

***Francis & Edith Schaeffer*** by L.G. Parkhurst, Jr., Bethany House Publishers: Minneapolis, MN (1996). (36 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols).

### **1. L'Abri, "The Shelter".**

Francis and Edith Schaeffer founded L'Abri Fellowship in 1955 to show that God exists. They wanted to demonstrate to others the character and reality of God by the way they lived, taught, and prayed. L'Abri, which means "the shelter," was started in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. It became a refuge and study center for people seeking to understand the meaning of life. [page 9]

### **2. The Schaeffers Praying.**

L'Abri helped so many people because the Schaeffers built it on prayer, and thus proved on a daily basis that God exists. People could see God in operation in their home and in the lives of those around them. The Schaeffers *prayed* for God to send the people of His choice to them; they *prayed* for God to send the money they needed without soliciting funds; they *prayed* for God to give them His direct leading and plan; and they *prayed* for God to send them co-workers of His choice. [page 10]

### **3. The Lives of Faith.**

A.W. Tozer wrote: "Next to the Holy Scriptures, the greatest aid to the life of faith may be Christian biography. It is indeed notable that a large part of the Bible itself is given over to the life and labors of prophets, patriarchs and kings—who they were, what they did and said, how they prayed and toiled and suffered and triumphed at last!" [page 11]

### **4. A Transformed Life = God's Existence.**

Dr. Schaeffer believed that a transformed life was one of the best arguments for God's existence. He prayed that God would help him show others by the way he lived the love of God and the truth of God *at the same time* in the power of the Holy Spirit. [pages 12-13]

### **5. The Importance of Christian Biographies.**

Biographies of Christians—of preachers, missionaries, writers, business people, statesmen, and theologians—teach us about God and what He can do through people dedicated to Him. They encourage us to draw closer to God, to pray, read the Bible, and seek to obey God. [page 15]

### **6. No Earning of Salvation by Good Works or Church Attendance.**

Fran learned many important values from his unbelieving father: he learned to persevere and work hard, and the value of doing an honest day's labor for an honest day's wage. He saw that non-Christians could be "good people," even better than some

who claim to be Christians. This fact led to his eventual understanding that no one can earn salvation by their good works or by going to church. Fran came to realize that both believers and unbelievers can do many wonderful things, because God made people in His image with abilities that should be used for His glory and honor. [page 20-21]

### **7. Learned Practical Work Skills Early.**

By the time he [Fran] graduated, he could lay flooring, build garages, lay brick, spread concrete, and do plumbing. During his high school years, he learned many practical skills that he would later use to overcome difficulties. He learned to be practical-minded and hard-working from his parents, and these values along with his early education would be absolutely essential after God led him to decide to live by faith as a missionary. [page 22]

### **8. Through Bible Reading Schaffer Became a Christian.**

He decided to be fair and read the Bible for himself. He began at the beginning and read straight through to the end. From reading Genesis to Revelation, he discovered that the Bible contained the answers to his philosophical questions. In the course of about six months, at the age of seventeen, the truth of God and the Spirit of God led Fran to become a Christian. However, he did not know anyone else who believed as he did. [page 24]

### **9. Only the Bible Contains Answers of Life.**

The Bible contains the only answers to the meaning of life and the questions life poses. Later Fran wrote, “The basis for our faith is that certain things are true. The whole man, including the intellect, is to act upon the fact that certain things are true. That, of course, will lead to an experiential relationship with God, but the basis is content, not experience.” [page 26]

### **10. The Bible – God’s Revelation to a Lost and Dying World.**

While a teenager, Fran learned what he later preached often: the Bible is true in all that it affirms, and the Bible is God’s revelation to save lost and dying people. [page 26]

### **11. Edith’s Early Training.**

God’s early preparation of Edith included having her accompany Dr. Hoste (who succeeded Hudson Taylor as the director of C.I.M) as he prayed by name for all the missionaries under his care. After admonishing her not to talk as they walked, he took little four-year-old Edith by the hand as he prayed out loud for the mission’s needs and the individual needs of each missionary and their children. Edith heard Dr. Hoste pray for her specifically, and then she saw his prayers answered on her behalf. She heard others praising God for the answers to prayer that she had heard Dr. Hoste pray about

earlier, and she praised God, too. Some of her earliest recollections include hearing her parents pray and seeing God answer them in special ways. Very early in life, God impressed Edith's heart and mind with truths about his faithfulness and His desire to hear and answer prayers. [page 31]

## **12. Actions Now Effect Eternity.**

The decisions we make *now* can cause ripple effects through eternity! [page 34]

