

How to Move from Activity for God to Intimacy with God



# MORE

God Has Everything  
Waiting for You

**GREG L. HAWKINS**

Foreword by Max Lucado

Praise for  
*More*

"I'm so thankful that as a young leader I was able to learn from Greg Hawkins. He taught me some of my earliest and most fundamental lessons—about leadership, about life, about faith—and I'm thrilled that now so many people will be able to learn from him through these pages. Greg is brilliant and kind, and his spiritual journey through these pages is a beautiful and inspiring one."

—SHAUNA NIEQUIST, author of *Bread & Wine* and *Savor*

"Greg Hawkins is a man with an enormously capable mind and a deeply feeling heart. His book *More* will help you connect your mind and heart to each other—and to God."

—JOHN ORTBERG, senior pastor, Menlo Church,  
and author of *All the Places to Go*

"Greg Hawkins has given us all a gift. His transparency and humility invite us on a journey of discovery. *More* is a spiritual devotional derived from data gathered in the most technical way and then processed through the filters of a heartfelt search for God's best. Anyone who takes the time to read these pages can find hope and direction for the challenges life presents."

—ALLEN JACKSON, senior pastor, World Outreach Church

"I've had the privilege of working closely with Greg Hawkins for more than twenty years, and I've learned from experience that whenever Greg has something to say, I listen and learn! He is such an incredible student of God's work in us and in churches, and the *Reveal* study he led had a profound impact upon thousands of churches worldwide. Now he's taken it a step further in *More* to inspire and point us to the true living that God so passionately wants us to experience."

—SANTIAGO "JIMMY" MELLADO, president and CEO of  
Compassion International and coauthor of *Small Matters*

“I enjoyed a front-row seat for two decades watching Greg yearn and reach for more. His spirit inspired me! This book will inspire you!”

—BILL HYBELS, senior pastor, Willow Creek Community Church

“In Greg Hawkins’s new book, *More*, he tackles the questions many of us have asked: ‘Is there more to this life? Is there more to my relationship with God?’ With very real conviction, he proves the answer is *yes*! Filled with practical, Scripture-based suggestions, years of research, and personal anecdotes, this book pushes us toward intimacy with God. I encourage anyone who wants to experience more of life to read this life-changing book.”

—ROBERT MORRIS, founding senior pastor, Gateway Church, and best-selling author of *The Blessed Life*, *Truly Free*, and *Frequency*

“When I met Greg Hawkins more than twenty years ago, I quickly discovered his passion for Christ. Today he remains a person full of zeal and zest for living a Christian life of eternal significance—and his goal is to pass it on to you. *More* exemplifies how preparing in this life for the next life is the most important thing we as Christians can do. This book will grip your heart spiritually, as it did mine, and your soul will be stirred by Greg’s vibrant faith and passion.”

—JON R. WALLACE, president, Azusa Pacific University

“I’ve never read a book so data-driven that stirred my heart toward love in all my life. If you personally need a soul reawakening to long for and pursue more of the life Jesus promised, pick up *More* and don’t be surprised when you struggle to put it down.”

—SHANE FARMER, senior pastor, Cherry Hills Community Church in Denver, CO



**BOOKS BY GREG HAWKINS (WITH CALLY PARKINSON)**

*Reveal: Where Are You?*

*Follow Me: What's Next for You?*

*Focus: The Top Ten Things People Want and Need  
from You and Your Church*

*Move: What 1,000 Churches Reveal About Spiritual Growth*

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## MORE

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*To Lynn,  
Forever and Always*



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The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy;  
I have come that they may *have life*, and have it to  
the full.—Jesus

JOHN 10:10

# Foreword

Greg Hawkins is a passionate man. When he talks, his eyes dance and his hands wave. When he listens, he leans forward and his eyes lock in. When he thinks, I promise, I hear gears whirring in his head. When he teaches, people listen, intently and joyfully. And when he talks about Jesus, oh, my goodness. When Greg talks about Jesus he is a groom describing his bride, an opera aficionado describing Puccini, a Green Bay Packers diehard retelling the glory days of Lombardi. When Greg talks about Jesus, he talks about the joy of his life.

