

## Her Story Silhouette by Shari House

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### Silhouette:

Emma Revell was born in London, England on July 5, 1843\*. In 1849 at the age of six\* her family emigrated to America and settled in Chicago. She was raised in the Baptist church and began teaching Sunday school at the age of 15. She was quite well-educated and of a serious nature, but she had a heart that loved people, and at the age of 17 she became a teacher in the public school. Emma first met her future husband, Dwight L. Moody, when at the age of 15 she decided to take a class at a mission school where he was working. She was drawn to this magnetic individual, and although a young man himself, Dwight was already an outstanding businessman who was well-known in the community. She began volunteering in his Congregational evangelical organization, and they eventually started dating. They shared a deep passion for showing God's love and kindness to others. When she was 17, she agreed to Dwight's proposal of marriage although he had made the life-altering decision to leave the business world behind and focus on lost souls and the cause for Christ. Emma's strong faith aided her decision to submit to a life of unsalaried missionary work as her future husband had determined to refuse all offers of salary, and instead they chose to live by faith.

They were married in 1862 when Emma was 19 years old and Dwight was 25 years old. After they were married, they set up house in Chicago where their ministry had great success. Their daughter, Emma, was born in 1864 and their first son, William, was born in 1869. By the early 1870's Dwight had become a popular evangelist and was in quite high demand. Emma accompanied him for the most part and his speaking engagements took them throughout the country and overseas. She was a tremendous help to her husband and was willing to not have a permanent home for many years. They happened to be at their house the night of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. They lost everything as they watched their house, their church, and their city burn to the ground. Emma was separated from her two children who had been whisked away in a neighbor's carriage in hopes of fleeing the fire. The events of the night and the harrowing experience of not knowing for 24 hours if her children had made it out safely caused her hair to turn white never to regain its color.

Although her husband kept a watchful eye on the rebuilding of the ministry in Chicago, their family never lived there again. Instead they returned to Northfield, Massachusetts which was Dwight's birthplace. They began a ministry there and it grew quickly. Emma loved teaching in the schools they established - the first one called Northfield School\* for girls and the second one called Mount Hermon School for boys. Their third child, Paul, was

born in 1879. During the next 20 years, they established the Northfield Summer Conferences, a publishing house, and the Colportage Library. In Chicago, they established the Chicago Evangelization Society, Moody Church, Moody Press, and Moody Bible Institute.

It has been estimated that Dwight L. Moody traveled more than one million miles in his evangelistic endeavors, and he addressed more than 100 million people during his lifetime. In all that he accomplished, his wife faithfully assisted him, mostly behind the scenes. Her poise and reserved nature complemented his flamboyant, and at times in his early ministry, brash manner making them a powerful force that the Lord used greatly. She was his solid rock and Dwight relied heavily on Emma's good judgment, knowledge of the Scriptures, and deep devotion to the Lord for strength and guidance for this great cause to which God had called them.

Dwight received letters daily from around the world that revealed tragedies, had confessions of guilt, or dealt with other various problems that called for spiritual counsel, compassion, and sometimes admonition. Dwight entrusted Emma with the great task of answering most all of his correspondence. She also handled all of the family finances, the running of the household, and the hosting of the hundreds of guests that made their way through the seemingly revolving door at the Moody household.



Emma Moody with her family in 1901. Back row: Mrs. Moody with Constance and Will Moody. Front Row: A. P. and Emma Moody Fitt, Emma IV; Mary, May Whittle Moody, Paul Moody

Throughout their entire ministry Dwight and Emma were both devoted to their children and worked hard at keeping their children's hearts. All three answered God's call to the ministry. They were devoted to each other as well, and it is said of them that there was never such a happy couple. Emma died on October 10, 1903, at the age of 61, four short years after her husband's death. Dwight often acknowledged that he could not have accomplished his ministry without the quiet strength of his beloved wife. A family member testified, "No man ever paid greater homage to his wife than Mr. Moody. In every way he deferred to her." Mr. Ira Sankey said of Emma, "One of the greatest influences of his [D.L. Moody] life came from his wife. She has been the break upon an impetuous nature, and she more than any other living person is responsible for his success." She was truly a woman of whom it could be said, "**She hath done what she could**"!

