

The background of the cover is a close-up photograph of a piece of wood, showing a prominent grain pattern. In the center, there is a small, circular knot or eye in the wood, which serves as a focal point for the design. The wood has a warm, brownish-tan color with subtle variations in tone and texture.

PAROUSIA

Parousia Christian Poetry Chapbook

*Poems of Hope
and
Inspiration*

John Zurn

Poems of Hope and Inspiration

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Poems of Hope and Inspiration
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Contents

Acknowledgements.....	5
Foreword.....	6
Courage	8
Prayer at Dawn.....	9
Love Will Find A Way	10
He Won't Abandon You	11
Blessing	12
If I Should Fall Asleep Tonight.....	13
Faith, Hope, and Love	14
Every Trial is Grace.....	15
A Lullaby to Die	16
When I Finally Wake in Heaven	17
May the Good Lord	18
Jesus the Christ	19
Rescue Me, Lord.....	20
Affirmation of Faith.....	21
Prayer to Lord Jesus	22
Blessed Be God Forever	23
In the Most Unguarded Moments	24
I Surrender to God	25
A Season of Death.....	26
When the Sun Appears	27
Change	28
Our Eternal Friend.....	29
Lord, Help Me Have a Grateful Heart	30
It's Been So Long	31
Nothing Else Matters Tonight	32
I Will Wait for God's Reply	33
I Pray That You Might Linger.....	34
Once You Saved My Troubled Soul	35

Poems of Hope and Inspiration | John Zurn

Only Grace Can Still My Doubts	36
In This Moment of Surrender.....	37
If Only I Am Patient	38
Only God Could Make Me Whole	39
I Cannot Find My Way to You	40
A Deeper Faith	41
Every Fear is Slowly Dying.....	42
Save Me from the Storm.....	43
God is Still the Friend I Love.....	44
God Restores My Courage	45
I Know God Has No Need of Me	46
A Feeling of Serenity	47
God Will Show Me Something New	48
Gratitude.....	49
My Prayers are Mostly Pleas.....	50
All Begin to Trust Again.....	51
God Rekindles My Hope.....	52
Silence	52
God's Perfect Timing.....	53
I Need You by My Side	54
I Pray to Hear Your Voice	55
God is My Infinite Guide	56
Life Becomes a Simple Prayer	57
My Lord Protects Me	58

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However, to be sure, my greatest blessing has been my wife, Donna. Not only has she encouraged me by reading all my writing, but she is also excellent with computers. Donna's editing skills and her ability to communicate with publishers has made this book possible. Because of Donna, I am a better author and more importantly, a better human being.

Of course, the compassionate love of God and the example of Jesus Christ have continually rescued me from doubt and fear. When the entire world seemed indifferent about me, the spirit of God picked me up, dusted me off, and gave me the courage to follow the love and the light as best I can.

Foreword

My book, “Poems of Inspiration and Hope,” represents my best effort to express my feelings of spiritual longing in a world that seems to grow more uncertain by the day. In order to accomplish this, I’ve created this chapbook of inspirational poems that offers substantive hope and some possible ideas for spiritual growth. Since life is often difficult to understand, the poems also help provide a sense of purpose and consolation. This allows the reader to develop courage that can foster feelings of reassurance and of self-confidence. Since most of my poems could be called meditative poems, they also have a feeling of tranquility that can sometimes be experienced by the reader.

For example, in the poem, “Every Trial is Grace,” the main idea centers on how suffering and trials can promote spiritual development. This, in turn, can lead to a closer and more mature relationship with God. In order to underscore this concept and as well as the ideas in other poems in the book, each poem offers corresponding Biblical passages that explain a deeper, more profound understanding of the themes in each one. “In every trial is Grace,” St. Peter describes suffering as transitory, and it is grace because trials lead us ever closer to God. “And the God of all grace, who called you to his external glory in Christ, after you have suffered, a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong and steadfast.” (1 Peter 5:10). In this passage, trials are seen as grace because they lead to divine love. This is not to suggest, of course, that having spiritual courage during a time of trial is a simple task.

Another example of the poems that are meant to reassure is called, “Love Will Find a Way.” This verse asserts that when there is no way forward; God will make a way for us. The Biblical passage I included to reinforce and expand on the unstoppable will of God is in Proverbs. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledges him, and he will make your paths straight.” (Proverbs 3:5-6). This helps point out directly that God’s providence can always find the best path even when we can’t.

A final illustration of a poem in the book that discusses a difficult topic focuses on the concept of death. The poem “When Finally I Wake in Heaven,” does not acknowledge death as the final defeat. Instead the poem expresses death as the gateway to love, peace, and acceptance. The Biblical verse that simultaneously expresses the truth about death but also offers an affirmation about the mystery beyond death is St. Paul. “No eyes have seen, no ears heard, nor has man conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.” (1 Corinthians 2:9). Clearly, misery in life is transformed into bliss so in death children of God prevail.

Finally, my poems originally were a kind of spiritual and creative exercise that gave me a sense of peace. But in time, these poems became a way to help others, even as the verses continue to offer me a measure of serenity. I hope the reader enjoys and finds solace in the poems.

John Zurn

Change is relentless with unending forms, but God is the shelter that leads through the storms.

Love is the presence of God in the world even though nations believe in themselves.

Love is the presence of God in the heart, yet everyone thinks He lives somewhere else.

Life is a mystery that words can't reveal. Grace is the moment when God becomes real.

Courage

At times, my Lord I'm filled with fear,
And I forget your love is near.
The courage that I need sometimes,
Is not enough although I try.
The pain of life can fill my day,
Until my courage drains away.
The thoughts of failure overwhelm,
Until my world comes crashing down.

My Lord this courage that I need,
Does not require mighty deeds.
It's not the wish for wealth and fame,
That draws me to your side again.
The kind of courage I require,
Is patience when my spirit tires.
When life itself is filled with doubt,
I need your love to help me out.

