A LIFE OF WORSHIP





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The Church is the primary atmosphere where God has promised that believers will experience and be recognized by his presence. The church is not a building, a sanctuary or a set time for a gathering, but the assembling of Christ's followers who come together to worship him, learn from his word and build a community where Jesus is always found at the center. A true heart cry as well as life verses for our church, and me personally, are found in Exodus 33 where Moses is pleading for the continued presence of God to rest upon the nation of Israel:

Exodus 33:15-16 (NIV)

Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"

The presence of God is what sets us apart or distinguishes us as his own special people. There are so many amazing promises in the Word connected to living in the presence of God that I determined years ago, in agreement with Moses, "if your presence does not take the lead, let's call this trip off right now." (Vs. 15 The Message)

One of our top values as a church is the presence of God. We believe "Lives flourish in God's presence so we will make a place for people to experience him". So let me state the obvious: God's presence is found in the place of true worship and true worship is the atmosphere of heaven. This book and the video teachings are practical tools for you and your small group to experience and see an increase of the presence of God in your lives. As you study, listen, worship together and discuss all the benefits and aspects of worship, you will find yourself hungry for more of the Lord. A greater awareness of his presence will begin to rest upon you and you will develop a longing to grow as a lifelong-worshiper. So I invite you to jump into a A Life of Worship small group and make a place for an increase of the presence of God in your life!

Pursuing Him,

Dave and Donna Patterson Lead Pastors, The Father's House

GETTING THE MOST FROM THIS SERIES

"Make the most of every opportunity...." Ephesians 5:16

Welcome, we're glad you have signed up for an *A Life of Worship* small group. Our desire is for you to experience the maximum impact and benefit from your participation in this six-week series. Here are a few keys that will make this a win for your spiritual growth and an outline of what to expect during the worship experience sessions.

- **Set aside the time.** The very act of prioritizing the time and setting aside a night to gather with other believers to go deeper in your worship life is in itself worship! Please do your best to attend all six sessions as they build on each other and your involvement helps create community within the group.
- Come ready to participate. This is an interactive experience where joining in with the worship team and participating in the discussion will be vital for the success of the group.

Outline of Each Session

A typical group session for *A Life of Worship* study will last approximately one hour and 15 minutes and include the following sections:

1. Coming Together

The foundation for spiritual growth is an intimate connection with God and his family. So we will start each session with two simple questions to encourage interaction, including a brief review of the previous week.

2. Learn & Worship Together / Video Teaching Segment

After the opening discussion we will join the worship team and Pastor Dave for a time of worship, teaching and testimony. During this time we encourage you to:

- Take notes from the teaching segment in the space provided in your workbook.
- Write down any thoughts, words or impressions God is speaking to you during the evening.
- Join in with the team as we all lift our voices in prayer, praise and worship.

3. Growing Together

Here is where we will discuss and process, as a group, the teaching and worship we experienced. The group leader will lead the discussion as we apply the scriptural insights brought out in the teaching segment. Our aim is for this study to be practical in it's application and help people become life-long worshipers.

4. Daily Reflections

Each week on the Daily Reflections pages we provide Scriptures to read and reflect on between group meetings. You'll then have a chance to journal your response to what you've read. Each day is designed to take about 10 minutes. Don't get in a hurry; take enough time to hear God's direction and wait on Him.

5. Weekly Memory Verse

For each session we have provided a memory verse that emphasizes an important truth from the session. This is an optional exercise, but we believe it's important. The verses for all six sessions are listed in the appendix.

HIS PRESENCE IS FOR YOU ENCOUNTERING GOD A LIFE OF WORSH

MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 100:4:

Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise.

Our days are filled with a variety of encounters. We meet up with friends and family for a meal or a cup of coffee, we're slowed by traffic and we wait in lines; we encounter hilarious moments, resistance and occasional setbacks. Such are the experiences common to life. But here's a million dollar question: Can we encounter God?

God is unseen and it's rare to hear his audible voice, but is it possible to experience the nearness of God, his presence, on a daily basis? Wouldn't that affect every other encounter we face during the day?

As we will see in *A Life of Worship*, we were created to experience the presence and nearness of God and the vehicle by which God has chosen to bring himself into close proximity is our worship. When we adopt a lifestyle of worship it will lead us into a lifetime of encountering God. In his presence we will receive renewed vision, strength, hope... all we need.



COMING TOGETHER

As we begin our first small group session, let's take a few minutes to make sure everyone knows each other's names. We'll open with a couple of questions to set us up for the session.

- 1. What prompted you to take part in this study? What do you hope to gain from this group?
- 2. Which of these most closely reflect your understanding of worship and why?
- a. It's the warm up to the speaker's message.
- b. The songs at church are okay, but it's not the type of music I listen to during the week.
- c. I look forward to worship both at church and on my own during the week.
- d. It's growing on me.
- e. I've received specific vision for my life during times of worship.



