

# What Is Worship

by Hans Peter Royer

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*Worship is not just about singing or giving a testimony, but about expressing our appreciation love to God, and it's a deeper and more meaningful experience that can be experienced in our everyday lives.*

**Duration:** 38:11

**Scripture:** Genesis 22:1-5, Psalm 139:13-16, Matthew 2:11, Matthew 6:33, Luke 7:36-50

**Topics:** "Worship", "Love Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker highlights the incredible complexity and beauty of human life, emphasizing that each person is a miracle. The speaker references the virtualized egg and the vast amount of information contained in our DNA to illustrate this point. The sermon also mentions Mother Teresa's perspective on seeing the face of Jesus in every person, and C.S. Lewis' concept of different types of love. The speaker concludes by discussing a woman who showed deep appreciation and thankfulness towards Jesus, demonstrating the highest form of love, which is worship.

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## Transcript

But anyways, as we enter this morning, the topic that I was inclined to speak on is how to experience God, and I want to focus on one area in particular, and that is worship. How do we experience God? When we talk about worship in our days, in our societies, in our churches I mean, we usually connect worship with a place. For some people, the place of worship is the church, chapel, maybe Mount Tambourine.

For others, maybe a quiet place in the woods. Now this idea that I go somewhere to worship, of course, in our Christian thinking, comes from the Old Testament, from the temple, where people used to go to worship God. But let me tell you something that I'm convinced of.

I'm convinced that this was never God's idea nor God's desire. In Genesis 1, we read when God created man, created him in his image in the Garden of Eden, and what did God do? He came and said, Adam, where are you? Let's go for our walk. And they walked, they walked, God and man.

In Genesis 10, we read that God lived in the tent of Shem. Tenting is close relationship. You're together, you talk, you spend time together, you get to know each other when you tent.

Tenting is great. I spent probably years in tent by now because of my traveling and the outdoor activity that I was involved and still am to some extent. Later on, we read that Abraham, he was a man of the tent

and also a man of the altar.

But the great thing about Abraham is he went from one place to the other. He set up his tent, took it down, set it up, took it down. And wherever he put up his tent, he also put up an altar.

So the altar and his tent, they were always together and the altar and the tent moved with Abraham or Abraham moved with them. They were never separated. And from the altar, all other areas of life were influenced and directed.

Years later, we know that God directed Moses to build the tent of meeting. And even later, He told him to build the tabernacle. Again, the tabernacle was a tent, the Shekinah glory, the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire during the night.

And whenever the pillar moved, the people moved. In other words, the tent and the altar always went ahead of the people. And wherever the people were, the tent was.

Wherever the tent was, the people were. It was a living together. Years later, David, a man after God's own heart, he had to decide to build a temple, a permanent worship place where people can go to worship God.

It's very interesting to notice that God was not very impressed about that idea. We read in 2 Samuel, just to quote this to you, 2 Samuel chapter 7, it is actually verses 5 to 7 I just read. He says, go and tell my servant David, this is what the Lord says.

Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of the rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, why have you not built me a house of cedar? God was not very impressed.

And we read, because the earth is his footstool. Why do we want to build God a house? He doesn't need a house. What happened when they built the temple? You know what happened? Until then, God always moved with people.

God directed, guided, influenced people on their daily walk, in their daily life. Now, man was in possession of God. Until then, God determined the daily life, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday of his people.

Because the altar and the tent was with the people in their daily life. Now, the ordinary life, the everyday life and worship became separated. You live your normal life on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and you worship on Saturday, Sunday.

It's separated. I read an article today, if I find it, oh, here I have it, from the Australian church bulletin, whatever it is, Christian. It says, according to a new U.S. survey, what churchgoers want most from their church is worship.

The survey also found that churchgoers often struggle to have a positive worship experience. It says a bit further down, a survey among a national random sample of churchgoers shows that most of those adults do not always feel that they experience the presence of God during church worship events. And it says, as a closing sentence, having never been taught much about worship, they find the inability to interact with God on a deeper level frustrating, but they don't know what to do about it.

You know what, it's a deep concern of mine. I believe the reason for that frustration is, one of the main reasons, we have separated our ordinary life from our worship time. This is why I'm so convinced about also what we do at Tarnhof, that's our place in Austria, where we now, we had 15 ski camps, and I have nine ski instructors employed, they're all believers, and we go skiing with people all day long.

And some, it's so typical, some say, well, now we have fun, when do we get serious, you know, when do we have Bible study? I say, well, there is no difference. And my main concern is that the ski instructors that work at Tarnhof, that they preach Christ on the slopes. And I had some people say to me, you have an interesting technique here.