Lord, teach me to be brave I pray,
Because your strength I need today.
My thoughts and problems will return,
But I believe you are concerned.
I pray Lord as the day begins,
That you will guide me from within.
When courage is the only way,
Please help me Lord without delay.

*Be strong and courageous. Do not be not terrified;
do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be
with you wherever you go.
(Joshua 1:9)*

Prayer at Dawn

My Lord I walk among the crowd
Lost and feeling frightened.
My anxious mind begins to doubt
And fear is fast approaching.
My heart is cracked. My tongue is parched.
My worried thoughts are sinking.
Everywhere my soul has searched,
But still I find no meaning.

My Lord I yearn to feel your love,
So hope and faith return.
I look for you, but you are gone,
And things are getting worse.
I pray at dawn to you each day
And trust your perfect timing.
But strength and courage fade away,
And peace and joy are dying.

My Lord I need your love and grace
Because I wander blindly.
My heart despairs both night and day
And only you can find me.
My pride, desire, and selfish will
Are stumbling blocks and snares.
I watch and pray to you until
Your mercy finds me here.

*I lift up my eyes to the hills. Where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. (Psalm 121:1)*

Love Will Find A Way

When the battles that you fight,
Are too much for you to bear.
When the tears you shed at night,
Drive you deep into despair.
If the wisdom that you know,
Can't release you from your pain.
If your troubles come and grow,
Like a cold, forbidding rain.
Love will find a way.

When your hopelessness surrounds you,
Like a dark invading cloud,
When your misery confounds you,
And your burdens wear you down.
Even though your heart is aching,
With the agony of doubt,
Even though advice you're taking,
Is not useful to you now,
Love will find a way.

Because love has no beginning,
It has been here all along.
Because love has never ended,
Love is never really gone.
So beyond your fear and agony,
Wait on love to get you through.
Go behind the world's uncertainty-
God's love, it will find you.

*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart;
and lean not on your own understanding.; in all your ways
acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.
(Proverbs 3:5-6),*

He Won't Abandon You

When thoughts turn into worries,
And your heart knows only fear,
Think of God and surely,
His love will draw you near.
If the problems that surround you,
Bring you loneliness and pain;
Believe that God will help you,
And that hope will come again.
Remember God is loving,
And there's nothing He can't do;
Although despair is growing,
He won't abandon you.
So, give to God the glory,
And practice self-control.
He is the Lord Almighty.
His love will make you whole.

*Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also
will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave.
(Psalm 16:9-10)*

Blessing

May the journey of your life,
Bring you happiness and joy.
May the problems that you face,
Wither up and blow away.
May the mountains that you climb,
Make you confident and wise.
May the rivers that you cross,
Be refreshing, cool and calm.
May the sorrows that you bear,
Be too few to cause despair.
May the other souls you meet,
Touch your heart and give you peace.
May the love of God prevail,
Even if your courage fails.
May the spirit be your guide,
May your love light ever shine.

*The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face
to shine upon you and be gracious toward you; the Lord turn his
face toward you and give you peace.
(Numbers 6:24-26)*

If I Should Fall Asleep Tonight

If I should fall asleep tonight
And not wake up tomorrow;
Don't believe that I am lost,
Or think my soul is troubled.
When dawn awakens earth and sea,
But I am strangely quiet;
Don't suggest the worst for me,
Or think my soul is silent.

If I should dream and not return
And help has been rejected;
Don't suppose that death occurred,
Or think my faith has ended.
When mourners talk about my life
And lift me on their shoulders;
Don't believe I'm there inside,
Or think my life is over.

No, God is my eternal friend
Who leads me through the darkness.
He lifts my soul beyond the end
And lights the lamp of courage.
Death is like a looming shadow
Seeking out the old and young.
Death is but a tiny candle
Hiding from the rising sun.

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only
Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but
have eternal life.
(John 3:16)*

Faith, Hope, and Love

Faith is my treasure,
That glitters like gold.
It fills up my heart,
And runs through my soul.
Though worries surround me,
Oh God I will wait.
Despair and confusion,
Will soon pass away.

Hope springs eternal,
Behind all my cares.
Though I feel sadness,
I know God is here.
I wait for his guidance,
And look for his signs.
Above and below,
In front and behind.

Love is my teacher,
Beyond what I see.
God in his misery,
Won't forget me.
Though troubles abound,
And fill me with fear.
Soon comes tomorrow,
And then God appears.

*And now these three remain: faith, hope and love.
But the greatest of these is love.
(1 Corinthians 13:13)*

Every Trial is Grace

My thoughts feel cold and cracked today
Like brittle autumn leaves.
My heart dries up and I'm afraid,
And life is misery.
My mind projects so many fears;
I'm paralyzed and broken.
Alone within my grim despair,
I wander through emotion.

My hopes fade into memory,
And faith creates no peace.
Now courage is the only thing
That brings my soul relief.
Each day is like the one before,
And every dream is crushed.
I seek to find an open door,
So God and love will come.

But then a calm, at last, returns,
And tensions pass away.
If God asks patience, I will serve,
And He will lead the way.
Suffering and wisdom come,
No matter what I face.
Courage leads to joy and love,
And every trial is grace.

*And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory
in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself
restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.
(1 Peter 5:10)*

A Lullaby to Die

Sleep my child, your heart is dead,
The plague has done its worst.
Rest your head upon this bed,
Of maple wood and silk.
Find your peace beyond the trees,
Your spirit drifts away.
God counts every leaf that falls,
He's calling you today.
Innocent of all misdeeds,
You need not linger here.
Fly your soul into the light,
Set free from your despair.
Poverty, the war and AIDS,
Bring children far and near.
Meet them at God's secret place,
There's nothing more to fear.
The world is cold and filled with hate,
Beyond all hope sometimes.
Weep no more my darling child,
Let God teach you your rhymes.