## **13. All Human Beings Created in God's Image.**

Consistent with his concern for all people [*while in college*], Fran walked through the woods every week to teach the Bible to a group of poor black children. He knew no barriers of race or color in Jesus Christ, and lived on that basis even when many had a deep-seated prejudice against their black brothers and sisters. Fran went to these little children because he loved them and saw them as individuals. But at the same time, perhaps unconsciously, he made a social statement regarding every Christian's responsibility to love and serve those who are different in some respects from themselves, for all human beings are created in the image of God. [page 37]

## **14. Common Bonds Through Daily Readings.**

They both read *Daily Light* each day, to have a biblical and spiritual experience in common while apart. Their shared reading of *Daily Light* continued until the day of Fran's death. [page 38]

## **15. The Church Is the Body of Christ.**

Because he recognized that the Church is the Body of Christ and not just another organization, he advised, "I personally would not belong to any denomination where there was no hope of recovering the bureaucracy or the seminaries for Jesus Christ." [page 39]

## **16. Showing Love While Battling for Truth.**

But Fran also recognized the need in his life for more sweetness, gentleness, love, and kindness. He wanted to express the qualities of love as he stood for truth in the midst of the battle for truth. He battled his temper all his life, but he did develop the kindness that he sought. [page 39]

## **17. Marriage Is a Shared Experience.**

After years of married experience, Edith later taught that marriage is a 90/10 relationship. While there are times where you give 90 percent and the other gives 10 percent, there are also times when your mate gives 90 percent and you only give 10.

There are occasions in a marriage where one or the other is just not able to give what is needed. [page 41]

### **18. Edith Schaeffer Wrote Family Letters.**

For most of her life, Edith only needed about three hours of sleep at night. While others slept, she spent the late evening or early morning hours at work, often writing family letters, then *L'Abri Family Letters*, and finally books. [page 42]

### **19. Give the Most to God and Learn the Most from God.**

Because Fran knew that people live in the midst of spiritual battles, he dealt with difficulties and unexpected “moves” in life without being completely shattered by them. He tried not to complain, but looked upon his difficult times and places as opportunities to *give the most to God and learn the most from God* in the midst of spiritual warfare. No matter what happened to them, Fran and Edith wanted to maintain integrity, honesty, and truthfulness before God and others. [page 46]

### **20. Life-long Prayer.**

All through their lives Fran and Edith combined prayer with obedient hard work, and God blessed their consistency. They became a clear and open channel for the flow of God’s grace into the lives of those around them. [page 48]

### **21. Using All of God’s Gifts.**

They believed in using all of God’s gifts (the gifts of faith, prayer, physicians, and medicine) in the battle to defeat Satan, sickness, and death. Trouble and sickness are not always a sign of a lack of faith or disobedience. Believers do not need to throw away their medicine to prove their faith in God before He will heal them. The believer’s troubles often come from living in a fallen world, from Satan’s attacks, and from the sins of others. Perfection will not come until the next world, after Jesus has returned. [page 48]

### **22. Schaeffer Worked Hard.**

One of their former church members in St. Louis said of Fran’s work there: “He worked hard, and he worked the people hard!” [page 50]

### **23. Inadequate Spiritual Food Endangers Spiritual Life.**

In their life story, *The Tapestry*, Edith made the observation that characterized their thinking: “What a variety of wars there are, and what varied forms of devastation. Inadequate and watered-down food depletes physical bodies, but inadequate, watered-down, and even poisoned spiritual food endangers spiritual life.” [page 52]

## **24. Loving Concern for People and Prayer.**

Fran's loving concern for people, and the practical expression of that love in whatever way possible, even through prayer when apart, always characterized his ministry and naturally drew people who needed help to his doorstep. [page 53]

## **25. Not Credible When One Is Cooperation with Non-believers.**

He felt it crucial for the true churches to take a stand and separate themselves from the modern forms of unbelief and paganism that characterized liberal theology. Later he wrote:

“Nowhere is practicing the truth more important than in the area of religious cooperation. If I sat that Christianity is really eternal truth, and the liberal theologian is wrong—so wrong that he is teaching what is contrary to the Word of God—and then on any basis (including for the sake of evangelism) I am willing publicly to act as though that man's religious position is the same as my own, I have destroyed the practice of truth which my generation can *expect* from me and which it will *demand* of me if I am to have credibility. How will we have *credibility* in a relativistic age if we practice religious cooperation with men who in their books and lectures make very plain that they believe nothing (or practically nothing) of the content set forth in Scripture?” [page 55]

