

## The Art of Following Jesus

### Part 8: Why does God want us to worship him?

Psalm 145 - [Watch online](#)

**Summary:** God created us to enjoy life. Yet so many of us just seem stuck in boredom, routine, or worse. But there is a way to enjoy the life we've been given even when things are difficult or overwhelming. It's discovered when we practice the Art of Following Jesus.

#### Main Points:

[00:37] God wants us to enjoy our lives.

[02:49] We find joy in every day by purposely practicing worship and celebration everyday.

[04:08] Dallas Willard: Worship is to see God as worthy, to ascribe great worth to him.

[06:20] Worship isn't for God... it's for us.

[07:45] When we worship we are reminding ourselves of how great, powerful, and loving our Heavenly Father really is.

[08:45] Worship allows us to put our problems in their proper perspective.

[10:36] Celebration is an outpouring of the faith that is developed in our worship.

[13:12] If following Jesus doesn't lead you to enjoy your life, you're doing it wrong.

[15:35] A person full of worship and celebration brings joy everywhere they go.

[19:51] True joy comes from seeing how great God is and enjoying how good he has been to us.

#### Invitation [17:45]

Read Revelation 5:11-14

Throughout your day thank God for who he is, what he has done, and is doing.

Choose to enjoy what he has given you.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of your favorite things? (Hobbies/Foods/Experiences/Etc)
2. Read Psalm 145. What are some of your favorite things about Jesus?
3. Jon said, "Celebration is an outpouring of the faith that is developed in our worship." What do you think he meant? How would you state that idea?
4. What are some ways you can purposely worship Jesus this week and celebrate the life he has given you?
5. How can your group pray with you this week?

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#### Transcript:

**IN:** Life is hard and then you die... False

Life is a gift we were created to enjoy. Especially when things are difficult or overwhelming.

This isn't wishful thinking, ignoring reality, or just choosing to look on the bright side of life... It is something real and deep and something we all can discover, enjoy, and share... together when we practice the Art of Following Jesus

So let's talk about it... together.

**WE:** If there is a God then we can say w/ certainty... **God wants us to enjoy our lives.**

Think about it...If he created us and everything around us (however he did it)... then he created us w/ a capacity to enjoy.

- He gave us eyes that can see so many colors... and then made a colorful world
- He gave us taste buds... and then made delicious food.
- Made flowers that smell good and gave us noses to smell them
- He created babies' laughs and gave us ears to hear them
- He created fermentation!
- Gave us hearts that need others and then gave us family/friends to enjoy

He created good things for us and then created us w/ the ability to enjoy them and in that enjoyment, experience happiness and joy.

That's amazing.

But so often we miss it... b/c life is hard and we have so much to do and worry about... but also b/c of how we tend to view our lives...

We see life as a journey of happy hills and dark valleys. We try to stay up on the happy hills as long as possible and hope to have as many hills in our life as we can.

But we know inevitably at any moment we're going to go crashing into those dark valleys... And if we think about it too much we just start worrying about the next valley and can't even enjoy the hill moments... right?

But our lives aren't compartmentalized into either highs times or low times.

In reality life is like riding a train. Out to one side are the good things we experience and out the other side are the hard and difficult and painful things. All coming at us at the same time.

There aren't good days and bad days... There are days.

And as King David wrote in Psalm 118, "This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it."

But how do we actually do that? Just look out the happy window and focus on the good and ignore the bad? Or just pretend to be tough and pretend the bad isn't as bad as it is. Nope.

**We find joy in every day by purposely practicing worship and celebration everyday.**

There's an ancient passage in the Jewish scriptures that has helped shape/transform the people of God for thousands of years...

**GOD:** The Book of Psalms has always been the song book and prayers of God's people.

For millennia it has been used as a guide to help finite humans express our thoughts and feelings to our infinite God.

These Psalms/Songs cover the whole range of human emotions and experiences...  
good/bad/happy/angry/confused/triumphant.

And in Psalm 145 David shows us how practicing worship and celebration actually lets us experience the full life Jesus offers.

