

HOW TO MAKE GOD YOUR ONE THING

02 AUGUST 2026

SUMMARY

Drawing from Psalm 27, this Message calls believers to reorient their lives around the singular pursuit of God's presence rather than His gifts, protection, or measurable success. Bruce Downes reflects on seven weeks of ministry travel across America, during which God stripped away distractions and worldly measures of success to reveal the core of authentic Christian life: dwelling in the presence of God. Using King David as a model, the Message distinguishes between loving what God does and loving God Himself. It introduces the concept of "missionaries of His presence" as a distinct calling within the broader community of "IMPACTERS" — people so transformed by God's presence that they become the catalysts for others' transformation. The Message also previews significant changes to the ministry, including the establishment of a base in Dallas-Fort Worth, America, and the formal raising of lay missionaries to serve the Church worldwide.

KEY POINTS

- Psalm 27 is structured in two movements: confident declaration of trust in God (verses 1-6) and urgent prayer for continued help (verses 7-14), reflecting the realistic nature of faith that carries us through struggle rather than eliminating it
- David describes God using three images in verse 1: light (dispelling confusion and enabling right perception of reality), salvation (ongoing deliverance, not merely occasional rescue), and stronghold (the true fortress is God Himself, not any physical refuge)
- David does not deny the existence of danger but denies danger the right to dominate his heart
- Verse 4 is identified as the crux of the entire psalm and one of the most extraordinary verses in the entire Old Testament: David, a king with vast responsibilities, reduces his deepest desire to one thing — dwelling in God's presence, beholding His beauty, and seeking His guidance
- The one thing David seeks is not a place but a Person; his longing is for God Himself
- Prayer must always be followed by pursuit; seeking God is an active, intentional chase, not passive attendance
- The distinction between loving what God does and loving God Himself is central to authentic Christian life and ministry
- A "missionary of His presence" is a smaller, more specifically called group within the broader community of IMPACTERS — those whose intimacy with God makes others' transformation possible
- Success measured by worldly standards — attendance numbers, production quality, comparison to other ministries — is identified as a disease that must be repented of

- The model of four Christian Brothers transforming an entire school of hundreds illustrates how a small group wholly devoted to God's presence can impact far greater numbers
- The ministry is preparing to announce significant changes, expand into America, and formally call lay missionaries to leave ordinary life and serve the Kingdom

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

- Psalm 27:1-14, with particular focus on verses 1-6; verse 4 is treated as the theological heart of the entire Message
- Matthew 6:33, where Jesus calls His followers to seek first the kingdom of God
- Philippians 3, where Paul describes counting all things as loss compared to the surpassing value of knowing Christ
- John 15, where Jesus calls His disciples to abide in Him as He abides in them

STORIES:

- A Protestant couple from Saskatchewan, Canada, shared a written testimony describing how the ministry's devotionals were instrumental in their journey into the Catholic Church, which they joined in 2025 on their 40th wedding anniversary
- Bruce Downes recounts seven weeks of solitary ministry travel across America, staying in borrowed accommodation, spending days alone without sightseeing, and discovering through that stripping away of comfort and activity what the true essence of the ministry is
- Bruce Downes describes joking with his wife Rosemary that he had told God He could not come on their holidays, because God consistently used quiet seasons to issue difficult and disruptive calls
- The story of courting Rosemary is recalled to illustrate the nature of pursuit: tracking her down daily across university library floors until she changed levels to avoid distraction, and crossing off each day on a calendar
- A man Bruce Downes had never met sent \$20,000 to the ministry; Bruce Downes traveled three hours to meet him and his family, who identified themselves as IMPACTERS transformed by the ministry
- The parable of the hireling and the Good Shepherd from John's Gospel is referenced: the hired hand flees when the wolf comes, but the owner of the sheep runs toward the danger to protect what he loves
- The story of four Christian Brothers among one hundred teachers and over six hundred students whose presence alone defined the character of the entire school is used to illustrate how a small number of missionaries of His presence can shape a far larger community of IMPACTERS .

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SMALL GROUP GUIDE

This guide is designed to help your small group dive deeper into the message.

OPENING PRAYER

Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and open hearts to God's transforming work. Pray the IMPACTERS Community Prayer .

