

## Worship: God Transforms

*Lecture Transcript*

- Father God, thank you for an opportunity to teach, to study, to learn, to consider. And God as we come into the subject of worship, I pray Holy Spirit that we could see things a bit more from your perspective. Sometimes we think that we have hobbies, we have culture, we have a job, we have lifestyle, we have life choices. But God from your perspective those are all worship decisions. And so help us to gain something of your perspective on our life so that we could live our life to worship you in Jesus name. Amen. All right, first lecture tonight is going to be, "Worship God Transforms." And the big idea is that God doesn't need worship but we do. God's perfect, has no need. You and I are imperfect, we're in process. And worship is the means by which God transforms us. And He allows us to worship Him because He loves us. And as we worship Him, we become more like Him. Just to start with a big perspective on worship. Worship is not a Christian thing it's a human thing. Worship is not a Christian thing it's a human thing. Every human being worships and the only difference is who or what or where or how you worship. So if you worship money, maybe your church is work. And you're always there making a sacrifice of your health and your life and your time to get your god of mammon. So all of life ultimately is a series of worship decisions. When I was in India some years ago, I remember I landed, I was a young man I was going out to teach at a pastors conference. And it felt like we went back in the National Geographic. There's people plowing fields with ox. There's no running water. There's no indoor plumbing. Most of the people don't have electricity. And as we're walking into the village there's all these little huts that are dedicated to local gods. And they're covered with blood and chicken feathers. And they all were offering sacrifices to pagan deities. And I was like, "This is crazy," witchdoctors. We get to the conference and I met a pastor's wife, they'd walked a long distance to get to the training event. And I asked her, well, she asked me first she said, "Have you ever been to India before?" I said, "No, this is my first time." And I said, "Have you ever been to the United States?" She said, "I went once." I said, "Oh, do you think you'll ever return?" She said, "No, I couldn't handle all of the idolatry in America." And we're standing next to a shrine to a demon god with a dead chicken. And I'm thinking, "What the heck?" She says, "No, no, those stadiums are bigger than any churches and those malls take more time and money and energy than any church." And she said, "Boy, the way that people worship celebrities and they go to concerts and sporting events are the center of their lives." She said, "It all seems very religious to me." I thought I'd never really thought of it that way. 'Cause in our culture, we're like that's sports, that's entertainment, that's shopping. But from a counter-cultural or a cross-cultural experience all of a sudden you see it as people who are devoting their time, energy and money to someone or something. Because it's the highest priority in their life, which is worship. And so we worship our way into trouble and we worship our way out of trouble. Worship doesn't happen just in the church. And it's not just a form of music though it includes those things. Let me start into the series of questions. What is worship? Romans 11:36 to 12:1 "To Him," it's God, "be the glory forever more, amen." "I appeal to you therefore brothers "by the mercies of God to present your bodies "as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." What's worship? Well, you look for the glory. And glory means weightiness, heaviness, preeminence, prominence. Who or what is the most important thing in your life? And if it's not God then there's a problem. And the problem is when a good thing takes God's place. That's usually the problem. So you hear people who even love the Lord they be like, "We live for our kids." No, no, no, no, no, no, your kids are great. But live for the Lord with your

kids don't live for your kids. It's a shift of priority. It's a shift of emphasis. It's an inversion of God's intention. And so the first question is, what is the most weighty, heavy, significant important, vital part of your life? And then, what do you make sacrifices for? What do you give your money to? That's a sacrifice. What do you give all your time to? That's a sacrifice. What do you give all your energy to? That's a sacrifice. And this is how we realize that not just Christians worship non-Christians worship as well. For some people it's work. For some people they worship at the grocery store. For some people they worship at the bar. For some people they worship at the beach. For some people they worship at the stadium. And they're making massive sacrifices for that which is the most important thing in their life. And then it says this in Romans 1:25, "They exchange the truth about God for a lie "and worshiped and served the creature "rather than the Creator who is forever blessed, amen." So what Paul is saying there is, everybody either worships the Creator or the created. And the created can be you're addicted to sex and you worship the human body. Or you're addicted to alcohol, which is something that is created. Or you're addicted to some sort of devastating lifestyle or strange philosophy or spirituality all of which is manmade. Or you worship the Creator. This is all of humanity, worship the Creator or worship the created. And what God wants us to do is to worship Him as Creator. And then we can enjoy and steward the things that are created as gifts from God. So food and drink and sex and recreation and leisure. All of those things can be done to the glory of God. And in so doing, we have them in their right place so they don't destroy us. And that's God's intention for us, is to worship Creator not created. Next slide, please. Next question is how is worship war? And we looked early on that there are two kingdoms. The kingdom of light, God's kingdom, the kingdom of darkness. And I need you to see that when we make lifestyle choices and decisions it's voting for a king and a kingdom, okay? So we see this with Jesus in Matthew 4:8-10, "The devil took Him to a very high mountain, "showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory." Satan is the prince of the power of the air He has some measure of dominion until Jesus returns over the nations. And so he shows Jesus, "Here's my kingdom. "Here's all the people, things that I have. "This is all that belongs to me." "And he said, 'All these I will give to you if you fall down and,' what? 'worshiping me. 'Worship me.' "Then Jesus said to him, 'Be gone, Satan! for it is written you shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.'" Here's the way that it works. When we make decisions, we're either worshiping Satan in his kingdom or we're worshiping God in His kingdom. And that's why sinful temptation is spiritual. And it's also choosing to worship God in that moment is an act of war. What's happening here is there's God in His kingdom and Satan in his kingdom. And here is Jesus. And he's either gonna worship Satan and his kingdom or God the Father and His kingdom. And in choosing obedience and holiness, what Jesus is doing is He is declaring spiritual war on that which is counterfeit and that which is corrupt. And so you and I, when we make decisions in our life ultimately we're inviting the Holy Spirit in or the demonic in. We're inviting God's presence down to be with us. Or we're walking away from God's presence in our life. And that's why it's really important. Especially for those of us who are parents or given the honor of being parents. To teach our kids to worship God and not just obey our rules. Because ultimately we want them to see the decisions you're making are even much bigger than your parents. It's your relationship with God. And it's either serving God and His kingdom or it's serving Satan and his kingdom. So as you make your choices, make your choices for the right king and kingdom. Next slide, please. Who worships God? And I'll give you some categories. This may surprise you, but God is not only worshiped God is a worshiper. God worships. I'll give you from John's Gospel here, talks about Jesus with God the Father in John 17:5 and Jesus is praying, "And now, Father, glorify me

