

MADE FOR THIS

40 DAYS TO LIVING YOUR PURPOSE

JENNIE ALLEN



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Made for This

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MADE FOR THIS

I am not really good at anything.”

The tears came first and then a slew of words that felt like lies. Really, they *were* lies, but the person saying the words obviously believed she was telling the truth.

“I don’t know if I have ever done anything truly important.”

“I feel like I have missed my purpose.”

“I don’t know what to do next.”

Sarah was a couple of years from an empty nest. What were once quiet, pesky thoughts now grew louder. She didn’t look directly at me; her eyes darted around as if they might land somewhere more comfortable. But they couldn’t find their home.

Her son, Isaiah, had popped in during our short coffee break. He had a firm handshake and told me he was almost eighteen. I noticed his shirt was ironed and tucked in because I have a son the same age who also tucks in his ironed shirt. He does this because I don’t iron them, so he learned how to do it.

All I wanted to do was wrap Sarah up and get her away from whoever was making her believe these lies! But I knew that the person was her.

“Sarah, are you a good mom?” I had already met her son with an

ironed shirt, and I knew. Like I knew she had a dozen or more superpowers that she couldn't see. I knew because God built her and set her in this time and promised to equip her with gifts and a purpose. I just knew.

Her eyes finally met mine. She grinned through her tears and said, "I am a great mom. That is the one thing I can do, but that is about to be over."

So what is our purpose on earth? Why are we here?

Though that conversation happened exactly two hours ago, I meet a Sarah, and sometimes ten Sarahs, every single day.

Sometimes she's a twenty-four-year-old dating a man who does not know Jesus. He barely values anyone but himself, but she can't bring herself to break up with him because she's afraid no one else will come.

Sometimes she is sixty-two and has both margin to make disciples and a passion for it, but she is divorced and can't see what she has to offer younger women in her church. So, rather than invest in their lives, she withdraws and disqualifies herself.

Sometimes she is sixteen and can't figure out how to quit obsessing about herself. She keeps thinking about her weight, stepping on a scale, and scrolling Instagram. She wants to please Jesus, and love people, but she doesn't know how to turn off the loud voices in her head telling her she cannot ever measure up.

Sometimes we tell ourselves the lies, and sometimes someone else has lied to us. Either way, these lies are from the Enemy, who is out to shut down the church.

But I have also seen the opposite. I have seen women believe God. Women who have been set free, who believe the truth about God and

themselves and their purpose here. They are nonchalantly—almost without thinking—radically laying down their gifts and resources to display Jesus and meet the needs around them. And it’s dangerous to hell.

So why *are* we here?

Since the release of my books *Anything* and *Restless*, I’ve watched women come alive. They’re finding that they were made for great purposes that can change eternity in the hearts and lives of others. I’ve heard their stories and seen them transformed through the prayer of surrender and intentional discovery of the great adventure God has written for them.

I want the same for you.

Acts 17:26–27 says, “[God] marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him.”

So let’s go on a journey together. Forty days to be exact. Forty days to remember how delightful Jesus is, to be reminded of who you are, to consider that you are a part of the story of God with a part to play in it. It’s forty days to hope hopes and dream dreams and pray prayers. Forty days to become dangerous to the Enemy again, or maybe for the first time.

Join us, will you?

This forty-day approach is a new look at the core message of my first two books *Anything* and *Restless*. We’ve combined them to create a unique, interactive journey to help you analyze the places you find yourself in, your passions, your gifts, your experiences, your age, and your positions to discover your specific calling. Then we’ve provided the space to work it out. You’ll also find a few stories along the way to show how other women have moved beyond fear, uncertainty, and excuses to find what they were made for.

But before we dig in to learning about our purpose and calling, let’s recognize we all already have one: “to make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19). In that we are the same. It’s how we live it out that is unique.

Let's do this together!

We are a team on a mission, and we need you to jump in with all of yourself: everything you have and everything you are, fighting the lies, being dangerous to the Enemy. Come on! You were made for this.



PART 1

THE PRAYER

DAY 1

PRAYING ANYTHING

We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

—EPHESIANS 2:10

God, we will do anything. *Anything.*”

That night as I was falling asleep, after my husband Zac and I prayed *anything*, I looked up at God and asked Him, *What do You want me to do while I'm here?*

We were just so tired of normal. We loved our simple, sane life, but now we wanted to find the kind of life you only find if you lose normal, simple, and sane. God was real and heaven was coming, and I wanted to hold every moment on earth in light of when I would meet God face-to-face. We didn't want to hold on to life as we knew it. There was something bigger than us and our little story playing out on this spinning planet, and we wanted in.

