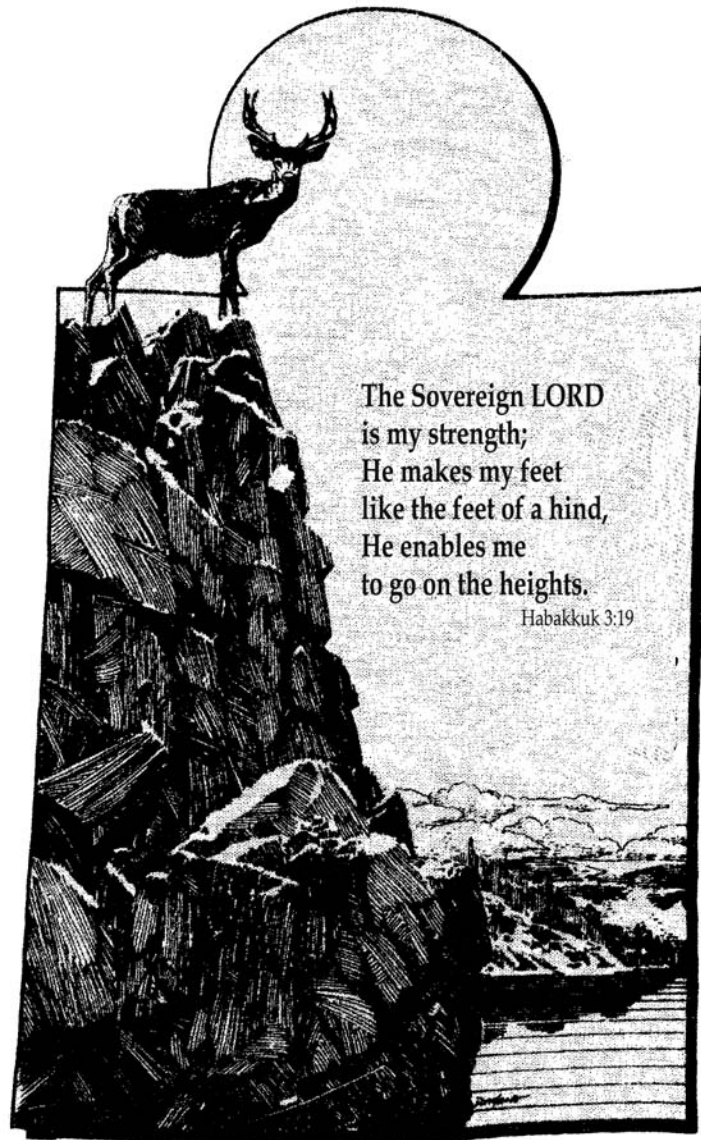


Going to the High Places

Chapter 7 *On the Shores of Loneliness*

Chapter 8 *On the Old Sea Wall*



Restoration Ministries International

Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz

Restorationministries.org

Introduction

Because the themes are interconnected, we'll cover two chapters in this lesson:

Chapter 7 *On the Shores of Loneliness*
Chapter 8 *On the Old Sea Wall*

The detour we made away from the mountains to the pyramid of refinement probably seems the most painful thing that's ever happened to you! All of us were born with a sinful, carnal nature that rules our attitudes and behaviors. After you've put your trust in Jesus, the sanctification process, in essence, is the Holy Spirit transformation from sin's control over your soul to Spirit rule within you.

As you've discovered, your carnal nature doesn't give up without a fight. As Paul warns, "*The sinful nature [your carnal self] desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other*" (Gal. 5:17).

Losing the carnal identity that feeds your ego is a struggle, a painful process that lasts longer than most of us prefer. But this battle is necessary if you are to put on the humility and yieldedness which are essential to following in Jesus' steps.

A danger lurks after your time in the pyramid. When you've finished going through God's grinding, purifying, and molding processes, you are enveloped by an overwhelming urgency *to do* something. Your impatient heart calls out, "I'm ready Lord! Use me!"

Yet there is one thing more before He can truly entrust you with His work. This one thing helps you stay away from the traps of ego that Satan will set up for you as you seek to serve Jesus. Many of the most powerful anointed people of our day have run ahead of God and fallen into this satanic trap: *They fled their classroom of loneliness*. They began their work without the final ingredient our Lord wanted to impart to them.

For the impatient, their isolation on the shores of the Sea of Loneliness makes the pyramid look like a trip to Disneyworld. To

the undiscerning, their period of loneliness seems as though nothing is happening that could be useful to God. Days, months, and even years go by when nothing seems to be changing. But for those who conquer their impatience, something of great magnitude is developing in the stillness of their souls.

Keep reminding yourself and your journey partner of this truth: *The Sea of Loneliness* is a time when your *inner motivations* are being *changed*.

The seed of love is quietly growing as Much-Afraid proceeds along her pilgrim way to the High Places. So, too, our Father's design is for you to learn to *cultivate complete trust in Him* before you leave the shore and the sea wall for the High Places. To the extent in which you both deeply desire and willingly permit your complete trust in Him to grow, you will find the rest of the journey that much easier.

Before we begin Chapter 7, anchor in your heart a fact, the reason for which He brings you to a place of isolation:

Our Father desires complete trust from you—a trust so complete that you do not have to understand as much as to obey.

Chapter 7 *On the Shores of Loneliness*

1. After they walked together...; 2. "It is now time for me to leave you..."

Isn't it wonderful that the Shepherd can depart from Much-Afraid and assure her (and us), "...there is really no distance at all separating us." Scripture repeatedly urges us to *draw near* to God, and He will draw near to us. He is eager for us to reach out to Him!

The concept of *failing* God undergirds the teaching of the Hellenism which has so infiltrated the modern church. Neither our Lord Jesus nor our Father considers it failure when you call out to Him for help. In fact, your dependence on Him is how you strengthen your relationship with God.

Consider for a moment the value of *obtaining wisdom*. Being considered wise is esteemed throughout the Scriptures, and is another arena for us to seek Him out: *“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him”* (James 1:5). **Wisdom, is God’s insight and way of doing things**, and is given generously by Him. And, He doesn’t stop to remind you first of all the areas in which you fall short.

Since He assures us that He’ll respond to that cry for wisdom, how tragic that so few of His children ask for His insight! The consequences of such ignorance are severe: *To act without wisdom is folly. Folly always leads to destruction and the hurting of other people.*

Perhaps the reason so few pray to our Lord for wisdom is encapsulated in the last sentence of paragraph 2. “My sheep hear my voice and they follow me.” So few ever hear the guiding voice of the Shepherd because they’re too preoccupied heeding the “voices in their mind.”

