



Devotions
for the
God Guy
A 365-Day Journey

Michael DiMarco

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Introduction

The God Guy wants what every other guy wants: to be accepted and respected. He wants love and laughter. He wants adventure and ease. But his life, like everyone else's, isn't perfect. It's messy and lonely, it's stressful and hard, but one thing sets his life apart, one thing makes his life amazingly different from others, and that's his heart. His heart is set on something above, something greater than him that gives him strength and hope. He has found the truth, and the truth is that God lives. He lives above and he lives within. The God Guy calls him Father, he calls him God, and he calls him his salvation.

Because of that **the God Guy wants more than anything else to hear from him.** He wants his words to ring in his ears. This makes a God Guy crave more from God. It makes a guy look for him, listen for him, and wait for him. When other people are sleeping, the God Guy is waking up to wait and watch for him. He knows that a day that starts off in God's presence is better than a day when he is forgotten or pushed aside for other more pressing things. Sure he has a lot to do, sure he is tired, but when a guy is hungry, he's got to feast on what fills him up the most.

If your life isn't what you would like and you wish you had more of God in your life, then you're on the right path. A desire for more is the first step. **Your willingness to be uncomfortable, to be put out, to be tired all mean spiritual success.** Each day you are given a finite amount of time, and often it doesn't seem like enough time to do all the things you have to get done. That can mean that God, in his graciousness and kindness, gets pushed to the bottom of the list. All that does is ensure that you will do life today on your own strength and not on his, and that leads to exhaustion and stress. But when you start your day off waiting for your orders from him and watching to see what he wants you to do next, life becomes almost effortless. Time seems to become more abundant.

In his book *The School of Obedience*, Andrew Murray calls this time spent with God **the "morning watch."** He challenges students all over the world to be faithful enough to devote a significant amount of time to the one they love the most, and to give their most important time at that. Take a look at his call to begin living a life fully devoted to the one you love the most by practicing the morning watch:

You tell me there are many Christians who are content with ten minutes or a quarter of an hour. There are, but you will certainly not as a rule find them strong Christians. And the Students' Movement is pleading with God, above everything, that He would meet to train a race of devoted, whole-hearted young men and women. Christ asked great sacrifices of His disciples; He has perhaps asked little of you as yet. But now He allows, He invites, He longs for you to make some. Sacrifices make strong men. Sacrifices help wonderfully to wrench us away from earth and self-pleasing, and lift us heavenward. Do not try to pare down the time limit of the morning watch to less than the half-hour.

There can be no question about the possibility of finding the time. Ten minutes from sleep, ten from company or amusement, ten from lessons. How easy where the heart is right, hungering to know God and His will perfectly!

If you think you are too busy to spend a half hour with God, make a list of everyone you spend more time with in conversation during the day and list God below them. Yikes, right? My hope is that with the help of *Devotions for the God Guy* and maybe even the book *God Guy* and the *God Guy Bible*, you will find the passion and desire to devote more of your time to the pursuit of God and watching for him each day. But if you are ready right now, then by all means go for it. **Give your time to him and watch how it impacts your day and even your life.** As you do you will notice that your emotions are less explosive, your fear diminishes, and your stress lessens. The more time you spend with God, the more things you can actually get done. If you want to spend your day in devotion to God, in obedience, and as far away from sin as possible, then you have to get close to him, talk with him, and listen to him.

I pray that God will give you the desire for more of him and the urgency to wake before the sun. Pay attention to your sleep pattern—if you find yourself awake in the early morning, then consider it his calling you to his side. Crawl out of bed and dive in. If you aren't sure what to do, consider reading your daily devotion and then praising him and thanking him for who he is. Confess your sins and offer your repentance, then dive into his Word. Read. Study. If you need help knowing what to read, pick up the *God Guy Bible* and use the guides in the back. Get yourself some good worship music; it can really help you to get into the worship mood and draw you closer to him.

There is not one right way to devote your time to God. If this doesn't work for you, then try something else. If you have the *God Guy Bible*, you'll find a lot of ideas for study in the front of it, so check that out. Just don't delay. If you want more of him, then now is your time and this is your call. Devote yourself to more than a superficial reading of these devos—read, pray, study, and listen. When you do, you'll find your faith growing deeper and your love growing stronger.

I am praying for you, God Guy. **I pray that God will be your everything** and that you will discover his true worth. If you'd like, come by GodGuy.com and hang out. Tell me how your morning watch time is going. Share your ideas for study and get more ideas yourself. All for one and one for all! Let us lean on one another as we make this walk of faith. I look forward to hearing from you. Enjoy your God Guy journey.

Michael

Obedience and Grace

I don't reject God's kindness. If we receive God's approval by obeying laws, then Christ's death was pointless.

Galatians 2:21

When it comes to God's Word, there are two popular lines of thought. One is that your salvation depends on doing all that it says. This is called legalism, and it's wrong. Salvation doesn't come from anything other than the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When you turn your life over to him and make him your Lord, then you are saved. Period. The end.

