



In this Growth Series, we will explore an activity common in most church gatherings: singing songs of worship. To be clear, worship is far more than just singing songs, but rather a lifestyle of enjoying God and living in such a way to celebrate His goodness through our actions. We will build a framework to understand worship, and how to honor God in all aspects of our lives—which includes singing songs in church or Christian gatherings.

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## DISCUSSION #1: THE FOCUS OF BIBLICAL WORSHIP

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In this discussion we will unpack the focus of biblical worship and the “why” behind our worship that is so important.

### MY STORY | Starting Place

In your life, when have you been obsessed with an object or experience? What drew you to that? What “needs” did it fulfill for you?

### DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

Read Deuteronomy 5:6-10, Revelation 4:8-11, and Revelation 7:9-12. Deuteronomy is the beginning of God’s directing His people toward living in relationship with Him, and the Revelation passages are a picture of the worship God continually receives in heaven.

Make a list of key observations of the focus of worship.

What do these passages teach us about the nature of God?

What happens in the heart of God when He is rightly worshiped?

What do these passages teach us about a right response to Him as created beings?

While this might not be addressed directly in the passages, what do you think the benefits are for created beings when they submit to and worship the God who created them and provides for them?

## **GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship**

Generally speaking, how does gratitude toward God express itself in your life? Through singing? Prayer? Silence? Testimony/telling others?

What is the most natural expression of gratitude to God for you? Why?

What is the most difficult expression? Can you discern why?

How has your relationships with others enhanced your gratitude, or worship of God?

## **MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action**

Attend a weekend service and focus your attention on simply giving to God through worshiping Him. Fine-tune your attention exclusively on responding to His goodness, and responding with your thoughts, posture, and the songs you are singing.

## DISCUSSION #2: WORSHIP GONE WILD

In this Growth Series, we will explore an activity common in most church gatherings: singing songs of worship. To be clear, worship is far more than just singing songs, but rather a lifestyle of enjoying God and living in such a way to celebrate His goodness through our actions. We will build a framework to understand worship, and how to honor God in all aspects of our lives—which includes singing songs in church or Christian gatherings.

Though created to respond to God's goodness in worship, humanity has a choice to what and how they worship. As a result of the fall, and apart from God's intervention, people will worship themselves, their experiences, or objects that promise them joy, satisfaction, and purpose. We will unpack this tragic truth in this discussion.

### **MY STORY | Starting Place**

Our world has no shortage of stories of people whose passion or obsessions go to unhealthy extremes. What story comes to mind when you think of someone whose passion went WAY beyond healthy?

### **DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application**

The Bible teaches that humanity's rejection of God's authority in Genesis 3 sent tremors of discord throughout creation and history. Romans 1:19-25 picks this up reality as it pertains to worship.

Read Romans 1:19-25

Discuss the progression of humankind's movement away from God-centric worship. What was our action, what was God's reaction?

The passage states that our worship went from God to *"images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things"* and eventually to *"the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves"*.

Why do you think our worship goes to these places (our hearts and our bodies) when our focus is taken off God?

If Romans 1:19-25 isn't bad enough, it gets worse as you read on to verse 32.

What additional observations about sinful human tendencies do you make of our non God-centric worship?

How do you see these played out in history and modern culture?

Why do you think our depravity went so quickly to our sexuality?

What does it say about the human heart apart from union with God?

## **GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship**

The human heart was created to worship. When we remove God from the central place of our worship, humankind has no limit to the objects to which we will surrender to in order to receive that which we think will satisfy us.

Discuss a time in your life when you lived in “worship” of someone or something.

What was the attraction to that thing? What was the promise you were chasing?

What did you “offer” or give to that person or thing?

What did you receive in response to offering yourself to it/them? Did this object of worship deliver on what it promised. Explain.

What were the residual effects of that experience?

## **MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action**

Spend some time pondering where your heart and mind easily go. What do you think about when your mind is free to go where it wishes? Where do you spend your time & money? Is this, in some way, an act of worship? How might you be seeking satisfaction from this in a way that God longs for you to find that security in Him?

