

WORSHIP THE LORD

WORSHIP AND SURRENDER

Story

There's a story of a little girl who worked very hard (doing extra chores) to earn a couple dollars to purchase a plastic pearl necklace that she saw at the store one day while shopping with her mother. The pearl necklace was the little girl's most prized possession and one night when her father was putting her to sleep he asked her, "do you love me?" The little girl replied that of course she loved her father, and to that her father said, "Then may I have your pearl necklace?" The little girl told her father that he could have her favorite toy, but to please not take her pearl necklace. The father told the little girl that he loved her and it was okay, and to keep her toy and her pearl necklace. This exchange went on a few more times and each time the daughter offered her father other things that she loved and asked that he take anything but her pearl necklace. Every time the father assured his daughter that he loved her and told her to keep her pearl necklace and all of the things she loved. One night, when her father came in to say goodnight, with tears in her eyes and her lip trembling the little girl handed her plastic pearl necklace to her father and told him that he could have it. The father took the necklace from the little girl and pulled out a beautiful strand of real pearls that he gave her in return.

Before we dive in...

Surrendering things to our heavenly Father can be scary, especially when they're things that we worked so hard to earn or things that we love deeply. Yet, we're told to surrender all things to God in faith—knowing that what He has for us is better. What are some things that feel too big or scary to surrender to God?

The Place to Worship

Prior to Jesus' arrival in Israel, God's people believed that there were only a few specific places they had to go to worship the Lord. In John 4:23-24, a Samaritan woman argued that her ancestors worshipped on the very mountain she was on, while sitting with Jesus, but that the Jews said worship must be in Jerusalem. To this, Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem." And He goes on to say that true worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth. Worship in the Spirit comes from within, from the Holy Spirit living and working in us—this was only made possible by the sacrifice that Jesus made, going to the cross and suffering for our sins. Worship in truth comes from knowing and obeying the Word of God. The internal relationship between the Spirit living in us and the Word working through us creates in us a heart that can take the posture of true worship anywhere, not just in one place.

Share: What role, if any, has worship played in your life? And where has been the most natural place for you to worship?

Surrender to a Good God

“Beloved friends, what should be our proper response to God’s marvelous mercies? I encourage you to surrender yourselves to God to be his sacred, living sacrifices. And live in holiness, experiencing all that delights his heart. For this becomes your genuine expression of worship.” Romans 12:1 TPT

In this scripture, Paul is expressing that the proper response to the mercy that God has shown us is worship. At the end of Romans 11, Paul reminds us that no one deserves God’s mercies—no one has given to God that He should then give to us—He chose to give everything to us, for from Him and through Him and for Him are all things! And though we are sinners, He gives us mercy because He loves us and His Word says, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11.

Share: What comes to mind when you hear that God’s plans for you are good—that He wants to prosper you and give you hope and a future? Be honest, there’s no right or wrong answer.

Worship as a Posture

The Bible is full of scripture inviting us to worship God, but what does that actually look like? Worship is a posture we take when we come before God, heart, soul, and mind in complete reverence and awe of who He is and everything within us is praising and glorifying Him. Therefore, worship can come in many forms—song, prayer, dance, painting, rejoicing and thanksgiving— He delights in all true worship.

Thinking back to the story of the little girl with the fake pearl necklace, let’s picture her actual physical posture as she surrenders her necklace to her father—hands open, palms up... an offering. In this posture, she is also open to receive the gift of real pearls that her father replaces her offering with. This physical posture, first came from the posture of her heart. As hard, scary, and sad as it was for the little girl to give her father what he was asking of her, she had to come to a place where she trusted him enough to give him the thing she loved the most—without knowing why he wanted it or what he planned to do with it. Reaching that place of trust with her father allowed her to take the posture of surrender. We can imagine that the little girl was able to trust her father because she knows him. She knows his character, his history, and most importantly she knows that he loves her.

*Share: What do we know about our heavenly Father based on His Word?
What do you think are some benefits of surrendering the things we hold close to God?*

Take Action

Knowing God’s character, history and seeing His depth of love for us deepens and enriches our worship. This relationship of being known, loved, and forgiven leads us to surrender. With surrender comes new life and overflows into worship. The Bible is full of scripture that describes God’s character. Take some time to read these following verses and respond in prayer and worship.

Read: 1 John 4:8, Hebrews 13:8, 2 Peter 3:9, 1 John 1:5, Isaiah 40:28, James 1:17, John 3:16-17, Matthew 6:26

Say a prayer of surrender. It could be the prayer on the next page, or one from your own heart.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You that You are patient and unchanging—my strength, my comforter, my provider of all things.

Thank You that You are love and that You loved me first, giving Your Son for me so that I could know You and be close to You.

I confess that surrender is hard and scary and that most times I would rather hold a tight grip on what I have and what I know rather than release it to You to do Your will in my life.

I believe that You are good and that Your plans for me are good even when they don't feel good or they look different from what I expected, wanted, or pictured.

Even when I can't see what You have for me, I believe that Your way is better than my way, please help me with my unbelief.

Make me a true worshipper—one who worships in Spirit and in truth—reveal to me how that looks in my life.

You are so worthy. Thank You that You found me worthy.

I want to know You more, I invite You to reveal Yourself to me in ways I have never experienced before.

I take this posture of surrender, lip trembling and heart trusting, offering this prayer up to You in Your loving, powerful, beautiful name. Amen.
