

A 10-DAY DEVOTIONAL ADVENTURE WITH BEAR GRYLLS



THIS WILD LIFE

Photo Credit: Bear Grylls Ventures

ADAPTED FROM SOUL FUEL BY BEAR GRYLLS



WHEN WE LOOK AT THE TERRAIN OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE...

... there are treacherous pitfalls we must look to avoid, difficult stretches we'll have no choice but to travel through, and vital tools we'll need to have & know how to use in order to handle the challenges along the way.

Thankfully, throughout the journey, we have a Great Guide we can look to for strength and support. Christ can show us the way in every circumstance.

Not only that, we have each other. Meet your fellow traveler: adventurer and survival expert Bear Grylls, who shares with you his reflections on braving the wild terrain of a life lived for Christ.

This collection of devotions are arranged by topic, as you get Bear's take on tackling some of life's challenges, such as:

04 ANXIETY

10 DISCOURAGEMENT

06 TEMPTATION

12 RISK & UNCERTAINTY

08 ISOLATION



Photo Credit: Bear Grylls Ventures

For more devotionals from Bear, get your copy of *Soul Fuel* **here**, featuring 365 daily reflections.

INTRODUCTION

TAKE TIME

WE CAN GO ROUGHLY three weeks without food, three days without water, and three minutes without oxygen. How long can we live effectively without refueling our faith?

Jesus never went long without praying. There was a time when the crowds were so desperate to get a piece of Him that there was no time to eat. People were running toward Him, predicting where He might be going next and waiting there. It was the busiest season in His life, but Jesus knew that He needed time alone in prayer, even more so when it was busy. Jesus always seemed to stick to this routine as a clear source of power for the day ahead.

“Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” (Mark 6:31)

Jesus’ words to His disciples are also words to us today. That’s why I try my best to start every day in a quiet place, getting my soul fuel in, even if for just a few minutes. And you know what? He’s always ready and waiting for me, and He’s never late.

So make that little time and protect it, even if it is with your eyes closed while you are on the train into work. Breathe it in; know His presence around you. Let His words soak in; let His strength empower you. Know you are forgiven, healed, restored. Ask for those things afresh, and be thankful and pray for the day ahead. Be still and know that He is with you.

Be still, and know that I am God.
(Psalm 46:10)

Now we are ready to hit the day.

ANXIETY

LAY DOWN THE WORRIES

WE ALL HAVE WORRIES. But how we deal with them determines our lives.

In his book *Affluenza*, the psychologist Oliver James pointed out that “almost a quarter of Britain suffers serious emotional distress, such as depression and anxiety, and another quarter are on the verge thereof.”¹

Society often puts wealth up there as a solution to the likes of depression and emotional distress. Maybe money can help this anxiety? Oliver James continued, “Those earning over £50,000 ... were recently shown to be more prone to depression and anxiety than those earning less.”²

So in addition to not being able to buy happiness, money doesn't even seem to bring peace or relief from stress. So where do we turn? How do we live with freedom, joy, and lightness? How do we remove our worries?

David said you should “cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you” (Psalm 55:22).

Later on, Paul called you to “cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

Cast them not just once, but daily. Each and every day you and I can make a choice: either we try to shoulder the ever-increasing burdens ourselves or we can hand over our fears, worries, and anxieties to Christ. We can freely lay them all before Him. He wants to take the shackles of anxiety and distress off of us. His arms are stretched wide on that cross to bear those loads.

Christ knows all, sees all, will heal all. Your life and your future are secure. He wants us to live light, free, trusting, childlike, in the moment, and worry free. As Jesus once told His disciples on the side of a hill:

“Look at the birds, free and unfettered, not tied down to a job description, careless in the care of God. And you count far more to him than birds.” (Matthew 6:26 MSG)

1. Oliver James, *Affluenza: How to Be Successful and Stay Sane* (New York: Vermilion, Random House, 2007), 52.
2. James, *Affluenza*, 52.

THE ANTIDOTE TO ANXIETY

THE ANTIDOTE TO STRESS, anxiety, and fear will never be riches, success, clothes, or diamonds. Even though we try pretty hard to medicate with these things, history shows that it just doesn't work. The harder we chase material possessions, the less they will satisfy.

Conversely, the more we allow ourselves to be shaped by the love of God, the more we experience His peace. Our fears always subside in His presence.

*God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear. (Psalm 46:1–2)*

To be wise and effective in our lives, we don't need a massive bank balance or a sprawling house any more than we need a degree or a bunch of letters after our name. To grow in character, love, and power, we just need to go to the source of everything beautiful and good, to the Creator of the universe who made us and who cares about our lives so much that He came to be among us and to die for us.

