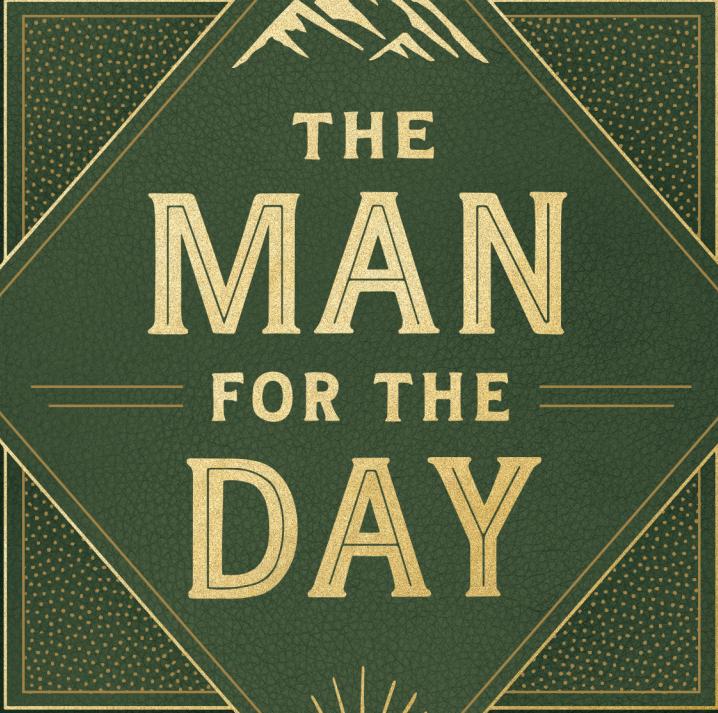


J. JOSH SMITH



THE
MAN
FOR THE
DAY

ANSWERING THE CALL TO
GODLY MANHOOD

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To two men who have been “the
man for the day” in my life:

Barry St. Clair and Fred Hartley

From the start of my journey with Jesus until now,
no two men have set the trajectory of my life more
than you. You have not only pointed me in the right
direction, you have walked with me and loved me
like a father with a son. Your influence on me is
immeasurable—and so is my love and gratitude.

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Introduction

The Man for the Day

FOR MOST OF my adult life, I have read a biography every January, and I have been inspired by the lives of many incredible men and women. If I had to choose my Mount Rushmore of spiritual leaders from church history, it would be difficult to narrow it down to only four. But one figure I would be certain to choose is the large, familiar, bearded, and seemingly kind face of Charles Spurgeon.

Spurgeon most famously built and pastored the Metropolitan Tabernacle Church in London in the mid-1800s. He preached the gospel to more than a million people and personally baptized more than fifteen thousand new believers. Spurgeon's impact on his generation was massive, and nearly one hundred and fifty years later, he remains one of the most widely read and quoted pastors in church history.

Although Spurgeon has a long list of accomplishments, his most enduring contribution has been his God-centered, Christ-exalting,

white-hot preaching. I wish, just once, I could have been one of the six thousand people who gathered at the Tabernacle each week to hear him preach. And if I had to pick a Sunday, I would go with February 5, 1888.

On that Sunday, Spurgeon preached a sermon from Revelation 2:12–13 titled, “Holding Fast the Faith.”¹ This is one of the few Spurgeon sermons I’ve revisited multiple times. Every time I read it, I can sense the fire in his bones, the passion in his heart, the strength of his voice, and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Every time I read it, the heat in his heart spreads to mine.

He begins the sermon by painting an incredible picture of Jesus in Revelation 2. It’s a picture of Jesus as a “man of war” holding “a sharp sword with two edges,” defending His church and leading them into certain victory. About this he says:

His sword is for the defense of the faithful. It is drawn from its sheath to protect the timid and the trembling. Jesus is come as our Joshua, to chase the enemy before us, and lead us onward, conquering and to conquer. The sword with two edges is the defender of the least of those whose hearts are right before the Lord.²

It’s hard for me to stay seated when I read that.

