

“DESIGNED FOR PLEASURE”

by Rom A. Pegram (8/28/16)

We were designed for pleasure ... but maybe not how you think! Just listen...

“The Lord is pleased only with those who worship him and trust His love.”
– Psalms 147:11 (CEV)

We’re made in God’s image ... so certainly we are made to experience pleasure ourselves. But, what we’re talking about today is that *we were designed or created for God’s pleasure!* That’s what this scripture verse is telling us. So, *bringing enjoyment to God ... and living for His pleasure ... is the first purpose of your life!* Listen to this...

Ephesians 1:5 (TEV) - “God had already decided that through Jesus Christ he would make us his children—this was his pleasure and purpose.”

So, God wants to be in a personal relationship with US, that brings God pleasure; we are God’s kids! Again, *bringing enjoyment to God ... and living for His pleasure ... is the first purpose of your life!* So, what does that look like *in your life?* How’s that biblical truth going to play out for you? Well, here it is...

Bringing pleasure to God is called ... “WORSHIP”, but I may be using the word ‘worship’ today in a way you’ve never thought of before! You see, worship—contrary to what many people believe and act like—is *not* just something we do ... but it’s really about *who we are!* And I’ll expand on that more in a little bit here...

So, if bringing pleasure to God is our first purpose in life ... and that’s done through worship, then what will that look like in our lives? I’ve got three things for you to consider today, regarding worship ... and how we need to be about pleasing God through our worship. First, I’ll mention two misconceptions ... and finally what worship should look like, if God is to be pleased: Here’s the first *misconception*...

WORSHIP IS FAR MORE THAN MUSIC. Have you noticed ... that worship for many people is just a synonym for music? People say things like, “Oh at our church, we have worship first, then the message.” This is a big misunderstanding ... because *every part of a church service is an act of worship:*

- Praying
- Scripture reading
- Singing
- Listening to a sermon
- Intentionally taking notes on the message
- Giving an offering
- Baptism, communion, etc.

So, *worship is far more than just music!* Though music is an important part of worship, it is not worship itself. Worship is something much broader—much more inclusive of everyone (even those without musical abilities)!

Worship actually predates music; did you know that? In Genesis 2:15ff ... we see that Adam worshiped in the Garden of Eden ... but it wasn't until later on we see this... In Genesis 4:21 ... speaking of Cain's family, we find that 'music' came with the birth of Jubal. "...His brother was Jubal, the ancestor of all musicians who play the harp and the flute." So, worship & music are not synonyms, but two separate things...

'Worship' is also sometimes *misused* to refer to a particular style of music! People will sometimes say they either sing 'hymns' or 'praise & worship music.' They'll say things like: "I like the fast praise songs ... but I enjoy the slow worship songs the best." So, it seems—for some—it depends on a certain tempo, or certain instrumentation, as to how they label music used in church... But is that right?

Biblically speaking, worship has nothing to do with the style ... or volume ... or speed of a song. *God loves all kinds of music* ... because God created it all—fast ... slow ... loud ... soft ... old ... and new. You may not like it all ... but GOD DOES! If it's offered to God 'in spirit and in truth' (John 4:23), *it is an act of worship!*

Now, I know Christians often disagree over styles of music used in worship, passionately defending their preferred style as 'the most biblical or God-honoring.' But, the truth is ... **THERE IS NO BIBLICAL STYLE!** There's no such thing as "Christian music!" There are only Christian lyrics... As Rick Warren has said, "There are no musical notes in the Bible!" The music style each of us prefers ... probably says more about *us* ... than about God! *Here's misconception #2 for today, which we need to know if our worship is to please God...*

WORSHIP IS NOT FOR YOUR BENEFIT. As a pastor, I hear all kinds of comments about worship, like this one: "I loved the worship today; I got a lot out of it!"

This is another misconception! Worship is NOT for *our* benefit! Now, there's nothing wrong with 'getting a lot out of it,' unless that's descriptive of a person's primary goal in worship. This may be quite a change in thinking for many of us ... but worship is NOT for *our* benefit! So, with that in mind, let me ask...

Are you or have you been worshiping for the right reason? If you've ever said something like: "I didn't get anything out of worship today," you may be worshiping for the wrong reason! The correct question to ask would be: "Did God get anything out of worship today?" and "Was God pleased with my part—what I offered today?" If you think this misconception about worship is something new ... I've got a surprise for you today; listen to this... In Isaiah 29:13 (TEV), it reads: "The Lord said, 'These people claim to worship me, but their words are meaningless, and their hearts are somewhere else. Their religion is nothing but human rules and traditions, which they have simply memorized.'"

Folks, God's heart is not necessarily touched by *tradition* in worship ... but by passion for and commitment to Him! It should be all about God's benefit—God's pleasure ... not ours... *And, finally...*

WORSHIP IS NOT A PART OF YOUR LIFE; IT IS YOUR LIFE ... AS A DISCIPLE OF JESUS CHRIST! Romans 12:1a (*The MSG*) says, "So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him."

As I said earlier, worship is *not* just something we do ... but it's really about *who we are* ... in our relationship with God! We're called to be disciples of Jesus Christ; worship was what Jesus' life was all about—everything he was about had to do with 'pleasing his Heavenly Father.' In the same way, we're told to "worship him continually" (Ps. 105:4, TEV) and to "praise him from sunrise to sunset" (Ps. 113:3, LB). It's really to be ... a way of life!

Several years ago now, I was out in Montana with a mission group, and I got to know the pastor's son quite well—Kenny Pretty-On-Top (Crow Reservation). I found out that for their denomination—Four Square Gospel Church, Kenny was their #1 music person, traveling throughout the United States to lead and teach worship. And, the one point he drilled into us that week was this: *He taught worship as ... a way of life—not as something we just do once a week!*

And, this is the way it should be for all who claim Jesus as Lord. As a matter of fact, every activity in life can be seen as an act of worship when we do it for the right reason—in the right spirit. 1 Corinthians 10:31 (NIV) tells us, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." Is your goal to bring God pleasure ... through every activity of your life?

- Through your work... When you go to work or school on Mondays, do you have a little talk with God ... asking him to bless your work so that all you do might be pleasing to him? That's worship, if you do...
- Through your play... When you're golfing ... or when you're fishing ... or when you're knitting ... or when you're playing ball, do you have a little talk with God first, asking him to bless what you're doing ... that it might be pleasing to him? If you do, that's worship...

Martin Luther once said, "A dairymaid can milk cows to the glory of God." How is it possible to do *everything* to the glory of God? Learn to do everything in life ... as if you're doing it for Jesus. In Colossians 3:23 (NIV), Paul says to the church: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men." *There's the secret to a lifestyle of worship...*

Life becomes worship when we dedicate each day to God ... then walk through it with an awareness of his presence... I'll never forget the summer of '77—the summer I first met and fell in love with my wife. We met at a church camp we were both working at that summer. Then, she went back to Indianapolis to go to school ... and I went to Oshkosh to work. Though many miles separated us, I was constantly thinking about her—while eating meals, while driving to work, while working on my car, while sleeping. You get the picture... *I could not stop thinking about Jane*—my little Hoosier girl! I would often talk to myself about her ... reminding myself of all the things I loved about her; this helped me to feel close to Jane, even though we were miles & miles apart. But, by constantly thinking of her, *I was abiding in her love...*

That's really what true worship is, folks ... falling in love with Jesus ... learning to abide in his love at all times ... no matter where we are, no matter what we're doing. So, *that's our first purpose in this life—to worship God, bringing pleasure to him...* Next week, our second purpose ... as God's kids... Don't miss out!