



## Happy Endings

Our life creates a story. Each stage of our life adds a new chapter to the story. Recently, I spent a couple of nights with two of my sisters reflecting on our life stories and adding to them as we shared time together, talking, eating, watching movies, laughing, and reminiscing. A theme of endings and beginnings woke me in the night. Let's reflect on what our life story has to do with happy endings.

Who doesn't love a happy ending? Wouldn't it be great if all stories ended that way? Yet, what could be further from reality in this world? Clearly, not every story has a happy, walk away smiling, ending. The truth is for many people happiness is elusive. For some there is pain and struggle from the beginning, whether physical or emotional the pain and struggle many people face as their story unfolds is hard to imagine and never fully understood.

During the holiday season we naturally reflect back on our life story, our history, our roots, our traditions and we try to fit our life events into their proper place. Not all memories bring a smile to our face and many we wish were not part of our story. These memories make it hard to withstand the pressure around the holidays; to be happy, to spend frivolously, and to put on an artificial smile. Holiday pressure is something we have allowed into our lives. Over the years it seems the celebration of the Christmas story has turned into a commercialized holiday which requires elaborate lighting and lots of food and entertaining.

The real story of Christmas had nothing to do with lavish decorations or big dinner parties. The Christmas story is about the birth of a savior, in a stable with animals and a bright star that led others to this glorious event. It is the beginning of a happy ending. We read in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life".

Even Jesus' life was filled with turmoil and death, but it has a happy ending: resurrection and new life. This is the story of Christmas joy. The happy ending we are all invited to share. Our stories reflect the faith we have in the true Christmas story.

There is a song written by Shawn and Dennis Morgan, titled, "In the Time That You Gave Me". It has been a powerful tool for me as I reflect on my own life story and as I decide what I might want to write into the next chapters of my life. The words challenge me; they challenge us, to consider our contributions to happy endings in the life stories of others.

As the story unfolds may we fulfill our purpose in life by renewing the compassion of Christ toward one another. Let us contribute in a positive way to the greater good in the world. Now that is what I call a happy ending!

### Questions to ponder:

- What is my life story?
- How have I made someone else's life a bit easier?
- What is God calling me to do with my life?

*Merry Christmas*

Tammy Koenecke, RN, BSN, MASL  
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### In the Time That You Gave Me

by Shawn and Dennis Morgan

In the time that you gave me, did I give all I could give  
Did I love all I could love, did I live all I could live  
Was my faith in your grace strong enough to save me  
Did I do all I could do in the time that you gave me

In the time that you gave me did I face the devil down  
Did I make him turn away every time I stood my ground  
If today is the day you should decide to take me  
Did I do all I could do in the time that you gave me

Oh and I'll never know 'til it's over  
But I wanna fly on your shoulders  
Might have strayed from the path  
I might have gone a little crazy  
I like to think I did you proud in the time that you gave me

Oh and I'll never know 'til it's over  
But I wanna fly on your shoulders  
Might have strayed from the path  
I might have gone a little crazy  
I like to think I did you proud in the time that you gave me

And as the hourglass empties, no it won't even phase me  
If I did all I could do in the time that you gave me

If I did all I could do in the time that you gave me