

David's Vow – To Behold the Beauty of the Lord

Psalm 27:4 One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple.

David's desire expressed in Psalm 27:4 is that he's going to give his heart to developing friendship and love with God.

We need to make a similar determination about our own hearts – that we will sow into our hearts with care.

Proverbs 4:23 Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.

There is also a reality of a corporate heart – Jesus speaking to the churches in Revelation addresses issues with the heart of the church as a whole. God also deals with Israel in that way.

My house will be called a house of prayer (**Isa 56:7**) is not speaking of a particular place or structure of worship, but of a prioritizing in our corporate heart of rightly relating with God.

As a house of prayer we want our corporate identity to be centered around the idea of meeting with God – in Moses' time it was literally called the Tent of Meeting. We come here with the objective of meeting with God, of ministering to Him, and of coming into agreement with what He wants.

That begins with every one of us cultivating that reality as individuals and carries over into the way that we spend our time together.

I. The Need for a Heart of Worship

A. A heart of worship is what empowers a life of obedience

John 14:15 “If you love Me, keep My commandments. 16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. 19 “A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. 20 At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. 21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” 22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?” 23 Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

1. Beholding and becoming – The more our life is given to gazing upon God, the more like Him we will become.

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Luke 11:34 The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness. 35 Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. 36 If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light.”

2. Laboring for another man's reward – Our revelation of God's infinite worth is what motivates our heart to volunteer in the Lord's service.

Psalm 110:1 The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” 2 The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! 3 Your people shall be volunteers In the day of Your power; **In the beauties of holiness**, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth.

Isaiah 6:5 ..my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.”... **8** ... “Here am I! Send me.”

B. A heart of worship is central to inviting the presence of God

1. Cultivating an atmosphere of worship is central to preparing for the Lord's presence
2. God is at home amidst worship. He dwells in the midst of ceaseless worship in heaven (**Rev 4**)

3. God inhabits praises

Psalm 22:3 But You *are* holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel.

4. The cry of longing that ultimately welcomes God to the earth is nothing like 'God this looks like fun, let's do it', but rather 'Worthy is the Lamb.'

Revelation 5:8 Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, 10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.”

C. A heart of worship is key to our testimony

1. God's glory is best reflected by the effect it has on those who draw near. In both John and Isaiah's accounts of being in the presence of God (**Rev 4, Isa 6**) what most strikes them is behavior of those who encounter God's glory.

2. The worship of the seraphim in **Isaiah 6** is what shakes the temple. God is absolutely going to shake the temple (and everything else). He wants to release a declaration of who He is so powerful that it shakes the very core of the church. That cry comes from the place of worship.

3. If we want to reflect His light we have to sit ourselves before His light.

2 Corinthians 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

4. One of God's primary objectives in sending the Spirit is to reveal Himself, so as to empower our testimony.

Acts 2:17 ‘ And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. 18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy... **21** And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.’

5. The knowledge of the glory of the Lord is going to cover the earth, and our lips will be doing the covering.

Habakkuk 2:14 For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.

6. We overcome by the power of our testimony: who do we say He is?

Revelation 12:10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast

down. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

7. A heart of worship is a powerful instrument in leading others to abandoned love for God.

Song of Songs 5:9 How is your beloved better than others, most beautiful of women? How is your beloved better than others, that you charge us so?

Her answer in 5:10-16 inspires seeking in those who hear.

Song of Songs 6:1 Where has your lover gone, most beautiful of women? Which way did your lover turn, that we may look for him with you?

- D. A heart of worship is our greatest weapon in warfare

1. Worship is at the center of the spiritual struggle

- a) Attempting to set himself as God and to steal worship was what resulted in his removal from the courts of heaven. (**Isa 14:12-15, Ezek 28:12-19**)

- b) It's what he's after in the end. Satan uses the antichrist and the false prophet to establish a global worship movement for himself.

Revelation 13:4 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" **8** All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. **15** He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

- c) Satan is called 'the accuser' (**Rev 12:10**). His primary occupation is accusing God to us, accusing us to God, accusing us to each other, etc. His motive in doing so is to steal worship.

2. God ordains praise as a weapon to silence the enemy – to silence the accusation.

Psalms 8:1 O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth, Who have set Your glory above the heavens! **2** Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, Because of Your enemies, That You may silence the enemy and the avenger.

3. A heart of worship is a heart unoffended. If we've cultivated worship in our hearts for who God is and what He does then we cannot be offended when He arises. This is in fact, the very picture the Bible presents. In the midst of the chaos of God arising to judge the earth there is a people who love Him and welcome Him with worship (**Isa 24:14-16,25; Rev 5,7:9-10,11:15-18,14:1-5,15:1-4,19:1-7; Psa 96,98**).