## Her Story/My Story:

During their 37 years of marriage and ministry, their home was open to anyone. The great Northfield Conferences that represented thousands of people from every nation on earth and sixty-two summers of meetings began in Emma's front parlor. She received all who came to her doorstep. A prisoner just released from jail was as welcome and an earnest Christian friend. Emma entertained neighbors, travelers from afar, college students, poor street urchins, soldiers, earls, dukes, and Governor Generals alike. She took care of meals for whoever was there whether it be one guest or a couple dozen and whether they were staying for just an hour or for several nights. She welcomed all with open arms and used the opportunity the Lord gave her to make a difference in each person's life.

In the months before her death she had been gravely ill and unable to host as in times past. She was determined to resume her monthly Sunday school class in the fall of 1903. The girls met for their September class in her home to make it easier for her. It thrilled her to have them in her home and have the opportunity to influence their lives. She died before their next class in October, but she left behind her outline of notes that she had prepared to teach on. Her last point was "He has sanctified childhood, motherhood, and the home." [Emma used her home to serve her Lord.](#)

As a missionary between deputation and furlough, you can imagine I have many stories I could tell about being the guest in someone's home. I remember once being given an entire wing of a house to myself that included my own private bathroom, pool, exercise room, and TV lounge area that was stocked with goodies. I didn't sleep much that night because I just wanted to take full advantage of everything. I also remember another night I didn't get much sleep. It was at a home I stayed in where I was asked to sleep in a makeshift bed that was set up in the narrow hallway where the family, including the husband, had to crawl across the bed to get to the kitchen and living room. Needless to say, I slept with one eye opened that night, and my pajamas stayed in the suitcase.

The Lord has always graciously provided me lovely homes that are conducive to entertaining. I always make sure to have at least one room set up for guests at all times. I have had the privilege of hosting friends, family, and strangers. I remember one night my ministry partner, Amber, and I were travelling back from a church service in Bangkok. We had traveled the three hours home and it was quite dark by the time we reached our town. We happened to pass by a woman walking with her small child on a dark road. She was crying and seemed in distress. We stopped the car to see if we could give her a ride since it wasn't safe for her to be walking at that time of night on that road by herself. The story came out of her sick child, her alcoholic, abusive husband, and how he had kicked her out without any money. We decided we couldn't leave her there, and so we brought her and the child to my house. They slept on a comfy mattress with clean sheets, and I gave them some food, something to drink, and some medicine. In the morning one of my Thai friends gave her the plan of salvation, and she accepted Jesus as her Savior. She then asked me to take her to where she worked as a migrant worker at a construction site not too far from my home. Shortly after that her work gang moved on to another city, and I've never seen her again. I praise the Lord for the opportunity He gave me to meet her and to help meet not only her immediate need at that moment, but also her eternal need.

# Bible Study: Company's Coming

Do the words "company's coming!" fill you with delight or fright? Are you the first to volunteer when visitors need a place to eat or stay or do you run away?

The Bible teaches us in . . .

- Hebrews 13:1-2 "*Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*"
- I Peter 4:9 "*Use hospitality one to another without grudging.*"
- Titus 1 lists "*lover of hospitality*" as one of the attributes of a bishop
- Romans 12:13 says every Christian should be "*...given to hospitality.*"

There are many examples in the Bible of people showing hospitality to others:

- Martha, Mary, and Lazarus welcomed Jesus and His disciples into their home to rest and rejuvenate
- The jailer took Paul and Silas to his home to dress their wounds.
- Lydia gave Paul, Silas, and Luke a place to stay for a time while they were doing missionary work in her town.
- Abraham and Sarah who entertained three strangers.
- Gaius opened his home up to the "whole church" in perilous times
- The Shunamite woman used her home to minister to Elisha's needs.