ALL IN

This is a journey that starts with deciding you're all in. That you're made for something more, and you're over living for anything less. You're over living a cute, comfortable, easy life. Sick of making decisions based on your

own limited adequacy and capacity because, if God is real and who He says He is, why would you?

If you're like me when I prayed *anything*, you don't want to waste your life. I didn't want to miss what God had for me because I was afraid to let go of what I knew. I was ready to forsake this life for the next. I wanted Him to unreservedly have me, so that when I faced Him, we would both know that my life was spent on everything He had dreamed for me. I wanted to be right with God at the end of my life rather than right with all the people in it.

To get to that point, I had to be ruined for ordinary life. Reading the blog of a girl named Katie Davis Majors, who had given up a comfortable life to adopt thirteen kids in Uganda—all because she was in love with Jesus—I grieved.¹ I grieved the life I had built around a plastic god and a pretend heaven. I grieved a life that was spent on myself, the excess I had justified while others suffered. I grieved sitting back and controlling my image rather than pouring out my life and gifts for the kingdom of God. I grieved that my mind had been spent solving my own simple problems rather than giving my life away.

Why had I sat on every gift God had given me to make Him known? Because I cared more about being judged by everyone else but Him?

It devastated me because I almost got away with a wasted life. But it was like God lifted my head and let me see into His heart, into heaven, into the brokenness of those suffering, into my own soul. And in a moment what had never occurred to me made perfect sense. So much sense that I was willing . . . desperately willing . . . to do *anything*.

SOMETHING BIGGER

Honestly, I think most people are craving something bigger than comfort and an easy life. I think, if you are starting this journey, you are someone who feels that too. We were made for this bigger story . . . we were made to

show the glory of God and to fight dark cosmic forces, even in parts of life that seem mundane. I know—it still sounds insane to me too. But it's real, and it's our story. And we were made for this. Now we discover what part we play in it by being wholly consecrated to Him. By praying *anything*.

Henry Varley said, “The world has yet to see what God will do with a man fully consecrated to him.”² I don't know if the world has seen it yet, but I do think we've found ourselves in the midst of a generation who would like to try. I want to try.

This is a journey toward living in that bigger story God has for you. Toward leaping, fighting, wrestling, and searching until you lay hold of it. Take these forty days to go deep—to search your restless soul, to dig through Scripture, and to know the heart of God so as to find your place in it. While at times it will be hard, at times exhilarating, at times beautiful and even terrifying, it will be worth it. Even if it is overwhelming and costly, it will be worth it because God is worth it.

AGAINST THE CURRENT

I look around and see currents that have dug deep crevices in our culture and eventually carved them into our souls. Currents that make us think:

- These seventy to eighty years of life feel long and important.
- Comfort and safety are worthy pursuits.
- Stuff matters.
- Happiness is my right as an American.
- Moral living pleases God.

As a generation, I believe we are all yawning and waking up, identifying these currents, and comparing them to the truth of God. We're considering

this simple but game-changing thought: *If God is really real and we are going to live with Him forever, shouldn't He be the only thing? Shouldn't He be the controlling force of our lives? If we really believe this?*

We feel a growing desire not to become like the religious people God referred to when He said, “This people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me” (Isa. 29:13 ESV).

And everyone is asking the question, *Do I believe in the invisible enough that I'm willing to live for it?*

It is a call to childlike faith. The simple reaction a child has to truth is to believe, act, and live as if truth is true. Simply. Recklessly. Christ said: “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:3 ESV). *Anything* is a prayer of childlike trust—trust that no matter what He asks you to do, He will do something beautiful with you. No matter how unprepared, inept, or ordinary you might feel, He's holding your hand

If you look at every significant impact for God's kingdom—from Paul in Acts to D. L. Moody to Billy Graham to Mother Teresa—these were all average people, sometimes the least likely people, who were just completely resigned to God.

Zac and I, we wanted in on this. We wanted to know what works God had prepared in advance for us to do. We wanted into the stories that last forever. We wanted to quit being swept along with the current and building lives that did not matter for eternity. We wanted to not just offer God words but truly offer up our lives and all that was in them, letting go of every expectation of what He would say.

“God, we will do anything. *Anything.*” Our lives now lay in the hands of a reckless, invisible God.

RESPOND

Write your own definition of *surrender*. What is it?

What does surrender cost?

What is the outcome of surrender for you?

In what ways, if any, are you sick of “normal”?

Think about wanting to be right with God at the end of your life rather than right with all the people in it. Can you discern between these two right now? What are the differences?

What do you need to let go of to offer your life and all that is in it to the Lord?