in your own presence." And worship is all about that, the presence of God. It's being in the presence of God. "Father glorify me in your own presence "with the glory that I had with you before the world began." What Jesus says is, "The Father and I in eternity past we lived in mutual glory." We live in mutual glory, that's worship. To glorify is to worship. God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit are all worshipers. They continually unceasingly are outpouring. They're loving and serving and honoring and valuing one another constantly. That's what worship is. So to be made in the image and likeness of God means that we are made as worshipers. Worship is not something that starts and stops it's our whole lifestyle. Worship is not just what we do worship really is who we are. And so everyone is living to glorify someone or something or to pour themselves out. Because we are made in the image and likeness of God. And God is a worshiper. So this is where this concept of the Trinity that we looked at early on, it's really helpful. They're a worshipping community of loving friendship, that's God. All right, so what is worship? Well, it would include love and community and relationship and affection and devotion and appreciation and adoration and consideration. All the things that the loving character of the Trinity has are the aspects which make a good worshiper. Number two, the divine counsel worships in heaven. So God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit they glorify, honor one another. They worship one another. And then we looked at the divine council is angels which are probably lower levels spiritual beings and messengers. Then there's some other divine beings, the sons of God as well as some creatures you'll meet here. And this is all in heaven. And so this is pulling back the curtain and it's seeing what is going on in the unseen realm. "I was in the Spirit," He says. And again, that's the key to worship. It's being in the Spirit. It's being in the presence of God. It's being in the will of God. "I was in the Spirit and behold a throne stood in heaven with one seated on the throne." Who's that? There's God, there's Jesus. "From the throne came flashes of lightning and rumblings and peals of thunder." I don't know for sure but this sounds a lot like a worship event to me. John's in the first century he's never seen a screen or lighting or heard a subwoofer. And he's like, "I went into heaven and wow! It really was quite a production." Sometimes people will say things like, "Why do we need to have production?" God has production. God has sound. God has light. God has smoke machine. I mean, that's what it says. So those people who would say, "That's not godly." Well in heaven, you're gonna be really bummed when you get there, the sound's gonna be loud. The lights are gonna be blinding. The smoke machine will be billowing and you will be complaining, which is not worshipping. "From the throne came flashes of lightning and rumblings "and peals of thunder. "And before the throne were burning seven torches of fire "which are the seven spirits of God." Those are angels. Those are some sort of divine being. "And before the throne, there was as it were a sea of glass like crystal." So right now in God's presence, around the throne of Jesus are angels, sons of God, other divine beings they're worshipping God. That's happening right now. You need to know that that's happening constantly. So when we enter into worship, we are participating in a worship event that is unceasing and we're just joining their worshipping. So God worships. Angels and other divine beings worship in heaven. And they're doing so presently. Number three, departed Christians worship in heaven. Right now, you and I all know people who passed away and they loved Jesus. What are they doing right now? They're in God's presence. They're experiencing God in glory and they're worshipping. It says it this way, Revelation 4:9-11. Again, it's a picture into the unseen realm. It says, "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day." heaven opens up and he gets to peer behind the curtain What's going on in the presence of God. "Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor "and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, "who lives forever and ever. "The 24 elders," those are human leaders. Some would say maybe it's the 12

tribes of Israel and the 12 disciples possibly. But these human leaders, "Fall down before him who is seated on the throne "and worship Him who lives forever and ever. "They cast their crowns before the throne saying, 'Worthy are you our Lord and God to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things and by your will they existed and were created.'" They're worshiping God because He is their Creator and they were created to worship their Creator. And once all their sin is gone and their life is over and our eternal life begins. These human leaders literally fall down. They take the crowns off their head and everything is to the glory of the one seated on the throne. One of the words in the New Testament for worship literally means to kiss the feet. In that day, if you came before your king you would take your crown off. You would get down on your knees and you would kiss your king's feet to honor him. But ultimately our king is Jesus. And there's a day coming for the children of God where we'll see Jesus in full, unveiled, complete and total glory. And what we're going to naturally do is kneel, bow, praise. That's why we do these things as a worshiping people right now. Because these are the things that we'll be doing together in the presence of God forever. And so right now, Christians departed saints are worshiping God in His presence right now. Now, I just want that to encourage you 'cause if there's somebody you've lost that loves Jesus, they're having a really good day. Today's a really good day for them. Some years ago, grandpa Gib, Grace's dad passed away. Loved the Lord, was a pastor. I love thinking, okay, he's there with the divine council, the presence of God in the throne room of God getting to hang out with Jesus who he loved more than anybody. That's amazing. That's so comforting. And it means that the next time we see him we'll be there worshiping Jesus all together with him. Which is why for the Christian, death as Paul will say is gain. To live is Christ to die is gain. It's an upgrade. It's an improvement. It gets better. And now how about spirit filled Christians on the earth worship. So God worships, the angelic and other divine beings worship, departed saints worship and on earth Christians worship. "But the hour is coming and is now here," Jesus says in John 4, "when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth." And I believe that's the Holy Spirit and truth. "For the Father is seeking such people to worship Him. "God is spirit," that's the Holy Spirit, "and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." The Holy Spirit, He is literally the capital L worship leader. Okay. He is the perfect worshiper. God the Holy Spirit has been worshiping the Son and worshiping the Father for all eternity. And when the spirit of God takes up residence in the child of God, He leads us in worship. He teaches us how to worship. And so for some of you who are new Christians this is a new experience for you. I can still remember as a new Christian I go to church and they're singing, okay. I've never gone anywhere and sang before. I'm not in a culture where all the men go to soccer matches and sing. I played football. My team never sang. We didn't do that. I'm not in the band. Okay, I need to learn how to sing. People are raising their hands. Well, I guess this is the universal sign of surrender. I guess that's what we're doing today we're singing and surrendering. I didn't know any of that. But the Holy Spirit wants you to learn and grow in that. And the deeper and more intimate your personal relationship is with the Holy Spirit the easier it'll be for you to approach a lifestyle of more continual worship. To where I worship at church and I worship at home. And that can include singing. It can include recognizing God's presence. It can include obedience. We'll look at all the things that it can mean. But it's a lifestyle in the spirit not just something that starts and stops. And He says this in Philippians 3:3, "We worship by the spirit of God." That's how worship happens. And so the key really to worship is everyone being submitted and surrendered to the Spirit. And then worship is what He will produce as the capital L worship leader. And so ultimately just to summarize, God worships. Divine beings worship. Human beings in God's presence worship. And also we on

