father to you. They're also delightful meat to chew on in times of reflection as you recall the particular circumstances in which He met you with that response, and how you followed through on it.

Much-Afraid's reading stirred her to action. The words, "*And now I will rise and go — out on the streets of the city, And out on the broad highway*", compelled her to overcome her fear and venture into the unknown to seek her Shepherd.

Sue: During our stay in Israel, we weren't sure if our Father wanted us to stay or to return to the US. We were earnestly crying out for His direction, willing to do whatever He revealed as His will. Early one Sabbath Mike got up early to read his Bible. A particular verse jumped out at him from the account of Jesus healing the Gerasene demo-

niac: "*Go back to your home and tell how much God has done for you*" (Luke 8:39). Mike noted the date next to the verse. A week later we went into town to worship. A man from the congregation spoke on Genesis 32:9,10 in which Jacob prayed, "*O Lord, who said to me, 'Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper.'*" Mike hardly heard what the man shared, as he quickly wrote down the date and asked our Lord if He was indeed showing us His plan.

That morning when we returned to the house, our host met us at the door: "We were praying for you, and God has shown us that He wants you to return to the States for His purpose to be accomplished!" Our hearts were at rest. His Word and His Spirit had been made known and confirmed!

- Can you recall a time (or several!) when the Spirit has leaped within you while you were reading a passage that indicated a specific action for you to take?
- Are you willing today to begin keeping track of what He tells you from His Word and in prayer so that you'll have permanent reminders of His faithfulness?

#### 9. Opening the door, she went out into the darkness...

A hundred Craven Fears couldn't have stopped Much-Afraid now. That is what love does. When you get a moment read through Hebrews 11, often called "The Faith Chapter." As you read it, consider the love for their Lord that these "heroes of the faith" had. Perhaps now these words from Paul will penetrate your journey motivation even more deeply: "*For in Christ Jesus... the only thing that counts is **faith expressing itself through love***" (Gal. 5:6).

While you can't "measure" your love quantitatively, you can evaluate your own

expression of how your love passes from within your heart onto other people. Answer this brief “love test” to discern how well others are aware of your expressions of affection.

<b>A Love Test</b>	
Circle the number that corresponds to your answer.	
To what extent do you <i>initiate</i> loving affection toward others?	Never 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Always
To what extent do you wait to <i>receive</i> affection from others first?	Never 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Always
Discuss your response with your partner(s). Then ask each other, “How would Jesus answer?”	

**10. She could not go..., 11. Had she but known...**

Sue and I believe that the Holy Spirit inspired Hannah Humard to hammer home the issue of love. The love that God gives to us and requires from us is not cognitive in nature. It can't be analyzed. Self-sacrificial love is centered in the inner motives of your heart.

*Love and pain go hand-in-hand.* If you strive to avoid the pain that love inevitably brings with it, you'll lose your love as well. Often that pain comes at the hands of a person to whom you're devoted — your parents, your spouse, your children, your closest friends.

God's Word offers special counsel to husbands in particular about the painful cost of walking in the steps of our heavenly Bridegroom, Jesus: *“Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word”* (Ephesians 5:25,26). The Greek word for love here, *agape* (*ah-GAH-pay*), is the kind that only the Holy Spirit can give you.

For a man to love his wife as God commands, he must cry out to God for the love she deserves. If his love is dependent on her response or perceived worthiness, he's looking in the wrong place to love as Jesus loves. It's an inescapable fact, guys. Our wives are,

and will continue to be, a source of pain to us as we seek to love them. But aren't we guilty of inflicting pain as well? The admonition to forgive one another applies to all of us!

Do you remember the scales from Chapter 1? Don't let yourself balance your guilt for *not* loving your wife by blaming her for the hurt she has caused you. You not only escalate the hurt, you impede yourself from going further on the journey.



Our friend Bert in Israel asked me a key question early in our stay with his family when I kept trying to tell him all the ways Sue had failed me. “Why can't you love your wife the way God commanded you to?” No excuses, no blame, just humble obedience!

And wives, blaming your husband for his perceived failures will not balance out your responsibility to bring your own guilt burden before our Lord. Only He can take those hurts, *if you're willing to release them*, and transform that pain and anger into loving affection and appreciation.

- A Christian radio station here in Colorado Springs airs prayer requests from time to time. Most are from women, and many pertain to relational difficulties in their marriages. To my dismay the station airs the actual names of the people. Are you a woman who airs her family problems with those who aren't part of the problem or part of the solution? Has it occurred to you that this activity is *slander*?
- Are you a husband who continually asks God for the power to love your wife? Is there evidence in your your life that His love is at work between you and your wife?

