



CHRISTIAN LIGHT

January – February

2023

# Does Love Feel Like This?

Alison Stoltzfus

I walked a little in front of the others, drinking in the majestic sea that extended into the sky far away. I felt the tension of the previous month draining away, leaving me limp. The usual noisy crowds of people at the clinic contrasted sharply with the gentle sound of the tide breaking on the shore, and I realized how weary I was.

*Why is choosing to love people always so unpleasant? Can what I feel for the refugees even be called love?* I asked God. I idly dug my toes in the sand, remembering the sick patients tugging on my clothes. Patients often waited all day to see a doctor. They would plead and gesture pitifully at their fungal rash or stiff neck. In their desperation, they seemed childlike, but I could not change the scene or help them all; I was drowning in my lack of ability, and sometimes I didn't even want to try.

I heard the voices of the others behind me, but I stood still, my back turned to them, staring into the

sea. My mind had been caught in the memories that came flooding back—of the painful days I had spent caring for my dad while he was dying. Many nights I had slept on the couch in the room next to where he breathed noisily from the hospital bed.

I bathed him, read aloud from James Herriot's *All Creatures Great and Small*, and froze, inadequate and scared, when his limbs stiffened in the grip of a seizure. I tried to use my critical thinking skills, those skills that nursing students were supposed to have—should I give him oxygen, give him more Ativan, call my mom to come?

I overheard him talking to my grandma, days before his death. "It's good Alison is here," he had said. His voice came breathy and much smaller than the voice that had sometimes yelled sternly at me when I was a rebellious thirteen. "She knows what to do." The tears had burned behind my eyelids as the words sank in.





My dad loved me, I knew then, and I loved him too. But this love made my heart feel numbed and dull, my inadequacy to stop the ravages of cancer overwhelming it. *Surely love shouldn't feel like this?* When I had imagined being a nurse, before my dad had died, before I realized the pain of watching sickness and death, I had pictured myself cool and composed, expertly healing people's sadness.

I would always know what to do, they would thank me for helping them, and I would walk away fulfilled. I had never pictured myself in dusty flip-flops surrounded by a sea of patients with varied and vague complaints, unable to help them all, but needing to decide who needed help the worst.

Suddenly I remembered Ben's sober dark eyes and the way he prayed for me before I left and watched me go without a word to hold me back. It had been hard sometimes, biting my tongue when he showed up half an hour late, holding a bouquet of wildflowers, or answering his stubborn questions when he pushed me to be vulnerable about my feelings.

He had never asked me to stay home though, when I wanted to leave for six months, even though I could tell that it hurt him. *Maybe real love is not about pleasant feelings and getting what I want after all?*

The ocean stretched far away as I could see, blending into the horizon, and I wondered how God's love could be so big that it could embrace every person in the refugee camp, as well as every Mennonite in my church at home—and die to carry each sorrow and sin. If that was love, then maybe love did hurt.

Maybe love meant choosing to live in a dirty, smelly town and serve a refugee camp full of crowding

patients, babies with head-to-toe rashes, and injured extremities dripping blood . . . As well as choosing to love Ben and open my heart to him when I would rather run away to protect myself. *Is that what it means to be in love?*

The pink sun grew large and dropped regally into the ocean. My heart was suddenly bursting with love, a love that was older than the day before, and I wished Ben were there to share it with me. I could imagine him sitting across the table, leaning toward me with a sparkle in his eyes.

*I will tell him all about this moment,* I vowed, my heart quickening at the thought. Ben would listen quietly with a compassionate smile lurking around his sensitive mouth and thankfulness flooding his heart. I knew it already.