*Have nothing to do with a false charge and do not
put an innocent or honest person to death, for I will
not acquit the guilty.
(Exodus 23:7)*

When I Finally Wake in Heaven

When I finally wake in heaven,
And this dream of life is spent;
I shall be with friends and family,
And my weary heart will rest.
Days and nights of pain and sorrow,
Then will fade like passing clouds.
Christ will lead and I will follow,
Free at last from fear and doubt.

When I finally soar to heaven
On the wings of peace and love,
Radiant light will shine within me,
And the joy of God will come.
Worries will be long forgotten,
And my loneliness will go.
Christ will lead me to devotion
And restore my tender soul.

But as I wait for God's good time,
My heart must trust in mercy.
This life is hard to bear sometimes,
So now I must be patient.
The Holy Spirit never sleeps
And always helps God's children.
Compassion is his sacred gift,
And he knows earth and Heaven.

*No eye has seen, no ear heard, no mind has conceived
what God has prepared for those who love him.
(1 Corinthians 2:9)*

May the Good Lord

When the morning brings no comfort
As the lonely day begins
And the nights go on forever
While your lack of hope creeps in
May the Good Lord help you settle
May the Good Lord be your friend

If your purpose has deceived you
And the busy world won't help
And you fail to find the reasons
That their plans are not for you
May the Good Lord be your teacher
May the Good Lord set you free

So the castles of your making
Have been cast into the sea
And the faith you need is sinking
Like the plans you can't believe
May the Good Lord lift your spirit
May the Good Lord ease your fears

When love is more than reason
Yet some say that God is dead
They point to wars and prisons
To prove that God is fled
Wait for the Good Lord to answer
Wait for the Good Lord to call

When searching for God becomes futile
But trust in his love remains strong
And your prayers are too long to untangle
So now you fear something is wrong
Wait for the Good Lord to find you
Wait for the Good Lord tonight

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as
you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by
the power of the Holy Spirit.
(Romans 15:13)*

Jesus the Christ

Hidden by shadows near agony road,
A grief stricken city stands stunned.
Silent with fear, they watch Jesus limp past,
And realize He isn't the one.
Their master and friend, stumbles and then,
Falls down from the weight of his cross.
His halo of thorns and kingdom of pain,
Terrify hearts even more.

The soldiers who lied, now crucify,
As Jesus is raised in the air.
For hours He struggles and calls to the sky,
But only the darkness is there.
He pulls himself up with his swollen hands,
And swallows a cruel, bloody breath.
Only the Father can still understand,
That Jesus the Christ won't forget.
Finally a hate driven spear is thrown,
And Jesus collapses and dies.
When the body flops down, the crowd disappears,
And even the faithful must hide.

But Jesus would still keep his word,
Though his body was only of clay.
On Sunday at dawn, a new world is born,
And the stone by his grave rolled away.
Raised from the dead he gathers his flock-
Mere words can't describe their relief.
Jesus the Christ, again full of life,
Offers himself as belief.

*The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.
We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only,
who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
(John 1:14)*

Rescue Me, Lord

Rescue me Lord, my courage collapses,
And no one but you can reach me in time.
My heart becomes brittle; my mind cannot rest.
I pray for your mercy but fear for my life.
When problems bring hardship and tensions increase,
I pray for your blessing to show me the way.
Now my despair chokes out my belief,
And thoughts feel so heavy that words fail again.

Rescue me Lord, before my health lapses,
When sorrow and pain will take me to die.
The world rushes on while I'm in distress;
Left out and frightened, I pray in the night.
The dawn brings the daylight without any peace.
The feeling of emptiness fills up my day.
My struggle is futile without your relief.
And life has no purpose when empty of faith.

But I trust you Lord, and know you are watching,
So my life has merit since you know my plight.
Whether I live or die in your presence,
As long as you're here, my fear will subside.
Although I'm in pain, this moment is passing,
And soon you will lead me to mercy and love.
So many times, you've saved me from danger,
And now, Lord, I wait with patience and trust.

*Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck.
I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold.
(Psalms 69:1)*

Affirmation of Faith

If I must die before the dawn
And hope has been abandoned;
I pray, Oh Lord, that you will come
And free me from my anguish.
If I must die alone in bed,
And only sorrow finds me;
I know, Oh Lord, my doubts will end
When you appear beside me.

If I must pass away at noon
When all my friends are working;
Oh Lord, I pray that you alone
Will find me and have mercy.
If in the twilight hours I weep,
And secret fears awaken;
Oh Lord, I trust that you will bring
My life to its completion.

But if I die in thankful joy
And life has been surrendered;
Your presence will unfold, My Lord,
And I will quit this prison.
When I die I might not know
The secrets of your kingdom;
But death is but a bladeless sword,
And you, My Lord are freedom.

*O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise
your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done
marvelous things, things planned long ago.
(Isiah 25:1)*

Prayer to Lord Jesus

Master I reach out to you,
Because I need you near me.
I humbly pray you bless my soul,
And help me to love purely.
I long to know your love and light,
In prayer and meditation.
I yearn for you both day and night,
In fitful agitation.

But now dear Lord, I must confess,
I never can feel peace.
No matter that I'm truly blessed,
My prayers are often weak.
Desire is my albatross,
That makes my wishes grow.
I look at all the time I've lost,
And now I'm growing old.

Lord Jesus, God, protector, king,
I ask for inner strength.
I pray for true humility,
So selfishness will end.
I pray my life is good and pure,
So love will rule my heart.
Help me, Lord, to seek you first,
Before we drift apart.

*I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen
you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,
so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.
(Ephesians 3:16-17)*

Blessed Be God Forever

If in my heart I seek to know
Your will in times of sorrow;
But you are teaching me to grow,
So onward I must travel:
Blessed Be God Forever.

If deep within my weary mind
I call to you in prayer;
But you await the perfect time,
So I must linger here:
Blessed Be God Forever.

If I wait with idle hands,
Yet work cannot be found;
And my soul can't understand
Because it feels cast down:
Blessed Be God forever.

