



“Grace for a Purpose Driven Life” – Week 7

Introduction:

1. I want to begin our time this morning by reading a quote from A Purpose Driven Life:

“God doesn’t want a part of your life. He asks for *all* your heart, all your soul, *all* your mind, and *all* your strength. God is not interested in half-hearted commitment, partial obedience, and the leftovers of your time and money. He desires your full devotion, not little bits of your life.” – p. 100

Input: How would you respond to that quote? What thoughts do these statements generate in your mind? What do these statements do to motivate you, or what lessons are there to learned from what Warren states in his book?

- One of the responses ought to be:

> These words are TRUE, and God, I need Your GRACE to make this happen!

- That’s why we’ve entitled this series: *Grace for a Purpose Driven Life*

2. *Enjoying God’s Grace!*

* Brief review of Lessons 5 & 6

➤ **What Makes God Smile?**

A. God smiles when we LOVE Him supremely - Like David in Acts 13:2

B. . . . TRUST Him completely.

C. . . . OBEY Him wholeheartedly.

D. . . . PRAISE [for Who He is] and THANK [what He’s done] Him continually.

E. . . . Use our GIFTS and ABILITIES.

➤ **The Heart of Worship**

* The heart of worship is surrender to God’s authority and His will in our lives

- Last week we focused our RELATIONSHIP with God:

I. Our Relationship with God Began at Creation – Gen. 1 & 2

II. Our Relationship with God was Affected by the Fall – Gen. 3

III. Our Relationship with God Was Renewed in Jesus Christ.

IV. Our Relationship with God is one of Friendship!

‘friend’ = a close, trusted relationship (not a casual acquaintance)

B. Ways to Develop That Friendship

1. I need to be engaged in constant conversation.

2. I need to be engaged in continual meditation of His Word!
3. I must choose to be honest with God.
4. I must choose to obey God in faith.
5. I must choose to value what God values.
6. I must desire friendship with God more than anything else.

-Today, we want to focus our time on two other aspects of our relationship with God:

1. Worship That Pleases God

2. When God Seems Distant

- Let's think about . . .

1. Worship That Pleases God

- There are nearly 200 references in the bible to worship – you can assume from that, that worship is an important part of our lives
- We must be engaged in active worship of our God if we are to fulfill the purpose for which we have been created
 - i.e. to bring Him glory – to worship/praise/thank Him for Who He is and what He's done!
- Of course the Psalms have a great deal to say about worship:
 - Psalm 29:2 **Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in holy array.**
 - Psalm 66:4 **"All the earth will worship You, And will sing praises to You; They will sing praises to Your name."**
 - Psalm 86:9 **All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, And they shall glorify Your name.**
- In the NT Jesus, Jesus made this statement to Satan while Satan was tempting Him:
 - Matthew 4:10 **Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"**
- John clarified some worship issues when he quoted Jesus:
 - John 4:24 **"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."**
- Let's think about 4 characteristics of worship that is pleasing to God

A. God is pleased when our worship is ACCURATE.

- John 4:23 **"But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers."**
- God is not the way He is because we imagine Him a certain way – He is the way He is because the Word of God
- To worship in truth mean to worship God as He is truly revealed in the Bible

Input: What are some truths about God we need to focus when we worship?

[various answers – but include holiness, justice, righteousness, gracious, merciful, love!]

- This is reason why the Word is central to our worship – it reveals God and His will to us – it tells us about the true condition of man!

B. God is pleased when our worship is AUTHENTIC.

- Jesus said that we must worship God “**in spirit**”.
 - * IMPORTANT NOTE: The Lord is not talking about the Holy Spirit in this phrase.
- That’s why the word “spirit” is not capitalized in the various translations, which is an interpretive issue on the part of the translators, but an accurate one.
 - > The idea here is that genuine worship flows from the inside out...from a heart that is on fire for God, in love with God, seeking to joyfully follow and obey and adore God.
- And please notice the argument of the verse carefully...the logic of the text is that “in spirit” is contrasted to “in truth”
 - > God has made our hearts with the ability to both think and feel.
 - > We have cognitive abilities, and we have emotional abilities...
 - > And yes it is true that our emotions must be controlled with right thinking
 - > Its also true that our physical bodies must be controlled by a biblically informed mind [there’s an entire message on that subject last year in the A.M. services]

Point: Worship must not just be a passive, cognitive, lifeless exercise.

