

## Highways To Happiness

the plaintive, earnest voice of the boy and came to the door to inquire what the little fellow wanted. "Please, sir," said Antonio, "I have a sharp knife and have learned to whittle well. I wonder if you think I might learn to make violins!"

Touched by the seriousness of the lad, the great Amati invited him to come and help him in his shop. Antonio was set to shaping a bridge, and then later other parts of a violin. For hours and days and weeks he labored before he had made the parts of one instrument.

What a thrill came to the lad when the parts he had made were assembled, and strings put on, making a real violin that would produce sweet music.

That little boy who could "only whittle" became Antonio Stradivari, the greatest violinmaker of all time.

We sometimes feel that others have all the gifts and talents, and that we should sit idly by on the side lines while these talented persons really accomplish things. Though we can "only whittle," let us whittle constructively toward some worthy accomplishment.

## 20. What Would You Do?

IF YOU WERE shipwrecked out in the middle of the ocean, far from shore or from any means of rescue, and were being tossed about in a small boat or on a raft, without food or water, what would you do? Would you trust to luck? Would you start paddling to some unseen shore? Would you pray. Would you think it useless to pray? Would you feel foolish to ask God up in heaven to send help of some kind?

Millions of people today do not believe in prayer, in asking God for help, especially when everything is going just right. But when danger appears suddenly, when tragedy comes our way, when we face disaster, and when we know no human being can help, we all turn to some outside source, some unseen helper for aid. It is not consistent I know, but we instinctively do it. Of course, we can hardly blame the individual for doubting if he has not been taught to pray, if he has no evidence that God answers prayer.

In World War II thousands of men and women were set adrift in boats and on rafts after the vessels in which they had been travelling were torpedoed by some submarine, or had perhaps struck a hidden mine. Many of them died of exposure and starvation. Some very interesting and exciting stories have been told by those who were rescued or in some way returned safely to land.

One very gripping and authentic story was told by Captain Edward Rickenbacker, who, with seven companions, drifted for twenty-one days, three full weeks, on rubber rafts in the great Pacific.

These men were travelling by plane on a Government errand when they lost their way. Their fuel supply ran out, and they had to put the giant clipper plane down on what they hoped to be a calm and peaceful Pacific. When they got out of the plane and into their rubber rafts, the waves were twelve feet high.

They had to leave the sinking plane in such a hurry that they neglected to take water and emergency rations with them. When they took inventory they found that they had four oranges for the eight of them. They were scantily dressed, too. Among their belongings were an emergency kit, two knives, some fish lines and hooks, and a few odds and ends.

Daylight faded, and night settled down on the helpless men. They were wet and cold. Sharks followed them and rubbed their rough backs up against the bottom of the rubber rafts. The night was long and dreary. The second day dawned dull and misty.

They decided to eat one of the precious oranges, so Captain Rickenbacker cut it in half, then halved the halves, and then cut the quarters in two, giving one tiny piece to each cold, hungry man. Of course, they ate peeling and all. They decided to eat one orange every day, which meant that their four oranges would soon be gone.

Then a glassy calm fell upon the sea, and a tropical sun beat upon them mercilessly. By day they longed for night, and during the long, cold nights they wished for the sunshine again.

Their faces, necks, arms, and hands were burned by the tropical sun. They blistered and became raw. The salt water got into the sores, and you know how that hurts. Their swollen limbs pained constantly. With no water to drink, their lips were soon covered with ugly sores.

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Cramped and crowded in the tiny rafts, unable to stretch themselves, they drifted they knew not where. If one moved or changed his position, he rubbed the sore, burning flesh of his companion.

On the fourth morning they devoured the second orange. They had now been seventy-two hours without much food and with no water. Countless fish could be seen swimming all about the rafts; but try as they would, they could not catch a single one. The bright, many-colored fish would nose right up to the hooks the men had put out, smell them, wiggle their tails, and swim away. How disheartening to famishing, starving men!

For six days they seemed to be sitting motionless on a calm, brassy, sizzling sea. They were actually drifting, but they did not know where, in spite of the fact that they had a map which they studied often. They believed that they were about four or five hundred miles from an island held by the Japanese.

They had brought a few flares from the plane, and decided to send up some of these every night, hoping they might be seen by someone. These flares were lights which burned for a minute or two, giving a red glare. Each time, after sending these messengers of distress into the sky, they scanned the horizon, hoping for some reply. But no reply came.