The real goal of the sermon, however, was not to paint a picture of this “man of war,” but to call the church to *follow* this “man of

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war” with purity, faith, and courage, to “hold fast the faith in the teeth of opposition.” To this he said:

If in the heat of the battle our good name or our life must be risked to win the victory, then let us say, “In this battle some of us must fall; why should not I? I will take part and lot with my Master, and bear reproach for his sake.” Only brave soldiers are worthy of our great Lord. Those who sneak into the rear, that they may be comfortable, are not worthy of the kingdom. What will our Captain say of cowards in that day when he distributes rewards to his faithful ones? Brethren, we must be willing to bear ridicule for Christ’s sake, even that peculiarly envenomed ridicule which “the culture” are so apt to pour upon us. We must be willing to be thought great fools for Jesus’ sake.³

In the final point of his sermon, he urges the church to hold fast to the name and faith of Jesus. It is a call to hold tightly to the faith, love the faith, and defend the faith. He then reminds his listeners of those who had given so much to ensure that the faith was passed on to us. To the men who “loved the faith and the name of Jesus too well to see them trampled on,” he said:

Personally, when my bones have been tortured with rheumatism, I have remembered Job Spurgeon, doubtless of my own stock, who in Chelmsford Jail

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was allowed a chair, because he could not lie down by reason of rheumatic pain. That Quaker's broad-brim overshadows my brow. Perhaps I inherit his rheumatism; but that I do not regret if I have his stubborn faith, which will not let me yield a syllable of the truth of God. When I think of how others have suffered for the faith, a little scorn or unkindness seems a mere trifle, not worthy of mention. An ancestry of lovers of the faith ought to be a great plea with us to abide by the Lord God of our fathers, and the faith in which they lived. As for me, I must hold the old gospel: I can do no other. God helping me, I will endure the consequences of what men think obstinacy.⁴

Even though every line of the sermon seems worthy to be underlined and quoted, like any good preacher, he leaves the best for last. He ends the sermon with these words that will make any Christian man with a heartbeat and an ounce of God's Spirit ready to charge the gates of hell for the cause of Christ. When talking about the legacy of faithful men who have gone before us he says:

These men loved the faith and the name of Jesus too well to see them trampled on. Note what we owe them, and let us pay to our sons the debt we owe our fathers. It is today as it was in the Reformers' days. Decision is needed. Here is the day for the

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man, where is the man for the day? We who have had the gospel passed to us by martyr hands dare not trifle with it, nor sit by and hear it denied by traitors, who pretend to love it, but inwardly abhor every line of it. . . . Look you, sirs, there are ages yet to come. If the Lord does not speedily appear, there will come another generation, and another, and all these generations will be tainted and injured if we are not faithful to God and to his truth to-day. We have come to a turning-point in the road. If we turn to the right, mayhap our children and our children's children will go that way; but if we turn to the left, generations yet unborn will curse our names for having been unfaithful to God and to his Word. I charge you, not only by your ancestry, but by your posterity, that you seek to win the commendation of your Master, that though you dwell where Satan's seat is, you yet hold fast his name, and do not deny his faith. God grant us faithfulness, for the sake of the souls around us! How is the world to be saved if the church is false to her Lord? How are we to lift the masses if our fulcrum is removed? If our gospel is uncertain, what remains but increasing misery and despair? Stand fast, my beloved, in the name of God! I, your brother in Christ, entreat you to abide in the truth. Quit yourselves like men,

be strong. The Lord sustain you for Jesus' sake.

Amen.⁵

I not only feel the passion in his heart and the fire in his bones, I feel those same things stirred up in me. His words make me long to be the man God has called me to be and make me long to call on a new generation of men to faithfully follow Jesus Christ, the man of war, into battle. His words make me want to leave a life of unholy contentment and strive to fulfill everything God wants from me. If his words do any of the same things in your heart, this book is for you.

The Day for the Man

I first read the last paragraph of this Spurgeon sermon in a book titled *The Forgotten Spurgeon* by Iain Murray. I was twenty-two years old, single, and a full-time missionary in the central European country of Slovakia. I was sitting in a small café when the Lord used those words of Spurgeon to light a fire in my heart. Over the years, there have been times in which that fire has raged like an uncontrollable blaze. At other times, I've only felt the warmth of a small ember. But more than twenty-five years later, the fire ignited by Spurgeon's words has not gone out.