LEARN & WORSHIP TOGETHER

Video Session 1

Throughout the sessions in *A Life of Worship* we will join a living room worship setting, hear a teaching by Pastor Dave as well as stories from others whose lives have been changed in the presence of God during worship, and we'll actively participate in the worship experience. Even if singing in your small group setting feels like a stretch personally, we encourage you to take the chance. The host will turn up the volume to allow everyone to sing, but not stand out in an uncomfortable way.

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GROWING TOGETHER

In the questions that follow, we will review and expand on the teaching we just experienced.

- 1. Pastor Dave identified three aspects of God's presence. Discuss the uniqueness of each one.
 - omnipresence
 - manifest presence
 - personalized presence
- 2. Have someone in your group read Psalm 100. Why do you think thanksgiving and praise are the keys to inviting the presence of God?
- 3. What are some of the hurdles that keep us from intentionally praising God, whether by yourself, in your small group or at church? How can we overcome these?
- 4. The idea of spontaneous worship may be new to some in your group. Have you ever felt like you don't know what to say in those moments of worship? Discuss ways we can grow in our "thanksgiving and praise" vocabulary.
- 5. How different would our church look if every person made it a priority to encounter God through personal times of worship?

This is a wonderful time to welcome a few friends into your group. Is there someone on your mind who might enjoy this study focus and group interaction? Consider giving them a call this week. The Daily Reflections section is designed to keep you connected with developing a lifestyle of worship as you go throughout your week. Each day's reading and response are intended to take about 10 minutes, which should fit into even the busiest schedule. Look forward to sharing what the Lord shows you with your group next week.

DAILY REFLECTIONS

Take time between now and your next small group meeting to dig into God's word. Each day has a selected passage related to this session's theme. Journal your reflections in the space provide.

Day 1: James 4:8a

Come close to God, and God will come close to you.

There are three main aspects of God's presence.

- 1 **His omnipresence:** It's a big word with a big reality, but simply stated God is everywhere, all the time.
- 2 **His manifest presence:** This is God's promise that when his people are gathered in his name, he will be with them. The Holy Spirit shows up and we experience his nearness in a tangible and concentrated way.
- 3 **His personalized presence:** It gets personal here. This is when God speaks to you; he reveals his love to you. He brings direction and revelation to you.

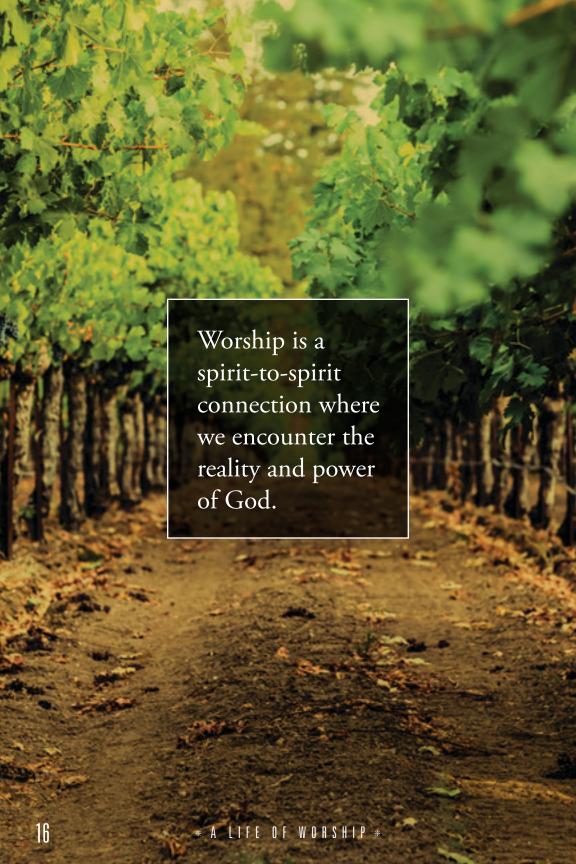
God longs to come close and surround you with his nearness. Our lives flourish in his presence and God's heart is for you to abound in every way. When we draw close to God by our words and with our song, James assures, God will respond. Speak to him as to a friend and invite his presence into your day. Value his nearness, be mindful of his omnipresence and pray for his manifest and personal presence to be your reality.

Response

Take a few minutes now to come close to God in prayer.

The original Hebrew word for "PRAISE" in Psalm 100, describes a spontaneous, heartfelt song that comes from our spirit to God's.





Day 2: Psalm 100

Response

Shout with joy to the LORD, all the earth! Worship the LORD with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy. Acknowledge that the LORD is God! He made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation.

How do we enter into the presence of God? How do we move from the "God is everywhere" reality into the "God is near, even right here!" reality? As this psalm directs, we simply, "Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise." Lifting thanks and praise to God creates the best possible atmosphere to encounter him. This can be singing or simply speaking praise, but the outcome is the same.

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Day 3: Kings 3:14-16

Elisha replied, "As surely as the LORD Almighty lives, whom I serve, I wouldn't even bother with you except for my respect for King Jehoshaphat of Judah. Now bring me someone who can play the harp." While the harp was being played, the power of the LORD came upon Elisha, and he said, "This is what the LORD says: This dry valley will be filled with pools of water!