- We are to worship God “in spirit”...in a way that all of the faculties of our inner person are brought to bear on the process but also in truth!
- There are different ways to worship God – we don’t all have to do it just like you!

C. God is pleased when our worship is THOUGHTFUL.

Input: What is one of the easiest times to not have your mind engaged during worship?

- ⇒ One answer: *Singing* – mindless singing – not thinking about the words, their meaning, Who you are sing to, or Who you are singing about!
- ⇒ Another answer: *Prayer* – letting your mind wonder and just go through the motions!
- Jesus referred to this as ‘vain repetitions’ – Matthew 6:7
- Next time you pray – CONCENTRATE and BE SPECIFIC
 - ✓ Don’t just ask God to bless the missionaries, but to allow them to lead a person to Christ this week
 - ✓ Be careful about the *vain repetitions* of His name: “Lord” 20-30 times in one prayer – He knows who you’re talking to at the moment!
 - > You don’t do that in talking to other people, I don’t say, “Steve can I talk to you Steve; Steve I want to know if you could do me a favor Steve, Steve I really need you to(get the point!)

D. God is pleased when our worship is PRACTICAL.

- By this we mean it’s not just about talking about God – it’s engaging in active, practical worship of God

- Another way of putting this would be: Worship must be demonstrated in ways that can be interpreted!
- One of the ways God defines His expectations is:

- **Romans 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is your spiritual service of worship.* 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.**

“We usually associate the concept of ‘sacrifice’ with something dead, but god wants you to be a living sacrifice. He wants you to live for Him! However, the problem with a living sacrifice is that it can crawl off the altar, and we often do that . We sing, “Onward Christian Soldiers” on Sunday, then go AWOL on Monday.” – p. 105

- Real worship leads to further faithfulness and obedience to our God
- One of the points that Warren makes is this: *‘Real worship costs.’*
 - > Q: What does it cost?
- One of the answers is ‘self-centeredness’ – it’s not about you!
- Some people say, ‘I really enjoy my time of worship.’ – while that’s OK, that’s not the point
- The question is: Did God enjoy that time of worship? Was He pleased?

ILLUSTRATION: P. 106 of the pastor in England who taught his people that worship was more than music, he banned all singing in their services for a period of time and taught them to worship in other ways. By that time, Matt Redman, the worship leader had written the words to, *“Heart of Worship”*:

**When the music fades, all is stripped away, And I simply come
Longing just to bring something that's of worth, That will bless Your heart.**

**I'll bring you more than a song, for a song in itself, is not what You have required.
You search much deeper within, through the way things appear.
You're looking into my heart.**

**I'm coming back to the heart of worship, And it's all about You, it's all about You,
Jesus.**

**I'm sorry Lord for the thing I've made it,
When it's all about You, it's all about You, Jesus.**

Q: How many times do we make worship about us – our preferences – what I like?

- the issue that often comes up is this: I don't seem very close to God – or what do I do . . .

II. When God Seems Distant

Input: What are some times when we tend to think that God is far away and not interested in our life?

[usually during trials – pain – disappointment – even temptation to sin!]

* 3 Suggestions to help you offset that way of thinking:

A. Focus on who God is – His unchanging nature!

Input: What specific things can I praise God for even in difficult times?

B. Trust God to keep His promises

- Numbers 23:19 **God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?**

Input: What promises of God can a person focus on that will help him during times of trial/difficulty?

Point: You focus on the truth about God – don't listen to your feelings –they are cursed by sin, as is your mind, so you need God's Word to help you through the times when God seems far away!

- He's really not:

- Hebrews 13:5 . . . **for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"**
- James 4:8 **Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**

C. Remember what God has already done for you!

Input: What would that be?

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Response:

1. Worship That _____

* 4 characteristics of worship that please God

A. God is pleased when our worship is _____.

Input: What are some truths about God we need to focus when we worship?

B. God is pleased when our worship is _____.

> The idea here is that genuine worship flows from the inside out...from a heart that is on fire for God, in love with God, seeking to joyfully follow and obey and adore God.

C. God is pleased when our worship is _____.

Input: What is one of the easiest times to not have your mind engaged during worship?

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⇒ ***Prayer***

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> 'self-centeredness'

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And I simply come
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worth, That will bless Your heart.**

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itself, is not what You have required.
You search much deeper within, through the
way things appear.
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**I'm coming back to the heart of worship, And
it's all about You, it's all about You, Jesus.
I'm sorry Lord for the thing I've made it,
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