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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Worship in Song.

(2013)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man. As to such I neither claim special knowledge or perfect understanding.

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Worship in Song.

Topics.

- Styles of music and lyrics and tunes.
- Motivation and worship.
- Raising hands and communion.
- Worship and life and who should be worshipped.
- Worship and love and worship and relationship.
- Worship and surrender and worship and fear.
- Nine ways people draw near to God in worship.
- Worship and the mind and worship and the heart.

INTRODUCTION: it goes without saying that it matters not how brilliant a musician maybe or how glorious the voice of a singer is if they live a lifestyle of sin every other day of the week and give God no thought their worship is worthless before God.

Ultimate and true worship is living a lifestyle that honors God and brings a good testimony to the name of Jesus and the Christian faith and laying our lives down for others, but in this study the primary focus is worship in music and song and supposes that those who are worshipping are worshipping from a honest heart of integrity love and devotion toward the Lord.

Various style of Worship.

Worship is often misused to refer to a particular style of music, but worship is not confined to one style or even one particular group of people. One group may prefer hymns to be sung first, then some praise songs, followed by quieter worship, while others prefer various fast paced praise songs, yet other groups favor a series of slow worship songs. Some consider that if a song is fast or loud or uses brass instruments, it is praise, while another group thinks worship can only take place if a song is slow and accompanied by quiet musical instruments.

This is a common misuse of the term worship, worship has nothing to do with the style or volume or speed of a song, God loves all kinds of music because He invented it all, fast and slow, loud and soft, old and new. Not everyone will like it all but God does, if it is offered to God in Spirit and truth as opposed to hypocrisy and pretense, if it is the true expression of our gratitude and love toward God and the Lord Jesus Christ and not just something we do because of tradition it is an act of acceptable worship.

Styles of Music: Christians often disagree over the style of music used in worship, passionately defending there preferred style as the most biblical or God honoring, but there is no biblical style, there are no musical notes in the Bible, Christians today don't even have the instruments they used in Bible times. The style of music a person likes the best says more about them, their background and personality and age, than it does about God.

Lyrics and Tunes: one ethnic group's music can sound like noise to another, there is no such thing as Christian music there are only Christian lyrics, it is the words that make a song sacred, not the tune, because there are no spiritual tunes, if a person played a song without the words, there would be no way of knowing if it were a Christian song or a secular song.

Motivation and Worship: worship is not primarily for the Christians benefit, often people say, "I loved the worship today, I got a lot out of it," this is a misconception about worship, it is true that in true worship the ones worshipping will spiritually benefit, but worship isn't primarily for the believers benefit, worship is for God's benefit. When we come together to worship our goal should be to bring glory and delight to the heart of God, not to ourselves.

When a person says, "They never got anything out of the worship" maybe it is because they worshipped for the wrong reason, those who belong to Christ should not be worshipping to please themselves, but to delight God. Biblical worship is about bringing glory and pleasure to Christ and to God for His amazing and undeserved grace that comes to us through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Raising Hands: is a biblical way of expressing worship, one group raises their hands and another group does not, neither group should judge the other groups heart attitude or love that they have toward God just because they have a different way of expressing their praise and worship. The following verses show that David raised his hands to the LORD and the LORD not only said that he was a man after His own heart, but promised him that the Christ would come from his own loins. When hands are raised from an honest heart of love and gratitude it is just an outward expression of what is dwelling within. David said: -

- Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy, when I cry to you for help, when I lift up my hands toward your most holy sanctuary (Psalm 28:2).
- I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands (Psalm 63:4).
- My eye grows dim through sorrow. Every day I call upon you, O LORD; I spread out my hands to you (Psalm 88:9).
- I stretch out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land (Psalm 143:6).

Worship and Communion: worship in communion is mindfully, consciously and thoughtfully reflecting on the Lord Jesus Christ and the enormous price he paid for our salvation while worship in song is expressing the inward heartfelt gratitude to God the Father and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ that we are saved by faith and grace and not by self-effort, works of the law and strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or by keeping religious customs and traditions.

