



THE ONE YEAR®

# WORSHIP THE KING DEVOTIONAL

365 DAILY BIBLE READINGS TO INSPIRE PRAISE



chris tiegreen



TYNDALE HOUSE PUBLISHERS, INC.  
CAROL STREAM, ILLINOIS

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*The One Year Worship the King Devotional: 365 Daily Bible Readings to Inspire Praise*

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ISBN-13: 978-1-4143-2395-4

ISBN-10: 1-4143-2395-6

Printed in the United States of America

13 12 11 10 09 08  
6 5 4 3 2 1



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# Introduction

What is worship? What does it mean to present yourself as “a living sacrifice”? Is there a set time and place for it, or does it encompass all of our lives? Considering the priority the Bible places on true worship—and Jesus’ declaration that real worship is what God is after—these are enormously important questions. If we want to fulfill the purpose God has for us, and in fact to *be* fulfilled, we need to know how to love and adore Him.

The readings in *The One Year Worship the King Devotional* explore the heights and depths of worship. We’ll look at it from many angles: God’s perspective and humanity’s, passions and practicalities, outward form and inward function, words and actions. Through the course of this year, you will be urged to purify yourself from false worship and to let the Spirit of God fill you with truth. And in the process, you’ll grow to be more like the One who created you in His image.

Worship defines the relationship between God and His people and touches every aspect of our existence. These devotionals are drawn from all portions of Scripture, which is only natural, since God’s story is filled with encouragement and exhortation about the affections of our heart. The full range of human expression is found in its pages. If you’ll let His Spirit work through His Word to sink into your life, you’ll find your relationship with Him deepening in every way. May that purpose be fulfilled in your life as you explore His heart this year.



# In Spirit and Truth

God is spirit, and his worshipers must  
worship in spirit and in truth.

JOHN 4:24

## In Word

We are worshiping creatures by nature. It's why we were made. A glance around our world reveals a panorama of worship. Our culture alone includes an abundance of styles, a plethora of deities, a multitude of definitions, and myriad motives.

Considering the central role of worship in the life of a human being—it is our entire reason for being, as well as the eternal activity of the saints in heaven, according to the Word—we might do well to consider what God wants it to be like. Does He prefer informal or formal? Ritualistic or spontaneous? Noisy or quiet? Dignified or recklessly passionate? Nearly everyone has an opinion on these alternatives, but they aren't really the heart of the issue. What God desires most has less to do with how we express our worship than with the spirit behind it. In our adoration of our Creator, God seeks inspiration and integrity, sincerity and a spirit of sacrifice. He wants our outward expression to match our inward attitudes. He wants us not to worship ignorantly, but to know who He is. He wants it to be real.

That's hard for us. We fall into error so easily: We're either too emotional or not emotional enough, too rigid or too unstructured, too self-conscious or not self-aware enough. Most of all, we're apt to turn a worshipful heart into a routine behavior in the blink of an eye. What was sincere devotion yesterday is a performance for God's approval today. What was once an act of passion is now an act of obligation. Our hearts can grow cold faster than we ever thought.

## In Deed

What is your worship like? Is it a Sunday ritual or a frenzied emotion that you can put on and take off? Is it limited to one style of music or a particular church? Most important, is it more than skin-deep?

God seeks those whose worship emanates from deep within. He desires legitimate praise and integrity between heart and mouth. He wants to be the One we treasure most. Most of all, He wants you. All of you.

To worship God is to realize the purpose  
for which God created us.

—HERBERT CARSON



# Chosen for a Reason

You are a chosen people . . . that you may  
declare the praises of him who called you.

1 PETER 2:9

## In Word

This is a remarkably encouraging passage of Scripture. It tells us of our chosenness, our royal role in this world, and our inheritance as children of the most high God. We read verses like this and are amazed at the high and holy nature of our calling. We realize that mercy has been lavished upon us and we're in a privileged place. We are the ultimate rags-to-riches story.