That is why when Greg writes about *intimacy* with Jesus, we all need to perk up and take note. He gets it. And he longs for us to have it as well.

I love this book. It is an honor to applaud it. Greg tackles a fundamental question: the question of unmet expectations. How do we explain this disconnect in the hearts of many Christians? The faith they desire and the faith they experience are two different things. How can we span the gap between the cold faith of the status quo and the vibrant faith of the New Testament?

Greg addresses this question as only he can do. His research is unprecedented. He is a man of numbers and facts. He's unimpressed by hunches. He works off of solid evidence. You'll find it in these pages.

## Foreword

You'll also find practical solutions that emerge from three decades of church leadership. If you are looking for pie-in-the-sky suggestions, look elsewhere. If you want fact-based, Scripture-informed, ready-to-implement suggestions, this is your book and Greg is your guy.

This book is terrific for anyone who wants to grow in faith. Church leaders will find it to be an exceptional resource for strategizing. All Christians will find it to be a wonderful encouragement for spiritual growth. This is a powerful book, written by a wonderful man.

Prepare yourself to be encouraged.

Max Lucado

# PART I



**Y**ou know, it wasn't supposed to be this way."

It should have been a happy moment, and in many ways it was, until the truth set in. My fiancée, Lynn, and I were meeting with our pastor and friend Jim. We were with him for premarital counseling before our upcoming wedding and had talked about what marriage meant and what our expectations were for the marriage. Eventually the conversation turned to the ceremony itself.

We were going to be married in a charming 120-year-old Methodist church near my wife's hometown in the far west suburbs of Chicago. Jim would be sharing the responsibility of the service with the pastor of that church. As part of the discussion about the ceremony, Jim asked Lynn whom she had chosen to walk her down the aisle. Normally that's a fairly straightforward question, but Lynn's father had passed away nine years earlier when she was twenty. Lynn, without hesitation, calmly said, "No one."

"Certainly you have an uncle or family friend or a friend of yours who could walk you down the aisle?" he asked.

"No," she answered resolutely. "I'm going to walk by myself."

Jim tried one more time to talk her out of it, but she was adamant. "No, I'm going to go alone."

I'll never forget what happened next. Jim leaned forward, looked her square in the eye, and with a voice full of compassion said, "You know, it wasn't supposed to be this way."

In the silence that followed we all recognized the truth that was in the room, and we all started crying. Tears came down our faces, and we wept silently because what he said was so incredibly true. The three of us just sat in silence, letting the gravity of the statement sink in.

It really *wasn't* supposed to be this way. When she was a little girl she imagined this special day when she would walk down the aisle with her father proudly at her side. He was supposed to be there for the most important day of her life. It wasn't supposed to be this way.

Two months later when she turned the corner in the back of the church and started walking down the aisle looking stunningly beautiful, it became very clear to me, and to everyone else, that she was not walking alone—that her father in some way was very much with her. Her decision to walk by herself honored him so powerfully because his absence made us all aware of his presence. She had reserved that spot once and forever just for her father. No other man would ever take that place, ever. That day she paid tribute to all that her father had done for her, all the words of love, blessing, and belief he had conveyed to her in twenty short years. It was a beautiful thing yet painful at the same time.

It wasn't supposed to be this way.

That phrase hit me hard that day and has stayed with me for over twenty years. Its truth has extended beyond our marriage cere-



mony and caused me to reflect on how life itself was supposed to be. When I reflect on my own life—working at a marriage, having three children, doing my best to raise them right, getting up every day, going to work, working hard, being exhausted at some point every week, buying cars and homes, repairing roofs, paying bills, facing any number of struggles—I ask, is this how life was supposed to be?

Deep down in the private corners of our souls, we all ask that question, don't we? And if we're honest, most of us at one time or another feel that no, it wasn't supposed to be this way. Something is just a little, or a lot, off. Why are the relationships with the people I love the most so difficult? Why am I working harder and longer hours today than I did twenty years ago? Why do I struggle financially? Why didn't I get the promotion instead of the person with a whole lot less experience in the next office? Why did I get cancer, while others who seemingly neglect their bodies are cancer free? It seems that despite trying to do all the right things, life isn't turning out the way I thought it would.

