

Corrie ten Boom: A Life Worth Emulating

I often ask myself, "Where are the heroes and heroines of our faith today?"

It is deeply important to remember that there are people who have lived wholeheartedly for Christ at every historical juncture. What we see in today in the lives of compromising politicians, seductive entertainers, self-centered athletes and even religious leaders leaves little for the common person to emulate.

I am on a mission to remember those who have lived with lives of virtue and integrity regardless of their circumstances and fame. My prayer is that you will join me in honoring these men and women who honored God and use their lives as the goal for which to reach.

There is an extraordinary historical account of a woman who was overweight her entire adult life and never married, although she longed for a home, a husband and children of her own. She lived at home with her parents and older sister while working in the family business.

The one bright spot in an otherwise mundane week was teaching the special needs Sunday school class at church. Although this spinster never gave birth to children of her own, her delight was to teach these little ones who were never able to sit still and would never be accepted into a university.

She taught these children how to worship like David with their hands high in the air, dancing erratically around the cramped Sunday school classroom, and singing off-key at the top of their small, but very loud, lungs. This enthusiastic teacher taught the children how to be brave like Daniel and to look for angels rather than at lions.

Corrie taught these sweet little minds and hearts that God always takes care of His children and that, like Moses, when others are unkind to God's people, God will lead them into His promised land.

This courageous middle-aged woman of the 20th Century found delight in entertaining missionaries and other friends from church in her parents' simple home. They often enjoyed sharing a meal and then entering into a raucous evening of playing games followed by a reverent time of singing hymns and reading the Bible together.

Although never a mother, this woman had deep maternal longings and thus her favorite person in life was her nephew, Peter, named after the bold fisherman who loved Jesus without reserve.

The dear, special-needs children, whom Corrie loved ferociously, began to disappear out of her weekly Sunday school class. One by one they ceased to show up for their favorite hour of the week. They were being taken by the government from their parents and placed in state institutions.

Shortly after the children began to disappear, Corrie's father gathered the family around the table and informed them that the ten Boom family would be making some serious changes. They were going to build a hidden room upstairs in their home and would be having some visitors who would be living in this hiding place. The ten Boom family was joining the ranks of hundreds of others who were assisting the Jews who were being sent to concentrations camps under one of the most evil regimes of all time.

By the end of World War II, this one family had saved over 800 Jews, as well as hundreds of Dutch underground workers.

The ten Boom family was betrayed, and on Feb. 28, 1944, the Gestapo arrived and took six members of Corrie's family to

prison. Although the violent Gestapo ransacked the entire home and systematically searched everywhere, they never found the secret room where six Jews remained in hiding. These Jews were rescued by the Dutch Resistance nearly 47 hours later.

Everyone in Corrie's family, except Corrie herself, died in the concentration camps. She was the sole ten Boom survivor of this horrific injustice, and she came home alone to live again. Thus began Corrie's life-long ministry around the world. Corrie testified everywhere she traveled:

"There is no pit that God is not deeper still."

"God gives us the love to forgive our enemies."

"Jesus always wins the final victory!"

Corrie ten Boom tramped for the Lord for 33 years until she was 88. She only retired after a stroke that took her speech. Corrie could no longer speak in English or in Dutch, but could still pray out loud in her prayer language.

Corrie died on her 91st birthday on April 15, 1983. Although Corrie was not Jewish by birth, she protected and cared for the ancient people of God. The Jews embrace a long-held belief that only truly blessed people die on the day of their birth.

Corrie knew how to embrace the life Jesus promised in John 10:10. She could have been a depressed, lonely woman lacking any true purpose in life. But instead Corrie gave all she had to give, loved when others hated, and gave cup after cup of cold water in His name to the children under her charge and a war-torn world. {eo}

Carol McLeod is an author and popular speaker at women's conferences and retreats, where she teaches the Word of God with great joy and enthusiasm. Carol encourages and empowers women with passionate and practical biblical messages mixed with her own special brand of hope and humor. She has written

five books, including No More Ordinary, Holy Estrogen!, The Rooms of a Woman's Heart and Defiant Joy! Her most recent book, Refined: Finding Joy in the Midst of the Fire, was released last August. Her teaching DVD, The Rooms of a Woman's Heart, won the Telly Award, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming. You can also listen to Carol's "A Jolt of Joy" program daily on the Charisma Podcast Network. Connect with Carol or inquire about her speaking to your group at .