2 Corinthians 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, **5** casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ

4. God has given us worship as a weapon in our hands to partner with Him

Psalms 149:6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, And a two-edged sword in their hand, **7** To execute vengeance on the nations, And punishments on the peoples; **8** To bind their kings with chains, And their nobles with fetters of iron; **9** To execute on them the written judgment—This honor have all His saints.

II. The Kind of Worship God Seeks

- A. God is searching for voluntary (lovesick) worship that overflows from a heart in love

1. The idea of a dwelling place where He would be worshiped continuously was so sacred to God that He refused to order it.

2 Samuel 7:7 Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever

spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?’

2. It was David's freewill offering to the Lord because he had set his affection on the house of the Lord.

1 Chronicles 29:3 Moreover, because I have set my affection on the house of my God, I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, my own special treasure of gold and silver

3. It was built on the freewill offerings of the people.

1 Chronicles 29:6 Then the leaders of the fathers' houses, leaders of the tribes of Israel, the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the officers over the king's work, offered willingly... **9** Then the people rejoiced, for they had offered willingly, because with a loyal heart they had offered willingly to the LORD; and King David also rejoiced greatly.

4. When God restored the temple in Ezra's day again it was volunteer labor and voluntary giving.

Ezra 1:5 Then the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, with all whose spirits God had moved, arose to go up and build the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem. **6** And all those who were around them encouraged them with articles of silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with precious things, besides all that was willingly offered.

5. The prophet Malachi (most likely speaking just after Ezra's day) soundly rebuked the people for profaning the house of the Lord by calling it a duty and a burden by their actions.

Malachi 1:6 “A son honors his father, And a servant his master. If then I am the Father, Where is My honor? And if I am a Master, Where is My reverence? Says the LORD of hosts To you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, ‘In what way have we despised Your name?’ **7** “You offer defiled food on My altar, But say, ‘In what way have we defiled You?’ By saying, ‘The table of the LORD is contemptible.’ **8** And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, Is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?” Says the LORD of hosts.

12 “But you profane it, In that you say, ‘The table of the LORD is defiled; And its fruit, its food, is contemptible.’ **13** You also say, ‘Oh, what a weariness!’ And you sneer at it,” Says the LORD of hosts. “And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; Thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand?” Says the LORD. **14** “But cursed be the deceiver Who has in his flock a male, And takes a vow, But sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished—For I am a great King,” Says the LORD of hosts, “And My name is to be feared among the nations.

6. God would rather we shut down our worship out of duty.

Malachi 1:10 “Who is there even among you who would shut the doors, So that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain? I have no pleasure in you,” Says the LORD of hosts, “Nor will I accept an offering from your hands.

7. But He will jealously restore for Himself across the earth voluntary, lovesick worship.

Malachi 1:11 For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; In every place incense shall be offered to My name, And a pure offering; For My name shall be great among the nations,” Says the LORD of hosts.

8. **God's heart in speaking to them about their empty worship is not to condemn them, but to awaken longing for the real thing so that He can bring it to pass.**

B. Worship in spirit and truth

1. Jesus, when questioned about the proper place to worship, says that what the Father is seeking is not worship in a particular location, but worship in spirit and truth.
John 4:19 The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.” 21 Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 *God is Spirit*, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”
2. I'm convinced that this passage is God's answer to the empty worship that He describes in Isaiah.
Isaiah 29:13 The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.
3. God's response to empty worship is truly awesome. With no condemnation, He makes provision for the real thing.
Isaiah 29:14 Therefore once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish."
4. Jesus – God's provision for true worship
John 4:25 The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.” 26 Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am *He*.”
John 17:25-26

III. Two Essential Tools for Worship in Spirit and Truth

- A. Truth – using the Word of God as the foundation of our worship
 1. One of the problems that God identifies in Israel's empty worship in Isaiah's time is that they have become illiterate – they've lost the ability to read the Word.
Isaiah 29:11 The whole vision has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one who is literate, saying, “Read this, please.” And he says, “I cannot, for it is sealed.” 12 Then the book is delivered to one who is illiterate, saying, “Read this, please.” And he says, “I am not literate.”
 2. God wants to open it up to us and so to give us joy in our worship.
Isaiah 29:18 In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, And the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness. 19 The humble also shall increase their joy in the LORD, And the poor among men shall rejoice In the Holy One of Israel.
 3. One of the primary ways for that to happen is to make the Word our prayer and worship manual – a tool for conversation with God.
- B. Spirit – open dialog with the Spirit of God within us.
 1. God also points to their attempts to hide the thoughts of their hearts.
Isaiah 29:15 Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the LORD, And their works are in the dark; They say, “Who sees us?” and, “Who knows us?” 16 Surely you have things turned around! Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay; For shall the thing made say of him who made it, “He did not make me”? Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it, “He has no understanding”?
 2. The realization that God sees the heart, that His Spirit dwells within us and wants to interact with our spirit, not just to hear our words is what keeps from drawing near with our lips while staying distant with our hearts.