**Psalm 145:1-3** An expression of worship if you've ever heard one right?... but what is worship?

**Dallas Willard:** *Worship- We engage ourselves with, dwell upon, and express the greatness, beauty, and goodness of God through thought and the use of words, rituals, and symbols...* **Worship is to see God as worthy, to ascribe great worth to him.**

It can be done alone or w/ others. And for JF's it is primarily focused on Jesus... our King, Master, Savior, God in the flesh.

When we worship God, we are filling our minds and hearts w/ wonder at who God truly is.

It can be done through music, but it can also be so much more... poetry, can be written/spoken/thought... art. Architecture- Cathedral made to draw the eye up to God and give a sense of wonder.

Sometimes it can be an emotional experience and other times it's just more of a factual statement/experience.

Sometimes it's a knee-jerk expression of "God you're awesome"...

- Like the word Hallelujah! Hebrew: Hallel- Praise and Jah- God

Other times it can be thought out and planned.

But right off the bat the question often comes... why worship? We believe these words were inspired by the HS of God... meaning God is telling us to tell him how awesome he is...

- What's that about?

Is God a narcissist that needs all the attention on him? Is he insecure and needs to be reminded about how great he is? Is he just trying to make sure we realize how small we are and how big he is to keep us in our place?

That would be a lame God who wouldn't deserve any worship.

God doesn't need our worship. He was fine w/out it since before the beginning of time.

**Worship isn't for God... it's for us.** Let me read more of this psalm and let's see... who gets the most out of this kind of worship?

**V. 4-14**

Life is hard. We have real problems that often are completely out of our control and too large for us to do anything about... but instead of leaving us to despair God gives us the ability to worship...

**When we worship we are reminding ourselves of how great, powerful, and loving our Heavenly Father really is.**

God tells us to worship him b/c through worship we can remember that he has everything under control, he sees, knows, loves, and cares for us and proved it by coming and living w/ us and then died for us and then rose for us.

Nothing and no one is out of his view or love.

He isn't waiting to punish us... he died to forgive and restore and heal and strengthen us.

Author/Professor **James Bryan Smith**- *Religion is the human search for God; Christianity is God's search for humans. We do not worship so much as we respond.*

And worship allows us to rise above our daily fears and worries by putting them in their proper perspective.

**Worship allows us to put our problems in their proper perspective.**

Worship gives us the strength and courage to stare those problems in their slimy, scaly, scary, ugly faces and say, "My Father is bigger than you, he loves me, and there's nothing you can do to take me away from him."

Think about the peace, confidence, and joy we could find by creating a rhythm of worship like this...

If everyday when we woke up we reminded ourselves of the love of God to give us another day of breath,

- When making breakfast we were reminded of the generosity of God to give us our daily food.
- When driving to work or even cleaning the house or mowing the lawn we praised God for his care in giving us the ability to work, and clean, and mow... could go on and on...

What fears would be able to overwhelm us if we were constantly being reminded how strong and loving and involved God is w/ our lives?

You want to grow your faith? You want to know Jesus more... start worshipping.

Whether it's through music/poetry/dance/workmanship/out loud/silent/alone/ or w/ others...

And when you do... it will lead to probably one of the most important and most **overlooked practices** in the Art of Following Jesus... Celebration.

When we truly worship God for who he is we can't help but celebrate the life he has given us.

If we trust that God cares for us, loves us, has everything under his control then we don't have to worry about what might/could be taken away someday.

Which means we are free to enjoy all the good things he has given us now..

**Celebration is an outpouring of the faith that is developed in our worship.**

B/c yes life is hard... but we can trust that it won't always be this way and that our Heavenly Father will take care of us.

Look... **V. 15-16**

**Dallas Willard**- *We engage in celebration when we enjoy ourselves, our life, our world, in conjunction with our faith and confidence in God's greatness, beauty, and goodness.*

When we are practicing celebration we are on the lookout for all the good God has given us and then we purposely choose to enjoy them!

Food, drink, friends, health, spouse, house, property, nature, favorite clothes, good coffee, games you love to play, music you love to listen to, movies you love to watch that stir your soul, books you love to read, hobbies and skills you enjoy. On and on.

