

God Has Soul: Inspiring Stories That Celebrate the Indomitable Spirit of African Americans (African American Heritage) [No Author]
Published by Honor Books (3 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

1. Betsy Stockton—More Than a Servant

When she was only in her early twenties, Betsy Stockton found herself on her way to the Sandwich Islands along with twelve other missionaries en-route to the southern tip of South America. The American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions had sent Betsy and her team, which consisted of herself and twelve men. Aside from being the only woman on the team, Betsy had another qualification that made her stand out as a significant member of this missionary trip. Betsy was a former slave. The law demanding the gradual emancipation of slaves in New Jersey did not go into effect until 1825. Yet God clearly answered Betsy's heart's desire when, soon after her conversion, her owner, Ashbel Green, set her free in 1816. (page 16)

2. John Marrant—The Storm Stopper

Born as a free black in 1775, a year before the Declaration of Independence was signed, John Marrant's life is a triumph in more ways than one. All odds seemed against him growing up. His father died when John was very young. America was a country with a huge racial divide and little opportunity for young black children, whether they were free or slave. But Marrant has an uncanny ability to seize opportunities, no matter what odds he faced.

Before Marrant was a teenager, he learned to play two different instruments—the French horn and the violin. He was so skilled that he was often invited to social gatherings to play his beautiful music for many important socialites of his day.

On one of his increasingly routine outings as a young teenager Marrant has intended to stir trouble in the gathering of men and women. But a preacher by the name of George Whitefield spoke a stirring message that penetrated the heart of this young musician. So powerful was the message that Marrant fell to his face for over half-hour upon hearing it. Soon after his conversion, he gave himself to Bible study and prayer.

While his conversion was glorious, his family's response was less than glorious. They accused him of insanity, calling his behavior bizarre. They began to unjustly persecute him because of his Christianity. In time, he voluntarily exiled himself from his place of residence and began to live life as a wanderer until he crossed paths of a Native American, who embraced him fully and allowed him to reside with his people, the Cherokees.

Among the Cherokees Marrant became an evangelist, preaching the gospel every chance he could. Many souls came to Christ through his ministry, and many bonds were created between blacks and Cherokees from the passion that this young man had for Christ's message. His story began at fifteen years old, when Marrant, after deserting his family, was captured by the Cherokee Indians and sentenced to execution for entering their land. (page 37-38)

3. Boston King—The Reluctant Missionary

With an opportunity from his slave master to apprentice as a carpenter, the young slave, Boston King, did not experience an atmosphere in which to learn. The only black apprentice among his peers, he shouldered the blame for lost tools and mistakes around the shop. And when tools, or even nails, were thought to be lost or stolen, young Boston was beaten without mercy by the shop owners to the point he could not work for weeks.

When the news of such beatings reached the ears of Boston's slave master, he intervened, not because he cared about Boston, but because Boston was his property, and the slave master could not afford for him to be permanently damaged by the shop owner. This intervention was effective, and Boston was able to properly gain knowledge of his trade. However, his slave master would never benefit from his service as a carpenter because Boston fled from his captivity not long after returning to his master.

Boston King ran into the hands of the English Army, who received him gladly and treated him humanely in the face of the American Revolution. He, along with his comrades, was infected with smallpox. He had to be removed a mile from the camp and could no longer march with the British Army.

Through miraculous provision and a Godly relief worker, Boston eventually recovered from his affliction. Not long after this, his wife became the first convert of the great orator, Moses Wilkinson. Her conversion was so dramatic that Boston's heart became troubled. One could only imagine what went through his mind. Perhaps it was a dream that he had as a child:

When [I was] 12 years old, it pleased God to alarm me by a remarkable dream. At midday, when the cattle went under the shade of the trees, I dreamt that the world was on fire, and that I saw the supreme Judge defend on His great white Throne. I saw millions of millions of souls; some of whom ascended up to heaven; while others were rejected, and fell into the greatest confusion and despair. This dream made such an impression upon my mind, that I refrained from swearing and bad company, and from that time acknowledged that there was a God; but how to serve God I knew not.

His lack of knowledge did not last forever. Soon after his wife's conversion, God dealt powerfully with Boston King, but King began to resist God's dealing and fell into doubt and depression. Then one day, God began to speak to him.

I continued in prayer about half an hour, when the Lord...spoke to my heart, "Peace be unto thee." All my doubts and fears vanished away: I saw, but faith, heaven opened to my view; and Christ and His holy angels rejoicing over me. I was now enabled to believe in the name of Jesus, and my Soul was dissolved into love. Everything appeared to me in a different light to what they did before; and loved every living creature upon the face of the earth. I could truly say, I was now becoming a new creature. All tormenting and slavish fear, and all the guilt and weight of sin were done away. I was so exceedingly blessed, that I could no longer conceal my happiness, but went to my brethren and told them what the Lord had done for my soul.

Soon after this miraculous experience, Boston began to experience a burden for the lost. He gave his life to serving God and soon became one of the most influential missionaries to Africa. He was one of the first black Americans to leave America and travel to Africa to preach the gospel.

Boston King's life was one of supernatural communication with God. Although, like all of us, he faced doubts and fears, his conversations with God included not only talking, but also listening. Because he listened, his impact crossed the natural borders of oceans and touched the lives of lost human beings. (Pages 48-50)