

# MADE TO WORSHIP

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More of Him and Less of Me



21-Day Devotional

# Introduction

My wife and I have five children. There has never been a moment that we didn't passionately and unconditionally love each and every one. And I honestly don't believe there's been a time that they haven't loved us in return. But sometimes a wall goes up, and even though we love each other, we don't necessarily *feel* each other's love. The result is a perceived distance that we desperately want to overcome.

One of my mentors explained it perfectly: "You love each other, but what you're missing is intimacy - and intimacy comes when you are loving each other the right way."

So true! We have begun to learn that our love must evolve. We must grow in love, learn new ways to express our love, and be ever attentive to each other's relational needs.

The same is true in our relationship with God. We know God loves us, but sometimes we go through seasons when we don't feel the same closeness as the season before. We know God hasn't changed His mind about us, so what's up? God hasn't drifted - we have. Intimacy with God comes when we are speaking His love language - and that language is **worship**.

But what is worship, and how do we do it?

Romans 12 says, *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship."*

Clearly worship is WAY more than just the songs we sing in church. If we are to maintain closeness with God, then worship must become a way of life. That's the heart behind this devotional.

**"Intimacy with God comes when we are speaking His love language - and that language is **WORSHIP**."**



In John 4, Jesus says to a woman, "*God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*" Worship that pleases the Lord has two ingredients: spirit and truth.

**SPIRIT** = *the condition of my heart toward God* = **LOVE**

**TRUTH** = *what I believe to be true about God* = **FAITH**

Worship is expressing our greatest to the One Who is the greatest. It is humbly directing our affection (**LOVE**) toward the One in Whom we put all hope and trust (**FAITH**). But true worship also has two adversaries: **PRIDE** and **DOUBT**. When pride appears, love for God is replaced by love for self. Then, as we elevate ourselves, doubt in the power of God is not far behind.

In other words, worship requires that we maintain proper perspective of God and proper perspective of ourselves. We stay small, and we see God as He really is. **LESS OF US** means **MORE OF HIM** (John 3)!

So when we come together to worship with the body of Christ, we humbly press in with thanksgiving in our hearts (Psalm 100), intimately aware of how much we need His grace and mercy (**LESS OF US**). We then remember, reflect, and rejoice in the eternal truths about our Lord (**MORE OF HIM**).

Likewise, to live a lifestyle of worship means to put this same love and faith on display in every situation. We show **LESS OF US** when we consider others above ourselves (Phil. 2), and we show **MORE OF HIM** when we speak words that build up the body of Christ (Eph. 4). We show **LESS OF US** by caring for the least among us, and **MORE OF HIM** when we allow our love for Jesus to shine brightly in ways that others can get a taste (Matt. 5).

In the next 21 days, may you discover the joy of living the life for which you were created - a life of worship. As you interact with others in the spirit of humility (**LESS OF YOU**), we are praying that you experience renewed hope and peace as you encounter His presence (**MORE OF HIM**)!



**"Worship is expressing our greatest to the One Who is the greatest."**

# How to Use this Devotional

To get the most out of this devotional, we encourage you to take your time and only cover one entry per day. We suggest the following approach:

## Supplies

- Devotional
- Bible (physical or digital copy)
- A way to journal or take notes (optional)

## Engagement

Whether you are alone or with a group, do your best to eliminate distractions (phone, TV, Internet, etc.).

1. Start with prayer, asking the Lord to speak to you during this time.
2. Slowly read and meditate on the Scripture passage that is referenced.
3. Read the devotional writer's commentary.
4. At the end of each devotion, you will find a section with action points for the day. Under the **MORE OF HIM** heading are steps intended to help you experience the Lord in a practical way. Then, under **LESS OF ME**, you will see a suggested fast for the day. Fasting helps us strip away the things that may be holding us back from experiencing His Spirit to the fullest.
5. Pray for God to give you a pure heart for the day ahead, filling you with His Spirit so that you may live for His glory. Ask Him to transform you into the worshiper He created you to be.

**"Worship** changes the worshiper into the image of the One worshiped." - Jack Hayford

# DAY 1

# Arrival of the Groom

## Read John 3:22-36

In our culture, wedding ceremonies emphasize the arrival of the bride. Everyone waits in anticipation to see how beautiful she'll be. But in Jesus' day, the celebration was built around the arrival of the groom. This made the role of the shoshben - the best man - an especially important one. The shoshben would make sure all arrangements were made, and he served as a go-between for the bride and groom. He would listen patiently for the groom to arrive, and then he would proudly and excitedly announce his arrival at the appropriate time. As soon as the groom appears, the shoshben's role is complete, and he may now join in the celebration.

In today's passage, John actually describes himself in this way. Imagine being the best man for Jesus and His bride - the Church! The call on John's life was simply to prepare the world for the arrival of the Groom. He spent his days teaching and preaching and announcing, "Make straight the way for the Lord!" (**John 1:23**).

And then it happened.

John sees Jesus and immediately takes his rightful place...

*"The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. **He must become greater; I must become less**" (John 3:29-30).*

And that is worship - living for the purpose and glory of God, and, in every opportunity, decreasing our presence so that His presence may be experienced by those around us.

Brad Bowen

## MORE OF HIM

Jesus, our Groom, has vowed to never leave us nor forsake us. He will be with us always. Take a moment to passionately praise Him for His unending faithfulness and love!

## LESS OF ME

**TODAY'S FAST:** Fast from being the center of your world. Throughout your day, pray for humility and tell the Lord you are excitedly and expectantly waiting to experience Him in a fresh way these next 21 days.