You don't just speak about Jesus from the pulpit, you speak about Jesus on the slopes. You know, it's a technique for them. I said, I'm very sorry, that's my life.

What's the difference between speaking about Christ on the slope and from the pulpit? If He's not the God on the slopes, forget about Him. It's a life. We are either Christians 24 hours a day or we're not Christians at all.

But we have separated it very carefully. Or somebody said once to me, you have an interesting way of presenting the Gospel here, it's so American. You know, as if speaking about Christ during skiing is only for Americans.

It's an interesting concept that people have. And it's because we have separated worship from our everyday life. Now, I have to admit though, that for the longest time, I didn't have a clue what worship is.

And I'm afraid I still don't know much about it. But let me try to help you this morning what I believe what worship is. What is worship? How do we worship? I believe I do know since a few years, and I was in Bible school 11 years ago, and Charles taught there as well, so he taught me one or two things.

And I think I do believe what worship is not. One help to find out the meaning of a word is called the law of the first mention. You just look up, you know, you get a concordance, you look up the word.

I do that frequently, it's a good tool. You look up the first mention of a word and then it helps you to determine what the word actually means. And of course in the Old Testament, the first time that the word worship appears is when Abraham is told to sacrifice his son Isaac.

And to make a long story short, they come to the mountain, to Mount Moriah, which of course is Jerusalem. And on the foot of the mountain, he says to his servants, you stay here while I and the lad, we go and worship. Now, Abraham didn't have a guitar, Isaac didn't have a songbook, but they went on the mountain to worship.

They didn't give a testimony up there, nothing at all in that respect, but both of them worshipped. It's interesting, the first time it's mentioned in the New Testament is in Matthew, chapter 2 and verse 11, where there are three holy kings. There weren't three, there weren't holy, but there weren't kings, but who cares.

But they came from the east towards Jerusalem and they followed a star and they came to the stable and they found the child, Jesus. And it says, and they opened their treasures and they worshipped. Now, they didn't sing, they didn't give a testimony, they didn't have songbooks, but they worshipped.

In both cases, in these two that I mentioned, worship has something to do with giving your best, giving all you have, whatever that means, we'll come to that later. Now, in our society today, we have those worship services and I'm glad we have them, don't misunderstand me, and they should be there, they have their place, but I'm afraid it doesn't have much to do with worship. It's a singing meeting, which is great, we should have them, music is very important, I believe, but I'm afraid much of what's called worship service has little or sometimes nothing to do with worship.

But as I said, to know what something is not, does not mean that we have understood what it is. Knowing what worship is not, does not mean that we know what it is. Now, what is worship? It says in John chapter 4, worship God in the spirit and in the truth.

Well, that's a great sentence, but I don't have a clue what it means. How do you worship God in spirit? How do you worship God in truth? Well, it's a great sentence, what does it mean? C.S. Lewis, he wrote a book that I much appreciate, it's called *The Four Loves*. I'm not talking about, you know, Eros, Dorgy, Phileo and Agatha, that's also *Four Loves*, but he speaks about something else.

He speaks about *Four Loves* in a sense. I just mentioned two of them. He says, every man is equipped with the so-called need love.

In other words, every man stands in need of love. We all have that. We all need to be loved.

We have a longing to be recognized, to be appreciated. I believe there is nobody in this room who doesn't understand that. Even Rambo, even he needs love.

Or Arnold Schwarzenegger, you know, he comes from the capital where I live, from my county in Austria. Actually, where I live, Schladming, is his holiday resort. Students always get very excited when they see Arnie.

But even he needs love. Everybody, we can act as though we don't, but everybody does. So we are equipped with the need love, whether you're an atheist or whether you're a Christian or a Buddhist, it doesn't matter, everybody needs love.

Also, every person, whether you're an atheist or a Christian or whatever, is also equipped with the so-called, C.S. Lewis calls it, a give love. People not only have a need to be loved, people also have a longing to share love. And the give love is friendly, it's generous, and it rejoices about doing something good.

By the way, for the longest time, I believe I had a wrong concept about non-Christians doing good things. I believe non-Christians cannot do really good things. I'm very sorry, that's wrong.

It always distracted me because I knew many non-Christians who do better things than many Christians, who help a lot. And I kind of, the theology is called the total depravity of man. And I don't believe in that anymore.

I have to revise that. By the way, never be afraid to change your mind about anything. I had to change my mind many times.

I listened to something, and it made sense to me, and I believed it. And then I studied my own word and I found, actually, there's something else in here. And I had to revise it.

