

COME, LET US WORSHIP!

Worship & Music
from
Creation to New-Creation

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» WELCOME!

Worship. When you think of that word, what comes to mind? Why do you suppose that is? What experiences shaped your understanding about worship? What traditions or ways of thinking influence whether you think worship is “good”? Or not? And, how about music? What role has it played in your life? Where did it come from? How is music influencing you now? How do you make musical choices?

Many people have repeated this basic sentiment:

What we believe about God and how we believe we should approach Him in worship is the greatest determiner of our life choices.

In my role as music pastor and educator, I’ve seen nearly 45 years of “worship wars” and ongoing division over the role of music in the church and people’s personal lives. I’ll tell you a little more about my personal journey later, but I’ve witnessed the power of music for good and evil in many ways – music as both enabling and detracting from biblical worship.

As I sit to write this introduction, I’m also coming to the close of a nearly two-decades-long pastoral ministry helping addiction strugglers. I’ve often wondered what God was doing when He dropped this parallel ministry into my lap and grew my love for those I affectionately call my “Friday Friends.” I know now that their addiction struggle is also over the object of worship, just like everyone else. Worship matters!

My deepest prayer is that this devotional would serve as a quiet companion, helping you prayerfully work through the two vital themes of worship and music as you reflect on the Bible's unfolding story—from creation to the re-creation we catch a glimpse of in the book of Revelation. I invite you to dive right into the Scriptures and allow the Word itself to teach you primarily inductively as you read and reflect. In an inductive Bible study, we first look at details in several passages, with the goal of the big ideas becoming clearer with each new chapter. There are already some wonderful resources in print that are more deductive in nature. They state the big ideas and then support those ideas with biblical details. Both ways of studying are valuable in their own way.

I hope to help you see recurring themes throughout the Scriptures. God initiated worship. The cosmic conflict over the object of worship. Costly, wholehearted worship. Worship on God's terms and for His pleasure. The power of music in our personal lives, families, nations, and churches.

Be seeking to grow in your discernment. Without rival, learn the trustworthiness of the Bible alone and the perfections of the Holy Spirit alone as He leads you into the truth of God's Word.

But I don't want you to just know about worship. I want you to worship! Sing! Pray! Talk! Bow! To help you do that, each chapter includes a hymn or a song that you can offer to the Lord. Some will be new to you, while others may be songs you've known for years. I hope my suggestions will stretch and inspire you to greater worship.

The musical examples come from three sources. 1) I will recommend some music that has the status of being in Public Domain. Anyone can copy this music. Almost always, I'll give

you the hymn number from a hymnal I've used for years, the Rejoice Hymnal. 2) Because of my long-standing relationship with Majesty Music, I will not only be referencing their Rejoice Hymnal but have also been given permission to use their copyrighted materials in this book. Please honor their policies when using their materials. 3) I also use some materials from Church Works Media, which has championed a movement to offer free hymns to the general public. I think this is a real gift to the church. They have graciously permitted me to use their materials. My music selections are not meant to be your exclusive sources, but in 2026, I have found them to be a blessing, and I hope they will be to you as well. I also want you to have the ability to access the written music when possible.

I have also included links to some YouTube videos, realizing that those links may disappear. While they may not be your normal choice, in an effort to give you some practical application of the concepts in each chapter, I humbly make them available to you. I am going to give you this formal statement about these links: *"All linked videos remain the property of their respective creators and are provided for reference only."*

Please know this about me: I believe application matters. But, at my core, I'm convinced the way we get to those applications, the path we take to make those decisions, matters even more. If you think of a better song to express those ideas, exercise your liberty choice in wisdom, purity, and love for the Lord and others. That is my heart in offering the examples I include in the book. God bless you as you make those choices.

I am calling you to join me in a journey -- a journey to discover what God reveals about music and worship. This journey starts in a place we have never been. A place that the most creative science fiction writer could scarcely imagine. This is a journey back to where God and God alone existed.

PRAYER

You alone, LORD, are worthy of our worship. You alone are worthy of our songs of praise. We begin this journey into Your Word humbly asking You to show Yourself to each reader. God, I pray that no one would leave this study, like the fool in Romans 1, and decide to worship the creature more than You, the Creator. From this first study, begin to transform us from self-worshippers to true worshipers for Jesus sake. Amen.

1» GOD ALONE

The heavens declare the glory of God

PSALM 19:1

Before a single star burned in space. Before a single galaxy spun on its axis. Before a single human ear heard a sound. A place where time itself made room for only One Eternal Being, God. Scripture opens with these simple, staggering words:

Genesis 1:1 says “In the beginning God....”