Jesus came so we could be restored to God's presence. When we shed the distractions, the fears, and the self, we clear the way for His light to shine through and out of us. That's the point of empowered living: letting the light and love of Christ lead us out of our fears, stresses, and anxieties and into His blessings.

TEMPTATION

THE GREAT LIES

WE ALL GET TEMPTED. Leading a life of integrity in relationships is not easy. There are temptations all around, and at times the pull can get really strong, especially when it comes to sex, money, and power. It's nothing new. The Bible has plenty of stories of people who were tempted to cheat on their partners. Plenty of them gave in too. Plenty of them believed lies like this: "Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is delicious!" (Proverbs 9:17).

It's such a deception, though. Stolen water is never sweet for long, and food eaten in secret is empty. The cold reality is that sin drags us away from freedom and light. Ask someone who has been through the experience of drugs, affairs, or deception. The buzz lasts but a minute. The dark sense of being manipulated by sensations leads to fear and shame—and the shame is always the hard part.

But little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the realm of the dead. (Proverbs 9:18)

That's why Peter's words are so important to us:

*Whoever would love life
and see good days
must keep their tongue from evil
and their lips from deceitful speech.
They must turn from evil and do good;
they must seek peace and pursue it. (1 Peter 3:10–11)*

God is on your side. He knows what it is to be tempted and what it takes to resist. His promise is that we will never be tempted beyond what He can help us resist. Focus on the truth, on the long game, on the value of fidelity. It will be a struggle and we might fail. His arms of forgiveness will never falter or fail, but sin damages us.

So if we have been given the tools and the power of God to resist, then claim that and stand firm. Every little victory makes us stronger. And like a muscle, the more often we resist and win, the stronger that resilience becomes.

CONTROL

HERE ARE FOUR HABITS I've found helpful to focus on in order to try to live a more faithful, love-filled, productive life:

Try to control what you think about. The life you lead will flow from your heart. Try to concentrate on good things, the sort that bring life and health. "Above all else, guard your heart," says Proverbs 4:23, "for everything you do flows from it."

Try to control what you say. Your words are powerful, so use them carefully. Before you speak, ask these three questions: Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary?

Try to control what you look at, as difficult as it is sometimes. In the age we live in, you've got to be careful about what you look at. Porn is messing up so many people's view of sex and relationships. Alternatively, what we look at can help us. You know the good stuff: inspiring films, mountaintops, books, music gigs, and so on. As Jesus said, "If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light" (Matthew 6:22).

Try to control where you go. There are a ton of shortcuts out there, but if we decide to "run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus," He will "make level paths for [our] feet" (Hebrews 12:1–2, 13). The easy path is rarely the right path.

All this trying should be underpinned by the central truth that our efforts are not linked to our salvation. We all fail, and we fail often. But these guides will help keep you rooted in love and heading in the right direction.

ISOLATION

STARTING STRONG, STAYING TOGETHER

EACH DAY I TRY my best to start out on my knees. I remind myself to tackle the day with Christ first—that I am the glove and He is the hand; I try to listen and be still; then I read a little bit of the Bible, say thanks for all the good, and ask for help with all ahead. It takes me ten minutes or less, but it is where I get my soul fuel for the day and tasks ahead.

Wherever I am in the world, I also know that one of my closest friends, Jim, will be doing the same thing. He, like me, is a busy guy, but he never misses a day. We do this together every single day, Christmas included. And each year, we commit to going again. We read the same verses and then send each other an email with any thoughts, struggles, and feelings. This brotherhood is a source of lasting strength for us both. Accountability, friendship, and growth all belong together.

As the Proverbs say,

As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend. (27:17 NLT)

We're not wired to live in isolation. We are designed to live in communities where love and friendship flow freely, where people of peace try to strengthen and support each other every day. This is how we grow and build strong foundations in our lives: through honest friendships, accountability, challenge, shared courage, and enduring commitment. Thank you, Jim.

LONELINESS

THERE IS SO MUCH loneliness in our society, probably more than at any point in human history, and people are suffering across the generations. Young people have fewer safe places to process their growing pains, parents are struggling to raise families alone, and the elderly are marginalized and isolated. We turn to what we hope will help us deal with isolation, but too often these “solutions” only make things worse.

We are not intended to be alone. God created us all for community—one that’s as close and as interdependent as the various parts of the human body. And like a body that’s made up of different parts, we belong to one another. You might think that a kidney is less important than an arm, but you would be wrong.

On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable. (1 Corinthians 12:22)

We all desperately need each other—we are inextricably linked.

Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24–25)

So when you see someone isolated, alone, or struggling, bring them into the fold. We are a family, each and every human being: wonderfully made and created to be with God and each other.