If every deed is ground to dust,
And hope and faith are strained;
But still you tell me I must trust
And do my best each day:
Blessed Be God Forever.

If the silence cracks and breaks,
And worry stalks my dreams;
And loneliness I cannot fake
Because I'm lost in need:
Blessed Be God Forever.

Yet if I fail to win a place,
But you are satisfied;
And all I have is love and grace
To lead me through this life:
Blessed Be God Forever.
Blessed Be God Today.

*When I said, "My foot is slipping," your love, O Lord,
supported me. When anxiety was great within me,
your consolation brought joy to my soul.
(Psalm 94:19)*

In the Most Unguarded Moments

Once I trusted expectations,
But soon I faced the world alone.
Then faith was mostly selfish action,
And my prayers were mostly show.
Finally, I thought nothing mattered
While my heart lost all control.
Then my life felt bruised and battered,
As I walked down lonely roads.
But now my Lord has shown me favor,
So my life begins to flow.
Now my heart is so inspired,
And I learn to trust my soul.
When I feel God lift me up,
I feel a sense of gratitude.
When I know I must be tough,
I know his strength will guide me through.
God has blessed my life with meaning,
So His mercy lights my way.
Now my faith in love has saved me,
So anxious fears have slipped away.
Every day I sense God's presence,
So the world is filled with hope.
In the most unguarded moments,
God appears to help me out.

*So we may say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper;
I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"
(Hebrews 13:6)*

I Surrender to God

I surrender to God
my worries today.
I relinquish to God
my feelings that stray.
I surrender to God
my sorrows and fears.
I relinquish to God
my impatient tears.
I surrender to God
each problem I meet.
I relinquish to God
success and defeat.
I surrender to God
my work time and play.
I relinquish to God
my entire day.

I forfeit to God
the little things.
I offer to God
the joys that they bring.
I forfeit to God
my need to compare.
I offer to God
the things that I share.

I abandon to God
my future unknown.
I give up to God
my reasons for hope.
I abandon to God
these words of rhyme.
I give up to God
ambition this time.
I abandon to God
and begin to let go.
I give up to God
for the freedom He knows.
I abandon to God
my penance and grace.
I give up to God
and patiently wait.

*Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me,
he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23-24)*

A Season of Death

If I pass away in springtime,
When all the flowers are reborn,
Lay me near the river,
By the soybeans, wheat and corn.
Let me feel the sunshine,
As it warms my rigid mind.
Help me say I love you,
To the maple, oak and pine.

If my death arrives in summer,
When the grass is shoulder high,
Place me in the meadow,
So that I can feel the sky.
Cover me with clover,
With my back against the dew.
Let me hear the crickets,
As they sing their hymn to you.

If I die in early autumn,
As maple leaves begin to turn,
Lay me by a willow,
So my feet can touch the earth.
Let me feel the rising wind,
So my spirit doesn't crash.
Then let me thank my body,
As you burn my bones to ash.

If the end comes during winter,
When the growing wind is cold,
Take me to the forests,
And then bury me in snow.
Leave me to the hungry wolves,
So my death will be of use.
Then let me fly undaunted,
So my soul will reach to you.

*"The grass withers and the flowers fall,
but the word of our God stands forever."
(Isaiah 40:8)*

When the Sun Appears

Sometimes in our secret sorrow
Thoughts are plagued by endless doubts.
Feelings lead to disappointment,
And the world begins to crowd.
Day and night are merely shadows
Like the clouds above the sea.
Life believes the time is autumn,
And the snow invades the trees.
In this sadness all will follow
That the spirit leads to peace.
These memories that bruise the soul
Are moments that assail belief.

Yet someday when the sun appears,
Our days can be fulfilling.
The lonely nights may disappear,
And peace will be a blessing.
The dreary times will pass away,
So life and love may linger.
The world of change may rule each day,
But God creates forever.

*On no day will its gates ever be shut,
for there will no night there.
(Revelation 21:25)*

Change

In through the grooves of my mind,
You hunt down my thought forms sometimes.
You follow my trail of routine,
And enter the world of my dreams.
Not knowing what I have to do,
I run through my forest confused.
I hide on my island and wait,
Breathless and sensing my fate.

You break through my outer defenses,
And scatter my white picket fences.
My mountains and rivers you cross,
Add to my feelings of loss.
My island of strength is in doubt,
As your bloodhounds and spies figure out.
The fire that you built fills my mind,
I choke in my fortress confined.

Finally my safe island town,
Comes crashing in pain to the ground.
Powerful bridges of faith,
Shatter and then fall away.
But as you are killing my mind,
I leave all my caution behind.
I see the destruction you need,
And follow wherever you lead.

*There is a time for everything, and a season for every
activity under heaven, a time to be born and a time to
die, a time to kill and a time to heal.
(Ecclesiastes 3:1-3)*

Our Eternal Friend

When the world is filled with sorrow
And your heart begins to sink
But the play and all its drama
Is your only source of strength
Be faithful and courageous
Learn the truth and find your way

If your days are quickly passing
And your dreams have not survived
Yet your friends are still successful
And they leave your love behind
Believe your inspiration
And then open up your mind

While the night might seem to hold you
In the grip of wild despair
So that doubt and death expose you
To the thoughts you cannot share
Look beyond your desperate mood
And seek out someone who cares

Remember God still loves you
And he rescues you from harm
His love will find the answers
To the world and all its storms
God is our protector
Our one eternal friend

*Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you;
he will never let the righteous fall.
(Psalm 55:22)*

Lord, Help Me Have a Grateful Heart

Lord, help me have a grateful heart,
So I may know contentment.
Please fill my hands with useful work,
So I may find acceptance.
When problems overwhelm my day,
Remember I am trying.
If peace and joy have slipped away,
Remember I am frightened.

