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Week three of the Campfire devotional series

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REND COLLECTIVE

EST. 2006

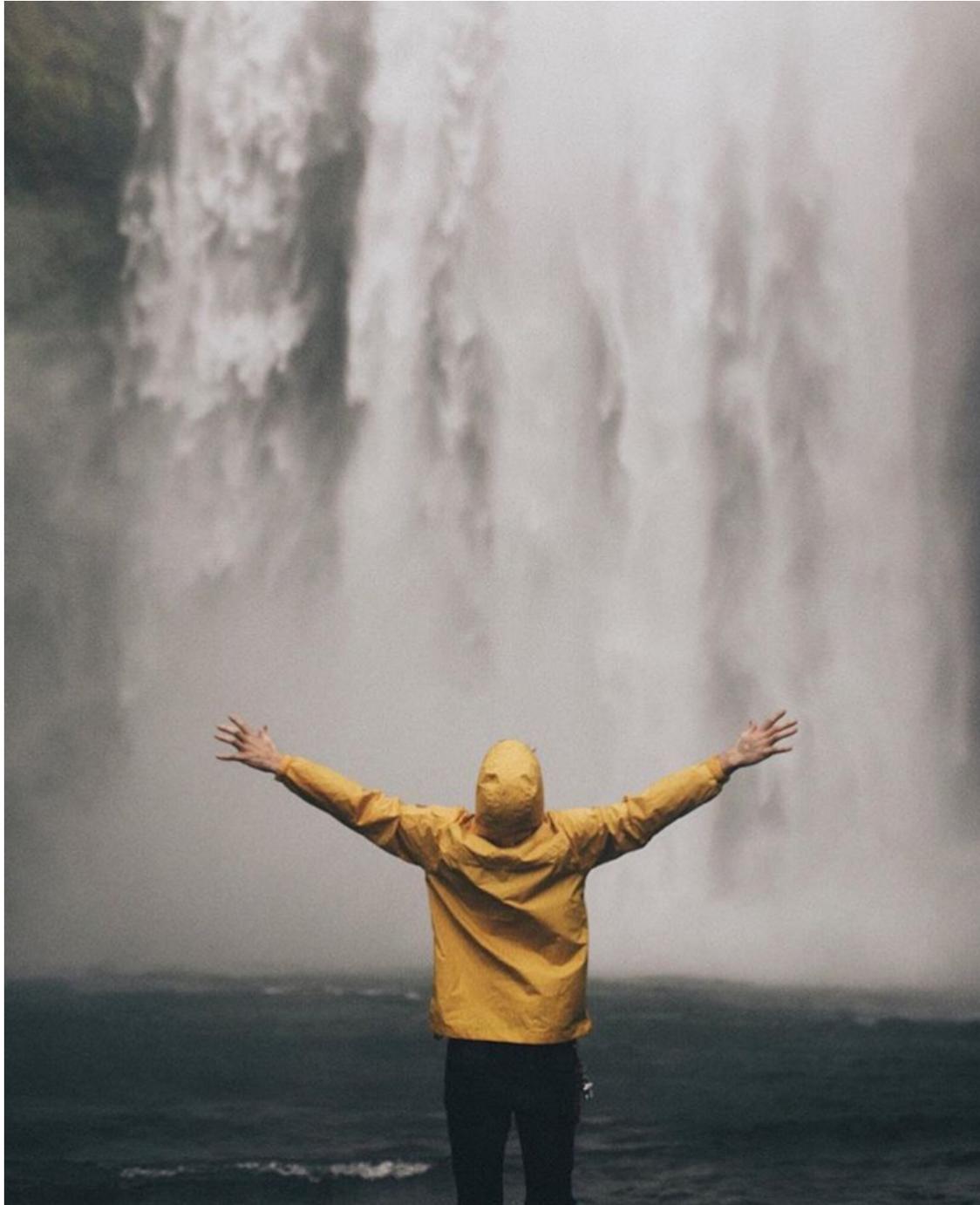


Image by Brandon Eckroth

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If I'm being fully open and honest, that is an exaggeration, but the "artisan" chocolate bars they sell at my local hipster coffee shop are OBSCENELY expensive. (As is the coffee come to think of it. Maybe I should gently remind them at some point that their beverages are made from ground beans and water.)

The perfectly designed packaging (complete with anchor - anchors were all the rage in 2012) told the story of how it was lovingly and locally crafted, described the tasting notes of exotic fruit and burnt caramel and promised that the cows providing the necessary dairy were treated to life of luxury surpassing most sultans. In every sense, I bought it.

Needless to say, I didn't expect to find myself spitting it out five minutes later. The tasting notes lied. They didn't mention the strong presence of body odour and morning breath.

I later heard that this company was accused of falsely advertising their product. Their so-called handcrafted confectionery was actually just a hodgepodge of cheap generic chocolate brands mixed together in the same factory. The only difference between this and supermarket own-brand chocolate was the packaging. And the price tag.

We all want authenticity. We all want the real thing. We all feel short-changed when we don't get it.

Do we think God is any different?

If anything, the Bible tells us that He is more discerning than us:

"Man looks at the outward appearance but the Lord looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)

We can't fool God with hype, noise or energy. We can't fool Him by lifting our hands up in the air and squeezing our eyes shut.

Don't misunderstand from this that God is some kind of demented Santa who sees us when we're sleeping, knows when we're awake and is planning on putting us on the naughty list. The quality of our worship has nothing to do with the quality of our performance, musically or spiritually speaking.

Authenticity isn't sinless perfection. It's just being honest and transparent in our imperfection.

One of the most dangerous kinds of inauthenticity can unfortunately happen by accident in our worship services. In our desire for "breakthrough" into intense and powerful worship we sometimes end up

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passionate.

There's a subtle difference between authentic worship and hype but it's crucial we learn to tell the difference. Authentic worship is our physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual response to what we know and see God is doing in the room. Hype is our physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual response to what WE are doing in the room.

We can sometimes think of hype as a type of response, as though enthusiasm is unholy in and of itself. God gave us emotions on purpose - for the purpose of relating to Him and others passionately, so this can't be true. The problem is when it becomes all emotion, with no rootedness in the presence of Jesus or His Word.

True worship is just bringing a real response to the real God. Authenticity isn't about a style of worship - it's a state of the heart. Lasers, confetti cannons, bubbles and a heart-stopping kick drum can be just as authentic as a quiet, solemn reflective song. Equally, we can fake it in home-group in the company of our closest friends. It's not about style - it's about substance.

AUTHENTICITY ISN'T ABOUT A STYLE OF WORSHIP - IT'S A STATE OF THE HEART.

To push the bizarre craft chocolate analogy to the brink, it's about making sure that when God bites into our worship, that it is as sweet to Him as our packaging claims it should be.

The thing that I love about our Campfire projects is that it's a chance for us to shed some of that outer packaging. As I've mentioned, big arena shows and festivals can still be authentic, but it's just so much easier when all the lights and the stage are stripped away to get to the substance, the heart of worship. To rediscover the reason we sing in the first place.

I want to leave you with this encouragement: you can be your real self. Jesus made you with a unique capacity to bring him joy and delight through your worship, that will never be repeated in all of history. Don't try to impress Him or others, but come just as you are- whether that's around a campfire, in a megachurch or a cathedral.

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CAMPFIRE

OLD ALBUM, NEW WAY TO LISTEN



In honour of Campfire II coming out later this year, we decided to bring Campfire I to Spotify for the first. time. ever. Which means it's now available to stream for free worldwide!

Being Irish we love free stuff and we love you all! We hope this album brings you joy as you're able to stream it anywhere.

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