But the amazing story doesn't end there. God hasn't just saved us and then written "the end." There's more to the plot than that. We are chosen so that we might declare His praises. As verse 9 continues, we have been transferred from a kingdom of darkness to a kingdom of light. We were blind, but now we see. We were hidden and then revealed. We were lost in a dark, murky wilderness, then plucked out of it and placed on streets of gold glimmering under the perpetual radiance of the Son. And according to this verse, there's a more ultimate purpose to our salvation than ourselves. We are bestowed with the honor of chosenness with the specific purpose of declaring His praises.

If you've never seen your worship as the ultimate purpose of your salvation, you're missing the best part of salvation. The place of glad worship is the place of greatest blessing, of richest fellowship, and of true fulfillment. Salvation isn't complete until we praise Him for His mercy—daily, passionately, honestly. We were bought with a price for a reason.

## In Deed

Many believers get caught up in getting the most out of their salvation. Few move on to giving the most out of their salvation. But those who do will realize one of the many paradoxes of the Kingdom: Giving it all results in getting it all. A heart poured out in praise results in a heart filled with purpose. The way of sacrifice leads to great gain. Losing your life in worship ends with fulfilling your life in God. And that's exactly the reason for which you were redeemed.

We are saved to worship God. All that Christ has done for us  
in the past and all that He is doing now leads to this one end.

—A. W. TOZER



## A Living Sacrifice

I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

ROMANS 12:1

### In Word

Since the days of the Exodus, wherever a tabernacle or temple stood, faithful Jews would bring the best of their flocks and herds to a priest standing at the altar of God. It was an act of devotion, a commandment handed down by God Himself. There were various reasons for the command: The offering would, at times, serve as a symbol of sin and its ugly consequences; as a sacrifice of gratitude, acknowledging that every good gift comes from God; or as an act of devotion and worship, a gift from a loving heart. Regardless of the reason, the origin of the sacrifice was always God—human beings clearly never created a ram or a bull—and the sacrifice was always a reminder of the horrible gap between the Creator and the created.

God bridged that gap with His ultimate sacrifice, of course—the body of Jesus on an altar made of Roman lumber. The wages of sin were paid in full. There are no more guilt offerings. All that was left for us to do is to place our lives in Him. Never before had such a gift been given, and never since. Those who accept it have no sin to work off, no condemnation to dread. We're left standing with nothing but our gratitude.

### In Deed

There is, however, an appropriate response. It has nothing to do with merit or guilt, but only with the thankfulness that should naturally flow from a redeemed heart. It is our spiritual act of worship.

The response is for us to walk to that tabernacle or temple as the Israelites did in days of old, approach the Priest, and hand Him the sacrifice that we brought out of our gratitude: ourselves. We are to envision our Priest doing His duty by taking the sacrifice, placing it on the altar of God, and accepting it in His name. But unlike the old sacrifices, this sacrifice lives. It lives a dedicated life, an altar life. It now belongs to the Priest. We are in His hands.

If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.

—C. T. STUDD



## On the Altar

I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

ROMANS 12:1

### In Word

What does it mean to lay our lives on God’s altar? Imagine a scene from the movies: In some distant tribal culture, one man saves another’s life. According to custom, the saved now belongs to the savior. And why not? If not for the rescuer, the rescued one would be dead. His life rightfully belongs to the one who preserved it. He might as well spend the rest of his days for the one who actually gave him the rest of his days.

So it is with Jesus and His sheep. We were lost and, for all practical purposes, dead. That’s not our preferred assessment of ourselves, but it’s what the Bible says. Without Jesus, we’d be forever lost and lifeless. But He rescued us. And in His culture, we now belong to Him. We are to live out the rest of our days—the days He mercifully gave us—for Him.