The other line of thinking when it comes to God's Word is that because of his grace, or great kindness, we are free to break the rules because his grace is relentless and he'll forgive us for it all, so why worry about it? This kind of thinking goes like this: "I really want to do this sinful thing, and since it's too hard to say no, I'm just gonna do it and then ask for forgiveness later." This way of thinking is just as bad as legalism, and it becomes a way of life that is contradictory to God's Word. God's grace isn't cheap, and it's not meant to be abused or used as a loophole to sin.

The truth about God's grace and your salvation is that you don't need to keep any rules to be saved or to keep yourself saved, but you love him because of what he's done for you. And out of that love flows your obedience to his Word. Only God himself gives

you the power to keep his law. People who try to keep it on their own are gonna fail; it's just too hard. But through the help of the Holy Spirit, you can be faithful.

The law is powerless to save you and powerless to change you, but as you fall more and more in love with God, you will find yourself changing more and more into the image of Christ. That's because of his Holy Spirit in you. As you become more like Christ, you will naturally be pulled into a fascination with God's Word. You will want more and more of its life-giving message. You will want to know more about the God who saved you so that he may be the only one you serve, and you will find following his law becoming your joy and not a chore.

As you read God's Word, remind yourself of the gospel message. Speak it to yourself. Remember the life of Christ, his death, his burial, and his resurrection. And know that only this unmatched sacrifice saved you. Your life is a miracle. Your mind being opened to the life of Christ in you is a miracle. Your God has reached down and placed his hand on your shoulder, and because of that you are different. If you don't feel different or believe you are different, then take some time to read God's Word. Get to know him and his unfathomable kindness in that while you were dead because of your failure, he made you alive together with Christ (see Eph. 2:5).

Nothing can keep you from this salvation but your own decision not to accept it. It is there for you today: accept it and your life will be forever changed. What you could not do before, you will do today. What you were ruled by yesterday, you will be free from now. God promises to save you—all you have to do is believe it.

If the light hasn't come on for you yet and you aren't sure if you are saved or not, stop by www.godguy.com and do some digging. You can start to answer the question of your salvation. Don't put it off. Start today to realize the amazing kindness of God and how freely he offers it to you.

The man and his wife . . . hid from the LORD God among the trees in the garden. The LORD God called to the man and asked him, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden. I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid."

Genesis 3:8–10

The world might tell you that you are a victim. You were hurt, abused, rejected, and abandoned, and that's why you have issues, addictions, and drama in your life. But **when you believe that your messed-up life is because of something beyond your control, you give away the power over your own life that you so desperately want. As long as you are busy blaming someone else for your life, you'll never be free.** You'll never have control, and you'll never take responsibility for yourself.

Part of becoming a God Guy is choosing to stop running away from the stuff that will make you more holy and happy, and that means being honest about your role in your own messed-up life, no matter who started it. It's called confession, and confession is good stuff. It purifies the soul because it gets to the bottom of what's going on in yourself without worrying about what someone else did or didn't do. Confession agrees with God and his Word about sin and says to him, "You are holy and I want to be holy too." It says, "No matter what others do or have done, I'm siding with God and living a life that pleases him because I know that's his will." And when you do that, you'll have all the protection and hope you need. Don't accept the pattern of avoiding honest confession like the first people did or like the world around you does. Confession might hurt, and it will probably feel totally uncomfortable and even dangerous, but the truth is, it's the safest and healthiest thing you could do. Confessing is good for the soul, and it proves that you don't belong to yourself but to God.

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The man answered, "That woman, the one you gave me, gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Then the LORD God asked the woman, "What have you done?" "The snake deceived me, and I ate," the woman answered.

Genesis 3:12–13

When someone makes you mad, who is more to blame, them or you? After all, if they hadn't done what they did, then you wouldn't have to get all mad. Or if someone tempts you to do something you know you're not supposed to do and you do it, whose fault is it? Where does the blame lie? The truth is that at the first sign of trouble, the human mind tends to look for someone to blame. The mind is like a super detective: always getting to the bottom of things, always searching to figure out who started it and who is responsible for the mess we're in.

So it's not surprising that blame was the first response to the first spiritual mess people got into. Adam and Eve both blamed someone else instead of taking responsibility. Was it the snake's fault? Would they have taken a bite without him? It's hard to say. But either way, the result of pointing a finger at the "real" problem wasn't quite what they had hoped.

When you blame others for your mess-ups or misery, you miss out on the one thing that can help you, and that's taking responsibility. Taking responsibility for the things you say, do, and think is the first step in the life of faith. When you confess your sin and accept Christ, you are taking responsibility, and suddenly something amazing happens: he takes responsibility for you as well. And presto! You have found all you wanted by doing the very thing you didn't want to do—accepting responsibility for your own life. If Adam and Eve hadn't tried to shift the focus off themselves, would life have been different for them? We'll never know, but what we do know is that blaming others doesn't please God.

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Enoch walked with God; then he was gone because God took him.

