

## Back to the Basics of Worship

“There was this husband and wife who were getting ready for bed and the wife was standing in front of a full length mirror taking a hard look at herself.

And she says, ‘You know dear, I look in the mirror and I see an old woman. My face is all wrinkled, everything else is either sagging or bloated. I’ve got fat legs, and my arms are all flabby.’

And so she turns to her husband and says, ‘Tell me something positive to make me feel better about myself.’

So the husband, he studies hard for a moment thinking about it and then says in a soft, thoughtful voice, ‘Well, there’s nothing wrong with your eyesight.’

Services for Russ Ortman will be held Saturday morning at 10:30 AM at Racine Memorial Chapel...Female friends of the family are invited.”

Now folks, how many of you guys would say that ol’ Russ there just kind of messed up his relationship? Uh huh, big time! Usually the funeral service gives it away! Okay, and praise God he was trying, he tried to give a compliment, but what was the problem there? His so-called compliment turned out to be a **major detriment**, didn’t it? And folks, believe it or not, I see this same kind of thing happening to Christians all the time. Only it’s not in their earthly marriage, okay maybe a couple of them, it’s in their spiritual marriage with Jesus Christ! And it’s not when they say the wrong compliment. It’s when they consider spending time with God a “**detriment**.”

Can you believe that? No wonder their walk with Jesus Christ looks like a funeral service!

**And so that's the obvious question,** "How in the world did it ever get that way? How did it ever become a detriment to spend time with God, the Creator of the Universe? It didn't start off that way, right? I mean, when we first got saved, we couldn't wait to spend time with God, we longed for God, we really loved God, right? And so that's the question is, "How did it ever get like that?" Well folks, what I've learned over the years is it's simply this...when we **lose sight** of what we have in Jesus Christ, what He died on the cross for...**a beautiful loving intimate personal relationship with the Creator of the Universe.**

And folks, I'm telling you, when we lose sight of that, all of a sudden, just like that, overnight, your once loving vibrant walk with Jesus Christ, just turned into dry, stale, stupid, boring, man-made religion called Churchianity. Not Christianity...Churchianity! And as we've been seeing folks, this is a deadly horrible disease! It's rotten! Once you get infected with that thing, you start crying out one of two things. "Help! I'm a Christian and I can't grow up!" or "Help! I'm a Christian and I'm dead as a stump!" You ever been there? Yeah, **unfortunately** it happens all the time!

Therefore, to stave off this deadly horrible disease called Churchianity, we're going to continue in our study called, **Back to the Basics**. And what we're doing is **revisiting** all the **Basics of Christianity** but this time, we're doing it **through the eyes of a relationship**, a loving relationship, a personal relationship with God Almighty the Creator of the Universe! And so hopefully we can recapture the **right motive** for doing what we do as Christians **and this time...stay there!**

And last time we saw **first basic thing** we need to get reacquainted with through the eyes of a relationship was **The Basics of Prayer**. And there we saw that prayer wasn't something mystical or magical that only a select few super duper spiritual people know how to do. No! It's just having a normal heartfelt conversation just like you'd have with any other person only this time your audience is with God! You don't need to cram in as many words as possible, or go through a list and you certainly don't need to speak in Shakespearean English! No! **It's just a normal conversation with God**. That's it! And once we realize this, we're finally on our way to getting rid of this goofball Churchianity stuff, This dry, stale, stupid, boring, man made religion stuff, amen?

But that's not all. The **second basic thing** of Christianity that we need to get reacquainted with through the eyes of a relationship is **The Basics of Worship**. But don't take my word for it. Let's listen to God's.

**Revelation 4:1-11** "After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this. At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with Someone sitting on it. And the One Who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne.

Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God.

Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, Who was, and is, and is to come.

Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to Him Who sits on the throne and Who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they were created and have their being."

Now folks, according to our text, when somebody encounters the actual presence of the Living God, be it angelic being or even a human

being, what is the natural instantaneous response? They **worship** Him, right? I mean, what did it say there? They fall flat on their face, they cover their eyes, and they worship Him in reverent awe, right? And people, the Bible is clear. The greatest way we can worship God is with our **life**, but one aspect of our lives that I want to focus on today is worshipping God with our **mouth!** I.E. singing praises to God. You know, what we call **worship time!** Do you ever wonder why we do what we do? Well, here it is. People, one of the ways we can **show** an attitude of worship to God is by singing! With music and songs! This is why we have a **worship time!** And that's what I see in this text! What were they doing? They weren't just **standing there** in worship to God. They weren't just **staring there** in worship to God. But they were what? They were **saying something there** in worship to God! "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty. Who was, and is, and is to come. You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by Your will they were created and have their being, right? **All heaven was busting out in praise and adoration of God,** right?