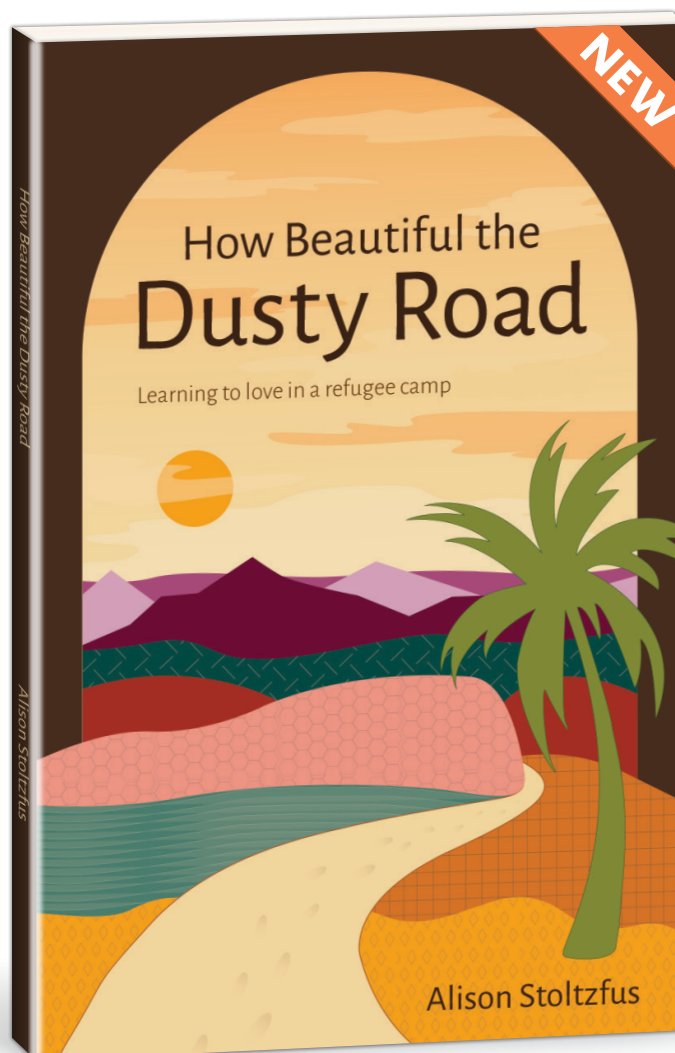
Adapted from *How Beautiful the Dusty Road*.

## How Beautiful the Dusty Road

Alison Stoltzfus

Alison spent six months as a volunteer nurse in a refugee camp on the other side of the world. Through the dust and disease, through patients rescued and lost, through relationships and trials, God gave her a greater understanding of what it means to love as He loved.

265890 **\$8.50** 115 pages, 5¼ x 8¼





Judy Yoder's father Eli grew up as an Amish farm boy, small and sensitive for his age, but with big dreams. A skillful storyteller, Judy captures Eli's adventures and emotions at each stage of his life.



## You Are Too Small, Little Eli Book 1

Many adventures await a shy Amish boy on the Oklahoma prairies during the dry years of 1939 to 1942—traveling on a train, entertaining strangers during a blizzard, and watching cowboys. When Grossdaddy dies, leaving the Amish people without a bishop, Eli is surprised by dreadful news. Is he big enough to face a challenge?

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## By the Fields of Fish Creek Book 2

At their new home in Kansas, Eli milks Hipbones every day. He helps Dad make hay, but no matter which machine he operates, things seem to always go wrong. Eli is happiest when he has time to explore Fish Creek. Then Dad and Mom begin praying about another move. Will his dream of being a cowboy farmer ever come true?

264468 **\$11.75** 312 pages, 5¼ x 8¼

## Harvest Boy of White Hill Book 3

Eli can't wait to see the farm Dad bought in Stuarts Draft, Virginia. Small for his eleven years, Eli dreads going to a new school and church. Electricity comes to the farm. Harvesting is done with tractors and newfangled equipment. Eli learns the responsibility resting on a farmer's shoulders. Will the family be able to keep up with farm payments? Will Eli find answers for his questions about God?

264469 **\$15.95** 544 pages, 5¼ x 8¼



## Buggy Wheels in May

Book 4

Eli enjoys joining the youth group, turning a battered old buggy into his own transportation to Sunday evening singings, and serving at weddings. Will he have enough courage to win the friendship of Ruthie, the demure, brown-eyed girl he admires? When change ripples through the Amish community, creating unresolved differences, how will Eli find God's will for his life? The final book in the *Little Eli* series.

