



# Only You Can Be You: 21 Days to Making Your Life Count

By Erik Rees

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If you desire clarity and confidence in your life, travel with Rees on this 21-day journey to living the life you were meant to live and experiencing the freedom you long for. Simple, yes! Challenging, yes! If you feel frustrated with trying to find your purpose in life, Rees reminds you of your uniqueness before God. He further directs you in maximizing your time on Earth. This audiobook will challenge, empower, focus, inspire, and touch us all, wherever we are in our spiritual walk. Discover the abundant life God has designed you to have. Erik Rees is not only challenging you to make your life count, but offering you the opportunity to connect with him daily so he can help you. The audiobook you hold in your hands is way more than words . . . it's an interactive life coaching experience! For the next three weeks of your life you have the wonderful opportunity to connect daily with pastor and life purpose expert Erik Rees through listening, video coaching, podcasts, and daily encouragements. Don't miss this opportunity! Sign up today online ([www.OnlyYouCanBeYou.com](http://www.OnlyYouCanBeYou.com)) for the *Only You Can Be You* 21 Day Connection and make your life truly count! Insert disc 7 to access a PDF with discussion questions and help in assessing your God-given tools .

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"You can only be you and God will always be God. Erik reminds us what a wonderful gift both of those truths can be. Join Erik for a life-changing journey." -- John Ortberg, author and pastor of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church

"Home run! Take this 21-day journey with Erik Rees, and your life will never be the same. This book will show you how to live like you mean it!" -- Les Parrott, PhD, founder of RealRelationships.com and author of *Love Talk*

"*Only You Can Be You* is a great book to help readers of all ages discover the uniqueness and wonder of you. Don't miss this opportunity to make your life truly count." -- Stephen Arterburn, founder and chairman of New Life Ministries

"Do you desire to make a significant difference with your life? Do you long to hear the Lord say, 'Well done'? If so, take the Only You Can Be You 21-Day Challenge and make the rest of your life the best of your life." -- Bob Buford, cofounder of Leadership Network; author of *Halftime* and *Finishing Well*

"Do you desire more out of life? Are your talents and passions being fully expressed? Does your career provide little fulfillment? Well, Erik Rees has the perfect answer! *Only You Can Be You* is the only book you'll need to help you get your life back into focus and eliminate stress and anxiety while increasing your happiness and satisfaction." -- Dr. Gary Smalley, author of *Change Your Heart, Change Your Life*

"Want to know who you are and how to make your life truly count for God? Then read this book and join Erik Rees for the Only You Can Be You 21 Day Connection. Don't miss this opportunity to learn from one of the leading experts on God-given uniqueness." -- Kerry Shook, senior pastor, Fellowship of The Woodlands, and author of *One Month to Live*

#### About the Author

Rees is the Pastor of Life Mission at the Saddleback Community Church, in Lake Forest, CA. He is also a certified life coach specializing in purpose discovery and career fulfillment. Rees is the author of several books and speaks nationally and globally through churches and conferences. His web site:

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Day 1

RESTORATION

*Discovering the True You*

The more we get what we now call "ourselves" out of the way and let Him take us over, the more truly ourselves we become.

-- C.S. Lewis

The absolute surrender of everything into His hands is necessary. If our hearts are willing for that, there is no limit to what God will do for us or to the blessing He will bestow.

-- Andrew Murray

We loved our home, but after living there awhile, it seemed that something was wrong. That fireplace: it just didn't quite say, "Sit by me and get cozy." After a few years of watching the paint flake off, my wife, Stacey, said, "What would happen if we restored the bricks to their original color?" *Ugh*, I thought, picturing all the work it would take. *What would happen? Major headaches, that's what!*

"Sure, honey," I said. "Let's do it." And so the restoration process began. After the first few "guaranteed" products failed, we sought and followed a professional's advice (always a good idea). We took off the old paint, wire brushed the bricks, applied stain, and lost our tempers a few more times than I'm pleased to admit.

Then one day it was done. We stood back and admired the earthy red beauty of those bricks, looking just as their maker had intended. "It's beautiful!" our daughter Jessica exclaimed. "It was hard work, but it was worth it!" My aching muscles agreed. There's nothing quite like natural beauty.

We serve a God of restoration who wants to bring us back to his original design. While the fireplace had no choice about submitting to our renovation, you and I are free to choose whether we'll surrender to his control. On the surface, that sounds like an easy choice to make, like trusting the hairstylist to know what will look best on you. But in practice...well, let's just say that if it were easy, a lot of pastors would have nothing to do.

In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses impressed upon the children of Israel the importance of always choosing God's way over their own when he told them: "When you and your children return to the Lord your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you" (Deuteronomy 30:2-3). God is ready and waiting to bring out his best in each one of us -- but first we must surrender to him.

### What Surrender Means

Many people have the wrong idea about what it means to surrender to God. In her book *Dangerous Surrender*, Kay Warren explains:

Surrender is a dirty word to many of us. It has mostly negative connotations. Some synonyms are *give in, give up, admit defeat, lay down your arms, submit, yield, capitulate....* One of the most deeply held illusions of Westerners such as me is that we are tough and independent and quite sure that we don't need anyone else. We carry these illusions over into our spiritual lives as well, and doing so keeps many from following Christ. "Surrender to God? No thanks. I can do life by myself." Even those of us who have acknowledged our need for Jesus Christ to be our Savior have a difficult time surrendering our will to him on a daily basis; we're just too full of ourselves, too much in control, too proud."