Here at the beginning, what do you hope to gain from this journey? Why do you think God has brought you to this point?



READ & REFLECT

What will your story be? In what will feel like only a minute, if you know Jesus as your Savior, we will be together in heaven. I am so excited that you are starting this journey toward living the story He has for you, and I cannot wait to meet face-to-face and hear it all. You better not bring me the safe version of a life! Bring the crazy stuff. Bring the unexplainable. Bring the story only God could write. I can't wait.

Read Acts 17:26 and Ephesians 2:10.

Acts says that God sets us in the generation and place we live. And in Ephesians Paul writes that before time, God planned the good works we would do. There are stories already written that we are to live. Are we living them?

After reading these passages, consider the answers to these two questions:

Who are You, Lord?

What do You want for me?

DAY 2

WHAT IS YOUR ANYTHING?

Whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

—PHILIPPIANS 3:7

That night we prayed *anything*, I told God, “From this point on things are changing. I am living for the moment when I will face You. I want to get to heaven out of breath, having willingly done anything that You—God of the universe—asked me to do . . . anything.”

Zac and I prayed *anything* every night for a week. Every night we offered up something else to God as though we were little kids; we lifted up our house to Him as if it were a little red plastic Monopoly house that we were willing to trade Him. We offered our home, our jobs, our places, and our talents, and step by step He answered yes or no, this way or that. Eventually He led us into radical, life-upending changes including adoption, new ministries, new cities, and other things beyond what we could have come up with by ourselves. But it started with the little everyday things. And as He peeled our grip off our lives, it hurt. As He asked us to jump, it terrified us. But we discovered that’s how the best things start.

HOW TO PRAY ANYTHING

Praying *anything* is where it all begins. It's not just saying mere words or a reckless sacrifice; praying *anything* begins with love—actually loving a person. “If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing” (1 Cor. 13:3 ESV). Starting with love and moving through to obedience, here are the most important steps to praying the *anything* prayer.

1. **Experience Christ.** *Anything* begins with a relationship with the God of the universe through Christ, who says, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6 ESV).

Laying down all that we love more than Him is next, and that may take a while. It took many years of God chipping away at me, and even still it is a daily surrender. But after that—after you are all surrendered, willing, abandoned, sold out, and all in—then what?

2. **Pray.** Our story began long before we prayed. The night we uttered the words was just a step in the process of surrender. But it was an important step. God wants to be invited in to lead your life, for your heart to stand before Him and say, “You have me. Do anything with me.” That is a bold, beautiful move. Continuing to mean it daily as His will unfolds will prove even more powerful. Ask Him to show you where He wants you to pour out your life and gifts and resources.
3. **God Speaks.** He speaks first through His Word. If I hadn't read God's Word to us about caring for the poor and the orphaned dozens of times, I would have never sensed His Spirit leading me to adopt. Or if it wasn't clear to me the passionate way Christ loved me and poured His life out for me, I would not be compelled to do the same

for others. We know who God is because of His Word; we must read it. His Spirit's leading always is tied up in His Word. We are to walk with God "in spirit and truth" (John 4:24 ESV). One without the other is not of God; it is either a false spirit or dead religion.

So you read and study and search and pray. Then you ask God to lead you. When we were feeling led in specific *anythings*, it wasn't through an audible voice. It was through promptings in our spirits, that burning in our gut when we know something is real. It burns, but it is also subtle, gentle, and mysteriously quiet. Sometimes He quickly makes himself clear, and sometimes it involves months of processing and wrestling with God till we know for sure. But He does still speak to our hearts because He has things for us here—things we cannot accomplish without Him.

4. **Band Together.** Surround yourself with people on the same mission. We were built to need people. We cannot passionately surrender and follow God alone. We were built for bands of brothers (and sisters) to fight beside us. Find a church, start a study or small group, get creative, but find people to live on a mission with who will make you better, help you remember, and help you live your *anythings*. Intentionally pursue people who make you better.
5. **Obey.** Do what He says—whatever He says. You will be miserable until you obey. Even if it is hard, even if it is costly, it will be worth it. No matter the cost . . . obey and trust Him with the consequences of that obedience. Whatever we considered valuable, it will pale in comparison to Him. These things, Paul said, "I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him" (Phil. 3:8). That's how they compare. He is more than worth giving whatever we have to give. Then He gets in and actually restores us, unwinds our mess of a head and soul. His mercy trumps the most epic of stories. This God is real, and He is worth my surrender.

your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven. (Matt. 6:10)

When we have our lives in gripped hands and we consider handing them over, most of us get that feeling—fear mixed with adrenaline mixed with nausea. It feels as though we might die if we jump. But when I prayed *anything*, what I feared would bind me set me free. It stung like death, and it still feels like death, but that feeling is the key turning in the lock. On the other side of the pain is freedom, peace, joy, hope, and the loss of control. It's how we were made to live.