Some of the men were now in a bad way. One young fellow of twenty-two, who had been in the hospital only three weeks before, was now only skin and bones. He became so thirsty that he actually cried for water.

One of the men, named Bartek, had a New Testament in his pocket, and spent some of his time in reading it. Someone suggested that they pull their three rafts close together and that they read the Testament aloud and have prayer. Rickenbacker says he did not consider himself a religious man, but he had not forgotten the prayers he had repeated when a child at his mother's knee. We do not forget those things! So, with this New Testament as a help they conducted morning and evening worship out there in the Pacific. One text that they read and reread was a real comfort to them-Matthew 6: 31-34: "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. But seek you first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Two of the men did not have much faith in prayer, and were a bit hard and bitter because God did not answer their requests instantly. The others prayed on, hoping God would send the help they needed. On the sixth day the oranges were all used up. With their food gone, their lips parched, their throats dry, and their skin too sore to touch, they talked of how much soda pop they could drink and of how many chocolate malted milks they could devour.

The eighth day was still and hot. In the evening one of the men had read the Bible, including the favorite text, and they had had prayer. Rickenbacker was sitting slouched down in the raft with his hat pulled down over his face to protect it from the sun. A sea-gull appeared from apparently nowhere and alighted on his head. He says, "I reached up for him with my right hand-gradually." It was an anxious time. What if the bird flew away? He continued, "The whole Pacific seemed to be shaking from the agitation in my body, but I could tell he was still there from the hungry, almost insane eyes in the other rafts. Slowly and surely my hand got up there; I didn't clutch, but cautiously opened my fingers, sensing his nearness, and then closed my fingers hard."

They divided the bird equally and passed it around to the starving men, keeping only the intestines for bait. Of course, the meat was raw, tough, stringy, and fishy, but they said it tasted wonderfully good to them. Then they baited some hooks and dropped them over the sides of the boats and caught some fish, which they ate with real relish. This gave them new life and renewed hope.

God had answered their prayers. This was not the first time God had sent food to hungry human beings. Ravens carried food to Elijah in the wilderness. With five barley loaves and two small fishes Jesus had fed thousands of people on the Galilean hillside and they had twelve baskets of food fragments left over. For forty long years God sent manna to feed the millions of Israelites on their journey through the wilderness from Egypt to the land of Canaan.

A soldier out on the battlefield in World War I was wounded and in desperate need. But the battle raged and stretcher-bearers could not go out to get him. He was weak and hungry. An old hen strolled out on to the battlefield with the shells screaming above her. She stopped near this soldier boy and laid an egg, which he reached out and took and ate. It kept him alive.

But let us get back to the men in the rubber raft. That night a storm arose, and there were winds,

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lightning, and high, swelling waves. Rain came down as if from a waterfall. They had spread out their clothing about the rafts to absorb what water they could. When these were soaked they would wring them into bailing buckets. That water was the sweetest they had ever tasted. They decided to use as little as possible, and so rationed it out, so much for each man for each day. The rain cooled their bodies and washed away the salt that had accumulated on them. Their sores were cleansed, and all felt refreshed.

About three o'clock on the thirteenth morning one of the men died; and when they had satisfied themselves that he was really dead, and they had said a simple burial service, as much at least as they could remember, they rolled his body over the side of the raft into the great Pacific.

They caught a small shark, but could not eat the meat, hungry as they were. Then one day some mackerel jumped into their rafts, and they again had food to keep the spark of life aglow in their pain-racked bodies. Hundreds of finger-length fish resembling sardines gathered around their raft, and they managed to scoop up some of them and eat them.

A never-to-be-forgotten thrill came to them on the seventeenth day. They saw an airplane off to their left. They yelled until they could yell no more; they waved and tried to attract the attention of the pilot; but he did not see them, and soon disappeared. But this did encourage them to believe that they were not far from land.

On the twenty-first morning they heard planes again. Two of them came from the south-east, but the men were too weak to stand up, so they waved as best they could from a reclining position. The planes were quite near the water, but passed on and disappeared in the west. A half hour later they heard them again. They came straight for them and dived down over the rafts. To their disappointment they disappeared again. But the planes returned a bit later. They had really come for them. We shall have to imagine their feelings, for the planes carried them to kind friends, warm beds, food, and water. This seemed like heaven to them. God had answered their prayers, and those men knew it.

