

Passionately Pursuing  
our God in Worship  
and Music

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**“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. You probably don’t like it all, but God does.” [used as a negative example]**

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***Milo Thompson* – Music is of God’s creation and an integral part of our lives, yet much of the current experience is one of the most emotionally charged and divisive issues facing the Christian Church, families, and individuals in America today. Pastors, worship leaders, trained musicians, and believers in general face new and powerful forces of change -- forces that bring renewal to some churches and fear and schism to others.**

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**No one can sidestep the hot debate between such matters as the various styles of music, hymns versus choruses, seeker services versus worship services, choirs versus worship teams, organs versus synthesizers, and flowing praise versus singing one song at a time.**

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**As we ask ourselves why all this controversy, it may very well be that a lack of biblical understanding is a major contributor to this adversarial experience (Eph. 4:13). It seems that many have not really thought through the biblical theology and principles pertaining to this matter of music. Many have used a proof texting approach of incorporating the Scriptures, without the benefit of addressing God's Word exegetically and allowing the text to dictate belief and practice.**

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**Hence, they are predominately deriving their musical belief and practice predominately from personal man-made preference, taste, traditions, and culture, which in many cases they have elevated to the level of the authoritative God-made Scriptures and make it a test of fellowship.**

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**Hopefully, the church will exercise diligent study of the more than six hundred passages in the Scriptures that will gradually define this issue of musical belief and practice in more biblical terms based on solid exegesis of God's Word.**

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## The Centrality of Worship

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**Six principles that help us understand worship as our ultimate priority and privilege.**

### ***I. Worship is an Action Verb.***

**The difference between a biblical and pagan understanding of worship lies in the difference between a verb and a noun.**

**– Ben Peterson**

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**A. The meaning of the original words for worship in the Bible.**

**1. Proskynein**

pros – “towards”

kynein – “to kiss”

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*David Peterson* – “...from earliest times the compound verb in Greek literature expressed the widespread oriental custom of casting oneself on the ground, as a total bodily gesture of respect before a great one, kissing his feet, the hem of his garment or the ground.”

*Psalm 95:6* – Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

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It would be wrong to conclude from this analysis that a particular posture or gesture is somehow essential to true worship. The culturally accepted way of responding to great ones and benefactors in the ancient world became a means of acknowledging the power and grace of God. But the Old Testament makes it clear that faith, gratitude and obedience are the essential requirements for acceptable worship.

– *David Peterson*

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**2. Latreuein**

“labor or service”

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*John Frame* – Worship in Spirit and Truth – In the context of worship, these terms refer primarily to the service of God carried out by the priests in the tabernacle and the temple... we can see that worship is far different than entertainment. In worship, we are not to be passive, but to participate.

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**B. The meaning of our English word.**

From the Anglo Saxon word  
worthscipe – tied to worthiness

*John MacArthur* – The Ultimate Priority – Worship is ascribing to God His worth, or stating and affirming His supreme value.

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**C. Definitions**

*Frame* – The work of acknowledging the greatness of our covenant Lord.

*Peterson* – An engagement with God on the terms that He proposes and in a way that He alone makes possible.

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*Wiersbe* – The believer’s response of all that they are – mind, emotions, will, and body – to what God is and says and does.

*MacArthur* – Honor and adoration directed to God.

Our innermost being responding with praise for all that God is, through our attitudes, actions, thoughts, and words, based on the truth of God as He has revealed Himself.

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**II. *Worship is a Lifestyle.***

**III. *Worship is a Priority.***

*verse 23* – for such people the Father seeks to be His worshippers.

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***John MacArthur* – The objective of redemption is making worshippers. The primary reason we are redeemed is not so that we may escape hell—that is a blessed benefit, but not the major purpose. The central objective for which we are redeemed is not even so that we might enjoy the manifold eternal blessings of God.**

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**In fact, the supreme motive in our redemption is not for us to receive anything. Rather, we have been redeemed so that God may receive worship—so that our lives might glorify Him. Any personal blessing for us is a divine response to the fulfillment of that supreme purpose.**

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***IV. Worship Must be Passionate.***  
**“in spirit”**

***V. Worship Must be Intelligent.***  
**“in truth”**

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***John MacArthur*** – The worship that occurred on Mount Gerizim was enthusiastic heresy. The worship offered at Jerusalem was barren, lifeless orthodoxy. Jerusalem had the truth but not the spirit. Gerizim had the spirit but not the truth. Jesus rebuked both styles of worship when he said, ‘God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.’

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The two enemies of true worship are Gerizim and Jerusalem. Sincerity, enthusiasm, and aggressiveness are important, but they must be based on truth. And truth is foundational, but if it doesn’t result in an eager, excited, enthusiastic heart, it is deficient. Enthusiastic heresy is heat without light. Barren orthodoxy is light without heat.

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***VI. Worship Must Be Christ-Centered.***  
I who speak to you am He.

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