**Read Isaiah 6:1-8**

Isaiah was a man who knew the Lord and spoke what He believed the Lord would have him speak. He saw the sin of the people and how far they were from who God called them to be and from walking in intimacy with Him. In fact, if you read chapter 5, Isaiah calls the people out for being self-sufficient, living lives of addiction, loving their sin, walking in confusion, lacking ability to distinguish good from evil, and being full of pride. Sounds a little too familiar, doesn't it?

The scripture doesn't say how Isaiah responded to the death of Uzziah, but I wonder if he responded like I tend to do. I know the Lord. I've been a follower of Jesus for years and love Him with all my heart. Yet, in times of pain it is so easy to focus my attention on myself, to entertain self-pity or feel as if I am the victim of things beyond my control.

In a spectacular vision, God presented Himself to Isaiah full of glory, power, authority, and holiness. This glimpse into the reality of the presence of God knocked Isaiah to his knees in humility and repentance as he saw his own heart clearly, and he realized that the sin he called out in other people was also in him. Miraculously, in the presence of God, Isaiah's guilt was taken away. He was forgiven and he was cleansed. In that very moment, God invited Isaiah to rise up and go share His Word with the people.

It's so easy to get caught up in putting others down or feeling sorry for ourselves, but this is not worship. Worship is bowing low before the Lord God Almighty to acknowledge His overwhelming greatness. It is submitting to Him and rising up to the invitation He offers each day to walk in His power and His strength with His Truth flowing from our heart. The Hebrew word for "Here Am I" is hineni. @aussiedave describes hineni as more than just volunteering for a task. It's agreeing to follow Jesus even if it seems your life is falling apart or you can't see to take your next step - even if you feel you have nothing to offer or are afraid.

"Hineni!" Here am I.

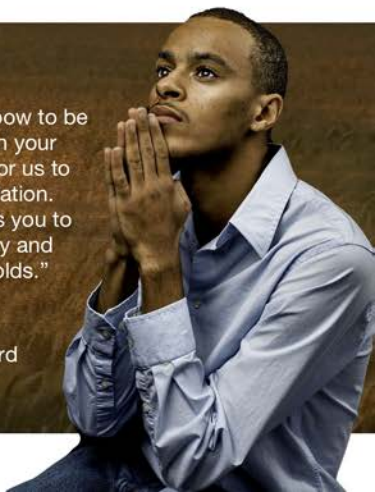
Cathy Owen

**MORE OF HIM**

Worship is about bowing down. You don't have to physically bow to be in a position of surrender, but it's a great position to try. Get on your knees and read verse 3 out loud. Jesus extends an invitation for us to join Him in bringing His kingdom to earth. Respond to the invitation. Agree with Him that He fills you with His Spirit and strengthens you to go forth. Say to Jesus, "Hineni. I will follow You in love, humility and surrender even though I don't know for sure what the future holds."

**LESS OF ME**

**TODAY'S FAST:** Fast from fear. Do one thing today for the Lord that takes you out of your comfort zone.



# DAY 3

# He Has My Heart

## Read Job 38-1-13

Why do bad things happen to good people? Why does God allow evil to exist? How can a loving God allow people to suffer?

These questions surely must have come to the mind of Sarah Edwards when she received word that her husband Jonathan had died at the age of 54 from a smallpox inoculation, just one month after becoming the president of Princeton College in 1758. However, after receiving the news she picked up her pen and wrote these words to her daughter Esther who had suffered the loss of her own husband six months earlier:

*My very dear child, What shall I say! A holy and good God has covered us with a dark cloud. O that we may kiss the rod, and lay our hands upon our mouths! The Lord has done it. He has made me adore his goodness, that we had [your father] so long. But my God lives; and he has my heart. O what a legacy my husband, and your father, has left us! We are all given to God; and there I am, and love to be.*

*Your affectionate mother, Sarah Edwards\**

Sarah Edwards understood the lesson that God teaches us through Job. When Job poses these same questions of suffering to God, like we so often do, God doesn't say, "Job, the reason you are suffering is for this or for that." Instead, in the midst of such powerful anguish, God answers with Himself; He Whose will bends and shapes the earth, He Who spoke and told the sun to split open the night, He Who laid the foundation of the earth and carved its cornerstone. In that moment, Job understood fear of the Lord. He experienced true awe and reverence towards our Father, and he knew that "as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (**Isaiah 55:9**). Job understood and repented not just for what he said, but for what he had become (**Job 42:5-6**).

So often when we are confused by the things of the world, we look for answers to specific questions when, instead, we should look to know God in His holiness, in His righteousness, and in His mercy.

\* *Marriage to a Difficult Man*, by Elizabeth Dodds, p. 196

Daniel Gibson

## MORE OF HIM

Listen to the song "How Great is our God" by Chris Tomlin. Imagine yourself as Job, stricken and in pain, coming to terms with the glory and power of an almighty God.

Reflect today on areas of pain and disappointment in your life. The Lord cares deeply about your hurts and invites you to give them to Him. Today, practice worshiping through your pain by naming each one and thanking God that He is bigger. He has your heart!

## LESS OF ME

**TODAY'S FAST:** Fast from gossip in any form. Only speak what is edifying and encouraging.





# DAY 4

# Extravagant Worship

## Read Luke 7:36-50

Years ago I was visiting my hometown and went for a bike ride. An acquaintance from my youth was driving by and stopped to invite me to her home. I followed her home and was warmly welcomed by a room full of people that I didn't really know. There was music and Bible study and prayer. Toward the end, a lady walked over to me and prayed for me. She didn't know my name, but called me an "extravagant worshiper" like the lady in **Luke 7**, she said. Whoa...I was a young believer, but those words - extravagant worshiper - struck such a chord in my heart. I was filled with joyful anticipation. I **WANTED** to be an extravagant worshiper. Somehow, in that moment, I felt the lady who didn't know me knew me even better than I knew myself. Her prayer touched a deep and genuine desire of my heart - **TO WORSHIP HIM**. Mounting my bike and pedaling home, I pondered the experience. "Wait a second," I thought. "I can't sing. I sure can't dance. How can I be an extravagant worshiper?" Yet, that lady's words in prayer had somehow **NAMED** me - Extravagant Worshiper. I didn't fully get it. But, I couldn't shake it either. Still pedaling, my thoughts turned into a prayer, "I **WANT** to be an extravagant worshiper like the lady in **Luke 7**. I do. But, how, Lord? I haven't exactly led the life that she led...I mean, I have plenty of regular sins, but, well...not like **THAT**. Lord, please show me what this is about."