earth get to worship. And here's what I want you to know that God sees and knows those who are worshipping Him. It doesn't say that the Father is seeking worship. He's seeking what? Worshipers. He's seeking you. He's seeking you to be a worshiper of Him. And when you respond in worship the Father sees that and He knows that. One of the great throne room scenes in Revelation talks about the prayer and praise of the people of God. It ascends into the presence of God like incense. So when we're worshipping God, I believe that there are spirit beings that are present among God's people. Each of the seven churches in Revelation is said to have an angel who is present as a member and divine leader of that church family. And as we worship I believe that there are unseen beings, angelic beings that are involved and invested in the church. I believe the Holy Spirit is present. And I believe when the people of God are in the presence of God singing the praises of God that would be one of my definitions of worship. So the people of God in the presence of God praising God. When that happens, because of the Holy Spirit we are connected to the unseen realm. They're singing, we're singing. They're praying, we're praying. And God receives it all as worship simultaneously. There's something profound that happens when people are worshipping in the presence of God. That's why sometimes there is healing, supernatural breakthrough, divine things happen. Because now we're participating in the presence of God and the kingdom of God. And we're living in the power of the Spirit of God. And so, when we sing, just know your voice goes to the ceiling but your soul goes to the presence of God. And He receives that. So what is Christian worship? There's a classic definition here in Hebrews 13:15-16 where it talks about adoration and action: "Through Him then let us continually," Worship is continual. Worship is something that happens when we get together and when you go home. It happens with how you treat each other in the car on the way to church and how you respond to God in church. And then how you treat others who don't know how to drive on the way home from church, right? It's adoration and action and it's continual. "Offer up a sacrifice of praise to God. That is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name." This can be speaking good of God. Which is why we don't take the Lord's name in vain. It's the opposite of that. This can include talking about the Lord. This can include praying to the Lord. This can include singing to the Lord. All of that is sacrifice of praise from the lips. "Do not neglect to do good," there's the action, "and to share what you have "for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." So this would be my definition of worship. And this is a new one for me. And 10 years ago, when I wrote the first edition of the "Doctrine" book, I'd been teaching through books of the Bible for about a decade. Well, I've added another decade to that. And what I am finding is that I'm learning more about the Holy Spirit and worship and the supernatural and the presence of God. And so I'm learning a lot more and it actually is really exciting for me. And it's really encouraging to worship God and to invite God's presence into my marriage and into our family and into our church. So that we're living in the presence of God, we're living by the power of God, we're living to the praise of God. And it can be more of a continual lifestyle. But Christian worship, and this is to juxtapose it with non-Christian worship. In Christian worship, Romans 1:25 is worshipping Creator not creation. Christian worship is private and public. Some people are like, "Why didn't you go to church to praise God?" God says don't forsake the gathering together. We worship together publicly. We worship alone privately. There were some dear saints here in the church recently that told me, they're like, "We didn't know you could sing outside of church." "Let me just tell you, you can, okay. You can." They said, "We didn't know that." They're new to learning some things in the Bible. They said, "But it's really fun to sing to God even when you're not in church." And you know what? It is. It's good to sing. Even if you've got a bad voice, still good to sing. And so this couple is singing to the Lord together. They're singing in the car,