That’s what being a living sacrifice is all about. It means that when Jesus tells us to turn the other cheek, we don’t have the right to say, “No, not this time.” When Jesus tells us to give all we have—our time, our talents, our money, or even our deepest desires—to some aspect of His work, we don’t have the authority to decline. We are not our own; we have no claim on our own lives. We were bought with a precious, heavy price. We were saved for the One who saved us.

### In Deed

Just as Jesus laid Himself on God’s altar for our sin, we are to lay ourselves on that altar for His righteousness. We don’t earn His righteousness, of course. But practically, God puts it into us—He works it into our spirits—to the extent that we lay down our tainted lives in exchange for His resurrected one.

The implications of that relationship are astounding. Radical. Relentless. It was an “everything” purchase for a “forever” promise. Living sacrifices don’t live for themselves. They live for Another. That’s their service of worship.

Precisely because they have been redeemed at such a cost, believers must be God’s men.

—LEON MORRIS



# Nonconformity

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world,  
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

ROMANS 12:2

## In Word

Imagine a culture in which there is no word to describe deception. No lie has ever been told and no one has even considered deviating from the truth. This culture has such clear lines of authority that it would occur to no one to assert his own rights—or violate another's. It has a complete absence of conflict, a perfectly united fellowship, and a plan that everyone single-mindedly pursues. There's no discord there, only harmony. It's the utopia that human beings have instinctively envisioned, yet never achieved.

Such was the culture of heaven before Satan fell like lightning from his high estate. As far as we can tell from Scripture, Lucifer's rebellion was an isolated incident. It drew many followers—one-third of heaven's hosts, according to many interpretations of Revelation 12:4—but was not in any way typical of the remainder of heaven's inhabitants. No, heaven's culture was perfect. Who—except for a being as prideful as Satan—would have wanted to mess it up?

We can't relate to a society in which evil is foreign. We're not nearly innocent enough for that. We've grown up with sin all around us, showing up in violence, bitterness and anger, lust and greed, and all sorts of idolatries. But in the enormous span of cosmic history, our earth has gone tragically wrong for only a well-defined moment—a brief sliver of eternity. What we've accepted as normal is drastically abnormal. God's eternal kingdom will not accept any elements of rebellion. Regardless of how comfortable we've been in the past with the human rebellion, we need to be terribly uncomfortable with it now. We have to change.

## In Deed

Our worship of God is to involve a radical transformation to His culture—a society in which all disobedience is a horrifying thought. No lying, no lust, no discord, no rebellion. Our minds must fit the eternal patterns of heaven, not the momentary aberrations of earth. We are citizens of a very different kingdom than we've ever known. The ways of this world hold nothing for us anymore. Our conformity is over. Transformation must begin.

Measure your growth in grace by your sensitiveness to sin.

—OSWALD CHAMBERS



# A Sacrifice of Love

Love the LORD, all his saints!

PSALM 31:23

## In Word

Being a living sacrifice is more than a holy obligation; it is a holy passion. It's the lover who says, "I would do anything for you. I'd sacrifice my life, my dreams, my everything for your welfare." Few of us love God like that with any consistency, but that's our goal. And the only way to get there is to ask Him for that kind of love. It's supernatural. Only He can offer it and maintain it in our hearts.

How do we know if we have it? We'll know by what fills our minds when we lie down at night and when we wake up in the morning. We'll know it by where we direct all of our resources and all of our abilities. And we'll know it by the things we pray for.

If a stranger were to pick up the ledger of our checkbook and read it, would he know that we are lovers of God? If he were to examine our calendar, would he be able to tell that we have a holy desire for a beloved Savior? If he were to hear our prayers, would he find that we're wholly dedicated to the will of Another? We're reluctant to answer, because we know our shortcomings. We know how fickle our hearts and how self-directed our desires are. We know we have more than one agenda—God's plus our own. We know we have a long way to go to be filled with a holy, God-centered love.