Lord, help me have a giving heart,
So I may learn compassion.
Lead me to the cold and lost
And teach me understanding.
If secret seeds of jealousy
Begin to sprout and flourish,
I pray for true humility
That reaches out in courage.

Lord, help me have a loving heart,
So I may find devotion.
Help me grow in strength and trust,
So I resist emotion.
If my heart is dry and brittle,
Fill me with a patient faith.
If my mind is weak and fragile,
Teach me with your precious grace.

*I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your
name for ever and ever.
(Psalm 145:1)*

It's Been So Long

A silent presence stills the mind
Behind the world of seeking.
It overwhelms all sense of time,
And thoughts are lost completely.
This silence forms a sacred bond
That reassures the lonely.
It sings a song of joy and love
And all the world is holy.

But soon this vision slowly fades,
And thoughts and feelings gather.
The quiet peace is gone today
Replaced by fear and anger.
This gloom begins to drag me down,
While love and faith are sleeping.
Thoughts turn dark and every sound
Reminds me I am sinking.

It's been so long, so very long
Since Love and Light were here.
The Spirit of Almighty God
Abandons me, I fear.
In this world I sojourn on
Without a light to guide me.
It's been so long, so very long,
And only God can find me.

*The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves
those who are crushed in spirit.
(Psalms 34:18)*

Nothing Else Matters Tonight

I still fade away from your love and light, Lord,
And memories haunt my existence.
With no one to share your infinite grace,
The world is a cry in the distance.
I secretly cherish your presence each day
And quietly try to surrender.

But nothing I do proves that you're here,
And book learning ceases to comfort.
None can perceive this truth in my heart
That leads me to lurk in this quiet.
I wait for some sign alone in the dark
And seek something more than the stillness.

But God, you are hiding behind some disguise,
And all I can do is keep waiting.
Year after year, I seek you inside
And patiently yearn for an answer.
My heart is still searching for you every night
But nothing can break through this sadness.

Lord, God Almighty, I pray for your love,
So I may be blessed with your presence.
I know I am bold and don't really know
The reasons behind my persistence.
But long before now, you quickened my soul
And you are my deepest commitment.

*For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,
neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,
neither height nor depth, nor anything else in creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God that
is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
(Romans 8:38-39)*

I Will Wait for God's Reply

My search for God is still in doubt
Behind a sea of sadness.
I seek to find my way across
But trust no more in patience.
All attempts to find my way
Have failed to give direction.
Now I wander through each day
In search of consolation.

My prayers to God are far away
While weeks and months are passing.
My deepest thoughts and chattered words,
Mislead and are confusing.
I cannot find my way ahead
Despite my prayerful silence.
I pray and wait, then pray again,
For comfort and protection.

This test of God has led me here,
And now I walk in darkness.
Every day is lost to fear
And now my mind is broken.
But I will wait for God's reply,
And He will bring me courage.
God will hear my desperate cry
And fill me with His spirit.

*The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to
the ones who seek him; it is good to wait quietly for
the salvation of the Lord.
(Lamentations 3:25)*

I Pray That You Might Linger

Oh Lord, I grow in confidence
And feel Your grace and mercy.
I leave behind my selfishness
And hold Your love within me.
This world has been a disappointment
Tempting me to waste my life.
But you, my Lord, are always present
Teaching me to do what's right.

Oh Lord, a quiet sense of trust
Invites me to surrender.
I feel your presence in my heart
And pray that you might linger.
A gentle breath absorbs my mind
And thoughts are soon abandoned.
I feel your love from deep inside
And have my questions answered.

Oh Lord, your sweet serenity
Restores my strength of heart.
These burdens you have given me,
I'll carry, trusting love.
If hope and faith begin to waver,
I shall work and love you still.
If my mind is lost and scattered,
Oh my Lord, I'll wait for you.

*Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified
because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you;
he will never leave you nor forsake you.
(Deuteronomy 31:6)*

Once You Saved My Troubled Soul

Expecting to live a wonderful life,
My confidence drove me to danger.
Ignoring my friends who dared give advice,
I trusted my will and my anger.
Seeking the realms of honor and wealth,
I lived for both fame and acceptance.
Each seed of desire grew deep in my heart,
Then blossomed like weeds in the desert.
Soon, I felt lonely, lost and alone
Because every effort brought failure.
All hope for success finally was gone
And seeking to live became harder.
Trapped in a world of perilous thoughts,
Feelings reached out for an answer.
Life had no logic, so deep in myself,
Despair cursed my mind like a cancer.

Now as I wander without and within,
The moment of life remains empty.
While rivers still flow and forests abound,
My Lord still prefers to ignore me.
Each twilight is colored in worry and pain.
Emotions lose hope in the darkness.
I wait for the answers while questions remain,
Off in the distance the night draws me near.

When will you save me from darkness and shame,
So I may know love is eternal?
When will you find me and tell me your name,
So light may restore and transform me?
I know the time of death will come
When life will be left for the living.
But once you accepted my despondent soul,
And now you are hiding your kingdom.

*Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.
(1 Peter: 5:7)*

Only Grace Can Still My Doubts

In this state of mind, I sink
And drown inside my feelings.
My mind collapses yet again,
And nothing has much meaning.
The world ignores my numb despair,
And love feels like a jingle,
So every day the music plays,
But I hear only sorrow.
I walk the desert of my thoughts,
But inner thoughts accuse me.
My soul seems lost behind a rock,
But God seems gone completely.
Nevertheless, I wait for God,
To lift me from this darkness.
God will save me soon enough
To lead me from this sadness.
A fragile trust still grips my heart,
Yet faith is barely stirring.
Only grace can still my doubts,
Yet time remains indifferent

*If you believe, you will receive whatever you
ask for in prayer.
(Matthew 21:22)*

In This Moment of Surrender

A soft and quiet intuition
Gently overcomes the will.
Any wish to trust in reason
Disappears and all is still.
This strength expands in silent freedom
Far beyond where fear can go.
This all-pervading secret feeling
Seeks no mission, friend, or foe.