they're singing at home. They're putting music on and they're singing. I said, "What's that doing for your relationship?" "Oh my gosh! This is really fun and we love the presence of God and we feel connected at the soul." Two people worshiping invariably grow closer. Because their souls are being knit together in the presence of God. So it's private and public. So the decisions you make when no one is looking those are worship decisions. The behaviors you have when others observe that's also worship. It's public and private and it's God glorifying. That's 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whatever you eat or drink or whatever you do do it all to the glory of God." So it's for God's glory, not ours. Internal adoration and external action. The internal adoration is the heart that God sees. Isaiah says: Jesus quotes, "These people worship me with their lips but their hearts are far from me." That's where they have external, not internal. And God cares about both. God wants the internal, the heart, the soul, that seat some center of your being to know him, love him. And out of that adoration internally we'll go in action externally. So when you serve someone, you love someone, you're generous to someone, you unburdened someone, you forgive someone, you bless someone. That's all action externally that's coming out of adoration internally. And some people will say things conversely like, "Well, you can't judge my behavior, you don't know my heart." I do because it's out of the overflow of the heart that the mouth speaks. Guard your heart it is the wellspring of life. A good tree bears good fruit and a good person brings goodness out of their heart. And so ultimately the behavior we see is guided by the internal condition that God sees. And worship is both of that. Which means sometimes worshiping God can involve singing and it can involve rejoicing and demonstration. We'll deal with that in a moment. Sometimes it's just a confident heart that says, "I trust the Lord." "Doctor says it's cancer and I might die. But you know what? In here I trust the Lord." Sometimes it's just very internal, it's very personal and it changes how we behave externally. Internal adoration and external action by the spirit. Some people are like, "I just have a hard time worshiping." Well, you need to ask the Holy Spirit to teach you to worship 'cause He knows how to worship. And He wants you to learn how to worship. And He would love to teach you how to worship. It's by the Spirit through the Son to the Father that our prayer and our praise, our adoration, our action the Holy Spirit is in us. Jesus is our mediator, 1 Timothy 2, between us and God. And ultimately when we worship, it is by the Spirit, through the Son, to the Father. That's why Jesus says the Father is seeking worshipers. Those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth. While we're worshiping the Father Jesus is the mediator telling us how to do that. And it's by the person, the presence, the power of the Holy Spirit. There is a teaching called cessationism that says that the way that the Holy Spirit operated in the first century is not the way that He operates today. I would disagree with that. And I would tell you this is why I believe churches that don't really appreciate the fullness of the ministry of the Holy Spirit tend to be weak on passionate worship. I've talked to some of these guys, I go to their church like, "How come nobody raises their hands?" They're like, "Well, we raise our hands in our heart." You have hands in there? I didn't... No. It's external action, which is passion and enthusiasm. And let me just say in a day, in an age, in a world where people do a lot of weird things. I'm not saying that we wanna be the weird Christians but today just being a Christian makes you weird. You go to church, what the heck? You read an old book? You wear a belt? You're single, you shouldn't wear a belt. Now that's a worship decision. I'm gonna offer my body as a living sacrifice. You're gonna sing? Yeah, I'm gonna sing. You're gonna pray? Yeah, I'm gonna pray. I'm going to clap. I'm going to kneel. I'm that guy. If people, and I see this too grown men, 70,000 strong in a stadium will jump out of their chair and cheer because one guy took a dead pig over a chalk line. If we can buy season tickets, buy the jersey, tailgate paint our faces, show up, stand up, scream for three hours because

the dead pig crossed the chalk line. Then resurrection of Jesus should be something that we don't feel so bad getting a little excited about.

- [Congregation Member] Amen.

- Right? So what is a worship look like? Here, I'm talking in large part about the external. And I've got all the scriptures in there. I got plenty of Bible verses for you but let me just run through it. It's heartfelt internally. How many of you just in the presence of God in the worship of God, you're like, "God is doing surgery on my soul?" He's healing some things. He's changing some things. He's revealing some things. And that's where there is life in the presence of God it's heartfelt. But it's also holy forms externally. You can read in the Old Testament over and over God says, "These are how the pagans worship their demon gods, you don't worship me like that." So we don't worship in a way that works for us we worship in a way that works for Him. Because He's the object of worship. And this is where sometimes in church people will be like, "I didn't like the worship." Well, it wasn't for you. We didn't wake up and say what would glorify you and sing praises in your ears. Because to me music has some to do with worship but the heart has more to do with worship. And even if you don't like the music, if your heart is tender toward the Lord you can still worship. And I've been in worship events. I was teaching at a conference in Mexico to thousands of men. I didn't know any of the words 'cause I don't speak the language. But my soul and their soul were both in the presence of God. It was internal. And God did something supernatural in the presence of those men. So I don't need to understand the music. At one point, they brought out a mariachi band and I was like, "Surely, the Holy Spirit can't flow through this." And some guys are on the keys and they are dancing. And I'm like, "Okay, here we go." It felt like your birthday where they bring out a sombrero and take your photo. But they love Jesus and they were filled with the Spirit. And they were excited and they were celebrating according to their culture. And even though that wasn't my genre of music that was my Lord. And if my heart is in a good place I can worship with all kinds of God's people and celebrate their freedom to enjoy the presence of God. But this includes holy forms externally. So for example, we believe in interfaith relationship but not interfaith worship. So if you're Buddhist, Jewish, Baha'i, Muslim, Sikh, Jehovah's Witness, Mormon I believe in interfaith friendship. I'd love to get to know you but not worship. Not worship 'cause you worship a different God in a different way. And my God says I should only worship Him and worship Him in the ways that He sees fitting. There is always this desire to take what God creates worship and to have a counterfeit. Which is either worshiping the wrong God or worshiping the right God in the wrong way. So we worship God the way that He tells us that He wants to be worshiped. Because He's the one in authority. But this can include a prostrate face down. You need to know that sometimes this is just a good place to be. And it is disciplining of the soul. There are times in the Bible, when people come into the presence of God and they go face down. Why don't we sometimes do this in church?

- [Congregation Member] You can't get back up.

- Well, you can't get back up. Some of us are at that age where getting back up will take a forklift or a crew. But why else sometimes do we not have a demonstration?

- [Congregation Member] It's embarrassing.