Genesis 5:24

The test of your faith is not in the amazing moments but in the boring and mundane ones. Your true faith shows through when you can be happy when you aren't in the spotlight and when no one of any importance is looking on. That's when your true character is revealed. When you are with someone who can't do anything for you, who you really are comes through. When you aren't trying to impress someone you think is important, then the real you comes out.

So who are you when no one is looking? And who are you when the people you are with can't do anything for you? Do you notice a different character than the one that shows itself when the spotlights are on or the popular people are around? Only you can judge, since you are in both situations, but take a look at your home life versus your social life. Are you less holy, kind, and compassionate at home with the people who know you and can't improve your standing? Or are you just the same? Why is it easier to be cranky with your family than your friends? Usually it's because you know they can't do much for you as far as your social life goes. You aren't trying to impress them like you are your friends and even acquaintances. But who you are in your most unimpressive moments is who you truly are.

The God Guy is the same no matter who he is with, and if he sees some differences, he's willing to get to the bottom of it. He doesn't blame his failures on the people around him but on his own moral mistakes, and so he does something about it. When it's all about you and not them, you have the power to change. So take an inventory of your life and see if there are two you's, and if so, decide which you is better and ditch the other one. Your life will be better, and so will the lives of the people around you.

The LORD said to Noah, "Go into the ship with your whole family because I have seen that you alone are righteous among the people of today."

Genesis 7:1

God's commands don't always make sense. They sound unrealistic, unsafe, and crazy at times. Build an ark in the middle of town? Spend your money on the poor? Turn the other cheek when bad people hurt you? Pray for people who persecute you? **Sometimes the things God asks you to do are going to hurt, and they might even make you look crazy.** But you have to decide now, before that time comes, if you're gonna do what he says no matter how it looks or how crazy it seems or if you're gonna run everything through your "common sense" filter.

You get it all backwards when you use common sense or the world's ideas of right and wrong as the final say on what you're going to do or think. **Relying on your own smarts is rejecting the mind of God** and saying your own mind deserves more respect and worship. As a God Guy your final filter should always be God's Word, not the world's ideas. You have to ask yourself, "Is what I'm being asked to do consistent with God's Word? Is it crazy-sounding but biblical?" If so, then the question is, "Am I willing to do it anyway?"

It couldn't have made any sense to Noah and his family to build an ark where there was no body of water, but it was all part of God's plan. Faith can mean you have to do some things the world thinks are crazy. Take the pack of gum back to the clerk who forgot to charge you for it. Tell the truth when everyone else is telling lies. Pray when others panic. Faith doesn't always make sense, but what does make sense is God's dependability. No matter what he wants you to do, you can be sure that it is for the best.



Then Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD regarded that faith to be his approval of Abram.

Genesis 15:6

The only way to become right with God is to believe in him. It was faith that made Abram righteous in God's sight. It was his faith that made him do what God told him to do. And it's faith that will give you the power of God on your side.

People who don't believe don't get the gifts of God. **Belief—not doubt, not suspicion, not fear, but belief—is your permission to allow God to work in your life.** Life is full of choices. You can choose not to believe and not to take the gifts of God into your life. You can choose not to hear from him, not to serve him, and not to love him. That's your prerogative. But you can also choose to believe, like Abram did, and get more of what you need from the God who knows everything you need. Abram could have doubted God's promises—after all, they were preposterous—but he chose to believe them anyway. And thousands of years later Abraham is known for his faith.

During the time Jesus walked on this earth, he healed everyone who came to him with faith that he could heal them and save them from their sins. If they hadn't believed him, they wouldn't have found what they were looking for. As a God Guy your faith defines you and sets your limits. Want to move mountains? Then you have to know God more so that you are able to believe him, trust him, and wait upon him for the things he promises. You have to believe that God's Word is true, relevant, and practical for your daily life before you can grow in your faith. So think about what you believe: is it consistent with what God says? Don't let the world tell you a lie that sounds godly but is really just sin dressed up as righteousness. Go after the truth as if your life depends on it, and you'll be rewarded for your faith.

Abraham remained standing in front of the LORD. Abraham came closer and asked, "Are you really going to sweep away the innocent with the guilty?"

Genesis 18:22–23

Prayers is direct contact with God. It isn't meditation or contemplation but a conversation, a back-and-forth with the God who has the power to do all you could ask. Our prayers can get repetitive and boring. But the prayers you see in the Bible are totally different. When these men and women of God pray, they are relentless, not passive. They beg, plead, and ask over and over again. Abraham wouldn't give up asking for God to save the town of Sodom from destruction (see Gen. 18:20–33). Moses pleaded with God (see Exod. 32:11). Hannah "poured out her heart to the Lord" so much that people thought she was drunk (see 1 Sam. 1:15). King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah called to heaven (see 2 Chron. 32:20). Paul fell to his knees in God's presence (see Eph. 3:14).

Prayer is where you plead with the one who can do anything to do what he wills. Prayer is free access to the Creator of the universe, available to all who make Jesus the Lord of their lives. And the Word of God says you can be sure that he hears your prayers and he will answer according to his will (see 1 John 5:14–15). He listens to your pleadings. In fact, he expects them. When Jesus told the parable of the widow and the judge, he said we should "cry out to him for help day and night" (see Luke 18:2–8).