Worship and Life: worship is not a part of a Christian's life, it is their life, worship is not just for church services it is an ongoing attitude of thankfulness and gratitude toward God for His grace, mercy and love and the free gift of righteousness all those who trust in Christ receive through faith Jesus. In the collective gathering at a church service this inward thankfulness is expressed outwardly in various ways, but individually worship is that deep heartfelt gratitude that flows silently through the thoughts of the mind toward God in thankfulness. The following verses speak of this type of worship

- Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually! (Psalm 105:4).
- From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised! (Psalm 113:3).
- I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. (Psalm 34:1).

To praise God from sunrise to sunset means praise him all day. This means we are to praise God at work, at home, in bed, while watching TV and when we are enjoying our times of leisure it means that worship is not something we do once a week, but is a lifestyle.

Who should be worshipped: many Christians struggle with the question, "Who should they worship?" They wonder, "Should they worship Jesus or God his heavenly Father?" Is it wrong for a Christians mind and their thoughts to be more occupied with Christ than they are with his heavenly Father?

This dilemma has caused certain confusion throughout all generations amongst many faithful brothers and sisters in Christ. Those who have pondered this question experience a mental dilemma between who in prayer, thought and heartfelt worship they should give the highest esteem and exaltation to and mentally wonder if it is wrong to love and esteem Christ more than God his heavenly Father?

Consider the following: Adam fully loved Eve, and God was not jealous of Adam's love it was proper and right. A wife fully loves her children and her husband is not Jealous it is proper and right. Likewise Christians can fully love and worship Christ and be confident that God his heavenly Father is not jealous of their devotion toward His Son because Christ is the glory of God and God's magnificence and love is seen in the character and nature of Christ.

It is proper and right to worship the immortal invisible eternal Almighty God who created all things and is the source of all life for without Him we would not exist, and it is proper and right to worship His Son the Lord Jesus Christ for without his willingness to lay down his life to a brutal, bloody and cruel death we would be eternally separated from the immortal invisible eternal God and left to decay in the grave with no hope of being raised from it to eternal life and everlasting glory.

It could be likened to a child asking the question, "Who should I love more, Mum or Dad?" Obviously the child is to love both Mum and Dad and have the same heartfelt gratitude toward both parents and neither parent is jealous of the child loving their spouse in fact it is quite the opposite they are thrilled that they do. Likewise Christians should love and honour God as their creator and heavenly Father and love and honour Christ as His most loved Son and as their redeemer, their perfect High Priest and eternal brother who laid his life down to a brutal, bloody and cruel death so that they could be saved.

Worship and Love: today most of us who belong to Christ may not achieve or do great things for the Lord, but we can all be great worshippers of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. When a person falls in love with their sweetheart they think of them constantly, while eating breakfast, driving to school, attending class, waiting in line at the market, pumping gas, they cannot stop thinking about them. They often talk to themselves about the one they love and think about all the things they loved about them. This helps them feel close to them even though they may be miles apart from each other, by constantly thinking of them they are abiding in their love, this is what real worship is all about, it is falling in love with Jesus.

Worship and Relationship: the thing God wants most from every believer is a relationship it is the most astounding truth in the universe that our Creator wants to fellowship with humans, He made humans to love and is seeking for humans to love him back. God through the prophet Hosea said, "I don't want your sacrifices, I want your love, I don't want your offerings, I want you to know me (Hosea 6:6).

Hosea said, "God does not want our sacrifices, He wants our love, He does not want our offerings, He wants us to know Him, in reading these words do you sense God's passion for you? God deeply loves us and desires our love in return. God longs for us to know Him and spend time with Him. This is why learning to love God and being loved by Him should be the greatest objective of a human's life, nothing else comes close in fulfillment and importance especially since such love leads to eternal life and everlasting glory.

Worship and Surrender: surrender is an unpopular word, disliked almost as much as the word submission, because it implies losing, and no one wants to be a loser, surrender evokes the unpleasant images of admitting defeat in battle, forfeiting a game, or yielding to a stronger opponent. The word is almost always used in a negative context (i.e., captured criminals surrender to authorities).

In today's competitive culture we are taught to never give up and never give in, so we don't hear much about surrendering, if winning is everything, surrendering is unthinkable, we would rather talk about winning, succeeding overcoming and conquering than yielding, submitting, obeying and surrendering, but surrendering to God is the heart of worship, it is the natural response to God's amazing love and mercy. Christians give themselves to Lord not out of fear or duty, but from love, because he first loved us.