- It's embarrassing. What are people gonna think of me? And the point is also it's about you. So everybody's here and you're the center and you're the object and you're the focus. It's not what will they think of me, what will they think that I think of Him? And think about this but in 1 Corinthians 14, Paul says, "The word should be preached and God should be praised. "And the unbeliever will come in and be convicted and say, 'Surely God is in your midst.'" Some years ago, I wanted to learn about Islam. So I looked for the guy who actually believed it. Like gets down on his rug three times a day, makes the pilgrimage for Ramadan, goes to Mecca. I don't agree with any of it. But I wanted to learn about Islam so I'm gonna pick the guy who actually believes it and practices it. If you and I will believe and practice as we invite other people, they may or may not receive Jesus. But they'll see people who really do believe in Him. And there's something that's compelling in that. I can still remember the first time I went to church as a new Christian. And everybody opened their Bible and the pastor just taught right from the Bible. Great man. And I remember thinking, "These people all believe that book." That was okay. I don't know if I believe that book but I probably should read that book. They believe it, right? If you carry a Bible, if you worship, if you pray if you devote your life to the Lord. I guess what I'm saying is that we should be less concerned about what other people think and more concerned with who we become. Okay? This can include dancing. I'm not gonna do it for you 'cause I love you. But some people are demonstrative. Clapping, cheering, right? We do this all the time, right? Somebody of honor walks in our room we clap. You may now kiss the bride. Jesus is alive. Yay! These are all good things. This includes reverence. Sometimes when we're in God's presence we need to remember that He's our Father. That doesn't mean that we cower in terror but you honor your Father in heaven. It's a reverence. I was at a worship event when I was a college director and a guy who got up and he was very cavalier about the Lord. He literally said, at one point he said, "Yeah, when I saw Jesus on the cross I was thinking He's got great abs." I was like, "Whoa, Whoa, whoa, whoa, that's inappropriately irreverent as you are supposed to be leading us in worship." He was young. He was immature. But at the end of the day, it's like, no, that's not respectful, that's not reverential. And I think part of reverence in our culture it's counter-cultural. Because we live in a completely irreverent world. Nobody has any regard or reverence for anyone or anything. Hallowed be thy name, we do honestly believe God is God. And he's worthy of reverence and honor and respect. This can include bowing. And it happens in the Bible where some people, especially in Eastern cultures where more of a Western culture. But if you travel in an Eastern culture bowing is a way of honoring and deferring. And so those physical demonstrations are in the Bible. Also kneeling. Sometimes this is done on one knee. Sometimes this is down on two knees. And sometimes the body needs to reflect the heart and the soul of the worshiper. So if you're surrendered in here it's good to be surrendered out here. One of my pastors, he's a wonderful man that I love very much. First time I went to his church, I was a friend and a guest. We're in the front row. It's one of the biggest churches in America. He gets down on his knees face down and he is singing and praying and weeping. And I just thought, "Well that's a guy I wanna hang out with." He knows God and he loves God from the heart very genuinely and he worships God. And I just thought, what a good thing that a pastor in the front row would be like, "Hey, worship starts here." It was good and it's encouraging. How many of you if you came home and your spouse or your kids, they're kneeling, they're singing, they're in God and you're like, "Yay! That's so much better than Fortnite, right?" Just a little leaking from my heart. This can include laying on of hands, praying for people. And sometimes the presence and power of the Holy Spirit is transferred through the laying on of hands. So sometimes in

church it's literally let me pray for you. Sometimes it's let me just welcome you. This can include lifting hands. What I always say is, here's a Presbyterian, here's a charismatic, here's a Pentecostal, right? And people walk into a church and the one of the first questions is what can I do with my hands? We actually had a family here at the church recently they're new. And we had the kinda meet the pastors welcome. And I said, "Do you have any questions?" And there she's like, "Well, I have one." I said, "What is it?" she's kinda shipped, she said, "Are we allowed to raise our hands?" Allowed to raise our hands! You get to raise your hands. "Yeah," I said, "Well, yeah, the Bible says to raise your hands, so yes." She said, "Well, our last church the band was singing, I closed my eyes." And she said, "I don't usually do it but I raised my hand and they took me outside and told me that was not permitted." I was like, "You got disciplined for worshipping?" "Wow! I'm sorry to hear that." These people are gonna be really frustrated in heaven. These people walking around like, "Put your hands down! Put your hands down! Put your hands down! Put your hands down!" This gonna be a full-time eternal job for these people. This includes sometimes just falling down. You're in the presence of God or you're overwhelmed by grief and the body responds. This can include playing musical instruments. And the Bible talks a lot about instruments and musical instruments. And so it includes songs and songwriting. And the Bible talks a lot about new songs. So, as God shows up in powerful presence among His people they write new songs to talk about the new things that God has done in their life and in their midst. So there's always new songs that God the Holy Spirit is anointing. And sometimes he'll take certain songs and they become anthems for the whole world. Some people will say, "Oh, isn't it sad that now we've got sort of Christian music." I was like, "There's something really cool about like millions of people around the world all singing the same thing to the same person." Sometimes the unity of the church in worship is greater than at any time. Because we're all singing that same song but the same person filled with the same spirit. And that's how we have unity as the people of God. It includes singing loudly. And I love the fact that the Bible doesn't require you to sing on key, I appreciate that. What I lack in skill I make up for in volume. I just do sing loud. And the hardest thing is to get men to worship. 'Cause men are emotionally stunted compared to women. Or I should say emotionally constipated. And also men don't wanna do anything that sort of makes them look weak or submissive or surrendered. That's what worship is. That's what worship is. And men who's saying it's good for their soul. It's good for their soul. It includes a standing, standing in this, how people worship God. We didn't actually have chairs in the church until the more modern era. The ancient church largely stood. This can include sitting down, shouting amen. Which means, yes Lord. It's agreement. I'll never forget the one church I was college director at. It was multicultural church, African-American pastor. I was a college director and there was one lady I called her the Amen lady. 'Cause every sermon she'd be like, "Amen. "Amen. "Amen." I was like, "I like her and if I ever get to preach, I'm gonna take her with me. I love that lady." 'Cause there's a little positive feedback, there's a little response. And next thing you know people in the congregation are like, "Amen, praise the Lord." And you're like "Hey, you're agreeing that's good to know." How many of you are parents and you've got your kids and you're teaching them and you're like, "Could you please give me any feedback?" Like, "Is this making any sense, do you agree?" "Yes." That's our way of giving feedback and agreement. It can include serving others with your spiritual gifts. And also the giving of tithes and offerings. All of that is worship. And there's more but those are just some examples. So let me pick up that last theme. And I wanna deal with stewardship as an aspect of worship. And the question is, how do we worship with our wealth? Our money says, "In God We trust" it should say, "In this god we trust," the god of mammon. And my point is we either