The spark the Lord used to start that fire came from one simple statement and one simple question hidden toward the end of his sermon. One statement and one question from one sermon preached more than 130 years ago has been a continual source of passion,

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pushing me to be the man God wants me to be. The question is this: “Here is the day for the man, where is the man for the day?”⁶

Spurgeon felt the need for faithful men. Men who take up the mantle passed down from the martyrs who had gone before them. Men who have suffered greatly to ensure the next generation heard the gospel. He looked at his generation and saw the desperate need for these men. “Here is the day for the man,” he said.⁷

Don’t you feel the same thing? Don’t you feel how desperately we need godly, faithful, strong, courageous, self-sacrificing, Spirit-filled men? Don’t you look around and wonder where the men are who have the backbone and resolve to stand against culture pressures for the faith passed down to us? Don’t you feel that now is the day for the man?

I recently met with a man who worked for a Christian publisher. He told me that women’s Bible studies are what kept them in business. That’s what pays the bills. And historically, Bible studies and books for men don’t sell. But this publisher told me they are starting to see a rise in requests for men’s books. He asked me if I knew why.

I don’t know all the reasons men are starting to buy more books and do more Bible studies specifically for them, but the more I’ve thought about it, a few things become clear.

First, pastors are realizing that they cannot ignore men any longer. They know the men in their church are dying, and they need help. They are also realizing that silly, trite, and shallow programs will not suffice to create the men we desperately need.

Second, men are feeling the depths of their own deficiencies. As I minister to the men in the church where I pastor and to men around the country, I sense more and more how much men feel defeated, discouraged, and even displaced. They are tired of feeling that way. They want to be faithful, godly men, but they don't know where to start.

More than all of that, there is a growing desire among men to stand against the cultural insanity of the day, fight the besetting sins of the day, and be genuinely used by God. Men are tired of feeling defeated, being scolded, and watching their families, churches, and culture be attacked. They are tired of feeling like it's wrong to be a strong man. In other words, men are feeling fed up! They see the need for men, and they want to be the man God has called them to be.

The Man for the Day

Spurgeon's statement resonates with us: "Here is the day for the man." But it's his question that must motivate us: "Where is the man for the day?"⁸

We all know men who like to rant about every cultural problem, societal need, and spiritual deficiency, and yet never do anything about it. It's like their spiritual gift is identifying things others should be doing better. The reality is we are all pretty good at that. Still, we must resist this temptation when it comes to the need for men. We must not just identify the need; we must meet the need. We must commit ourselves to becoming the man for the day.

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This book is written out of the conviction that now is the day for the man. This book is also written as a road map for how you can become “the man for the day.” What does it mean to be the man for the day?

The man for the day is a man who is ready and willing to be used by God when, where, and how God desires to use him.

In my book *The Titus Ten*, I wrote that every man has four primary domains. There are four areas in which every man must be sacrificially committed to work. Those four areas are (1) his own flesh, (2) his local church, (3) his family, and (4) his workplace. Those are every man’s four primary domains.⁹

The man for the day knows the areas in which God has called him and then faithfully, courageously, sacrificially, and consistently seeks to do everything God has called him to do in each of those areas. The man for the day does not just see the need; he meets the need.

The man for the day is a man who loves God, hears from God, and walks in obedience to God. He is a man who has surrendered his life to be and do everything God has called him to. He is a man who wants nothing more than to fulfill every good work God has laid out for him to accomplish.

Elijah: The Man for His Day

A few years ago, I decided to start walking through the life of Elijah at our church’s monthly men’s breakfast. I love the life and

ministry of Elijah. I was eager to dig deeper into his life and thought that I could at least spend five or six weeks on him. I finished twenty-three months later, and still didn't feel like I did him justice.

There was a desperate need for godly men in Elijah's day. Elijah was the man for the day. There was a time in his life when he thought he was the only one. And although his life is remarkable and inimitable in many ways, he shows us how to be the man for the day. Not only because of his strengths but because of his weaknesses, both of which, thankfully, are recorded for us.

As we walk through his life, we will see the ten marks of becoming the kind of men we need and need to be. Elijah will not only equip us but he will motivate us, encourage us, and inspire us to be “the man for the day.”