If you have journeyed with us this far, you know how we respond to those who contact us with their besetting mental wrestling matches: *“[YOU can] demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, [if you] take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ”* (2 Corinthians 10:5).

How can anyone ever hear the voice of Jesus our Shepherd with all this other clamor going on? Just as an army uses radio jamming to disrupt communication, Satan jams you with voices if you are willing to listen. As you continue to take your thoughts captive to make them obey Christ, you’ll be

able to hear our Shepherd’s guiding voice.

- Are you being demonically jammed? Don’t rail because of the attack or you’ll play further into agitating hands. First, resist and take your thoughts captive as the Bible commands. Ask your journey partner for prayer and encouragement to keep on resisting and taking your thoughts captive as often as need be. Spiritual warfare is an ongoing development of *alertness and resistance* as you press on in our Father’s purposes.

3. “Whenever you are willing to obey ...

There are some special moments when you’re a shepherd. Sue and I had a flock of sheep at our retreat center as part of my counseling ministry to clergy and other church leaders. We didn’t have a sheep dog, and sheep don’t do well if you try to drive them along. They have to be moved every three weeks to a new pasture to avoid ingesting parasites that develop in their stool. These parasites could ultimately kill them.

So when Sue or I went out to move them from one pasture to another, it was heartwarming to open the gate and call, “Sheep! Sheep!” and watch them trustingly respond to us and enter their new pasture. They heard our call, recognized our voices, and obeyed, which resulted in their health and safety.

To be trusted is a remarkable experience. I enjoy seeing little children grab their parent’s hand in times of danger or uncertainty. And if we earthly parents feel so good when our kids trust us, how joyful it must make the heart of our Jesus when we hear, trust, and obey Him!

Your season along the shores of the Sea of Loneliness is your time to die to your own rationale. All of your weighing of pro’s and con’s is replaced by trusting confidence in your Shepherd. Your fevered analysis is transformed into a yearning to obey Him without concern for the outcome.

Do you want to hear the voice of Jesus or tune in to demonic jamming?

Not taking your thoughts captive causes you to miss turns in your path, leading to your defeat.

The diagram illustrates a path that starts as a solid blue arrow labeled "God's path" pointing to the right. At a certain point, the path is interrupted by a red dotted line labeled "demonic jamming". From the end of this dotted line, two paths emerge: one continues straight to the right as a solid blue arrow labeled "God's path", and the other turns downward and to the right as a solid blue arrow labeled "God's path".

I was recently sharing on the phone with two particular brothers in Christ. These two have been journey companions with me when we first moved West. They've been wellsprings of wisdom as well as loving friends as we were preparing to produce our video series, *Jesus In Your Home*.

What really encouraged us was their willingness to seek our Lord's will on each aspect, even down to which software would be the most effective for this endeavor. Once we receive Spirit confirmation about what our Lord wants, we do it!

Now that may sound courageous (or strange, depending on your personal experience), but another facet to our relationship surfaced as I described it to my friend on the phone that day. To be *respected* is very important to me as a man. But respect is a by-product of other decision processes a man uses when He wants to walk in God's will and is willing to do it for His glory.

I realized that not one of the three of us who were prayerfully cooperating in this project wanted to lose the respect of the others. Sometimes our decisions were painful to follow through on for the one who was affected by them. But we had little or no hesitation in following through because something beautiful in our relationship with both God and with each other would be tainted by doubt or vacillation.

Trust vs. Rationale Test

Where would you place yourself on the scale below? Do you seek God's will and obey, or do you weigh the pro's and cons' before you act?

Trust in God..10..20..30..40..50..60..70..80..90..*Rationalize*

- Men: Do you have a devoted male friend who holds you accountable to know and follow through on God's will? Someone whose loss of respect for you would really hurt?

- If you don't, why not? Is there something in you that really doesn't want that level of accountability and friendship?

4. Much-Afraid and her two companions...; 5. The green valley...

Have you ever noticed that the sea has so many moods? One day the waves ripple softly against the sand. Another day the roaring surf lashes frothy foam across the sand. Perhaps these two extremes can help you picture the difference between solitude and loneliness.

Solitude breathes an essence of calm serenity, quietness to hear, peaceful moments of remembrance. *Loneliness*, on the other hand, cries out for intervention, for change in circumstances, for relief from negative rumination.

Perhaps if Much-Afraid had evaluated her environment from the Shepherd's perspective she would have been able to appreciate the beauty of the acrobatic gulls and whimsical crabs. But, predisposed to remembering what she had left behind (see Luke 9:62), rather than focusing on the lovely places to come, all she could perceive was "endless sandy desert" on one side and "endless sea moaning drearily on the other."

You may be identifying with Much-Afraid's appraisal of her circumstances in your own life, wishing you didn't have to undergo such challenges before you can rest securely in prepared service for your Father's glory! You can look at the chaos and disorder of your life as a swirling sea, or you can thank the Shepherd for His constant presence along your shoreline as you breathe in His faithfulness.

- Describe some seasons in your life when you've relished solitude. Now contrast that with periods of loneliness you've experienced, and how you coped with them.

- Does the thought of walking along a deserted seashore bring a smile to you or a shudder? What past experiences come to mind in your relationship to the sea?
- Now look into the Bible's view on suffering together. Is there a change in attitude you need to make?

6. In those days Much-Afraid...; 7. She had been down into Egypt...

Remember Much-Afraid's encounter with the little flower outside the pyramid? "*Behold me, Acceptance-with-Joy*". That inner acceptance of the circumstances churning around you is the initial sign that your period of refinement is over.

Sorrow and suffering take on a much more positive meaning in your life when you understand that our Father has orchestrated them for His very special purposes. It's easier to embrace negative circumstances when you see them as necessary for your own Christ-like character development.

Jesus understood the value of suffering, for we're told, "*Although He was a son, He learned obedience from what He suffered*" (Heb. 5:8). How else can we ever develop the confident unwavering hope our Lord desires to form in us if we don't embrace suffering?

"Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us" (Rom 5:3-5).

As difficult as it is for our carnal nature to swallow, suffering is the best way for us to learn obedience and trust as well. Just like our Lord Jesus, we will each have our "Gethesemanes". May we each have such trust that we too say, "*My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will.*" (Matt. 26:39b).

- Take the time to articulate to your journey partner your feelings about suffering.

8. She could look back across...; 9. She did not understand how it happened...

Sanctification — the process of being set apart in Christ's character for His use — is first accomplished in the unseen niches of your heart. Out of your heart, your attitudes and motivations are brought into conformity to Jesus. Then, over time, your inner self finds outer expression in your behavior. This is crucial for you to understand: •first, the unseen heart change, •then your attitudes and motives, and finally, •your behavior follows.