# DISCUSSION #3: WORSHIP IN NATURE

In this Growth Series, we will explore an activity common in most church gatherings: singing songs of worship. To be clear, worship is far more than just singing songs, but rather a lifestyle of enjoying God and living in such a way to celebrate His goodness through our actions. We will build a framework to understand worship, and how to honor God in all aspects of our lives—which includes singing songs in church or Christian gatherings.

In this discussion we will look at the ramifications of humanity’s broken worship and the effect it had on all of creation.

## **MY STORY | Starting Place**

As you look at creation, or “nature,” do you see it evolving (getting better) or devolving (getting worse)? What are some specific realities to support your belief?

## **DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application**

Romans 8:19-25 gives a clear picture of the effects of our sin, and broken worship, on God’s created order. Read this passage and discuss the ramifications.

What do you think the author means by creation in this passage? Is it specifically the environment, or could it mean more: possibly culture, nations, etc?

What is the current state of creation?

What is creation longing for? What do you think that looks like today?

Psalm 148 is all about creation’s active worship of God.

Read this Psalm and discuss...

How do the words of the psalmist synchronize with what Romans 8 shared about the groaning of creation?

How does creation worship God? How can humanity reconnect and worship God along with creation?

## **GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship**

Consider a time you were moved by a beautiful place or an experience with creation.

Did it move you to worship, or gratitude to God? What did that look like?

What emotions did it stir up in you? Joy, loneliness, hope, sadness? Why?

What deeper longings does the beauty of creation stir in you?

## **MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action**

Spend some time this week in quiet awe of creation. Find a place to simply stare at a beautiful tree, or the front range, and take notice of what happens in your heart. What thoughts and words of gratitude does it stir in you?

# DISCUSSION #4: WORSHIP RESTORED

In this Growth Series, we will explore an activity common in most church gatherings: singing songs of worship. To be clear, worship is far more than just singing songs, but rather a lifestyle of enjoying God and living in such a way to celebrate His goodness through our actions. We will build a framework to understand worship, and how to honor God in all aspects of our lives—which includes singing songs in church or Christian gatherings.

In this discussion we will explore worship restored. Specifically we will unpack the work of Jesus and how, through Him, we can once again worship God in the way He intended.

## **MY STORY | Starting Place**

Share a time when you received really good, potentially life-changing news.

## **DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application**

In a previous discussion we unpacked the devastating effects of humanity turning away from God. This is found in Romans 1:19-32, if you want to revisit that heartache.

The good news is that God did not leave us there! Jesus came and, through laying down his own life on the cross, cleared our great offense and reconnected us back to God. Read Romans 3:21-26 to unpack how Jesus' atoning work is transferred to us after we experience saving faith..

List and discuss the imperatives in this passage. What does Paul explicitly say about humankind and the love of God?

A big spiritual debate is if humanity is merely spiritually sick, or completely dead apart from the work of Jesus. What do Romans 1:19-32 and 3:23-26 teach us in this regard? Why is the answer such good news?

Romans 12 is the hinge of the book of Romans. As much as Romans 1 tells the story of humanity's rejection of God and how we submitted our bodies to various forms of debase worship, Romans 12 tells us, "*by the mercies of God...*" we are to do something specific with our bodies. What is that? Read all of Romans 12:1-2.

Contrast the "offering our bodies" in this passage to ways human beings offered their bodies in rejection of God in Romans 1:19-32.

The rest of Romans 12 & 13 lay out specific examples of an appropriate lifestyle of worship for those who have responded to the "mercies of God." Skim these chapters and make note of the specific actions they outline.

## **GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship**

Of all Jesus accomplished for you, what are you most thankful for?

How do you express gratitude for that? How would you be different today if you had not experienced being reconciled with God through Jesus?

Psalm 116:1-14 is a beautiful expression of gratitude for all that God has accomplished for us. Read this passage and discuss all that God's salvation has accomplished for us. These verses culminate in v.12-14 following the question, "What shall I render (or give) to the Lord for all His benefits to me?"  
What do you think the author meant by a fitting response to God's goodness?

