

# Her Story Silhouette by Shari House

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## Silhouette:

Susannah Thompson was born in the suburbs of London on January 15, 1832. Her parents raised her in a godly home, and she trusted Christ as her Savior as a young girl. However, during her teen and young adult years, she grew cold and distant to the things of the Lord much like many of the youth in that day. At the age of 21 she heard Charles Spurgeon preach for the first time. He was only 19 but was already becoming quite famous in London, and large crowds would gather to hear him preach. She was not impressed . . . with his manner, with how he preached, or with how he looked. It wasn't long, though, before Susannah found herself growing spiritually under his ministry. They became friends, and their friendship blossomed into love. They were married two years later on September 20, 1856. They were devoted to one another, and their love stood the test of time through long periods of separation, illness on both their parts, and all that came with being a famous preacher. Charles found in his wife, a faithful companion, a trusted source of wisdom in spiritual matters, and a constant source of encouragement.

Susannah gave birth to twin boys before she and Charles celebrated their first anniversary. Her health was weakened with the birth, and from that point on she suffered from physical ailments that often kept her in bed. There was even one 15-year period of time when she was unable to leave the house. Charles also suffered from gout and bouts of depression that often accompany that sickness. Together though, they faced every challenge and used these difficulties in their lives to draw them closer together and closer to the Lord. Susannah was a devoted mother, and although she was often bed-ridden, she took it upon herself to train her sons in Christian doctrine and things of the Lord. Both her sons grew up to serve in Christian ministry, and both publicly recognized how much the influence of their mother's example and teaching played a role in their lives.

Susannah was not only a devoted wife and mother, but she was devoted to the Lord's work. For years she ran a charity called "The Book Fund" that helped distribute Christian resources to needy pastors and families. This work expanded to include other ministries such as "The Pastors' Aide Fund" and "The Westwood Clothing Society." She also authored several books including a biography about her husband, a book about her charity, and several devotional books. Susannah passed away in October of 1903 at the age of 71. For her entire life she remained faithful to the Lord and to His work. She was truly a woman of whom it could be said, "**She hath done what she could**"!

## *Her Story/My Story:*

After Susannah's husband had completed a book entitled, "Lectures to my Students." He asked Susannah to proof it and give him her opinion on it. After reading it, Susannah said she wished that she could put a copy of this book into the hands of every minister in England. The greater percent of ministers at that time were extremely poor and could barely keep their families clothed and fed. There was no money to be spent on books like Bible commentaries, theological books, or like this book her husband had just written that would be a powerful tool in the hands of a minister. Her husband answered her statement with, "Then why not do so: how much will you give?" Susannah stopped for a moment. Her mind had seen the need, but she hadn't considered that she could do anything about it. With her husband's simple statement, "**Then why not do so:**" she felt a call to action. She went to her "money jar" to see how much she had saved up and found out she had enough to purchase 100 copies of the book. She ordered them and sent out an inquiry to ministers to see who might like to receive a copy. She got back 200 requests. Through God's provision she was able to purchase 100 more and fulfill all the requests. And just like that, a charity called "The Book Fund" was created. Although she never solicited funds, the Lord began funneling money through the charity and once word got out, people started sending books out of their own libraries to be distributed. Susannah received scores of letters every week from needy preachers requesting her help. Her testimony was that the Lord always provided just the amount of funds needed to meet the needs that were presented. By the time Susannah passed away in 1903, she had distributed over 200,000 theological resources to impoverished pastors in England and to missionaries and pastors around the world. It would be impossible to even guess how many lives were changed, how many pastors' hearts were encouraged, how many families were strengthened, and how many churches were better equipped all because one day Susannah saw a need and decided to do what she could about it.

I had an "**And so?**" experience a couple years ago. I was continually burdened about what could be done for two young orphan girls that had been faithfully attending our church in Hua Hin for several years. Once I opened myself up to the idea that the burden I had for these two girls might be God's call to action for me, the Lord led me to start the "Heavenly Treasures Orphan Project." What started out as trying to provide funds for the girls' daily meals, school fees, school uniforms, transportation to and from school, clothes, etc. has grown into something much more. The Lord has brought wonderful, faithful sponsors and donors that support the orphan project, and for the past two years we have been able to meet the needs not only of these two girls, but this year we began taking on other orphan children. Donations have also been distributed to needy families who have a particular need, and this year we were able to sponsor 16 children to go to Bible English Camp. This month without any solicitation, the Lord miraculously provided the funds needed to purchase 51 mattresses, 51 sheet sets, 51 comforters, and 51 pillows to be given to 51 children who are Karen and Burmese refugees that live in a Christian orphanage located about 40 minutes from our ministry. I am amazed at what the Lord is doing and how He has expanded this little project that he burdened my heart with. What a wonderful blessing it is to be the one who gets to "stand in the gap." I can't wait to see what the future holds for the "Heavenly Treasures Orphan Project."