FALL

So why do it? Why pray *anything*—and then *do* anything?

What if these little acts of obedience were a small part of a matrix of dominoes unfolding the glory of God (small because, after all, I am a small domino in a huge matrix)? Could He bypass me and find another route? Of course—He is God.

But what if I laid down my life, my domino, and through that unleashed an army of others who laid down and unleashed their obedience? What if, through this matrix, God's glory was displayed?

Many dominoes have fallen behind me to allow me to fall. Watching friends fall into adoption prepared our hearts for falling into adoption. And countless mentors and friends have fallen into my life to help me to fall into ministry through writing.

We are all dominoes . . . we all have our place. What is yours?

I beg you—all of us—to fall. Fall into obedience that will shape the

glory of God in our generation. We don't want to get to heaven and realize we missed it, that God rerouted around us.

Besides, I have a feeling that what God has for us are the best things in life. I don't want to miss them.



RESPOND

Why would you pray *anything*? Is God worth it to you?

When you think about what your *anything* is, where do you feel your heart taking you? What scares you most and makes you most excited? List these things and pray through them in reflection.

When you think about praying your own *anything*, what is the most difficult thing to release control of to God, to lift up to Him?

There is a temptation to think surrender should look like the radical, crazy stuff everyone can see. What small, quiet, obedient step is God calling you to right now?

If God actually told you what He wanted you to do, would you be afraid to do it? How do you imagine this will work itself out in your everyday and ordinary moments?

We have no idea how our small acts of obedience impact others. Some of our *anythings* feel flashy and fancy, but most fall in secret places. And that throws us. We think we need to do something grand to prove our surrender. But God is so pleased with the times of prayer and obedience that happen in secret. “Your Father who sees in secret will reward you” (Matt. 6:4).

Whose faith has most shaped yours? What is it about their obedience that has influenced you?

Get an hour alone and journal. Can you pray *anything*?

Do it. Today. Don't wait.

Write it out. Tear it out and share it with the people closest to you.

Take a photo and mark this decision. It's your turning point.

READ & REFLECT

Friends, we are getting in deep. I know I never promised you easy, but when it comes to actually praying this prayer, actually handing it all over, I have received many, many letters about how finally letting go has often been agonizing. It is.

Paul is one of my favorite models of surrender in Scripture. He describes the tensions so clearly and yet is so sure of his own surrender. His faith emboldens mine.

Read Philippians 3:7–11.

What did Paul hold as his greatest possession?

How did that affect his view of suffering?

How did that affect his view of blessings?

After reading these passages, consider the answers to these two questions:

Who are You, Lord?

What do You want for me?

DAY 3

OUT OF CONTROL

What we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

—2 CORINTHIANS 4:5–6

Somewhere I picked up the idea that if things did not feel right or fall perfectly into place, God was not in them. I thought obeying God should feel pretty easy and convenient. For instance, if God was calling you to Rwanda, then He would have a buyer for your house in two weeks; and if not, then He likely wasn't in it. Okay, maybe not that extreme, but if obeying seemed too uncomfortable, I likely would have decided that it wasn't from God. Where did I get that?

In Scripture God promises we will have trouble in this world. Christ says, "If you are for Me, then the world will be against you. If you are not willing to lose everything you have, including your life, don't even follow Me. Expect persecution, and consider that a privilege" (Matt. 12:30; Luke 14:26; and Matt. 5:10, paraphrased).

All my life I thought I had God's stamp of approval because my life

wasn't going badly. Suddenly I was faced with the fear that it might actually be the opposite. What if my life was going so beautifully because I wasn't chasing after God?

Even though the thousand problems in my soul had shifted toward one goal and one hope and I felt free, I had a new problem: life was getting hard, the pace was picking up, and I felt reluctant. As I began this journey I wrote:

May 5, 2009

What if He actually told me what it is He wants me to do . . . and I don't want to do it? We are in a vulnerable spot. We have told Him we will do anything.

Go. Stay. Speak. Be quiet. Stand up. Sit down. Redeem children. Redeem dirty dishes. Something big. Something small. Anything drastic. Nothing fancy. Anything.

I want to know Christ . . .

Yes!

And the power of His resurrection . . .

Yes!

And the fellowship of sharing in His suffering . . .

Um . . . maybe?

Becoming like Him in His death . . .

Not at all! Could I have Starbucks while I decide?

And somehow to attain to the resurrection of the dead . . .