We can learn 6 things about being hospitable from 2 Kings 4 and the Shunamite woman, who the Lord calls a "great woman."

(vs. 8) - *And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.*

1. She was **persuasive** – the Bible uses the word "constrained." She invited Elisha into her home for the purpose of meeting his needs that day which was giving him something to eat. It doesn't say she killed the fatted calf or prepared for him a feast. She served him a simple meal.

2. She was **welcoming** - Every time Elisha passed by their house, he was welcome to come and take a meal.

(vs. 9) - *And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually.*

3. She was **perceptive** – She perceived that Elisha was a holy man. She was kind to Elisha before she knew he was a person of importance.

(vs. 10) - *Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.*

4. She was **discerning** – She took note of Elisha's situation and considered what she could do to be a help to him.

5. She was **thoughtful** – She prepared a room with the things she thought he needed – a bed, table, stool, and candlestick.

(vs. 13) - *And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people.*

6. She was **unexpected** – She did not do all of this for her guest in order to receive something in return.

Consider using your home today to serve the Lord. Here are some possibilities:

- Invite some friends over for a time of prayer and fellowship.
- Invite a visitor or new church family to your house for a meal after a service.
- Invite a travelling missionary or speaker to stay in your guest room when they are travelling through town.
- Offer to babysit your pastor's children so they can have a date night.
- Offer to host a youth activity.

**Your home doesn't have to be a palace to be used by the Lord, it just has to have a hostess whose heart is open to accepting people into it for the purpose of showing them God's love.**

### **3 Practical tips for unexpected guests**

1. Try to keep the main bathroom and living/entertaining area of your home tidy at all times, but if a guest should find your house a little otherwise, don't apologize profusely for it. Making a big deal of it will only make your unexpected guest feel like they are bothering you and they should leave.
2. If your guests end up staying for a meal, don't worry if you don't have the food on hand to make a lavish meal. A simple meal served with love has a much more lasting effect than a 4-course meal designed to impress.
3. Keep something on hand in the cupboard you can mix up quickly for a sweet treat like a box of brownies or a frozen roll of cookie dough. Another idea would be to make a variety of muffins up ahead of time and freeze them. When someone comes unexpectedly, just pull a few out and pop them in the microwave.

**10 Elements of a great guest room** - If at all possible give your guest their own room.

1. Clean and tidy room
2. Clean towels, sheets, and blankets
3. At least 2 pillows so the extra one can be used for reading in bed. (I have a set of thick pillows and thin pillows I use to accommodate those who have different preferences)
4. A small or dim light near the bed
5. A mirror (full length if possible)
6. A box of tissues
7. A trash can
8. An electrical outlet near the bed for charging electronic devices and one near the mirror for getting ready. (If an outlet isn't available in either of these places, provide an extension cord.)
9. A clock
10. Space in the closet/place to hang clothes and extra hangers

**10 Extra things to really make a guest feel comfortable**

1. A chair that can be used for reading, studying, getting dressed, etc.
2. A small gift bag of goodies and snacks to tide them over between meals
3. A small vase of flowers
4. A private bathroom stocked with toiletries
5. An information card with Wi-Fi code, alarm code, instructions for using the washer/dryer, local emergency numbers, etc.
6. Some good reading books or magazines
7. A place to hang towels
8. A basket for dirty laundry
9. Travel & info tips about local attractions
10. Candle with lighter/matches or flashlight in case of power outage

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\* Some accounts list her birth year as 1842.

\* Some accounts list her age as 7 instead of 6 for when the family emigrated depending on which birth year they use.

\* Northfield School for Girls and Mount Hermon school for Boys is now one school called Northfield Mount Hermon or NMH.

Resources: A Heavenly Destiny: The Life Story of Mrs. D.L. Moody, Emma Moody Powell, Moody Press, 1943