And so here's the point. Surely that's what we're doing down here on earth, in our worship time, right? I mean, praise God, we're getting ready for heaven now! When we get an opportunity to praise God here on earth with

music and song, we're busting out with praise and adoration at the top of our lungs, along with the angels and the redeemed, right? Eeeench! Wrong answer! Folks, let's be honest. For most of us, when it comes to the time when we're supposed to be singing praises to God, you know worship time, during the Church service, it's about as lively and exciting as a morgue tour! And maybe it's just me, but that's not quite how I envisioned the angels singing before the throne room of God, in Revelation Chapter 4, you know what I'm saying? But seriously folks, when it comes to "worship time," singing praises to God, isn't that our attitude? You know, just going through the motions, staring at the bulletin, not really putting our heart and soul into it as if we really were dead?

Therefore, let's get **Back to Basics!** Let's revisit this topic of worship, i.e. singing praises to God **but this time** through the eyes of a beautiful loving intimate personal relationship with the Creator of the Universe! And let's dispel this goofball Churchianity stuff once and for all!

And the **first basic question** we need to ask ourselves if we're going to dispel this goofball Churchianity stuff is, "**Why Do We Worship?**" Let's take a look.

**Revelation 5:6-14** "Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He went and took the scroll from the

right hand of him who sat on the throne. And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people.

And they sang a new song, saying: You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.

Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they were saying: Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever! The four living creatures said, Amen, and the elders fell down and worshiped."

Now folks, can I simply translate what I believe what the Apostle John is trying to say here in response to the question, "**Why do we worship God?**" Let me see if I can be as blunt as I can...**BECAUSE HE'S WORTHY!!!! Are you crazy!** Folks, after all God's done for us and Who He is, and the fact that He's saved us from eternal damnation in hell and He didn't have to but He did, and He did it by dying a horrible gruesome death on the cross, **for our sins** that we're **committed against Him!** Who in the world wouldn't want to sing to Him, right? No wonder every creature in heaven and earth and under the earth is busting out in praise to Him, right?

Therefore, here's the point. **He is worthy** of our **best songs** from the **best of our heart** and He deserves the **best introduction** we could ever devise. Get up on your feet, and show your love for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Ruler of the Universe, the Lamb Who is **worthy** to open the scroll, and was slain before the creation of the world, so we could be forgiven, loved, and accepted by God, forever, and ever, and ever, and ever, amen! Why do we worship God in songs and praise? Because He is worthy people! After all He's done for us...He is worthy! And once we realize this, it's kind of hard to sing like we're in a morgue, you know what I'm saying? That's what gets rid of this goofball Churchianity stuff, amen?

But that's not all. The **second basic question** we need to ask ourselves if we're going to dispel this goofball Churchianity stuff is, "**What is Worship?**" Well believe it or not folks, it's not that hard to understand, **if** you're not suffering from Churchianity. If you look at it through the eyes of a relationship, it makes total sense. First of all, the word **worship** comes from a the Greek word "proskuneo." It means literally "to kiss the hand, or fall upon the knees as an expression of profound reverence." Or to put it in simpler terms, Crone translation, in the context of a relationship, **worship** is

simply **having a daily passionate love affair with God**. That's it! Nothing more. Nothing less.

And one of the ways we express this passionate love affair with God is through music and singing. And people, this is why the Bible is big on music and singing! We have 150 chapters alone in the Bible just on music and singing. They're called the Psalms! The word "psalms" in the Hebrew is translated "praises." From the Greek translation it denotes, "the plucking or twanging of strings." In fact, the later rabbis called this section in the Bible the "Book of Praises" not the "Book of Psalms" and they're right smack dab in the middle of the Bible, which I don't think is by chance. That's tells me that singing and music **must** be a profound way we can show worship to God because there's a hymnbook or praise book right in the middle of the Bible!!! Hello! Do you get it?

And again, this makes total perfect sense when you look at it **through the eyes of a relationship**. Just like when we are in love with somebody down here on earth, we can't help but sing and make music in our hearts to them, right? And so people, this is why we sing songs during a Church service! It's an opportunity to take these songs that the worship team plays, and sing them back to Jesus as a love song. Isn't that amazing?