This feeling of complete acceptance
Seeks no meaning from the world.
This consciousness without submission
Needs no thoughts to take control.
Like a trance beyond all thinking
Life is now a sacred path.
Like an end with no beginning,
God and grace are first and last.

Now the ego has no anchor
Leaving all its roles behind.
Separate thoughts no longer linger
Now ignored, they slowly die.
This is how the spirit beckons,
As the soul abandons pride.
In this moment of surrender,
I must learn to live and die.

*I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live,
but Christ lives in me.
(Galatians 2:20)*

If Only I Am Patient

I stumble into everywhere
And seek to know the future.
But hidden thoughts are lurking there
And I project some purpose.
Across the desert wilderness,
The ancient trail deceives.
Beyond the mountain promises,
I struggle with belief.

My soul has scouted many lands,
In search of joy and freedom.
But nowhere is there liberty
Beyond the tyrants' reason.
My mind is weary, old, and tame,
And fear begins to matter.
My heart has wandered far away,
Afraid to face disaster.

But in this quest that finds despair,
I will not change direction.
The truth, at last, will find me here,
If only I am patient.
At any time the grace of God
May lead me out of trouble.
The past is like a stagnant pond
Where I refuse to wallow.

*Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be
mature and complete, not lacking anything.
(James 1:4)*

Only God Could Make Me Whole

When life drags on too long sometimes,
My world feels like a prison.
But God can hear my desperate cry,
And then I feel his presence.
If emotion leads to anguish,
And my feelings rise and fall,
God can see my fear and panic
Even though I'm overwhelmed.
When my failures leave me weeping,
Only God can make me whole.
Even though I feel bewildered,
I believe that God still knows.
Sometimes I feel frail and broken,
And my thoughts contract in gloom.
Yet God has always raised me up
Before my thoughts could drag me down.
Before when death brought doubt and fear,
I thought that God was angry.
But God is love no matter where,
And death can never slay me.

*For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord,"
"plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give
you hope and a future.
(Jeremiah 29:11)*

I Cannot Find My Way to You

Oh God, my heart cries out to you,
And all my thoughts are troubled.
I cannot find my way to you
Although I pray in sorrow.
I feel a sense of loneliness,
So every day is nervous.
I search for you within my soul,
And pray for hope and service.

Oh God, I pray for love and strength,
So I may not feel hurried.
I pray that you bestow your peace
And save me from these worries.
Perhaps, I run ahead too far
Or else I lag behind you.
But now my mind is simply lost
And faith alone can find me.

I pray oh God, for words of hope,
So life may have direction.
The years of loving trust drain out,
And all my work has ended.
Every day I search for guidance
Lost and frightened in despair.
Every night I pray for silence,
Trusting you will find me there.

*How long O Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
(Psalm 13:1)*

A Deeper Faith

My Lord, another day begins
As loneliness returns.
A worn-out silence comes again
Like hollow arid words.
My thirsting soul is parched and dry
Wandering through this desert.
I'm trapped beneath a barren sky
And track down lifeless rivers.

Oh Lord, this hard forbidding place
Has haunted me for years.
My life has sought a better space,
So silence brought me here.
But mind is now an enemy
That poisons deeper thoughts.
The spirit deep inside of me
Can't find the inner voice.

Lord, my life is still uncertain,
So I search for deeper faith.
Every day is now a burden
In this desert wilderness.
Anxiety and endless fears
Test my weary heart and mind.
I yearn for you in my despair
Beyond the world of day and night.

*For nothing is impossible for God.
(Luke 1:37)*

Every Fear is Slowly Dying

My heart finds joy, beating faster,
Safely lost among the flowers.
Intuition dawns then lingers
Like a fragrant, summer shower.
Thought and feeling merge together
Free from every selfishness.
Compassion and a silent power
Overwhelm my loneliness.

Awareness builds an open sky
Steeped in cosmic mystery.
Every fear of death is dying
Lost to faith in God instead.
Energy pervades existence
Deep within and all around.
Everywhere my soul is singing
Free to merge with love and sound.

But still this landscape comes and goes,
And I feel separation.
From deep within my heart and soul,
I seek God in creation.
Contentment is the toughest task
When patience turns to hurry.
Attachment is a living death
That leads to every worry.

*For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me
high upon a rock.
(Psalms 27:5)*

Save Me from the Storm

When fears and sadness take control
and loneliness prevails;
I pray that God will fill my heart
before my courage fails.
If signs and symbols fail to see
and every road is wrong,
I pray, my Lord, will shelter me
and save me from the storm.
When strength and effort aren't enough
and plans and dreams collapse;
I pray that God will help me trust
beyond my circumstance.
If life becomes a raging sea
and death conceals the shore,
I pray, my Lord, will shelter me
and save me from the storm.

No matter how our lives unfold
The world is hard to bear.
Because our fate is left unknown,
I pray, my God, is here.
We flock and swarm in search of peace
But mostly die alone.
I pray, my Lord will shelter me
And save me from the storm.

*"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing
them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the
Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.
And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
(Matthew 28:20)*

God is Still the Friend I Love

It seems for me the time has passed
For worried thoughts
Careful plans
And seeking goals.
Now every challenge I accept
Is unresolved
Misapplied
Or disallowed.

My life is stuck with sinking verse
That drains my heart
Infects my mind
And chokes my soul.
I see a world that fails to love
That cares for none
With no controls
That overwhelms.

But God will not
Abandon me
Ignore my prayers
Or leave me out.
My Lord will surely
Take the wheel
Restore my faith
And find me here.
For God is still the friend I love
The truth I seek
The grace I need
Who lights my way.

So, I surrender all my futures
Locked in thought
Lost in self
Fixed in time.
So, now I pray God helps me soon by
Guiding today
Protecting tomorrow
And absorbing my soul.

