

Episode 2-14: Worship

Resources:

Books

[Corporate Worship - Matt Merker](#)

[Worship Matters - Bob Kauflin](#)

Document

[Faith Church Worship Team Mission and Vision Statement](#)

Website

[Biblical Counseling in Action](#)

Transcript:

Janet: I don't just need to feel better. I need the truth. And ultimately that will make me better.

Alexandra: I just want to make it as totally simple and no brainer as possible for ladies to see that the Bible is really applicable to their everyday life.

Jocelyn: When they understand theology, the application flows out of it quickly with joy.

Janet: It is a journey, but even the journey itself is joyful when I'm doing it, holding the hand of my savior and trusting him all along the way. This is the joyful journey podcast, a podcast to inspire and equip women to passionately pursue beautiful biblical truth on their journey as women of God. When you choose truth, you're choosing joy. Typically, I'll be joined by either Jocelyn or Alexandra, but for our first full episode listen as all three of us discuss the topic of joy.

Janet: Well, hi, welcome back. This is Janet, once again with my co-host, Jocelyn.

Jocelyn: Hey there!

Janet: And today we have a guest who's pretty special to me. We're tackling the subject of worship.

Josh: Woohoo!

Janet: And to do that, the cheerleader that you just heard is my son, Josh.

Josh: Hey mom!

Janet: Hello son! Who is just about to graduate with his MDiv and in July, we'll be starting as a worship pastor at our church.

Josh: That's right.

Janet: I asked him if he would come and share with us some of, a bit of his development, in how he got a passion for worship and maybe help us to think through biblically what worship is.

Josh: Yeah, that's right. I actually got started on the worship team. I wasn't one of those people in high school or junior high that just loved the worship environment, the worship experience, all about going to concerts, and so I just wanted to be on the worship team. No, I was quite the opposite. My piano teacher at the time, I was a freshman in high school, and my piano teacher's brother was scheduled to play keys for a Sunday morning and also sing a solo. So he just asked me, "Hey, you want to play keys?" I showed up for that rehearsal because they needed me and the worship leader, said, "Josh is playing keys today? So while I guess this is your audition. If you play well enough, then you can stay on the team." So I did.

Janet: Well-planned.

Josh: That's all right. Yeah. So I didn't pursue it. Just showed up and did it, but over time, I think under the influence of a lot of godly worship team members, people who cared about worship, who cared about leading our church well, going through high school and getting to lead the high school worship team, leading our college worship team. I just started to see a little bit of a difference between how many of my peers and my generation views worship, and the purpose of worship and the philosophy behind it. Really what I think the biblical purpose behind why we gather every Sunday morning and choose to sing together is so even pretty early on, I started to develop some pretty deep convictions as to what I believed worship should be about, and then with musical gifts and the way that the Lord gave me opportunities to practice them even all the way freshman year high school, be around people who shepherded me and helped to train me. Then in seminary, I've been able to do a lot of worship leading in different capacities and then have the privilege to be able to be the worship pastor here once I graduate. I'm excited about all that and excited to share some of what the Lord has taught me.

Jocelyn: I can't wait to hear about the purpose of worship because I think it's an important theological fact that we should be thinking about, but probably not many of us do.

Janet: Right, and just as a parenting aside to think about where your children are investing their time, they're being influenced. I mean, like Josh said, he was not thinking I want to go because eventually I want to be a worship pastor, but who he was around influenced how he thought about that. It just makes me think as a parent, who am I encouraging my children to be influenced by?

Josh: Maybe, let me start by asking you guys a question. When you think about modern worship,

Janet: Josh, we are the interviewers.

Josh: Yes, mom, but still, when you think about modern worship, what kind of a picture starts to come to your mind? What do you tend to think about when we think about the category of modern worship, maybe stereotypically more than anything else?

Janet: So I initially think of thousands of people in a room with some smoke, not a lot of lights.

Josh: Oh yeah, fog machines, the Holy Spirit can't move unless you have fog machines.

Janet: Absolutely. And hands raised, eyes closed, and a moment of feeling like I'm one with God in a way I never have before, or may never after.

Jocelyn: I agree, I think it also includes incredibly stylish people on the stage,

Janet: Skinny jeans, for sure.

Jocelyn: Being completely in the moment and also incredibly in touch with God. So when I think of worship, I think super big, huge auditorium where stylish people are leading us. All the videos are just filled with beautiful people.

Josh: They obviously didn't use that criteria when they picked me to be the next worship pastor.

Jocelyn: And they're saying, come people, join us, join us in this emotional moment.

Janet: Because you could be stylish too.

Jocelyn: Worship God and be stylish.

Josh: Yeah, yeah, that's right, it's not like all of those things are bad things. I think even a lot of the things you mentioned are good and we enjoy that. But I think, you know, I'm reading for my apologetics class and seminary. I'm reading Carl Trueman's *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self* book, which describes how the Western cultures idea of the self and what makes a person actually satisfied and fulfilled has changed over the past 200 years to the point where he talks about the therapeutic self or like the individualistic, expressive self. I'm not using all the right words that he's using, but he tracks through philosophers over the past couple of hundred years to see how we got to where we are today. Even where you see that in the LGBTQ movement of expressing myself, my inner feelings is what's going to satisfy me. It's all about how I'm feeling in a given moment. And, you know, just like in any age, there's the strengths and weaknesses of the thoughts of a different age and the church is not immune from that. And I think, you know, you see that in the Christian psychology movement, how that infiltrated the church, and that's why our church has championed biblical counseling for all of these years. But I think another area in the Christian Church where it has infiltrated to some degree, maybe more than others is even the modern worship movement where all of a sudden it has become about my experience in

a given moment, and I judge it's effectiveness by how I feel. That was an incredible worship experience. Well, what do you mean by that? It means that's I felt good that's what it means.

Janet: It's so interesting that you said that. It's now a worship experience.

Josh: Yeah. I've developed my convictions and as I've seen, even some of my peers in my generation in particular, you know, as I've talked to dad about some of this, I don't even think this way of thinking always meshes with the way he thinks about worship. Because his generation didn't think about worship this way. It's just, how am I feeling in a given moment? Well, that's just not how previous generations thought about it.

