

## **Take My Life and Let It Be**

By Maggie Moller

*“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

(Romans 12:1 NIV)

*“Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises.”*

(Psalm 47:6)

Praise can take on many forms in our worship. Sometimes it comes pouring out of our hearts like loud crashing waves that cannot be stopped or contained. Other times it is much more peaceful, like a cool summer breeze that brings refreshment for our souls. But whatever the form, praise is a vital component of our walk with the Lord and our daily worship. I want to emphasize that it is meant to be a DAILY part of our journey with Christ. I am ashamed to admit how many days I fall into bed after flying through my crazy schedule only to realize I spent more time during the day asking God to fix my problems rather than praising Him for all my blessings. Nurturing a complaining heart is such an easy pattern to fall into. But this is not glorifying to Christ! One of my favorite authors is Corrie ten Boom. As I read her accounts of the horrors she faced during World War II in a German concentration camp, I am ashamed of all the petty things I find to grumble and be dissatisfied about. Although the natural human tendency would have been to complain and foster unhappiness, Corrie and her sister Betsy continually found ways to praise God in the midst of their torture at the hands of the Germans. A heart of praise was what sustained Corrie and allowed her to return to minister to her persecutors after the war. She understood that her happiness was not founded upon her earthly circumstances, but completely on the work her Savior had done. Praise is our weapon against discontent and the cure to an ineffective ministry for the Lord.

Praise is not merely a component of our life, it is meant to be demonstrated with every aspect of our life all the time. Often we think praise comes in the form of singing hymns or pouring out a prayer of praise to the Lord. I don’t mean to say that it is not these things; it most certainly is! But it can be so much more! The Lord has been showing me over the last few months how every activity I do throughout my day can serve as an act of praise to Him! We have so much to be thankful for that if we were to fill the entire day with praising God for what He has done in our lives and the blessing He has bestowed upon us, we still would run out of time!

One of my favorite hymns is “Take My Life and Let It Be” by Frances Ridley Havergal. Oftentimes when I am struggling to surrender an area of my life or needing to refocus my heart, this is the hymn I am drawn to. The words offer up such a beautiful prayer! As I researched the life of Miss Havergal, I was greatly encouraged by her complete dedication to her Lord. I hope your heart is encouraged by her life as much as I was.

Frances Ridley Havergal was born on December 14, 1836, in England. Her father was a minister, and both her parents were sincere Christians. Very early in her life it became known that young Frances possessed a gift for learning. By the age of four she was able to read the Bible and other Christian literature. When she was only seven years old, she had already composed her first piece of poetry. Her musical talents came from her father who composed over 100 pieces of music to accompany his sermons. Her first steps towards committing her life to Christ came when she was 11. As her mother lay dying, she called her daughter to her and

told her that the most important decision she could make in her life was to commit to following Christ as her Savior. She finished by telling young Frances, “Fanny, pray to God to prepare you for all that He is preparing for you.” These words greatly influenced Frances.

As Frances began to turn over her life to Christ she found ways to serve Him and bring others to salvation. She began teaching Sunday school and kept detailed records of each of her students so she could more effectively minister to them. Part of her daily routine included scheduled prayer times throughout the day. Her prayers included the following:

Morning Prayer: Watchfulness. Guard over temper. Consistency. Faithfulness to opportunities. For the Holy Spirit. For a vivid love to Christ.

Midday Prayer: Earnestness in spirit of desire, in prayer, and in all work. Faith, hope, love.

Evening Prayer: Forgiveness. To see my sinfulness in its true light. Growth in grace. Against morning sleepiness as hindrance to time of prayer.

Her dedication to prayer demonstrates her strong desire to continually grow more in her relationship with Christ.

Although she possessed great musical talents and could have used her abilities for enormous personal gain, she considered her talents as mere loans from the Lord. She committed to using her talents only for the Lord’s service and to bring souls to Him.

The story behind how she came to write “Take My Life and Let It Be” is beautiful. It was written during a short five-day visit to a home. The other ten guests were either unbelievers or not living wholeheartedly for Christ. Before arriving, Frances prayed that the Lord would use her to bring all ten of the other guests into salvation before the conclusion of the visit. The Lord answered her prayer and by the last night of the visit, the final two committed their lives to Christ. When Frances returned to her room after praying with them, her heart was pouring over in praise to God! As she was praising God, He gave her the words to “Take My Life and Let It Be.”

Throughout her life, Frances suffered from poor health. At the age of 43, she passed into the glorious presence of her King. While we may say her life was cut short, Frances was finally in the presence of the One she spent her life glorifying. What an amazing reward for her life of dedication!

Frances Ridley Havergal demonstrates to me what a life looks like that is completely devoted to praise and service for Christ. I hope you are as encouraged by her story as I have been.

<http://www.truthfulwords.org/biography/havergaltw.html>

<http://www.wholesomewords.org/biography/biorphavergal.html>