I once worked with a Christian physician who ran a home for friendless girls. The coal bin became empty. He called the workers together, and they prayed for a truck-load of coal. In the middle of that same week he received a letter written in a trembling hand from an aged woman in the same state, saying that she had been impressed that he needed money. Her check for two hundred dollars was enclosed. It solved their urgent heating problem.

Some time ago a well-known magazine ran a story of an orphans' home in New Britain, Connecticut, which was founded and maintained by prayer. Its manager, John Kleinberg, was earning only sixteen dollars a week when he took three tiny children into his home. He already had two small children of his own. But he says, "We just prayed and trusted in the Lord for help!" When this story was printed there were more than one hundred children in the home, and Mr. Kleinberg had never asked anybody for anything. But unsolicited money came to him from all over the United States, hundreds of dollars each week. People everywhere sent clothing, carloads of food, a cow, hay to feed her, cabbage, and canned goods.

One day, while his home was still small, the ten dollars rent came due, and he had not one cent with which to pay it. He walked down the street praying silently. A stranger gave him ten dollars; another person, fifteen dollars. One Sunday there was no food for the children. It seemed they would surely go hungry. There was a large picnic up the street, where there were mirth and happiness and lots of food. Mr. Kleinberg prayed. It began to rain—a real downpour. In a little while there was a knock at the door, and there were two men on the porch carrying a large hamper bulging with good things to eat. The rain had spoiled their picnic, and they could not use the food. Many people thought Mr. Kleinberg an impractical visionary to try to run an orphans' home on prayer. But he declares that forty years of experience have taught him that he can depend on God to answer his prayers.

It is hard to understand how we can utter a prayer that can be heard by God in heaven, and answered according to our needs. But countless examples of answered prayer have been recorded as a rebuke to the doubtful.

When the radio was first being developed, my ten-year-old boy came home one evening with the request that he and I build a crystal set. I am not at all mechanically inclined, and had not the least idea how to go about it. But he knew, and told me just what we would have to buy. So he and I went shopping to buy the necessary parts—some wire, a small crystal, an antenna—then we must get an empty cigar box, an empty mailing tube, and some headphones. We wrapped the wire many times around the mailing tube and fastened the crystal in the bottom of the cigar box and the antenna near by. All the while, of course, I was assuring myself that we would never get anything over that crude affair. Then we attached one end of that

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assembled paraphernalia by wire to the electric light socket, and the other end of it we connected by wire to the bedspring for a ground wire. The headphones were attached to the proper place, and my son put them on and began moving the cat's whisker, or antenna, over the rough surfaced crystal. Soon I saw a pleased expression come over his face. He was getting something. He asked me to put the headphones on, and sure enough, I heard music coming over or through that simple contraption which we had built under his direction, the parts of which had cost us so little.

I think I would have bet almost any amount of money, had I been given to wagering, that no sound would ever come through that cigar-box radio. But I was wrong, I cannot explain just how or why, but I know it worked, simple as it was.

It is marvelous to me today, to sit in a radio broadcasting studio and listen to a program, and know that my family, hundreds of miles away, can hear the same program, as soon and as well as I can. Yet we accept it as no particular marvel. If our grandparents could come back today, and we should tell them that little box affair with some knobs on the front of it, sitting on our table, could bring in messages from New York, and London, they would be utterly incredulous.

Not long after my first experience with the simple crystal set, I was travelling west across Canada on the Canadian National Railway whose trans-continental trains were equipped with radio. We left Winnipeg at ten o'clock at night, and as we pulled out of the terminal I went into the observation car to listen in. As we sped along over the broad prairies, then covered with snow, the radio was picking up from the still, cold, night air some beautiful music and bringing it in to us, clearly and distinctly. It seemed all the more miraculous when I learned that it was coming from a broadcasting station one thousand miles away. It seemed too wonderful to be true.

Of course, we have had the radio so long now that it has lost its wonder for us. As I went to bed that night I could hardly sleep for thinking about it. I could not understand how sounds produced in Chicago could be picked up and reproduced on a fast train crossing the Canadian prairies one thousand miles away.

Television and its marvels have more recently taken the public interest. Great parades and pageants and public events can be viewed by people without their stirring from the comfort of their parlors. And these pages will be scarcely off the press before these developments will be outmoded, for programs in natural color are already proving practical and assured.