Janet: It wasn't the priority.

Josh: That wasn't the priority that wasn't the purpose of it, but my generation in particular, it's all about a particular experience where I am feeling something with God. God and I time. I think that is incorrect. That's not the right way to think about it, which is why I think this topic is so important. It's not the biblical way. It's not the most fulfilling way, that's not the best way that we please Jesus.

Jocelyn: That's certainly helpful to know because I think a lot of people think that worship is about an experience. We're probably... I mean, I'm a little older than you, but we're probably more of the same generation than me and Janet.

Janet: I'm with ya.

Jocelyn: But I totally think of worship as an experience. Like when do you raise your hands? When you feel a certain way? Like I raised my hands to worship when the words say, raise your hand and worship, like I'm doing the thing to get the experience.

Janet: Yeah.

Josh: That's not all bad. Worship should be obeying God from our hearts.

Janet: It does affect us.

Josh: So it's more than just intellectual ascent. It's more than just going through the motions. Of course, it should be impacting my heart, but just like any other area of Christian obedience, I don't just read the word in the morning only because of the experience I get.

Janet: I don't say it was an effective time in the word because I feel something.

Josh: Because of how I felt. Yeah. It's an act of obedience.

Janet: But I love it, when I feel something, it just draws me to God.

Josh: I don't serve in the church just because of how it makes me feel. Although it should be a good experience as I'm learning how to not think about myself and instead of thinking about others. But if the purpose of my serving is to get an experience, it's a little more obvious for us to see that we've missed something, but in worship, it's sometimes a little harder to see that we missed something, if that's what we are shooting for.

Janet: So I'm going to ask you to, before we say much more, define worship for us, because as you talk about it, a lot of people may be thinking a variety of different things about what worship is. So as you're going to talk about it, how are you defining it?

Josh: Yeah, that's a really good question. In preparing for this, I just looked up, you know, Merriam Webster's definition of the word, worship, which I think is totally appropriate for us. Now, how you apply that in a Christian obedience? There's a couple of different nuances to it but Merriam Webster defines it to honor or show reverence for as a divine being or supernatural power. To worship something, to worship God is just to honor Him to show that He is worthy, ascribe worthiness to Him, to worship him. In the New Testament, it's used a couple of different ways in a general way, but also in a more specific way. You think of Romans 12 that shows us our whole life is an act of worship. Let me read Romans 12:1 here because I think this is important for us to see. It's not just a one particular time on a Sunday morning where Paul says, "Therefore, I urge you brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."

Janet: That wasn't a Sunday morning song service, you don't think?

Josh: Not exclusively.

Jocelyn: So worship could include singing, but it's much bigger than just singing.

Josh: Yeah. I mean, just thinking ascribing worth to God, in the New Testament we've been sanctified by the blood of Jesus. We've been given new life. So now anything I do empowered by the Spirit can be an act of showing that God is worthy worthy of worship. Anything I do, Christ has sanctified me so that I can choose in any given moment to worship God through what I'm doing. So I have to have that in my mind that I'm not, there is a sense in which I come on Sunday mornings to worship, and I'll talk about that in a moment, but there's also a sense in which I should be worshipping through my whole life. I am worshipping something with my whole life. Every action I'm worshipping something, whether it's myself showing that I'm worthy, or showing that something in my life is worthy, or am I showing that God in Christ is worthy. That's the first general sense that all of life is worship, but I think it's also appropriate to recognize that there are times when we gather, or even when we're on our own, but when we gather, when we are directly ascribing praise and honor to God, and that's also called worship, and it's, I like to think of it as saying it's the most direct way that we are worshipping God because we're verbally and with our bodies ascribing worth and honor to God. I think of that even in passages, Revelation 4, where it

talks about the elders around the throne falling down and worshiping God. Of course, they're always worshiping God, they're sanctified, but there's a direct...

Janet: So they were worshiping before they fell.

Josh: They were worshiping before they fell, but there is a physical act of them ascribing worth to God in a direct way, and that's what we gathered to do on Sunday mornings with our song time, and as we gathered together.

Jocelyn: It's like purposeful. At that moment, they did something organized and purposeful.

Josh: Yes, organized and purposeful, and even not in this case, but all around that verse was they're verbally ascribing worth and honor to God as well.

Janet: So then what would you say, what's the goal of worship, not the worship of our whole lives are worship, we know that ought to be true. We could do a lot of podcasts on that probably, but when you talk about the times that there's a more direct ascribing worth to God and we come together as a church to worship. Okay. So what's the goal of worship on a Sunday morning?

Josh: Yeah, that's a great question. So we've already talked about how the goal of worship is not a personal experience. That's what it's not, and we all tend to think of it as. Over the last it's been about a year and a half, actually our worship team, the worship leaders that lead at our three different campuses, as well as a core group of our lay leaders, so folks who have been involved in the worship team for a long time and are key members, we've actually been meeting monthly or so, and there was a period of time where we wanted to develop our church's worship team mission and vision. Just remind ourselves, why are we doing what we're doing? So some of what I'm about to share is not just my thoughts, but as we worked it all together to remind ourselves what are our core values, what's our core mission, what's our core vision, and this really helps. I think there are so many questions about the practicalities of worship. What songs should we sing? What styles should we sing? What's the level of excellence we're shooting for? How expressive should I be? But I think in order to answer a lot of those more practical questions, it's really helpful to first go back and rethink through the framework biblically of why are we singing in the first place? If it's not for like, we've talked about, if it's not for a self experience, what is it for you?

Jocelyn: I can't wait to hear this.

Josh: So let me read the mission statement here and there's several aspects to, and we'll walk through, but let me just read what we came up with as our Faith Church mission statement, not just as only the Faith Church mission statement, but this should be in our view what worship is about. The Faith Church worship team leads the church in passionately singing biblical truth.

That's what we do. Here's the three purposes for that to praise our Holy God, encourage one another in love and faithfulness, and display Christ glory to unbelievers.

Jocelyn: That's cool.

