

## Epilogue

Contributed by LG Parkhurst Jr  
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This is what the LORD says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD. --  
Jeremiah 9:23,24

As I have read the biographies of great Christians, I have been more impressed by what God has taught them and done through them than by what they have done for God. I feel this way about Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, Charles Finney, C.H. Spurgeon, Hudson Taylor, Andrew Murray, and especially Francis and Edith Schaeffer. I firmly believe that God determined to prepare and call each of these leaders for their place in history before they were born, in order to bless thousands for generations. Before they were born, God prepared them physically and placed them where He could achieve His purposes. For example, C.H. Spurgeon was prepared physically to preach to thousands without modern, electronic amplification. His photographic memory was God's gift, so he could preach and publish sermons that would move people even today, a hundred years after his death. Francis Schaeffer was born to parents he had to lead to faith, and this helped him identify with nonbelievers. Edith Schaeffer was a child of faithful missionaries and born in China, and this helped her understand the special needs of those who had been raised in the church but had problems with it. Through their opposite childhoods, God prepared them in a very special way to meet the needs of troubled young people from around the world. The Schaeffers could also function on very little sleep (Edith needed only about 3 hours a night), and this was essential for a work like L'Abri and all it led them to do.

If we measure our success and failures by the impact or size of great Christian leaders, we may always be disappointed. God has raised up leaders through the centuries to bless thousands and be a lasting example of faithfulness to succeeding generations. Jesus did not make every follower into an Apostle, and we should not think that if we are less effective or less well known than other Christians in our day that that is a sign of our unfaithfulness or God's unfairness. God has a plan and purpose for each of us, and we need to follow Him whether that leads to places of greatness or small corners of the world.

No matter what role God wants us to take in His Kingdom, He will use enduring principles and similar procedures over and over again to teach people how to pray, to draw people close to Him, to transform their character into the image of Christ, to enable them to lead some to saving faith, and to empower them to bear fruit. We can learn these principles from Christian biography as well as theological books, but I have needed both to help me in my Christian walk.

In this book, I have carefully selected only a few answers to prayer in the Schaeffers' lives and in L'Abri, and these were selected to illustrate some spiritual principles and truths about prayer. I have not tried to write another biography on the Schaeffers, but I have tried to show how God led them prayer by prayer over the years and built their faith to teach them how to prayer one day at a time. There did come a day when they had learned the major lessons God wanted to teach them, and then they needed to be faithful in prayer and teach others how to pray.

As we look over their lives, we find they received many blessings from God in answer to prayer, but as their prayers became more effective, God led them deeper into the spiritual battle and they were deeply wounded from time to time. A life of prayer may seem romantic, but if we enter into such a life with romantic reasons God will quickly show us the reality of a life of prayer and we will need to make a decision about whether or not we intend to carry on or be sure that we are in the center of God's will for us.

My presentation of the Schaeffers' prayer lives in this book may have seemed idealistic, but I have tried to dispel that notion as we have seen increased suffering along with greater answers to prayer. I have tried to show that God will teach us how to pray and be faithful, but that we can be faithful in works far different from L'Abri and that we should not try to duplicate anyone else's work unless we know with certainty that God wants us to model our ministry after someone else. When the Schaeffers modeled L'Abri after many of Hudson Taylor's prayer principles, they did not try to duplicate the China Inland Mission. We can model our lives after the prayer principles in this book, and be called to a new work for our time, just as Hudson Taylor and Francis Schaeffer were called to do a special work for their time.

Francis and Edith Schaeffer always strongly emphasized the importance of the choices we make and of our need to follow the Holy Spirit instead of doing our own thing. They were conscious every day of needing to make choices on how they would spend their time or where they would go or who they would talk to. And because they knew they were so limited, they prayed for the Holy Spirit to help them manage their lives with His daily guidance. They did not wait day after

day for God to show them His total plan in some mystical way. They prayed and did all they could do for God each day, in ways they knew He would bless because they were scriptural, and then they discovered God's leading through their faithfulness to God in each day's tasks. When they had to make a big decision, such as whether or not to build a new building, they waited until God gave clear leading. But they did not stop serving Him daily in other ways while they waited for Him to show them when they could buy another chalet, for example. To have done that would have completely immobilized their ministry.

I do encourage you to study the appendices in this book. The first one will give you a good review of the book as a whole, and show you which chapter to turn to in order to find more information on any particular prayer principle. Perhaps you will discover some prayer principles in the appendix that you did not recognize as you read the book. The second appendix could help a church become a House of Prayer by studying and applying the principles in each chapter in small groups. A new prayer group could be formed by using the study guide or an older group can be renewed by praying together and learning some new principles. If you would like more information about L'Abri, I would encourage you to write, visit, or call the L'Abri branch nearest you, you will find their addresses in Appendix III. For further reading and study of the Schaeffers' books, see the Notes to the Text.

If you have read this far, stop now and praise God for all that He has done for us through His Son, Jesus Christ, and thank Him for giving us the opportunity to fellowship with Him and be His friend through prayer. Thank Him for all the Christians who have been faithful in prayer throughout the centuries, and pray that He will show you what He wants you to do with your life as you seek Him daily in prayer. Prayer

Dear Father, I praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ, and for His death for my sins. Help me turn from all sin and follow you faithfully. By your Spirit, make me into the type of person you need to demonstrate your character and reality. Place me where you want me to be so your Kingdom may increase. Amen.

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