And the good news is, anybody can do it! I didn't say you were good **at it**, I said you **can do it!** This is the beauty of God's wisdom and this is why you don't need to be some "secluded monk" or a "super duper singer" in order to worship God. No! Anybody can sing! God did not say if you want express your passionate love affair love with me then...**go build a house!** He didn't say that! And praise God, because my worship would stink! Just ask my wife! I couldn't build a shed if I wanted to. No! Praise God it's **not** the Book of OSHA that's in the middle of the Bible, it's the Book of Psalms, praise songs, get it? God picked something we could all do and that was **sing!** In fact, let's take a look at one of those songs we can sing.

**Psalm 150:1-6** "Praise the LORD. Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty heavens. Praise Him for His acts of power; praise Him for His surpassing greatness. Praise Him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise Him with the harp and lyre, praise Him with timbrel and dancing, praise Him with the strings and pipe, praise Him with the clash of cymbals, praise Him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD."

Now folks, according to our text, I hope this isn't going to be a difficult question to answer in response to our question, "What is worship?" but apparently, according to the Psalmist, we're to praise God, **one** for Who He is and what He's done. **Two**, we're to praise Him with just about kind any musical instrument we can find, be it the trumpet, the harp, the lyre, with strings and pipes and even cymbals. And **Three**, we're to be jubilant

and excited about it even to the point where we might even be of dancing out in praise about it, right? Exactly!

And so here's the point. Surely, that's what we're doing when it comes time to worship God in our **worship time**, right? I mean, surely this is how we're expressing our daily passionate love affair with Him, right? We're praising Him with every musical instrument we can find, and we're totally excited and jubilant about it, right? Are you kidding me folks? Let's be honest, sometimes our so-called celebration service looks like a funeral service. Hello! And folks, the reason why I think we do this is because of one of two things, which I believe are both side-effects of that horrible disease called Churchianity.

The **first side-effect** is **We Act Like it's Illegal to Get Excited about God!** Excuse me? People, that's not what I just read about in the Psalmist! They were all excited and jubilant and dancing around praising God, right? That's a little bit of excitement. So how can that be illegal if that's our example? Besides, those that say you can't move a muscle or show any excitement in a Church service are the first once who will raise their hands and give other people high fives if they make a basket in basketball, they'll scoot around like a dancing machine if they make a hole in one in golf, and they'll scream and shout like a mad man if someone from their favorite team

makes a touchdown in football. Now in the south, we call those people **hypocrites!** Hello! You can't move a muscle, you can't clap your hands, you can't shout out and get excited praising God, but you can do that over things that **are not worthy of worship?** I'm not saying draw attention to yourself or roll around on the floor, don't misunderstand me. But there's nothing more exciting than getting excited about God!

But that's not all. The **second horrible side-effect** of Churchianity is **We Act Like it's Illegal to Sing a Different "Kind" of Song to God**, like these people.

"An old farmer went to the city one weekend and attended the big city church. He came home and his wife asked him how it was.

'Well,' said the farmer, 'it was good. They did something different, however. They sang praise choruses instead of hymns.'

'Praise choruses?' said his wife. 'What are those?'

'Oh, they're OK. They are sort of like hymns, only different,' said the farmer.

'Well, what's the difference?' asked his wife.

The farmer said, 'Well, it's like this. If I were to say to you: 'Martha, the cows are in the corn' well, that would be a hymn. If on the other hand, I were to say to you:

'Martha, Martha, Martha,  
Oh Martha, MARTHA, MARTHA,  
the cows, the big cows, the brown cows, the black cows  
the white cows,  
the black and white cows,

the COWS, COWS, COWS  
 are in the corn,  
 are in the corn, are in the corn, are in the corn,  
 the CORN, CORN, CORN.'

Then, if I were to repeat the whole thing two or three times, well, that would be a praise chorus.'

The next weekend, his nephew, a young, new Christian from the city came to visit and attended the local church of the small town. He went home and his mother asked him how it was.

'Well,' said the young man, 'it was good. They did something different however. They sang hymns instead of regular songs.'

'Hymns?' asked his mother. 'What are those?'

'Oh, they're OK. They are sort of like regular songs, only different,' said the young man.

'Well, what's the difference?' asked his mother.