### **MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action**

Spend some time this week re-reading the above passages and all that God has accomplished for you. Decide on a practical way that you can respond to God with gratitude for His grace and mercy—perhaps by showing grace and mercy to someone this week.

# DISCUSSION #5: HEART OF WORSHIP

In this Growth Series, we will explore an activity common in most church gatherings: singing songs of worship. To be clear, worship is far more than just singing songs, but rather a lifestyle of enjoying God and living in such a way to celebrate His goodness through our actions. We will build a framework to understand worship, and how to honor God in all aspects of our lives—which includes singing songs in church or Christian gatherings.

In this discussion we will begin unpacking OUR response to the mercy of God that was revealed in Jesus. This is the foundation of true worship.

## **MY STORY | Starting Place**

Share a life experience that brought a profound emotional response to you.

## **DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application**

Though it preceded the fulfillment of Jesus' work on the cross, in John 4:23-24, Jesus shares the type of worship his salvation would make possible.

Read this passage and discuss what this means. What do you think it meant to people in rigid religious systems? What do you think it means to us today coming to Jesus without a stifling religious framework?

A heart of worship is defined as “a surrendered life; we worship God with our words and lives flowing from a God-purified heart.”

Read the following verses and discuss the various expressions of a heart of worship. How does each one honor God? How do they reflect his goodness to the world around us?

Hebrews 13:15

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Psalms 27:4

Psalms 150

After reading Psalm 150, what do you think the value is of singing and playing music in worship of God? Why does this form of worship (out of a pure heart) provoke deep delight in God's Spirit?

## **GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship**

Is there a specific setting that stimulates your awareness of God and gratitude for all that he has done? Describe that setting. Is there anything you need to do to get that environment ready?

What is your most common expression of gratitude toward God?

How do you experience times of musical worship? Are those experiences generally positive or negative? Explain. Where does your mind go during times of musical worship?

What disciplines have you/can you apply to best engage and focus your attention on God during these times?

## **MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action**

Go to a worship gathering this week and pay attention to your heart and mind. Where do they go? How can you be more present and aware what is happening in God's Spirit during times of musical worship?



# DISCUSSION #6: WORSHIP IN SONGS AND LIVING

In this Growth Series, we will explore an activity common in most church gatherings: singing songs of worship. To be clear, worship is far more than just singing songs, but rather a lifestyle of enjoying God and living in such a way to celebrate His goodness through our actions. We will build a framework to understand worship, and how to honor God in all aspects of our lives—which includes singing songs in church or Christian gatherings.

In this discussion we will unpack the purpose and benefits of musical worship. Worship is a beautiful activity that both honors and celebrates God’s character, and strengthens and refreshes us.

## **MY STORY | Starting Place**

Is there a specific worship song or hymn that touches you uniquely? What is the song? How does it move your mind or heart?

## **DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application**

What happens when we worship God? Though it’s true that God’s nature and character are worthy of celebration, something unique happens in the hearts of men and women when we submit to and engage in genuine worship. What are some experiences you have had in times of musical worship?

Read James 4:1-10 and discuss its application to preparing our hearts and participation in a musical worship experience. What are some of the practical things that James suggests we do in order to light up the dark places in our hearts that might hinder our ability to worship?

What insights can you identify that could be practical in participating more fully in a time of musical worship?

## **GROWING TOGETHER | Spiritual Friendship**

Psalm 16 provides a beautiful picture of a heart surrendered and trusting God. In this regard, a time of music and simple gratitude to God for all He has blessed us with can be a pinnacle experience for a Christian.

Do the sentiments of Psalm 16 resonate with you? Which ones?

Which ones don’t resonate with you? What do you think the barrier is to you experiencing this type of intimacy with God?

How can a Christian “grow” to engage more fully and truly enjoy times of musical worship?

How can musical worship stimulate a lifestyle of worship 24-7?

## **MOVING OUTWARD | Faith in Action**

Musical worship is super rich for some, and others have a hard time engaging. Have a conversation with someone to share key insights you have learned in this Growth Series.