

Her Story Silhouette by Shari House

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<i>Priscilla Studd</i>		
Life Span: 1864 - 1929	Field of Service: <i>China / India / Africa</i>	
Nationality: <i>Irish</i>	Years in Service: 42	

Silhouette:

Priscilla Stewart was born on August 28, 1864, in Lisburn, Ireland and grew up among the wealthy. It was said of her that she was Irish both in her looks and in her spirit. She wanted nothing to do with religious people and had no fear about where she would spend eternity. She even boasted that she would have a wonderful time in hell with her friends. However, one night she had a vivid dream where she saw Jesus hanging on the cross and she heard Him say, "With my stripes are ye healed." The dream was unsettling, and she couldn't get the image out of her head. She trusted Christ as her Savior a short while later, and not long after that she committed to go to China as a missionary. Hudson Taylor had been spreading the word about the great need for missionaries in China and had already organized the China Inland Mission. Taylor had organized the departure of the popular "Cambridge Seven" in 1885, and Priscilla joined the cause as one of "The Hundred" that arrived in Shanghai, China in 1887. Those joining the mission went through a specific course of study and examination to become a missionary. Six months initial training covered Chinese language, geography, government, etiquette, religion and the communication of the Gospel. Trainees were then posted to an inland station where they were supervised by a senior missionary. After two years, successful candidates became junior missionaries and after five years took responsibility for a station. Priscilla along with three other women were assigned to the inland station in the city of TaKuTang.

The following year in 1888 Priscilla became acquainted with C.T. Studd, the successful, wealthy English cricketer who was one of the famous "Cambridge Seven." She had no plans of marrying as she was fiercely dedicated to the work the Lord had called her to do. Charles on the other hand, was quite convinced they were meant for each other and told her, "You have neither the mind of God nor the will of God on the matter, but I have. And I intend to marry you whether you will or not so you'd better make up your mind and accept the situation!" Eventually Priscilla consented to marry him, and on their wedding day she wore a sash that said, "United for fight for Jesus."

Both Priscilla and her husband took to heart [Matthew 19:21](#), "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." Before Charles left for China, he gave away most all of his inheritance, amounting to over 40,000£ (\$4.4 million in today's value), to D.L. Moody, George Muller, and various other ministries. What was left, about \$500,000 in today's value, he offered to Priscilla as a wedding gift. She responded with "Charlie, what did the Lord tell the rich young man to do?" "Sell all." "Well then, we will start clear with the Lord at our wedding." And with that they gave the rest of the money away to the Lord's work.

After they were married, Priscilla and Charles moved to the inland city of LungangFu to work. They endured many hardships, but together they faced them with the full belief that they could reach the people of China for Christ. Some of these hardships included their bed becoming infested with scorpions, starvation, and having their neighbors greet them with curses whenever they left the house . . . every day. . . for five years. Eventually the power of the Gospel began to do a work in the hearts of the people and the persecution the Studds had borne for five years began producing Christians who were also willing to bear persecution for the cause of Christ. Here is a case in point:

One Chinaman they witnessed to many times said, "I am a murderer and adulterer. I have broken all the laws of God again and again. I am also a confirmed opium smoker. He cannot save me." The Studds continued to preach Christ to him and he accepted Him as his Savior. The Chinaman said, "I must go to the town where I have done all this evil and sin, and in that very place tell the Good News." He did just that and was arrested. His punishment was 2,000 lashes with a bamboo cane. After a stay in the hospital he went straight back to the town to preach again. Embarrassed to flog him again, they instead sent him to prison. Crowds came daily to listened to him preach through the small open windows and holes in the wall. Eventually, they set him free because he preached more inside the prison than out. This man is just one of dozens of examples of the lasting mark that Priscilla and her husband left in China.

Priscilla and Charles were both forced to return home to England shortly after that in 1894 because of poor health. They brought with them their four daughters (Grace, Dorothy, Edith, and Pauline) and left behind two sons who had died in infancy. After a period of time of recuperation, they spent the next two years touring English and American universities recruiting missionaries. They then served in Ootacamund, South India from 1900-1906. Once again, ill health forced them to return home. Priscilla did not know it at the time, but she would never return to serve on the field.

In 1913 Charles' heart was stirred by the great need in Africa. Because the doctors would not give their consent, his financial backers stopped their support. He decided to go anyway but thought it would be better for Priscilla to stay behind with their daughters much to her great disappointment. She took up the cause for missions on the home front, though, and headed up an organization called Worldwide Evangelization Crusade (WEC) that not only raised the funds that kept her husband on the field, but also raised awareness of the needs for more missionaries to go to unreached areas all over the world.

Priscilla died on January 29, 1929 at the age of 64 after living a lifetime on and off the mission field for the cause of Christ. She is truly a woman of whom it can be said, "**She hath done what she could!**"



Her Story/My Story:

As a wife, mother, and missionary, Priscilla's life took many turns, but the one she was least prepared for was when her husband decided she should stay home with the children while he pursued missionary work in Africa. Charles saw this separation from his family as just one more thing he was willing to sacrifice for the cause of Christ, but Priscilla struggled with feelings of rejection, loneliness, and loss of her calling. She eventually came to terms with her feelings and realized, although her life's plans had changed, there was still a part she could play in missions. She had decided that if she couldn't be on the field anymore and no one was willing to support the work her husband was trying to do, that she would make it happen. And so, she threw herself wholeheartedly into raising support for her husband and recruiting new missionaries to join in the work by heading up the WEC. Priscilla lived the last 16 years of her married life apart from her husband except for a brief 13-day visit to the Congo a year before she passed away.