## **26. Loving Others to Share the Truth.**

“To be right,” includes loving others as we share the truth with them, so we can lead them to embrace the God of love. “A will to win” can quickly lead to saying hurtful, unloving things that can destroy those God loves and drive them away from God. [page 72]

## **27. Relationship with Others Is Personal and Equal.**

In the midst of being right, if self is exalted, my fellowship with God can be destroyed. It is not wrong to be right, nor to say that wrong is wrong, but it is wrong to have the wrong attitude in being right, and to forget that my relationship with my fellow men must always be personal and as equals. If I really love a man as I love myself, I will long to see him be what he could be on the basis of Christ's work, for that is what I want or what I should want for myself on the basis of Christ's work. [page 72]

## **28. Christ's Finished Work on the Cross.**

He stressed that a personal, subjective relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ flows from our accepting His finished work upon the Cross in our behalf. [page 75]

### **29. Learning to Think Clearly and Logically.**

Organizations and personalities change; they come and go. You become what you think about, and what you do relates to the way you think. Dr. Schaeffer did not offer easy outs for people who did not want to think. He believed that one of the most lasting effects of discussion and study should be the knowledge of how to think clearly and logically, and of how to discern right ideas from wrong ways of thinking. [page 86]

### **30. To Show Forth the Existence of God.**

The Schaeffers had had the reality of the existence of God demonstrated to them in real ways up to that point, and they began L'Abri simply from a desire "to show forth by demonstration, in our life and work, the existence of God."

They made plans to achieve this goal in specific ways: they would pray in four different areas. First rather than appeal to others to send them money, they would pray for God to meet their material needs. Second, they would pray for God to send the people He wanted to L'Abri, and keep all others away. Third, they would pray for God's leading every day, rather than planning the work for themselves. Fourth, they would pray for God to send the people He wanted to join them in the work. [page 91]

### **31. Standing for Holiness and Love at the Same Time.**

... a keynote of Dr. Schaeffer's teaching and private conversations; that is, *Christians must always stand for holiness and love at the same time*. After study and prayer, he came to believe that this can never be done in a person's own strength. It can only be done through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's life. God gave the Holy Spirit so he could help Christians live Christ-like. [page 93]

### **32. With Disagreements, Things Were Discussed Privately.**

After he began L'Abri, Dr. Schaeffer preferred to deal with his critics on a private level through careful correspondence and discussion. In this way he hoped he could show the love of Christ for those who disputed his ideas. But he did not carry controversial discussion on for long when he felt the issues and differences of theological opinion had been fully discussed and understood by all parties involved. [page 96]

### **33. Only Christianity True to Reality.**

Dr. Schaeffer understood modern man and the foundations of his ideas and actions. He did not appeal to people's selfishness or self-interest by telling them to accept Christ for all that He could do for them. Rather, he knew that conversion to Christ involves turning from self-centeredness to Christ-centeredness, to putting the claims of Jesus Christ first in one's life. He presented Christianity as *the only viable option that is true*

*to reality* and then he demanded that people live on the basis of Christian truth. [page 107]

### **34. Evangelism with a Pure Life and Pure Doctrine.**

In 1974 Dr. Schaeffer addressed the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelism and declared that the church today must emphasize Christian holiness, purity of life, and purity of doctrine. Christians must realize the reality of God and the supernatural in the midst of this present life, and this cannot be forgotten as they try to do evangelism. “Evangelism that does not lead to purity of life and purity of doctrine is just as faulty and incomplete as an orthodoxy which does not lead to a concern for, and communication with, the lost.” [page 109]

### **35. Liberals Infiltrated from the Inside.**

When various leaders and pastors from a variety of denominations came to him for advice, he noted in recent history only one mainline denomination had fought the battle for the Bible in their church and won against the liberals. In some other denominations the battle had yet to be decided. His observations led him to warn that when the denomination’s bureaucracy or leadership and seminaries had been captured by the theological liberals the battle is lost. Liberals always tend to infiltrate, subvert, and take over institutions from the inside. With the possible exception of the World Council of Churches, he observed that liberals have never created a major theological institution (they have always taken them from the Bible-believing Christians). [page 111]

### **36. His Complete Focus Was the Needs of Others.**

Dr. and Mrs. Schaeffer were accessible to almost everyone at all times, but that does not mean this was an easy choice for them to make. Fran suffered silently from his illness, and as he tried to help others he never complained to them or put his own needs before theirs. The Holy Spirit gave him the strength to make the needs of others his complete focus of attention for the time that was required. He called on patients in the Rochester hospitals, continuing the work of a simple pastor, never thinking he was better than anyone else or too great to give others his time. [pages 121-122]