So make your prayer active. Be fearless about asking for what you need, knowing that God answers prayers and no matter what answer you get, you can be sure it's the best thing for you.

Just don't neglect to pray. That's where the power lies. Be persistent. Be vocal. Don't be too proud to beg. Talk to God as the only one who can. And you'll find that he is truly the one who will.



Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I will show you.

Genesis 22:2

Abraham was told to sacrifice his son Isaac—not for just any old reason but to reveal the truth that only through death can your life be truly devoted to God. But it wasn't the death of Isaac that was really the point here but the death of Abraham. It would be worse than death to have to kill the one you love, but that's what God wanted Abraham to do in order to prove his faith, die to himself, and die to his feelings that fought against him with every bit of their energy, telling him not to do what he was being commanded to do.

Dying to your urge to do what makes sense even when it's directly opposed to God's commands is at the foundation of faith.

Dying to self is refusing to let you be your boss any more and deciding that no matter what God asks, you'll do it. No matter how crazy it sounds, you're in. You're in because you know that God can be trusted and that you want his best. That makes it easy to do the hard things; they are no-brainers when you know that of course God is good and can be trusted, so you can do whatever he asks without any worry about the outcome.

Abraham was asked to do an unimaginable thing, but he never hesitated because he knew God and he knew that if God asked him to do it, it must be for the best. The world might consider that insanity, but the believer considers it necessity. When doing what God commands seems impossible, remember Abraham, and remember who God is. Either he is perfect or he is imperfect. What you decide to do after he commands you to do something proves which one you think he is.

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Now I know that you fear God, because you did not refuse to give me your son, your only son.

Genesis 22:12

God is the giver of every good and perfect thing, but what happens when that thing he's given you is so good that you start to think it's more important than anything else, even him? We humans have a tendency to give the gift the same kind of worship and honor meant for the giver.

Abraham never expected to have a kid. So when God gave him Isaac, it would have been easy for Abraham to fall deeply and even obsessively in love with his kid. And when God seemingly demanded that Abraham kill the one he adored, how easy it would have been to say, "No way, José!" But Abraham proved his faith when he refused to give in to his desire to protect the boy he loved and instead did what God asked. Not many have felt this kind of agony of obedience as much as Abraham. But in the end that obedience would bring more glory than any agony could ever steal.

Obedience isn't always comfortable; in fact, true obedience demands something of the obedient. It demands complete reliance on the wisdom, power, and love of the one who knows what is best, and it demands a ruthless determination to do whatever has to be done to prove that following is much better than rebelling.

If God isn't demanding something of you, you're not listening, God Guy. What could you do right now out of obedience that would lead you closer to the God you love and deeper into the life of faith? To listen, turn the pages of his Word. Study his law and make his kindness part of your very essence. Love the unlovable, give to the needy, obey authority, offer forgiveness, turn the other cheek, humble yourself, and he will lift you up. Obey him today and find a reward far greater than you ever imagined could be yours. Nothing gives more to the life of a God Guy than obeying his Lord.

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Then Jacob prayed, "God of my grandfather Abraham and God of my father Isaac! . . . Please save me from my brother Esau, because I'm afraid of him."

Genesis 32:9, 11

If you want more faith, then you're going to need more prayer. As you pray you learn to trust the God who answers prayer. It is like exercise. The more weight you lift, the stronger your body gets, and the more you pray, the stronger your faith gets. Neglecting God's call to prayer leads to spiritual weakness and failure. If you want more trust, if you want more hope, more faith, and more strength, then you need more prayer. You can't let prayer take a backseat in your life. It has to be the most important part of your day. It sets the tone for your life. Without it your faith is useless and weak.

When you love someone, you want to spend time with them and talk with them, and when you need something from someone, you have to communicate to ask them for what you need. Prayer is your communication with God. It's the way you connect, the way you come into his presence and learn his character. It's the way your life comes to really mean something, because through praying for others you can change their lives. And as those lives change, your trust in God deepens and their lives improve. It's a win-win.

Prayer is a powerful thing in the hands of a God Guy. **Don't ever underestimate its strength and its ability to change not only your life but the lives of the people you pray for.** Jacob's willingness to go to God for his needs brought divine help for his entire family. And your prayers may just serve to help not only you but the people around you as well.

While Joseph was in prison, the LORD was with him. The LORD reached out to him with his unchanging love and gave him protection.

Genesis 39:20–21

If you feel depression coming on, you can stop it before it digs in and takes over, and all it takes is a decision: decide not to think about it. Impossible, you say? No, no, no. It can be done.

As soon as you feel depressing thoughts coming on, think about something else. When you pray, don't agonize over your misery; just say to God, "Your will be done," and then get on with something else. Sometimes prayer can just be an excuse to wallow in your pain and agony, and that's not right. Don't pretend to be praying when what you're really doing is worrying. Let your prayer remind you who God is, not what your problems are. What seems bigger, the thing closest to you or the thing off in the distance? The closer the bigger, so bring God closer by adoring and praising him, and put your worries in the distance by refusing to stare at them, even in prayer. Know that God knows your situation, and then ask him to show himself to you so that you can find truth instead of the lie of depression.