And what did God do back before He created all that we see and know? God fellowshiped with Himself in the person of the Trinity. He wasn't lonely. He wasn't incomplete. God existed in perfect fellowship within Himself—Father, Son, and Spirit—living in eternal relationship marked by openness, perfect unity, true oneness, and mutual delight. Long before creation ever lifted its voice, God was already living in harmony. God lived -- in “Oneness” -- marked by mutual love and respect.

And that matters—because worship didn't begin with us. It began with God.

From God's place of eternal self-sufficiency, God made a plan to create all of what we see, and know, and hear. Everything came into being with the pronouncement of God, a single word of His mouth. God needed no elaborate machinery, no

fancy tools, no colossal effort of His will, not so much as a snap of His divine fingers. God needed only to speak and all we see and hear came into being.

God made this grand creation to show forth His own handiwork. God wanted nothing more than to show Himself to be the supreme and glorious Lord of all things. God revealed His glorious, eternal self.

*Whether we look into a
microscope or a telescope,
we see how amazing God is.*

An example of God's extravagant creativity is found in a simple fern. We see them everywhere, common in greenhouses as well as outdoors in places like Florida. Each frond (the large divided leaf of a fern) bears twenty-five leaflets. Each leaflet bears approximately one hundred sori (the dark spots on the underside of each leaf). Each sori contains an estimated 57,000 reproductive spores. This multiplies to a little less than one billion spores, each of which is a potential plant. Every glance into a microscope should cause a collective, WOW!

Now, look into a telescope. An internet search would reveal that it would take over 13 octillion (that's 13 with 27 zeros!) earths to fill up just our small solar system. Our modest solar system is part of an equally modest galaxy among trillions of galaxies that we are aware of right now. With each advance in science, God's greatness is amplified! Again, WOW!

Psalm 19:1-4 says:

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the
firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters
speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge.
There is no speech nor language where their voice is

not heard. Their line [speech or language] has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. (NKJV)

God created the universe and all that is in it to show His own glory. God revealed Himself and then invited all of His creation to testify to His amazing acts and attributes. And they did, and do! What was it that God intended to show us all by His glorious creation?

Romans 1:19-20 says ...

For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. (ESV)

TRUTHS TO PONDER

Take some time right now to consider how great God is. If God is revealing Himself in creation, what is He saying? Are you listening? How should you respond? Our worship adds nothing to God. Why would that be important for us to remember in our worship?

SONGS TO SING

I SING THE MIGHTY POWER OF GOD

*I sing the mighty power of God
That made the mountains rise!
That spread the flowing seas abroad
And built the lofty skies.*

*I sing the wisdom that ordained
The sun to rule the day.
The moon shines full at His command
And all the stars obey.*

*I sing the goodness of the Lord
That filled the earth with food.
He formed the creatures with His word
And then pronounced them good.
Lord how Thy wonders are displayed
Where'er I turn my eye.
If I survey the ground I tread
Or gaze upon the sky.*

REJOICE HYMNAL #27



HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD

https://youtu.be/U_aMReImxlQ

PRAYER

God, You are eternal. You are eternally powerful. You are forever the Godhead. Your creation shows that there is no one like You. No one like You in all the universe. You are all that and so much more. Amen.

2 » ANGELIC CELEBRATION

“Let all the Angels in Heaven worship Him”

HEBREWS 1:6

God spoke -- and in a moment, by the power of His Word, every angel came into being.

Despite the famous movie many of us dutifully watch every Christmas, angels don't “earn their wings” every time a bell rings. God paints a more awe-inspiring picture. Every angel came into being in a moment, and bowed in obedience and praise. These free moral agents were created for the holy purpose of serving the great God of Creation, to serve Him, and joyfully show how great He is.

God not only created the angels, He empowered them to serve. God gave them the ability to communicate. Immediately at their creation they were given the ability to communicate beyond mere words. They were given a very special gift that transcended the communication of mere facts; they could express their deepest emotions by singing and celebrating God's creative acts with the gift of song!

God gives us some insight into this “humanless” time in the book of Job. God put Job in his place when he asks him a series of rhetorical questions in Job 38:4-7.

Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (ESV)

Did you notice? When God was laying the foundations of the world, music was already a part of the universe. Even before man was created, angels (here called “morning stars” and “sons of God”) sang in celebration of God’s mighty acts in creation.

It is really no surprise that God would create angels with the ability to communicate with the beautiful gift of music. The fact is, God Himself expresses His joy by singing too! That’s right, when God wants to communicate His joy over those who repent He lifts up His voice in song!

