

**Chuck Chamberlain**

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**From:** "Laraine Chamberlain" <chambch@charter.net>  
**To:** <chambch@charter.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 06, 2008 6:08 AM  
**Subject:** Monthly Encouragement from GivingItaVoice.com



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**Voices**

**Your Monthly Encouragement from GivingItaVoice.com**

**June 2008**

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**In this issue:**

[Corrie and Betsie Ten Boom](#)

[Small Bits of Joy](#)

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**Dear Chuck ,**

I want to encourage you to get on the website and share your story and insight. Take a look at the discussion board and see what you can add to it. The topics range from dealing with repressed memories to forgiving an abuser to helpful therapies and more. And, of course, you're welcome to add a new topic for discussion.

We're also looking for original articles relating to abuse to put on the website. If you have any advice, experiences, or ideas for healing you're willing to share, please do so. (You can keep the article anonymous if you'd like.) Simply send it to Laraine at [larainecha@charter.net](mailto:larainecha@charter.net). There is so much we can learn from each other if we will just share our experiences.

Because of that, I want to share part of a story I love and have learned so much from. I hope you will learn something from it as well and realize that your story could be helpful to others who might be struggling. You may be a source of guidance to someone in need of some inspiration.

To those who have already shared stories or advice, thank you for your wisdom, and please continue to share. The more we can discuss how best to deal with and stop abuse, the quicker we

will find solutions.

Thank you,  
Lisa Shepherd

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## **Corrie and Betsie Ten Boom**

By Lisa W. Shepherd

As adults, Corrie Ten Boom and her sister, Betsie, lived with their father above the watch shop they worked in and owned. They were devout Christians who believed in helping others. When World War II broke out, and the Jews began hiding for their lives, the Ten Booms provided a hiding place for them. Unfortunately, they were discovered and sent to concentration camps.

Corrie's father was quite old by then and died shortly after. Amazingly, Corrie and Betsie were able to stay together and were sent to the same concentration camp and later moved to the same concentration camp. It was undoubtedly through divine intervention that they managed to keep their Bible with them.

Betsie had an unconquerable spirit. She was constantly looking for the good in every situation and always trying to help other women around them. At times, this was too much for Corrie who, as most would, felt overwhelmed and discouraged.

One of these instances was when Betsie and Corrie were being moved to new barracks in the camp. Not only were the "beds" extremely close together and close to the wall, creating a claustrophobic feeling, but the straw in them had a nauseating odor. To top it all off, there were fleas everywhere. After dealing with sickness, unbearable living conditions, being publicly humiliated, terrified, seeing others brutally beaten and killed, facing starvation and the many horrors of concentration camps, Corrie hit her breaking point:

Suddenly I sat up, striking my head on the cross-slats above. Something had pinched my leg.

"Fleas!" I cried. "Betsie, the place is swarming with them!"

We scrambled across the intervening platforms, heads low to avoid another bump, dropped down to the aisle, and edged our way to a patch of light.

"Here! And here another one!" I wailed. "Betsie, how can we live in such a place!"

"Show us. Show us how." It was said so matter of factly it took me a second to realize she was praying. More and more the distinction between prayer and the rest of life seemed to be vanishing for Betsie.

"Corrie!" she said excitedly. "He's given us the answer! Before we asked, as He always does! In the Bible this morning. Where was it? Read that part again!" (197-198)

Corrie read First Thessalonians 5:18 to Betsie: "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." Betsie knew what they needed to do:

"That's it, Corrie!" That's His answer. "Give thanks in all circumstances!" That's what we can do. We can start right now to thank God for every single thing about this new barracks!"

I stared at her, then around me at the dark, foul-aired room.

"Such as?" I said.

"Such as being assigned here together."

I bit my lip. "Oh yes, Lord Jesus!"

"Such as what you're holding in your hands."

I looked down at the Bible. "Yes! Thank You, Dear Lord, that there was no inspection when we entered here! Thank You for all the women, here in this room, who will meet You in these pages."

"Yes," said Betsie. "Thank you for the very crowding here. Since we're packed so close, that many more will hear!" She looked at me expectantly. "Corrie!" she prodded.

"Oh, all right. Thank You for the jammed, crammed, stuffed, packed, suffocating crowds."

"Thank You," Betsie went on serenely, "for the fleas and for-"

The fleas! This was too much. "Betsie, there's no way even God can make me grateful for a flea."