Do Small Things for God

When I was young, people often used to say, “God is going to do great things with you someday.” I don’t think this was because they sensed some special anointing on my life as a ten-year-old boy. I think part of this was because of the family in which I was raised and some of my natural personality.

It was kind of people to say that. They said it with great intentions. They intended for it to bless me. But over time, those statements led to more defeat than victory. When I thought about “great things,” I thought about Hudson Taylor, George Müller, Adoniram Judson, and Billy Graham. This meant, in my mind, if I didn’t end up doing the things they did, I had failed to do great things for God.

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It took me a long time to get free from those expectations. It took many years of frustration, angst, disappointment, and unfulfilled hopes. It took me dying to the unrealistic expectations others had put on me and I had put on myself. It took a season of painful but necessary suffering and death to self. It was a painful process, but one that changed my life.

At the end of that process, I came to a place where I genuinely wanted to do nothing more than love my family, lead and pastor the church God had entrusted to me, love and serve those around me, and not care if anyone outside of that circle ever knew who I was. Even as I write those words, I still feel the joy and freedom of that.

Although our guide through this journey is the greatest prophet of the Old Testament, this book is not designed to create “great men of God” in the way we often interpret it. This book is designed to help *you* be the man that God has created and called *you* to be. Not comparing yourself to anyone else. Not competing with other men. Not coveting the success of others. But to simply be ready and willing, every day, and every moment, in every area, to fulfill God’s calling for you.

This is a book about doing small things for God. It’s about winning the day. It’s about faithfully fulfilling what God has for you today, knowing that those who are faithful in little can be entrusted with more. This is a book about being the man for the day—and the day is today.

Although we certainly need “men for the day” in politics and in the pulpit, what we really need is more of these men in homes,

churches, communities, and workplaces. We need men who are not looking to be known but are looking to be used. We are looking for men who just want to be who God has called them to be—nothing more and nothing less.

A Beginning Prayer

A few years ago, someone challenged me to write down one prayer that summarized what I wanted God to do in my life, and then pray it every day. I liked that idea. It sounded simple. It also sounded helpful.

As I began to work on that prayer I found it more difficult than I imagined, but ultimately more helpful than I imagined. It was really challenging to summarize what I really wanted to see God do. But as the Lord gave me clarity, it became not only a statement of longing and desire for what I wanted God to do, but a way to keep me focused on being the man I wanted to be.

In that prayer, I have a few lines that have been so life-giving to me. These lines flow out of the death of my desire to do “great things for God” and the birth of my desire to do exactly what God has for me—whether the world views that as great or not.

One part of my daily prayer says this: “Lord, I surrender myself fully to You. I only want for my life what You want for my life. Nothing more and nothing less. Please fulfill every desire you have for me. I don’t want to miss a thing.”

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Those lines have been more life-giving to me than you can imagine. They motivate me to be all that God wants me to be and also free me from trying to be something other than what God wants. I want to encourage you to stop and pray that prayer. And consider making it the prayer you pray throughout this journey.

As we begin this road map for becoming “the man for the day,” we begin with surrender. The place we must start. And we begin with a genuine heart-cry to God that He would make each one of us into the man that He has created us to be—the man for the day. May it be each one of us.

Chapter 1

Surrender

Surrender: Submitting your will to the will of God and trusting Him to write your story.

IT WAS JULY 9, 2013. I only remember that date because two days later our family would experience something that would change our lives forever. I was the camp pastor at a student camp in central Texas. My role was to preach every morning and be available to counsel every night.

On Tuesday night, I sat and listened as a well-known student evangelist preached a message calling students to surrender everything to Jesus. He called them to trust Jesus with everything, and as a response to that trust, willingly surrender complete control and authority to Him.

At the end of his sermon, he asked if students would be willing to pray a simple prayer of full surrender to Jesus. He didn't give them words to pray; he just asked them to pray. Students all over the room got on their knees and surrendered their lives completely to Jesus.

Many students walked toward counselors for prayer. That is why I was in the room.

But as I watched God work inside these students, something unexpected was happening in me. I was scared. I was beyond scared. I was almost terrified. I was terrified at the thought of what it would mean for my life, my family, my church, my health, or my career if I surrendered everything to the Lord. This came out of nowhere. I had heard countless sermons on surrender. I had preached countless sermons on surrender. But for some reason, at that moment, I feared what it would mean for me to surrender.