The depressed mind is not trusting God to be who he says he is or to do what he says he'll do. You can kick the most common depressions of life, but you have to know and trust the one who is truth. God's Word confirms that faith should override feelings. Hebrews 11:1 says that faith is being certain of "things we cannot see"—in other words, not being controlled by what we feel. It might feel like all is lost, but the truth is that nothing—not angels or rulers, not devils or evil men, not trials or suffering—can take us away from him (see Rom. 8:38–39). Nothing will be our destruction, but it can all be used for good if you, like Joseph, are just willing to trust that God wouldn't let it happen if he wasn't going to make something amazing out of it. **There certainly can be chemical causes for your depression, but the beginning of all efforts to lift your thought life up out of darkness should be to place your mind on God.**

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Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Because God has let you know all this, there is no one as wise and intelligent as you. You will be in charge of my palace, and all my people will do what you say."

Genesis 41:39–40

One of the hardest things you'll ever do is stay hooked up to God in the good times. Bad times always drive you to your knees. You need so much help and protection when times get tough that you run full speed to him. But look out for the good times: they can soften your faith and drive you off into a different direction.

Whenever you have a win, you have to consciously remind yourself to bring everything back to him to give him the credit and the thanks and then to move on. **You can't concentrate on your wins any more than you should concentrate on your failures.** But spend your energy on him and you'll find your faith on the increase. And when the bad times come, just think about them as a blessing in disguise, because the bad times are a reminder to your heart of the one who works everything out for the good of those who love him. They remind you that you can do nothing in this world without him. So be thankful and happy in the bad times, knowing always that this too shall pass as you rest under the graceful hand of the Savior.

Joseph said to his brothers . . . , "I am Joseph, the brother you sold into slavery in Egypt! . . . God sent me ahead of you to make sure that you would have descendants on the earth and to save your lives in an amazing way. It wasn't you who sent me here, but God."

Genesis 45:4, 7-8

When people try to destroy you, God Guy, don't worry. You can't look at life from the world's perspective anymore; you have to look at it from God's perspective. Why would he let something bad happen if it wasn't for your good? Just look at the life of Joseph, whose brothers hated him and sold him into slavery, who was sent to jail unfairly, but who never stopped trusting God. God's plans aren't always like ours. They might seem totally off track from ours and even dangerous, but they're always the best. No one should go looking for their own destruction, but when it looks like the world is bent on yours, don't freak out. Trust him and go to him for comfort. Have faith and know that he works all things together for the good of those who love him.

When life throws you a curve ball, don't worry, God's got your back. You've got to know that like Joseph, you can rise above mean people and overcome through faith in the one who sets the moon and the stars in place. You, child of the living God, are protected no matter how tragic your situation. No matter what they do to you, you will continue to go in the right direction if you trust that God works it all out in the end. When the world attacks, remember Joseph. All those things had to happen to him—even slavery and imprisonment—in order for him to get to the position of power where he needed to be to save his family and many other people. Suffering isn't something to worry about but can be something to take hold of when your will is only that God's will be done.

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Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid! I can't take God's place. Even though you planned evil against me, God planned good to come out of it."

Genesis 50:19–20

Good can come out of the evil others plan. Don't limit your life by thinking that when bad things happen, your life is ruined or things are out of control. Bad things don't always mean your end. People might plan to hurt you, but no one can hurt you unless you decide to let them. How you think about who is ultimately in control of life and what trials are for will decide how much they hurt you. You can be attacked on all sides, trapped, and wounded, but if you trust that God is who he says he is and decide that nothing matters except pleasing him, then you won't be destroyed, only made stronger.

Suffering builds the life of the God Guy; it doesn't tear it down. He knows that suffering can lead to pure joy because it builds his perseverance and character. He knows that it is through suffering that his faith is proven and his strength increased. Just like lifting weights, resistance, not ease, makes you stronger. So **consider adversity to be only a part of your training.** When you look at life from this perspective, no one can control you or hurt you. When you are a slave to God and God alone, no one else will tell you what to do, how to act, or how to feel.

This trial is only meant to make you better. So rise above your human nature that whines and complains and pushes back against trials, and stand on his nature that knows all, sees all, and ultimately controls all. As you stand on the solid rock of your salvation, you will overcome anything the world might throw at you. And whatever they plan for evil, he'll use for good.

In the course of time Moses grew up. Then he went to see his own people and watched them suffering under forced labor.

Exodus 2:11

Moses saw his people suffering and was sure that he was the one who would save them, but when he tried, he failed miserably. But forty years later he was the one who set them free. So why the big-time gap between his dream and reality? What took him so long?

When Moses decided to set the Hebrews free, he did it on his own and got to work with his own power. He wasn't relying on God but on his own sheer brute strength. It turned out that his vision wasn't wrong; the time just wasn't right. **Be careful that you don't jump the gun when it comes to your dreams.** They might be meant to come true someday, but not today. God may want you to do something, but he doesn't want you to do it in your own strength; he wants you to do it in his. So wait for his prompting, his leading, and his power. When you do, that thing you want to get done will succeed, but if you jump ahead and take matters into your own hands, then you can't be sure of the outcome.