What Kay describes is exactly where I was when I first asked Christ into my life. I'd heard that I had a heavenly Father who loved me and wanted to help me. Believe me, I was ready for that message. After years of trying to please a dad who didn't really care and then trying to live up to a false image of myself, I was

lonely and tired. But it was much later when I finally invited Jesus to be in the center of my life, where he belongs. When I finally switched places with God and fully surrendered to him, everything in my life changed. It was as if God had pushed the Reset button and restored the original settings that had been lost for all those years.

Today I'm living the life God intended for me from the beginning. He's taken all the junk I went through as a kid -- the abusive, alcoholic father, my overeating to compensate for not feeling loved, the pressure I felt to live up to someone else's idea of perfection -- and given me back the real Erik Rees. He has convinced me that only I can be me. And by the same token, only you can be you.

### **Anything You Want to Be -- Or Who God Made You to Be?**

I recently finished reading a great book, *Pinocchio Parenting: 21 Lies We Tell Our Kids*, by Chuck Borsellino. Guess what one of the top lies is that parents tell their kids? "You can be anything you want to be." Have you heard that phrase before? I have. Did you hear it growing up? I did. If you have kids now, have you ever told them that? I sure have. The phrase *you can be anything you want to be* sounds so good, doesn't it? But this idea has a big problem: it's a lie!

The truth is, you can't be anything you want to be. When you were born, you were given a specific set of gifts, talents, and passions, and a unique personality. Then, as you grew, you went through a series of experiences -- some good and some not so good. Perhaps you even had a few devastating moments. All those things are tools God uses to make you into the unique you he's had in mind from the start. But you've got to let go and let the master makeover artist do his work.

Over the next few days, we'll look at various areas of our lives that we need to inventory to make sure we're living truly surrendered lives. We must give every aspect of our lives -- our past, our present, and our future -- to God so that he can guide us. In the weeks ahead, I'll ask you a few tough questions because I care about you and want to see you living the life that God intends for you -- a life that many want but few take the time to strive toward. Although I truly desire to see you find freedom in who you are and what you do, what matters most is that God wants this for you. He designed you to be you and wants you to trust him with your life.

As you think about making this fresh start and renewed relationship, I must ask you a critical question -- one of the most important you'll ever have to answer: where is God in your life right now? There are only three real possibilities. He is either:

1. Outside your life
2. Inside your life, or
3. At the center of your life

When God is outside our lives, he has no chance to finish his good work. When God is inside our lives, he'll control only what we give to him. However, when God is at the center, given full access, he can begin his work of restoring our broken lives.

So I ask you again, where is God in your life?

The Bible says, "God made my life complete when I placed all the pieces before him. When I got my act together, he gave me a fresh start. Now I'm alert to God's ways; I don't take God for granted. Every day I review the ways he works; I try not to miss a trick. I feel put back together, and I'm watching my step. God rewrote the text of my life when I opened the book of my heart to his eyes" (Psalm 18:20 MSG).

Could you use a fresh start with God? Do you feel like your life is an unfinished puzzle? God wants to put it back together -- and only he knows where all the pieces go. He wants to rewrite the story of your life, but you've got to recognize that he has always been its author. The psalmist David knew what that felt like when he wrote, "Count yourself lucky, how happy you must be -- you get a fresh start, your slate's wiped clean" (Psalm 32:1 MSG). If you want your slate wiped clean, you've got to give God the eraser. Are you catching the drift here? Give it all to God...that's what you do when you surrender.

### The Surrendered Life = The Significant Life

We hear a lot of talk about living a significant life, as if it's something on the other side of the fence that we must work toward, the ultimate goal. But I would argue that we can live a significant life every day -- once we understand God's equation: the surrendered life = the significant life.

Let's take a look at what God promises to those who choose the surrendered life, as opposed to continuing in a self-centered life. Following are the wonderful benefits of allowing God to live at the center of our lives.

#### Purpose for Living

As God prepared Moses to confront Pharaoh and demand that he release the Israelites from their Egyptian captivity, he said, "I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth" (Exodus 9:16). You and I may not be called to lead a nation, but we all have the purpose of showing God's power through our lives so that his name will be glorified through us.

Paul tells us, "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10). Beyond showing God's power to the world through our lives, discovering our purpose allows us to see what God created us to do.

But discovering God's purpose for our lives is impossible unless we first surrender to him our dreams, our hopes, our plans, and our ambitions. The Bible says, "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails" (Proverbs 19:21).

God desires to show you the specific purpose he put you on earth to fulfill. That's great news!

#### Peace of Mind

Almost since time began, mankind has been on a quest for peace. Our world is continually in conflict, yet, somewhere in our hearts, we know this is not how it should be. We talk about peace, we put visualize WORLD PEACE bumper stickers on our cars, and at Christmastime we sing songs about peace on earth. So why is peace so elusive?

Jesus promised his disciples, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27). This world may never have peace, but...

#### **Users Review**

##### **From reader reviews:**

##### **Roy Stoudt:**

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