*A man of many companions may come to ruin, but
there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
(Proverbs 18:24)*

God Restores My Courage

The season of despair is gone
And faith returns to comfort.
The storms of anger, fear, and doubt
Retreat and I surrender.
My thoughts of anguish lose control,
And God restores my courage.
The way of loving trust unfolds
Without the need to hurry.

Now resignation lights my way,
And understanding follows.
Devotion lives for just today,
And future plans seem shallow.
The awkward play without a role
Is finally feeling peaceful.
I rest within and seek no goal,
And work when I am useful.

Yet, feelings of uncertainty
Can soon become disturbing.
The world of change rules everything,
And life is rarely easy.
Like a stupid goat I struggle,
Trapped between the garden posts.
Many times I get in trouble
Trying to improve myself.

*For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a
spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.
(II Timothy 1:7)*

I Know God Has No Need of Me

I will put my faith in God
And trust no selfish purpose.
I will seek His grace and love,
So I may grow in service.
If my thoughts of pride and greed
Begin to turn to anger,
I pray that God will rescue me
And lead me out of danger.

I will seek to follow God
And go where I am taken.
I will hear His spirit song
And follow His direction.
If the snares of doubt and reason
Threaten to surround my mind,
I will trust in faith and mercy
And resist my fear and pride.

I will seek to find my God
In every situation.
I will learn to guide my heart
Beyond my thoughts and feelings.
I know God has no need for me
To help Him move creation.
But I still wish to be of use
And learn like other children.

*So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed,
for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isiah 1:10)*

A Feeling of Serenity

A feeling of serenity
Begins to still emotion.
The mind accepts simplicity
Relying on devotion.
Doubt, conceit, and every craving
Sink beneath a secret sky.
A subtle sense of God sustaining
Holds the heart and stills the mind.

This timeless consciousness unfolds,
And life becomes surrender.
The moment frees the captive soul,
As thought forms are transcended.
Silence like a dawning meadow
Fills the heart with mystery.
Life accepts and learns to follow
Promptings from eternity.

Yet, soon the world of thought seeps in,
Until the trance is smothered.
Frustration follows, yet again,
So thoughts are dark and troubled.
The world of change and circumstance
Is boring, old, and weary.
The day becomes the separateness
That leads to every worry.

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you
as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled
and do not be afraid.
(John 14:27)*

God Will Show Me Something New

Once I searched for right and wrong
In every friend and neighbor.
My heart would find their every fault
And see myself as favored.
Bitterness concealed the truth
That I was lost and frightened.
Deep within I felt left out-
Alone in all creation.

But all these fears and attitudes
Were mostly realms of pride.
My ego sought to raise me up
Before the world passed by.
Now I see that life is tough,
And everyone has problems.
So now I don't compare myself,
and need no selfish motives.

So as the spirit comes and lingers,
I shall seek no points of view.
Every moment love discovers,
God will show me something new.
I leave behind the wilderness
That led my ego to despair.
I pray with patient confidence
That God will lead me everywhere.

*And Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah,
for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father
in heaven."
(Matthew 16:17)*

Gratitude

When did you leave me alone, Oh my Lord,
Or fill me with doubt in your presence?
How can my conscience forget or ignore
Your unfailing love and protection?
What did I suffer that you didn't see,
Or when have I called with no answer?
Where could I sojourn for safety and peace
Without trusting you as my master?
Yet there are moments when life seems so good
My mind soon forgets all of your blessings.
Then there are seasons when life is so tough
I blame you instead of believing.
I am a creature who stumbles through time,
But you, Oh my Lord, still patiently guides.

*Be joyful always; pray continuously; give thanks in all
circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
(1 Thessalonians 5:18)*

My Prayers are Mostly Pleas

My prayers, Oh Lord, are mostly pleas,
Yet, “thank you” seldom follows.
My heart forgets you rescue me
Until I face more problems.
When life is free from doubt and fear,
I think I am a master.
Then my ego runs to hide
When pride leads to disaster.
Worst of all, when answered prayers
Restore my friends and neighbors.
I assert my faith was there,
As if God needs a favor.
Now, at least, my doubt and pride
Are out where I can see them.
Although my thoughts and ego bind,
The spirit still can free me.
Oh Lord, I’m weak and so unsure
Yet, love is here beside me.
My faith is lost in clever words,
But somehow you still find me.

*In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of
hard work we must help the weak, remembering the
words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed
to give than to receive.’
(Acts 20:35)*

All Begin to Trust Again

I cannot know about tomorrow
Nor do I see the trials ahead.
Perhaps the road will lead to sorrow
If my path turns right or left.
Each morning may bring joy and purpose,
But soon some cloud may steal my plans.
The past remains to haunt the future,
So the present fails again.
When doors are locked, and roads are blocked,
All paths forward seem to end.

But nothing lasts and dreams are phantoms,
And it's change that rules the earth.
The road is long and thoughts are scattered,
As the doubts soon reappear.
Yet God still leads us home through patience,
And He helps us through the maze.
When all seems lost and hope is sinking,
The love of God will turn the page.
When God appears, the way is clear.
Then all begin to trust again.

*You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is
steadfast, because he trusts in you, Trust in the Lord
forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the rock eternal.
(Isaiah 26:3-4)*

God Rekindles My Hope

My mind is restless; my thoughts never end.
My heart is a wave that rises and falls.
Beliefs become stale when boredom descends.
Out in the wasteland, my purpose is gone.
Then finally, My God, rekindles my hope.
He always is there and shows me the way.
With God by my side, I'm never alone.
He picks me back up whenever I stray.
God leads me slowly, so I understand.
He is my master and ultimate friend.

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as
you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit.
(Romans: 15:13)*

Silence

My mind is a circle of unending thoughts
That makes me feel anxious and tired.
Wherever I wander, I always end up
Back in the world where I started.
Stuck in the cycle of faith and despair,
I try to escape from confusion.
Lonely and desperate, I reach out in prayer,
But thoughts block all hope for an answer.