And for the next several decades of my life, He **HAS** shown me...and He **IS** showing me. And I am brought to my knees often with brokenhearted tears of repentance...I am humbled into worship. Yes, I **AM** the prostitute in **Luke 7**. Every time I go anywhere besides to Him for life, I am she. Anytime I love something or someone else more than Him, I am she...Every time I seek to meet my own needs apart from Him, I am she. **BUT**, every time I come into His Presence heartbroken over my sin and my brokenness and knowing that **ONLY HE** can save and heal and restore and fulfill, I am she. And, there, in **THAT** moment, when He allows me to see my sin against the backdrop of His mercy and grace, I **AM SHE**...I fall to my face at His feet and I worship...extravagantly.

I'm glad He lets me see the depth of my sin and how much I need His mercy and grace. It fills me with a gratitude that makes me want to be extravagant in giving away mercy and grace to others. When people hurt me or let me down or don't meet my expectations, I get the opportunity to give away mercy and grace. That's extravagant worship!

Emily Hall

## MORE OF HIM

Who are you in this Luke 7 story? Simon the Pharisee? The neutral onlooker? Or the sinful, but extravagant worshiper? Think about it. How much did you owe? What debt has the Lord cancelled in your life? Thank Him. Extravagantly. Who has "owed" you for a long time? Ask the Lord to help you to cancel that debt today. That's extravagant worship.

## LESS OF ME

**TODAY'S FAST:** Fast from unforgiveness. If you have been holding a grudge, initiate reconciliation today.





**Read Philippians 3:1-3**

In **Philippians 3**, Paul urges believers to rejoice in the Lord because they are “the circumcision.” What does that mean? Paul means that believers in Christ are the heirs of God’s promises. This is a matter of celebration!

In the Old Testament, circumcision was the physical sign that a man was part of God’s people. It was a major badge of honor and a key way of knowing and showing that a man belonged to Israel and was faithful to God’s law. In the early church, some people (they called themselves the circumcision party) felt that it was so important to be circumcised that even if you trusted Jesus you still had to be circumcised in order to be part of God’s people and be saved. Paul strongly disagreed and clarified that those who belong to God are marked by different characteristics. God’s people are those who worship by the Spirit. They boast in Jesus alone. They do not put their confidence in who they are or what they have done.

Paul understood that Jesus accomplished what no one else ever could. He made it his aim to intimately know Christ and live for His glory. Central to what it means to live a life of worship is being a people who will not let anything hinder us from knowing Christ. We celebrate the glory of Jesus. We rejoice in our identity as the people of God. There are many distractions and false ways of pursuing God but in Christ we have all that we need. He is the only One worthy of our devotion. Our great honor in life is knowing, loving, and belonging to Jesus.

Stephen Adcock

**MORE OF HIM**

Evaluate your defining qualities. Is the fruit of the Spirit evident in your interactions? Use this day to pray for a fresh encounter with the Lord’s Spirit and to repent of thoughts or behaviours that are unfruitful.

**LESS OF ME**

**TODAY’S FAST:** Fast from self-loathing. Remind yourself throughout the day that your identity is defined by Christ. Praise Him for that!



# DAY 6

# Life in the Vine

## Read John 15

In **John 15:5**, Jesus says, "I am the vine and you are the branches. If you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing".

How can we remain in God?

There are opportunities every day for us to remain in Him. We often get distracted thinking about our present circumstances. Worship in any form (singing, praying, giving, painting, dancing, playing an instrument, etc.) changes our perspective. When we acknowledge how magnificent our Heavenly Father is, we begin to see things with His view and not our own. That stressful workplace environment suddenly becomes less difficult. The bitterness you were holding onto after an argument with your spouse begins to subside. The sickness of a loved one gets a little easier to bear. These situations are difficult - even impossible - without God. Jesus says, "Apart from Me you can do nothing!" Conversely, the more we seek God and allow Him to have His way in us, the more fruit we will bear for His glory.

Some versions of the Bible use the word "abide" instead of "remain". That's also where we get the word "abode", another word for "home". Jesus is actually inviting us to make Him our home - the place we rest, the place we are nourished, and the place we experience the unconditional love of family. If God feels distant to you, today we invite you to change your perspective of His love. He is inviting you home!

Mitchell & Carissa McKinney

## MORE OF HIM

Here are some practical ways to remain in Him. Pick at least one to try today:

- Spend time in prayer
- Meditate on His Word
- Memorize a scripture verse
- Meet with someone just to talk about the Lord
- Sing! (It doesn't matter how good you sound!)

## LESS OF ME

**TODAY'S FAST:** Fast from indulging in anything that harms your faith or hinders your spirit.





# DAY 7

# Even if He Does Not

## Read Daniel 3

**Daniel 3** contains a familiar Bible story. Three Hebrew young men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were exiles in a foreign land. Because of the favor of God and their good choices, they fared well in exile...until King Nebuchadnezzar made a golden idol and commanded everyone to fall down and worship it. The three young men refused. Their consequence for not obeying his order was to be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire. Look at their response, found in **verse 17**, to the impending consequence. "Our God Whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire. And He will deliver us out of your hand, O king." These two great statements show the trust and faith that the three young men possessed. However, I think the third statement they made is incredible: "Even if He does not...we are not going to worship the golden image that you have set up."