To truly worship is to fully surrender our lives to the one we worship, true worship is bringing God honour in everything we say and do. The act of surrender is called making Jesus Lord, taking up our cross, dying to self and yielding to the Spirit, but what really matters is that believers do it, not what they call it because God wants a person's complete life, all of it; ninety-five percent is not enough.

Worship and Fear: people may not realise how much God wants to loves them and be in fellowship with them many think God is a Father without love and mercy and that He is all about judgment and rules, it is difficult for them to surrender to God because of the fear they have of Him. A person won't surrender to God unless they trust God, but they can't trust God until they know Him better, trusting God is an essential ingredient to surrender, but fear keeps many from completely surrendering

The Bible says: -

- There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love (1 John 4:18).

The more a person understands how much God loves them the less fear they will have of Him, love does no harm, therefore knowing God's love means, knowing that God will not do harm, that is why love cast out fear. Many believers have a brother or sister in Christ who they know loves them regardless of their human limitations to be perfect, so they are comfortable and honest with them because they know their friends love will cover any of their human imperfections. The amazing thing about Christ's love is that Jesus did not sacrifice his life for someone who was his good friend or had become good and believed in him, but quite the opposite, the Bible says: -

- God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

Jesus gave his life while were still in sin and paying him no regard why? Because God is raising up an eternal family in Christ that at the end of Christ's millennial reign as King of kings and Lord of lords when eternity begins in all its majestic royal splendor God Himself will descend and dwell amongst this family that He has raised up in Christ. The true dwelling place of God is in the heart of those who love His Son. God says, "I know the plans I have for you, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope (Jer. 29:11). God is lovingly patient and merciful toward all who love Him and no one is ever out of His sight He even knows all the hairs on our heads (Matt. 10:30). God cares about us and forgives and imparts to us the capacity to enjoy all kinds of pleasure and enjoyable things.

David prayed: -

- You, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you (Psalm 86:5).
- You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways (Psalm 139:3).
- The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in love (Ps. 145:8).
- The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made (Psalm 145:9).

Some who believe in God measure His love toward them by the circumstances of their life. When their life is blessed they feel God loves them, but when they are suffering or in hardship they feel God's has withdrawn his love, but this type of thinking is not only superstition and fantasy, but also judging God according to the fickle circumstances of life. The only way any faithful brother or sister in Christ should ever judge how much God loves them is to look at God's most beloved Son on the cross of Calvary with a crown of thorns stabbing his bleeding head, his bloodstained body pierced with nails and his arms outstretched saying, I love you this much!

Nine ways People Draw Near to God in Worship.

Naturalists: are most inspired to love God out-doors, in natural settings.

Sensate: love God with their senses and appreciate beautiful worship services that involve their sight, taste, smell, and touch, not just their ears (they hug, burn incense and have regular meals together etc.).

Traditionalists: draw closer to God through rituals, liturgies, symbols and unchanging structures.

Ascetics: prefer to love God in solitude and simplicity.

Activists: love God through confronting evil, battling injustice and working to make the world a better place.

Caregivers: love God by loving others and meeting their needs.

Enthusiasts: love God through celebration.

Contemplatives: love God through adoration.

Intellectuals: love God by studying with their minds.

With many people it maybe a combination of any of these this is because there no one size fits all approach to worship and friendship with God. People don't bring glory to God by trying to be someone God never intended them to be. The kind of people the Father desires or is looking for are people who are simply and honestly themselves before Him in their worship.

Worship and the Mind: God is pleased when we love God with all our mind, meaning that our worship is thoughtful, in contrast to when hymns are sung with an indifferent, apathetic, automatic or mechanical attitude or the praying of clichés or careless exclamations of, "Praise the Lord," because we can't think of anything else to say at the moment, if worship is mindless it is meaningless, the mind must be engaged, Jesus called thoughtless worship, vain repetition.

Worship and the Heart: the LORD said: "This people draw near with their mouth and honour me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me (Isaiah 29:13). Praising with the lips means that the motivation of their worship stems from a legalistic sense of duty, rules and traditions taught by men. It is half hearted worship and hypocritical, these people were offering God stale prayers, insincere praise, empty words and man made rituals without even thinking about the meaning, God's heart is not touched by tradition in worship, but faithfulness, by passion and honest heartfelt love, gratitude and commitment.

For related topics see the titles: -

- Surrender.
- Music (Should Church Have Music).

Both titles are in, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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