

wise traveller



relationships

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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:

Happiness

Loss

Yet to be published:

Forgiveness

Growing

Hope



Lover



I see the path ahead of me...

Love is patient... She sips her coffee and tries to focus on the pages of her novel, wondering when the phone will ring. She had promised to give him time to forgive her, so after a moment of staring intently at the receiver she returns to her book...

Love is patient... For the second time that week, they sit slumped together on the sofa, listening to late-night radio and watching the clock. As the minutes turn into hours, they try to breathe calmly and wonder what time their son will finally return home...

Love is patient... Addressing the envelope, she pauses fondly to remember the lifelong friend now many miles away. With her heart full of all the years they have shared, she picks up her pen and begins another letter...

Love is patient... As his wife slowly begins to lift her aching body from the chair, he pretends to look out of the window at the daffodils. Then, with perfect timing, he silently leans forward and with a familiar and practised gesture, offers her his arm and smiles...

Love is patient...

Emma Sergeant

If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy
but don't love, I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty
gate.

If I speak God's Word with power, revealing all his
mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I
have faith that says to a mountain, 'Jump', and it jumps,
but I don't love, I'm nothing.

If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to
the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've
gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe,
and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love.

Love never gives up.
Love cares more for others than for self.
Love doesn't want what it doesn't have.
Love doesn't strut,
Doesn't have a swelled head,
Doesn't force itself on others,
Isn't always 'me first',
Doesn't fly off the handle,
Doesn't keep score of the sins of others,
Doesn't revel when others grovel,
Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth,
Puts up with anything,

Trusts God always,
Always looks for the best,
Never looks back,
But keeps going to the end.

Love never dies. Inspired speech will be over some day; praying in tongues will end; understanding will reach its limit. We know only a portion of the truth, and what we say about God is always incomplete. But when the Complete arrives, our incompletes will be canceled.

When I was an infant at my mother's breast, I gurgled and cooed like any infant. When I grew up, I left those infant ways for good.

We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us!

But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love.

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 (The Bible, The Message version)

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meditations for life's journey

For good or bad, our lives are shaped by our relationships with other people. How can we make the most of our encounters, both with those who inspire us and those we find difficult?

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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