A friend of mine in whom I have the utmost confidence told me of an experience which I shall pass on to you. He and his family had moved into a new territory. They did not know a soul in the district. When they had unpacked their goods the first night, and were about ready to retire, his wife reminded him that they did not have any bread for breakfast or any flour to make any. "I cannot go to the store and buy," he replied, "for I have spent my last penny. And it is too far from our headquarters to get any money back here for several days!" "What shall we do?" the anxious wife inquired.

They disliked to ask for credit when they had just arrived in town. The minister thought of how he preached to others that God would hear and answer the prayers of His children. So, calling their little boy, they all knelt down and told their heavenly Father of their needs. Then they retired, trusting God to supply their urgent want.

The next morning, when they awoke, there was a hundred pound sack of flour on the front porch. They had not told any human being of their needs; and although they lived in this community for several years, they did not find out who put the flour on the porch. But one thing they knew-God answered their prayer.

"If radio's slim fingers can pluck a melody  
From night-and toss it over a continent or sea;  
If the petalled white notes of a violin  
Are blown across the mountains or the city's din;  
If songs, like crimson roses, are culled from thin blue air-  
Why should mortals wonder if God hears prayer?"

Ethel Romig Fuller

In these times of stress and strain do you find yourself one of the growing army of unbelievers with no faith and no hope? There is still a God in heaven who rules in the affairs of men. He still hears and answers prayer.

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It might be well to quote a few promises which have been left us to encourage us to pray. Whole books have been written, and more can be written, of authenticated experiences where God has definitely answered the prayers of His children.

Jesus emphasized faith as the true power in prayer. He told His disciples, "What things so ever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them." Mark 11: 24. When the disciples saw how potent were the Savior's prayers they cried, "Lord, teach us to pray."

Again, on another occasion, to show how persistent prayer should be, Jesus told the story of the unjust judge and how he was moved to action by the continual entreaty of a certain Widow who had been defrauded. He summed up the lesson of the parable by prefacing it with the reminder, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." The praying heart is not a fainting heart.

One of the most stimulating texts in the Bible, suggesting the effectiveness of the believer's prayer, is found in Luke I: 37: "For with God nothing shall be impossible." Promises like this abound in the Scriptures. The tragedy of spiritual and moral defeat in human experience is that such powerful assurances go too often untried.

## 21. Calf Trails

MOST OF US are following calf trails every day we live. To show what I mean by that sentence, I am quoting a poem by Sam Walter Foss that is full of food for thought. It is entitled "The Calf Path."

*"One day, through the primeval wood, A calf walked home, as good calves should; But made a trail all bent askew, A crooked trail as all calves do.*

*"The trail was taken up next day By a lone dog that passed that way; And then a wise bell-wether sheep Pursued the trail o'er vale and steep, And drew the flock behind him, too, As good bell-wethers always do.*

*"And from that day, o'er hill and glade, Through those old woods a path was made; And many men wound in and out, And dodged, and turned, and bent about And uttered words of righteous wrath Because 'twas such a crooked path.*

*"But still they followed-do not laugh. The first migrations of that calf, And through this winding wood-way stalked, Because he wobbled when he walked.*

*"This forest path became a lane, That bent, and turned, and turned again; This crooked lane became a road, Where many a poor horse with his load Toiled on beneath the burning sun, And traveled some three miles in one. And thus a century and a half They trod the footsteps of that calf.*

*"Each day a hundred thousand stout Followed the zig-zag calf about; And o'er his crooked journey went The traffic of a continent.*

*"A hundred thousand men were led By one calf near three centuries dead. They followed still his crooked way, And lost one hundred years a day; For thus such reverence is lent To well-established precedent."*

It is an interesting story, isn't it? Enlightened though we like to consider ourselves, we are still prone to follow the beaten path, to take the well-traveled road, to go with the crowd. It seems almost unbelievable that we who live in such a highly efficient, tabulated, and card-indexed age should be so silly as to go "some three miles in one," because others have made a crooked path before us.

The power of habit and example is so strong that most of us find ourselves following the steps of grandfather or grandmother, or some hero or heroine. We do as others do. Custom influences a good many of our actions. If the world is wearing pointed shoes, we wear them, too, and pinch our feet. If some silly