The young man said, 'Well, it's like this. If I were to say to you: 'Martha, the cows are in the corn' well, that would be a regular song. If on the other hand, I were to say to you:

'Oh Martha, dear Martha, hear thou my cry  
 Inclined thine ear to the words of my mouth  
 Turn thou thy whole wondrous ear by and by  
 To the righteous, inimitable, glorious truth.

For the way of the animals who can explain  
 There in their heads is no shadow of sense  
 Harkenest they in God's sun or His rain  
 Unless from the mild, tempting corn they are fenced.

Yea those cows in glad bovine, rebellious delight  
 Have broke free their shackles, their warm pens eschewed  
 Then goaded by minions of darkness and night  
 They all my mild Chilliwack sweet corn have chewed.

So look to the bright shining day by and by  
Where all foul corruptions of earth are reborn  
Where no vicious animals make my soul cry  
And I no longer see those foul cows in the corn.’

Then if I were to do only verses one, three and four and do a key change on the last verse, well that would be a hymn.”

Now folks, does that sounds familiar or what? I call it **worship wars!**

And here’s the point. Who cares what kind of song it is as long as it glorifying to God, right? Whether it’s a hymn or contemporary, so what? The style of music is secondary! Isn’t that what the Psalmist said? Just praise God from the heart with just about any instrument you can find? Uh huh! So that means there’s going to be different kind of music styles, hello!

And for those of you who think is has to be a hymn, **do a history test**. The first hymns we’re warmed over bar songs and caused a ruckus in the Church. They were considered too rocky! And for those of you who think it has to be contemporary, **do a lyrics test**. Most contemporary songs today are so gutted of the Name of Jesus that one wonders if they’re just singing about their boyfriend! **The point is this**, don’t get hung up on the mechanics!

I learned this one time when I attended a small tent meeting that was a part of an internship I was doing. Helping them to organize tent meeting crusades. And as I entered through the tent flap, I saw about thirty or so people clapping and singing along with the worship team who were at the

back of the tent. There was a guitarist, a bassist, drummer, and keyboard player. They all “sounded” really good. One might even say that they were “rocking” the place. Everybody was really “getting in to it” singing and clapping. You could tell that everyone was “enjoying” the music.

Then one song finished and instead of the guitar player leading out the song, it was turned over to the keyboard player. He had his eyes closed as they began an energetic intro to the next song. Then he began to sing. But he didn't just sing. He sang off key. And not just one key. It was more like three or four. But the “band” played on. Soon, many of the people began to snicker and look at each other trying their best to hold back their laughter. I must admit, I was trying to refrain from “busting a gut” too. But the Lord was about to teach me a profound lesson.

The longer they continued to play, the louder and seemingly more off key the keyboardist got with his eyes still closed. I stopped laughing and watched him intently. I noticed that he was in another world. It was him and his Lord and he was “getting into it.” Then I realized that it wasn't so much his voice that was pleasing to the Lord as it was the expressing of his heart to God through the song. In one of those “mystical” moments, I made an individual choice to “join” him regardless of his voice still being off key.

And you know what? It worked. I entered in and joined him in worshipping God.

And I realized that day that each time we gather together for our “time of worship” that each of us has an individual choice to make. Will we come to be “entertained” or choose to express our hearts to God through the instrumentality of songs regardless of whether it “sounds great” or gives us “goosebumps?” Those who came to that tent meeting seeking to be “entertained” received their reward in full as they continued in laughter. But the “band” and recently myself were deeply ministered to by God Almighty. I went away spiritually satisfied and inwardly changed. The others went away seeking a better source of “entertainment.” Later I found out that the keyboardist was blind physically but obviously not spiritually. The Lord used him to show me that I was blind spiritually although I could see physically.

And so I ask you. How about you? Are you still blind to the true purpose of worship? Do you think it’s illegal to get excited about God or that it all about you and it has to be the particular style of music you happen to like? Then maybe you need to get back to what true worship of God really is. Singing a love song to Him, no matter the music, no matter the style, in an attitude of worship, praise, and adoration.

People, the Bible is clear. The primary purpose of music, according to the Psalmist, is whatever “kind” it is, it’s to be a love song to Jesus Christ, from the heart! That’s what worship is people, and once you realize that that’s how you dispel this goofball Churchianity stuff, amen?