The LORD Thy God in the midst of thee is mighty;
He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy;
He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with
singing. - Zephaniah 3:17 (KJV)

God created the universe a musical place. One of God’s actions is to communicate with His created moral beings not only facts but also feelings so He created angels and men as musical beings, like Himself.

TRUTHS TO PONDER

Music is about communion, celebration beyond mere facts. Worship is about relationship and what God in Christ did to make it all possible. But look around, what has music and worship become? It is God alone who is worthy of our worship. Are you willing to confirm that truth by singing to Him?

SONGS TO SING

WORTHY OF PRAISE

My heart overflows with praise to the Lord.

I will lift up my voice to the King.

He brought me out of the pit of despair,

And taught my heart to sing.

Worthy of all my praise,

You are worthy of all my praise.

I bow at Your throne, and I worship You alone.

Lord You are worthy, worthy of praise.

My lips sing His praise my heart feels His love.

His Word is a lamp to my way.

His mercy and grace forever endure.

His arms draw me closer each day.

REJOICE HYMNAL #53



GOD OF WONDERS

<https://youtu.be/cidwvqAU-Bo>

PRAYER

Thank you God for sharing your amazing gift of music!
Your angels are awesome! Not only did they sing at
Your creation, they are still singing today around
Your majestic throne. I know I'm not an angel and
never will be, but I pray I would, like the angels, see
Your amazing creation and sing and celebrate Your
matchless creativity and beautiful artistry! No one and
nothing is as amazing as You! Amen.

3 » COSMIC CONFLICT

“I will be like the Most High”

ISAIAH 14:14

It would be great if that angelic praise and worship could have just continued unhindered, unbroken, pure. But instead, we read of something tragic and scandalous. One of God’s created angels, the archangel Lucifer, was determined to deflect worship away from God the Father and onto himself.

When Isaiah prophesied against false worshipers of his day he talked about Lucifer’s fall. Isaiah explains what happened in Isaiah 14:11-14.

Your pride and the music of your harps have been brought down to Sheol; maggots are spread out as your bed beneath you and worms are your covering.’ How you have fallen from heaven, you star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who defeated the nations! But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’

Lucifer, using all his intelligence, beauty, and musical abilities, was bent on being the object of worship. The heart of false worship is to bring attention to self, to ascend, to exalt self, to move from humble bowing to a more comfortable seat on the throne. And that is how it has been ever since.

*This began a conflict of cosmic proportions
over the object of worship.*

God intends that all creation worship Him, for He alone is worthy. Yet, His created beings are given the free will to choose whom they will worship. They can worship God alone or they can center worship on themselves.

For nearly 20 years my wife, Brenda, and I have been involved in helping strugglers who find themselves trapped in addictions. Before that time, my pastoral ministry had been mainly focused on worship and music ministry. I sometimes wondered why God would connect my world of worship and music to the world of addiction strugglers. What I have come to understand is that addiction is a worship issue. Instead of God being my only the source for healing, wisdom, peace, love, relationship, and more, we seek to be our own god, worshiping the creature more than the Creator. Addiction is a worship disorder.

Lucifer and the legion of angels that followed him in his worship rebellion have sought to draw people away from God ever since. Be warned!

TRUTHS TO PONDER

How about you? Does pride or self-fulfillment often well up in your heart? Are there times when you are more concerned about what people think about you than what they think about God? Do you want to be worshiped like God -- the Most High? I know I fall into that trap. You see, all false

worship starts with a focus on self; with a bent toward self-sufficiency, self-indulgence, with wanting others to think well of you, instead of ascribing value to God alone. How will that truth look next time you worship?

SONGS TO SING

ALL TO JESUS I SURRENDER

*All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live.*

Chorus

*I surrender all, I surrender all;
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all.*

*All to Jesus I surrender,
Humbly at His feet I bow;
Worldly pleasures all forsaken,
Take me, Jesus, take me now.*

REJOICE HYMNAL # 476



YOU ALONE ARE GOD

BY MARY McDONALD

https://youtu.be/33pe8kw6a60?si=xTU2DMjqMXmIo_iC

PRAYER

Holy God, I confess my heart easily slips into self-focus. I become more concerned about my glory than Yours. Forgive me. Humble me. When I read about Satan's heart to be a worship thief, I am cut to the heart. I too am all too prone to be a glory thief. Change me from deep within and help me to be so focused on You and Your glory that I surrender all and come to You alone as my source for all things. Amen.

4 » MUSICAL ENEMY

“...your timbrels and pipes”

EZEKIEL 28:13

Lucifer, like all the angels, was created a musical being. Ezekiel 28:12b-17a is a description of him and those who are like him. It says ...