Josh: That's the three purposes, and then here's how we do that. Using engaging and excellent music and production. So we lead the church in passionately singing biblical truth for three purposes, praise God, encourage one another, and display Christ to unbelievers, and we do that with engaging and excellent music.

Jocelyn: That's super cool to see. That's so neat that you guys have thought through this. Cool.

Josh: So the first one here, and I think walking through those three purposes. It almost is so simple that you think you shouldn't have to say it, but when it's so easy for us to slip into worship is about my experience with God. I still think we need to say it. Worship is first about praising God, because He's worthy of me praising Him.

Janet: When my heart is wanting to do that, there will be an experience.

Josh: Yeah, that's true.

Jocelyn: But it wasn't for the experience.

Janet: Yes, yes.

Jocelyn: It happened accidentally.

Josh: As a nice byproduct. No, that's right.

Janet: It's an appropriate byproduct.

Josh: Let me read a few verses from Psalm 47 here, "Clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with a voice of joy! For the Lord, the Most High, is to be feared, a great king over all the earth. Sing praises to God, sing praise! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! For God is the king of all the earth."

Jocelyn: That's so beautiful.

Janet: Yeah.

Josh: So why do we sing?

Jocelyn: Because God is the king over all the earth.

Josh: Yeah, not just because I feel like it, or because this song has nice groove to, it just makes me want to dance or anything like that. It's because He's worthy of it. And I think we would all mentally assent to that, but then just put yourself on a Sunday morning when you walk in, are you singing vibrantly? And a lot of times the answer is no oftentimes, or at least, in several moments, we're not singing vibrantly. And if you're asked, why is that the case? Well, because I don't feel like it.

Jocelyn: I'm tired.

Josh: I'm tired.

Jocelyn: I'm not soaked in my coffee yet.

Josh: Yeah. Yeah, I just got my coffee in the foyer and I still have my grumpy face on for the first song or two, then I'll warm up. Yeah, that's right. Or they picked that song. Oh my goodness. That person is singing. They're dressed like that. All sorts of things. So we recognize I'm not really there singing because God is worthy of it. If I was singing whenever God was worthy of it, that'd be always. So I would be singing vibrantly right now. As opposed to waiting until I feel like it or anything like that. So I think that's the first purpose because God is worthy of it. If we're worshiping through the week, letting our minds soak into God's characteristics, what He's done for me, the gospel, then it, that puts me in the best place on a Sunday morning to then respond by singing because I do believe, and I've been meditating that He is worthy of my songs. My passionate is singing that morning. So that's the first purpose. Any questions about that?

Jocelyn: Proceed.

Josh: Clear enough. That's good. You're convinced. That's good.

Janet: I think God's worthy. I wasn't sure before, but now I know.

Josh: Oh good.

Jocelyn: Oh my word!

Josh: I've done my job. The second purpose, and this one I think is so counterintuitive for how we tend to approach worship times, it's to encourage the people around me, to encourage one another.

Jocelyn: I've actually never actually thought about that until you said it, although it is so true because when someone is singing truth and they look happy about it, it certainly does encourage me.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: It certainly does.

Janet: But we think it's not genuine if I'm doing it for your sake, it should just be me and God, and I shouldn't even care that you're in the room.

Josh: Yeah, there's the psychology. It's all about me expressing myself. That's what's fulfilling.

Jocelyn: And it's me and God alone. You happen to be having a "you and God alone" moment at the same time.

Janet: And we happen to stand next to each other while we're each having our alone moment.

Jocelyn: Yes!

Josh: It sounds good, but it's also let me prove it biblically first, before you buy into it too much here, Colossians 3.

Jocelyn: Thanks for backing it up.

Josh: Colossians 3: 15-17, "Let the peace of Christ to which you are indeed called in one body rule in your hearts and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God." How do we teach and admonish one another? By singing to each other. That's one of the biblical purposes of our singing.

Jocelyn: That's crazy. That's so cool.

Josh: And so again, that just totally changes the way I approach a Sunday morning. This is God and I time. That's just so common among people my age. This is God and I time and I've tried to teach my worship teams, whichever ones that I've been in. You can have your time with the Lord in the morning, sweet song times there should be personal worship services. That would be awesome for everybody to have that. But when we gather corporately, this is not God and I time. This is time for you to be singing passionately, to encourage the people around you. Just think about if there's a single mom in the audience, who's really had a hard week and needs to see you singing about how God is faithful, even in trials, or think about somebody who just lost a loved one and needs to see you singing about God's love and grace for them. God can use us singing His truth to impact people's hearts. And there's even one call to worship I gave where I was encouraging the church family to sing with me. And I said, the electric guitar riff is not going to change somebody's heart. I mean, it is cool. The drums are not going to change somebody's heart, but your voice singing these songs could be what changes the heart and impacts the heart of somebody singing next to you. And I think that gives us a reason to sing passionately every week.

Janet: Yes.

Josh: No matter how you're feeling. What a high calling we get to be a part of!

Jocelyn: That's super helpful for you to have just spelled out. Because I would say that the majority of our listeners would probably not know that.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: That's something that we don't talk about.

Josh: Because it's so counter-cultural. It's all about me expressing myself, my experience, and me thinking about the person next to me, forces me to get outside of me and my experience to maybe their experience and how I can impact them. It's so opposite.

Jocelyn: Almost feels a little bit prideful, like, oh, they're watching me worshiping, they're listening to me. And so it seems like maybe potentially not a biblical thing to be thinking about. So it's so helpful to be thinking about that.

Josh: Yeah, that's a good point. Yeah. That's why we have in part a worship team. We want the worship team on stage to be engaging people, and, you know, one of my worship team members has talked about how he doesn't always appreciate the phrase, "let's not be a distraction". He's like, well, we do want to distract people from whatever wrong things they're thinking with the right things. So we do want to engage them and point them to the right things they should be thinking, encouraging their hearts, challenging, rebuking, and teaching.

Janet: So the goal isn't to lead in such a way that we don't notice you're there?

Josh: Correct.

Janet: The goal is that when we look at you, we see how awesome it is to worship God.

Josh: Amen!

