

Tiny Flame of Faith

In *Love and Duty*, Anne Purcell writes about seeing Major Jim Statler standing with her pastor outside his study following a Sunday service. She knew instantly that he was there with news about her husband, Ben, on active duty in Vietnam.

As she feared, Major Statler gave her a chilling message: "He was on a helicopter that was shot down; he's missing in action."

Purcell recalls, "Somewhere in the back of my mind, a little candle flame flickered. This tiny flame was the vestige of my faith."

Days passed without a word. To her, being an MIA wife was like being in limbo. She found herself only able to pray one thing: "Help me, dear Father." She says, "I hung onto this important truth – that He would help me – and the flickering flame of my candle of faith began to grow."

Then one day, Purcell noticed a white dove sitting in her yard. It was particularly beautiful, very still and quiet, and a highly uncommon sight in her neighborhood. She took it as a sign from God that He was, indeed, always near.

For five years, Anne Purcell clung to the fact that God was near. Little did she know that during those years before she was reunited with her husband, he was whispering to her from a prisoner-of-war cell, "Anne, find solace and strength in the Lord."

Are there difficult or desperate times in your life when you need to be assured that God is near? He promises His followers in His Word that He will be. You will also find His presence in the comforting actions and encouragement of fellow believers who wrap you with arms of love and hope.

--Beecher Hunter