What a statement of belief, trust, and worship! I want to be an "even if He does not" Christian. I want to be an "even if He does not" worshipper. Living as a follower of Jesus may not be difficult when things are going our way and our prayers seem to be answered. What about when they are not? When faced with our own fiery furnace, will we be "even if He does not" worshippers?

Can I suggest that the purest, deepest, truest, and most God honoring worship is "even if He does not" worship? When facing difficult circumstances, when your prayers seem to be bouncing off the ceiling, or when God feels a million miles away and yet you choose to worship Him anyway and you refuse to run to some other object of worship, you have entered HNL - a 'hole nuther level!

**Verse 25** tells us what King Nebuchadnezzar observed after his consequence was delivered: "Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!" "Even if He does not" worship invites Jesus into your fiery furnace, and it burns off the things that bind you so that you can walk in freedom.

Roy Reeves

## MORE OF HIM

Make a list of some things you are facing right now. What circumstances make up your present fiery furnace? Turn that list into a prayer. Ask God for the changes and interventions you need. Close your prayer time with a faith declaration that no matter the outcomes, you choose not to run to some other object of worship. Make a strong declaration that you choose to worship the one true God. Write "even if He does not" over your list, and spend the rest of your day repeating this phrase to yourself in a spirit of worship.

## LESS OF ME

**TODAY'S FAST:** Fast from all forms of complaining. Speak words of life!



# DAY 8

# Work is Worship

## Read Luke 5:1-11

Peter was doing what he did most everyday. He went to work. Only on this day, Peter's boat - his workplace - would become a place of ministry. Jesus would use Peter's boat as His pulpit. Can you imagine Jesus asking to come to work with you?

That is exactly what God wants to do. God wants you take Him with you everywhere. God has given you gifts and abilities for the purpose of glorifying Him. You have a design and purpose. Each of has a job to do.

**Genesis 2:15** – “The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.”

The Hebrew translation for the word work here is avodah. Avodah is used 289 times in the Old Testament and is translated as “worship,” “serve” and “work.” There is no separation in our worship and work. Our worship is how we live and how we work.

Worship is to take place in the midst of our everyday lives, in our homes, in the office, in the factory, in school. It is how we express our values, morals and convictions. Each one of us has been given a personal mission field to witness to. When we worship God through our work, we are a witness to those around us. Through our work people know who we are and what we believe.

So what is your “boat”?

Where do you spend your day, make your living, and live your life?  
How can you worship God there?

Michelle Bowen

## MORE OF HIM

Today take time to write down the names of the people God has placed around you. This can be in your home, neighborhood, workplace, anywhere you spend your day. Then take your list to God in prayer. Ask the Lord to give you opportunities to minister and encourage. May your work become an act of worship!

So “let every detail in your lives - words, actions, whatever - be done in the name of the Master, Jesus.” (Colossians 3:17 MSG).

## LESS OF ME

**TODAY'S FAST:** Fast from thinking negatively about work - begin to view it as worship and see how it changes your attitude!





# DAY 9

# Heart Song

## Read Acts 16:16-40

In the book, *The Insanity of God* by Nik Ripken, we are told the true story of Dmitri, a believer in the former Soviet Union, at a time when faith was openly opposed and policed by the government. Dmitri began hosting worship services in his home. Unfortunately, he was discovered by communist officials – then tortured and imprisoned for 17 years. While in prison, Dmitri began every morning by standing up, facing the east, lifting his hands and singing what he called his ‘Heart Song’ - a praise offering to God. He did this despite being the only believer amongst 1500 other prisoners who hurled insults and even their own waste at him. He consistently sang and wrote down Scriptures and songs every time he found a scrap of paper. After being discovered with one of his papers, guards led him to what would have been his execution – until 1500 prisoners stood, lifted their hands and sang Dmitri’s ‘Heart Song’ to the terror of the prison guards. He was soon after released and reunited with his family.

Paul and Silas were in a very similar situation. After casting an evil spirit out of a woman, they were beaten severely and imprisoned. They too had a “Heart Song”. They raised their voices in praise to the One True God and to their Savior. The circumstances didn’t matter. God’s glory and mercy were enough to keep them going through this unexpected, hard time. Their worship in the face of fear and uncertainty was strong enough to convert their own jailer. Like Dmitri, their scoffers would become their supporters. Praising through pain unlocks a greater level of faith. If we can choose to lift our hands in worship in the midst of our darkest hour, like Paul and Silas and Dmitri, we learn to see the faithfulness of God in all things.

Oh, and Dmitri’s son is now serving as the chaplain in the very prison that his father was held. Talk about a miracle!

Nick & Kelsey Selph

## MORE OF HIM

Think of your favorite hymn or worship song. Today, make that your ‘Heart Song’. Whenever you are frustrated today, instead of responding with anger, try pausing to invite God into the moment. You might even want to try singing the song - just see how it impacts the way you respond to the situation. Now take a moment to pray for those around the world who are unable to worship freely and carry them in your heart throughout the day.

## LESS OF ME

**TODAY'S FAST:** Fast one meal and pray for those suffering for their commitment to Christ.



# DAY 10 Everything Everywhere

## Read Psalms 149 & 150

**Psalm 149** tells us we are to sing a new song to our Lord and to not be ashamed to praise Him in our church gatherings. We are to praise Him on different types of musical instruments. We are to sing to Him a new song. This can be one you make up on your own and sing to Him in your personal prayer and worship time. He loves us, even delights in us, so why would we not praise Him? As we lift up His name, His praise will be used as a weapon to make the enemy run away.