Janet: So we're encouraged to worship God.

Josh: You know what? That's actually mutual because when the worship teams up there, I've been in enough audiences too, where it feels like you're invisible in a big crowd, especially if you're at a bigger church, nobody can really see you. So it doesn't really matter what you do. Doesn't it feel like that?

Janet: Right.

Josh: It's only about my experience so I can do whatever I want because it doesn't impact anybody else.

Jocelyn: I can't see past the spotlights anyway.

Josh: Right.

Jocelyn: So they don't know if the congregation's doing anything.

Josh: Those lights are so bright. They're blinded. They can't see anything. That's just not true. It is so encouraging for us as a worship team when we look out and we see people looking us in the eyes, smiling, engaging with us just as we're trying to engage with them because all of us are trying to encourage one another with the truths that we're singing.

Jocelyn: That's so cool.

Josh: Yeah. So that's a way to bless your worship teams, whatever churches you're at, just by singing passionately, regardless of whether you feel like it or not, because that's the way of encouraging them and encouraging the people next to you, engaging with God is you're there you're an active participant in the worship rather than just a passer consumer of it.

Janet: So just a biblical counseling aside there as you've made that statement, Josh, I thought, oh, my word we teach, or at least I teach that in counseling all the time. What is the role of my emotions? It follows. So when I do what is right because it is right, and meditate on what is right and orient my mind to what is right, the emotions that are appropriate to that follow. So when I come in and I choose to worship and I choose to think about the worship team even, and want them to see, thank you for leading us to the throne. Before it's over, I am experiencing joy as I'm singing. Like it feels good. As I've already done it for the right reasons.

Josh: That's right. It is best for us when we obey, like the path of obedience does bring blessing.

Jocelyn: This so good. This is so cool to think about. Because one time we were sitting in service and me and my girls were singing and we really enjoyed singing. And the person sitting next to us said, you girls, were really fun to watch worship. I really enjoyed hearing your voices. I was really embarrassed about that actually, because I thought, oh man, I distracted them from the point, like we were just over here doing our thing really enjoying worshipping and they were paying attention to us. So this is helpful to know.

Janet: It was good.

Jocelyn: It's not that we're supposed to have attention drawn to us.

Josh: Correct.

Jocelyn: The point is not that we gain someone's attention, but when sometimes we are worshipping, it will be something that other people pay attention to and it should be like

Janet: it encourages their worship

Jocelyn: us enjoying God together.

Josh: That's right.

Janet: Yeah. Love it.

Josh: And then the third purpose. So let's review. The first one to praise God. That's why we do it. That's a noble calling. Although we've thought of it so often sometimes it becomes mundane for us, but the fact that our voices can give worth or ascribe worth to God that He already has. What a calling that is, we get to encourage one another. I just think that people in your churches, your voice gets to be a part of that. And then the third purpose that we have in our mission statement, it's to display Christ glory to unbelievers. I get that from a couple of places. One is even the Psalm I read before. Clap your hands. All you peoples shout to God with a voice of joy. The psalmist, he speaking to? All you peoples. He's saying to the whole world, all of you come and join with me in praising the Lord. Our God is worthy to be praised by not just my voice, not just the voice of my church, but by every voice on planet earth, He's worthy to be praised by. And so, as I'm lifting my voice vibrantly, I'm encouraging everyone who has come into the service, whether they're believers or unbelievers. God's worthy to be worshiped. Praise Him with me. He's worthy of being praised by you. This is where you'll find your fulfillment is by praising Him along with me. That also comes from a place like 1 Corinthians 14, where Paul says, "The worship service, if it's done rightly". He's talking about prophecy there, but I think it can be applied to the whole service unbelievers should be able to come in and fall on his face, recognizing the God was in that place.

Jocelyn: Wow. That's so cool.

Josh: And so thinking, the way you're singing on a Sunday morning, what an unbeliever be able to come in and say, wow, your God's worthy to be worshiped because of the way you're singing right now.

Janet: So Josh, as you say that, what's coming into my mind, several years ago we had an international student at Purdue we were building a relationship with from a country that I believe was primarily Muslim and they came to a Christmas Eve service, I believe it was where there was a lot of music or it was the Cantata. I don't know. They came to a church service. They had a lot of music and their comment was number one, they were drawn to it. They loved it. I thought, you know, that's okay, but I wanted them to hear the truth. Well, they were hearing the truth, number one in the words.

Josh: Sure.

Janet: And one of the comments they made was it was out of their experience to see joy in worship because where they came from you worship out of fear.

Jocelyn: Wow. That's so cool.

Josh: That's interesting.

Janet: For them to see music where people were joyful, it drew them, and it was something that they recognized as I like that. They wanted to come back to more of that and they couldn't really understand it even.

Josh: That's what it should be! The way we're singing on a Sunday morning if I'm doing my job the way I'm trying to lead the church to sing more and more each week is to sing being enthusiastic. I know there's a word for that, with enthusiasm.

Janet: Passionate.

Josh: There's the word. With an enthusiasm or with a passion that shows my God is worthy to be worshiped and the way I'm singing it, it shows it so that people who don't know him come in and say, wow, God really is here.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: It makes me think of Taste of Christmas, which originally was like about the food. We have an outreach event at Christmas where we offer really cool food, but over the years it has turned into really cool concert.

Janet: Yes for unbelievers, primarily.

Jocelyn: Primarily it's an outreach, and I was just sitting here thinking how many of those songs were the point of them is the gospel.

Janet: Over and over.

Jocelyn: From every different aspect and a lot of guests are invited because they're not churched. This is their opportunity to hear about the gospel and they did it by listening to music. That's exactly what. Christ's glory was displayed in magnificent, you know, huge overtures, but the point of it was they got to hear what we were singing about, which was the amazing magnificence of Jesus Christ.

Josh: Yeah, that's right. If you're looking to learn more, read more about this. There was a good book that just came out last year by The Nine Marks group called, Corporate Worship by Matt

Merker. And I was reading through it. I haven't finished yet, but it's been really helpful. And it was cool for me to see that he came down actually on the same three purposes of us gathering together as a corporate body that we came up with independently. So if we're reading the same book and came up with the same three purposes. He titles them, exaltation, edification, and evangelism.