Our contemporary psychological and materialistic culture stirs us too often to judge by what we can see and touch, much like doubting Thomas. We're programmed by schoolroom instruction and scientific processes to measure change so that we can have tangible proof by which we can verify facts.

In contrast, along your journey you've been impacted by both your pyramid refinement and your sea of loneliness. These are designed to reconstruct you away from judging everything by the external so that you can learn to cherish the *internal changes* in your character. The passage, "*We live by faith, not by sight*" (2 Cor. 5:7), becomes all the more clear, "for those who go down into the furnace of Egypt and find the flower of Acceptance come up changed and with the stamp of royalty upon them."

It's vital that you wear a cloak of humility during your journey, sweeping away any temptation to judge those who haven't pressed on as you have. These warnings should pierce your heart if you're given to comparative analysis:

"So from now on we regard no one from a worldly [carnal] point of view" (2 Cor. 5:16a).

*“Who are you to **judge someone else's servant?** To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand” (Rom. 14:4).*

*“Therefore judge nothing **before the appointed time**; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will **expose the motives** of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God” (1 Cor. 4:5).*

Any time you judge another person and find that you feel better about your own practice of Christianity, you're engaging in **self-justification**. Satan loves nothing more. Even the Pharisees began with good intentions, constructing behavioral fences around the commands of God so they wouldn't be in violation. In time, they began to judge each other's performance, entering into **legalistic perversion**. Thus they nullified our Lord's atoning work on the cross. The Lord Jesus's appraisal of them? “Hypocrites!” Don't give Jesus grounds to say this of you.

- Do you find yourself judging other Christians by external behaviors? If a person drinks wine or beer, attends movies, dances, does that diminish your view of them?
- Why do you think we are commanded, “*Judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes*”? Can it be that you're unable to see the Spirit's inner work going on in someone else's heart?

10. Therefore, though she went...; 11. Her heart often thrilled...; 12. Often, too, she found herself...

When Acceptance-with-Joy fills your heart, you begin to see everything differently. Over time your conversations with others

on the journey to the High Places become filled with testimonies of “God-sightings.” You see Him more and more around you in encounters, circumstances, and timing. You're more likely to perceive delays as opportunities to see God's hand at work in the unexpected and unanticipated!

Your growing aura of peace and joy, however, makes your conversations with those who never left the Valley of Their Strongholds strained. You sadly discover how little you have in common with them, and your sadness is compounded as you realize that they are not experiencing the wonder of your growing intimacy with your Shepherd. Sue and I have lost so many relationships over the years at this point. Even some who had made it to the Sea of Loneliness bolted back to the Valley because they thirsted for acceptance by others back there.

Beware: the agitating voices can still reach you here! Two points characterize those who turn back to the Valley of Their Strongholds:

1. They thought that resisting the devil and taking their thoughts captive was an optional requirement of God. Remember, only *you* can resist your fleshly as well as demonically-inspired thoughts, and take them captive. It's up to you!
2. Married couples who returned never owned the intensity needed to rightly align their marriage to the biblical requirement for headship. Most had a weak commitment to learning and living out their respective roles as husband and wife, preferring the world's values and interpretation.

If you've been learning our Lord's lessons and have found yourself changed so far on the journey, the Sea of Loneliness offers you the opportunity to perceive the uniqueness of God's beauty and design that you could never experience anywhere else. You begin to recognize divine timing and divine encounters with those He wanted you to

meet. You come to grasp how truly Sovereign He is, and the creative ways He has been operating all around you to fulfill His divine purposes through you.

For instance:

- * You develop an incredible appreciation for others. Those you once wrestled with bitterness, you now see as divine instruments to teach you the power of forgiveness.
- * You no longer care where you *live* because you are moved to plead with Him to put you where you can reach the people He has prepared for you to share His love with.
- * You no longer care where you *work* because you are pleading with Him to put you where you can reach the people He has prepared for you to share His love with.
- * Your chief desire is to be as used as fruitfully as possible in serving your King. You are able to perceive that everything around you can be used for our Father's glory.

God Consciousness Survey

Where do you place yourself on the scale below? How conscious are you of God's activity around you? Do you share that with others?

Unaware..10..20..30..40..50..60..70..80..90..Very Aware

- Over whom do you grieve their loss because they turned away from you and returned to the Valley?
- Describe a place you have visited a number of times that found you bearing different emotions each time. How did your emotional state affect your appreciation for your surroundings or companions?

13. One day they came...; 14. When, however, drawn by an urge...; 15. On seeing this transformation...

These three paragraphs summarize the essence of what happens along the shores of the Sea of Loneliness. You feel as though nothing is going on, but just wait... The Holy Spirit is making tremendous changes!

If the Mike and Sue Dowgiewicz of our retreat center days (1983-93) could meet us today, when we've been living and sharing the relational intimacy of the Hebraic foundations, they wouldn't know us! Our motivations and purposes are that much different. At the retreat center we were identified by the activities in which we were involved. Now we are known by the intimacy we have with our Lord and with each other. The difference is rather like being known by your doctor as "the man with the compressed disk", compared to your mother's loving and multifaceted perception of who you are!

In Israel the Lord told us, "*Share this message.*" He didn't tell us to "*teach this message.*" Let me explain: Our Hebraic ancestors who followed the path of Abraham understood that whenever people discuss the truths of God, the Holy Spirit is there giving understanding and application.

Discussion is the pattern that the first Hebrew, Abraham, used to pass on a way of life: "*For I have chosen [Abraham], so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what He has promised him*" (Genesis 18:19).

As Sue and I began to write, we had to discuss together so many facets that enabled the first followers of Jesus to be so spiritually powerful and relationally intimate. Without being conscious of it initially, we were being changed as we prepared the material to share with others.

It's in this light that we encourage you to discuss these truths and lessons He's revealing to you with your journey partner. The *inner change* will occur in your discussions as you seek to obey God's commands. We may

make you aware of different facets of the truth God has given us to share, but your discussion is the means to bring them into application in your life.

- Do you have discussions with your spouse and family so you can seek together how to apply God's words to the myriad of matters that affect you and your household?
- If you haven't been discussing matters, sit down with the appropriate people and ask for ideas of how to begin — early morning, dinner, after dinner??? Purpose to set a time and then follow through.

16. It was only a short time...; 17. Spies were sent out; 18. Off they went to the shores of Loneliness...

At the Sea of Loneliness you can experience some of your worst despair. This is especially true if your Christian experience was filled with *"doing"* and you found that just *"being"* was threatening. If you've been very involved in Hellenistic Christianity, then most likely you identify strongly with *what you do for God*.