Then I look at the world around us. The world in which our children will grow up. Conflicts and war, epidemics, terrorist attacks, collapsing economies, a giant gap between those who have and those who do not. It doesn't feel like God is winning at all. Is this really how it was supposed to be? I don't know about you, but too often I find myself thinking things will never get better in the world, which gives me an excuse to focus only on my own needs. Sure, I want a better life for everyone, but I can barely provide enough well-being for my own life, let alone do anything for the rest of the world.

Surely this is not the way it's supposed to be, right?

As a pastor, that question haunts me even more when it comes to matters of faith—for myself and for my congregation. When I look at all we do in the church—produce worship services, teach classes to the young and old, connect people in small groups, pray with those in need, organize serving experiences—I constantly wonder to myself, *Is this the way church is supposed to be?*

Think about your own experience. You go to church most Sundays (well, at least once a month). You pray. You read your Bible now and then. Maybe you're in a small group or even lead one. You volunteer to work with the children's ministry. Maybe you have gone on a mission trip to Guatemala. And all these things are good. Really good.

We do all these good things because we believe they will make us better people, give us better lives, bring us closer to God, and maybe even help others. And in many ways, they do. But if you are being honest with yourself, deep down, you want to believe there is more. You reflect on your relationship with God and wonder, *Is this how a relationship with God is supposed to feel?* And truthfully, you have gone beyond *wondering* if there is more to actually *wanting* more. And not just a little more. You want everything that Jesus promised when He said, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10).

So you do all you know to do. You participate in even more activities at church or maybe look for a new church altogether. You find

yourself spending more time in prayer and reading your Bible. And that seems to help, for a while. But then at some point, despite all that you are doing, you reach a plateau well short of your heart's desire. And you wonder all over again if this is all there is.

And then eventually, something awful happens. Little by little you start believing that more is not possible, and this is *exactly* how it was supposed to be. You convince yourself that good enough is, well, good enough. You remember that Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble" (John 16:33) and resign yourself to the belief that the "full life" Jesus spoke about is not possible, nor intended, here on earth.

My sense is that some people get to this place in life and then, figuratively speaking, just hold their breath, hoping they have enough air to get to the very end. Hoping they can ignore their suspicion that there is more to life than what they are experiencing. They settle for the way things are, while they wait for their last real breath and ascension to heaven.

That's okay. I want to go to heaven too, but I'm not satisfied that earthly life for a Christian is just a long wait for heaven. I want more, and I want it now. And I think you do too.

I'm writing this book because I believe with all my being that each of us *can* experience the more that God has for us right here, right now. I don't have a magic formula or a set of ten easy steps that will improve your life. You've likely tried those and found them as hollow as I have. But in God's perfect timing and sovereignty, my

own search for “more” coincided with some astonishing discoveries that came when a small team and I asked the Willow Creek Community Church congregation—and then over a thousand other congregations—to tell us the truth about their spiritual lives. It was not exactly the truth we were looking for, and it wasn’t always easy to hear, but it created a profound shift in my thinking and has redirected the entire course of my life. I know more is possible right now, and on the following pages I will share with you what God has revealed to me through research, the Scriptures, and the stories of my friends about how a life of more actually works. Do I have it all figured out? No—and there is a real chance I have it all wrong. But I don’t want to live any other way, and I suspect you don’t either.

Despite the absence of Lynn’s father at our wedding, it was a beautiful ceremony. She turned what could have been a reminder of his absence into a tribute to the special place he occupies in her life. It wasn’t easy for her, and she would be the first to say she would have rather not walked alone down the aisle. But she made do. We all do. We’ve learned that when things don’t work out the way we hoped, we make the best of it, and usually that’s a good thing. Except where God is concerned. He did not invite us into a relationship so that we could just make do but so that we could experience *more*.

It took me a long time to learn that.



## REFLECT

You let the world, which doesn't know the first thing about living, tell you how to live. (Ephesians 2:2, MSG)

On a scale of 1 (very unsatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied), how satisfied are you with your life right now? Does it feel like you are living a *full* life or just a busy one?

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