

#5 of 12 - 5 & 10 on the 15th

(a monthly series on impactful Christians who poured out (5) their lives in Christ's strength and power (10) sent out around the 15th of each month)

Frances Ridley Havergal: Losing it all, lost it all, yet gave all she had to God in Christ

Romans 12:1 — *“Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”*

Intro Refrain - This is the fifth in a monthly series this year entitled *Victorious Christians You Should Know* from Warren Wiersbe's book by this title, introducing you each month to one amazing Christian from the past.

Church history is so important! It's both encouraging and inspiring to hear how Christians have sought the Lord, lived for Him, been sustained by Him to accomplish great things in the Kingdom of God, and then die and pass into eternal life. We are the church in our time! We must both take up the cause of Christ in our day and also live for Jesus with dedication and passion – laying down our lives so that the life of Christ might be lived in us and through us. I hope these short sketches inspire you to read more about each of these Christians and to go out, asking Holy Spirit, to help you live a more earnest and uncompromising Christian life.

Frances Ridley Havergal: Losing it all, lost it all, yet gave all she had to God in Christ

Frances Ridley Havergal (1836–1879) was a radiant soul whose life was a melody of faith, poetry, and devotion. Born into a musical and devout Anglican family in England, Frances was reading at the age of three, reading the Bible at age four, and writing verses by age seven, composing hymns that would echo through churches for generations. Her most famous hymn, *“Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee,”* became both her prayer and her practice.

Her life, though brief, was a blazing testimony to wholehearted surrender. Battling fragile health, when she was 23, her doctor told her that she must choose between writing and living because her health would not permit her to do both. Frances nonetheless lived with vibrant spiritual energy. She once wrote, *“I am not afraid to die; I think I should be glad to die... but I cannot be sure, and meanwhile I wish to live for Jesus as long as He lets me.”* Her days were steeped in Scripture – she memorized entire books of the Bible from both Old and New Testaments, with Isaiah being her favorite – and her pen became a channel for both theological depth and childlike trust.

Fluent in six languages, including the Hebrew and Greek of the Bible, Frances deeply valued knowing that in 1 John 1:7-9, the Greek wording of the original New Testament makes clear that God promises “to keep/treasure her as well as to save her,” claiming God’s ongoing victory in Christ, “not a coming to be cleansed in the fountain only, but a remaining in the fountain, so that it may go on cleansing.” The hymn “Like a River Glorious” is Frances Ridley Havergal’s Spirit-led testimony to the reality of the ongoing victorious Christian life.

Besides her recurring illnesses and constant weakness, Frances faced other mountainous challenges. In 1874, her American publisher went bankrupt, and since she had an exclusive contract with him, it dealt a huge blow to her income. Then in 1876, just three years before her death, the offices of her British publisher burned down with the complete manuscript and plates of “Songs of Grace and Glory”, which she’d recently completed but had not kept a copy. So she had to begin all over again, not only with the words to all the songs but also with all the tunes to all the songs. She testified that God alone gave her the strength to hear and compose all the songs again.

Frances lived out Romans 12:1: *“Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”* Whether through her hymn-writing, letter ministry, or humble charity, she poured herself out like fragrant oil at the feet of Christ. *“I only wish to live for God. Let me do nothing but what God will approve,”* she once wrote, echoing Philippians 1:21: *“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”*

Though Frances was known by many on two continents, she served “in the valleys and trenches” of life, not only teaching young children (to whom she was just an ordinary person) in Sunday School classes for decades, but also keeping an ever-growing journal of young children’s names, daily praying for each child through their life in a way that we pray would inspire all adults today to pray for children as each child, like Jesus in his humanity, grows in wisdom and stature through their years.

In her short 42 years, Frances gave the world a legacy of sacred song and luminous faith—a life offered fully to God, line by line, note by note.