Big yes!

Please, somehow, God save me! Some days I am willing and some days I feel reluctant. Maybe I could do whatever big or small things if He would help me . . .

God, overcome me. Please.

LINDSEY'S STORY

Lindsey and her husband, Chris, were in their comfort zone. They were teaching and coaching at a private Christian school they loved, and their kids were settled in and thriving. The arrival of a precious new baby made finances tight, but they committed to doing what it took to stay where they were and keep their kids enrolled in their school.

Then Lindsey prayed the *anything* prayer and started feeling restless for something bigger. She felt overwhelmed with the sense that God had more in store for them. “We felt God was stirring our hearts to move us forward to something new,” she wrote to me, “but we just didn’t know yet.” Then circumstances overcame them. At a time when they felt they had no choices financially, they were both offered jobs at a public school that looked nothing like what they dreamed of.

“It was such a hard decision to leave,” she said. “We always thought the only way the Lord would move us was through His favor in getting us a job that was a ‘step up.’ But that is not the way it was panning out. God moved us through disappointment—the reality that we just financially could no longer sustain working there. So many tears were cried in wondering what God was doing, where He was in all this, and why He would move us from somewhere we loved and believed in to somewhere that was difficult and completely absent of a Christ-centered community—even for our children, who had to move schools with us.”

Fast-forward further into Lindsey’s journey, when she began to feel the threads of her life and talents weaving into a bigger dream: working at the collegiate level. When a position finally opened at her ideal school, the Christian college where she and her husband had gone, she fought back crippling doubts, inadequacy, and insecurity to apply. She felt in no way qualified, but she held on for dear life to Paul’s instructions to “fan into

flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline” (2 Tim. 1:6–7). Then, after rounds of interviews, she was selected as the new associate dean of the school.

“We came to find out,” she wrote, “that I was most appealing to the college because I had seen both sides of education—Christian and public school. One thing we have learned through all this is that God orchestrates every season and experience in our lives according to His perfect plan—even when it doesn’t always make sense.” God moves through disappointment, she says. “Faith in the unseen and in the waiting, I’ve learned, is all part of this journey of life and sanctification. Now, here’s to new adventures!”

HOLD ON AND SCREAM

Risk is terrifying. I had prayed the prayer of *anything* as though I were about to launch on the Superman ride at Six Flags, my eyes closed tight and fingernails digging in. I was so afraid.

I can just imagine God thinking something like, *Thanks a lot, Jennie. Great. You’ll be used by Me, but no one else will ever want to be because you are making it look so terrifying!*

But on the other hand, maybe He was thinking, *I love that she realizes she is going to need Me for this.*

Yes, we are inadequate. On the edge of risk, you always feel it. But we aren’t powered by ourselves. In taking the risk and praying *anything*, I was strapped in and couldn’t get off. My heart raced and I thought I might throw up. Yet all I had to do was hold on and scream. The ride did the work. I just held on and screamed.

As I did, God showed up. We began to know Him. We began to

live out what one of my favorite seminary professors had told us about knowing God: *The only exercise that works 100 percent of the time to draw one close to the real God is risk.* To risk is to willingly place your life in the hand of an unseen God and an unknown future, then watch Him come through. He starts to get real when you live like that.

When he said that to our class in the lecture hall, we were all speechless. Knowing God, really knowing Him, was getting more complicated. But if He was real, if He was God, then certainly He was worth knowing—not just the facts but knowing what it was like to launch on this ride and have His hand alone holding us up.

Scripture describes a radical, reoriented life for those who trust Christ—one full of living for the invisible and the future. It's a life fully surrendered to an invisible God, whose agenda contradicts mine—a life very different from the safe, comfortable one I found myself creating.

Stepping out wholly dependent on God to come through, stepping away from what is secure and comfortable exposes the holes in our faith. And then when God comes through, it expands our faith. We see Him move in greater ways. When we risk and He shows up, we see Him differently than if we were standing safely looking on.

RESPOND

Recall a time when you were glad God trumped you in your life.

Describe an experience that helped you to realize that your life was completely out of your control.

Where is your faith currently being tested?

What precious thing might you have missed if you had been afraid to risk? Take a moment to give thanks for that, and ask God to empower you to continue living for things you can't see yet.

The question everyone asks themselves when looking over the cliff, before jumping into the unknown deep, is *what do I have to lose?* What are you most afraid of losing in this life? List them under each subject.

Comfort

Success

Approval

Acceptance

Other

All of this comes down to identity. Who are you apart from your things, your image, your people, and your plans? Are you secure alone with God?

Freedom comes through letting go.