If you knew you could make the enemy flee from your life, wouldn't you do all you could to make that happen? Well, lift God up in praise right now, and as you do, depression, guilt, fear, loneliness, etc. all will begin to run away as you focus your heart on Him. Join me today in lifting up praise, rejoicing, and thanksgiving to our God. We are not only encouraged to praise Him in church, but every day we are to live a lifestyle of giving Him our praise and worship. He alone is worthy of all we have to give. Praise Him!

**Psalm 150** also encourages us to lift our praise to Him everywhere and at all times. There are different ways we are to praise Him. We are to praise Him for his greatness and for His acts of power. It tells of several musical instruments used for praise including trumpets, harps, guitars, cymbals, which are part of a drum set, even singing and dancing!

When is the Lord worthy of praise? All the time!!!

Stewart Demott

## MORE OF HIM

You may not be a gifted singer or musician, but you are gifted. Consider the things that are special about you. Now thank God for that gift and ask Him to show you a way that can be used for His glory. Today, worship Him in a new way.

It may be uncomfortable at first, but stretch yourself.

Sing louder than you ever have before. Dance.

Shout. Make a beat. Whatever you do, lift it to God as a gift of worship. He is worthy!

## LESS OF ME

**TODAY'S FAST:** Fast from secular music and replace it with music that glorifies God.





# DAY 11

# Picking up the Guitar

## Read Psalm 95:1-7

Liliane, a long time family friend, was diagnosed with cancer. We were all optimistic and just knew that God would choose to heal her on this side of heaven. She and her husband Joe were faithful to God, to their church and to their teenage children. Surely God would not let this faithful woman of God die from cancer.

A few months into Liliane's treatment plan, it didn't look good. It was at this time that Lance and I went to visit Liliane in the hospital. We got to spend some time with Joe while Liliane was having some tests run. Joe was exhausted. His heart was beaten up and he was weary. As we were chatting, he told us that he and Liliane used to lead worship together, but he hadn't played his guitar since the diagnosis. I suddenly felt the Lord was telling me to say something that seemed heartless and inconsiderate. I argued in my mind with God how cruel it was and before I realized it...the phrase fell out of my mouth! I said 'Joe, you have to pick up your guitar again. You have to worship through this and over Liliane.' I was ready for him to slap me. I would have slapped me! After a moment of dead silence, he said, 'You're right'.

When Lance and I returned to the hospital later that day, we walked into the room and saw the most beautiful sight. Joe had his guitar and was sweetly singing over his wife!

I would love to say that this story ended in Liliane being healed and telling everyone about it. Instead, she continued to suffer and held onto life for a few more weeks. But Joe continued to sing and pray over her. This worship stirred up joy and that joy became his strength.

Liz Ruis

## MORE OF HIM

What is your "guitar"? What is the thing you've laid down that used to bring God glory and you joy? I want to gently ask, "Is it time to pick it up again?"

Recapture that heart of a worshiper and return to your first love. At some point today, pick up that old "guitar". Sing a new song to God, and experience the joy of the Lord as it washes over you.

## LESS OF ME

**TODAY'S FAST:** Fast from worry. Give your burdens to God, and worship over all your worries.



# DAY 12

# He is Faithful

## Read Psalm 100

Imagine sitting at a traffic light, waiting for it to turn from red to green. The light changes, and you get ready to go on through the intersection, only to have your vehicle stall for a moment. Aggravated, you decide to give the gas pedal an extra push, but at that moment another vehicle barrels through the intersection, running the red light from the other side of the road.

Once you realize you would have been in an accident had your vehicle moved when the light originally turned green, you would probably pause to give thanks to God that He kept you safe.

In this Psalm by David, he calls us to give thanks to God in any and every situation. David reminds us that we are God's creation when he says, "It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture" (**verse 3**). What joy to know we are God's and that He wants us to remember we are His children!

As worshipers, we are to give Him all our praise. It can be difficult to worship in every moment, but when this age comes to a close and all is made new, we will then have true perspective. We will finally see clearly, and in that moment, we will all surely know:

*"For the Lord is good and His love endures forever;  
His faithfulness continues through all generations!"*

John & Ashleigh Oxford

## MORE OF HIM

Take a listen to the song "My Story" by Big Daddy Weave. The song describes how our lives should be pointing to Jesus at all times. I have been taught for years that prayer should often begin with praise, giving thanks to God for all He has done. Commit this day to maintaining a heart of thankfulness. Regardless of our circumstances, we have so many reasons to worship. Every time you think of a blessing today, stop and give Him praise!

## LESS OF ME

**TODAY'S FAST:** Fast from anger. Recognize trials as an opportunity to display grace and forgiveness. Worship Him through your attitude!





# DAY 13     On the Wings of a Dove

## Read Genesis 12:8

When I was just a small girl my parents would take my sisters and me to a friend's house where many would come together for an evening of fun. They would bring food and games for us kids, and the grown-ups would all laugh and talk on the front porch till the sun went down. Then they would bring out the guitars and harmonicas and we would all sing for hours. I have forgotten the names of the people who came, even the kind gentleman who was our host. But I distinctly remember the song he would sing – even as a child it pierced my heart.

*On the wings of a snow-white dove  
He sends His pure sweet love,  
A sign from above  
On the wings of a dove*

Now that I am all “grown up”, I better understand the lyrics and my emotional response to the song. For me, this would be one of my first memories of His, the Holy Spirit's, presence in my life. Little did I know then, that there would be many, many more life experiences where I would encounter Him in a way that would leave a permanency on my soul. There was that time at a prayer conference in Atlanta, and then that day at the little prayer chapel on the back of the church property, and the afternoon on the back porch of a cabin in the Great Smoky Mountains. As I grow closer to Him, they come more often. Now I find myself looking for opportunities to invite Him in, such as the small flower garden I planted last summer. I walk there each morning inviting Him to join me. He always does!