When my dad skis he says he feels God's pleasure and feels gratitude that God allows him to enjoy what God created.

"What? That sounds sooooo..." "What... unproductive/selfish/sinful/irreligious?"

You know why it seems like that?

We've seen this done **wrong** all our lives... it permeates our culture... We've been taught to "enjoy" these things as a distraction from real life, as status symbols, or an act of worshiping ourselves, our pleasure, and our luxury... which only makes these gifts ultimately feel empty and we constantly need more and better.

They have no true satisfaction and lasting enjoyment attached to them.

There is a better way... there's the Jesus way!

We can enjoy the big/small things God has given us as a thank you and even as worship to him...

We can contently and fully enjoy the good and perfect gifts we have received. **James 1:17**

We enjoy what we have been given not to distract ourselves from our problems but to celebrate how good and generous our Heavenly Father is.

Enjoying what God has given us is a huge sign that we are truly trusting God and that we are secure in his love for us...

**If following Jesus doesn't lead you to enjoy your life, you're doing it wrong.**

I think this is something the Church has forgotten. Why Xians often have the reputation of being stuffy, boring, miserable.

We've forgotten that God gives us good things b/c he loves us and wants us to enjoy them.

It's been God's heart from the beginning... even in Israel's earliest laws God made rules to make sure his people celebrated what he gave them...

**Deut. 14:22-26** And he ain't talking about grape juice there. Obviously not saying get plastered... but, he us saying: enjoy what God has created.

Now do you see why when God came to earth as human he was accused of being a glutton and a drunk?

- He didn't overeat or get wasted but he thoroughly enjoyed what he had created... b/c as he said in the beginning... "it is good!" (Gen 1)

God's heart is a heart of celebration. It's why he created good things for us.

- How lame would it be for someone to give you a gift and not want you to enjoy it or for you to refuse to enjoy it?

Imagine if JF's were known for how much we enjoyed life? What if we were able to show people the true joys of life? What if we learned to be examples of God's true love by choosing to enjoy everything he has given us?

**A person full of worship and celebration brings joy everywhere they go.**

Next to loving our neighbor it's actually one of the main ways to "let our light shine"

B/c then people start asking questions... wanting to know how they can have what you have.

Ok but what if I'm not *feeling* it... what if what I'm facing is more than just some minor inconvenience?

Well, nowhere does Jesus say we are to just fake it. Or just try really, really hard to be happy and ignore our pain.

So what do you do? 1st acknowledge reality. Name what is hurting you, what you are mourning...

Then Lament... allow yourself to feel what you are feeling. Don't push those feelings/thoughts away, accept them. Invite God into them w/ you and tell him how you feel.

And then find at least one thing (maybe just one a day) that God has done, or is doing for you... and simply thank him for it.

I would recommend **Psalm 77.**

- **Read 2-3 and 11-12** In our mourning and lamenting there is always a "but God"

And if you're not facing something like that right now... practice now so that in the future it will be second nature to worship and celebrate even when it seems that both sides of the train are shadowed by pain and loss.

How do we practice this?

**YOU:** It's actually not that complicated.

**Read Revelation 5:11-14** Join the eternal worship of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

**Throughout your day thank God for who he is, what he has done and is doing.**

- What has come from him that you are thankful for?

**And then choose to enjoy what he has given you.**

- Take time to enjoy that sip of coffee
- Wear your favorite clothes
- Enjoy that shower
- Hug your spouse/kids
- Call a friend
- Play a game
- Go outside and take a deep breath.

What brings you joy? In honor of the one who gave you those gifts... Go enjoy it!

**WE:** God created us w/ a capacity for joy.

He wants us to be happy... and he knows the best/most lasting way for us to experience a life of joy is to have a life full of worship that leads to celebration.

Even in our darkest times we can discover peace and joy and hope.

Someday, when we are eating/drinking/laughing/talking w/ Jesus face to face everything we do will come out of worship and celebration... so let's start practicing now and invite others into worshiping and celebrating and enjoying all the good gifts he has given us.

B/c **True joy comes from seeing how great God is and enjoying how good he has been to us.**