READ & REFLECT

This journey never stops being terrifying. It isn't the brave ones who pray this *anything* prayer; it's the ones who believe God. These days I hear a lot about bravery. But no matter how risky my faith has become, I've never once felt especially brave or courageous. The only thing that enables me to walk forward is having my eyes fixed on Jesus.

The opposite of fear is not bravery and courage—the opposite of fear is faith.

Read 2 Corinthians 4:1–18.

In his letter to the Corinthians, how did Paul's understanding of Christ and the gospel affect . . .

his view of himself?

the purpose of his life?

the way he suffers?

After reading these passages, consider the answers to these two questions:

Who are You, Lord?

What do You want for me?

DAY 4

ANYTHING FOR HIS GLORY

Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

—JOHN 17:24

What do I want most?

For me, there are so many things. I want a few silly, shallow things: I need my car washed right now, and I would love a new iPhone (mine was recently dropped in the bath), a night out with my husband, or a night to catch up on TV. I want deeper things such as close friendships, to be someone my kids want to emulate, and for my words to make a difference. But what do I want most? What's the deepest desire of my soul? I cannot name it, but I am certain it centers entirely around me, a selfish desire to be important or appreciated, to “matter” or “be seen.” Something like that.

What does God want most?

I've always known the answer, though I've never known what the answer meant. I certainly never knew what the answer meant for my life.

God is most after His glory.

Glory: it is a vague and mysterious word. John Piper defines God's glory

as “the holiness of God put on display.”¹ It’s who God truly is, revealed so you can see and taste and feel Him, and in turn fall flat on your face.

JESUS PRAYED ANYTHING

When Jesus went to meet and plead with His Father before facing death, one word fell off His lips over and over again. He prayed for God’s *glory*. He longed for it. He said He had spent his life on earth building and displaying it. Nothing mattered more to Him before His death than God showing Himself through Jesus and through us.

Even as I write these words today, I wonder if I honestly care. I can barely obey God without thinking, *What will it cost me?* I don’t want to think that way. Left to myself, I am just that selfish. I want things. I want comfort and fun. I don’t want to suffer. I want things to feel in control. Today I don’t want to be typing and studying about God’s glory—I’d rather be at Target or on Facebook.

What if we wanted what God wanted most? What if we wanted, like Jesus, God’s glory above every other thing?

What if the true motive of my life and my heart were to make God known for a few years on this earth?

Jesus prayed this prayer: “Father, glorify Yourself through Me. Glorify Yourself through them” (John 17, paraphrased). Everyone sitting with Jesus that night felt the weight of that call, which was so large, so costly, so significant: the call to show the glory of God to the earth.

Jesus went on to pray, “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word . . . I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world” (John 17:20, 11 ESV). A few men meant to display God. Eventually, most of them were killed for this call. Friends, we’re up. Those men are gone. Now we show God. We show His glory.

COMPELLED BY GLORY

We wake up every day to a world that needs us. All people everywhere are waking up and setting their feet on the earth, with their own responsibilities likely defined by whether their feet land on tile or wood or carpet or dirt.

But we all wake up and put our feet down every day, and we move through our time here according to the rules, expectations, demands, and hopes of our given space in this world. The given place in which I grew up issued a script that spelled out a life lived near family, in a safe neighborhood where you had a fence and cute curtains, and where life wasn't too hard, especially if you loved Jesus.

In John 17 Jesus prayed this for me and all of us who would come to know Him:

You are not of this world, Jennie. You don't belong here. You are going to put your feet down every morning in this world, but you don't belong to it. You don't adhere to its rules and expectations. You don't even hope for the same things. Because you know Me and you are Mine, your home, your hope is with Me forever. Your expectations are that your short life here is spent on My mission even if it is costly. Because you know it is short.

If we pray *anything*, we will all, like Christ, be called to give up this life and things we love. We will be called to risk for His glory. Christ never intended for those who walked with Him to feel comfortable and safe. This was meant to be a risk-it-all pursuit. The glory of God will be made great on this earth, but what a privilege to be part of His plan to restore it.

Our God is compelling. He is asking us to go compel people to Him. To *compel* means to have a powerful or irresistible influence in the lives of others.

Many of us don't do this much. We avoid compelling anyone to God because it may feel cheesy or annoying. Well then, we have to find ways to compel that aren't cheesy or annoying. The problem with this new generation and their endearing disgust for "faking it" is that they run from church and organized religion. So we'll have to take God to them in a way that's real.

When my husband and I prayed *anything* with God's glory in mind, it all started to make sense. It all started to be real. Authenticity came without trying. What we once did in order to "matter" or to "be seen" we forgot all about. We matter and are seen because of God's love for us. Because there is an object to our actions, we move and love and restore, not so we matter but because we have been moved, loved, and restored by God.

