

Together
Moments
for
Couples

BOB & EMILIE
BARNES



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TOGETHER MOMENTS FOR COUPLES

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Let People Touch Your Star

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

—PHILIPPIANS 4:13

Scripture Reading: Philippians 4:10-20

The burning of a little straw may hide the stars of the sky, but the stars are there, and will appear” (Carlyle). Have you ever considered that you are a star people can touch? Does your life light up the room when you enter? Do your children and grandchildren reflect the love you give them? Do the elderly say you make a difference in their lives? Yes, you can become a star in so many areas if you will only think in the larger terms of life.

We each have 24 hours a day, seven days a week. What are you going to do with your time? Most of the great conquests of life started as a little idea in someone’s head—for example, Microsoft, Hewlett Packard, McDonald’s, Coca-Cola, Weight Watchers, and Campus Crusade. It’s what is done with that idea that counts.

Scripture says that without a vision a nation will perish—and so will we. As Christians, we either grow or we begin to slide backward. No one advances by accident; all achievements are reached by vision and hard work.

What are your deepest dreams—writing a song, starting a business, authoring a book, helping children, being a nurse, being a gourmet chef? Reach out today and plan how you are going to energize that thought into reality. Don't let the dream fall to the ground and die. Plant it, nurture it, and water it until God makes it grow. Daniel H. Burnham said, "Make no little plans, they have no magic to stir men's blood....Make big plans, aim high in hope and work."

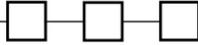
Action

Dream a big dream today and share it with your spouse.

Prayer

Father God, we know You had a big plan when You created the world. We want to reach for the stars and go beyond. Amen.

Reflection



Twenty-Six Guards

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing.

—1 THESSALONIANS 5:16,17

Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22

One of the hardest disciplines is to remember to pray when we say we will. We have good intentions, but we forget. A missionary on furlough told this true story.

While serving at a small field hospital in Africa, every two weeks I traveled by bicycle through the jungle to a nearby city for supplies. This was a journey of two days and required camping overnight at a halfway point. On one of these journeys, I arrived in the city and observed two men fighting, one of whom had been seriously injured. I treated him for his injuries and talked to him about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Two weeks later, I repeated my journey. Upon arriving in the city, I was approached by the young man I had treated. He told me that he had known that I carried money and medicines. He said, "Some friends and I followed you into the jungle, knowing you would camp overnight. We planned to kill you and take your money and drugs. But

just as we were about to move into your camp, we saw that you were surrounded by 26 armed guards.”

At this, I laughed and said that I was certainly all alone in that jungle campsite. The young man pressed the point, however, and said, “No, sir, I was not the only person to see the guards. My five friends also saw them, and we all counted them.”

At this point in the sermon, one of the men in the congregation jumped to his feet and asked if the missionary could tell him the exact day this happened. The speaker told the congregation the date, then the man who interrupted said, “On the night of your incident in Africa, it was morning here and I was preparing to go play golf when I felt the urge to pray for you. In fact, the urging of the Lord was so strong that I called men in this church to meet with me in the sanctuary to pray for you. Would those men who met with me on that day stand up?” The men who had met together to pray that day stood up. There were 26!¹

This story is an incredible example of how the Spirit of God moves. If you ever experience prodding to pray, go along with it! God hears and answers prayers of the faithful.

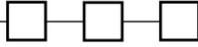
Action

Join hands with your mate and pray for those in need.

Prayer

Father God, thanks for impressing upon us the need to continually be in prayer. Amen.

Reflection



Anyone Can Sing in the Sunshine

*Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial.
Rejoice to the extent you partake of Christ's suffering.*

—1 PETER 4:12,13

Scripture Reading: 1 Peter 4:12-19

Rejoicing anytime is a delight to behold, but seeing someone who is able to rejoice when it is raining is particularly amazing. Sunshine rejoicing is a lot easier than raining rejoicing. When all's going well and we are bumping heaven, that's easy. It's much more impressive when the winds blow and rain begins to fall.

For most of our lives, we lived with noonday sunshine—not a cloud in the sky. Then we entered quite a few years of dark clouds hanging over our heads. Many times we were anticipating the medical profession telling us there weren't any more treatments left for Emilie's type of lymphoma, but they didn't. When one new treatment failed there by grace was a new treatment available. During this rainy season of our lives we were able to rejoice in the Lord.

Once there was a godly woman who had suffered for several months with a lingering illness. One day while her pastor was visiting, she said, "I have such a lovely robin that sings outside my window. In the early morning, as I lie here, he serenades me." With a smile that radiated a deep joy within her weakened body, she added, "I love him because he sings in the rain."

This trait of the robin—singing when the storm has silenced other song birds—should be evidenced in a similar way by every child of God.

Throughout Scripture the writers have rejoiced even when the storm clouds come and it begins to violently rain. One of our sustaining verses of Scripture is found in John 11:4: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

Anyone can sing in the sunshine, but those who know Jesus as Savior can experience joy in the midst of a rain-storm. The psalmist in Psalm 61:8 writes, "So I will sing praise to Your name forever." Life teaches us that the sun doesn't always shine. Our joyfulness will be tested to see if we are more than sunshine believers. When the showers come, look upward and know that after every rain there will be rays of sunshine. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning" (Psalm 30:5).

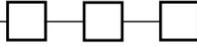
Action

When the rain begins to fall, rejoice.

Prayer

Father God, since Jesus Christ is Lord of heaven and earth, we can keep singing. Thank You for our mentors who teach us to rejoice when it rains. Amen.

Reflection



A Ship in the Night

*And you shall know the truth, and
the truth shall make you free.*

—JOHN 8:32

Scripture Reading: John 8:28-36

Isn't it difficult to change when you think you are right? We get so stubborn that we won't change our thoughts and opinions for anything. "Why should I? I'm right!" we say.

One foggy night the captain of a large ship saw another ship's lights approaching. This other ship was on a course that would mean a head-on crash. Quickly the captain signaled to the approaching ship, "Please change your course 10 degrees west." The reply came blinking back through the thick fog, "You change your course 10 degrees east."

Indignantly the captain pulled rank and shot a message back to the other ship, "I'm a sea captain with 35 years of experience. You change your course 10 degrees west!" Without hesitation the signal flashed back, "I'm a seaman fourth-class. You change your course 10 degrees east!"

Enraged, the captain realized that within minutes they would crash head-on, so he blazed his final warning: "I'm a 50,000-ton freighter. Change your course!" The simple message winked back, "I'm a lighthouse. You change..."²

You, too, may get so frustrated with your mate that you give out stern warnings that he or she had better change course. Because of past experiences, you and your spouse may not want to budge from your respective positions. Satan would like to destroy your marriage using the differences in the way you like to do things. We petition both of you today to be set free from stubbornness.

You must be willing to support one another (see Ephesians 5:21). With this attitude you are free to serve each other. Anything less than this allows selfishness and pride to enter your life, creating an unwillingness to change.

Alter your course rather than insisting on your own way.

Action

Think of one thing in your relationship that needs to be changed. Make the change.

Prayer

Father God, let us always remain flexible. We don't want to break apart when we move. Amen.

Reflection