

Real Worship

Setting Aside Preference and Submitting to the Bible

Why Should it be So God-Focused?

Pastor Brad Bigney / Sunday, April 15, 2012 / Grace Fellowship Church

God-focused worship connects us to the glory of God – which is our ultimate purpose for living. It's the reason you were created

I. God-Focused Worship Keeps You from Obsessing Over and Chasing After All the Wrong Stuff

Our problem never WAS, is NOT, and never WILL BE a circumstantial problem – it's a worship problem.

Isaiah 43:6-7 "...bring My sons from afar, and My daughters from the ends of the earth – everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory..."

You were created for God's glory... the sooner you come to grips with that, the sooner you'll find real happiness and joy that's unrelated and disconnected from your circumstances.

It's not a question of whether or not you're worshipping... it's a question of WHAT you're worshipping – everybody's a worshipper.

"When we cease to worship God, we don't worship nothing; we worship anything." GK Chesterton as quoted in *The Trivialization of GOD- the Dangerous Illusion of a Manageable Deity*, Donald W. McCullough. P. 106

"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world... The tragedy of the world is that the echo is mistaken for the original shout. When our back is to the breathtaking beauty of God, we cast a shadow on the earth and fall in love with it. But it does not satisfy... For they are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited." C.S. Lewis, *A Mind Awake: An Anthology of C. S. Lewis*, ed. Clyde Kilby (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1968), 22.

Isaiah 61:1-3 NIV "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor; He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives, and release from darkness for the prisoners... to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord **for** the display of His splendor."

Living for yourself and grasping for what you think just might satisfy you in this life is one of the most miserable ways you could ever live.

"There are tendencies within us and forces outside us that relentlessly reduce God to a checklist of explanations, or a handbook of moral precepts, or an economic arrangement, or a political expediency, or a pleasure boat. God is reduced to what can be measured, used, weighed, gathered, controlled or felt. Insofar as we accept these reductionist explanations, our lives become bored, depressed, or mean. We live stunted like acorns in a terrarium. But oak trees need soil, sun, rain, and wind. Human life requires God." *Reversed Thunder*, by Eugene Peterson, p. 3-4 *Reversed Thunder*, by Eugene Peterson

2 Corinthians 4:3-6 "But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

II. God-Focused Worship Changes You and Your Place in Life

Psalm 19:1 “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.”

Isaiah 6:1-5 "In the year of King Uzziah's death, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above Him were seraphs, each with six wings: with two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling out to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory.' And the doorposts shook at the sound of their voices and the temple was filled with smoke. Then I said, 'Woe is me, for I am undone... for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts'"

God-focused worship shatters us and puts us in our place! Isaiah was shattered... He said 'I'm undone!' And that's the starting point for real change in your life. Until you see who you really are in light of who God really is, you'll just keep living in a very small world.

But when you start to see God for who He really is, you can't stay the same!

2 Corinthians 3:18 "But we all with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit."

“That sinful habit you struggle with daily, that low-grade addiction that keeps you in the throes of guilt and shame, that inability to walk with consistency in the things you know please God, ultimately will only be overcome when your heart, soul, mind, spirit, and will are captivated by the majesty, mercy, splendor, beauty, and magnificence of who God is and what He has and will do for you in Jesus... Do you realize how difficult it would be to sin if this were true of you?”
Pleasures Evermore, Sam Storms, P. 106 - 107

God-focused worship will provoke you to go further with God and put down that sin that seems so dear to you.

III. God-Focused Worship Jerks Us Awake to Who and How Big God Is

Because of sin, we tend to DWARF God, and MAGNIFY our problems, and other people. And that's what leads us into fear and worry and depression and lust and greed.

Psalm 34:1-3 “I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. ² My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; the humble shall hear of it and be glad. ³ Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together.”

'Magnify': to make something large by twisting together small threads.

We magnify the Lord and make His name big when we think about and proclaim all the individual threads of what we know about His glorious character. So the more we know of who He is and give thought to it, the more you start weaving together something big that can begin to change your perspective.

Isaiah 40:9-18, 22-31

Now there's a soul-strengthening big picture of God! But you've got to take that picture with you back into your daily routine.

“Very often when I've left a place of worship the first impression I have of the 'outside world' is how small it is - how puny its politics, paltry its appetites, squint-eyed its interests. I've just spent an hour or so with friends reorienting myself in the realities of the world - the huge sweep of salvation and the minute particularities of holiness - and would blink my eyes in disbelief that so many are willing to live in such reduced and cramped conditions. But after a few hours or days, I find myself getting used to and going along with its assumptions since most of the politicians and journalists, artists and entertainers, stockbrokers and shoppers seem to assume that this is the real world. And then Sunday comes around again, and a pastor calls me back to reality, 'Let us worship God.' And I get it straight again, see it whole. Every call to worship is a call *into* the Real World.” *The Wisdom of Each Other*, Eugene H. Peterson, P. 109

Every time you leave a worship service or a small group meeting or finish your own time of prayer and Bible reading – you need to understand that you just tapped into the REAL world... and are now heading back into the world of deceptions and lies.

- How dim are the things of this world... and what is it that you're chasing after?
- Have you come to the point in your life that you've recognized the essential place for God-focused worship in your life?
- Have you made the connection yet between how SUCCESSFUL you've been in your fight against sin and how CONSISTENT you've been in developing and cultivating God-focused worship?