I am fully confident that at that time I had a genuine relationship with Jesus and was actively trusting and following Him. I had not only surrendered my life to Christ but had surrendered to the ministry. Yet for some reason, in that moment, it felt more difficult than it ever had.

As students walked forward, I slipped out the back. I went to my room and wrestled with God. I will never forget that night. I paced, knelt, cried out, and laid face down on the ground. At some point in the middle of the night, I fell asleep. The next morning, I woke up to an unexpected call telling me I needed to come home. I got in the car and continued my wrestling match with God. I still could not pray a prayer of surrender.

In those moments, all alone in the car, the Lord reminded me of a little phrase from 1 John 4:18. Over and over again, I just kept hearing the words, “Perfect love casts out fear. . . . Perfect love casts out fear. . . . Perfect love casts out fear” (esv). In those moments I realized

the only reason I would be afraid to surrender is if I questioned God's love. If I trusted His heart, I could trust Him with my life.

Somewhere on Highway 175 going west toward Dallas, Texas, with a new confidence in God's love for me, I told the Lord that I surrendered everything to Him.

As I look back on that moment, I realize what Jacob must have realized when he looked back on wrestling all night with God in Genesis 32: God always wrestles with us to prepare us. And that is exactly what was happening to me. God was preparing me for something. God was calling me into a greater awareness of His love because God was preparing me for something that would demand it. He was preparing me for something that demanded surrender. A new work of God always demands a new surrender to God.

A Needed Man

The story of 1 and 2 Kings is a sad one. It shouldn't have been, but it was. These two books follow the story of the kings who led God's people after the death of King David.

When David died, the kingdom was filled with great hope and expectations. David's son Solomon became king. He famously asked the Lord for wisdom, and the Lord gave it to him. With that wisdom he built the temple that his father, David, longed to see built—and it was magnificent. When the temple was dedicated, God showed up. The people worshiped, God was glorified, and it appeared as if this was the beginning of something wonderful.

But Solomon's heart turned away from God. He was ruled by his own passions, not God's. He married foreign women, built unholy alliances, and allowed the worship of pagan gods. And as is always the case, his sin was not just his problem. His sin led the nation into a devastating spiral of idolatry, rebellion, and immorality.

After Solomon's death, his two sons battled for the kingdom. This resulted in the division of the kingdom into two kingdoms: the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. These two books are titled "Kings" because they follow the story—the mostly sad story—of the thirty-nine kings of these two kingdoms.

Out of those thirty-nine kings, there were four who did right in the eyes of the Lord. Four. The other thirty-five were evil. And all four good kings were from the southern kingdom. The northern kingdom did not have one—not one—good king. Out of eighteen kings, they did not have one good one.¹

Jeroboam, the first king in the north, became the prototype of evil kings. The worst kings are known as kings "like Jeroboam." Ultimately, the Lord took him out and another king took the throne. From there, the story just keeps getting worse. Try to follow this:

- Jeroboam was followed by Nadab. Nadab reigned two years, did evil in the sight of the Lord, and was assassinated by a man named Baasha.
- Baasha's first act as king was to murder everyone from the house of his predecessor. He

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reigned for twenty-four years, did what was evil, and died.

- Baasha's son Elah became king. After reigning for two years, while in a drunken stupor, he was murdered by his servant Zimri.
- Zimri became king and immediately killed everyone in Elah's family. He did not leave one of Elah's male relatives or friends alive. Zimri's rule, although busy, did not last long. He was king for seven days before committing suicide by burning down the house he was inside.
- After a brief civil war, Zimri was followed by Omri. He reigned for twelve years, and in those twelve years managed to do "more evil than all who were before him" (1 Kings 16:25).
- After Omri's death, his son Ahab became king. Ahab, we are told, did more evil and more to provoke the Lord to anger than any other king before him (1 Kings 16:29–34). That is saying a lot. But much like Solomon, his worst decision was marrying a pagan wife. He married Jezebel, the daughter of a pagan king, who not only led the nation into the worship of her god, Baal, but worked to rid the land of every prophet of the Lord.

