

# Her Story Silhouette by Shari House

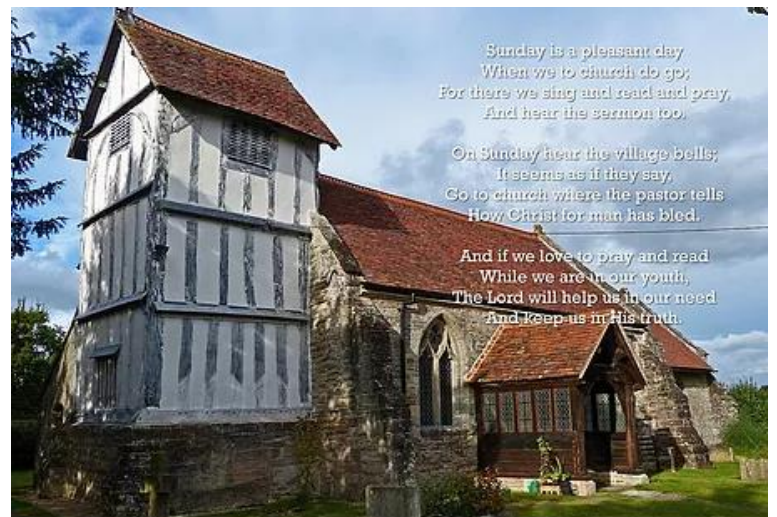
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## Silhouette:

Frances Havergal was born on December 14, 1836, in Worcestershire, England. She was one of six children born to the famous William Havergal who was a clergyman in the Church of England, an accomplished musician, and an avid hymn writer. Her parents led by example and greatly impressed upon her two things - the need to know Jesus Christ personally and the need to share Him with others. Of her parents, Frances said, *"Beside the rich chords and tuneful songs in our home, there were wise and holy influences. Our parents' prayers and their fine example for living which they gave us were the keynotes of our childhood."*

By the age of four she was able to read the Bible with comprehension and by the age of seven she had begun writing down her thoughts in poem form. Her mother passed away when she was eleven years old, and at the age of thirteen, Frances started attending boarding school. One of her greatest influences during this time in her life was a devout Christian headmistress named Mrs. Teed, who earnestly challenged her charges to receive Christ as their Savior. It was here Frances made her salvation decision and took a strong stand for Christ. She made it a matter of priority to pray at least three times a day:



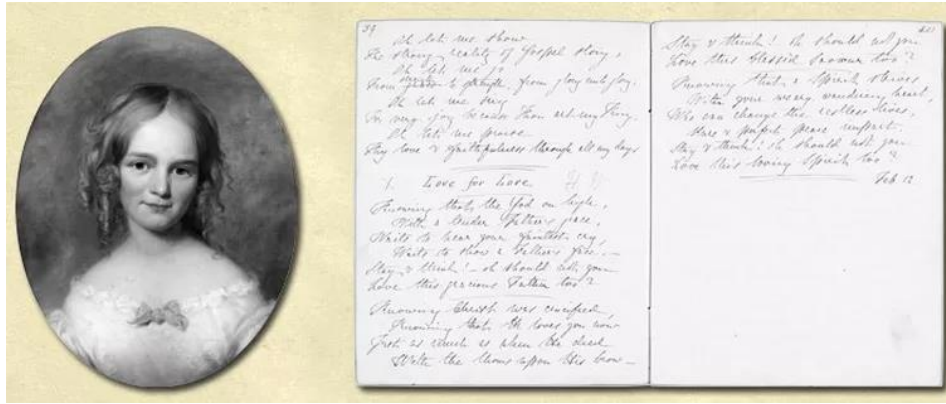
St. Nicholas Anglican Church, Worcestershire, England - The church Frances was attending as a young child when she wrote this poem.

MORNING PRAYER - watchfulness, guard over temper, consistency, faithfulness to opportunities, for the Holy Spirit, for a vivid love to Christ.