Keep this in mind: The enemy sends his demons at just the right time in order to destroy your trust in the Shepherd and to focus you on your own lonely misery. Loneliness, probably more than any other feeling, drives people down avenues of sin. To find relief, they're willing to bend their moral values and rationalize wickedness.

One of God's ways to create isolation is to alter your environment for His purposes. Many men who have been too busy to spend time with our Lord and their families find themselves unemployed. We've seen God put men, especially in their 40's and 50's, out of work in order to increase both their time with Him and their dependent trust in Him.

This is a crisis point. If you don't seek God wholeheartedly at this juncture, you may shipwreck your faith, drown in self-pity, and destroy your marriage.

Satan will send his "Red Berets" to torment you. And who better than Resentment, Bitterness, and Self-Pity? These demons are clones of the very attitudes you harbor if you misperceive your time along the shores of loneliness.

- Describe the time you've spent along the shores of the Sea of Loneliness. Did you struggle to escape, or did you learn the lesson God had intended for you to learn? What was the lesson?
- Have you found that God keeps bringing you back to the shores because you aren't learning the lesson of trust He wants to instill in you? What are you going to do this time?

19. "I told you so" ...; 20. Then Resentment would raise...

Have you ever been laughed at or mocked about something that was out of your control? Mockery that assails your self-esteem can be a powerful motivator to alter your life journey.

In the old novel, *Gone With the Wind*, Scarlett O'Hara has been thrust by the Civil War from a life of pampered wealth into a protracted season of utter poverty. All throughout the years of distress one thought drives her: "I will never be hungry again!"

Scarlett is fictional, but you probably know people who have been so humiliated that they are consumed with silencing that echo of mockery. A younger friend of ours had been taunted by schoolmates because his clothes were out of style. He swore to himself that when he was able, he would buy only the best for himself.

He has followed that course but discovered that his labels and luxury have not afforded peace to his heart. The little boy who had been shamed years ago was still crying to be accepted for who he is rather than the image he projects.

That wounded “little boy” or “little girl” within you is a prime target for the enemy to pierce with pain if you haven’t laid that pain on His altar for Jesus to heal and restore to wholeness. I discovered that need to trust Jesus to heal old emotional pain while we were in Israel. I had to choose to cast off those soiled garments of shame and resentment in order to press on without having to compensate for old wounds.

- Is there an unhealed “little boy” or “little girl” in you who suffered shame or teasing at some point way back? Have you protected or hidden away that area as you’ve gotten older by compensating?
- Are you willing to set this burden down at His feet so the sting of those memories can be healed, and that testimony of His healing be a life-giving instrument to help others?

21. Bitterness would then break...

Bitterness threatened Much-Afraid that the Shepherd would thrust onto her “a cross of some sort and abandon you to it.” But isn’t that the cost for all whom Jesus calls to follow Him? *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me”* (Matthew 16:24).

Until self and all its willful desires and ambitions is set in its proper place of submission, you’ll always be prone to filter your obedience through the lens of self-preservation. Even your family relationships will be a source of imposition to you if you don’t take that self-determination and put it on

the cross so you can embrace the plan and call God has for you. After you yield self-preservation and self-focus, then you will be able to follow Jesus wholeheartedly.

His steps lead to rejection, mockery, desertion. Yet for the joy set before Him, He endured His own cross to free us to share life and love with Him now and in eternity. Should we be discouraged or dismayed when we’re put in the position of tasting some of that pain ourselves?

- Your cross is not your argumentative spouse, your bickering children, or the consequences of your disobedience. It’s the life path He is calling you to! How would you define your cross at this point in time?
- What areas of self-denial are the hardest for you today? How can you help your journey partner overcome his or her distractions away from the path of following Him?

22. Self-Pity would chime in...; 23. “Poor little Much-Afraid”...; 24. “You have every right to feel sorry for yourself”...

Voices! Voices! Voices! If, after several months of journeying to the High Places, you haven’t developed spiritual muscle by resisting and taking your thoughts captive and making them obedient to Jesus, you’ll wish you had by the sea! You’ll find yourself scrambling for emotional sanity. You may be phoning people everywhere trying to find comfort because being alone is the last thing you can stand.

Even Cain received a wise warning from God when he thought about killing his brother: *“If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it”* (Genesis 4:7). To resist and fight back against the evil

of your own heart and the demonic hoards comes with the territory of following Jesus.

Wise military leaders reiterate, "Don't underestimate your enemy." Heed this warning even more so as you linger by the Sea of Loneliness. The demons are experienced in deception and torment, and your own carnal mind can come up with some painful agitation as well.

Satan's goal is to separate you from your trust-filled confidence in our Lord Jesus Christ. Who hasn't entertained thoughts like, "Everyone is laughing at me"; "All He has demanded from you so far is nothing to what He will demand if you persist in following Him." This last statement inspires fear if you let the voices have their effect. To those who have taken their thoughts captive and continue to proceed on the journey, we say, "Hallelujah!!! Let's see where Jesus leads!"

Remember, the continued assault of voices is *not* a sign of your failure. However, your unwillingness to resist and take captive your thoughts will ultimately lead to your return to the Valley of Your Strongholds. Be alert!

Even Jesus was plagued by the "voice of Satan". Matthew 4:10-11 tells us that our Lord was tested by Satan himself. This test was needed before our Father released Jesus to represent His work on earth. Immediately thereafter our Lord began to preach and heal the sick. So, too, your opportunity to bear much fruit may be just around the bend!

- When did you last feel sorry for yourself along your pilgrimage? How did you restore your peace and appropriate His comfort?
- What voices have been assailing you lately?

25. "The last remark of Self-Pity's was a mistake...; 26. When she thought of this...; 27. But it is exhausting...."

Sue and I as well as others who have accompanied us on the Hebraic pilgrimage can all point to a moment when the demons overplayed their hand. At that point of realization, we were able to shove out those internal arguments and purposely focus on our Lord's faithfulness.

But resisting and taking your thoughts captive over a prolonged period of assault can take its toll. As we were being worn down, fearful that we were losing the battle, some accusatory word struck a cord of warning deep within. Slowly an inner strength began to ignite a more determined resistance, and the desire to praise Jesus outraced the former distracting, agitating thoughts.

- What was going on in your life when you recognized an obvious demonic assault in your mind?
- Do you have some favorite Bible passages or praise songs to help you refocus your heart on trusting Jesus? Write these down and keep them handy as needed!

28. One day when her companions...; 29. When she reached the end...; 30. "You can put down..."; 31. Much-Afraid lifted her face...

Keep in mind that the lesson learned by the Sea of Loneliness is designed to protect you in the future. Depending on how difficult your further purposes in the Kingdom are to be, it isn't unusual for the verbal assaults to keep coming back at you for days or weeks.