**14. Much-Afraid could not speak... 15. It came to her...**

Shall we repeat the journey refrain once more? *Keep your focus on Jesus!* His foreknowledge includes awareness of what you

will do. You haven't surprised Jesus yet. Camp out on this promise: "He who began a good work in you will **carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus**" (Phil. 1:6).

Only if you fail to keep trusting our Lord Jesus will you be stopped in your tracks. Trust is the glue that holds your heart in your relationship with your Lord. HE never stops extending His loving mercy, but YOU can choose not to receive it. When you give up trusting Him you grieve the Holy Spirit, and begin sliding down the slope to breaking your part of the Covenant with our Lord. As Much-Afraid noted with trembling heart, "[He] would not leave until he was quite sure that she really meant to refuse to go with him."

At this point, discuss with your journey partner this ongoing challenge: "And let us consider how we may **spur one another on toward love and good deeds**" (Heb. 10:24). We've already heard from some married couples in which the wife is putting up resistance to leaving the familiar Valley for the unknown heights. Wife, if your husband has already dealt with his strongholds, and if he has or is in the process of severing co-dependent relationships, then don't you be a stumbling block!

We hope you're not traveling alone on the journey. It's such an encouragement and comfort to have another man or woman alongside to bounce ideas off and to "spur one another on" in devotion to Jesus. If you haven't had a deliberate talk with your companion heading out of the Valley, now is the time! Trying to press forward toward the High Places when your companion is wavering in trust can keep you *both* from ever leaving the comfortable bondage of your old nature. Frank conversation is the order of the day — *before* you get to the far edge of the valley to begin the trail.

- Are you sensing that your companion on the journey, or even yourself, is having second thoughts about the cost of what will have to be left behind in order to press onward?

17. **Just as the sky...** through 19. "I am here," said Much-Afraid, still kneeling at his feet, "and I will go with you anywhere"...

Can you repeat the words of Much-Afraid from your heart to our Lord Jesus right now? Can you *and* your traveling companion say to our Lord Jesus together, "I will go with you anywhere!"?

Mike: When we were finishing our time of research in Israel, we traveled to a small, rustic retreat center near Latrun, just outside Jerusalem. About 4 AM on our final morning there I climbed up to the rock-hewn chapel to gripe to God about why He had chosen me to share the Hebraic foundations.

I poured my heart out to Jesus as the darkness was swallowed by the dawn, reminding Him of how much I had failed Him. Suddenly, the Holy Spirit prompted me to pick up a little devotional on the stool next to me. I opened it to the lesson for that day: "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'" (Isa. 6:8). Crying uncontrollably, I whispered, "You do this to everyone you recruit!"

I've made an important discovery in my walk with Jesus. My own unworthiness has stirred in me a greater determination to encourage others to be prepared and available for God's use of them.

Commit to memory the following passage of Scripture as a good reminder along your way to the High Places:

*Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I **press on to take hold** of that for which Christ **Jesus took hold of me** Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and **straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal** to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus (Phi. 3:12-14).*

Our Father has called each of us to "set our hearts on pilgrimage" (see Psalm 84:5).

And as we shall see, the companions He's chosen for the journey are designed to propel us onward in trust!

A pilgrimage starts with the first step of trust in Jesus. Picture yourself as the pilgrim on the journey in this poem.

### **STEP BY STEP**

*"As thou goest, step by step I will open the way before thee" (Proverbs 4:12, New Translation).*

Child of My love, fear not the unknown morrow,  
Dread not the new demand life makes of thee;  
Thy ignorance doth hold no cause for sorrow,  
Since what thou knowest not is known to Me.

Thou canst not see today the hidden meaning  
Of My Command, but thou the light shalt gain;  
Walk on in faith, upon My promise leaning,  
And as thou goest, all shall be made plain.

One step thou seest — then go forward boldly,  
One step is far enough for faith to see;  
Take that, and thy next duty shall be told thee,  
For step by step thy Lord is leading thee.

Stand not in fear, thine adversaries counting,  
Dare every peril, save to disobey;  
Thou shalt march on, all obstacles surmounting,  
For I, the Strong, will open up the way.

Wherefore go gladly to the task assigned thee,  
Having My promise, needing nothing more  
Than just to know, where'er the future find thee,  
In all thy journeying I go before.

Frank J. Exley