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## PREFACE

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**Psalm 27:4:** *“The one thing I ask of the LORD the thing I seek most—is to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, delighting in the LORD’s perfections and meditating in his Temple”* (NLT).

The book you are about to read is not the product of a few weeks or months of research. Its contents have been born out of precious times of fellowship I have had with God over many years. As I’ve spent time in His presence, the Lord has instructed me in worship and led me into experiences with Him that have blessed my life beyond anything I could have imagined.

My heartfelt prayer for you as you read the following pages is that the Holy Spirit will touch you deeply, so deeply that you enter into a new place of intimacy in worship. May you find the delight in God you have long desired and be satisfied by Him completely. I pray you will come to know and experience His tender love for you in a greater way than ever before.

May the passion of your life be to fill the heart of God with beautiful, adoring love and worship that will thrill and delight Him. He is the Lover of your soul—the One who is altogether holy, altogether worthy and altogether lovely.

# INTRODUCTION

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**Romancing:** *Pursuing a love relationship valued especially for its beauty, purity and the mutual devotion of the lovers.*

What comes to your mind when you think of worship? For many people, the very word conjures up memories of boring religious rituals devoid of meaning or personal fulfillment.

Others think strictly in terms of music and singing songs to God. While I love to minister to the Lord through music, worship involves much more than music. In fact, the worship I'm going to be sharing about often takes place in the total absence of music. Although instruments and singing can enhance it, this worship does not have to have music to inspire or to maintain it. Even those who have no musical ability can experience and enjoy it to its fullest measure.

In the pages that follow I want to explore how to develop an intensely personal and intimate love relationship with the God of the Universe, the one Person who loves you more than you love yourself. In order to have a relationship with you, He bankrupted Heaven, broke His own heart and gave His very life.

I am going to attempt to describe the indescribable as I share the joy, the wonder and the delight I have discovered in worshipping and loving God. This love I've found in Him is so thrilling and so completely satisfying that it gives all of life meaning and makes every day worth living.

As I share what God has taught me about worship, I pray it will encourage you to deepen your own relationship with Him. In telling

some of my experiences, I realize that you won't relate to Him exactly as I do because you are a unique individual. God values your uniqueness! No one should ever become a clone of someone else. So please don't try to duplicate anyone else's worship life or mine. The only reason I share my experiences is to provide inspiration for experiences with God of your own.

Because I'm writing about worship, I won't speak in depth about other subjects vital to Christian growth such as the importance of God's Word, prayer, attending church et cetera. One of the drawbacks of a topical book is that the reader can get the impression if he becomes proficient in just one area of truth from the Bible, he will need nothing else to live successfully for God. But that is not the case. Success in the Christian life never comes by focusing on only one Bible subject. Every believer needs the full range of truth found in God's Word to become spiritually mature.

And yet biblical worship is one truth that has been sorely neglected in teaching throughout much of the Body of Christ. I believe it is an indispensable ingredient for having a vibrant and fulfilling walk with the Lord. I am also firmly convinced that worship will play a key role in God's end-time plan for His Church. Much more instruction about worship must come forth in the time we have remaining before Jesus' return.

For several years the Lord has been dealing with me to write about a particular aspect of worship—devotional worship. Devotional worship speaks of the way we love and adore the Lord when no one else is around. The biggest reason I've hesitated to publish a book is because I've felt someone else would be more qualified than I am to write it. I've waited and hoped others would release a flood of books and tapes on the subject. In continuing to check the shelves of

Christian bookstores, I have found plenty of material on such subjects as church growth, leadership and administration. But by comparison, I've found little in print concerning devotional worship. In the meantime, I've seen a growing need in the Body of Christ for greater understanding of the importance of worshipping God in our personal, devotional lives.

The time we spend with the Lord in private changes us. It shapes the kind of people we become. Private time spent in worship greatly enhances those corporate times when we gather with other believers to worship. But most of all, our personal, individual worship brings the Lord great delight. That, without question, is the greatest reason to become the best worshippers we can possibly be.

The Church worldwide is soon to enter a new move of worship—the likes of which has never been witnessed before on the earth. There is a cry coming from Heaven for passion and intimacy, and the Church is starting to respond.