Radical acts were not the goal; we were moved by a Person, in love with Christ. And out of that love came a willingness to trust and hand over our lives. Out of that, Jesus, because He is merciful, led us to the unique places where we would each give our lives away.

It spread in our church. Couples started praying *anything* with abandon. Hundreds of children were sponsored, friends relocated to impoverished neighborhoods to spread the gospel, families adopted and fostered. Others downsized their homes to give, reconciled with family members, forgave and pursued unity in our church, and let go of this life, longing to give themselves away in forgiveness and mercy because of Jesus. Because of His forgiveness and mercy. Because of His glory. Seeing it come to life is the highest goal of the *anything* prayer.

RESPOND

Do you struggle with forgetting about God as you go through your day-to-day life? What can you practically do to remember the supreme importance of God's glory each day?

Have you been burned by legalism? How can you avoid communicating legalism to your children, those you know, or loved ones who are growing in faith?

Why is God beautiful to you?

How do you think God might be calling you to start giving Him away rather than just learning about Him?

If you really believe that your life belongs to others as much as to yourself, how does that change your interactions with your family, community, and especially your church?

READ & REFLECT

No other passage shaped this project more than the verses you will be studying today. They recount the ultimate moment of surrender and perspective. Jesus is about to lay down His life for us. He is with His people, and He stops to pray for them. It is as if the heart of Jesus is laid bare before us. We see His thoughts, His goals, His passions, His hopes, and His plans.

Why would you pray *anything*? Is God worth it?

These verses scream yes to me. I pray you take significant time with these words and let them seep into your thoughts, your goals, your passions, your hopes, and your plans.

Read John 17:1–25.

How did Jesus view His Father?

What did He pray for us?

What did He believe could happen?

After reading these passages, consider the answers to these two questions:

Who are You, Lord?

What do You want for me?

DAY 5

STEPPING INTO HIS STORY

In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.

—1 PETER 1:3–4

Prayers like *anything* place us in the midst of stories. These stories have an Author who writes characters, places, and parts. He develops story lines that are actually quite epic, even if they feel momentarily insignificant.

In a million unique ways—as we change diapers, eat dinner, return e-mails, pay the bills—we are to be the evidence of God. Jesus factored in the mundane. We need to eat and sleep and shower and clean up and work on our marriages because of the way He made us—typical, inadequate, and human. Embrace the common: a Sunday afternoon watching sports, coffee with a friend, cooking dinner for a neighbor, taking the dog for a walk, heading to a job that is making you more humble and needy because it is so unfulfilling, or working through conflict with a friend you have offended. This and more is all part of it.

So do your everyday and your ordinary. Godliness is found and formed in those places.

Jesus said the way we glorify God, the way we step into His story, is by

accomplishing the work God gives us to do. While on earth Jesus glorified His Father by doing this very thing.

We play our part in His story, and the beauty is we were made for this.

We trust in God, who leads us to do spiritual things that may not totally make sense. God is still not very practical, and to follow Him takes trust. Following Him completely requires belief that He is good even if everything here and now is not, that He sees us and has an intentional plan for our few years here.

But before we can do anything, we need the Spirit to do anything, and He operates on a different level.

THE SPIRIT FUELS US

Until we believe in the reality of a spiritual war where spiritual beings exist and a spiritual plan is being accomplished, we won't need an invisible Spirit's help. It would seem ridiculous . . . unless it is all real.

I had made following Christ all about rules and principles. But the relationship I'd heard about growing up? This was it. God's Holy Spirit in me. Leaning into Him for self-control when my kids talk back, for guidance on where to use God's gifts in me, for words when I am writing, and for patience as the consequences of obeying flooded our lives.

Without the Spirit of God to lead our *anythings*, we will only be do-gooders with our own agendas. And they will fizzle. It will be a phase, some dramatic spiritual experiment we look back on fondly, wishing it had been real life. But sometimes the real thing takes time. We prayed *anything*, but it was over the course of months and years that our *anythings* have been revealed. I imagine this will continue for the rest of our lives; if we remain willing, more *anythings* are in store.

The Spirit is in us, those bound to Christ, and we wait on Him to

act. We wait on Him to tell us what's next. This isn't easy, but it's pretty simple.

Service, or living your *anything*, is simply an expression of what is true about my God: He is trustworthy. I adore Him, so He has me . . . all of me. I don't choose my own path anymore. It is set for me, laid before the foundations of time. God prepared in advance the good works I would do (Eph. 2:10). That is the beautiful call on my life, on our lives. Led by the Spirit of God.