Even some of the Christians who have been close to you over the years will become like Job's friends and give you all kinds of

unwise advice. "There must be something wrong with you for God to permit this to keep happening." "Are you sure there isn't any sin in you?" One dear friend reports that every time she runs into a certain gaggle of former friends, they accuse her of disobeying God, even though she and her husband are faithfully following Jesus!

Just know this: Our Father wants you to be grounded in spiritual basics: •resist, •take your thoughts captive, •cry out to Jesus.

The crisis point of assault often comes just a little *beyond* where you feel you can't take it anymore. With everything you have done, you *still* feel cornered. You get the feeling that your prayers are not even being heard. *Nothing could be further from the truth.* Your prayers are being heard, but something is taking place in you which our Father knows you'll need in order to meet the desire you have to serve Him: unreserved trust in Him.

There comes a moment in your crying out that reveals the intensity of your trust in our Lord Jesus. This is where the transcendent Lord rises above time and space to bring you His presence and strength.

- Do you get down on yourself when God is using difficult times to prepare you for His further work?
- One of Satan's names is "accuser of the brethren." Are there certain accusers who come into your life like wolves in sheep's clothing? Purpose today to testify with loving peace rather than intimidated fearfulness when you see them again!

32. To the horror...; 33. "O Shepherd"...; 34. "No," said the Shepherd...; 35. "Shepherd" asked Much-Afraid...; 36. "I think" said the Shepherd gently...

Any carnal attitudes you embrace during

your lonely times are magnets for unclean spirits. "When you wear the ***weed of impatience*** in your heart instead of the flower Acceptance-with-Joy, you will *always* find your enemies get an advantage over you." But impatience isn't your only weed.

Astringent thoughts you harbor toward others whom you feel are responsible for your lonely condition can take root. Anger that your way has to be so hard can poke holes in your well-being. The Shepherd reminded Much-Afraid of her identity as His humble Acceptance-with-Joy. Perhaps you need a refreshing gulp of that truth to counteract deceptive lies and deceit!

- Are you harboring anything against anyone else at this time? Deal with it quickly, because you are giving the demons a foothold in your soul in which to operate.
- What opportunity did you have today to walk in the character of Acceptance-with-Joy?

37. Much-Afraid blushed; 38. The Shepherd stooped down...

I think we all blush on the journey at one time or another. If we could perfectly make it to the High Places then we wouldn't have to go on this journey to reach His character transformation. As Much-Afraid came to realize, "It had been easier to accept the hard path..."

There are few who don't balk along the Sea of Loneliness. Remember, it's a type of Gethsemane for each of us. Our cup is to embrace the difficulty until absolute trust in our Father and His Son Jesus is complete. Beginning with the pyramid on through the Sea of Loneliness, this can be a terrible time for married couples if one refuses to go on. Quite a number of couples consist of one

spouse stuck in the pyramid and the other at the sea shore. You can only imagine how difficult this situation is, and what discord assails their home! The two of them together must get on their knees to humbly seek our Father's help.

Only our Father can bring them to the same point on the journey. It's very unhealthy for an outside third party to become their answer person. Reliance on others over time will cripple their ability to walk unified as a couple.

Although all of us are tempted by impatience to see this difficult time come to an end, those who yield to agitating voices hurt themselves as well as their journey partner. Regroup in prayer and press on!

The Shepherd handed Much-Afraid another stone as a reminder of what she had placed on His altar that day. Keep in mind that before we finally reach the High Places we will all be confronted by the altar experiences we have encountered along the way. Can you gladly look back with Acceptance-with-Joy?

- If you were asked by the Shepherd, "*Do you truly delight in the changes I have made?*", how would you answer?
- Your body reveals your impatience: tapping feet, deep sighs, shifting position, rolling eyes. How do you make others feel when you're impatient? How do you respond when others are impatient with you?

Chapter 8 *On the Old Sea Wall*

1. A few days had passed...

Surprised by joy! Can you recall a time when everything that could possibly go wrong had? And then...a gracious phone call, a revelation by the Spirit, a shaft of

warm sunlight passing through the window onto your sleeping child...these small indicators of our Father's continuing love were made manifest, and *your heart could recognize them!*

Because He's at work all the time to stir you to follow His Son, God's indicators are always there. It's just that sometimes you don't have the "enlightened eyes" of Ephesians 1:18 to perceive them. Much-Afraid continued on with her companions Sorrow and Suffering in a direction she neither fathomed nor desired, but trusting the Shepherd's promise nevertheless.

Sue: That trust was her sustaining strength — and mine. I could never have believed that our Father could hold in His hands the tattered remains of our disintegrated marriage and bring about not only healing but new purpose and meaning! Sorrow and Suffering had been our constant companions during that journey as well.

But just as Much-Afraid found herself "unexpectedly facing back over the desert in the direction of the mountains", we too found ourselves drawn together by *humility* and *forgiveness* to be prepared for His new call on our lives. Through His Spirit we became His workmanship, created in Jesus to do the good work He'd prepared in advance for us (Ephesians 2:10). We just needed to come through the desert equipped for mountain work!

- What seemingly unending desert has drained you of hope that things would ever change?
- How did our Lord intervene to redirect your path to fruitfulness, hope and joy to show that your desert walk had not been in vain?

2. She dropped the hands..., 3. Suddenly the path...

When will we learn as followers of Jesus to stop being controlled by our circumstances? As quickly as the path changed from endless sand to potential mountain refreshment, it swerved back again!

Your awareness of the Spirit's constancy in your life will grow only as you choose to focus on His abiding presence. Jesus has promised to never forsake you. So, are you willing to “practice His presence” by redirecting your mind, will and emotions back to Him when assailing thoughts tumble in?

Or, will you let yourself be swept away by currents of urgent appointments, interminable chores and clamoring responsibilities? Are you prone to forgetting that His Spirit doesn't mean for you to ignore your obligations, but to do them *with* Him? That's right, *with Jesus!*

Did it ever occur to you to quiet those discordant voices—take them captive—and concentrate on the task that you can do with Him? The prophet Isaiah urges us to be cloaked with His promise: *“In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength.”* But the rest of the verse grieves over those who refuse to trust His sovereign power: *“but you would have none of it”* (Isaiah 30:15).

Every time you wash the dishes, *thank our Father* for the person in your life who soiled that glass or dish. As you fold laundry, vacuum, wash the car — focus your mind purposely on *gratefulness* for the health to do these jobs for and with the people you love.

For each assignment or responsibility that confronts you at work, express thanks to our Father that you're interacting with people who need to see Him in you. Purpose to respond to them by His grace with His expression, His words, His deeds.

