



## CHAPTER NINE

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### *Wrinkles Are God's Little Way of Saying . . . "I'm Stepping on Your Face"*

*You really know you're getting old when  
you bend over to tie your shoes, and you wonder  
what else you can do while you're down there.*

—Source Unknown

For two hours I had been doing the talk show, and I had told my radio host and all the people who had called in just about everything I knew. We were almost out of time when the host turned to me and said, "Barbara, we have just two minutes left—if you could say one thing to encourage all the people who are listening, what would you say?"

I felt a twinge of panic. I wasn't sure I could even think of my name, and I had already said everything I knew—I couldn't even think of a Scripture verse. I glanced into the little Joy Box I take with me when I'm interviewed to see if there was anything left among my props that might give our radio audience some encouragement. Then I gleefully found one bumper snicker that I hadn't used, and I said, "Well, there is one thing I would like to tell everyone, and it's this: 'LIFE IS HARD, AND THEN YOU DIE.'"

The shocked host of the show looked at me as if I had lost every marble I had.

"Well . . . uh . . . Barbara . . . maybe you could tell us in a few seconds why you think that's encouraging . . ." he stammered.

I could tell my host was thinking, "*What is she going to do NOW?*" I wasn't sure either, but I plunged in.

"What I mean is, our EXIT from this life is our GRANDEST ENTRANCE up there. This life isn't it! There is pain and suffering . . . but those who want to name it and claim it are looking in the wrong place because there is nothing here to name and claim! *This isn't it!*"

"This life is hard. There are all kinds of pain, there are all kinds of problems—AIDS, divorce, crime, disease . . . sin. Life is hard, and some of the people listening know how hard it can be. But I like what my little granddaughter told me: 'Grandma, you shouldn't say life is hard and then you die; you should say life is hard and then you GET TO DIE.'"

"I really believe that's good news for Christians. We have an ENDLESS HOPE, not a HOPELESS END and, while life is hard, someday we will die, which isn't really bad—it simply means we'll leave this life and go to be with our Lord and Savior, and what could be better than that?"

"That's why I believe in rapture practice . . . I go out in the backyard and jump up and down, practicing for the rapture, because one day we'll soon be *out* of here. I love that song, 'I'll Fly Away,' because I know my future is so secure with Him. This life holds no charm for me . . . my deposits are in heaven, just waiting for me to come! What a day it will be when we cast our crowns at His feet. This life is just a veil of tears, but earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal. Life is hard and tough, but it is only temporary . . . this life is only a vapor, but eternity is FOREVER!"

When we finished the interview, the lights were flashing on the call-in board. It seems that dozens of people wanted to talk to the lady who thought it was so glorious to die!

### Billy's Book Was Encouraging, Not Depressing

From time to time I meet people who think it's depressing to hear that "Life is hard and then you die." But I don't think so. We're all getting older, and we're all going to die, unless the Lord comes first. Why not face it positively, instead of avoiding it and looking on it as the ultimate evil?

I was on a plane the other day reading Billy Graham's book *Facing Death and the Life Hereafter* (Word, 1987). The person in the seat next to me said, "Oh, what an awful book you're reading—how depressing."

I just laughed and said, "It's not depressing, it's exciting. It's a wonderful book."

"Do you have cancer or something?" my seat mate wanted to know.

I explained that we all have a life-threatening disease. We're all going to die because we're on our way out of here and it's a one-way trip. For a Christian, it's a pilgrimage, and I believe Billy Graham's book on death is one of the most encouraging I've ever read. He tells why Christians can face death with joy, not gloom. We're all going down the road very fast. You don't have to look very far in the obituaries to see that people are going every day. And if they are without the Lord, they have nothing. But with the Lord, they have eternity, eons and eons, to be with Him.

Facing death is really the ultimate triumph for a Christian. Perhaps you have a disease, and you don't recover. If God doesn't heal you physically, He heals you spiritually, and you spend eternity with Him.

As far as I'm concerned, whatever problems we're going through, we can think of them as temporary. As I said earlier, our troubles didn't come to stay; they are going to pass. And that helps you cope, whether it's cancer or problems in your marriage or problems with your children. Whatever it is, it's all temporary. And what's up ahead is going to be glorious because of the hope we have as Christians.

That's why I laugh at getting older and overweight. You can