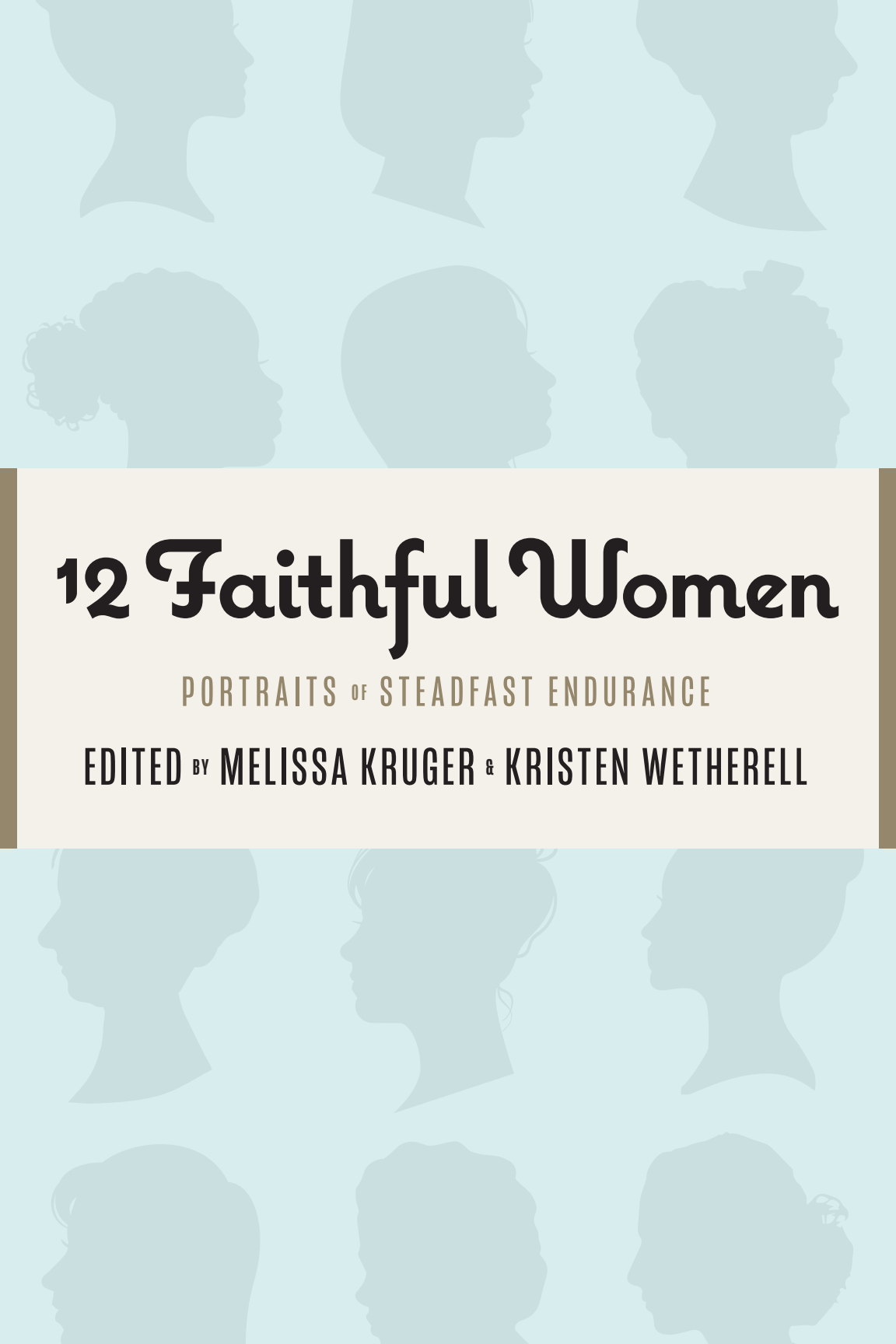


12 Faithful Women

PORTRAITS OF STEADFAST ENDURANCE

EDITED BY MELISSA KRUGER & KRISTEN WETHERELL

12 Faithful Women

PORTRAITS OF STEADFAST ENDURANCE

EDITED BY MELISSA KRUGER & KRISTEN WETHERELL

12 Faithful Women: Portraits of Steadfast Endurance
Copyright © 2020 by The Gospel Coalition

Published by The Gospel Coalition

The Gospel Coalition
P.O. Box 170346
Austin, Texas 78717

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher, except as provided for by USA copyright law.