When you forget His presence and react out of hurry, worry, exhaustion or frustration, “gird up your loins” with humility to ask and receive His forgiveness. Then ask forgiveness of those you snapped at, and restore within yourself that serenity of awareness of His love for you.

Our Father is for you, even when you stumble! The difference between you and those who are without His Spirit is your willingness and power to trust Jesus, take His hand in your heart, and step out once again into the hot desert sand of life without expectation that you'll be applauded by others for your efforts!

- Do you often find yourself multi-tasking — doing several things at once, frantically waiting to at last collapse into bed when you can? Has it ever occurred to you that Martha's shortcoming wasn't her activity, but her self-pity-driven complaining and self-imposed urgency that earned her a pointed rebuke from Jesus?
- Monitor yourself for a day. What stress points set you up to become a frenetic gerbil in a speeding wheel? Are you willing to call upon the Spirit of Jesus within you to slow down your mind — the playground of false expectations — to concentrate on the one thing at hand with thanksgiving?

4. “Hope deferred...; 5. Up from behind...; 6. Then he said, as venomously

You are most prone to entertain bitterness (or other voices) when you feel isolated and bereft of people who understand what you're going through. You may be surrounded by your kids or your coworkers, but your heart aches over your dashed hopes. You keep all that pain tucked away within because you don't want to “fail God” or your husband or your faith family.

Sue: I know exactly how you feel! Early on at the retreat center we administrated, I was overwhelmed by unending tasks and a dread that I'd failed as a wife and mother. The two women I'd treasured as sisters had experienced major life changes. One had returned

to demanding graduate school courses, and the other had taken on a full time job besides mothering her four children.

In my pride and rejection I convinced myself that they were too busy for my woes and pain. I spent lonely days conversing with deceiving spirits that used my excessive introspection to convince me that my family would be better off without me.

I sealed my heart off from Mike, not wanting to burden him because I believed the lie that I could never change. Voices of suicide whispered in my mind. Little did I realize that behind those voices was the evil laughter of the enemy who wanted to thwart my Father's plans.

- Can you identify with Sue's experience in self-inflicted pain and self-imposed isolation that set her up to believe her distorted perspective? What circumstances have added to *your* times of isolation?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, at what level of desperate isolation are you? Is your husband /journey partner aware of your need for encouragement to trust Jesus and press on in His faithfulness? We do urge you, dear one, to turn away from the lie that no one cares. Pour out your heart to your journey partner so that together you can affirm your value to our Father through prayer and His Word.

7. In the silence...; 8. Next moment the Shepherd...

Still your thoughts and the conflicting emotions churning in you. Only then will you have eyes to see the Shepherd and a will to recall that He never lets go of those who call upon Him in trust, no matter how small or wavering it is.

Sue: This is the assurance I experienced from my Shepherd. He broke through that I

was needed, and that He had very great and precious purposes for me to fulfill with Mike and our son. The transition to joy wasn't immediate, but I knew He was faithful, and I could choose each morning to trust Him to work in me. I also learned that love doesn't seek to escape, but perseveres until *He* opens the door of change.

As soon as Much-Afraid's words tumbled trembling from her heart, the Shepherd made His presence known to her. Note that He didn't commiserate with her, nor did He rebuke her. Rather, He told her, "Be of good cheer."

Interesting, isn't it? He didn't tell her to put on a happy face because of her painful circumstances. Instead, he urged her to appropriate the joy of the Spirit because "it is I." If you decide to focus on the roaring wind and stinging sand of your challenges, you'll miss the loving "It is I" Who is faithful to respond to your trusting cries.

After exhorting Much-Afraid to restore her joy because of His reality, His next words are, "Be not afraid." Again we come to the fear issue — your expectations and hopes might be dashed, you might be overcome by the worries and deceptions of your mind, you'll probably fail...The list could go on and on. But the Shepherd's command is as pertinent to you as it is to Much-Afraid: Decide now to cast off that fear and doubt and unbelief. Put your trust in Him!

The Shepherd didn't take away her fear, nor will He strip away yours! You need to exercise your trust muscles and choose to disintegrate that old fear on an altar of trust. That means "your whole will" must at this stage of the journey be set before Him— not when all is rosy and cooperative, but when it's troublesome and fraught with irritation and provocation!

This is no easy task, which is why you have a partner to help you do this, even as you need to help him or her.

- What specific fears, disappointments and unfulfilled expectations have brought you to this point in your journey? When have

you faced similar crisis points, and how did you respond?

- Purpose to cast down your fears and unfulfilled expectations at a set time with your journey partner. Then note this in the margin of your *Hinds' Feet* book as a reminder of your decision to obey your Shepherd in trust.

9. Obediently Much-Afraid...; 10. From somewhere, though...

Much-Afraid has learned a valuable lesson as she builds her pebble altar. Don't put off what He is calling you to do until later, when you think you'll have more time to "do it right" or more motivation when you're at peace or in a private place.

Delighting to do our Father's will doesn't always mean a smile and eager anticipation. Many times your "delight" is accompanied by tears of conviction and a heartbeat of sorrow. But His will is far better than ours, and your delight comes in the fact that you can repeat with confidence, "O my God."

A dear friend and his wife had recently relocated to another state, eagerly hoping to find work and a faith community of extended spiritual family. As the weeks passed, their funds dwindled and his resumé's produced no results.

As we talked on the phone, his voice shook with frustration and anger at himself. "I'm back in the same classroom I was eight years ago! Why do I keep missing what He's trying to teach me?"

Our Father gave me some insights for him to pray about with his wife. He had indeed accumulated some life experiences and wisdom that our Lord had planned for a very specific forthcoming purpose. But first, he needed to crucify his expectations — even if they seemed good — in order to see

clearly the new pathway they'd be treading.

I shared with him a path he hadn't considered. Suddenly, he could see through the dust of their trials to recognize that God's hand had been on them the whole time to equip them for the next destination along their pilgrimage. And what potential lay in this new opportunity to bring God glory as he and his wife found confirmation before His throne and in His Word!

- Share with your journey partner a time when you had to crucify a particular desire or hope in favor of something our Lord had orchestrated for your spiritual growth.

- How have your "death to self-will" events along your life course prepared you for where you are today?

11. Another gust of wind...

The winds were still swirling around Much-Afraid, but because of them she was able to clearly spot the pebble of remembrance where the scattered ashes had been. Her circumstances hadn't changed — she was still on a path headed away from the longed-for mountains, surrounded by blowing sand dunes.

