

Published based on [When the Fires of Life Test You](#)

When the Fires of Life Test You

How easy it is to sing, "How great is our God, How great is our God, All will see how great is our God, Name above all names, Worthy of my praise, My heart will sing, How great is our God."

How easy it is to feel His presence in the sanctuary with other believers lifting His name when we are away from the world! We can sing, "The enemy has been defeated, Death couldn't hold Him down, We're gonna lift our voice in victory... Make a shout unto God with a voice of triumph ...Shout unto God with a voice of praise...We lift Your name up..."

Yet how quickly we disconnect with Him when we leave the doors of the church! Not a problem for me – I hardly ever left the doors of the church!

As my world has been shaken in the last few months, my heart hasn't sang a lot. I haven't felt the enemy has been defeated - not in my life. Most days my voice hasn't shouted triumph.

Perhaps I had become so isolated in my church world that I had forgotten what the lost world was like. You know, I remember agonizing with God as I said, "Lord, I don't know any lost people. All my ministry is to the church." I cried, "Lord, break my heart for the lost. God, disturb me. Get me out of this place (in my heart)." Well, I'm out of that place now. My world is disturbed, shaken, moved out of the church walls.

Often times we say that who we really are is who we are when no one is looking and maybe that is true. And just maybe who we really are is who we are when everything around us shakes. We do find out what remains. The fire tests us in a way that a sweet church service cannot. Storms shake our very being. Everything unlike God comes up and out.

During this season, I've struggled with my willingness to forgive. Sometimes, I've responded to gossip with gossip. At times, I've responded to people hurting me with anger. And mostly, I've just found out my personal commitment to holiness is perhaps not what I thought it was.

One friend of mine has a habit of describing someone who has a high opinion of themselves as "all that and a bag of chips". Maybe my own spiritual meter said I was all that and a bag of chips. But when God allowed my bag of chips to be shaken, I found out those chips were just a bunch of crumbs.

Many of my spiritual friends reminded me that I was a strong woman of God – that my faith was unshakable. And I've been through difficult seasons before. But this season shook all the way to the depths of my being. Questions like, "How do I know God is real? How could He allow me to hurt this way when I was faithfully serving Him? How could... How could..." God didn't rush to answer me. He knew that as I railed my fists against His chest I would eventually get close enough to hear His heart.

And His heart said that He was more concerned with the deep, deep work He wanted to do inside me than my comfort or my ministry or my job or my, my, My, MY....

Once again, I've had to agree that it's all His. He can do whatever He wants with me and my life. He really is in a state of peaceful control.

One day as I reminded Him how much I loved MY church, He reminded me that it was HIS church. Had I forgotten?

Now I'm not just bashing myself, but self examination is important. We should never exit a storm without it. I'm not really into having to endure more storms when I don't get the lessons of this one, you know?

So I ask you as I've asked myself, is it maybe just a little too easy to sit in our Eiffel Tower churches and sing about victory and triumph and peace and seeing His face when we can't see His face in hurting people – we don't see His image inside them? Why do we only equate His presence with wonderful worship services? So what is true worship anyway? Isn't it the giving of our lives to Him? Oh, yes. But what does that mean?

Romans 12:1

But I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

Excuse my KJV kind of language – old memory work – see I'm a good Christian! (Don't worry. "My All That and a Bag of Chips" Sunday School pin is in no longer on my shirt.)

What does "your reasonable service" mean? It means your spiritual service of worship. Presenting yourself and all you have to God is worship. You are the offering. (I feel like a burnt offering lately!)

Worship – giving it all to Him. In storms and out. In failure and triumph. In fear and in peace. In the church and in the world. It is acceptable to Him.

And He really is all that and a bag of chips.

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