

***Who Put the Skunk in the Trunk? Learning to Laugh When Life Stinks*** by Phil Callaway (Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Publishers, 1999) (21 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

**1. Skunkbuster Secret #1**

*The world is full of cactus... but we don't need to sit on one.* [Page 16]

**2. Getting Up in the Morning**

“Do you ever teach your children how to get up in the morning? Not only to get up, but how to get up? There is a threefold technique in getting up: First, we stretch. That gets the body going. Then, smile. That puts the soul in the right attitude, so that we don't start the day grumbling. And then say, ‘God loves me.’ Because that sets the spirit right.” Ray Stedman [Page 34]

**3. Lying at a Funeral.**

Live so the preacher won't have to lie at your funeral. [Page 34]

**4. Looking forward to Eternity.**

I'm thankful that my hope is not fixed on the stuff of this earth. That I've got more than tomorrow to look forward to. I've got eternity. [Page 50]

**5. To God the Journey Is Important.**

I love what Kent Hughes says: “God is not so much interested in whether we reach our destination as in how we try to get there. To us arrival is everything, but to God the journey is most important, for it is in the journey that we are perfected, and it is in hardships that He is glorified as we trust Him.” David Sandford, Portland, OR [Page 57]

**6. Listen to God's Surprises.**

And if we listen hard enough we just may learn a very important lesson when it comes to surprises: When God sends one our way, embrace it. When opportunity knocks, don't complain about the noise. Instead, pass God's grace along. [Page 65]

**7. Joy Is Multiplied When Shared.**

It happened a few years ago at the Special Olympics in Seattle. Nine contestants, all physically or mentally disabled, assembled at the starting line for the 100-yard dash. The contestants waited. The crowd watched. The gun sounded. It wasn't exactly a dash, but all nine ran the best they could. Hoping to finish. Hoping to win. Suddenly one of them stumbled on the asphalt, tumbled over, and began to cry.

The other eight heard his cry. They slowed down and looked back. Then every one of them stopped, turned around, and went back to get him.

A girl with Down's syndrome bent over and kissed him. "This will make it better," she said sweetly. A few helped him up. Then all nine linked arms and walked across the finish line.

Together.

Everyone in the stadium stood. The ovation went on for several minutes. People who were there still tell this story. Why? Because joy is one of the few things that is multiplied when it's divided. Because those who bring sunshine to the lives of others can't keep it from shining on themselves. [Page 70]

### **8. Filling Suffering with God's Presence.**

"Jesus did not come to explain away suffering or remove it. He came to fill it with His presence." Paul Caudel [Page 72]

### **9. God Looks at the Scars.**

"God will not look you over for medals, degrees, or diplomas, but for scars." Elbeert Green Hubbard (1856-1915) [Page 79]

### **10. God Gives Better.**

"God will either give you what you ask, or something far better" Robert Murray McCheyne (1813—1843) [Page 117]

### **11. Moving Mountains When We Pray.**

Sometimes we come across a story that changes our outlook on life. Sometimes we find ourselves telling the story to our children, our friends, and complete strangers on airplanes. For me, the story you are about to read fits that description.

Bob Hunter, a Washington, D.C., businessman, had just become a Christian. Every Sunday he attended church. Every day he read his Bible. Never before had he felt so alive. And never before had he had so many questions.

One day Bob asked Doug Coe, a fellow Christian businessman who led the National Prayer Breakfast, "Do you really believe what the Bible says about moving mountains when we pray?"

"I sure do," replied Doug.

Shaking his head, Bob asked, "You mean to tell me that if I pray for a mountain to move, it will?"

"Let me put it this way," Doug replied. "I not only believe it, but I'll make you a bet. A five hundred dollar bet. Bob, what do you know about Africa?"

“Nothing.”

“What do you think about when you think of Africa?”

“I think of monkeys swinging through trees.”

“Then here’s the bet. I want you to pray for forty-five days: ‘God help Africa.’ That’s all you have to pray. But you can’t miss a single day. At the end of forty-five days, you judge whether or not any mountain has moved. If you think one has, you pay me five hundred dollars. If you think one hasn’t, you just tell me, and I’ll pay you five hundred dollars, no questions asked.”

Now Bob was an astute businessman and he rather liked the odds. So he shook his friend’s hand and began a daily prayer: “God help Africa.”

A few days later he found himself seated next to an elderly lady at a dinner. She told him she lived in Uganda and ran an orphanage there. Bob began to pepper her with questions about Uganda. And about Africa.

“Why are you so interested in Africa?” she wanted to know.

With some embarrassment he explained, ‘You’ll never believe this, but I made a bet with a good friend.’ He then proceeded to tell her of the bet and by the end of the evening she had extended an invitation to the young Christian. Would he return to Uganda with her to visit the orphanage?

He said he would.