But how different the atmosphere was as she focused on the Shepherd rather than on her environment! As long as she walked on step by step choosing to trust in His promises, her personal enemies (Self-Pity and Resentment; who are yours?) could find no foothold with which to torment her.

- How do you purpose to deal with your own personal enemies when they stir up thoughts of unfairness, depression, or self-flagellation?

- When did you last take captive those thoughts and conform them to the mind of Jesus? Our Father knows that there's a battle going on for your mind, will and emotions, and the Spirit has promised to help us in our weaknesses as we trust (Romans 8:26). Don't come down on yourself because you struggle — thank Him for His faithfulness to cheer you on!

12. Presently they reached a place...; 13. Much-Afraid, followed by...

Causeways are a marvel to behold, and bear special meaning for Sue and me. For many years we've been blessed to spend time along the North Carolina shoreline with my brother and Sue's sister.

Our rental quarters were on a strip of island that could be reached only by crossing a lofty causeway that rises over the highest surf's reach. From that vantage point you can see up and down the intercoastal waterway for miles, as well as the ocean horizon in one direction and the hazy neighborhoods on the mainland.

The Shepherd led Much-Afraid to the base of just such a causeway and repeated *with great emphasis* His words that indeed there would be a delay to their destination. But that delay would serve to bring glory to both God the Father and His Son. Perhaps revisiting that purpose would arm her will with strength when future events aroused despair and doubt!

At any rate, what a blessing to be able to look back at your own desert trials and realize how far you've come in your walk, even if your destination seems so hazy and far away. But unlike Much-Afraid, you don't have to wonder whether your goal is mere "wishful thinking." Your journey has been ratified by our Shepherd, and it's been pursued in trust by the Hebrews 11 notables who have gone before you!

- Are you strengthened by reminding yourself

that your delay in coming to maturity in Jesus is for your King's glory as you press on in trust?

- A causeway passes over a body of water to link one land mass with another. You can travel in either direction, either back from where you came or onward to new territory. How eager are you at this point to cross over to the new land our Shepherd has for you? Why?

14. Then looking ahead...; 15. Somehow the roar of the wind...; 16. "And now shall mine..."

Have you ever traversed a bridge or causeway and sensed great relief that you don't have to cross the churning waters by boat? The "causeways" of your life are the encouragement from our Father to lift you above the rushing waters of frantic reaction to your daily responsibilities.

From His perspective you are able to appreciate how He's carried you this far, and be reminded as you descend that every day can be a "different kind of country altogether" if you choose to inhabit His peace.

The full force of the wind which had so aggravatingly stirred up blinding dust in the desert was now a source of energizing joy to Much-Afraid. The "glorious wine of life" took hold of her very being and freed her to shout praises to God! She was well aware that her enemies lay in wait, but she chose to concentrate instead on the sacrifice of joy that comes from praising Him with a heart of abandon.

Look with eyes of praise at your own life! You aren't starving, you have a roof over your head, and there are people who are glad you were born — and you are loved by your Lord! Climb up that causeway of praise and practice spirit-dancing on the waves

and wind in your mind — even if the melody is accompanied by bickering children, strident TV, or jangling phone!

It's your choice — do you cross the causeway with surging strength or crawl back down into a sandy foxhole?

- When was the last time you spontaneously burst into songs of praise or love to Jesus, even if just sung in your heart?
- Isn't it about time you and your journey partner edified each other in joyful praise? Will you?

17. As she sang she thought...; 18. While still on the causeway...

Each day that you decide to look your enemies — self-pity, rejection, pride, whatever! — in the face and refuse to listen to their taunts, you've triumphed in a battle of spiritual proportions! Instead of berating yourself for having to consciously turn aside dark thoughts each and every day, confess to yourself and to our Father that indeed you "*need Him every hour*" as the old hymn proclaims. Dependence on Him is a good place to be!

Your victory is the Shepherd's victory, because your decision to turn away from darkness into the light of loving obedience to Him brings Him glory in the heavenlies, just as He promised! So focus on those victories, and each night before crawling into bed, recount before Him the pebbles of triumph you've gathered that day. More failures than triumphs? Stop keeping score! Our Father promises to forgive the sins you bring before Him in humility, and to cleanse you from their defilement.

Equipped with that wholeness, go to those you've offended and ask them to forgive you as well. Then purpose in your heart

to give them hope by your changed attitudes and behavior so they don't have to fear that your old-nature ways will return.

- In what areas of your life are you still prone to being a "silly little weakling" subject to the temptations of your spiritual enemies?
- How is *today* going as far as triumphing over your enemies? Do you need to come to our Father for forgiveness in any areas of heart? Do you need to ask forgiveness and make restitution for anyone you've sinned against?

19. The change in scene...; 20. Much-Afraid told herself...; 21. Everywhere she looked...

Sue: I don't know about you, but having been raised in frosty New England it was always such a joy to see the first crocuses peeking out of the late snow. But Spring, ahhh! Aside from allergies, what a visual feast as the fresh, eager plants unfolded their riotous colors.

Because we've lived in the dry and dusty West for quite awhile, we especially appreciate the creative diversity of our Father's palette. To the unsuspecting eye, much of the thirsty high country is overwhelmed by reddish dirt and sage green bushes. But, like Much-Afraid, when you make an effort to investigate more closely, you can stare in wonder at the fiery Indian paintbrush or vibrant yellow prickly pear blossom.

Most high country blooms aren't profuse — but that makes their appearance all the more welcome!

Pause for a moment and think of the life teeming all around you from a child's perspective — the child we're admonished by our Savior to emulate in wonder and in trust! Walking with an inquisitive four-year-old can

open up for you a whole vista of previously unnoticed beauty. Rubbery worms, delicate violets, shimmering dandelions begging to be blown — the dishes, the phone calls, the deadlines just have to wait!

Don't be ruled by the tyranny of urgent things unless you're unwilling to stroll in peace with the Shepherd. Purpose to reevaluate your hours and what is filling them. Don't let yourself be agitated by guilt or reciprocal obligation ("They invited us over, so we have to invite them back.")

- Picture yourself as a young child venturing out into a spring pasture. What will you take the time today to notice and thank our Creator for, even if you never make it out of your house?
- Are you willing to talk with your journey partner to help clear your plate of distractions and needless busyness in order to learn to laugh again in wonder? When will you do this?

22. At the same time...; 23. As Much-Afraid looked at it...; 24. You may think...

If you're willing to start growing in wonder and appreciation of our Father's small revelations of His love in your daily life, you may be recognizing that getting up in the morning is more hopeful for you. You aren't quite so overwhelmed by the coming day's realities because a new root of loving trust has been burrowing in your heart!