MIDDAY PRAYER - earnestness of spirit in desire, in prayer, and in all work, faith, hope, love

EVENING PRAYER - forgiveness, to see my sinfulness in its true light, growth in grace, against morning sleepiness as hindrance to time of prayer.

Frances was quite intelligent and studied languages and literature from different countries. She knew Hebrew and Greek well enough to read the Scriptures in their original texts, and she was also fluent in German and French. She loved to study the Bible and made sure to read it every morning and evening. She memorized copious amounts of Scripture including all the Psalms, Isaiah, the Minor Prophets, the Gospels, the Epistles, and the Book of Revelation. It is this deep well of her knowledge of the Scriptures and her close personal walk with the Lord that she drew from for her writings.



Writing was as natural as breathing to her, and she never forced a poem to appear. At one moment she would not have a single thought of writing and then all of a sudden, the thoughts running through her head seemed to couple themselves together into beautiful poetry. She would then pray over each line to make sure she was writing it just as the Lord would have her do. In her own words, *"Writing is praying with me, for I never seem to write even a verse by myself, and feel like a little child writing; you know how a child would look up at every sentence and say, 'And what shall I say next?' That is just what I do; I ask that at every line He would give me, not merely thoughts and power, but also every word, even the very rhymes."* She used this outlet to express her commitment to Christ and her desire to be completely consecrated in service to Him. It was important to her that her poems and hymns held doctrinal truth, and **she made sure that the focus of her writings was Christ and His salvation**. Besides poems and hymns, she wrote devotional books, tracts, and articles on spiritual self-discipline like "12 Reasons for Attending Church on a Wet Sunday." Many of her poems were published on ornamental cards, and other of her writings were published as leaflets or compiled into books.



Like her father, she was a gifted pianist and had a beautiful singing voice. She was in demand as a concert soloist, often being called upon to sing and play for audiences of all sizes from small dinner parties in London to larger audiences at cathedrals in France. Her fame grew in England, Germany, France, and beyond, and the Lord broadened her influence with her writing and musical talents. Hundreds consulted her personally and by mail expressing their appreciation for her poems and hymns that brought them the hope of salvation and comforted their hearts in trials. Once when Frances was only 19 and visiting a school in Ireland, a young student commented *"...there must be the music of God's own love in that fair singer's heart. There was **joy in her face, joy in her words, and joy in her ways.** And the secret cry went up, 'Lord, teach me, even me, to know and love Thee, too.'"*

Frances was bold not only in her writing and singing but also in her conversations which ranged from speaking to Catholic priests to school girls to someone she might pass on the street. "She used many occasions to lead travelers, tourists, and invalids to Christ through her singing and her warm conversation." It was her greatest desire to see others have a sure salvation, and she penned these words,

Lord, speak to me that I may speak  
In living echoes of Thy tone  
As thou hast sought, so let me seek  
Thine erring children lost and lone.

At different times she taught Sunday school, gave singing lessons, and trained choirs including the choir at the Young Women's Christian Association in Liverpool and the choir at the St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Some of her famous hymns that we still use in our hymnal today are "I Gave My life for Thee," "The Half Has Never Been Told," "Truehearted, Wholehearted, Faithful and Loyal," "Who is on the Lord's Side," "Like a River Glorious," and "Take My Life and Let It Be."

Frances suffered with poor health most of her life, and died quite suddenly on June 3, 1879, at the age of 42. In that moment she met her Savior face to face - the One that she had loved and served and used her talents for throughout her entire life. She was truly a woman of whom it could be said, **"She hath done what she could."**

## Her Story/My Story:

The highest praise I believe we can give Frances is that she used her talents well.

She used her talents **to speak the Truth to the hearts of her listeners.** One time she was asked to sing for a French Catholic audience, and she sang her own hymn called "Only for Thee." The tune was so well received she decided to write a French version for them that she re-titled "Only by Thee" and made sure the lyrics spoke clearly of salvation by grace alone so that the Roman Catholic audience could hear the plain truth of the Gospel.