In Uganda his heart was touched by the orphans. After returning to the States, he got a few friends together and bought toys and clothes and sent them back to Uganda. After they arrived, the woman at the orphanage called. “Mr. Hunter,” she said, “the children are so grateful for what you did. Would you be able to come back?” He accepted the invitation and before long was off to Uganda again.

After a heartwarming ceremony the orphans had prepared for him, Bob received a phone call from the president of Uganda. He had heard about the gifts and called to thank him. And to extend an invitation to meet with him that afternoon.

Arriving for the appointment, Bob found the president rushing out of his office. “I’m sorry,” he apologized. “Something has come up, but will you ride with me so we can get acquainted?”

Along the way, Bob looked out the window at the Ugandan countryside. Suddenly the car jolted to a halt. Out his window, Bob was surprised to see what appeared to be a stockyard; only this stockyard was not filled with cattle, but with men.

“What is going on here?” Bob asked the president.

“This is a political prison,” replied the president. “These men are my political enemies.”

Bob looked out the window again.

“But Mr. President,” he said, “it’s not right to have men living in such horrible conditions. You must let them go.”

“But they are my political enemies; men who have tried to subvert my authority I cannot let them go. That would be foolish.”

“You have to let them go,” Bob insisted.

A week after returning to the States, Bob received a phone call. It was the State Department asking him to come to a meeting with the undersecretary for African affairs. Rather puzzled over the purpose of such a meeting, Bob had little choice but to attend. At the meeting, the undersecretary for African affairs asked him, “Mr. Hunter, on behalf of the government of the United States, I want to thank you for what you have done in Uganda.”

“Pardon me?” said Bob. “The U.S. government is thanking me for sending some toys to some orphans in Uganda?”

“No, Mr. Hunter. The president of Uganda recently released the political prisoners, which is something our government has been trying to get him to do for years. He told us after taking this action that he was doing it because of what you said to him.”

“What I said to him?”

“Yes. What exactly did you say to him?”

After the State Department meeting, the president of Uganda called Bob over the phone, asking him to return to Uganda to help him form a new cabinet for his country. “But Mr. President,” he replied, “I don’t know anything about your country or the people who would best serve in your government. I’m just an American businessman. How can I possibly help you choose a cabinet?”

“Mr. Hunter,” came the reply, “I trust you. Please come.”

And so Bob went. And did what he could to help the president select his new ministers. After that, a close friendship developed between Bob Hunter and the president of Uganda. The president now stays in Bob's home when visiting America.

After forty-five days of praying, "God help Africa," clearly God had answered. He had moved a mountain. And he had moved Bob.

There was only one drawback. Bob Hunter owed his friend Doug Coe a check for five hundred dollars. [Pages 117-120]

## **12. Fearing God**

"The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God, you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God, you fear everything else." OSWALD CHAMBERS [Page 121]

## **13. Daniel Boone's Happiness.**

"All you need for happiness is a good gun, a good horse, and a good wife." Daniel Boone [Page 127]

## **14. Bravery During Fear.**

"Bravery is the capacity to perform properly even when scared half to death." General Omar Bradley [Page 133]

## **15. Age Changes Outlook.**

Two eight-year-olds were talking after school one day. The one asked the other, "Wouldn't you hate to wear glasses all the time

The other responded, "Nope. Not if I had the kind Grandma wears. She sees how to fix lots of stuff, and she sees lots of cool things to do on rainy days, and she sees when folks are tired and sad, and what will make them feel better, and she always sees what you meant to do even if you haven't gotten things right just yet. I asked her one day how she could see that way, and she said it was the way she had learned to look at things when she got older. So it must be her glasses." [Page 153]

## **16. Receiving Mercy.**

Many years ago the old Puritan saint, Thomas Hooker, lay dying. Several friends sat by his bed.

"Brother," said one, "you are going to receive your reward."

"No, no!" breathed Thomas. "I go to receive mercy!" [Page 163]

### **17. Pleasing Others**

Sign on an office door: I can only please one person per day. Today is not your day. Tomorrow doesn't look good either. [Page 169]

### **18. Valley Walks Bring Maturity.**

"Mountaintops inspire leaders, but valleys mature them." F. Philip Everson [Page 171]

### **19. Being Reminded Every Now and Then.**

I don't know about you, but I need to be reminded of these things every now and then. I need to be reminded that the same God who has been faithful to each generation isn't about to stop with this one. I need to remember that although parenting is sometimes a frightening responsibility, it is also a joyful privilege. In fact, I wouldn't trade my kids for a good night's sleep. A full head of hair. Or some healthy plants. [Page 194]

### **20. Hope from God.**

"The word which God has written on the brow of every man is hope." Victor Hugo, author of *Les Miserables* (1802-1885) [Page 195]

### **21. Living on Less.**

When I was five years old, I prayed that God would make me rich. It did not happen. The buck stopped before it got to our house. One day I overheard Dad tell Mom, "Honey, we have enough money to last us the rest of our lives. Unless we live past Thursday." That was about the sum of things. [Page 195]