Cover design: Gabriel Reyes-Ordeix
Typesetting: Ryan Leichty

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

ISBN:
978-1-7334585-2-8 (paperback)
978-1-7334585-3-5 (ebook)
978-1-7334585-4-2 (kindle)

Printed in the United States of America

Ever since I was a little girl, my heart has been warmed and my faith fueled by biographies of faithful men and women of God. The portraits of godly women found in this collection will do the same for you. In each challenge and trial these women faced, Christ proved himself to be steadfast and sufficient. The courage and compassion they exhibited in their times are no less needed in ours. May their stories inspire us to reflect his majestic gospel and grace to our world.

NANCY DEMOSS WOLGEMUTH, founder and Bible teacher of *Revive Our Hearts* and author of *Adorned: Living Out the Beauty of the Gospel Together*

If you feel weary or worn, you don't need a change in circumstance; you need the testimony of God's faithfulness in the lives of believers who have persevered. *12 Faithful Women* points us to our faithful God, and in so doing, encourages our hearts to remain steadfast, right where we are.

RUTH CHOU SIMONS, founder of GraceLaced.com and best-selling author of *Beholding and Becoming* and *Foundations*

Those who profess faith in Jesus Christ are adopted into a family—a family that has spanned more than 2,000 years. It falls to each of us to get to know the members of our new family. Through this book,

we can get to know and appreciate the unique contributions of 12 faithful women—12 faithful sisters in Christ.

> TIM CHALLIES, blogger at challies.com and author of *Epic: An Around-the-World Journey through Christian History* and *Devoted: Great Men and Their Godly Moms*

Stories! Stories of women who have served Christ faithfully. Stories of saints who have suffered steadfastly. What a gift, these stories. This book helps light up the great and growing cloud of witnesses.

> KATHLEEN NIELSON, speaker and author of *Women and God: Hard Questions, Beautiful Truth*

In *12 Faithful Women*, we're given glimpses of steadfastness in the midst of suffering. The various authors profile the lives of 12 women who show us, through their examples of endurance, how we too can be found faithful. If you want encouragement to walk fearlessly with God, pick up this book and let the lives of these godly women point the way.

> COURTNEY DOCTOR, author of *From Garden to Glory: A Bible Study on the Bible's Story* and *Steadfast: A Devotional Bible Study on the Book of James*

Contents

Introduction: Steadfast Under Trial 1
Kristen Wetherell

Helen Roseveare: Steadfast in Sacrifice 5
Betsy Childs Howard

Esther Ahn Kim: Steadfast in Persecution 19
Catherine Parks

Sarah Edwards: Steadfast in Service 33
Courtney Reissig

Elisabeth Elliot: Steadfast in Loss 45
Abigail Dodds

Corrie ten Boom: Steadfast in Darkness 59
Christine Hoover

Phillis Wheatley: Steadfast in Revolution 75
K. A. Ellis

Susannah Spurgeon: Steadfast in Suffering 91
Kristen Wetherell

Wen Wei Chieh: Steadfast in Opposition 107
Irene Sun

Catherine de Bourbon: Steadfast in Oppression 125
Rebecca VanDoodewaard

Lilias Trotter: Steadfast in Adversity 141
Jen Oshman

Hannah More: Steadfast in Controversy 155
Karen Swallow Prior

Joni Eareckson Tada: Steadfast in Pain 169
Vaneetha Rendall Risner

Contributors

ABIGAIL DODDS (MA, Bethlehem College & Seminary) is a wife and mom of five children. She is a member at Bethlehem Baptist Church, where her husband, Tom, serves as an elder. Her favorite work includes excessive baking, gardening by hook or crook, and mediocre knitting. She is the author of *(A)Typical Woman* and a regular contributor at Desiring God.

K. A. ELLIS is passionate about theology, human rights, and global religious freedom. She is the director of the Edmiston Center for the Study of the Bible and Ethnicity at Reformed Theological Seminary in Atlanta, where she is also a Robert Cannada fellow for world Christianity. Since 2006, she has collaborated with the Swiss-based organization International Christian Response and travels internationally advocating for marginalized, overlooked, persevering Christians — both in history and also the contemporary world.

CHRISTINE HOOVER is a pastor's wife, mom of three boys, host of the By Faith podcast, and author of several books. Her latest offering is *With All Your Heart: Living Joyfully Through Allegiance to King Jesus*. Previous books include *Messy Beautiful Friendship*, *Searching for Spring*, and *From Good to Grace*. Originally from Texas, she and her

family live in Charlottesville, Virginia, where they planted a church in 2008.