Yet I can recall the presence of "Now"
Where thought forms were banned from admission.
Secretly quiet and strangely profound,
This space had the feeling of wisdom.
Thoughts are the reason I feel ill at ease,
But God is the silence I fail to perceive.

*Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked
or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his
delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day
and night.
(Psalms 1:1-2)*

God's Perfect Timing

Faith is the refuge for families in need
Even when trouble rolls in like a storm.
His presence gives comfort for those who believe,
And he feels the heartache that others ignore.
Faith can endure the toughest of trials.
And when Faith is silent, that silence is God.
Faith can be strong or frail like a child,
Patient and loving, it never gives up.
Faith holds its ground and lives in the Lord,
And stubbornly trusts when problems begin.
With every misfortune, faith loves even more,
So nothing can hurt the love deep within.
When others seem clever and think they are wise,
Faith knows their folly and holds to the truth.
Faith recognizes the meaning of life,
And faith apprehends the wise and the fool.
But if Faith feels weary, lonely, and weak,
God's reassurance will always be strong.
God's perfect timing will rescue the meek,
And after the darkness, God brings the dawn.

*The end of a matter is better than its beginning,
and patience is better than pride.
(Ecclesiastes 7:8)*

I Need You by My Side

I look for you in milling crowds
But that has left me lonely.
I wander through my empty house,
But all the rooms feel empty.
Oh Lord, your love is everywhere,
So I should feel contentment.
Oh Lord, your presence leads me here,
So I should know acceptance.
I wait for you to end my fears
And calm my thoughts of anger.
I pray to you to set me free
And rescue me from danger.
Oh Lord, you teach my heart to trust,
So life can offer purpose.
You teach my soul the infinite,
So faith can hold out promise.
I seek you out in quiet prayer
And wait for you to answer.
I linger still to find you here
And hope for your direction.
Oh Lord, I need you by my side,
So love can be my shepherd.
My Lord you are eternal light,
But I walk in the shadows.

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want. He makes me
lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet
waters, he restores my soul.
(Psalm 23:1-3)*

I Pray to Hear Your Voice

Lord, I pray for confidence
When worries overwhelm me.
I hope that I do not forget
That you can always save me.
I need your love when I am down
And in my times of danger.
I pray your grace will still my doubts
When life brings only tension.
Lord, I pray to hear your voice,
So only you will lead me.
Now I long to end the noise
And listen for your teaching.
Oh Lord, I pray for you to guide,
So faith may feel your presence.
Till now I've been so lost inside,
My soul is gray and restless.
I wait within this bitter night,
And hope for words of comfort.
Oh Lord; you are the sacred light,
And I am feeling broken.

*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they
follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never
perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.
(John 10: 27-28)*

God is My Infinite Guide

My mind is like a spinning top
That never stops for very long.
My thoughts are mostly hidden wants,
Yet I pretend my will is strong,
Selfishly, I seek advantage,
So I hurt my closest friends.
Seldom have my acts been challenged,
By the doubts and guilt within.
But now, the Lord, has shown the way,
And life begins to offer peace.
To give and serve means more than take,
And love is never far from me.
Each day begins with faith and hope,
No matter what the morning brings.
No longer trapped in selfish roles,
Now compassion draws me in.
Still, each day I seem to stumble,
And selfishness ignites my greed.
Prayers are vague and thoughts are troubled,
And all I seem to feel is need.
However, the Lord helps me stand,
While sorrow may teach me to try.
But I won't give up or even look back,
Since God is my infinite guide.

*The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your
needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your
frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a
spring whose waters never fail.
(Isaiah 58:11)*

Life Becomes a Simple Prayer

Life has mostly simple moments
Like the rising sun each day.
The times of truly great excitement
Seem like clouds that drift away.
Plans and memories are tainted
With the hopes and fears of thought.
When the many dreams have faded,
The only peace begins with God.
Then in the moments by the river,
Or walking through a crowded mall,
Simple thoughts of God can linger,
And nothing else exists but God.
In this moment thoughts have ended,
And the spirit fills my heart.
Then the peace of being present
Overwhelms my inner talk.
But just for a short pause only
Does the fleeting moment last.
My eager mind returns and slowly
Thinking fuels my selfishness.
Yet in these quiet simple moments,
My heart perceives that God is near,
Without the rush to trust emotions,
My life becomes a simple prayer.

*Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we
have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially
in our relations with you,
in the holiness and sincerity that
are from God. We have done so not according to worldly
wisdom but according to God's grace.
(II Corinthians 1:12)*

My Lord Protects Me

My Lord protects me with his love
When problems cause confusion.
When doubt begins to grip my heart,
The Lord restores my patience.
He knows how much I need his help
When hardships lead to tension.
He calms the waves of secret thoughts
that lead me to acceptance.
So many times I lean on pride
And sacrifice devotion.
Yet God stills hears my desperate cry
Because he is compassion.
My ego is a cunning beast
That leads me into trouble.
Trusting selfishness and greed,
I run through life and stumble.
But God perceives my wayward mind
That still seeks out emotion.
He teaches me to seek and find,
Before my life is over.
In life when courage has no hold,
The Lord can hear me praying.
He leads me to a peaceful road
Where hope and faith are waiting.

*You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of deliverance.
(Psalm 32:7)*



Biography

John has an MA in English and is a retired school teacher and psycho-social rehabilitation counselor. Throughout his life, his Christian faith has allowed him to address some of life's most difficult challenges such as loneliness and greed. But he also discovered that faith must be accompanied by self-effort in order for the religious life to be developed. Without character improvement and a change in priorities, spiritual life would have been far less likely. Writing has always been an important method for John to address problems and accept life. In conjunction with spiritual truths, this writing has led to insight and devotion. By turning inward, spiritual ideas have blossomed into a spiritual way of life. John has been married to his wife, Donna for thirty- eight years, and they live in Yorkville, Illinois.

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