But that’s not all. The **third basic question** we need to ask ourselves if we’re going to dispel this goofball Churchianity stuff is “**How Do We Worship?**”

**Ephesians 5:17-20** “Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Now folks, according to our text, if we’re going to be wise Christians and not a bunch of fools, then we not only need to be **not getting high on liquor** but we need to instead be under the control of Who? The **Spirit of God**, right? We need to be under His control, not alcohol! And apparently, one of the ways we’re encouraged to do that, to be filled or under the control of the Spirit, is by what? Singing songs to God, right? And notice it wasn’t just **different styles** of music but it was what? It was music **from the heart**, right? Why? Because we have a relationship with God, not some dry, stale, stupid, boring religion! And the songs we sing are to be a way of expressing our **daily passionate love affair with Him**, right?

And so that means the **first way we do not** sing to God is as a **Source of Entertainment**. And to help illustrate the foolishness of doing this in our personal relationship with God let's look at it through the eyes of another personal relationship, a marriage. I'm going to act like I'm singing this song to my wife Brandie in an entertaining fashion and you tell me how it sounds.

"I gave my love a chickennnnnnnnn that had no bowowowowone. I gave my love a cherryyeyeyeyeye that had no stooooooooone! Thank you thank you. Thank you very much."

Now that was pretty goofy, wasn't it? Oh, I was singing to my wife alright. But I wasn't really singing praises for her. No! What was I doing? I was entertaining for the **praises of others**. So folks, what do we think we're doing when we do that to God? I mean do we think He's more impressed with a **song from Hollywood** or a song from our heart? Just who are we singing for anyway?

But that's not all. The **second way we do not** sing to God is as a **Source of Ritual**. For instance, what if I were to sing to my wife as if just going through the motions in complete mindless boredom? Oh, I'd be singing alright. But it's not from my heart, is it? No! I was just performing a boring ritual. So folks, what do we think we're doing when we do that to

God? I mean do we think He doesn't know the difference? Do we actually think He's pleased with **a boring ritual**?

But that's still not all. The **third way** we **do not** sing to God is as **A Source of Me-Ness**. For instance, what if I were to sing a love song to my wife like this.

"I'm so in love with how you make me feel. I need to be near you so I can be more in love with the way I want my life to be. I know you love me and it makes me glad, so glad that my emotions are filled to the top. My excitement can hardly be contained. My life, my life, my life, what would I be without you energizing my life!"

Now that was pretty goofy, wasn't it? Oh, I was singing **to** my wife alright, but it had **nothing to DO with my wife!** It was all about me and me this and me that, and me me me, right? So folks, **here's the point**. What do we think we're doing when we do that to God? Who's the love song for anyway?

But that's still not all. The **fourth way** we **do not** sing to God is as **A Source of Silence**. For instance, what if I were to sing a love song like this to my wife.

The music starts and then song begins.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 ....."

Now that was pretty goofy, wasn't it? Nothing but silence. Oh, I was standing there in **position** to sing and had music playing in the background,

but what? I never **did** sing! Some love song, huh? So folks, **here's the point**. What do we think we're doing when we do that to God? We stand up, we're in the position, but we just stare at the words or look around and nothing comes out of our mouth? What kind of love song is that? I love you Lord so much that I'm not going to say anything at all!!! Nice **love** song, huh? I wonder how that makes God feel when we do that?

People, if we're ever going to dispel this goofball horrible disease called Churchianity, it is high time that we in the Church get back to singing to God from the heart like the Bible says. And so I ask you, when was the last time you sang a song like that to Jesus? Not so much from the **talent** perspective but the **heart** perspective? I mean, isn't that how it **should be** after all He's done for us? Singing from your heart, with all your might, in deep adoration and praise like the angels and the redeemed?

And people, here's the point. If you're reading this today and you're suffering from this horrible wretched disease called Churchianity and worship to you has become something dry, stale, stupid, and boring, then I've got good news for you. It doesn't have to be this way! You see, sometimes before you can move forward in your walk with Jesus Christ, you just need to get **Back to the Basics, the Basics of True Worship**. Singing a love song to Jesus Christ from the heart in a daily passionate love affair with

Him, in response to all He's done for us. That's what'll cure the disease.

Amen?

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To find the way to God, to understand the *truth* of God's Word, and to received the gift of eternal *life*, begin by repentance and faith through a prayer like this:

“Dear God, I understand that I have broken Your Law and sinned against You. Please forgive my sins. Thank You that Jesus suffered on the cross in my place. I now place my trust in Him as My Savior and Lord. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.”

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