As long as you change your mind, it means you're still alive. Once you don't change your mind, you're dead. It's true.

I really encourage you, don't be afraid to change your mind. If you hear anything this weekend that totally goes against everything that you heard for decades maybe, check it in your words. And if it's in there, change your mind.

Don't be afraid. You see, atheists doing good things, non-believers doing good things, even heroic things, is something that is evident. I mean, just watch movies.

I mean, I haven't been in a war myself, thanks God. But you see in those movies, and my grandfather, he wrote a book. He was in Russia, and he died on his way home.

The war was over, but a bomb was dropped still, and this is where my grandfather was sitting. But he wrote a book, and I read it, about his wartime. He was a very fine believer in Russia.

And it's amazing when you read how somebody steps in and is killed instead of his friend. None of them are believers. But people do that.

It happens. I'm a member in Austria in the mountain rescue team as well as in the cave rescue team. And every year, one or two mountain rescue teams are being killed by the rescue.

You see, it still happens. Or you see, when your child falls into the water, you don't think twice whether you can swim or not. You jump after the child.

By the way, if you jump after your own child, that's not a heroic act, because you only save your own flesh and blood. But it also happens that people jump in for another people's child. That's a heroic act.

Or, you know, worldly things like the Rotary Club, Lions Club, I'm so thankful they exist. We have a polio home in India, led by Schloss Klaus, the other torchbearer center in Austria, and they greatly support us. They don't know the Lord, but they support us so that we can help those children.

And we are very thankful for them. The Lord Jesus says in Matthew 7 and Luke 11, even though you are evil, you know how to give good gifts to your children. And people do know that.

And I read a verse, I shared it with Charles this morning, it's an interesting verse in Mark, chapter 9, and it encourages me to invite non-believers to help. It says in Mark 9, 41, I tell you the truth, the Lord Jesus says, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name, because you belong to Christ, will certainly not lose his reward. I don't have a clue what that means.

But I know one thing, if I allow a non-believer to help me, he will get his reward. That's what the Lord Jesus said. And we must not hinder people to give us a cup of water, but to help.

So people are equipped with a need love, we need love, but we are also equipped with a give love, whether you are a non-believer or a believer. C.S. Lewis also mentions something else, he says we are equipped with a need pleasure. In other words, each one of us, we have pleasures we want to satisfy.

It can be a cup of water on a hot day. Ah, I'll have a cup of water. Ah, it's a pleasure, it's a need pleasure to drink that, or skiing down.

Oh, you don't know about that, but maybe surfing on the waves or whatever, you know. It's a pleasure to do something like that, or to eat a Wienerschnitzel or something like that. And then C.S. Lewis also talks about the appreciation pleasure.

Now what is the appreciation pleasure? It's the pleasure that a man, and a woman of course, experiences, for example, when you see a sunset. You see a sunset and you are overwhelmed by the beauty. It can also be a field of flowers, it can be clouds, and you just look at it and you're overwhelmed by the beauty.

I hope you all know what I'm talking about. This joy can also be related to another person. When you see your wife, the way she moves, the way she plays with the children, her character, her beauty, it's a pleasure to look at it.

And this appreciation pleasure also an atheist can have, just as much as a believer, because we are made that way. And now I come to what I really want to talk about. It's the deepest longing in man.

And at the same time, it's my strong conviction, it's the highest virtue any man can live up to. And C.S. Lewis calls it the appreciation love. Now let me explain to you what I mean by that.

Did it happen to you that you stand on this hill, we call it a mountain, which is great, it is one. And you look out the horizon and you see a sunset and you're so overwhelmed by its beauty, you want to grab a camera, you know, and take pictures. At the same time, you know, it doesn't work anyways.

You can't capture it, you can't take it with you. It's a moment where you write a poem even a man like Charles who knows nothing about things like that. In these moments, it hurts when you cannot share this inner joy.

Have you ever experienced that? You want somebody to, look at this, look at this, how beautiful it is. You want somebody to share. The Lord Jesus says, when the heart is full, the mouth flows over.

And it hurts when you are so full of joy and you cannot express the joy. And this is where we as Christians have a very unique standard. When I stand up on my mountains back home and I see the beauty, I see the hundreds of mountaintops.

I cannot hug the mountains. Geographically, it doesn't work. When you stand at the sea, you won't kiss the sea, but I know you can do one thing.

You can say, thank you God for this incredible beauty that you made in order to express yourself and for my joy. You see, an atheist cannot do that. He has nobody to thank, to say thank you to.