DISCOURAGEMENT

BE RESTORED

EVEN GREAT PEOPLE OF God experience times of great discouragement. Look at the great leader Elijah. Having killed all four hundred of those prophets of Baal, you would think he could take on anything. For a while it looked as if he could, as he outran King Ahab's horse and chariot. But eventually the exhaustion caught up with Elijah. Extreme tiredness gave way to fear and anxiety, and soon he ended up depressed.

After we've taken on a bunch of emotional, spiritual, and physical risks, we all need replenishing. Elijah's recovery was no different. He needed sleep, food, exercise, friends, and God's healing, restoring presence. He needed to know that God had him.

God...is not far from any one of us. (Acts 17:27)

Are you feeling tired? Worn out? Exhausted? Be disciplined in making sure you rest properly. Give yourself a break and know that God is close by, ready to reinvigorate you in His own perfect way.

*Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust." (Psalm 91:1-2)*

Claim it. Soak it in. As He was with Elijah, so God is with you.

YOUR TRUE ID

WE ALL STRUGGLE WITH self-image from time to time. And many factors come into play. The ever-widening gap between the public life people share online and the private life people struggle through alone means that our self-image is constantly under attack. We find ourselves often pigeonholed into a role and a title that becomes hard to shake off. You are the accountant, the football player, or the doctor. You're the fat guy or the tall girl; you're the wild cat or the stay-at-home dad. You name it, society puts labels on us and says in a loud voice: that's who you are.

But Jesus always sees beyond the labels, right into our hearts.

You are a chosen people...God's special possession...called...out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:9)

One of my favorite bits of the Bible is a little-known phrase that the disciple John used to describe himself time and time again. Instead of using his own name, John always referred to himself simply as the one Jesus loved.

It's genius because when we see ourselves as simply a child of God, deeply loved and truly free, it changes everything. We are no longer our label; we are His, and that's all we ever need to know. That's the important part of our identity. The answer to self-image comes flowing through these simple words:

It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. (Ephesians 1:11 MSG)

That's a beautiful and empowered way to live.

RISK & UNCERTAINTY

THE STILL VOICE

RISKY DECISIONS COME IN many shapes and sizes— emotional, physical, social— but one thing they all have in common is this: they involve us having to step into the unknown. I love this verse from Isaiah:

Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it.” (30:21)

It is telling that the voice is “behind you.” It’s not ahead of us or to the side. It’s back out of sight, leaving us in front to take the leap of faith. That feels risky and takes courage, but right there is faith in a nutshell.

When we take the kind of risks that God invites us into, a life of adventure with Him, we have to accept that we won’t always know exactly where we are going. The ultimate destination is clear, but the waypoints are the adventure.

Even though we step out into the unknown, we are not alone. There’s always that voice behind us, whispering guidance and encouragement. We experience that guidance and encouragement through the promises of the Bible, the sensation of the Holy Spirit, through the wisdom of others, and sometimes even through direct divine intervention. So let’s always be spiritually alert to that still voice and bold in our response.

EMPOWERED DECISION MAKING

IT'S NOT EASY WHEN we've got a big decision weighing heavily on our shoulders and we don't know the best way to approach it. When Jesus was preparing to select twelve of His disciples to be His closest confidants and friends for His journey ahead, He followed a clear plan.

At about that same time he climbed a mountain to pray. He was there all night in prayer before God. The next day he summoned his disciples; from them he selected twelve he designated as apostles. (Luke 6:12–13 MSG)

Jesus often took Himself off to a quiet place to pray. It was all part of His process to make sure He made the right choices. But there's more to it than this. Jesus didn't stay up all night to double-and triple-check His decisions or to repetitively bang out prayers. He didn't do it because it took Him that long to get through to God. He stayed up because He loved being with His Father. It was His safe, cozy, empowered place.

Staying up all night talking and planning is the kind of thing we do when we're about to embark on the adventure of a lifetime with someone we love. And when we hear the words of God over us, we become empowered and equipped— ready for that risky adventure ahead.

*So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)*

We all want less fear in our life and more strength. Whatever we're facing, there's no preparation like time alone with God. Just be, with no formal prayers. Soak in His presence. It changes us from the inside out.

A SENDOFF FROM BEAR...

THE GREAT GUIDE

SURVIVING IN THE MOUNTAINS is all about managing risk and trusting the right people. As a young mountaineer, learning my trade, I encountered some great guides and a few less good ones. I learned so much about the mountains and survival through these experiences.

If we head off with an inexperienced guide, we will fast find ourselves in unnecessary danger and will make little progress. It is risk for the sake of risk rather than for any purpose. And ultimately we are more likely than not to end up in a ditch somewhere and probably injured.