Jocelyn: Oh, wow! How perfect!

Josh: That's he titles those three purposes.

Janet: Which is the same thing.

Josh: Exaltation, edification of one another, and evangelism.

Jocelyn: And it's alliteration, which makes me happy.

Josh: It's alliteration. Easier to remember. That's right.

Janet: We will link that in our show notes.

Josh: That's been a helpful book for our worship team core leadership team to go through. Let me highlight maybe two other parts of that mission statement, that's just really, really key and helpful. In what we do, we're leading the church to passionately sing biblical truth. And I think there's two aspects of that that are important to think about carefully, and to get right. Singing biblical truth, you know, the Joyful Journey Podcast. I don't think there's going to be, everyone knows who's listening to this podcast, the importance of scripture, and reading the Bible.

Janet: We hope that they do.

Jocelyn: That would be our hope. We're all about theology.

Josh: That's right. But that's true in singing too. That's key. I think, you know, evangelicals in general that that's a key emphasis that we already agree on, but it's important to hit it again. We should be singing biblical truth. What Jesus said, sanctify them in truth. Your word is truth. And so if we're wanting our songs to impact each other, to grow us, to accurately ascribe praise to God then we need to be singing songs that are in line with biblical truth or else we're going to miss those three purposes. We're not going to lead people to the true Jesus, if we're not singing true biblical truth. We're not going to really encourage one another, if we're not singing the Bible to them. We're not going to praise the real God, if we are not singing truth about the real God.

Jocelyn: And conversely, then you could assume if you find a "worship" song that is not biblically accurate, you shouldn't be singing it because it will also not do those three things. It won't worship God in truth. It won't be edifying to believers because it includes things that are

not accurate and it won't be displaying Christ's true glory, which is one reason why it's important to care what the words of the songs are.

Josh: That's right. You know, first and foremost, that's always been in my thought, just that's an assumption, they have to be biblical. Now it's are they a good song or a bad song? But that's a given that it has to be biblical or else it won't accomplish those three purposes. So we're not up there singing "Eye of the Tiger" as much as people might enjoy that.

Jocelyn: Well, I was thinking more along the lines of some bands that would call themselves biblical music, Christian music, but their lyrics are not accurate. They're not theologically appropriate.

Janet: So we need to think, not just say it's a Christian band and I love the music. I have to think about the words.

Jocelyn: They played on a Christian radio station or I heard it from a Christian friend does not mean it's biblically or theologically accurate.

Josh: That's right. That's right. But that doesn't mean it has to be biblically complex in order to be a good song.

Jocelyn: True. True.

Josh: I think sometimes you can confuse accuracy with complexity. Sometimes what's going to be most helpful for somebody on a Sunday morning is just to sing, give me Jesus, give me Jesus, give me Jesus. They're in a place where a really hard, complex song wouldn't minister to them in the same way that give me Jesus would. That's an accurate song. It's simple, but that doesn't make it less good.

Janet: So even if it doesn't give the whole gospel from creation to consummation.

Josh: That's a good point.

Janet: To have everything in every song.

Josh: There is no song that has everything. Every song you could have qualms with, so to speak because it doesn't give the full picture. You'd have to sing the entire Bible in order to get the whole picture.

Janet: Right.

Josh: We're not going to do that on a Sunday morning.

Jocelyn: That would be a very long worship service.

Josh: It would be. So it is important to be discerning in what you sing. Crucially, you have to be singing truth, but also as a congregation member, if there's something you have a question about or something you're not quite sure about, it's also good to have the humble heart that would then ask the leader, can you help me understand this? As opposed to this and this, and this are wrong because there is no perfect song. There might be a reason behind why he's singing that or a way he could teach that better. You need to think, Jesus paid it all, all to him I owe. Are we enslaved? Do we owe everything to Jesus?

Janet: Do we live under obligation?

Josh: Do we live under obligation?

Janet: What about grace?

Josh: That's a fine song, but even a good song...

Janet: ...doesn't say everything.

Josh: It doesn't say everything. So that's why you need the rest of the song, you need the rest of scripture to balance it out, even good songs.

Jocelyn: That's a great point.

Josh: So I think that's one thing you have to be singing biblical truth. I think then the other thing, what does it mean to passionately worship God? Passion, you got to do it with passion. So again, if you think under the old, the grid we tend to view worship through passion is me expressing myself however I feel most comfortable and that leads to my greatest feeling in experiencing it. That's what passion is. So if it's not that, what is passion? Appropriately so. What does passion mean? And I think already when we've changed the purpose to praising God, encouraging one another, and displaying Christ glory, that already helps us answer that question better because I'm not thinking in terms of, well, what's comfortable for me, or what's not comfortable for me. That's not even the question anymore. It doesn't matter what's comfortable for me. It doesn't matter what's uncomfortable for me. What matters is what's going to praise God, encourage other people, and display Christ glory to unbelievers. And that's still, certainly will vary from person to person and even church culture to church culture, what will encourage other people and what will display Christ glory in the best way.

Janet: But that now becomes the goal.

Josh: That becomes the goal.

Janet: As you said that, I was thinking it made me think I want to be actively engaged.

Josh: Yes!

Janet: Like who knows what it will look like, but I'm not going to be passively just listening. Passionately, if I'm going to exalt God, if I'm going to encourage other people, if I want to be displaying how amazing God is to any unbeliever who might be watching, I now have to actively participate. That's part of the passion.

Jocelyn: Absolutely.

Janet: I'm actively participating in whatever that looks like in cultural norms.