Oswald Chambers says, “We must ‘pitch our tents’ where we will always have quiet times with Him, however noisy our lives may be.”

Diane Walden

## MORE OF HIM

Perhaps setting aside a time each day to pursue the presence of God is new for you. If so, have fun today thinking about your place - the place you'd like to go each day to escape the busyness of life and to simply encounter the Holy Spirit. Spend time in that place today and linger long enough to hear His voice. I promise it will be worth it.

## LESS OF ME

**TODAY'S FAST:** Fast from the noise of life today. Set aside 15 minutes to sit in silence, asking the Lord to speak to your heart.



# DAY 14

# The Hands of Jesus

## Read Matthew 5:13-16

Years ago I was driving on the north side of Tallahassee. I remember approaching a homeless man standing under an overpass and holding a sign asking for help. As my vehicle got closer, my prayers grew stronger. I prayed that God would send someone by to help the man who appeared to be having some struggles. Fervently I prayed for him. Just as soon as I passed the man I heard God say to me, "I sent someone, but you passed him by."

I was too busy to stop. My wants were more important than the homeless man's needs. Many times I have thought about my younger self who had an opportunity to put God's love on display. If I could go back, I'd definitely stop and see if I could offer some assistance to his situation.

Mark Cunningham

## MORE OF HIM

Today I want to compel you to put God's love on display. Look around and ask God to show you the wants that you have prioritized over someone's true need.

Meet that need, deny yourself and let your good deeds glorify the Father!

## LESS OF ME

**TODAY'S FAST:** Fast one meal and, instead, pay for someone else's meal. Tell them you just wanted to express God's love.





# DAY 15

# The Hiding Place

## Read Isaiah 57:15

As a mom, I can successfully plan long car trips and fun activities down to the smallest detail, but when my 3-year-old starts counting in a game of hide-and-seek, and time is running out, I panic and hastily duck into the smallest most uncomfortable hiding spot. This particular day, in a moment of adrenaline, I crouched into a cramped dark corner under some hanging dresses in my closet. About 7 minutes in, I was beginning to feel my legs burn from my hiding position and I was getting impatient. As I waited to be found, the irony struck me. This was the most alone time I had experienced in quite a while! My two kids have the unique ability to find me anywhere I am in the house at all times. The only exception appears to be during a good 'ole game of hide-and-seek where I often sit alone squeezed between a shelf and the wall or behind a chair in the most cramped spot I could have possibly chosen. In this moment of revelation, I could hear my kids happily searching the house, and I knew I was in the wrong spot. I quickly devised a plan for the next round that involved a dark laundry room and a full load of clothes getting folded in peace.

Have you ever found yourself hiding in the wrong place?

**Psalm 91** says, "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty." The word used for shelter is also the word for hiding place or secret place. Why do we hide in sin when we can hide in God? The hiding place of the Most High is safe. It's a refuge and a fortress where you will not fear because of circumstances around you. It's a place of love for God, deliverance, and salvation. That's where I want to hide. Because of Jesus, that's where I belong. So how can I get there?

In today's passage we read that God is in two places. He is in a high and holy place. He's in a holy place that we cannot attain to despite all our striving and trying to "get it right". And He's with the lowly and the contrite where we can go. He's not in the middle where we think we are just okay. If we want to meet God...if we want to hide in Him...if we want to be cleansed - we better humble ourselves and get way down low. This is where God is waiting for us. Keep going lower to find God.

This is where worship starts - when we meet God in our brokenness and allow Him to cleanse us. When we give Him our whole selves. We stop hiding *from* Him and hide *in* Him. We allow His powerful blood to wash over our sin. When we get on our knees and confess our sin to God and receive His forgiveness, we can worship God for His beautiful, underserved grace.

Kristin Adcock

## MORE OF HIM

Find a quiet place and get on your knees. Confess your sins to God. Ask for forgiveness and for strength. Take a deep breath in and receive His free grace. Thank God for being a loving and patient Father. When you seek Him, you will find Him!

## LESS OF ME

**TODAY'S FAST:** Fast from complacency. Take an intentional step to encounter the Lord today. Replace something from your normal schedule to spend extra time seeking the Lord.



# DAY 16

# Raised by Wolves

## Read Psalm 103:1-5

In the late 1800s, a group of hunters in the forests of India froze at the sight of a passing pack of wolves. To their disbelief, among the pack was a small child - a 6-year-old boy they would later name Sanichar. After rescuing the boy they took him to a local orphanage, but unfortunately Sanichar just couldn't adapt to life as a human. He would only eat meat and even sharpened his teeth on the bones. He never learned to speak and his communication was limited to just a few animal sounds. He would go on to live another 20 years but never developed many traits of a normal person.

Sanichar never got to experience the joy of living life the way it was intended.

It sounds extreme, but you and I aren't too different from Sanichar. We were created to live a life of **WORSHIP** — and yet, most of us never fully understand what that means. We, too, have been raised by wolves. Our instincts and habits don't align with our purpose. The world has taught us counterfeit versions of worship. We give our affections to the mirage of happiness and wonder why emptiness creeps into our soul.

At least for today, let's change that. Let us live not for ourselves, but for the glory of the One Who loves to fill our hearts to overflowing.

Brad Bowen

## MORE OF HIM

If you can access the song, "10,000 Reasons" by Matt Redmond, take the time to prayerfully listen to it. Let the words sink in. Imagine yourself as the writer of the Psalm, and you are reminding your soul to spend this day blessing the Lord.