# Bible Study: And So?

Maybe one day you saw a need and you thought, "Someone should do something about that." Maybe the next time that need came across your path you thought, "Someone should do something about that. They could do this or that." Maybe as this need continued to cross your path and take root in your mind, you thought, "Someone should do something about that. They could do this or that. Maybe so-and-so would be the one to do it." Many times this is where our thoughts get stuck. . . playing on a loop.

I remember hearing someone say once, "When God calls something to your attention, He is calling you to action." I wonder if every time the Lord laid something on our hearts and we viewed it as a call to action, how much more could be accomplished for Him.

I always love reading the beginning of King Saul's life. I'm sure on the day Saul left his home to go look for his father's missing donkeys, he never imagined he'd return home as the chosen king of Israel. Here are some things we can learn from this part of Saul's story that would serve us well to remember when our "And so?" times come.

## 3 Character Traits we see in Saul

### 1. Saul was **responsible**.

- [1 Samuel 9:3](#) "And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses."
- Saul was being faithful and was fulfilling his current responsibility.
- The Lord rarely uses someone to do something great who isn't already being faithful in their current responsibility no matter how small it might be.

### 2. Saul was **tenacious**.

- [1 Samuel 9:4](#) "And he passed through mount Ephraim . . . the land of Shalisha . . . the land of Shalim . . . the land of the Benjamites . . . the land of Zuph . . ."
- Saul went above and beyond to try to carry out his current responsibility.
- Tenacity is a common trait found in people that the Lord calls upon to do a work for Him.

### 3. Saul was **humble**.

- [1 Samuel 9:21](#) "And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? And my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Wherefore then speakest thou so to me?"
- Saul was humble and found nothing in himself or his background that would warrant calling on him to fulfill such a great responsibility.
- A humble person is much more useable in a great work, but we must be careful to not use a feeling of "I don't think God could possibly use me for such a great task" as an excuse to not do it.

### 3 Things God did to show His stamp of approval on the matter

#### 1. God put the purpose in Saul's heart.

- I Samuel 10:9a "And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart . . ."
- To be the king of Israel had never entered Saul's mind before Samuel told him of God's plan.
- The Bible says God changed his heart on this matter. I don't know if that means he put a new desire in his heart to be the king or if it meant that God changed his doubt that he could do it to a sense that he could with God's help accomplish the goal, or both. I'm not sure, but whatever work it was that God did in Saul's heart, it was the beginning of Saul fulfilling God's purpose.

#### 2. God confirmed to Saul that this was His desire in Saul's life, and He was with him.

- I Samuel 10:7 "And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee."
- I Samuel 10:2-6 tells us of three things that would happen as Saul returned home that were signs from God to him that He was with Saul in order to confirm this "assignment" in Saul's heart and mind.
- Your confirmation might not come as clearly as Saul's was laid out, but the Lord will confirm the matter in some way if in fact He is in it.

#### 3. God gave Saul a band of men.

- I Samuel 10:26 "And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched."
- I love that God was not asking Saul to do this thing on his own. Of course, the Lord was going to be with him, but God also saw fit to give Saul a "band of men" whose hearts were knit with his.
- Rest assured that once God has called you into action, placed a desire and confirmed it in your heart, and you have stepped out in faith to do the task the Lord has put before you, God will give you a "band of men" to help you if you need them.

### 1 Thing we need to emulate

#### 1. Don't listen to the "Naysayers."

- I Samuel 10:27 "But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace."
- Saul didn't try to defend himself or this action that God had called him to.
- There will always be doubters – people who think that the task doesn't need to be done or that someone else could do it better.
- Don't give ear to the naysayers . . . even when that naysayer is you.

Next time the Lord calls something to your attention and asks you "And so?" consider answering with, "I'll do it."