And that hurts. And we can come to God and do exactly that. And to thank God, to appreciate Him, that's appreciation love, to show Him my appreciation love, the Bible calls worship.

To say thank you is the highest form of love. And this love goes far beyond joy. You see, appreciation love is something like when you stand in front of a unique, a beautiful piece of painting.

Linton is around as well and he draws beautifully. I have a big one at home. And it's overwhelming when you see the meaning, the beauty of a picture.

I learn to appreciate that more and more. And when you stand in front of it, even if you would be the only man who ever sees this painting, and even though the world collapses tomorrow, you would not put any

dirt on that painting. You would never touch it or destroy it.

That's appreciation love. And another unique thing about appreciation love is it's also there when you don't see it. Appreciation pleasure, you can only enjoy it as long as you have the glass of water.

Appreciation love goes far beyond that. When you give this kind of love to a woman, and we see it in movies every day, you call it admiration. He admires a woman.

When you give this love to a man, it's called in the English, hero worship. When you give this kind of love to God, it's simply called worship. Now, you don't have to experience a sunset every day, and you don't have to have a wife or beautiful children in order to worship.

All it takes to worship is to see the wonders of human life. Every human is a miracle, which we will never figure out. You have been made without your will, without anything on your behalf.

You grew up nine months in your mother's womb, and then you were born. You know what's interesting? I sometimes ask this question. Does anybody remember when you were born? I haven't met anyone yet, but I still, I want to know if anybody does.

Nobody in this room, okay. I believe there is a reason why nobody remembers his birth. The Lord Jesus says, you don't even understand earthly things.

How can I tell you about heavenly things? It's a miracle. The moment of conception to the birth, incredible changes take place. The fertilized egg, over these nine months, grows to 100 trillion cells, and one single string of the DNA would fill a thousand volumes of encyclopedia with 600,000 pages and 500 words on each page.

And this incredible information is changed into you. You know what we should do this weekend? We should walk around and say, a miracle! A miracle! This should be, really, I'm not joking. We are all miracles, and this should be enough reason to worship.

It is. Once a journalist asked Mother Teresa, as she was working in India with leprosy people, he said, how can you stand to work with those distorted people all day long, all year long? Mother Teresa said very wisely, it's not hard for me, because in every face, I see the face of Jesus. Mother Teresa knew what worship is about, because she saw the wonder of God in every human man, however distorted that man may have been.

There's a very touching story that I read. It's a true story about a young American couple who went to Romania in order to adopt a child. Actually, I just, I had friends with me a couple of weeks ago.

They adopted three children from the Ukraine. A woman, she has lost one leg because of cancer. I taught her how to ski a couple of years ago.

And now they adopted three children. It's quite a handful, but it's great. But anyways, this couple went to Romania in order to adopt a child, and they went to an orphanage.

We sometimes also, we do outreaches with our students, Bible school students, and one outreach is we go twice a year, we go to Romania, just bring aid there, and the orphanage preach the gospel and so on. And as they entered the orphanage, they saw one little boy in the corner where nobody was, and both of them knew right away, that's our boy. The reason why nobody was there is this boy didn't have any arms.

He could never hug you. And so they went to this corner and they said, that's our boy. So they went to the director of this orphanage and said, is the mother or father somewhere? Of course they need to be contacted.

So they called the mother of this boy, and when the mother heard that an American couple wanted to adopt their boy who doesn't have any arms, she got very afraid because she has seen documentaries how rich people in America buy handicapped children in order to use their organs for their sick children at home, which of course is a big business today. And so this mother went to this orphanage and said, the only thing they want is just they want maybe the heart or the kidney or whatever from my child in order that theirs can survive. But this American couple was not only very wise, they were very godly.

And that the man, he didn't speak apparently much Romanian, but he did bring a Romanian Bible, which he wanted to give to the parents anyways. And what he did is, he took this Romanian Bible, he opened up Psalm 139, gave it to this mother and asked her with his few words he could speak to read Psalm 139. I'll just read a few verses out of it.

And the mother read this loud. I'll just read from verse 13. For you created my inmost being.

You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, because I'm fearfully and wonderfully knit. Your works are wonderful.

I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in a secret place. When I was woven together in depth of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body, and all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God. How vast is the sum of them. Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand.

When I wake, I'm still with you. And the story says when the mother read this psalm, she had tears in her eyes and she gave the baby to the parents because she knew one thing. This couple appreciate the life of my son.