Reread today's scripture and put to memory the benefits of knowing God. Throughout your day, capture as many moments as you can to pause and simply thank Him for His love. Thank Him for His power to save, heal, restore, and fulfill.

## LESS OF ME

**TODAY'S FAST:** Fast from a worldly pleasure. Choose either sugar, caffeine, sexual immorality, entertainment, or fast food.





# DAY 17 Worship from Your Back

## Read Matthew 15:7 & Psalm 40

Apathy is the enemy of worship. It is vain to fake worship when you actually feel indifferent towards God. To not have feelings strongly against or for God is the most miserable place to find yourself. Waking up every day knowing He loves you deeply but not feeling like His love is very impactful in your life is dreadful.

Like David, sometimes we find ourselves in a pit waiting for the Lord. When you find yourself here, the most important thing you can do is simplify your life, pray, and wait for the Lord. Simplify by turning the radio off in the car, stop watching TV in the evenings, starve yourself of anything that allows you to wallow in your apathy and bury your indifference in entertainment, and instead face it head on. Pray by asking God to show you His grace and allow you to feel again. "Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?" (**Psalm 85:6**). Command your soul like the psalmist, "Bless the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name, forget not his benefits..." (**Psalm 103**). Wait for the Lord and so fight your apathy, because the very act of fighting apathy with the goal of being intimate with God IS worship. It isn't ideal, but worship it is. An apathetic heart that longs and seeks to worship God fully is a worshipful heart fighting from its back.

David closes his Psalm by saying, "But may all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; may those who love Your salvation say continually, 'Great is the Lord'" (**Psalm 40:16**). If you are at a place where you feel like your worship is lip service and there's no heart in it, but you long for God to restore your soul back to a place of intimacy with Him, then worship by acknowledging you feel nothing and ask God more than you've ever asked Him to "restore the joy of His salvation" (**Psalm 51:12**).

Christian Edwards

## MORE OF HIM

Many of us have a regular routine of taking in entertainment (evening TV, morning news, radio on the way to work, social media, etc.). If this is you, be intentional today about breaking the cycle. Instead of overindulging on entertainment, enjoy the stillness of the presence of the Lord.

## LESS OF ME

**TODAY'S FAST:** Fast from entertainment & social media and replace it with an act of worship. Maybe take a walk in nature and enjoy time with your Father.



# DAY 18

# The Greatest Life

## Read Matthew 25:31-46

This November I will have the privilege of turning 89-years-old. As I reflect back over the decades, one of the most eventful years of my life was 1949. Prior to my nineteenth birthday: Graduation from Junior College, five weeks of summer stock theater acting on Cape Cod, and then back to Cairo for a stunning surprise. The school superintendent asked if I would accept the principalship of Spence School (a crossroad community south of Pelham). It had eight grades, six teachers, and a take-home salary of \$119 per month.

The Lord doesn't make mistakes. He knew that little school, those students, those teachers, and a year of soul-searching decisions would change my life forever. The children - many having lived within the poverty level - displayed gratitude for everything: small lunches, used and reused pencils, paper torn out of notebooks. They showed a voracious desire for attention from their "superiors". They volunteered for even the most menial jobs when they realized I had grown to care deeply for them.

Prior to that out-of-the-blue job offer I had been all about fame, money, and glamour. My aspirations a year later had made an about face. Now my life HAD to be about making a difference in the world! Taking care of others became my life's priority. Now almost 70 years later, I wouldn't change a thing as I reflect on a career in education, faithfulness to the church and the body of Christ, annual Christmas toy drives to help families in need, and countless moments of humbly serving the Lord by blessing others. A life of service is truly the greatest life possible.

Thank you, Lord! Thank you!

Chuck Bowen

## MORE OF HIM

Look for an opportunity to bless a perfect stranger today. You could buy their lunch, pay for their groceries, or simply give them some other type of blessing. Rediscover the joy of giving. It is an act of worship!

## LESS OF ME

**TODAY'S FAST:** Fast from selfishness, and thank those you love for the role they play.





# DAY 19

# More Than a Song

## Read Philippians 2:1-11

Worship is so much more than a song. It is our everyday heart posture. We should begin each day with a grateful heart and honor God throughout our day. Every word we speak should be only to glorify our Father. Our conversations should reflect our love for Him and we should always be an encouragement to others. That is actually a form of worship in itself. **Philippians 2:5** says that our attitude should be the same as Christ's, Who loved us all the way to the cross.

Humility is foundational to our worship life. We should never think of ourselves higher than anyone else, and we should use our strengths and gifts to edify the body of Christ. When we walk in humility, we can worship out of a pure and humble heart.

Think of a time that someone approached you with great humility. Maybe they apologized for hurting you. Maybe they simply wanted to bless you in some way - not asking for anything in return. That kind of love is so endearing. It breaks down walls and opens our heart to love. That's the gift the Lord wants us to give the world - spreading His amazing love and changing the atmosphere everywhere we go.

**Philippians 2:10-11** tells us that, at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow and every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord. We want our hearts to be ready to lead those around us to Jesus. Let us be encouragers and point others to Christ by our words and actions - this is worship!

Stephanie Moses

## MORE OF HIM

Walk in humility today, looking for ways to encourage others:

- Thank your meal servers for doing a great job (leave a big tip!)
- Tell a friend how much he or she means to you
- Write a note telling your kids why they make you proud
- Let a co-worker know what you admire most about them
- Remind a stranger that the Lord loves them

You have no idea how your words might bring life to a hurting heart!

## LESS OF ME

**TODAY'S FAST:** Fast from the strings you attach to the relationships in your life. Simply express your love, expecting nothing in return.