CALLED TO A PERSON

As our friends prayed and acted on their *anythings*, they weren't just recklessly saying yes to God's Spirit. They were also being set free from sin they had struggled with for years. As God got bigger, their thousand problems were shrinking. God was setting everyone free. Our affections, our goals, our futures had shifted. We were on a mission. Life was getting really fun because we were running with friends toward heaven, with abandon.

Abandonment only makes sense if there is a God worthy of abandoning everything for. The greatest gift in surrender is that in letting go of everything you think will fix you and make you feel better, you find a Person . . . not a pat answer or a verse or a cause. After your head clears from the struggle of wrestling yourself to the ground, you see a Person.

He was there before when you were preoccupied, but now you see Him.

Jesus said, "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full" (John 15:11 ESV). And Scripture tells us, "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19 ESV). He is our "living hope" (1 Peter 1:3).

When we don't love or feel joy or peace or passion, it's because we do not know His love or His joy or peace or passion. He is a Person, not a

magic pill you take when your life or your soul is broken. He is a Person you talk to and listen to and love and respect. He's someone you decide to spend time with and dream with, someone you follow and learn from and hurt with—someone you choose over anybody else, over anything else. Jesus is a Person—*the* Person who defines my life, sweeps in, and changes me. When I let Him in.

We all want to be free, joyful, and peaceful, but we get reluctant to hand God everything. Yet that is part of the path to the things He promises us.

JUMP

At some point our faith and our words must become our actions and lives. But here is the beautiful, backward thing about risking everything for God: it is not the ones sitting out the dangerous parts who are finding life; it is the ones with everything at risk—heart racing, hopes high, purpose clear, and completely dependent and scared to death—who are really experiencing life.

The thing about following Jesus is He does things backward—freedom and true life came out of His death. In turn, to follow Christ to the cross, we jump: trusting Him with everything, praying *anything*, handing over every day and all that lives in it to a Person—in death we find life and freedom too.

God is often present right over the edges. Even so, “doing something,” even something good, even something *great*, will never be the gospel. When we trust God with everything, He can explode our numb life into something beautifully meaningful.

We want God to knock out suffering and poverty. Ironically, He gave us just about all we need to do it. We give our lives to Him and He gives

our lives away. Nothing on earth is more fun and more full than being distributed by an all-knowing, compassionate God, who knows exactly where our ridiculously blessed lives would be best spent.

There are a million creative ways to give our lives away, and we are going to find out what those are in the coming days. God is just waiting for us to jump.



RESPOND

In what area of your life is God asking not for radical sacrifice but simple obedience and your heart?

What agenda—maybe even a Christian agenda—do you need to set aside to follow Christ? Take a moment to sit with God and think of new ways you can get to know Him more as a person.

Read James 2:14–17. Do you talk more about God than you obey Him? In what area of your life are faith and words ready to become actions?

Over the past few days of this journey, you may have experienced a hint of the winds of change blowing. Looking over your answers to previous questions, what have you started to dream about how your life could be different in one or two years if you step out in that direction?

What are the first few steps you can take toward your anything? Consider sharing this with a small group, friend, or trusted mentor to support you as you grow.

READ & REFLECT

A day is coming when our eyes will close and there will be no more chaos. No one will be preaching or writing books about God to help us remember because we will be alive in that world with Him forever.

Anything is nothing in light of that. In light of forever. In light of Him—the Person. That day is coming faster than any of us realize. What will we do with the time we have been given? I want what Jesus wants for me, even if it costs me everything here.

Read 1 Peter 1:3–9.

Based on this passage, what is promised?

In light of that promise, how do you live from here?

After reading these passages, consider the answers to these two questions:

Who are You, Lord?

What do You want for me?

for you because of the countless ways you have changed the world behind thousands of books.

Curtis Yates and all of the Yates and Yates team, you go so far and above in everything you do. I feel overwhelmed that God placed me in your agency. Literally, this project happened because you made it happen! Thank you for caring that these words go out further than I could ever imagine or dream.

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NOTES

DAY 1: PRAYING ANYTHING

1. You can read her life-changing story at <https://katiemajors.blog/>.
2. Quoted in Mark Fackler, “The World Has Yet to See . . .,” *Christian History* 25 (1990), accessed August 27, 2018, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-25/world-has-yet-to-see.html>.

DAY 4: ANYTHING FOR HIS GLORY

1. John Piper, “Rebuilding the Basics: The Centrality of the Glory of God,” [desiringGod.org](https://www.desiringgod.org), November 4, 2009, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/rebuilding-the-basics-the-centrality-of-gods-glory>.