Just one hundred years after King David's death, the nation of Israel was in a state of absolute moral chaos. Under the rule of King Ahab, new temples to false gods were constructed on every hillside, while the Lord's prophets were being gathered and killed. It's a sad story. It's also a good reminder: Nothing causes more damage to a family, a church, or a nation than ungodly men.

If there was ever a "day for the man,"² this was it. In the presence of these ungodly men, God was about to raise up a man. This is what God does. When there needs to be a man for the day, God raises him up and calls him out. As the story continues, we get an even more important reminder: Nothing causes more good to a family, a church, or a nation than godly men.

An Obscure Man

In the midst of the spiral of moral chaos, an obscure prophet by the name of Elijah comes out of nowhere as if he was shot out of a carnival cannon.

We know almost nothing about him. We don't know about his family, his training, or his background. All we know is from a half-sentence introduction of him that says, "Now Elijah the Tishbite, from the Gilead settlers . . ." (1 Kings 17:1). That's it. That's our introduction to the greatest prophet of the Old Testament. It's not much, but it's enough to get a good picture in our minds.

Elijah was a Tishbite. Tishbe was a small, obscure town in Gilead. Gilead was a place known for its rugged, outdoorsy, hardworking,

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farming people. Elijah was not refined. His hands were not soft. His neck was not pale. His clothes were not new. He was not unfamiliar with long days and hard work. He was a simple, strong, hardworking, God-fearing outdoorsman.

Centuries later, John the Baptist would give us a little clue to what Elijah might have looked like. When John the Baptist came on the scene with his rough robe, loud voice, and strange diet, looking like he always slept outside, the people thought he was Elijah (John 1:21).

But the most important detail is not his looks, but his name. His name is more than just a name. His name is his calling card. His name tells us who he was, why he'd come, and what was most important to him.

The ancient Hebrew name for God is El, as in Elohim. Elijah's name starts with that. The "i" after "El" is a first-person possessive pronoun. The "jah" represents the personal name of God, Yahweh; the covenant name of God—the name that God gave to His people. So Elijah's name is made up of two names for God and a personal possessive pronoun. In other words, Elijah's name meant, "My God is the LORD." Or to say it another way, "I'm God's man."³

Depending on how you look at it, this is either a perfect name for the moment or a terrible name for the moment. I don't know if his parents gave him this name or if the Lord changed his name, but either way, his name made a statement. A strong statement. Especially in an age in which all of God's men were being killed. Elijah's name was a statement of rebellion against everything happening in the culture around him.

The lack of detail about his life might make him an obscure man, but his name made him a surrendered man.

A Surrendered Man

Fulfilling the role of a faithful prophet, Elijah's first words were God's words. And they weren't easy words. The very first thing Elijah did was stand before King Ahab and say, "As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word" (17:1b *esv*).

What was so bad about that? Well, if there was no rain, there would be no crops. If there were no crops, there would be no food. If there was no food, the people would starve. These were words of judgment. God was judging the people for their continual rebellion. But they were not only words of judgment; they were also words of grace. The pigsty was not only judgment on the prodigal son's rebellion, but it was also a call to come home (Luke 15:11–32). The lack of rain was not only God's judgment on His people, but a call for them to repent and come home.

This was not an easy message to hear, and it was definitely not an easy message to deliver. But Elijah, without any hesitation or reservation, without any fear or fanfare, came on the scene with nothing but a word from God.

Standing before the king with a word of judgment is an act of incredible courage (which we will discuss later). But his name

reminds us that his courage flowed from something deeper. His name shows us the foundation from which his courage was built.

Elijah's name tells us, first and foremost, that Elijah was a surrendered man. He was God's man. He was not controlled by anyone else but God. He could not be bought because he had already been bought. He said what God said, no matter the cost, because he had already surrendered his mouth to the Lord. He went wherever he was called to go, no matter the cost, because he had already surrendered his feet to the Lord. This surrender, above everything else, would be the primary mark of his remarkable life.

Elijah came out of nowhere, in the midst of a perverse, godless society that hated God, and said, "I'm God's man!"

The reason we are studying the life of Elijah is because he was the man for the day. He was ready and willing to do whatever God called him to do. But the reason he was the man for the day is because he was God's man. And he was God's man because he was a surrendered man. He was not trying to write his own story; he was trusting God to write his story.

