

Psalm 91*James Montgomery (1771–1854)*

Call Jehovah thy salvation,
 Rest beneath the Almighty's shade,
 In his secret habitation
 Dwell, and never be dismay'd:
 There no tumult shall alarm thee,
 Thou shalt dread no hidden snare,
 Guile nor violence can harm thee
 In eternal safeguard there.

From the sword at noon-day wasting,
 From the noisome pestilence,
 In the depth of midnight blasting,
 God shall be thy sure defence;
 Fear not thou the deadly quiver,
 When a thousand feel the blow,
 Mercy shall thy soul deliver,
 Though ten thousand be laid low.

Only with thine eyes the anguish
 Of the wicked thou shalt see,
 When by slow disease they languish,
 When they perish suddenly:
 Thee, though winds and waves be swelling,
 God, thine hope, shall bear through all;
 Plague shall not come nigh thy dwelling,
 Thee no evil shall befall.

ΤΩ ΚΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ*In the Nick of Time***In Praise of Ordinary Men, Part Two: John Javaux***Kevin T. Bauder*

The first time I met John Javaux was on the gridiron. He was playing linebacker; I was a tight end. We got acquainted when he decided to blitz the quarterback. I met him with a cross-body block, then slipped down into a crab block. He was bigger and stronger than me, but somehow I got just the right leverage, shoved a bit, and sat him down hard.

That's when I started to worry. I'd never met a linebacker who took kindly to being knocked down, and John was very obviously a bull of a man. As we got up, I braced myself for what was about to come. To my surprise, John shot me a big grin and said, "You're pretty good at that, aren't you?"

As I would learn, that kind of relaxed, self-effacing, down-home response was typical of John. We were at the beginning of our freshman year in Bible college. I came from ten miles up the road; John came all the way from Idaho. We were destined to see quite a bit of each other. Our paths crossed in intramural athletic competitions. We shared several classes. We were also in a men's choir together. The more I saw of him, the more I realized that John was just a genuinely nice and caring guy. When the choir went on tour during the spring semester, John and I shared a room. That's when we became friends.

At the time I didn't realize that John was still a new believer. He had trusted Christ as Savior only a short time before coming to Bible college. He accepted the stringent rules that our little college laid down (or most of them), but displayed a talent for finding loopholes. For example, we were supposed to be in the dorms by 10:00 every night, but John noticed that the school had no rule about how early we could leave in the morning. So John began to plan outings that began shortly after midnight.

During our sophomore year, John and I worked together at an auto parts warehouse. When the school year ended, we kept our jobs and roomed together through the summer. I was courting the woman whom I would eventually marry, and John would sometimes join us with a date—though never the same one. John had already decided whom he wanted to marry. He was just waiting for her to catch on. That December John was in my wedding.



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Susan eventually consented to marry John, and I was in their wedding the following July. She was the love of his life. He never deviated in his affection for her. Indeed, if one word characterized John, it was the word *faithful*: he was faithful to his marriage, faithful to his friendships, and faithful to his Lord.

After graduation John and I moved in different directions. He stayed in our college town, found a job, and reared a family. I went away to seminary in another state, then went on to minister in a variety of locations. Distance kept us apart, but whenever John knew that I was in the area he would take the initiative to look me up. His greeting was always warm. He was the sort of guy whose friendship did not require a big investment. I could go years without seeing him, and then he would pick up exactly where we had left off.

I last saw John about six months ago. His pastor invited me to preach in their church. With a crowd of people around, John waited patiently for his turn, and then offered to take Debbie and me to dinner. We were delighted with the opportunity to catch up, and when we arrived at the restaurant we discovered that John had also invited other people from our past. It was a characteristically thoughtful thing for him to do.

About a month ago I was out walking on a cold Saturday morning. While walking I phoned my parents, and my mother answered. Almost the first thing she said was, “Did you know that John Javaux died?” I was stunned—in fact, I thought she must have got the news wrong. But when I reached home and checked, it turned out to be true. John had been diagnosed with an advanced and aggressive cancer only a month before. During the rapid progress of the disease, neither he nor his family had time to let me know what was happening.

I wondered who might attend John’s funeral, and I realized that I knew little of his life since our paths had gone different ways. I’d met his children, of course, and I knew he was proud of them. I also knew that he’d mainly worked blue-collar jobs, usually more than one at a time, to provide for his family. But I didn’t know about other friendships or relationships that he had built.

What I discovered was overwhelming. He had been a member of a medium-sized church in a suburban setting. The crowds for both his visitation (which was the night before the funeral) and the funeral itself were overwhelming. As I talked with people, I began to understand why.

John was gifted at building relationships. He formed friendships easily and he used those friendships to minister to others. He invested time and interest in those around him. He never seemed to be the kind of person who wanted anything from others, but he was always the guy who was willing

to go the extra mile. He cared about people and he gave his time and energy to them.

He was especially interested in college students. John would show interest in them, bring them into his home, befriend them, and mentor them. His easygoing ways made them feel at ease with him, and he counseled them as they faced the challenges of coming to maturity.

Furthermore, John’s faithfulness to his local church was exemplary. The skill of his hands and the strength of his back were always available for the jobs that needed to be done. He and Susan loved to work in the children’s ministries. John also served the church as a deacon for years. Again, his life touched people and changed them.

John Javaux was just an ordinary guy. He never had what most people think of as a career. He never won a Nobel Prize and was never a captain of industry. He wasn’t even a pastor or missionary. He was just a faithful man whose life affected an extraordinary number of people. He built himself into others, including me. His life is a testimony to how God can use an ordinary man.



This essay is by Kevin T. Bauder, Research Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Not every one of the professors, students, or alumni of Central Seminary necessarily agrees with every opinion that it expresses.