worship our wealth or we worship God with our wealth. And sometimes the greatest test of worship is your wallet. I always say the last thing to get saved is your wallet. It's the last thing to get saved. Jesus says it this way, "No one can serve," that's a worship term, Matthew 6:24, "two masters, for either he will hate one and love the other "or he'll be devoted to the one and despise the other. "You cannot serve God and money." What He's saying is money is a series of worship decisions, wealth, resources, assets. You're either going to worship your wealth or you're going to worship God with your wealth. And this is really, really, really critical because some people will say like, "Why does God wanna get the money out of my hands?" He doesn't, He wants to get the idol out of your heart. And the money in your hands has just exposed the idol in your heart. If this matters most to you, you've forgotten about your greatest treasure. That's your relationship with the Lord. He uses this language in Philippians 4:18. Paul is away, If I remember correctly, he's in prison. And the church has been generous. And this man, Epaphroditus has brought the gift to Paul from the church. He says, "I have received full payment and more. I am well supplied having received Epaphroditus the gifts gifts you sent," that's financial, "a fragrant offering, a sacrifice and acceptable pleasing to God." He says you were generous and that was worship. You were generous and that was worship. And so generosity and stewardship is in fact part of our worship. I wanna talk about this briefly. Fully 25% of Jesus teaching is on finances, wealth, possessions, investment, 25%. I've found just looking it up over 800 scriptures in the Old and New Testament talking about wealth, finances, possessions, investment. Your wealth is everything you have to manage, right? Your wealth includes your real estate. It includes your income. It includes your credit. It includes your possessions. And I want you to think about investing your life. The average person lives about 27,000 days. So you've got 27,000 days to spend. The average person in their life will spend about \$2 million. So you've got \$2 million of decisions or more to make. And the average person will speak 400 to 800,000 words in their life. Women more to eight and men four. I would be in the millions. That's just me. But then you start thinking about, how do I have my words be part of my worship? How do I take my time and it's an act of worship? How do I take my wealth and it's an act of worship? And so there's three ways to see your life and possessions. One is selfish. What's mine is mine. People that hold this mindset they're not generous. They tend to hoard. They're stingy. What's mine is mine. I've met people that were very wealthy. Didn't spend anything, hoarded all their wealth. And even as their kids and grandkids struggled they gave them nothing. It's what's mine is mine. Stealing is what's yours is mine. You have it, I should have it. Sometimes we do this through stealing or taking or demanding or voting in politicians who will. There is this entitlement mentality in our culture and that is, "If you have things, I should have it." So I'm gonna vote for somebody to take it from you and give it to me. That's why we have such a debt crisis in our culture because it's a heart issue. And then there's stewarding. And stewarding is this, what's mine is His. It's His, I kid you not. I drove in today in my Jeep and I wasn't even thinking about the lecture. I got out of the Jeep and I literally said out loud, "Lord Jesus, thank you for letting me drive your Jeep. If you would let me ride on your bus that would be great. But the Jeep is even better. I'm grateful." Hey Jesus, thanks for letting me stay at your house. Thank you for letting me wear your shoes. Thank you for letting me get stuff out of your fridge. Right, like, "Hey, thank you." It's an attitude of gratitude. And it's realizing everything that I have it comes from, belongs to the Lord. And the steward then says, "How do I take what is the Lords and invest it wisely?" How many of you do investing? You're people that are working in the financial services. Or maybe you've got a real estate portfolio. Or maybe you're a controller at your work. And you're trying to figure out how do we invest the best?

That's a steward. But it's recognizing that it's ultimately God's resources that you're stewarding and investing. And so let me hit this quickly on Christian stewardship. There are, I think it's four things that I think are mindsets and habits and attitudes to worship God with your wealth. Number one, I belong to Jesus Christ, okay? This was my salvation verse, if I have one. Not exactly sure when I got saved but I know the time that something in me came to awareness. I was a freshman in college. I read this sitting on my dorm bed and literally it was like God flipped a switch in my soul. You also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. The first thing is, Jesus I belong to you I don't belong to me. The Bible says, "You were purchased by a price so honor God with your body, you belong to Him." Number two, everything I have belongs to Jesus Christ. "The silver is mine, the gold is mine," Haggai 2:8, "declares the Lord Almighty." So people are like, "That's my money." God's like, "Actually, it didn't start with you that came from me." And some people will say, "Well, what about all my possessions or my assets?" Psalm 50:10, "Every animal of the forest is mine and the cattle on a thousand hills." God looks down at creation and says, "That's mine. That's mine." And He gives a portion of it to you to be a steward of it. Number three, everything I have is a gift from God. 1 Corinthians 4:7, "What do you have that you did not receive? "And if you did receive it "why do you boast as though you did not." What He's saying is everything's a gift. Life is a gift. Breath is a gift. Friends are a gift. Car is a gift. Job is gift. House is a gift. I mean, it's all a gift. And what this allows us as the children of God is to cultivate really an attitude of gratitude. We have a little saying at our house when the kids were little. It was, it's better than hell. That was a little saying at our house. Mom be like, "We're having fish for dinner." "I hate fish!" "It's better than hell." 'Cause that's what we deserve, hell. We got fish. Fish is way better than hell, be grateful. So kinda my attitude is I have earned hell that's what I deserve. Everything else is a gift. So even if it's a bad day, it's not a bad day in hell. So it's a good day. Number four, excuse me, back. I'll read the Deuteronomy text as well. "You may say to yourself," Deuteronomy 8, "My power, strength of my hands "have produced this wealth for me." You don't understand, I went to school, I worked hard I made sacrifices, I started a company. I pulled myself up by my bootstraps. God's like, "But remember the Lord your God is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth." If you have intellect, He gave you that mind. If you have work ethic, He gave you that strength. If you had opportunity, He provided that opportunity. And God's saying, "I'm for you but don't forget me. I'm for you but don't forget me." And then number four, I wanna manage Jesus' resources wisely. 1 Peter 4:10, "Each of you should use "whatever gift you've received to serve others "as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." What He's talking about here is when you receive gifts from the Lord, that's grace. And then you can be a means of grace stewarding it. I'm gonna give this to the Lord. I'm gonna give this to them. I gonna give this to my family. It's being a steward of those resources. And so, the question then comes, why should Christians give generously? And He says this in John 3:16. Number one, God takes our worst and gives His best. Some people are like, "Why should I give?" Because God's a giver and God's a forgiver and God wants you to be a giver and a forgiver. 'Cause that's how you worship, is by reflecting the character of the Creator. It says this in John 3:16, the great end-zone verse you all know it. "God so loved the world," that He what? Giving is a way of loving. If you give time, that's love. If you give money, if you give encouragement if you give blessing. If you give hope, that's love. Love is sometimes what you feel but ultimately love is what you do. How do we know that God loves us? He gave. He gave us His best. "He gave His one and only son "that whoever believes in Him shall not perish "but have eternal life." Here's what I want you to see. I had a guy come up to me some years ago he's like, "Well, how much does God want me to give?" I said, "100%." He's like,