He was willing to stand alone. He was willing to suffer. He was willing to die. He was willing to say the hard things to the hardest people. He was willing to be confrontational and even willing to be obscure. And that resonates with us. We want to be that kind of man.

And it all begins with a surrendered life. Before Elijah stood in front of King Ahab and said, "I'm God's man," he had already knelt before his King and said, "God, I'm Your man."

Being the man for the day is about being a man who is ready and willing to be used when, where, and how God desires to use you. This means being the man for the day begins with trusting God to call the shots. It's rooted in complete surrender to God. It is not about you being the man you want to be, but being the man God wants you to be. It's not about fulfilling your plans, but God's—no matter what those plans might be. Elijah was a surrendered man. And his surrender was essential to his usefulness. So is ours.

A Life of Surrender

Surrender is a difficult word for men. It goes against everything culture tells us about what makes a man. Cowards surrender. Weak men surrender. We are told to never be anyone else's man but always be our own man.

Surrender is the reason so many men won't give their lives to Christ. Surrender means the loss of control, the loss of ownership, the loss of rights. We don't want to lose control. We don't want to be owned by anyone. We don't want to relinquish our rights. We don't want someone else calling the shots. There may be no word that goes against our cultural idea of manhood more than the word *surrender*.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer famously said, "The cross is laid on every Christian. . . . As we embark upon discipleship we surrender ourselves to Christ in union with his death—we give over our lives to death . . . When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."⁴ Meaning, the invitation to follow Jesus is an invitation to death. In

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order to be saved you must be willing to lay down your life in order to gain His (Matt. 16:25). There is no salvation without the willingness to let go of all authority and all rights and surrender yourself completely to the control of Christ.

And here is the beautiful irony—it is in that death to self that we gain life. The abundant life that Jesus promises us only comes through the death that He demands from us (John 10:10). When we lose our life, we actually gain life. The gospel explains why this must be true.

The good news of Jesus Christ is that we are sinners, separated from God because of our sin, and under the just wrath of God (Rom. 3:23). But God, because of His great love and mercy, sent His Son Jesus Christ to live a sinless life and die a criminal's death (Eph. 2:4). His death was not for His sin, but for ours (2 Cor. 5:21). And if we will acknowledge our inability to save ourselves and trust in Jesus alone, calling upon His name and asking Him to save us, we can be saved by His death (Rom. 10:13). But that is not the end. Jesus rose again, defeating death, ensuring that we are not only saved by His death, but receive new, abundant, and eternal life by His resurrection.

And all of this—all of this—being saved from death by His death and gaining abundant life through His Spirit—is ours by grace. Meaning, we can't earn it. In order to receive it, we simply acknowledge that we can't earn it and ask God to give it to us (Eph. 2:8–9).

Life with Jesus begins with this kind of humility. And it is that humility that is at the heart of surrender. Surrender begins when we

acknowledge that we need something we don't have. But Jesus has it all. And as you trust and follow Him in the continual process of death to self and resurrection life, God makes you into the man He wants you to be. Primarily, a man who is controlled by His Spirit, not self.

You cannot be the man God has called you to be unless you are first and foremost controlled by the Spirit of God. It is the Spirit that gives life. It is the Spirit that must lead. It is the Spirit that must bear fruit. But the Spirit only fills those who surrender themselves to His control.

Being God's Man

Before Elijah ever came on the scene, he laid down his desires to be his own man and decided to be God's man. It was the foundation of his usefulness. And it will be the foundation of ours as well. The truth is, you can never be God's man unless you are a surrendered man because you can't be your man and God's man at the same time.

This is what we often miss. We miss the truth that life with Jesus is one of continual surrender. It is about dying daily (1 Cor. 15:31). The gospel teaches us that there is no resurrection without death. So, as we die daily and surrender our life to the Lord, then, and only then, will we experience the resurrection life of Jesus and the power of His Spirit.

But let's be clear: Surrender is not just a prayer. Surrender is a work of God's Spirit. Surrender is also a spiritual discipline. It is not

just a disposition of the heart; it is an act of the will. It is the discipline of continually surrendering every area of our life to him. *Every* area.