Josh: That's exactly right. And the paradigm that helps me or that has helped me think through that maybe in the best way is even thinking through Deuteronomy 6, "You shall love the Lord, your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might worshiping with everything you got". So on a Sunday morning, what's the right level of physical expressiveness? Well, that's a fine question to ask in terms of, what's going to draw attention to myself versus what's going to encourage somebody else. Yeah, we have to ask that, but, my framework should be, I want to worship God with everything I got on a Sunday morning. So I want to worship Him with my voice. I should be singing. I want to worship Him with my body. So whether that's me raising my arms or putting them at my sides, not distracting other people, whatever that is, I'm worshiping in with everything I've got. I'm worshiping Him with my mind. My mind is actively engaged. If I'm playing music, then I'm worshiping Him by how I'm using my fingers, how I'm using my voice. I'm worshiping Him with everything I've got. And I've found that to be more helpful than thinking in terms of what's the right level of physical expressiveness. Cause that's so easy, it goes into the categories of fear of man or comfort, or what feels good to me. That's less helpful than thinking I want to worship God as appropriate with everything I've got, whatever that looks like right now. It just recenters me away from myself.

Janet: So I think this has already been incredibly helpful. This is how we ought to be. What do you see? What are some of the common ditches that churches tend to fall into?

Josh: Sure. Being focused maybe from a worship team perspective, but even from a congregation perspective, if there's ever too high of an emphasis on musical performance, or if it ever turns into a performance where we're evaluating the people on stage and did they do enough for me? I think that's an easy ditch to fall into in terms of it becomes performance driven instead of engagement and accomplishing these purposes driven. It becomes performance driven. I think that's an easy ditch to just fall into.

Janet: And I get it can be for the worship team, but you're right. It can also be for us who are listening, it can be, oh, I'd only want that soloist.

Josh: Yes.

Janet: Because their voice, for whatever reason, I like or whatever. So I am now enjoying worship more, if a certain soloist sings than if another soloist sings.

Jocelyn: Or even if a certain person leads that song.

Janet: Yes.

Josh: Yes, and even I've seen a few comments recently and these could be totally valid comments, but I wish that there was more, less performance driven. I wish it was less performancy and I think, you know, if I, as a young worship pastor am ever starting to look arrogant, I hope my church family will come and tell me don't be so performance driven. So that's a valid comment, but I do wonder if, you know, as a congregation, it can be easy then to evaluate the worship team on the basis of their performance, even as you're saying, don't be so performance driven and you're contributing to the consumer performance culture by not engaging with it, and instead evaluating it. We should be evaluated. Tell us what's helpful because ultimately we want to be encourage each other. So I want to be picking styles that are helpful for the congregation to sing, even though in a big congregation, there is no one style.

Jocelyn: How can you do that?

Josh: But still there's certain things I'm not going to play because our church wouldn't sing it well. So there is some level, you know, obviously if evaluation, helping one another out, but even the act of evaluating, coming to consume, you're contributing to that performance.

Janet: If I'm actively engaged, I don't have as much time to sit and evaluate.

Josh: Correct. And that helps us then not be as focused on how we're performing because we're not looking out and seeing people who look like.

Janet: They're evaluating.

Josh: They're evaluating me right now instead they're so engaged that I want to engage back with them.

Janet: Yeah.

Josh: So I think being focused, the ditch of consumerism, performance driven, is easy to get into because that's where a lot of churches today are. Related to that, a second ditch, that I think it's easy to fall into which super related to that making preferences or styles, the king, this is what it needs to be. We need to sing more this way. We need to sing more hymns. We need to sing less hymns. We need to sing more fast worship. We need to stop singing all that crazy stuff and sing slow, reflective songs. Slow reflective songs? I'm falling asleep, sing all the fast songs. Less

songs, more songs. I mean there's so many preferences that it's easy to make king. And I think that just misses the whole point of why we're there.

Jocelyn: What about the ditch of worship is not important? Like it's just something that you go do. There's not a reason.

Janet: So I can come 30 minutes late because I hear the sermon. That's the teaching.

Jocelyn: Yes. Or like I was busy fellowshiping, getting coffee.

Janet: Why do I need to be there for?

Jocelyn: And missed all of the worship because it's unimportant.

Josh: then you just might think what is motivating you to think that worship is not important? Probably. You don't enjoy the worship at that particular church, or it's not something that brings you the fuzzy, warm feelings. So.

Jocelyn: Or you're embarrassed by doing it or something.

Josh: Or you're embarrassed by singing because that's not my gift or whatever.

Janet: Which again is all about me.

Josh: It's all about me!

Janet: Instead of seeing it as a way to exalt Christ and encourage my fellow believers.

Jocelyn: It probably stems from a misunderstanding of theology about what worship is.

Janet: Yeah.

Josh: Yeah.

Jocelyn: I think one of the, probably you were like a baby when this happened. I don't remember how old it was, but a while ago, probably 20, 24 years ago, our church did a really important series on worship that was monumentally foundational that helped our whole church to look at what actually worship is supposed to be. And so that's a thought to consider is like this might need to be a topic of teaching in the church from the sermons or from a class or something where the congregation can be informed what is the theology and the point of worship.

Josh: That's right, and in the past year, something that me and the other worship leaders at Faith have been trying to do. I haven't been doing it as much recently, but what we do, especially as we were writing this document is using those times in between songs or whenever we're doing a call

to worship to say, hey, why are we doing this today, Church? Do you wanna encourage somebody next to you? Sing this out with me. Do you believe God's worthy to be worshiped today? Sing this with me. Just teaching, even as we're doing it, setting the foundation of why are we even doing this activity right now? otherwise it's so easy to just go through the motions. We sing five songs every week.

Jocelyn: You are going to segway into the next one.

Josh: We're merely preparing for the sermon. We're certainly preparing for the sermon, but it's also more than that.

Jocelyn: That's helpful, by the way, when the music leaders take us to the next song and tell us what we're doing. I really appreciate that.

Josh: Yeah. It helps us all stay cohesive and focused on the purpose of it. especially for worship teams, it is easy to get just in the mundane week by week, just get it done because we're practicing five songs a week playing them often through the week. On Wednesday, play them. If you're with multiple services, you're playing them two or three times on a Sunday morning. So it's really easy for our worship team in particular to get lost in why are we doing this again? What's the purpose? I need to get this done and to fall into the performance driven part, which is why it's so important just to continually reinforce the purposes of why we're singing together in a culture that it makes it easy to focus on ourselves.

Jocelyn: Right.