You want to be happy, you want true love, and God might want that for you too—but don't take matters into your own hands and try to manipulate the situation. Don't jump into things and try to control them. Let them be what they will be while you trust God all the way.

If you know that a vision is from him, then you can trust him to fulfill it; you don't have to take charge. So rest in the truth and prepare yourself not only to hear God's voice but also to act as soon as he says to act.

Moses said to the LORD, "Please, Lord, I'm not a good speaker. . . . I speak slowly, and I become tongue-tied easily." The LORD asked him, "Who gave humans their mouths? Who makes humans unable to talk or hear? . . . Now go, and I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."

Exodus 4:10–12

Shyness is never an excuse for sin. Just because you don't feel capable of reaching out to love and serve others doesn't mean you can disobey God's call. Nothing should keep you from reaching out to the world around YOU—not your tendency to fear rejection or to assume they all hate you, and not your fear of social situations—nothing is bigger than the God who commands you to go.

This should be good news to the shy guy, not something that freaks you out. It means that contrary to popular belief, you don't have to be controlled by your shyness. You don't have to panic or be afraid of people, because God promises to help you do the things he tells you to do. God's people are called to have compassion and empathy, to treat others as we would want to be treated, to teach, to preach, and to share truth with others—yes, even with strangers. That means that if shyness is getting in the way of these commands on your life, then it is leading you to sin, and so it must not be obeyed. You're a God Guy—you serve the one true God and not the god of fear. There is your freedom!

The cure for your fear is the love of the Father. When God's will is your will, nothing anyone says or does can hurt you, and that's the source of your confidence. You are truly free when you label yourself a God Guy instead of a shy guy and when you choose his will over your own!



Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh. I have made him and his officials stubborn so that I can do these miraculous signs among them. . . . This is how you will all know that I am the LORD."

Exodus 10:1-2

When you are faced with impossible odds, just think of it as a chance for God to show up. Nothing that happens in the life of the God Guy is failure; everything is an opportunity. Adversity is a good thing when you use it to help you turn to the only God who can save you.

Don't let terrible situations or stubborn or angry people keep you from believing that God can and will do as he pleases on this earth. After all, he is all-powerful and always present, remember? His will ultimately wins. Even though times might look tough, you can be sure that he is still God and still in control.

so don't fear what others fear. Just look at a trial as an opportunity for God to do what God does best: perform miracles. When you look at the world from that perspective, nothing can get you down, nothing can scare you, because you are sure of one thing, and that is God's presence and power. Relax and let others who don't know him do all the worrying. You are a God Guy and you are a child of the King. His hand is always on you to protect you and to guide you. Just look to him, trust him, and be sure that nothing happens without his ultimate permission. Because of that you can be sure that you are able to overcome any tough situation.

On the tenth day of this month each man must take a lamb or a young goat for his family—one animal per household. . . . Your animal must be a one-year-old male that has no defects.

Exodus 12:3, 5

Since the cross, sacrifice no longer has to be made for our sins (see Heb. 10:18–19). Today, sacrifice for a God Guy is associated with giving up something that matters to you, and it is a part of how you worship God. When the Israelites were told to sacrifice a lamb for the Passover (see Exodus 12), they were told to select one that was special, with no defects, aka perfect. This perfect little lamb was to be cared for by the family for four days and then to be slaughtered. So why didn't God tell them any old animal would do? Why didn't he just say kill a pigeon or a rat? Because the sacrifice was not only about killing the animal but also about the people who needed and maybe even loved the animal giving up what they needed and loved. Sacrifice isn't about giving up things that are easy to give up; it's about giving up what is hard to give up.

A lot of times we say we're giving up stuff or making sacrifices for God when we're really not, like saying we won't date anymore even though we haven't had a date in a year. In that case, saying that not dating is your sacrifice to God is not technically true since you weren't dating anyway. But giving up any daydreaming or thinking about dating would be a great sacrifice if that would be almost impossible for you without God's help. So whatever you want to give up for God, make sure that it's yours before you give it. In other words, if giving it up hurts and you'll notice its absence, then that's a valid sacrifice.

When you give up something for God, you also have to make sure that it's not a sin you are giving up. Choosing not to sin is not sacrifice. Remember the lamb: it was to be without defect, a symbol of sinlessness. Not dirty and unclean, a symbol of sin. Sacrifice has to do with giving up what is good, not what is evil. Giving up what is evil or sinful is repentance, not sacrifice, and is a daily requirement.

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In the desert the whole community complained about Moses and Aaron. The Israelites said to them, "If only the LORD had let us die in Egypt! There we sat by our pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted! You brought us out into this desert to let us all starve to death!"

Exodus 16:2–3

Are there times when you hate your life? That was the case for the Israelites in the desert. "We're sick of this food," they complained. "We need meat." Really? God has just brought you out of slavery, and you're going to complain? Sheesh! What's up with that? From where we stand it all seems so crazy, doesn't it—complaining after what God had just done?