# DAY 20

# Worship as Warfare

## Read Romans 12:1

In 2005 during the height of the insurgency in Iraq, my unit found itself chasing a wanted man. Due to his listing as one of the Coalition's top tier targets, we spent numerous man hours trying to capture the leader of a vast network of combatants and skilled bomb makers. Unfortunately, due to his endless supply of resources and connection with the local populace, he stayed one step ahead of us. Regardless of the amount of personnel dedicated to conducting night raids, road blocks or deliberate missions, we weren't able to capture our foe. After several weeks we were growing concerned that our target had left the area and our efforts hadn't been effective. However, during a road block, a young boy ran out to our vehicles clutching his hand and thumb that had been mauled in a water pump accident. We couldn't find the parents or anyone that would speak to us about the boy, so we decided to bring a medevac helicopter into our sector in order to fly the boy to our treatment facility. We weren't sure if we could save the boy's thumb, but we wanted to try. After surgery and a few days of recovery, we brought the child back to the place we'd found him and asked to speak to the tribal sheik to ensure he was aware of all that had transpired. To our amazement the sheik was not only the father of the young man, he was also assisting the high value target to ensure he stayed hidden during the operations we'd conducted around his land. He asked us why we'd offered to assist the child of the enemy, so we told him that true love doesn't see friend or foe when a child is in need. The man began to cry and told us he'd never experienced this type of love. While we were walking away, he chased us down and gave us all the details on our high value target. Amazingly, it wasn't the vast amount of offensive missions that led to the capture of our target; it was an act of love.

Scripture reminds us that our battle is not against flesh and blood but against rulers and authorities of the unseen world (**Ephesians 6:12**). Worship can also be warfare as it changes the atmosphere and brings light to dark places.

Brian Lassetter

## MORE OF HIM

Today, practice spiritual warfare by praying against the work of the real enemy in your life. For any tough circumstance you are facing, grab a Bible verse or song that you can hold onto and worship over that situation.

## LESS OF ME

**TODAY'S FAST:** Fast from control. All day long, whatever you face, first acknowledge that it belongs to the Lord, and ask Him to have His way.





# DAY 21

# Withholding Nothing

## Read Genesis 22:1-19

Earlier this year, one of our daughters, her husband and our only grandchild sold most of their possessions, packed up what little remained and moved across the globe to share the love of Christ in a culture where it is illegal to convert to the Christian faith - where some people have been killed by their own families for believing in Christ. Our kiddos lived with us in the final weeks before departure, so I grew accustomed to my granddaughter's precious arms reaching up for Gramcee to hold her, sweet night-night kisses and morning hugs. When the moment came for the final good-bye to be uttered, my heart felt like it was plunged into a shredder, and I closed my eyes that night, longing for just one more night-night routine. I felt drawn to **Genesis 22**, the story of Abraham being called to sacrifice Isaac, and I read it with a new lens.

After what seemed like a lifetime of waiting, Abraham finally saw his calling and God's promise fulfilled in the birth of his son Isaac. He delighted in the boy and dreamed of the plans God would unfold for their future generations through Isaac. However, when God called Abraham's name this time, the words that followed must have felt like a bad dream - "take your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering." Without hesitation, Abraham packed up everything needed for a sacrifice, with the exception of an animal whose body would coincide with the knife and headed out. As he reached the spot and faced the impending loss of his most precious treasure, his description of the moment captured my heart: "I and the boy will go over there and WORSHIP..." Wait! There was no upbeat song to lift his spirits or any measure of a feel-good moment, but Abraham described this most agonizing encounter as WORSHIP. No swaying back and forth to the beat of a drum, but arising out of Abraham's heart, we see this raw and unfiltered response to a God he had come to believe and to trust with ALL of his being and belongings. WORSHIP.

Perhaps God's perspective on worship pierced my heart even more deeply - because you have not withheld your son and because you have obeyed my voice...I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU. Not that I must receive anything from the experience of worship because God alone is the worthy recipient, but He didn't stop giving at the blessing. "And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Now that's something I can grab hold of - if only I am willing to let go of the things I hold so tightly. Withhold nothing from the Lord, but offer all of yourself to Him in obedience, and watch what power is released over your enemies and into your difficult circumstances. WORSHIP.

Cheryle Reeves

## MORE OF HIM

Will you choose to believe that God is worthy and withhold nothing from Him? Take some time to think about the people and things that are dear to you. Visualize yourself holding each one in your hand and offering them to the Lord. Repent of any areas where you are exercising control. Receive and release the blessing and power of God over your loved ones and over the nations! Throughout the day today, pause and - with hands open - worship the Lord by telling Him that all you have belongs to Him.

## LESS OF ME

**TODAY'S FAST:** End this experience by fasting from food all day. Ingest only water. You can do it! Let the hunger remind you of your desperate need for Him - the Sustainer of life.



# Conclusion

## A Living Sacrifice

We pray these past 21 days have been helpful and fruitful. We hope you have been stretched, but we also hope your relationship with the Lord has been renewed. You have reached the end of the devotional, but living a life of worship has only just begun.

As a believer in Christ, we are called to offer ourselves as a "living sacrifice - holy and pleasing to God". This is what the Lord calls proper worship (**Romans 12**). There's something interesting about a living sacrifice - because it is still alive, it has the ability to get off the altar! We were created to worship, but from this point forward it will require a daily decision to submit - our emotions, our will, our plans, our everything - to the Lord. We daily pick up our cross and, as we die to ourselves, we make room to see Jesus glorified.

Any sacrifice we make on earth pales in comparison to the sacrifice He made on our behalf. In the end, when we see Him face to face, it will surely be worth it.

Less of us. More of Him. Let it be so forever.









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