## In Deed

That's okay. God's grace is more than enough to cover our lukewarm hearts. But He doesn't want us to remain ambivalent toward Him. He wants to stir us up to a consuming obsession with His goodness, His love, and His plans. He wants us not just to try hard to please Him—we've done that and failed so many times—but to delight in Him. Like any lover of another, He wants to be our joy. Like a wife who craves evidence of her husband's affections, or a husband who looks expectantly for affirmation from his wife, our God—though never needy—wants to be adored.

Can we adore Him? We must—it's our created purpose, and it's the only love we'll ever have that will leave us completely satisfied. All others fall short, but passion for Him always fulfills.

Love unites the soul with God; and the more  
love the soul has, the more powerfully it enters  
into God and is centered on Him.

—JOHN OF THE CROSS



# We Surrender All

If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

LUKE 9:23

## In Word

When you were first saved, or as you grew in your walk with Christ, you probably told God that you surrendered all of your desires, plans, skills, talents, relationships, and resources to Him. (If not, stop reading and consider doing that now.) That pledge is a serious one, and most of us have made it with all sincerity and even enthusiasm. We've begun to see ourselves as His possession, available for His purposes. We gave Him the keys to our lives—keys that we wrongly held as our own. And, according to His plan, He probably began to test our devotion.

That's the catch. The thought of letting Jesus have our all was liberating and relaxing when we first had it. But when He began to take our word for it, we balked. Did He remove a loved one from you? Let your peaceful circumstances erupt in chaos? Threaten your financial security? Limit the use of your time or talents? It hurt. It had to. He has to make our devotion more than theoretical. He will not let us live under an illusion that we have surrendered all to Jesus when we haven't. In our hearts, we have to let everything go but Him.

It's often a shock that God would actually take us up on some of our offered sacrifices. When we tell Him we'll go anywhere and do anything for the glory of His name, we have to mean it. He already knows whether we're authentic in our devotion, but do we? No, we have to notice our own reactions to be sure. When we develop hard feelings toward Him because He has not given us what we wanted, He has opened our eyes: We wanted some things more than we wanted Him.

## In Deed

Did you mean it when you told God, "I give my life to You"? Then His removal of your props should be no surprise. We cannot "give" Him our lives and then complain when He takes them—or painfully touches them, or seemingly deprives them. Our lives are His. What business is it of ours if we are uncomfortable under His management? He has higher purposes than we do, and we trust Him. We've surrendered all.

No sin is small.  
—JEREMY TAYLOR



# Mysterious God

Clouds and thick darkness surround him.

PSALM 97:2

## In Word

Can we worship someone we can't see clearly? It stretches us to try. We describe God's greatness in our praises and we give gratitude for the good things He has done, all the while knowing that we're missing the mark. Whatever we can conceive of when we think of God is going to fall woefully short of who He really is. The biggest, greatest, most awesome being we can imagine is an insufficient image of God. If our minds can come up with it, it won't measure up.

Perhaps that's why we are so prone to idolatry: We like to worship things we can see. Our adoration seems to beg for specifics. When we fall in love with a person, we adore the way she smiles or the way he walks. But when we fall in love with our God, what do we have to hang on to? His ways are mysterious, His thoughts higher than ours. Clouds and thick darkness surround Him.

That's why God sent us Jesus. "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being" (Hebrews 1:3). Though we can't completely comprehend Him, we can "see" Him. Even if we didn't walk Galilee and Judea all those years ago, we can see Him through the eyes of His disciples. We can know what He has said and how He has related to other human beings. We don't have to wonder, as did a popular song a few years ago, "What if God was one of us?" For a moment in time and through the eternal Word, He was. And is.

## In Deed

Why do clouds and thick darkness surround God? Because seeing Him fully would blow a poor creature's circuits as completely as a million-volt current running through a 110-volt appliance. And also because there's this problem called sin. We are too small to comprehend Him naturally, and too unholy to comprehend Him righteously.

But we worship a God who has made Himself accessible. We take that for granted, but the rest of the universe is amazed. Avoid the idolatry that our limited vision craves. Jesus has pierced the cloudy darkness and invited us higher.