Don't let your daily complexities strangle that new growth. Your steps are progressing ahead, so hold discouragement and self-disappointment at bay. Your Father is cheering you on as you continue!

Sue: I'm my fiercest critic, and it shows all over my face, my disposition, and my attitude when I feel like I've failed Mike or anyone else. But even worse, I let these wrong perceptions infect our whole home

with dissatisfaction. It's time to remind myself again of Paul's encouragement to the followers of Jesus in Philippi:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:4-7).

Part of my needful "denying of self" is to let go of my perceived right to feel so bad about me that I lose my focus on Jesus' presence in me and in our home. Our Father knows our sorrow and has sent us a Comforter to help us move beyond our personal grief. He has us on a "strange journey" that others might not understand — and they won't until they respond to His call with ears to hear!

- Much-Afraid was "half-afraid and half-eager" to evaluate her willingness to love as Jesus would have her love. Where would you put yourself in this arena of love?
- What ways has the Spirit been revealing to you to live out the love He's growing in you?

25. But she did not weep...; 26. Much-Afraid smiled...; 27. This time, though...

If you've gotten this far in the book and the notes, you're ready to look in the mirror of your heart to find "Acceptance-with-Joy." By now you've learned that you generally have little control over what comes your way — unanticipated bills, accidents, poor

choices by your children. Whatever you're going through that's causing you to call on the Shepherd, you probably didn't plan for or ask for!

What is under your control, however, is your response to those intrusions into your sense of well-being. If you've been clinging to our Lord's sovereignty and love for you, then you can accept with joy whatever happens because He's your Sustainer and Strength. This doesn't mean you have to be happy that your car engine blew, but you can trust with peace and joy that He can fulfill your needs (creatively, if need be — maybe not car repair but perhaps a neighbor's offer to drive you to work!)

Much-Afraid admitted that she had allowed her memory of her growth in Acceptance-with-Joy to lapse, and noted that her *heart* needed to be sacrificed to remind her. Her yieldedness to walk in what He's shown her so far without grumbling or moaning was enough to spark radiance within her. And she was able to *run* — she, lame Much-Afraid — to His presence on winged feet!

- How have your responses to unexpected crises changed since you first began your journey?
- Can you recall some instances in which you've evidenced "Acceptance-with-Joy" in response to a situation that formerly would have agitated you?

28. "Oh, welcome, welcome...; 29. "I have come...; 30. The color leaped...

Much-Afraid was self-deprecating as she evaluated her spiritual progress. The Shepherd ignored her humble putdown but responded with words that recognized her earnest zeal. He told her to be *ready* for

something *new* that would come from His hands.

Sue: I really dislike change. Once something is in its place in our home, it stays there until the next move! But I've been learning along the way that change is needful in our lives — not necessarily relocation, but willingness to be conformed to Jesus in arenas that are unpleasant and challenging.

The more I resist, the more I remind myself of a horse I recently rode. She was used to being the lead horse on trail rides, but the wrangler decided to break in a new lead horse. My mount was reassigned close to the rear. That first day she fought me hoof and tail! Whenever I relaxed a bit, she'd strain to push ahead of the others, whisking her tail, kicking the horse behind her, and flattening her ears at the horses who impeded her progress.

Each and every time I had to haul back on the reins and bring her back in line to the place she'd been assigned. This was not fun for her or for me! The next ride, we were given a position closer to the front, and she was relaxed and content. Had she realized in her equine heart that change wasn't all bad, she could have forestalled a sore mouth!

In human terms, if I seek our Lord with my husband over a matter and Mike reports a response (even if it doesn't suit me!), I can accept with joy my Lord's sovereignty. Or, if I whine and moan and try to get my way, we're both miserable.

- How do you respond to change? How does your response impact others?
- What change has been the hardest for you along your journey? Why? How has the Shepherd shown you that such a change was needed for your good?

31. "O Shepherd,"...; 32. She thought he

nodded...; 33. “Do you mean it?”...; 34. This time he answered...

Have you ever so anticipated a trip, only to be disappointed that it was postponed? Perhaps that was behind the inscrutable expression crossing the Shepherd’s face. Much-Afraid was breathless with excitement at the prospect of finally going to the High Places. The Shepherd, though, knew she wasn’t ready. She needed much more preparation before the High Places would be appropriate for her.

- Like putting waterskis on a child who can’t swim, we sometimes end up over our heads in life situations. I was totally unprepared to be an arts and crafts instructor at a summer camp, and my ineptness was painfully obvious to staff and campers alike. How about you? What situation have you ever found yourself in that caused you embarrassment (or worse!) because you hadn’t been fully prepared?
- Have you come to the point in which you can extend grace and mercy to those who haven’t been fully prepared yet to venture on a pilgrimage to the High Places? How can you best help them?

A Final Exhortation

The pilgrimage with our Lord Jesus in which He is changing us is developing new response patterns which are leading to our Father’s desired goal for our lives — Christlikeness. In any learning process you discover steps and practices to help you along the way. There are also processes you’re constrained from doing because they’ll hinder your progress.

In each of these chapters we’ve been repeating some of the same themes, such as resisting the enemy by taking your thoughts captive and transforming them into

thoughts prompted by His Spirit. We’ve also added new elements to your journey, such as walking in complete trust in our Shepherd. Each of these components must become a *way of life* for you. In other words, you must put them into practice if you want to be changed!

You may have been steeped in Hellenistic religious practices which have segmented your life into “secular” and “sacred” realms. The Hebraic understanding of our Lord is a wholistic perspective that brings Him into every venue of your life, whether your home, your school, your workplace, or your faith practices.

Your life pilgrimage is a 24/7 lifestyle in which every aspect of your life represents the depth of relationship you have with our Father and His Son Jesus. You bear the awesome responsibility of permitting your life to mirror a divine relationship as you are God’s physical agent to represent Him to all who encounter you.

This journey, however, is not about *you* per se. It’s about our Father and His eternal plan for the redemption of mankind. And He enlists “Much-Afraid” like you and me who are willing to leave the Valley to accomplish His task. The journey is exciting, to be sure. But to prepare us to be fully available for His purposes, He must transform us and conform us to be like His Son Jesus.

Quotes for Your Heart and Your Refrigerator

- My *life* reflects the depth of my relationship with my Father.
- My *response to situations* reflects the depth of my relationship with my Father.
- My *willingness to change* reflects the depth of my relationship with my Father.
- My *willingness to forgive* reflects the depth of my relationship with my Father.

- My *willingness to praise with thanksgiving* reflects the depth of my relationship with my Father.
- My *willingness to love even when I am not loved* reflects the depth of my relationship with my Father.
- My *willingness to press on to the High Places* reflects the depth of my relationship with my Father.