





ONE SOLITARY LIFE

*Based on the noted passage by*  
James Allan Francis

*With commentary by*  
Ken Blanchard

*In partnership with*  
Mac Anderson

*A*  
COUNTRYMAN  
*B*

Nashville, Tennessee

## ONE SOLITARY LIFE

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*“You are great, O Lord GOD.*

*For there is none like You,  
nor is there any God besides You.”*

2 SAMUEL 7:22 NKJV

FOREWORD *by Ken Blanchard*

*One Solitary Life* is one of the most inspiring stories I know. I'll never forget the first time I heard it read. It was at the end of the Christmas pageant at the Crystal Cathedral in Orange, California, at a time when my faith was reawakening after a long slumber.

My mom and dad had been great fans of Robert Schuller and his "Hour of Power." From the moment they tuned into his very first televised Sunday service several decades ago, my parents were hooked on the positive philosophy and faith that Robert Schuller espoused. In fact, if you made a sound during Sunday's "Hour of Power" you were in trouble, because that was a very special time of the week for them.

In 1978 my dad was suffering from cancer. I brought him and my mom out to California for Christmas. It was a wonderful time to be with him, with family gathered around. Dad made it through the holidays but died early in February. That March my mom was still with us. One Sunday I said to her, "You've never seen Reverend Schuller live, have you?" And she said, "No, Dad and I always watched him on TV." I said, "Let's go up today." So we drove up to Orange County for the "Hour of Power." That day was the last service in the old chapel.

Halfway through the service the whole congregation got up and marched into the new Crystal Cathedral. It was extraordinary to be there for this grand opening. Reverend Schuller's sermon that day was entitled "Every Ending Is a New Beginning." My mom said to me, "Can you imagine Reverend Schuller designing a sermon just for me? There are no accidents in life."

During that service I turned to my mom and said, "Someday, Mom, I'm going to be up there with Reverend Schuller." She said, "Really?" I said, "Yes, I don't know how, but I just get a feeling that I'll be there." It was four years later—after *The One Minute Manager*<sup>®</sup> came out—that I stood with Reverend Schuller in the Crystal Cathedral, with my mom in the congregation. That was when I began to look closely at my faith. I had turned my back on the Lord for over fifteen years, but the success of *The One Minute Manager* was so absurd that even I had trouble taking credit for it. During this time I began to revisit the spiritual foundation that my mom and dad had given me as a kid.

There are no accidents in life. Shortly after being on "The Hour of Power," I got a call from Larry Hughes, president of William Morrow—the company that had published *The One Minute Manager*—asking if I would consider writing a book with Norman Vincent Peale. I said, "Is he still alive?" Larry said, "Not only is he alive, but he's fabulous." My

parents had gone to Norman Vincent Peale's church before I was born, and Bob Schuller had modeled his church after Dr. Peale's *power of positive thinking* philosophy. In fact, Norman and his wife, Ruth, served on the board of the Crystal Cathedral for many years. Working with Norman Vincent Peale on *The Power of Ethical Management* and getting to spend time with Bob Schuller gave me a powerful one-two punch for looking at my relationship to the Lord.

Part of my recommitment to spiritual renewal involved taking our family to the Christmas pageant at the Crystal Cathedral. What an incredible spectacular it was, with live camels, donkeys, and flying angels! But the most moving part of the entire celebration was at the end, when the lights dimmed down and an incredible voice read "One Solitary Life." The story hit me like a ton of bricks, because it put in perspective that all this pushing in life for wealth, recognition, power, and status—all the things that people identify with success—doesn't really mean anything. What really matters is what you do for other people. You finally become an adult when you learn that life is about what you give rather than what you get.

In 1993 our good friends Pete and Donna Whiskerman sent "One Solitary Life" as part of their Christmas greeting. Although I'd heard it a number of times, the powerful impact of reading the words motivated

me to put the story in my daily journal and read it every day. That's how important "One Solitary Life" became to me.

I often wondered who wrote "One Solitary Life" and if anybody had done anything with it in published form. We did a little digging and found that the essay was written by Dr. James Allan Francis as part of his 1926 book, *The Real Jesus*. About two years ago I had a wonderful visit with Mac Anderson, the founder of Successories, and we brainstormed about bringing "One Solitary Life" alive for everyone. Mac immediately went to work coordinating the design of this wonderful book.