"Give thanks in all circumstances," she quoted. "It doesn't say, 'in pleasant circumstances.' Fleas are part of this place where God has put us."

And so we stood between piers of bunks and gave thanks for fleas. But this time I was sure Betsie was wrong. (198-199)

Because Betsie's health was in poor condition, she was given the assignment to work as a knitter in an indoor room. There was little supervision in this room, which she did not understand, but she used it to her advantage. She was able to knit very quickly and finished her quota quite early each day. After finishing her work, she read the Bible to the others, providing hope for them. It wasn't until sometime later that she discovered why this blessing had been granted to her:

"You're looking extraordinarily pleased with yourself," I told her.

"You know we've never understood why we had so much freedom in the big room," she said. "Well-I've found out."

That afternoon, she said, there'd been confusion in her knitting group about sock sizes and they'd asked the supervisor to come and settle it.

"But she wouldn't. She wouldn't step through the door and neither would the guards. And you know why?"

Betsie could not keep the triumph from her voice: "Because of the fleas! That's what she said, 'That place is crawling with fleas!'"

My mind rushed back to our first hour in this place. I remembered Betsie's bowed head, remembered her thanks to God for creatures I could see no use for. (209)

Amid unbearable circumstances, Betsie was able to find something to be grateful for, something that would comfort her and give her hope. She turned a negative situation into a positive one. Not only did she help herself endure those horrendous days, she also helped others with her positive outlook on life.

We all have days when it seems everything is going wrong and there's nothing good in our lives. Perhaps, if we can find even just one, small thing to be grateful for, no matter how unlikely it may seem, we may be able to find some encouragement to keep going another day. And we may find out in the end, that what we thought was yet another difficulty was really a blessing in disguise.

(Ten Boom, Corrie with John and Elizabeth Sherrill. *The Hiding Place*. New York: Bantam Books, 1971.)

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***Small Bits of Joy***

Sometimes, we become so entrenched in our difficult circumstances and the hard work of healing that we find ourselves feeling depressed and discouraged. When dealing with abuse, it's easy to see the many negative things in the world and in people. And we can't simply ignore the painful emotions of anger and hurt—we need to work through them. But sometimes, we need a break, something to remind us that life is good and that there is hope. I'm not suggesting we pretend everything is wonderful, but that we try to remember something good once in a while. This is a list of happy things someone once gave me. It's a nice reminder of some of the good things in life.

*Falling in love.*

*Laughing so hard your face hurts.*

*A hot shower.*

*No lines at the supermarket.*

*A special glance.*

*Getting mail.*

*Taking a drive on a pretty road.*

*Hearing your favorite song on the radio.*

*Lying in bed, listening to the rain outside.*

*Hot towels fresh out of the dryer.*

*Finding the sweater you want is on sale for half price.*

*Chocolate milkshake. (Or vanilla or strawberry.)*

*A long-distance phone call.*

*A bubble bath.*

*Giggling.*

*A good conversation.*

*The beach.*

*Finding a \$20 bill in your coat from last winter.*

*Laughing at yourself.*

*Midnight phone calls that last for hours.*

*Running through sprinklers.*

*Laughing for absolutely no reason at all.*

*Having someone tell you that you're beautiful.*

*Laughing at an inside joke.*

*Friends.*

*Accidentally overhearing someone say something nice about you.*

*Waking up and realizing you still have a few hours left to sleep.*

*Your first kiss (either the very first or with a new partner).*

*Making new friends or spending time with old ones.*

*Playing with a new puppy.*

*Having someone play with your hair.*

*Sweet dreams.*

*Hot chocolate.*

*Road trips with friends.*

*Swinging on swings.*

*Wrapping presents under the Christmas tree while eating cookies.*

*Song lyrics printed inside your new CD so you can sing along without feeling stupid.*  
*Going to a really good concert.*  
*Making eye contact with a cute stranger.*  
*Winning a really competitive game.*  
*Making chocolate chip cookies.*  
*Having your friends send you homemade cookies.*  
*Spending time with family.*  
*Seeing smiles and hearing laughter from your friends.*  
*Holding a newborn baby.*  
*Running into an old friend and realizing that some things (good or bad) never change.*  
*Riding the best roller coasters over and over.*  
*Watching the expression on someone's face as they open a much desired present from you.*  
*Watching the sunrise.*  
*Getting out of bed every morning and being grateful for another beautiful day.*

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