

wise traveller



happiness

**wise traveller**

# happiness

meditations for life's journey



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# Introduction

Many of us want a more spiritually satisfying life. This book is about catching hold of those moments of divine intensity that come our way in the midst of everyday living. As David Adam, a writer who draws on the inspiration of the ancient Celts, puts it, 'We need to walk with awe and wonder, we need to be aware of the deep mystery and power that flows through all things. ... We need to discover again that there is an adventure to be lived in our world, a personal discovery to be made of the presence and the life that dances in all things.' And so this book is also about celebrating life as a journey, one which we 'walk with awe and wonder', recognising that there is something about the travelling, as well as the arriving, that should be treasured.

It's not always a popular theme, but by way of contrast to the hedonism of modern life is the view that worthwhile things take time, that process is important, and that taking the long way round cultivates traditional benefits such as patience and perseverance. This is what the journey can do for us. As we walk in solitude or in company we discover the power of the journey to prepare us, resource us and change us in

ways that enhance our appreciation of the significant ‘arrival’ moments in our lives. Sure, it might be easier to drive straight to the packaged tourist experience, but the journey via the coastal path will have many compensations: the changing light on the ocean; the colour and contours of the cliffs; the seabird colonies perched precariously; the white sand draped like a scarf around the bay.

The *Wise Traveller* series offers wisdom for the journey; wisdom drawn from the spiritual classics of the Christian tradition alongside original reflections – stories, poems and meditations – that engage with the spiritual, emotional and, sometimes, brutal realities of life. As Proverbs 24:3,4 (TNIV) says: ‘By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.’

This book has been written and compiled by people who would identify themselves as Christian in the broadest understanding of that term. These are people who have wrestled with what it means to live fully and who, time and time again, have turned to the Bible to find the wisdom, inspiration and guidance they need to carry

on. At the back of the book you'll find notes that offer suggestions for further reading, showing where ideas and themes explored in the book originate in these ancient biblical writings that the Christian tradition has always recognised as sacred and God-inspired.

For many of us, seeking deeper fulfilment in life means increasing our sense of peace. This book offers opportunities to nurture stillness through contemplation. As you read, you may find it helpful to pause and reflect on your thoughts and feelings using the 'litany' or devotional pattern provided, a line of which appears on the first page of each chapter, accompanied by a woodblock-style illustration for those of us who find art a stimulus to meditation. The litany is inspired by the famous Celtic prayer, 'St Patrick's Breastplate', whose author, understanding Jesus to be the Son of God, calls upon him to be his companion and friend on each step of the journey:

Christ be with me, Christ within me,  
Christ behind me, Christ before me,  
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,  
Christ to comfort and restore me.  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,

Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,  
Christ in hearts of all that love me,  
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

Whatever your spiritual convictions and hopes, I hope  
this collection blesses you on life's journey.

## **Phil Andrews**

Series Editor

Other titles available  
in the *Wise Traveller* series:

*Loss*

*Relationships*

Yet to be published:

*Forgiveness*

*Growing*

*Hope*



# Adventurer



*I see the path ahead of me...*

**W**hen I plan adventures I've always been drawn North – over the seas and far away. Recently I spent some time in Helsinki, the farthest North I've ever been. The winter midday temperatures are regularly -20 °C and the roads and pavements are ice rinks. Drivers have to skid, pulling away from stops and taking corners with finely controlled wheel spins. Chaos and control are delicately balanced.

My natural inclination is that my future happiness depends on me being tightly in control of important choices, but often I get that wrong. I overestimate the effect that good and bad events will have on my happiness. Real adventures, the ones infused with a deeper happiness, demand a willingness to let go and trust.

There are stories of Celtic monks putting their trust in the divine. Imagine getting into a coracle and trusting that God would bring you to a safe harbour. That is an extreme example, but it illustrates for me the exciting possibility that there is a plan for me if only I would ease up a little on the steering wheel and try to find out what it is.

*Bruce Stanley*

It's tempting, Lord,  
to stay at home  
when faced with hard decisions.  
To turn my back,  
stay rooted in the soil of what I know  
rather than look uncertainty right in the face,  
although I think uncertainty has many faces  
– or none – I'm not quite sure.

The world out there can seem so threatening,  
the changes rapid, unexpected.  
A frightened fledgling,  
I'd rather nest in what I know,  
than risk my wings in flight.  
The nest is warm and undemanding  
but its safety is unreal  
and soon outgrown,  
security as insubstantial

as the air I'm frightened of.  
And staying at home  
would breed a poverty of spirit  
more dangerous than the journey.  
Help me to find the courage, Lord,  
to launch out into space  
wherever you may lead.  
To widen my horizons,  
soar with confidence,  
explore the possibilities  
of life and love with you.  
Take to the air on wings of faith  
and fly.

*Eddie Askew*

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## meditations for life's journey

We all want to be happy, but lasting fulfilment often eludes us. How do we know what to aim for? Is happiness really possible or desirable?

Life is not neat or painless, but is instead stuffed full of meaning, mystery, beauty and sacred encounters; all shaped by our relationships with people, places, ideas and stories. The *Wise Traveller* series brings original reflections together with spiritual writings from across history to offer pathways and turning points for those seeking a more authentic way of living.

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