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Johnny Ruhl

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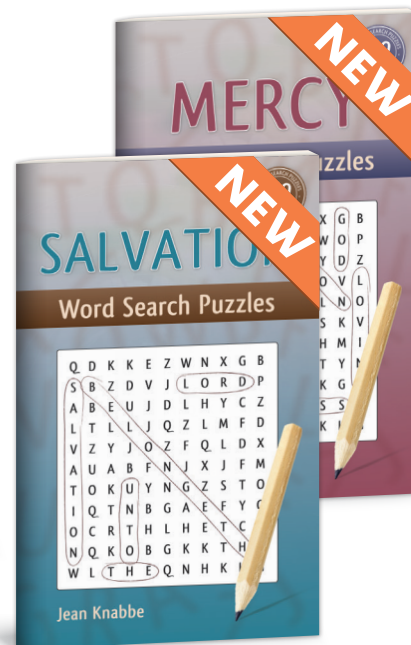
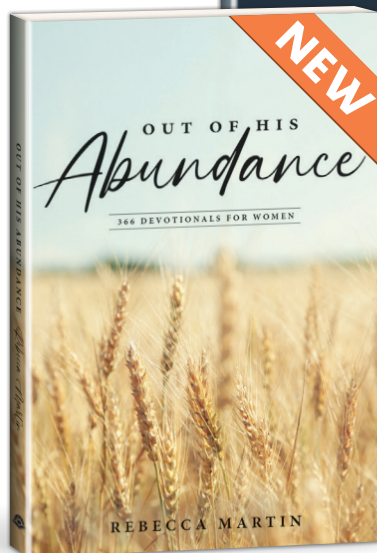
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## Out of His Abundance

Rebecca Martin

This book of 366 devotionals helps women from all walks of life glean truth from God's Word. Each day includes a short Bible reading and a thoughtful meditation.

242405 **\$12.95** 366 pages, 6 x 9



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Jean Knabbe

Do you enjoy word search puzzles? We offer a large selection—these two are the newest. They contain ninety puzzles each.

**Mercy Word Search Puzzles \$3.50**  
**Salvation Word Search Puzzles \$3.50**

## Luke 1:76, 77

AND THOU, CHILD, SHALT BE CALLED THE PROPHET OF THE HIGHEST: FOR THOU SHALT GO BEFORE THE FACE OF THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS; TO GIVE KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION UNTO HIS PEOPLE BY THE REMISSION OF THEIR SINS.

Puzzle text actual size!

PUZZLE  
63

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# Changes and Challenges in 2022

## Paper challenges

Because we print some of our publications ourselves, each year we purchase about 750 tons of paper. In 2022 paper shortages continued to be a problem, and paper prices continued to rise. We began to purchase paper up to six months in advance, and raised prices to keep pace with increased costs.

## New presses

In 2021 we installed a new digital press for more flexibility and cost savings on printing lower quantities. This digital press prints a lot of teacher's guides. In 2022 we replaced a worn-out offset press with a larger and more efficient one. The newer press can output over 100,000 sheets per day, printing mostly LightUnit workbooks.

## New building

In September our warehouse and shipping operations moved into a new 24,000 square-foot fulfillment center.

## New software

In 2021 we decided to upgrade our business management software for efficiency and increased capabilities such as better integration with our website. Working toward this transition consumed thousands of hours in 2022. We are switching to the new software in early 2023.

Everyone at Christian Light is grateful for your prayers and support. Thank you and God bless you in your own changes and challenges!







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## Miracle Boy

Daniel Allgyer, illustrated by Diane Hurst

On board the ambulance and then a helicopter, paramedics worked to help Dale stay alive. But there was no response. He had been underwater too long. This true story allows you to ride along with Dale, watch the medics and doctors, and listen as family and friends pray. God answers!

265600 **\$11.95** 68 pages, 6 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 8