But have things really changed? After all, isn't complaining about your lot in life, like having a big nose or not being popular, like accusing the God who gives you all that you have of not giving you enough? Did you know that everything that happens to you has to come through God to get to you? Does that make him a tyrant in your eyes? It might if you don't know the big picture.

The truth is that God has a purpose for everything in your life. And he promises to work all things together for good. All your aches, pains, and emptiness—he'll use it all for good if you'll do just one thing: trust him. Can you trust that the place where you are in life right now is exactly where you should be? **Everything that he gives or takes away is for your benefit.** Even if it feels like the exact opposite, don't believe your feelings but trust him. When you do you will find a life filled with hope and direction. You won't be wandering in the dark, dry desert, but you'll find your promised land, the place where you can be content no matter what happens.

Are you tired of being unhappy? Do you want victory? Then choose it. Choose to trust God and believe that your life is under his control no matter how lost you feel. You must believe God's Word when it says, "all things work together for the good of those who love God" (Rom. 8:28).

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If you carefully obey me and are faithful to the terms of my promise, then out of all the nations you will be my own special possession, even though the whole world is mine.

Exodus 19:5

You've read your Bible a million times and still nothing. What does it all mean? Where is God when I need him? Why do I feel so empty? Am I missing something? Then suddenly you obey him in some way and *poof!* That same verse you've read a hundred times means something. Why didn't you get it before?

Well, it's simple: it's a matter of action. When you read God's Word and then do what it says to do, something funny happens: he shows you more truth. He blesses you, as his Word says he will. If you just aren't finding God and want something more, then consider just doing it—whatever God commands. Do what he is asking you to do and you'll find more of him than you've ever found before. **Obedience**, the art of just doing it, brings you face-to-face with **God**. You won't ever have that connection you want to have until you do what he says. Once you take that first step and do what he's telling you to do, this obedience stuff will get easier and easier. He's not a tyrant that tells you to do something only to punish you and wreck your life. No, he tells you to do stuff so that your life will be better. **Don't expect the worst from obedience; believe in the best.** His Word promises it. Don't wait another minute; do what God is asking you to do today, and you'll see more of God than you are seeing right now.

Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live for a long time in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

Exodus 20:12

Sometimes the hardest people to love are the ones closest to you. It's easier to love people you see only from a distance, but the ones you see up close can be unimpressive, even unkind. But the truth is that we're all like that up close. No one is perfect, and the closer you get the more you see those imperfections. And that's why parents can be so much trouble. Not only do you see all their blemishes and smell all their stinks, but you have to deal with all their emotional, spiritual, and mental weaknesses. When they tell you what to do it can be hard to respect them, hard to not roll your eyes or to laugh, but then God knew that, didn't he? "Honor your father and your mother" (Exod. 20:12). It was such an important command that it made the Top 10 list.

Your parents were given to you to make you stronger. And though they might sometimes do that by godly example and insight, sometimes they do it by accident. **No matter what your parents do, the most spiritual response to them is honor and respect, if only for their position as parents.** Knowing this can help you to stop taking everything that comes from them as insanity or old age setting in and start thinking about it like direction from God. Each time you give up what you want to do to do whatever your parents want, you build your spiritual strength and show God and the world that his desires are more important to you than your own. Doing what God wants you to do means doing what your parents want you to do, plain and simple. So unless they are asking you to sin, the God Guy has got to obey, and out of that will come holiness.

In the tent of meeting outside the canopy where the words of my promise are, Aaron and his descendants must keep the lamps lit in the LORD's presence from evening until morning.

Exodus 27:21

Light is a symbol of God and godliness. Before God created the seas teeming with creatures, the land growing with plants, and the first people, he turned on the light. "Then God said, 'Let there be light!' So there was light" (Gen. 1:3). Light is always associated with goodness. God is said to be dressed in a robe of light (see Ps. 104:2), and 1 John 1:5 says he is light. His Word is a light that helps us to see where to walk (see Ps. 119:105). And the gospel itself is considered light to a dying world (see 2 Cor. 4:4).

God wants his people to live in the light. He wants the light to keep burning continually. There was a time when we lived in darkness, but when we met Jesus the lights were turned on and everything that was hidden was seen. As a God Guy **you can't let yourself go back into darkness.** Darkness is the opposite of light. In darkness evil lurks, sneaks, and pounces. **Sin hides in the dark, but when we shine the light on our lives, it can no longer hide.** And that is why the light should always be on.

God Guy, you too are a light to the world, revealing truth to those who are lost and shining light on what people do in secret (see Matt. 5:14). But if you put your light out, hide it, or are ashamed of it, then you give in to the darkness. You have to trust that truth is what this earth needs, and that truth is found in the light.

No more hiding, God Guy. No more "lights out" moments where you do what you would never do if the lights were on. Encourage the light by praying, studying, and looking for opportunities to bring your own sins into the light.