You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes* was prepared for you on the day you were created. “You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. “By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones. “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor... (NKJV)

**For more on this see, The Word on Worship and Music Matters pp. ?? or visit worshipintheword.org, and see supplemental notes for Come, Let Us Worship!*

As one of God's created angelic beings, Lucifer didn't stop communicating with the powerful tool of music after his rebellion against God; he just redirected it. Once a tool for reflecting God's glory, now redirected toward self.

When Lucifer fell and led an angelic revolt against God he did not cease to be powerful, intelligent, resourceful, and, yes, very musical. Satan, for his part would like you to ignore that fact and keep you in the dark as a master deceiver.

A battle over the object of true worship has raged on over the pages of time and will continue until the final discords of false worship are forever thrown into the pit of God's judgment. Remember, Satan is ...

- » The accuser of the brethren (Rev 12:10)
- » Disguised as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14)
- » The father of lies (John 8:44)
- » A roaming devouring lion (1 Pet. 5:8)
- » An adversary (1 Tim. 3:7; 2 Tim. 2:26)
- » A wily deceiver (Eph. 6:11)
- » The prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2)
- » A ruler of darkness and wickedness (Jn. 14:30)
- » Tempter (Mt 4)
- » "Seed stealer" (Mk. 4:15)

Arm yourself for the battle.

- » Peter says resist the devil "firm in your faith" (1 Pet. 5:9).

- » James says, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (Jas. 4:7).
- » Paul exhorts “give no opportunity to the devil” (Eph. 4:27).
- » Resist anything the evil one does (Eph. 6:11, 13).
- » Don’t be “ignorant of his designs” (2 Cor. 2:11).

Praise God we can have the victory because...

- » Satan’s power is limited and finite (Lk. 4:6).
- » Satan’s actions are limited (Jb. 1:12; 2:6; 1 Cor. 10:13; Rev. 20:2, 7).
- » Satan is doomed (Mt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).
- » Preachers can to turn men “from the power of Satan unto God” (Acts 26:18).
- » Paul told the Roman believers, “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly!” (Rom. 16:20).

TRUTHS TO PONDER

Gather your family or friends together and let’s get real. Satan is after you and he is using the tool of music to subtly turn the object of your worship away from God and toward one of God’s creations; idols, corruptible man, or Satan himself. Are you following his lies by yielding to the ideas of ungodly men, or to your own pleasure, or your own wisdom? Time to ask each other some serious questions.

- » If Satan is a musician how can we tell what kind of music he is behind?
- » What music accompanies the “works of darkness” that Satan is behind?
- » Satan is a deceiver, a counterfeiter. How do you suppose Satan is deceiving believers today to center their worship on self instead of God?

» What can I do to turn myself away from the power of Satan and to God?

This cosmic conflict over the object of worship has colored the worship and the music of every angelic being and man since the very beginning. Are you ready for the battle? Are you aware of Satan's devices? His musical devices? Knowing Satan is musical needs to shake us awake about the music around us. What do you suppose Satan might be trying to sing to you right now? How has he used his skill and beauty to deceive Christ's bride, the church? What is he up to in your family?

SONGS TO SING

A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD

*A mighty fortress is our God,
a bulwark never failing;
Our helper He amid the flood
of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe
doth seek to work us woe –
His craft and power are great
and armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.*

*Did we in our own strength confide,
our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side,
the Man of God's own choosing:
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth, His Name,
from age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.*

*And though this world, with devils filled,
should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us:
The Prince of Darkness grim,
we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
for lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.*

*That word above all earthly powers,
no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours
through Him Who with us sideth:
Let goods and kindred go,
this mortal life also;
The body they may kill:
God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.*

REJOICE HYMNAL # 172

SOLDIERS OF CHRIST, ARISE

*Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armor on,
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through His eternal Son.
Strong in the Lord of hosts,
And in His mighty pow'r,
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.
Stand then in His great might,
With all His strength endued,*

*And take, to arm you for the fight,
The panoply of God;
That, having all things done,
And all your conflicts passed,
Ye may o'ercome through Christ alone,
And stand entire at last.*

*Leave no unguarded place,
No weakness of the soul,
Take every virtue, every grace,
And fortify the whole.
From strength to strength go on,
Wrestle and fight and pray,
Tread all the pow'rs of darkness down
And win the well-fought day.*

REJOICE HYMNAL #659

PRAYER

Lord, You gave us some stern warnings and precious promises about our enemy Satan. Thank You that he is a defeated foe and that You in us is greater than any power he possesses. My heart aches for those who have been deceived by him and have never realized that he is a powerful musician. Oh God, open our blind eyes so that we are not ignorant of his devices. Help me not to get trapped into his music. Amen.