She used her talents **to inspire young people**. One young Irish school girl commented, "...*We were in a great state of delight at the thought of seeing 'the little English lady.'* In a few seconds Miss Frances, caroling like a bird, flashed into the room!...*like a burst of sunshine, like a hillside breeze, and stood before us...her eyes dancing and her great sweet voice ringing through the room. I sat perfectly spellbound as she sang chant and hymn with marvelous sweetness.*"

She used her talents **to express her consecrated life to the Lord**. The story behind "Take My Life and Let It Be" in Frances' own words: "*There were ten persons in the house, some unconverted and long prayed for; some converted, but not rejoicing Christians. He gave me the prayer: 'Lord give me all in this house!' And He just did. Before I left the house every one had got a blessing. The last night of my visit I was too happy to sleep, and passed most of the night in praise and renewal of my own consecration, and these little couplets formed themselves and chimed in my heart one after another, till they finished with 'Ever, ONLY, ALL for Thee!'"*

**She used her talents to serve the Lord well, and in so doing, she challenges all those who have ever read one of her poems or sung one of her hymns to do the same with their talents.**

As for me, I had many aspirations of what I wanted to do with my life. My one great desire as a teenager was to be a fashion designer in New York City. As I got older I decided my love for organizing parties and special events would make me a great wedding planner. While in Bible college I was challenged by different teachers and leaders to use my talents in Christ's service instead of for myself. Over the years in ministry I have had many opportunities to sew costumes, curtains, and puppets; plan weddings, special events, and conferences; and organize and start different ministries. I'm not sure that I would be considered very talented in any of these areas, but I praise the Lord for giving me the opportunity to do the things I love for His service.

## **Study:** A Talent Well Used

We find in Matthew 25:14-28 the parable of the talents. We all know that this parable is speaking of a...

**tal·ent** ('talənt) – n. a weight and unit of currency, used especially by the ancient Romans and Greeks,

but the truth in the parable is also applicable to the word...

**tal·ent** ('talənt) – n. natural aptitude or skill.

We see in this parable that the lord or master gave each of his three servants a quantity of talents. He left for a period of time with the understanding that He would return someday. He expected them to be wise with the talents. When the lord returned he wanted to know what had become of the talents he had given them. The first two who used their talents wisely both received the same praise "**Well done, good and faithful servant;**" and they were both rewarded equally, "**thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.**" The last one, however, who hid his talent and did nothing with it disappointed his lord, was rebuked, had his talent stripped from him, and was given no reward.

It is always easy for us to look at the lives of others and see the talents they seem to have and compare them to the abilities or lack thereof that we have in our own lives. Like in the parable, God doesn't judge according to who got the most talents, but according to how the talents were used that were given. Whether you sing beautifully or are a great teacher, whether you are a fantastic cook or eloquent author, whether you work well with children or you have a knack at fixing things, **all that matters is that the talent you have been given is used wisely for the Lord.**

### Here are 4 "P's" that might be of help in using your talents wisely:

1. **Purpose** – Pinpoint what your talent(s) might be and see how you can use them to further the Gospel, grow the body of Christ, and bring honor and glory to God. Sometimes it is helpful to ask others what they think your talent is. You might have a hidden talent you don't even recognize because it just comes naturally to you.
2. **Passion** – Study the lives of people who have used this same talent for the Lord to encourage yourself, gain wisdom, and challenge yourself.
3. **Practice** – Make the time to perfect your talent. Start by setting aside 15 minutes a day or maybe 1 hour a week to improve yourself in this area. An idea might be to research articles and books or counsel with someone who has been able to use this talent effectively to serve Christ.
4. **Perform** – Set aside time each week to use your talent for the Lord. Schedule it. If it isn't done on purpose, your talent won't be used to its full potential.

Concerning her talents, it can be said of Frances Havergal that she was prepared to use her talents; she practiced to perfect her talents; and she was purposeful, persuasive, and passionate with her talents. And . . . the result of her submitting and using her talents for the Lord's service resulted in countless hymns and literary works that are still priceless nearly 200 years later.