And not only that, they also appreciate my life. And will tell the little boy one day who the real mother is because they appreciate life. Sometimes I wonder, don't you find it so easy to see this miracle in little children? And when little children look at you like this, it's apparent that's a miracle.

It's the wonder of God. I wonder why don't we see that in each other? What about your church fellowship? Is it a miracle of God in everyone in your church? Every person is a miracle. And if we would learn that, we would learn how to worship once again.

You see, a man, a person is not a number. He's not an elder. He's not a pastor.

He's not whatever. Every man is a miracle. Mathematically, it may be true that half and half makes one.

But there is the Solomon rule. Remember when two mothers brought one baby and they were fighting about the one baby and they said, it's mine. The other one said, it's mine.

And Solomon said, no problem. Bring the baby. Cut it in half, give each a half.

That's satisfying. It doesn't work. Because man is not one in one.

Man is a whole miracle. Now what is worship? Worship is to stand before God in awe and thank Him for the miracle of life, for the wonder of life. I want to close.

Turn with me to Luke 7, please, if you did bring your Bible. One of the most clear passages of worship as far as I'm concerned. In Luke 7, verse 36, it's beautiful how worship is described here.

Luke 7, verse 36. Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him. So he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table.

When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and put perfume on them. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is, that she is a sinner.

Jesus answered him, Simon, I have something to tell you. Tell me, teacher, he said. Two men owed money to a certain money lender.

One owed him 500 denarii and the other one 50. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more? Simon replied, I suppose the one who had the bigger debt cancelled.

You have judged correctly, Jesus said. And then he turned towards the woman and said to Simon, Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

You did not give me a kiss, but this woman from the time I entered had not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has put perfume on my feet. Therefore I tell you, her many sins I have been forgiven, for she loved much, but he who has been forgiven little loves little.

And Jesus said to her, Your sins are forgiven. This woman came into this house totally uninvited and totally unfitting. She fell, while two adult men have a theological discussion, she fell at his feet and by the way, she gave the best she had.

She wet his feet with her tears and dried the wet feet with her hair. This shocking gesture spoke volumes about her incredible thankfulness and her appreciation and love towards her newly found Savior. And everybody who has seen that except the most arrogant must have been speechless.

But you see friends, that's worship. In C.S. Lewis' words, I try to summarize and I want to summarize it giving worship to a woman. Since I'm a man, give it to a woman.

Need love, need love says to the woman, I need you, I cannot live without you. Now move it, leave it. I need you, that's need love.

Give love longs to give the wife happiness, comfort, protection, even wealth. You know, I want to give you everything I have. That's give love.

Appreciation love gazes and holds its breath and is silent. Rejoices that such a wonder should exist even if not for him and will not be wholly dejected by losing her but would rather have seen her than never have seen her at all. That's appreciation love.

Appreciation love is by far the highest form of love. In relation to God, it sounds like this. Need love cries out to God from our poverty, God, I need you.

Give love longs to serve, even die for God. Appreciation love says, I give thee thanks for thy great glory. That's appreciation love.

The sheer existence of the object is enough to worship. My question to you this morning is, when have you worshipped the last time? When have you last just been overwhelmed by the effect of your life, by the existence, by the beauty of the other people around you? When have you told God the last time how much you appreciate him, how much you love him, how much you appreciate his creation which he made for your joy? When have you worshipped the last time? It's the highest virtue and it's the deepest longing. Let me tell you something, even though you may be single for the rest of your life, if you learn how to worship, you reach the deepest level of love.

It's deeper than give love, it's deeper than need love. Let's worship. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you so much for the beauty of worship. We thank you for yourself, the object of our worship. We thank you, Lord Jesus, that in you, through you, by you, we have everything we can ever have.

And Lord, we want to thank you. Even this Easter time, we want to be overwhelmed once again by the fact that you have died for us. That you rose again, came alive, poured out your spirit and gave us your own life.

Lord, we thank you. Lord, it is such a privilege to know you. And my prayer is, Lord, that for my own life as well as for these people here, that as we look at each other, we may see these wonders.

And that looking at each other may be enough reason to give thanks, to worship. Even though we distort it, there's still your glory. Father, I thank you.

And of course, in the greatest measure, your glory is revealed in your own Son, Jesus Christ. And as we behold him, as we look upon him, we want to worship and thank thee. Thank you for your creation, for this beautiful place here, for these trees, the birds, which are all made to honor you.

Which are all made to draw our attention to an amazing creator. We want to worship you. Father, forgive us when we have separated.

Worship from our normal life. And help us that we will learn to worship you in our attitude. It's my prayer for myself, for these lovely people.

May you bless them richly. Amen.

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