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening

1. At the beginning of the Message, Bruce Downes asked: "If God said something to you today that scared the living daylights out of you, would you be open?" How did you honestly respond to that question in the moment? What does your response reveal about where you are right now in your relationship with God?
2. The letter read at the start of the Message was from a couple who converted to Catholicism after years as Protestants. They described how signposts placed in their past gave them the courage to explore something unfamiliar. Can you identify any signposts God has placed in your own life that you only understood later?

On Psalm 27:1 - God as Light, Salvation, and Stronghold

3. Bruce Downes described three images David uses for God: light, salvation, and stronghold. Which of these three resonates most with you right now, and why?
4. Bruce Downes made a careful distinction between David saying "the Lord gives me light" and "the Lord is my light." What is the difference, and why does it matter practically in how we pray and how we live?
5. Bruce Downes said that David "denies danger the right to dominate his heart." Think of a current circumstance in your life that is trying to dominate your heart. What would it look like, practically, to deny it that right?

On Psalm 27:4 - The One Thing

6. Bruce Downes described Psalm 27:4 as one of the most extraordinary verses in the entire Old Testament. Read it slowly together as a group. What strikes you most about what David asks for, given everything he could have asked for as a king?
7. Bruce Downes shared that during his seven weeks in America, he was often alone, saw no tourist sights, and stayed put to avoid spending money. He said God had not asked him to go on holiday but to seek him. When was the last time you deliberately stripped away distractions to be alone with God? What happened, or what has stopped you from doing so?
8. Bruce Downes confessed: "I've been writing in my journal, Lord, I love the things you do too much. And I'm not sure I love you enough." How honestly

can you say the same thing? Where in your life do you find yourself more grateful for what God does than for who God is?

9. Bruce Downes said that "love of God means that you move toward the beloved" and described how he pursued Rosemary during their engagement, crossing off every day he found her. On a scale of one to ten, how actively are you pursuing God right now? What would it look like to increase that number by one?

On Psalm 27:5-6 - Presence Over Circumstances

10. Bruce Downes observed that when he asked what would happen if God asked something frightening of us, most people immediately went to circumstances: money, family, the future. Why do we default so quickly to circumstances rather than to God's presence? What would it take to reverse that instinct?
11. David says in verse 5 that God will hide him in his shelter "in the day of trouble," not from the day of trouble. What is the difference, and how does that distinction change the way we pray when we are in difficulty?
12. Bruce Downes described a disease he called "the disease of success" - measuring ministry and life by worldly metrics like attendance, comparison to others, and visible outcomes rather than by the presence of God. In what areas of your own life, whether in work, family, ministry, or faith, have you caught yourself measuring by the wrong standard?

On Missionaries of His Presence

13. Bruce Downes drew a distinction between IMPACTERS, people who have been impacted by God and who impact others, and missionaries of his presence, a smaller group called to make IMPACTERS possible. He used the image of four Christian Brothers in a school of 600 students and 100 other teachers. Do you sense a call toward that smaller, deeper role? What excites or frightens you about it?
14. Bruce Downes said: "IMPACTERS is advanced Christianity. It doesn't come to you. You have to go after it." What is one concrete step you could take this week to go after God rather than waiting for him to come to you?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice before your group meets again.

The One Thing Exercise Set aside 20 to 30 minutes this week in a quiet place with no agenda other than to be in God's presence. No prayer list, no Bible study plan, no podcast. Just sit before him. Afterward, write down what you noticed about your own heart during that time.

The Journal Prompt Write honestly in a journal or notebook: "Lord, do I love you, or do I love what you do for me?" Let yourself sit with the question. Do not rush to a comfortable answer. Bring what surfaces to your next group meeting.

The Pursuit Commitment Identify one way this week that you will actively pursue God rather than passively waiting. It might be waking earlier, turning off a screen, choosing silence during a commute, or attending an additional time of prayer. Tell someone in your group what you chose and follow up with them.

The Presence Audit Reflect on the past month of your life. Think about your work, your family interactions, your church involvement, and your personal prayer. Ask yourself honestly: in how many of those moments was I aware of God's presence? What would need to change for that number to increase?

Reading and Reflection Bruce Downes referenced two articles written alongside this Message: "Missionary of His Presence" and "Raising Missionaries." If your group has access to these, read them before your next meeting and come prepared to discuss one thing that challenged you and one thing that stirred something in you.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, if your presence does not go with us, we do not want to go. We are not seeking success. We are seeking you. Let your presence be the foundation of everything we are and everything we do. Make us missionaries of your presence to the people around us. Amen.