

Let Me Illustrate - Stories and Quotations for Christian Communicators by Albert Stauderman, Ausburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1983 (24 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

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Adversity

1. If I live long enough, I'd like to write a book on trials, because without them a person can neither know Scripture or faith, nor can he fear and love God. If he has never suffered, he cannot understand what hope is. -- Martin Luther [Page 13]

2. Early in the 16th century, William Tyndale completed a translation of the Bible into English and attempted to have it published. He could not borrow enough money for the job or even enough to buy paper, because such publications were illegal and Tyndale himself was regarded as a heretic.

Finally, he managed to issue a small edition of his Bible translation. Learning of this, the papal authorities sent their agents to buy up the copies of Tyndale's Bible at any price and to burn them. Sales to the papal agents provided Tyndale with money enough to buy more paper and print a much larger edition. [Pages 13-14]

3. A hunting accident in 1858 blinded a young Englishman, leaving him depressed and despondent. Letters from friends did not help much, for they

mostly urged him to be resigned to the will of providence. But one letter was different. It came from a former tutor of the 25-year-old man and said in part, "It will be your own fault if this trouble does not bring with it some alleviation. The evil that has fallen on you will lose half its terrors if regarded steadfastly in the face with determination to subdue it as far as may be possible." The letter went on with practical suggestions for study and plans for the future. It was the right challenge. Called on to accept his misfortune and make the best of it, Henry Fawcett became a professor at Cambridge University and later England's postmaster general. [Page 14]

Anxiety

4. Worried about what may happen when "the bottom drops out"? That's a worry in Wall Street, because it could wipe out great fortunes. A dozen prophets of gloom have written bestselling books to tell us how to confront the catastrophe they predict! It was evidently a worry in the days of Moses, too, but he found an answer. "The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. 33:27). When the "bottom drops out," God's everlasting arm is there to catch and support us. [Page 16]

5. It is not work that kills people, it is worry. Work is healthy and you can hardly put more upon a man than he can bear. Worry is the rust upon the blade. -- Henry Ward Beecher [Page 17]

6. People do not avail themselves of the richness of God's grace. They love to nurse their cares and seem as uneasy with them as a man wearing a wig. Urged to cast their cares upon God, they soon take them up again. They take God's ticket to heaven and then put their baggage on their shoulders and tramp, tramp, tramp, the whole way there afoot. -- Henry Ward Beecher [Pages 16-17]

Attitude

7. Contrasting attitudes toward life can be seen in statements from two men who are generally considered highly successful. Lord Byron, the poet, wrote at age 36: My days are in the yellow leaf; the flowers and fruits of love are gone. The worm, the canker and the grief are mine alone." On the other hand, Adoniram Judson, a Baptist missionary to Burma in the early 19th century, wrote after a life of trials and hardship, "I suppose they think I'm an

old man and it's easy for me to give up a life so full of trials, but I'm not an old man in that sense, and you know it. No man ever left the world with more inviting prospects, brighter hopes, or warmer feelings." [Page 35]

Bible

8. Once in a sermon I told an old joke about the biblical ignorance of our day. It starts with someone asking, "What are the Epistles" Then someone else answers, "Oh, the Epistles are the wives of the apostles." The joke drew its usual appreciative chuckle from the congregation. But after the service, a woman as she was leaving the church said to me, "Pastor, I didn't get that joke of yours. If they weren't the wives of the apostles, whose wives were they? [Page 23]

9. When Sir Walter Scott was near death, he asked one of his servants to read to him.

"What shall I read?" the man asked.

"Need you ask?" Scott responded. "There is only one book." His library was stacked from floor to ceiling with thousands of volumes, yet he thought of only one book-the Bible. Scott added, speaking to the servant, "Be a good man, be strong in faith. Nothing else will give you comfort when you lie here." [Page 24]

Character

10. Philosophers have always struggled with the problem of evil. John Newton observed, "Many have puzzled themselves about the origin of evil. I observe that there is evil, and that there is a way to escape it, and with this I begin and end." The fact is that evil can build strength, faith, and character. Savonarola said, "If there be no enemy, no fight; if no fight, no victory; if no victory, no crown." By facing and overcoming evil, we gain strength of character and increase our determination to do good. [Page 33]

Commitment

11. A young doctor decided to go to India although his friends tried to discourage him. "You will be helpless against the suffering in that huge nation," they said. "You'll just be swallowed up in the mass of humanity. What can you do about their epidemics, wars, famines, floods?"

But the young doctor had only one answer: "When it is dark about me, I do not curse the darkness. I just light my candle." -- Eddie Cantor [Page 44]

Courage

12. Physical courage is a widely admired trait. We praise athletes who compete despite obvious handicaps, like the one-armed baseball player Pete Gray, or Monty Stratton, who pitched effectively although he had an artificial leg.

