

## God's goodness at the heart of worship

Dan Nelson

2005

"When the music fades and 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." When I first heard these lyrics to this song written by Matt Redman, a chord was struck, literally.

Worship is many things to many different people but one thing is sure, it's got to be real. I think that so many people miss out on what worship is intended to be because they don't understand it. I remember a time in my life, shortly after Shelley and I got married, that we were running late for church and were trying to decide whether we should still go. My dedication spoke out, "Let's go, we can still make the teaching, we only missed the worship." Although I still believe our resolution to go ahead, even if late, was the right decision, my comment was very telling of where my heart was. "We only missed the worship?"

Of course, you probably know I was referring to the first 30 minutes of most services that are filled with music; worshipful music of praise. I don't know how I could have spent so many years in church growing up and still carried such an unbalanced view of worship through music. God invented music and I am convinced that he has blessed humanity in this as one of his many precious endowments. To respond to this gift by using it to return honor to God seems too fitting for explanation. When I receive a gift from a friend, I return thanks. When I receive greater gifts from God, I respond with greater thanksgiving. Isn't it appropriate to express gratefulness for what we have been given?

The purpose of this article is not to convince anyone that God has blessed you, I will save that for another writing. My goal today is to encourage those who already understand that they are blessed to respond with a genuine heart; to make it a priority to both recognize God's goodness and express thankfulness. This is where worship begins. The more you understand the blessings in your life, the deeper your appreciation. Ultimately, as you come to realize God's greatness, and his goodness and love toward you, your gratitude grows into worship.

I now realize that worship involves every area of our lives, all week long. We do not merely worship on Sundays. Every decision we make to honor and glorify God

when faced with the temptation to sin is another act of worship. When we open the Bible with a heart to learn, when we pray with a heart to live his way, when we follow in the path Jesus has led us; these are also part of our worship.

I invite you to a worship-filled life, humbly presenting yourself as his living sacrifice, all week long, worshipping him in gratefulness and obedience, in the study of his word, in godly decisions, in forgiving others, in building up the body of Christ, in fulfilling his purpose for you, in following Jesus, in loving your savior; let this be the song of your heart. Let us worship him together. "Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful" (Psalm 147:1).

Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. This article was published in 2005. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



P.O. Box 1443  
Ojai, CA 93024  
(805) 640-9498  
[www.calvaryojai.org](http://www.calvaryojai.org)

### **Sunday Worship:**

**9:00 & 10:30am**  
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
195 Mahoney Ave, Oak View

### **Mid-Week Study:**

**7:00pm Thursday**  
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View