3. The point is not that we only worship when we feel that life of worship on our hearts, but rather that as we give ourselves continually to a life of worship in every season we would partner with the Spirit to awaken that reality when it's not present. When we don't feel that good theme overflowing from our hearts, we acknowledge it, ask for His help and begin to meditate on His goodness and dialog with Him about His greatness.
- C. Conversing with the Spirit concerning the truth about God is how we unlock our hearts to worship. When God reveals God in the Word, our hearts begin to burn.
- Luke 24 (The road to Emmaus) 27** And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. **32** And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"
- D. The new song is at the center of God's purposes for worship. It is that good theme that overflows out of a heart filled with love (**Psa 45:1**).
1. Paul describes the new song as the way to be filled with the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. **18** And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, **19** speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,
 2. The new song recaptures the central heart of worship in the conversation of our heart with God, about God. It is the overflow of our heart that emerges from the place of gazing.
 3. Some starting places for singing:
 - a) Worship songs – take them and begin to put them into your own words, get into what they really mean to you.
 - b) Scripture – take a verse and just hang it for several days (or weeks). Some good passages are listed in the next section.

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.
 - c) Conversation with the Lord – resume whatever you were last talking about with the Lord in your devotional or prayer time.
 - d) Sing in the Spirit

1 Corinthians 14:15 What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.
 - e) Make melody in your heart (**Eph 5:19**)
 4. The difficulty of the new song is that it exposes both of those problems that God identifies in Isaiah. When we actually start talking with the Lord we realize that we don't know His language very well and that we don't have a whole lot to talk about. But if we will embrace that emptiness, we gain the place of a heart flowing in praise that God wants for us.

IV. Material for Worship

This is (obviously) an incomplete list, but some things to be looking for as we read the Word and as we're searching for passages to begin to worship Him out of. We can often read through passages of the Bible and miss the worship that lies locked within them – the revelation of God that lies behind them. When scripture becomes just stories, or just commands, we miss its central purpose – to reveal God to our hearts. Practical application is actually a secondary purpose that overflows from our hearts being stirred in love for God. We need to be asking as we read, what does this passage reveal about:

- A. Who He is – God's eternal attributes: His omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, holiness, beauty, eternal nature. Gazing directly at God (**Rev 1,4,5; Isa 6; Dan 7; Ezek 1**).
- B. What's on His heart – God's heart is a huge realm of His glory. It's one reason why prayer is so essential to worship and vice versa. If we're not seeking out God's heart we are missing a whole realm of worship. God's heart for justice, and His heart for mercy are an endless source of praise. (**Ex 33:18->Ex 34:7, Jer 9:23-24, Mic 7:18, Psa 145, Isa 42, Psa 118**)
- C. How He leads – God's sovereign control over the course of history and the wisdom of the way He has ordained things (**Isa 46:9-11, Rom 11:33-36, Eph 1:1-12**).
 - 1. Also, personally how He has led you and shepherded you. (**Psa 23**)
- D. How He loves (**Song of Songs, Rom 8, Eph 5:25-32, 1 Cor 13, 1 John 4**)
 - 1. How His heart moves in response to us – worship Him for the way that He carries His heart with regards to us. The emotions of God and how He relates to us unlocks a whole realm of worship.
 - 2. How our heart moves in response to Him – worship Him for the way that He touches our hearts.
- E. How He judges – one of the things the four living creatures gaze upon is the wisdom of God's judgment (Rev 6). The way that God simultaneously exercises mercy and judgment is stunning. (**Rev 15:3-4, Rev 11:17-18, Isa 16:5, Jer 9:23-24, Psa 96, Psa 98**)
- F. What He's done – the history of God's marvelous deeds is a testimony to who He is and what He's like. Every story tells us something about God. (**Ex 15, Psa 136, Phil 2:5-11, Ps 103**)
 - 1. Also, His testimony in you – the work that He has done in your life.
- G. What He's going to do – both in this age and eternity. What God has in store for us is a mystery beyond our comprehension that God wants to reveal to us – 2 Cor 2 (**Isa 25, Rev 7:10-17, Rev 19:6-7, John 17:20-26**)
 - 1. Also, His promises to you personally – **2 Samuel 7:18-27** David responds to God's covenant with him by praising God for the greatness of His promises.
 - 2. Any and all of God's promises are fair game for worship, as are all of the apostolic prayers. They are things that God desires to bring to pass, and most certainly will.
- H. Who we are – our very existence is to the praise of His glory. The existence of a people who God has enabled to relate with Him through grace is a great mystery worthy of worship. (**Psa 8, Rev 5:9-10, 1 Pet 2:9, Eph 1:1-12**)
Ephesians 1:11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, 12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

Let's take up the awesome challenge to give to the Lord the glory due His name.

Psalm 96:1 Oh, sing to the LORD a new song! Sing to the LORD, all the earth.

4 For the LORD is great and greatly to be praised...

8 Give to the LORD the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come into His courts.