It's said that a lame man came to join the Greek army but the other soldiers laughed at him and said, "How can you run with that lame leg-," To which the lame man replied, "I came to fight, not to run. [Pages 50-51]

Decision

13. During the Civil War a well-meaning person said to President Lincoln, "I pray that God is on our side."

Lincoln answered, "I am more concerned that we are on God's side." [Page 54]

Excuses

14. As a U. S. Army hospital ship was steaming into the combat zone in the Pacific during World War II, special chapel services were held for those of the Roman Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish faiths. Because of the imminent danger, there was a record turnout. One doctor attended all three services. When his colleagues kidded him about this, he said. "Listen! At a time like this I'm taking no chances." [Page 62]

God's Love

15. An old woman in India turned to the Christian faith, making some of her unconverted neighbors furious. They shunned her at times and harassed her, even shouting after her on the street. "You're the ugliest old woman I ever saw," one of them shouted. She gently turned the attack aside. "Isn't it wonderful how God can love an ugly old woman like me!" she replied. [Page 78]

God's Power

16. Napoleon once seemed destined to conquer the world. He exalted his own power and commented that "God is always on the side of the heavy battalions." But eventually Napoleon was cut down to size and sent into exile. Victor Hugo remarked, "God got bored with him." [Page 80]

God's Presence

17. "What are you drawing?" a teacher asked a youngster. "I'm drawing a picture of God," was the reply.

"But nobody knows what God looks like," the teacher protested. "They will when I'm finished," said the child. [Page 84]

18. David Livingstone, the African missionary-explorer, was received with silent respect and reverence by the commencement audience at Glasgow University, which conferred a doctorate on him. Gaunt and weary after 16 years in the African sun and 27 attacks of fever, with one arm made useless by the bite of a lion, Livingstone told the audience that he was going back to Africa. His work would be partly to open new trade routes, partly to help suppress the slave trade, and chiefly to seek new opportunities for the preaching of the gospel, he said. "Shall I tell you what has supported me through all these years of exile among people whose language I did not know and whose attitude toward me was often hostile and always uncertain?" he asked. "It was this: 'Lo, I am with you always even to the end of the world.'" [PAGE 84]

19. In the early days of the Communist revolution in Russia, a group of peasants met secretly for worship. During their meeting, police broke into the room and proceeded to take down the names of all who were present. They finished with 30 names and were about to leave when one elderly peasant said, "One name is missing." The officer in charge took the roll again, but when he had finished the peasant said again, "One name is missing."

Impatiently the officer demanded, "Who is it? Tell me his name!" The old peasant said, "Jesus Christ."

Muttering, "Oh, that's different," the police left the meeting, but the old peasant was right. [Pages 84-85]

Greed, Selfishness

20. Greed can be deadly. When the soldiers of Cortez invaded Mexico, they lusted for the Aztec treasures of gold, silver, and gems. In one battle the soldiers overpowered the poorly armed Aztecs and scooped up as much loot as they could carry, filling bags with gold chains and jewelry. As the Spaniards fled, the Aztecs regrouped and pursued the robbers. Loaded clown with heavy bags of gold, some of the Spaniards were quickly overtaken and killed. Only those who threw away most of their loot could escape. [Pages 86-87]

21. A man once found a dollar bill in the street. Since then he's kept his eyes on the ground, always searching for more. He has accumulated 1,754 pins, 578 buttons, and \$2.68-but he has lost the sight of the faces of friends, the loveliness of flowers, the glory of heaven and its blue skies. [Page 87]

22. Human nature sometimes leads its to believe that God wants us to have the biggest and best, so we might as well take it for ourselves. We are like a little boy who was offered some cake. There were two pieces on the plate, a big one and a little one, so the boy said, "I'm sure my little sister would like a piece. May I give her one?"

The adults in the room were deeply moved by this graciousness and commented on how polite the little boy was. But one of them said to the boy, "You're not usually so thoughtful about your sister. How come?"

The boy answered honestly, "Well, if I took the first piece, I'd have to take the little one, so I offered it to her first so she'd have to take the little one and leave the big one for me." [Page 88]

Growth

23. A rural church had one member who insisted he was the best Christian in town but who rarely attended services, never did much, never knew much, never gave much. The minister kept after him, urging him to grow in faith, but he had one consistent answer: "Preacher, I may not seem to make much progress, but my faith is firmly established."

Then one spring day when he was hauling a heavy load of logs, his truck got stuck in the mud at the side of the road and couldn't budge. Just then the minister came by and couldn't resist the opportunity to remark, "Well, brother, I see you're not making much progress, but you are surely firmly established!"

Don't be stuck in the mud. Grow! [Page 88]

24. Marriage and Family

"How's your wife?" an absentminded clergyman asked.

"Why, my wife died and went to heaven," the man answered.

"I'm sorry," the clergyman started to say, but that didn't sound right. "I'm glad," he then started to say, but that too sounded improper. So he wound up saying. "I'm surprised!" [Page 116]