Take your finances, for example. I love to challenge men to give financially. Not only because I know that God blesses it and because God has used it in my life as much as anything, but because it is one of the most basic yet profound acts of surrender. It's one thing to surrender our lives, but it's another thing to surrender our money. Surrender says, "My money is not mine, it's the Lord's." If you are not giving sacrificially and consistently, you are not a surrendered man.

And although this type of complete surrender sounds difficult, it is actually the starting place of true joy. There is incredible freedom in totally entrusting your life to the One who created you, knows you best, loves you most, and has plans for you that you could never imagine. Everything you long for comes from the life of the Spirit in you. And that life only comes to those who are surrendered. If you want to be the man for the day, you must first be God's man. And being God's man is about surrendering your life, over and over again, to Him.

The Rest of the Story

It was July 11, 2013. It was two days after I began to wrestle with God about surrendering my life to Him. It was the day after I finally prayed the words, "Lord, I trust You with my life in every way. Do with me whatever You want to do." On that day, my wife and I walked into a small, dark room filled with computer monitors

THE MAN FOR THE DAY

and listened as the doctor told us that cancer had spread across my wife's body.

She was thirty-two years old with no previous health conditions. At that time, we had four daughters ranging from ages ten to one. The following months would be the hardest months of our lives (the rest of that story is at the end of the book).

As I look back on those difficult days, I now realize they were the starting place of a much greater work of God in my life. I would not be the man I am today if it were not for that experience. I hated it at the time, but I would not trade it for anything. That moment of surrender was preparing me for what God knew was coming. And what was coming was the preparation to mold me into the man I am today.

God knew that I would only be prepared for that season if I was a surrendered man. Why? Because surrender is always the foundation for God's work in us. I needed to settle in my heart that I could trust the Lord no matter what. And that would be manifested by my willingness to surrender my life to Him because I knew how much He loved me and how much better His plans were than mine. God rewards faith, and surrender is our declaration that we trust God to write our story.

I do not tell you that story to scare you. The moment you surrender to the Lord is, hopefully, not also the day you get the worst news of your life. I tell you that story to remind you that surrender is the starting place for a new work of God in your life. It always will be.

You can trust God to write your story. Don't try to write your own. He writes better stories than you ever could. Trust Him to do it. Surrender all you are and all you have to Him.

The Man for the Day

The man for the day wants nothing more than to be God's man, not his own man. He knows he cannot be both, so he fights continually against the desire to take control.

The man for the day surrenders himself daily to the will of God. He knows that surrender is not a one-time occurrence, but a daily necessity. He continually fights the enemies of self-will, self-love, and self-service. He continually looks to the Lord for leadership and wisdom. He wants what God wants.

The man for the day knows his desperate need for the Spirit of God. He surrenders himself to the control of the Spirit, that God might work through him.

The man for the day has surrendered his future, his family, his time, his finances, and all of his resources to the Lord. He knows he owns nothing. He knows that he has earned nothing. He knows that he deserves nothing. Everything he has is a gift from God and belongs to God. He holds everything to God with an open hand.

THE MAN FOR THE DAY

The man for the day knows he is loved by God and, as a result, is not afraid to surrender fully to God. He rests in the confidence that what God has for him is always good. He knows God's plans are always best. He trusts God to write his story.

Be the man for the day!



“HERE IS THE DAY FOR THE MAN, WHERE IS THE MAN FOR THE DAY?”

Charles Spurgeon

Many men sense a growing desire for a more robust spiritual life, to walk with God and to be used by Him. They long for meaning and purpose and a life that impacts eternity. They long to matter. Men are increasingly weary of a worldly culture's constant assault on their families, their churches, and their manhood. They yearn to do something, to be God's man, but they remain uncertain of what that something is or even how to begin. They hear the resounding higher call to be God's man, the man for the day, and to courageously yield to be used by God however He chooses.

In *The Man for the Day*, J. Josh Smith walks through the life of Elijah to reveal ten qualities needed in the pursuit of a life that matters. Smith invites men to boldly lead their families, churches, and communities, to meet the needs of the day for the glory of God. We need not limp through life with the feelings of indifference and insignificance. We need not settle. Our Maker has called us to more. Smith issues the challenge to us all that during these days of increasing hardship and decay, our times need godly men, and our God wants men to be The Man for the Day.



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