Josh: In what we're doing.

Janet: Which makes me think about, so you've just acknowledged it can be hard for the worship team. So instead of us just saying, well, I hope you do a good job so that I can go to the throne of God. How can we as listeners be a blessing to you? How can we promote your vision? What do you want us to be focused on when we come?

Josh: Yeah, so those three purposes as you're coming in, even just, I've been hitting this throughout, as we've talked about even the different purposes of worship, I've been hitting it, but just put yourself in that moment as you're coming in, or even as you're preparing to come into a Sunday morning, what is your goal in coming in? Is it going to be, this is my experience with the Lord and I hope the worship team serves up to me on a silver platter, or is it I'm coming to engage with God by praising Him, encourage other people, including the worship team, and hope that there is unbelieving people there that are going to hear me singing and maybe get a little bit of a glimpse of Jesus's worthiness through how passionately I am singing to Him and expressing it in my body and whatever that looks like.

Janet: Truthful things.

Josh: Truthful, yes truthful things. We're saying the truth. Having that kind of a mindset is going to bless the worship team considerably because just like we were talking about the opposite is going to be coming in to be a consumer where you hope the worship team gives you what you want, if they do, you'll go away happy. If they don't, you're going to complain about it. It's going to show on your face throughout. We're never going to please everybody in the room. So people who are all coming in as consumers are going to divide over the issue. They're going to be, I'm of team style this, I'm of team style this, as opposed to us unit. It'll divide the worship team, be tough. It will make it easy for us to fall into fear of man trying to give people what they want. That's easy for me to fall into when I'm looking at people who may be evaluating me, it's so easy for me then to immediately lose why I'm there and think why I'm up here in the first place. These people aren't enjoying this time. Why am I up here? It's easy for me to fall into fear of man and people pleasing as opposed to us all engaging together and unifying on purpose.

Janet: And to think at that point, it would be easy for you to focus on I want to really perform with excellence so they will like me. Now, I am thinking about my performance.

Josh: A hundred percent.

Janet: Instead of, I was just imagining if we all walked into worship thinking, I get to sing with my brothers and sisters about how awesome God is, I get to encourage the worship team and each other, and I get to show any unbeliever in the room, how amazing Jesus is. If we're all doing that then we're all there with you. You're not performing anymore.

Josh: Right.

Janet: We're all doing it.

Josh: Correct. It should be a mutual and all together.

Janet: I love that.

Josh: We're all sinners. So we're all going to walk in with varying levels of attunement with those purposes and different purposes of what am I having for lunch?

Jocelyn: I was thinking we're all going to walk in with certain levels of grumpiness

Josh: Or certain levels of grumpiness.

Jocelyn: Because it's morning.

Josh: That's right.

Jocelyn: We had to get up early. We don't have our coffee.

Josh: And that's also part of the beauty of the singing time together is to help one another, get past that to that purpose.

Jocelyn: Yes, to that right purpose.

Josh: So as a worship team, my heart should recognize in parts, I've been up a little earlier, probably than most people. I've been thinking about the songs. I've already rehearsed the songs one time that morning. So if my job is to help some grumpy people get excited. That's awesome. But the more of us that are all there together, then it'll help me, if I am having a grumpy heart that morning, everybody's singing back to me. That's all just a beautiful aspect of us all being sanctified together.

Jocelyn: So I actually have a follow-up question about this. So when a worship pastor chooses the songs that we're going to sing, are they like choosing songs because they point to something that the sermon is getting ready to talk about? Like how do you organize what it is we're going to talk about? Does it have some kind of cohesive theme?

Josh: Yeah, I think it depends on the week. It depends on the worship set. There are certain sermons that are easier to tie to themes than others. You know, we were walking through John last year as a church, and when we got to Crucifixion Sunday and Resurrection Sunday, boy!

Jocelyn: Those are easy ones.

Josh: Those are easy ones. Soft balls. Yeah. So, you know, you pick more of a mellow crucifixion songs, vibrant resurrection songs. If there's a sermon, I can't think of one off the top of my head. We've done recently, but if there's a sermon on human sexuality, it's a little harder to pick us off a worship set that would meet that. So I haven't always found it easy to match a particular theme. Also because we're planning song sets at least a week and a half, probably two weeks is ideal out.

Jocelyn: Oh, wow, I didn't know that.

Josh: Or two and a half weeks out. If we're one week away from rehearsal, which is about half a week away from when we perform it, a week and a half out, sometimes the pastor's sermon isn't written.

Jocelyn: Isn't even written yet!

Josh: I'll know the passage so I'll often read through the passage before I would plan a song set, but particular themes, I don't always get nailed on the songs that we're singing. But I have such a good bank of, well, our church over the years as if I was the one who picked them all, our church has such a good bank of rich songs. Yeah, you know, we have a core songs list of probably 48 songs, which try to pick three of those each week so that we keep it consistent. There's only so

many songs that church can sing well before they start to get songs, they don't know as well. If I pick any three songs from that list, they're going to be good songs. They are all solid enough that I can then look for what common themes, tie them together as I move from one to the next. So going from God's greatness to yet our sin, but the cross or going from the gospel to let's praise Him because of the cross. There's various ways I could walk through the service. And so, I don't know, I found one pattern in particular that's really the way to go, but I have found being intentional with, okay, let's think about where we are, where we're going, how can I help lead them to the next place? And just being intentional with it, even though there's many ways I could do that, is what leads the church to sing in the best way, because they felt led by it, and it prepares them then to listen to the sermon, even if it's not the exact theme of the sermon. So that's a good question.

Jocelyn: That's helpful, and it also shows that worship time in the service is not just about getting your heart ready only for the sermon.

Josh: That's not the only purpose. It is one of the purposes, but it's certainly not the only purpose.

Janet: But it is to exalt Christ.

Josh: Yeah, to exalt Christ and encourage one another.

Jocelyn: And you can do that regardless of what the sermon is about.

Janet: Right.

Josh: Yeah, and the sermons about exalt Christ and the sermon is to do all those same purposes. I mean book I referenced earlier. Those are the three purposes of corporate worship gathering as a whole. So those are the three purposes should be for gathering for the sermon, for of the song time, and our time together. That's the purposes of our whole time together.