Priscilla's life did not turn out at all like she had planned when she left her home as a single missionary to serve the Lord in China. Life is often like that. It takes twists and turns, sometimes caused by our actions, and sometimes caused by the actions of others. The beauty of staying faithful to the Lord, though, even when your life doesn't look like the one you planned, is that often the Lord allows you to see your hopes and dreams come to fruition in the lives of your children and grandchildren. Priscilla lived long enough to see two of her daughters go to the mission field with their husbands to continue on with the work that she and her husband had given their lives to.

My grandmother on my father's side got saved as a teenager during an old-fashioned revival meeting. From that point on she desired to serve the Lord with her life, and she surrendered to be a missionary. She met my grandfather, a blue-collar worker, and they were married. They were faithful Christians in their church, but my grandmother never lost her desire to become a missionary. As time went on, she realized it might not be in God's plan for her life. She had only one child, my father, and my grandma began praying that the Lord might call her son to the mission field. My father grew up and became a business man and served the Lord as a faithful layman in church until he became an assistant pastor. When myself and my siblings came on the scene, she began praying that the Lord would call one of her grandchildren to the mission field.

Although I was never aware of my grandmother's prayers concerning the mission field, she often quoted to me this poem that she had written:

A Christian brave is what I want to be.
More like Jesus, Who walked the shores of Galilee.
I want to be a soldier of the cross,
To help some soul find their way that's lost.
I want to live my life in such a way,
That a stumbling block for others, I'll never be.
A Christian more like Jesus, is what I want to be.



I remember the day in October 1993, when I told my grandma that I was going to go to the mission field. There were tears, but not the kind I was expecting . . . the kind that most grandmas might have when their granddaughter tells them that they are committing to live a life on the other side of the world. Instead, they were tears of joy at answered prayer and fulfillment of a life-long dream.

From the time I left for Nigeria until her death 12 years later, I only got home to see her a few times, but never once when we spoke on the phone did she not at some point say, "Shari, God love you, I pray for you every day, many times a day." Every letter she sent me was filled with the same sentiments. My grandmother was upholding me on the field with her prayers. It is true that my grandmother never made it to the mission field, but I know it is also true that I would have never made it on the mission field if it were not for her faithful prayers. She never did get to be a "Joshua" on the front lines of the battle, but she was a faithful "Hur" her entire life.

Bible Study: "Hur" Story

We first find Hur mentioned in the Bible in Exodus 17:8-13 where the Israelites were fighting in the Battle of Rephidim. As per Moses' direction, Joshua and his chosen men went out to fight the Amalekites while Moses went up to the top of the hill overlooking the battlefield for the purpose of holding up the rod of God. The Bible tells us that Aaron and Hur went up with him. When they saw that Moses was getting tired, they found a rock for him to sit on. Then they

noticed that when Moses' arms lowered under the weight of the rod, the Israelites began to lose the battle. Aaron and Hur stood on either side of Moses for the duration of the battle and steadied his arms until the evening came and the Israelites were victorious.

Moses, Aaron, and Joshua are familiar characters that play important roles in Israel's history and the Bible has much to say about their lives. Hur on the other hand seems to come on the scene quietly with no backstory of his life given, although Jewish tradition says he was Miriam's son. He wasn't Israel's great leader . . . that was Moses. He wasn't Israel's great speaker . . . that was Aaron. He wasn't Israel's great general . . . that was Joshua. He wasn't one of Israel's great warriors fighting the battle on the field either. He was, however, one of Israel's faithful men who served the Lord as he could. He was the one who met the physical needs of Moses when he was tired. He was the one who used his strength to help Aaron keep Moses' hands lifted in the air during the battle. He was the one who kept a watchful, and no doubt prayerful, eye on Joshua and the warriors as they labored in the fight . . . and in so doing, he did his part and helped the Israelites win a great victory.

The only other time Hur is mentioned in the Bible apart from a few genealogies is in Exodus 24:14 where God has called Moses up to Mount Sinai to speak with him. Hur must have been a man of some wisdom and leadership because Moses leaves him, along with Aaron, in charge of all the Israelites while he is gone, and he instructs the elders to bring to them any matters that need attention. It is interesting to note that as the days progressed, and Moses tarried on the mount, Hur is not named with Aaron when the golden calf was fashioned to be worshipped. Jewish tradition says that he is was not present because he was killed by the people while trying to prevent them from carrying out this wickedness.

We know nothing more of Hur's story, but in Exodus 31 and subsequent chapters we find that Bezaleel, Hur's grandson, was called and equipped by God for the great honor of building the Tabernacle and all its intricate parts including the Ark of the Covenant. It is easy to conclude that, although the Bible doesn't give us a large narrative of Hur's life, he most likely was a man who led his family spiritually by example and helped raise up future generations for the Lord and His work.

Deuteronomy 7:9 says, "Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;"

Your faithfulness to the roles and tasks, whether great or small, that God gives you in your life makes an indelible mark on those that come after you for generations to come. Sometimes your greatest contribution to the Lord's work comes not by being a "Moses" or an "Aaron" or a "Joshua". . . but by being a "Hur."