Conversely, when we find a great guide, when we are ready to work hard and commit to trust that person's decisions (even when they feel frightening), then we will travel far. Yes, there will be risk and danger, but we will be in safe hands and heading in a positive direction. And eventually we will reach that mountaintop, together, uninjured, and the place will take our breath away.

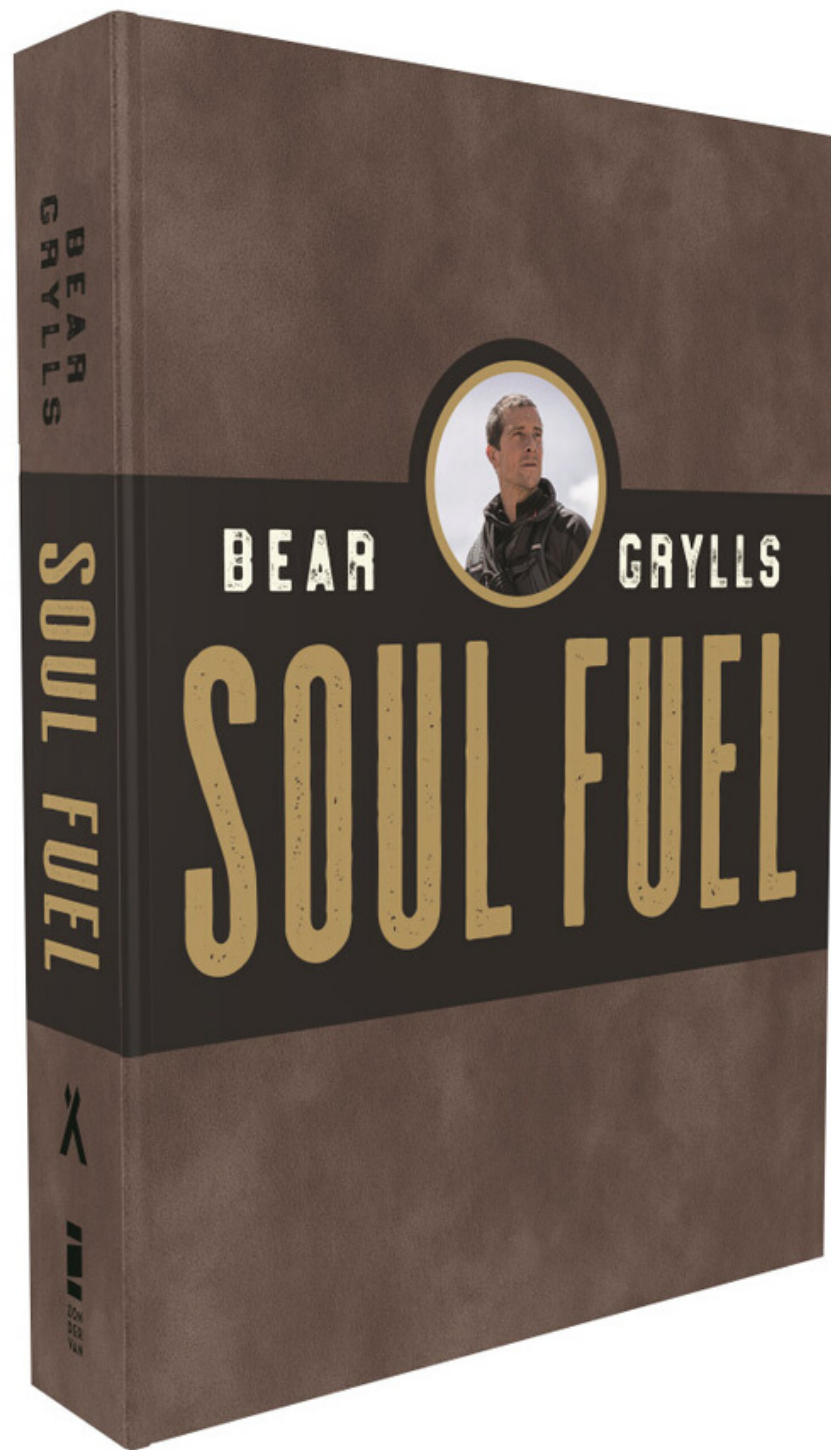
That's the key with life and with faith. Choose your guide wisely. Christ is the ultimate Guide, and with Him all the risks are worthwhile and surmountable. Wisdom and trust conquer dangers and risk.

This verse below has followed me on many adventures. It was written on a small scrap of paper, tucked away in the top of my pack, when I eventually stood on the summit of Everest at age twenty-three.

Be my safe leader, be my true mountain guide.... I've put my life in your hands. You won't drop me, you'll never let me down. (Psalm 31:3-5 MSG)

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