"100%?" I said, "Of your sin." He's like, "Oh, okay." How many of you're like, "100% of sin, I'll give you that." And then he said, "Well, how much of my money does He want?" And I said, "Well," we had a little conversation I'll get into it in the moment. I said, "Well, how about 10%?" He's like, "10%?" I said, "You'll give Him 100% of your worst and you struggle to give Him 10% of your best? Why is it that we can give sin easy, money less easy. It's hard issue. It's a worship issue. Number two, your wallet is God's scalpel for heart surgery. Jesus says, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be." Some people will be like, "As soon as I get my heart straightened out I'll deal with my wallet." No, no, no, your wallet will expedite the change of your heart. I found this with married couples. Sometimes married couples will go into a cold war and you meet with them and they're making no progress. Do something, "Okay, I'm gonna refer to you a counselor and it's gonna be \$200 an hour." They're like, "\$200 an hour!" Yeah. You're you're gonna make some quick changes. I promise you that, right? You'll be like, "I'm tired of writing this check. I forgive you. Let's move on." Your heart goes where your wallet is if you give money toward your family your heart is toward your family. If you give your heart toward ministry your heart is toward ministry. If you give towards someone who is suffering your heart goes in empathy toward them. Number three, first fruits grow faith. "Honor the Lord with your wealth "and the first fruits of all your produce," Proverbs 3:9. We live in a day where it's almost impossible to give God your first fruits because the government has put themselves upstream in the waterfall. I learned this first time I got my first paycheck. My first job, it wasn't the full amount. It said FICA. I was like, "Well, there's a new F word I just learned here." If I should have said it that way. But I was like, "FICA? Who's FICA? And why does he get a portion?" Oh, that's federal tax. So the government doesn't allow you to even choose whether or not you will give. God does 'cause God wants your heart not just your money. And some people would be like, "I can't give to God." Give first. That's what first fruits is, first and best. Number one, it prioritizes your spending in lifestyle. If you're like, if I give to the Lord first, that means God first in my finances. Now all of my other decisions are stewarding His money and He gets what's first and best. And it grows faith in me that if I will steward what he has given me, He can continue to provide for me. And it grows faith. Grace and I learned this as brand new Christians. I got saved in college and we were college broke. And there was a school loan that we didn't know that had been defaulted on in Grace's name. So I'm married, college broke, 21, got nothing. Get a multi thousand dollar bill in the mail and have a complete heart attack. And I was like, "Oh my God! Babe we can't afford this. We don't have this in the budget." And so the next Sunday she's like, "Hey, how much do you wanna give in tithes and offerings?" "Give? No, when the bucket comes by I think we should pay off this college loan." "The Bible talks about the poor that's us, babe we're the poor." She's like, "No, no, no, we give first fruits." I was like, "First fruits? I got no fruit. What are we talking about?" She's, "No, we give to God first. It's an act of worship." And I kid you not, the bucket goes by and I put \$100 bill in the bucket. and it went away and I had a heart funeral. It was like, that's a lot for me. At that point, we would go to Pizza Pipeline for lunch because it was 99 cents for a pizza, a slice of pizza and a drink. That's what we could afford for a date. I eat there so much. The phone number is 509-332-1111 I graduated from college in the early 90s. I ate so much of that pizza, I still remember the number. But we were just broke. And then what happened that week, I kid you not. We got up one morning, we lived down around back of this downstairs apartment, very small. We heated it with wood 'cause we couldn't afford the heating bill. And I kid you not, somebody put \$100 bill underneath our door. I came to Grace I was like, "I have never had anyone put \$100 under my door." She says, "That's the way that the Lord is confirming to you that you need to trust Him." And I was like, "Okay,