As we are caught up in worshipping our unspeakably wonderful God, He will impart the qualities of His loving character so necessary for us to carry the tremendous power that will operate through the end-time church. We will be equipped to reap the greatest harvest of new births in history, and we will be so changed that we will be made ready for His return.

How will worship bring about those things? Worship takes us into the realm where God dwells, where His glory abides. In that glory we come face to face with God in all His marvelous love, kindness and holiness. Looking into His glory, we are changed into His likeness. And in that same glory are miracles, wonders and ability to accomplish feats beyond anything this world has ever seen.

Because of the time in which we're living, I feel compelled to at least share what I've learned about devotional worship. It is my sincere hope that others more experienced in worship than I am will also release the knowledge God has given them. I, for one, desperately want to hear what they have to say because I am hungry to learn and to go even further in loving Him.

From the beginning, I think it is significant to mention that I don't have a naturally outgoing personality nor am I given to much outward emotion. My inclination is to be a very private person (just ask my husband; it drives him bonkers sometimes). I really struggled with the idea of disclosing in print experiences from my relationship with God that are so personal and precious to me. But if my doing so can help even one person to fall more deeply in love with Him, it will be worth it.

Some people think that worship is just an emotional experience or can only be enjoyed by extroverts. However, I want you to understand that it does not matter what type of personality you have—outgoing or introverted, emotional or quiet—you can have a rich, loving and passionate worship life with God. Intimacy with Him that will satisfy the deepest yearnings of the heart is available to anyone who desires it.

This book is about finding delight in the secret place. What is the secret place? It is the place of exclusive, personal and wholehearted devotion to God, your own private “holy of holies” where you delight in your Maker, He delights in you and you revel in your love for one another. The supreme beauty of the secret place is just that—it is secret. It is as personal and as individual as the relationship between each human being and God.

I long for believers everywhere to realize there is so much more available for them in God than just going to church, struggling through a chapter a day in the Bible and praying mechanical prayers! All Christians need to know that they can experience God's awesome and wonderful presence in their everyday lives. They can know the reality of His tender love thrilling the very depths of their being. God's desire is that all His children would enjoy the delights of His companionship and live in a love relationship with Him continually.

In talking about worship I've endeavored to be scriptural, yet at the same time practical. No one ever came to know God intimately through textbook theories. He must be experienced! The goal of my writing is not to present another study on the subject of worship; the goal is to help you *do it!* So I'm just going to share with you my heart, my experiences and what the Lord has taught me thus far. My prayer is that your own worship experiences with God will far exceed anything I've written about.

I certainly don't consider myself to be an expert on the subject of worship—far from it! Most of the time I feel like I'm splashing around in knee-deep water near the shore looking out into a measureless ocean of God's love. He is so vast that knowing Him is the discovery of a lifetime and will be our quest for all eternity. But what a discovery it is!

If every person in the world could experience the sweetness and the intimacy of fellowship with God through Jesus His Son, I cannot imagine how anyone would reject Him. He is the fulfillment of the deepest longings of the human heart.

Experiencing God's presence makes life so worthwhile. When enjoying regular, intimate fellowship with Him, you have inward joy in spite of bad news, unfavorable circumstances or personal disappointments. God Himself becomes your source of total fulfillment. Deep,

satisfying communion with Him gives you unshakeable confidence. You aren't dependent on others' favorable opinions of you to give you security or significance. Your worth comes from knowing God loves you, delights in you and passionately pursues you. Your value as an individual lies not in personal achievements, popularity or even in your level of spiritual maturity, but in knowing God deeply loves you and that you, in return, are in love with Him.

If you are a Christian who has never, or only limitedly, experienced the wonder of God's presence in your daily life, He wants you to know Him more intimately than you've ever imagined. Worship—blessing and enjoying God—is the greatest privilege of every believer.

Perhaps you've already been experiencing extremely satisfying worship in your personal times with God. But if there's one thing I've learned about Him, it is this—no matter how wonderful or how glorious His presence becomes, there is always more!

So get ready, and read on...the adventure is just beginning!