Jocelyn: That's cool.

Josh: So that's a good question, but that's probably what I would say about planning sets in line with the sermon.

Janet: So now what do I do then if I'm in a church where I just, I don't like the music. So do I just listen to what I want in the car and then come in when the sermon starts?

Josh: Well, I guess I would have to ask you, what do you mean by, I mean, if the question is a little broader, I don't like the worship time. If somebody were to say that, well, what do you mean by you don't like the worship time? Does that mean you are disagreeing with the way the pastor is leading the worship time, or you're wondering, man, is the focus getting offset because if so, then we just work at biblical, problem-solving going to the pastor.

Janet: Communicate.

Josh: Coming to me, communicating, asking questions, and confronting, if need be. I don't know that's what we're always at when we're saying we don't like the worship time. I don't like the way the pastor. I think the pastors leading sinfully, that's probably not normally where we're at. Is it I'm not sure about the theology of a particular song? I don't like that song. Well, then again, you go and you ask humbly, ask questions about it. I feel like most of the time it's I have a different musical preference as to what makes me feel good on a Sunday morning than what our church is currently doing then. Well, it's not about you. I do hope you get to enjoy music of your choice in worshiping the Lord at all kinds of times, that blesses our whole church and we move that way, that's awesome. I would hope that I picked songs that most, at least a couple of songs, that most of our church can enjoy every Sunday. Like I, would hope that I'm picking styles that are appropriate for what our church likes. You can never please everybody style preferences, but I'm hoping that that's true. But that's not the main purpose of a Sunday morning. So instead, you would need to choose to meditate on what is the real purpose of my worship? What am I trying to get out of this time that I'm coming on a Sunday morning? I don't like the music. Okay. Well, I need to need to stop thinking that way. I do like glorifying God, I do like encouraging other people, and I do like witnessing to unbelievers.

Janet: That's what I'm going to do.

Josh: So I should do that. If I'm not liking that right now, then I need to do some heart reflections sometime with the Lord asking Him to help me get to the place where that's what I want to Sunday morning to be about.

Janet: As you say that, it makes me think about back when your dad was over the college ministry, and we would talk a lot with students, who really only wanted to hear certain preachers. So I am of so-and-so and I am of so-and-so and I learned the best from their style, but they didn't say that. They just I like him and I don't like him.

Josh: Yeah.

Janet: And sometimes it's people that they listen to on podcasts. Sometimes it was some of our people, I like when they give sermons, I don't like when they give sermons. So remember Brent talking to them about 1 Corinthians 4.

Josh: Oh, Dad stamps that out real quick.

Janet: Oh, I am of Paul. I am of Apollos. And then he says, you know, that the end of that. It's all yes, in Christ. And to help them think through, if you can only learn from one style, you're the one who's stunted and limited.

Josh: Yeah. That's right.

Janet: So if you can only worship God in one style of music, you're the one stunted and limited. You can grow to appreciate other styles then you get to worship and enjoy that worship in more styles. So when you can only learn from this one teacher, you're limited and you're only hearing their facet and their way.

Josh: Yeah, that's right.

Janet: So to help them recognize it's not just a matter of I'm better because I like this person it's actually, you're limited.

Josh: That's right.

Janet: And I can learn from all styles. I can learn from classical music, which is a stretch for me because I don't understand it. So I don't always appreciate it, but I can learn and I can learn from hymns and learn to enjoy them if I don't. I can learn from something with more of a beat than I'm used to.

Josh: That's right.

Janet: And if I don't like that already, and then I am able to enjoy more things because I have learned to.

Josh: And I do think that helps us not be critical of other churches that have maybe picked different styles and make them self-righteous, or think we're better than them. Any style that helps a church sing together and be unified on those three purposes is a style that works.

Jocelyn: And I just alluded to this worship series that we had. I don't know.

Josh: So maybe early 2000s.

Jocelyn: Something like that. I think that was born out of, in general, a pastoral staff that wanted to make sure we were being biblical and also appropriate for our culture and saying like, it's important for people to understand how to worship God and how to show Him His worth through music. They were willing to listen to hard questions from people and develop the way that they handled music because they believed that it was good for everyone involved. So the other side of that is when sometimes people ask questions, it's really good for the church to think through it together, and it was a very defining time for our church.

Josh: That's right.

Jocelyn: That was difficult. Honestly, it was a difficult series. Not everyone loved it, but I remember some of the passages that our pastor read from the Psalms where it said that people were like dancing and shaking tambourines and like, you know, it was like, I just remember it

was like silent in church, as people were confronted with what the Bible says about music and how different it was than what we were doing at the time and so we will think about doing things differently.

Josh: Yeah.

Jocelyn: So good questions asked is an important way for people to develop.

Janet: Right.

Jocelyn: And to be able to serve more people.

Josh: Yes. Yes, that's right. one other thing came to my mind, a little bit of a previous question where you said, how can you bless the worship team? One other thing I would encourage the congregation just to think about is if you do want to compliment the worship team, to thank them for what they're doing. Think about complimenting them on accomplishing these three purposes, as opposed to, I thought the worship was great today, you guys were jamming. Maybe it'd be better to say that one song really encouraged my heart, as I thought through this truth, or I really saw our church family worshiping together. Thank you for leading us that way.

Janet: Not that you hit that note really well.

Josh: Wow. You slayed that note. Yeah, that's fine, but not as helpful of an encouragement as we're all accomplishing these three purposes together. Because again, that helps us focus on not the performance side of it, but the accomplishing these purposes together as a church. So there's so much more that could be said about worship. How do you think about excellence? How do you train a worship team? How can you grow as a church? But I think this sets the foundation for us answering those types of questions. If we understand the biblical purposes of worship, it helps us get on the same page and start moving in the right direct.

Jocelyn: Oh, this is so helpful. I'm so glad we're talking about this today. This is so good.

Janet: Thank you, son, for coming today. So that's it for this episode and I hope you'll come back and join us for our next episode as we continue on this journey together.

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