well I do, glad we learned that lesson." Next week she's like, "What are we gonna give?" I was like, "Hey, I thought we learned our lesson." We gave another 100 bucks. I kid you not at a Bible study that week with our pastor who was a dear man, he came up to me said, "I was praying for you and Grace this week and I feel like I'm supposed give this to you." Opens his wallet, hands me \$100 bill. I was like, "Wow!" He's like, "Does that make any sense?" "Yes." God is saying it's mine steward it, trust me. It's mine steward it, trust me. It was a massive faith lesson for me as a new Christian. Grace already knew it 'cause she'd grown up in a Christian home. Last couple, you can not take it with you but you can send it ahead. Nobody takes their stuff to heaven. But if you're a good steward, you're sending it ahead. How many of you moved here and you sent your stuff ahead? "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth "where moth and rust destroy "where thieves break in and steal. "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven "where neither moth nor rust destroys "and where thieves do not break in and steal." Can't take it with you but you can send it ahead. Number five, giving is a blessing. I love this line, it's quoting the Lord Jesus the only time it appears in the Bible Acts 20:35. "It is more blessed to," what than what? "Give than receive." There's something called prosperity theology that says if you give God will bless you. We don't believe that. We believe giving is the blessing. How many of you when you've given God just awakens a joy in you? How many of you are grandparents? Grandparents? So let me just ask a question, Christmas comes, you got your grandkids a present they got you a present. Are you more excited to open your present or watch them open their present? You're more excited to watch. That's why we give gifts to kids. We like to see the expression on their face. It produces joy in our heart. Giving is a blessing. It's a blessing to give. And those who understand the blessing of giving what they live, they live a lifestyle as a generous person. So let me just say this. If you can give your money, you can give your time. You can give your heart. You can give your words. You can give your service. If I can get people to take the posture of a giver they can become a forgiver 'cause forgiving is a form of giving. In addition, if you're a giver, you're gonna be a better spouse. You're gonna be a better friend. You're gonna be a better parent. You're gonna be a better child. Because it is giving that is life-giving and it brings life into the relationship. And so I just need to see giving is a blessing. And it is a blessing to give. And what this means is nobody has joy that is equal to God. Because no one has given like God gives. I believe giving is a blessing, God is generous. God is blessed and wants us to share in His blessing. I'll give you an example. I'm long in off notes. When we first moved here, my youngest son, my kids are generous I praise God for that. They actually all are givers and they're generous. And they tithe to the Lord and all of that. He went to school and was in school for a few weeks. And we went in for the parent-teacher conference, my youngest son. And she said, "Do you know that he always carries at least 20 bucks on him?" Did not know that. She said any kid who forgets his lunch money he buys him lunch. She said, "For two weeks I've watched your son just buy different kids lunch. I went home and I was like, "Hey, little buddy. I heard you're the ATM here at the Christian School." He said, "Yeah, dad, I noticed some kids sometimes they'll forget lunch or they'll forget their lunch money. I just look for opportunities to meet the need." Wow! that the world would have people who are looking to help, looking to meet the need, looking to be a blessing. Last question then is this, should a Christian tithe? A tithe literally means 1/10. People are like, "I tithe 3%." It's tenth. You can't buy three. It's like you pregnant or you're not. It's a yes or no. Tithe is 10%. In the Old Testament, 10% tithe was given to the Levites for ministry. So that was their local ministry, their version of the church. And there were other offerings for such things as religious celebrations, helping the poor. The total giving amount was around 25%. And it's hard to get an exact number

because in agrarian society, you're given your livestock or your field harvest. It's a little less precise than our accounting sometimes with dollars. In the New Testament, the focus is on giving and you could look at 2 Corinthians 8:9. That whole section is on giving and generosity. The focus on giving is cheerful, sacrificial and regular. It's cheerful, right? God loves a cheerful giver. But it's sacrificial. He says that it's proportionate to your income. Unlike a ticket to a sporting event where everybody pays the same price. Giving for the Christian is proportionate according to your income. If you make more you give more. And here's what I need you to know statistically, people who make more give less. Percentage wise, the more you make, the less you give. Statistically. Sometimes it is people who are poor and have very little that give a higher percentage of their income. Maybe because they're doing life with people that have needs that are greater than their own. So there's some sort of compassion toward them. And then the New Testament often asks for more by the spirit than it does by the letter of the law. Some people say Old Testament was tied New Testament is not. That doesn't mean that it's less. It may mean that 10% is a floor and not a ceiling. I'll give you an example. The Old Testament says, "Don't commit adultery." The New Testament says, "Or commit adultery in your heart." Oh, lots of whole another level of expectation. Old Testament says, "Don't murder anybody" And Jesus says, "Don't murder their reputation with your words." Okay. Well, the New Testament is superseding the expectations of the Old covenant. Maybe because we have the power of the Holy Spirit and we're capable of more. So I don't like to set a number. People will say, "Well what percentage?" That's a good question to ask the Lord. And when you've resolved that, then give that. My wife and I, there's every year we pray about a percentage and we put it in the budget. And then we also do additional things for needs that come up and external ministries. And God's always been really faithful because Grace has a spiritual gift of giving and that's gotten into our children. And I didn't intend to do this but I'll just close with a story. We even put in the budget when the kids were little money for them to give away. They would give away their own money to the Lord and missions and ministry. But we would even set aside a portion of the budget and we'd tell the kids, "Look for visible needs to love and serve people." And so, I'll never forget, my daughter, Ashley she was really little maybe like 10 or 11 or something. She came home and she's like, "Dad, I need an attorney." I was like, "Well, what have I done? This cannot be good. What do you need an attorney for honey?" She said, "Well, you know that mom and her daughter that are in my school and they came to the church and they became Christians. Her dad was paying child support. And now her dad got an attorney and says he's not gonna pay child support. And instead he's gonna sue for custody to take the daughter." She said, "So my friend is really anxious 'cause her dad's a mean bad man. And she wants to live with her mom but her mom will totally go broke unless her dad continues to give the child support." I said, "Okay, so what happens?" So she said, "I looked at my friend and I said, 'You need an attorney.'" That's what Ashley tells her friend, her little friend. These little pigtail girl's having this conversation at the Christian recess at the school. "Well, you need an attorney." "My mom can't afford an attorney." Here's what Ashley says, "I'll pay for it." She's like, "What?" She's like, "Yeah, we have a fund and we look for needs and I have access to that. So I have authority to fund the attorney." So Ashley comes home she's like, "I need an attorney." I was like, "Okay." I get a call from the mom she's like, "Yeah I heard your daughter's paying for my attorney." "She is." She did. And they won their case and she got to stay with her mom. It was a blessing for my little girl. I want her to learn to give. Because ultimately our God is a giver and God blesses through His generosity. And it's a blessing to be generous.