BETSY CHILDS HOWARD is an editor for The Gospel Coalition. She is the author of *Seasons of Waiting: Walking by Faith When Dreams Are Delayed* and the children's book *Arlo and the Great Big Cover-Up*. She and her husband, Bernard, live in Manhattan, where he is the pastor of Good Shepherd Anglican Church, which they planted in 2017.

JEN OSHMAN is a wife and mom to four daughters and has served as a missionary and pastor's wife for two decades on three continents. She currently resides in Colorado, where her family planted Redemption Parker. Her passion is leading women into a deeper faith and fostering a biblical worldview. Her first book is *Enough About Me: Find Lasting Joy in the Age of Self.*

CATHERINE PARKS lives in Nashville, Tennessee, with her husband, two children, and a cute dog named Ollivander. She's the author of four books, including *Real: The Surprising Secret to Deeper Relationships* and *Empowered* and *Strong*, collections of biographies for middle-grade readers.

KAREN SWALLOW PRIOR earned her PhD from the State University of New York at Buffalo. She is research professor of English and Christianity and culture at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. She is the author of *Fierce Convictions — The Extraordinary Life of Hannah More: Poet, Reformer, Abolitionist*; *On Reading Well: Finding the Good Life through Great Books*; and *Booked: Literature in the Soul of Me*.

COURTNEY REISSIG is a writer and Bible teacher who has written for The Gospel Coalition, *The Washington Post*, and *Christianity Today*. She is author of three books: *Teach Me to Feel*, *Glory in the Ordinary*, and *The Accidental Feminist*. She is married to Daniel, and they

are the proud parents of four sons. They make their home in Little Rock, Arkansas, where they serve at Immanuel Baptist Church.

VANEETHA RENDALL RISNER is a writer and speaker who is passionate about helping others find hope and joy in suffering. She is the author of the books *The Scars That Have Shaped Me: How God Meets Us in Suffering* and an upcoming memoir, *Walking Through Fire: A Memoir of Loss and Redemption*. Vaneetha is a regular contributor to Desiring God.

IRENE SUN was born in Malaysia. She is the author of the picture book *God Counts: Numbers in His Word and His World*. She studied liturgy and literature at Yale University (MAR) and the Old Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (ThM). She teaches her four boys at home with her preacher husband and through TGC's Women's Training Network.

REBECCA VANDOODEWAARD is a wife, mother, and author. Living south of her native Canada, she spends her time teaching, writing, and hosting along with her husband, a church history professor. Her books include *Reformation Women: Sixteenth-Century Figures Who Shaped Christianity's Rebirth* and the Banner of Truth board book series for children.

KRISTEN WETHERELL is a wife, mother, and writer. She is the author of *Fight Your Fears: Trusting God's Character and Promises When You Are Afraid* and the co-author of the award-winning book *Hope When It Hurts: Biblical Reflections to Help You Grasp God's Purpose in Your Suffering*. Kristen lives in Chicagoland with her husband, who is a pastor at The Orchard, and their daughter.

Introduction: Steadfast Under Trial

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.
James 1:12

What is the hardest trial you have endured? Did you come out on the other side the same as when you entered it? Probably not. Trials have a way of changing us, for better or worse. They can humble us or harden us. They can make us run to God or away from him. They can cause us to ask profound and important questions about our identity, purpose, and hope (or lack thereof), and about God — who he is and what he might be doing.

A decade ago, I spent a year in New York City that changed me. It brought one hard thing after another — loneliness, job loss, heartbreak, financial stress, chronic pain. I remember thinking, *No more, Lord, please* . . . Yet, Jesus used those trials to exercise and strengthen my faith — not in myself or my own understand-

ing, resolve, or strength, but in him, in his faithful character and steadfast purposes.

My circumstances in that season didn't immediately change for the better (in fact, they got worse in some ways). But my unchangeable God revealed himself to me within them. He awakened me to the reality of my dependence on him as Creator and Sustainer. He exposed my earthly hopes for the unreliable and unfulfilling idols they were and showed me that he is the only Savior worth worshiping. He convicted me that his Word of truth bolsters faith and battles fear. And he reminded me of his faithfulness displayed at the cross, where he proved his steadfast love and provided for my greatest eternal need.

Take a minute to think about your current situation. Maybe your life is smooth sailing, or perhaps the storms have been relentless. Maybe you trust in Jesus as your Savior, maybe you don't. Perhaps your trials have resulted in a closer walk with him, or maybe he seems far away. You might have questions about God's character, and your trials might have tempted you to doubt his goodness and purposes.

