

Is Your Worship Transparent?

Why our heart's response to God goes beyond sight or song

Not long ago my son was playing at a splash pad on a hot, humid summer day. As I watched him from a distance, I noticed a baby sitting on the edge of the play area, grasping at the air around her. Her parents laughed harder with each lunge she made. I didn't understand why until I got up and saw from a different angle what she was trying to "catch." A rainbow had formed in a misty spray of water close to her, and she was determined to capture this spectrum in her tiny hands.

Throughout the Bible God is described as "invisible," "unseen" or as a "spirit" (e.g., Col. 1:15, 1 Tim. 1:17). But it's not by accident that John also asserts that "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). Natural sunlight, as our eyes perceive it, is essentially colorless. Yet in the right conditions, when there are elements (raindrops) to refract that light, a rainbow of magnificent colors can appear. What once seemed to be nothing but thin air suddenly turns into a brushstroke of God's brilliant prism painted across the sky.

I don't know anyone who can see a rainbow without responding in sincere awe—our Creator's covenant sign is always stunning. Likewise, I don't know anyone who has truly encountered God who doesn't naturally respond in worship. That's why, as we grow in our relationship with this amazing God, worship becomes a fundamental aspect of our lives and, indeed, our reason for living. Like raindrops in a rainbow, we exist to refract God's glory throughout the earth. We were created to be transparent vessels of this endlessly colorful God.

But sometimes our understanding of true worship can get clouded. I couldn't see what that baby at the splash pad was reaching for until I shifted my perspective. Likewise, many of

us fail to see His presence all around us, so we quit worshipping. While we're stuck, crying out to feel God more, many times He simply wants us to change our viewpoint and gain a new perspective on who He is—regardless of if we can “see” Him or not.

Jesus talked about this with the woman at the well. “God is Spirit,” He said, “and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). Only moments before, He revealed the difference between these two elements: Those who worship in truth worship what they can see, yet God is looking for those who will *also* worship in an invisible realm that's just as real. Truth is often that which we can see and know; the spirit is that which we cannot see but still know. God desires the kind of worship that involves both.

Today believers are often reminded that worship is a lifestyle—and it certainly is. Unfortunately, the American church does a lousy job of showing people just how real worship can be in our everyday lives. We talk about different aspects of worship (e.g., Rom. 12:1-2, James 1:27) and even stress the “action” part of worship (particularly when it's time to pass the offering plate). Yet in practice we overemphasize musical worship and relegate corporate “worship” to four songs in a Sunday service. We tell people from the platform that they should be worshipping all week, yet too few leaders explain what that actually looks like when your kids can't stop fighting, you're about to be laid off at work and your mother just found out she has breast cancer. (Hint: It's not just about singing another verse of “How Great Is Our God.”)

The truth is, we can learn more about worship in our everyday, mundane routine than we can at a worship conference when the lights are down and the music's just right. God desires that our hearts be so in tune with His that we reflect His glory, like drops in a rainbow, as we worship in spirit *and* truth in our moments of pain, marvel, joy or frustration—yes, even as

we can't see or feel Him.

Check out July's special issue of *Charisma*, we've asked 10 worship leaders to write on 10 unique aspects of worship. Though these artists are known for leading people in musical worship, they'd be the first to tell you that what they're writing about extends far beyond notes and sounds. We'll spend eternity responding to this "invisible" God in worship, continuously discovering new attributes of Him—seen and unseen. But I pray these few pages will at least challenge you to rethink your view of worship and to draw closer to Him.

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