Build an altar out of acacia wood for burning incense. Make it 18 inches square and 36 inches high. The horns and altar must be made out of one piece of wood.

Exodus 30:1–2

You can find God even in the boring stuff, like the dimensions of the altar and taking a census. But don't expect to find him there before you do the work. God calls you to get up and get going, and sometimes it's not until after you get a move on that he shines his light on what you've done. When you have a dull or boring job to do, you have to look at it as a character builder, because when you are willing to do the boring things in life with a good attitude, you will be changed, and so will the job you do. You can't look at anything as *beneath you*, because that would be putting yourself above even Jesus himself. When he washed the feet of the disciples, he did the most "beneath him" job there was.

It takes inspiration to go through the boring stuff. Don't think for a minute that the amazing saints of history had exciting and glorious jobs to do every day. It's the exact opposite: those boring, difficult, and dull tasks that they committed to every day were what made them shine and made them go down in history forever. When you let God do something through you, he always changes it into something beautiful. So don't avoid the dull and boring things you've got to do. Be like Christ and dive in to the hard stuff knowing that God has called you to do his work and because of that, he will do an amazing work in you.

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*Choose something of your own to give as a special contribution to the LORD.
Let everyone who is willing bring this kind of contribution to the LORD:
gold, silver, and bronze.*

Exodus 35:5

Is there something you can't part with? If someone asked you to give it up, could you do it? The thing you say you can't give up is the very thing you have to give up. **When something you own becomes the most important thing in your life, it teeters on idolatry.** An idol is anything that you obsess about, that you need, that you can't live without. The only thing that you truly can't live without, other than food and water, is the presence of God in your life. And when things overshadow that need or even try to fill it, danger is in the air.

God asked the Israelites to give something of their own to him (see Exod. 35:4–9). Do you think he meant “your least favorite thing” or “the one thing you don't really like, use, or want”? Or do you think he was looking for something important that they really loved or thought they “needed”? Look at the things listed in Exodus 35:5: gold, silver, bronze. Do you think they were important to the people? Worth something? Yep, they were. In fact, all the things on that list would have been very valuable in their time and hard to part with. Why do you think God asked for this contribution? Why would he want his followers to give up what they love and even need?

Maybe it is because those things seem so important that they can easily start to replace God in our lives. Think about what you really need. What things are essential? Air, water, food, shelter. Everything else is an opportunity for misplaced worship.

Look at the things in your life and see what you worship. What can you not live without or give up? Think about what that thing means to you and how it could be meeting some of the needs in your life that God wants to meet—for comfort, physical needs, hope, or joy. In what way do you worship things rather than God, and how will you change that in order to save your soul?

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The burnt offering will be accepted to make peace with the LORD.

Leviticus 1:4

Imagine giving up something you need or love to God every morning and every evening. This was the system the Israelites lived under (see Lev. 1–2). Each morning and evening the community sacrificed things like food, grains, and animals (see Num. 28:1–8).

The guilt or sin offering was made to clear people of all the sins they had committed prior to the sacrifice. There was also the burnt offering, where they would burn up entire animals into ashes. This offering represented their total dedication to God, giving him their all. A third offering was the fellowship offering. This was basically a family meal where everyone had fellowship with one another and with God.

Let's look a little closer at those three things: You have the forgiveness of sin, complete dedication to him who forgave the sin, and then fellowship. And that pattern still exists today. The sacrifice of Jesus is your guilt offering, but it only had to happen once—forgiveness in full, once and for all. All that is required for forgiveness is for you to confess, repent, and accept Christ's blood as all you need. Then comes your complete dedication, and then fellowship with God.

If you were completely holy as God is, then there would be no separation between you to bridge. But since that isn't the case, something had to happen to get the two of you together, and that was the sacrifice of Jesus. He is your one and only sacrifice. **He is all that you need to be made holy in the eyes of God.** No longer do you need to bring your choicest items to the altar in order to come near to God, but you now have full access to him because of your position in Christ. As you read the book of Leviticus, consider how much God requires of those who worship him.

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I am the LORD your God. You must live holy lives. Be holy because I am holy.

Leviticus 11:44

God isn't your buddy. He isn't a genie in a magic lamp sent to grant your wishes. He is holy, he is perfect, and he requires honor and reverence. But because he is also forgiving, kind, and loving beyond compare, it can be easy to get so relaxed around him that you verge on being disrespectful. The Bible does talk about being a friend of God and how when you make him the Lord of your life he adopts you as his own child, but that doesn't give you permission to lose your awe and reverence for him. As a God Guy you can't forget your place. Don't get so relaxed around God that you treat him with disrespect. Don't get so *casual* with him that you forget the reverence he deserves.

Reverence isn't something that weakens you to make him strong. You are actually made strong by admitting how powerful God truly is. When you get relaxed around God and think of him as more of a buddy than a deity, you run the risk of not giving God the faith he needs in order to be able to act in your life. Reverence reminds you not only who he is but who you are, so that in everything you do you will act in godliness and awe and not in childishness and disrespect. As a God Guy you must live a holy life because the one you worship is holy. Wanting anything less is disobedience and disrespect.