Whatever your situation, I hope you'll be both encouraged and also challenged by the stories within these pages. They are portraits of 12 faithful women who steadfastly endured many trials — including physical pain, persecution, infertility, loneliness, and oppression — and who, in their various sufferings, found Christ to be an all-sufficient Lord and Savior, steadfast, faithful, and true. Enter into the stories of Corrie ten Boom, Susannah Spurgeon, Esther Ahn Kim, Phillis Wheatley, Lilias Trotter, and others, and you'll see women who held fast to Jesus. They steadfastly endured not because of their own perfection or strength, but because Christ's strength was made perfect in their weakness (2 Cor. 12:9).

At the end of every chapter you'll find a section called "Lessons from the Faithful." There, we will summarize what we can learn from each woman's story. We will also offer some verses to read and pro-

vide several application questions to consider. Use these for personal reflection or to spur on discussion in a small-group setting.

Friend, whether you are walking closely with Christ or struggling to do so, he wants you to know an important truth, and it's what we hope you take away from this book:

Within your trials, knowing Jesus makes all the difference.

Romans 5 tells us why:

> We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. (Rom. 5:3–6)

The only way to steadfastly endure trials with hope is by keeping our eyes fixed upon the One who endured suffering and death for us so that we might live forever. We "[look] to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who *for the joy that was set before him endured the cross*, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2, italics added).

When we trust Christ by faith, receiving him as our Savior and our Lord, we have hope — hope within our trials and hope beyond our trials — because we have *him*. And this hope makes all the difference, as Jesus gives us both present courage and also eternal perspective to steadfastly endure until we "receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him" (James 1:12).

Often, God fortifies our faith through the witness of steadfast Christians who've gone before us. The same God who walked with them, walks with us. Thankfully, "He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength" (Isa. 40:28–29).

May we learn from these 12 faithful women what it looks like to trust and follow Jesus so we might do the same.

Kristen Wetherell
Editor

In our trials, knowing Jesus makes all the difference.

Trials have a way of changing us, for better or worse. They can humble us or harden us. They can make us run to God or away from him. Perhaps your trials have resulted in a closer walk with him, or maybe he seems far away. Often, God strengthens our faith through the witness of courageous Christians who've gone before us. Be encouraged and challenged by these 12 portraits of faithful women who steadfastly endured many trials—including physical pain, persecution, infertility, loneliness, and oppression—and who, in their various sufferings, found Christ to be an all-sufficient Lord and Savior, steadfast, faithful, and true.

◆

"Ever since I was a little girl, my heart has been warmed and my faith fueled by biographies of faithful men and women of God. The portraits of godly women found in this collection will do the same for you. In each challenge and trial these women faced, Christ proved himself to be steadfast and sufficient. The courage and compassion they exhibited in their times are no less needed in ours. May their stories inspire us to reflect his majestic gospel and grace to our world."

NANCY DEMOSS WOLGEMUTH

"Those who profess faith in Jesus Christ are adopted into a family—a family that has spanned more than 2,000 years. It falls to each of us to get to know the members of our new family. Through this book, we can get to know and appreciate the unique contributions of 12 faithful women—12 faithful sisters in Christ."

TIM CHALLIES

"If you feel weary or worn, you don't need a change in circumstance; you need the testimony of God's faithfulness in the lives of believers who have persevered. 12 Faithful Women points us to our faithful God, and in so doing, encourages our hearts to remain steadfast, right where we are."

RUTH CHOU SIMONS

◆

Melissa Kruger serves as the Director of Women's Initiatives for The Gospel Coalition. She's the author of multiple books, including *The Envy of Eve: Finding Contentment in a Covetous World*, *Walking with God in the Season of Motherhood*, and *Growing Together: Taking Mentoring Beyond Small Talk and Prayer Request*. Her husband, Mike, is the president of Reformed Theological Seminary and they have three children.

Kristen Wetherell is a wife, mother, and writer. She is the author of *Fight Your Fears: Trusting God's Character and Promises When You Are Afraid* and of the award-winning book *Hope When It Hurts: Biblical Reflections to Help You Grasp God's Purpose in Your Suffering*. Kristen is married to Brad, who is a pastor, and they have two children.

TGC THE GOSPEL COALITION

$12.99
ISBN 978-1-7334585-2-8
51299>
9 781733 458528