Behold, the Heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, and thou sayest, Come ye all unto me.

—THOMAS À KEMPIS



# Beneath Rebellion

The heavens proclaim his righteousness,  
and all the peoples see his glory.

PSALM 97:6

## In Word

Beneath every skeptic's protests against the existence of God is a desire to be autonomous. Their objections are often a transparent mask. To acknowledge God and His righteousness would be to admit that humanity must bow down. That's an unappealing option for many, so the intellectual arguments come out and the clarity of truth gets obscured.

How do we know that pure, objective logic does not guide the skeptic? Because the Bible is clear: "The heavens proclaim [God's] righteousness, and all the peoples see his glory." The psalm was written at a time when many thought that only Israel saw His glory. But God has written the evidence for His existence—and His righteousness—into every human culture and into every dark corner of this world. The smoke-and-mirrors approach of agnostics and atheists will not hold water; even if their theories span centuries, they are still short-lived. And the misdirection strategies of those who worship idols will not hold water either. Tailor-made gods may appear to spring from religious sincerity, but they are simply one more human attempt to avoid the Righteous One. Our Sovereign has not spoken as subtly as many think.

## In Deed

Be careful not to get drawn into religious issues as the world has framed them. There are only two categories of religion: the religion of those who accept the Righteous God, and the religions of those who avoid Him.

What does that mean in the daily life of the average Christian? It means that the bottom line in every conversation you have with a non-Christian about your faith is an authority issue. You don't have to point that out; just know that it's there. And it also means that the doubts you may struggle with are probably not an intellectual crisis. A question of authority often underlies them as well. Will you trust in God's sovereignty or strive for your own autonomy?

Doubts are normal for believers and unbelievers alike, but understand the battle of wills that is their source. His righteousness has been abundantly proclaimed, and all have seen His glory.

Every revelation of God is a demand, and the  
way to knowledge of God is by obedience.

—WILLIAM TEMPLE



# Opposed to Evil

Let those who love the LORD hate evil.

PSALM 97:10

## In Word

God is relentless in His hatred of evil. We may think He tolerates it awfully well to let the world go on as it has for century upon century. But He hates evil. He has demonstrated at every turn His opposition to anything that conflicts with His character and corrupts His work. His judgments are certain. God and evil will not forever coexist.

We must ask ourselves if we love this God. We would hardly admit that we don't, but the biblical witness is clear: Those who love Him will hate evil. Those who love evil have opposed God. There can be no double-mindedness in the heart of man—not legitimately, and not permanently. The unredeemed cannot help but accept some form of evil, whether it is ideological or moral. And the redeemed cannot tolerate any form of evil—at least not in the long run. Our true love will tell on us. Sooner or later, we will demonstrate either a love for God or a love for corruption.

That doesn't mean a Christian can't vacillate between the two. But one of them will eventually win. Jesus told this truth to His disciples: "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. . . . He who does not love me will not obey my teaching" (John 14:23-24). It doesn't get any clearer than that.

## In Deed

An obedient Christian may or may not have love for God in his heart. But a Christian who loves God will necessarily be obedient. You can fake obedience, but you cannot hide love. It will come out in actions, and those actions will be increasingly marked by an absence of evil. Those who love the Lord will love His values.

Most of us have grown up in a society that has a high tolerance for evil. Our late-night shows laugh at it, our advertisements flaunt it, and our leaders wallow in it. We dismiss gross corruption because, after all, no one's perfect. We allow our own bad habits to become more deeply ingrained because, after all, we're not legalistic Puritans. And all the while God grieves. He hates evil and is zealous about purging it from the hearts of His people. May His righteous zeal become ours.

The destined end of man is not happiness  
nor health, but holiness.

—OSWALD CHAMBERS



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False worship, November 16  
Father, October 20  
Fear, February 8, June 27, September 6  
Fearing God, March 3, September 15, December 14