Read "One Solitary Life" and put your life in perspective. You can make a difference, and it doesn't depend on how much money you make, how much you are recognized, or the power and status you receive. It's all about your relationship with the Lord and with those He puts in your life. May God bless your reading of this book.

**KEN BLANCHARD**

coauthor of *The One Minute Manager*<sup>®</sup>

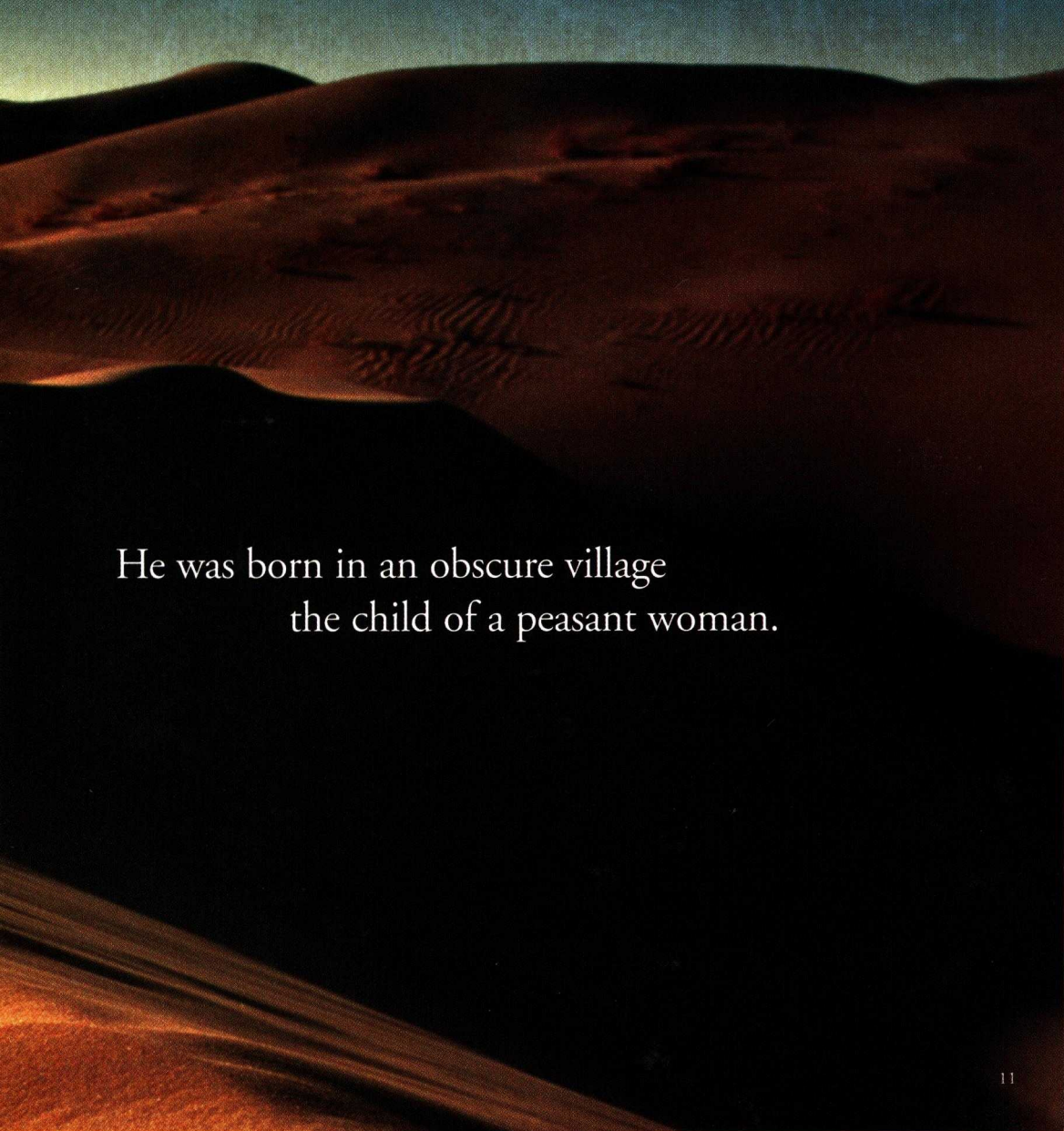
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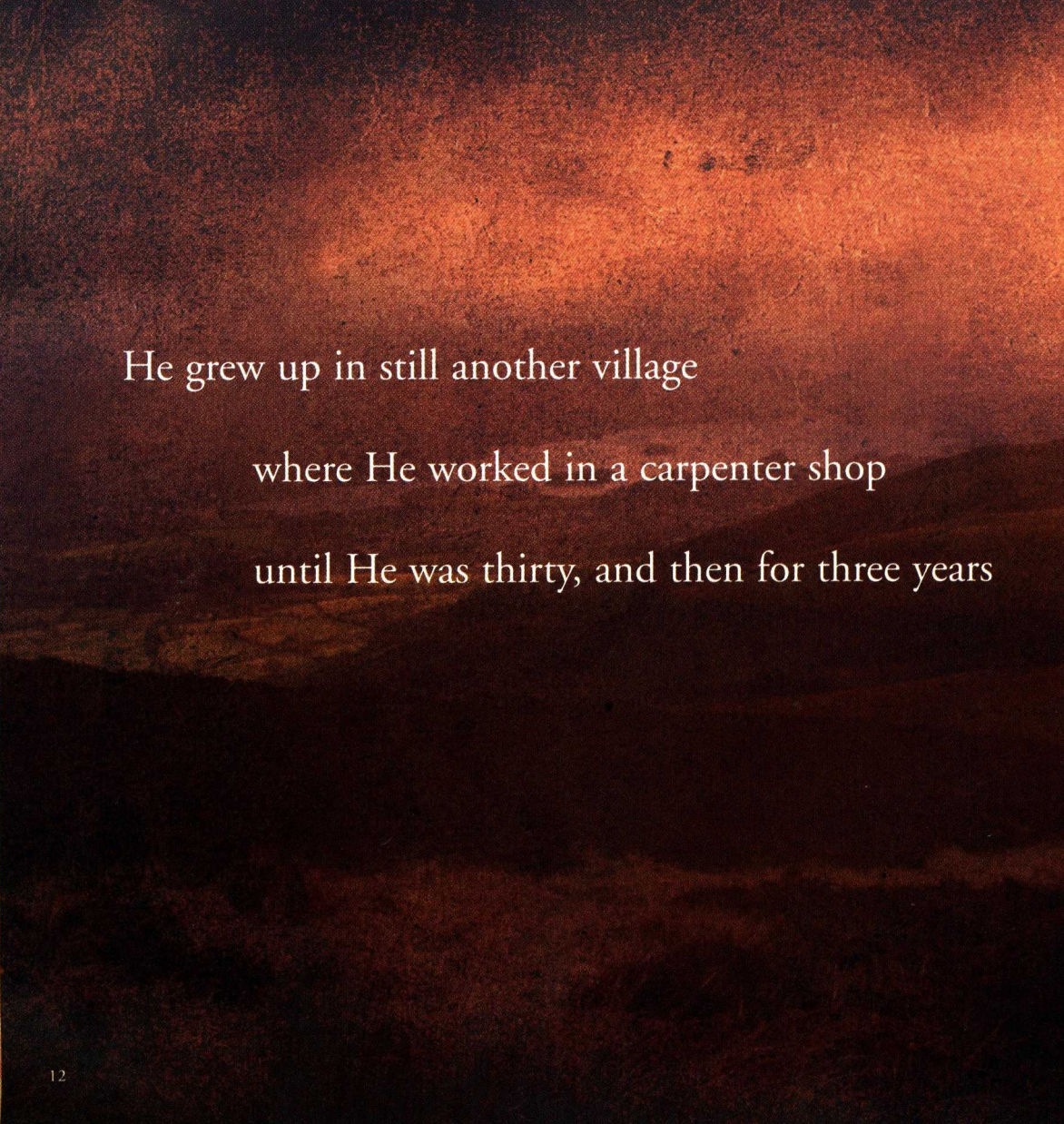




ONE SOLITARY LIFE  
*James Allan Francis*




He was born in an obscure village  
the child of a peasant woman.



He grew up in still another village

where He worked in a carpenter shop

until He was thirty, and then for three years



He was an itinerant preacher.

A dark, grainy landscape at dusk or dawn. The sky is a deep, dark orange-red, transitioning to a dark blue-grey near the horizon. The foreground is mostly black, with a few silhouettes of trees and a utility pole visible against the horizon line. The overall mood is somber and quiet.

He never wrote a book.

He never held an office.