And Elisha began to prophesy...

We believe when God allows us to encounter his manifest presence, people can be healed, prophetic words are spoken and a long list of other God-activity is possible. This is when our finite, natural reality intersects his infinite, supernatural reality. He buries hope deep within our hearts, covers us in joy in the most hopeless of situations and confirms that he is real in our lives. Encountering God in worship transforms a bad day into a day of hope and ushers in vision and breakthrough into bleak situations.

Have you experienced a moment in worship when God supernaturally

Response

impressed a message into your heart? If so, write it out below. If not, what pa of your life would you like the Lord to address? As you go about your day, invite him to speak to this specific area of your life.		
1		





Day 4: Psalm 33:1-3

Let the godly sing for joy to the LORD; it is fitting for the pure to praise him. Praise the LORD with melodies on the lyre; make music for him on the ten-stringed harp. Sing a new song of praise to him; play skillfully on the harp, and sing with joy.

Through our praise, God gives us the power to initiate an encounter with him. There are many pre-written songs at our disposal: songs from past generations and fresh ones from today. But differing from those, the word "praise" in Psalm 100 speaks of a song of praise *from your heart*. It's *your* spontaneous, written-on-the-spot praise. Psalm 33 calls it a "new song". In the video portion, Pastor Dave explained the spontaneous song and we had the opportunity to join the worship community. Give it another try today. The melody can be original or borrowed, but the lyrics are uniquely yours. Like most new practices the more you try it the more comfortable you'll become, so don't let discouragement grab hold if it feels awkward. God loves the spontaneous song.

Response			
Turn the expressions of love and gratitude resident within your heart into a			
spontaneous song of praise.			

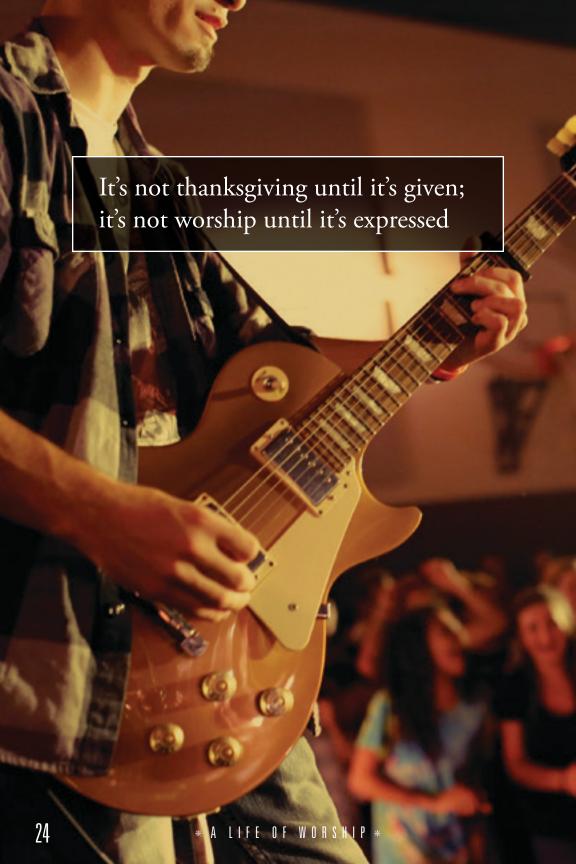
Day 5: John 4:23

But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way.

We catch a glimpse into the extreme value placed on worship when we consider the Heavenly Father is *looking* for true worshipers. Worship is far beyond attending church and singing songs, rather it's a spirit-to-spirit connection we have with the living God. We get to encounter the reality and power of God through our worship.

Will God identify you as a worshiper? How has your understanding of worshi			orship	
been challenged or stretched this		,		r
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Day 6: Isaiah 40:29-31

He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

A life of worship leads to a lifetime of encountering God. If we live without pursuing God's nearness, we will eventually run out of strength and even faith. We're leaky vessels. God pours himself into us, we are renewed; we run back out into the fast lanes of life and before long — we leak again. It's not failure; it's an expected cycle that fosters dependence as opposed to self-reliance. The gospels record that Jesus often slipped away from the crowds to be with his Heavenly Father in prayer. If the Son of God was deeply dependent upon his time with his Heavenly Father, how much more should we be?

Do you identify with this cycle of running dry, so to speak? What has been your

Response

source of renewal? How has the focus on worship this week made a difference ir your overall energy and attitude?		
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CHANGING THE ATMOSPHERE

THE POWER OF PRAISE



MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 22:3:

Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

Life holds a strange dose of uncertainty, doesn't it? We know change is here to stay, but sometimes when life pitches the proverbial curve ball, we're pushed straight to our heels. How do you respond when your atmosphere is brimming with uncertainty? Where do you turn when difficult news hits your doorstep, when you're let down or when you did everything in your power to protect but it wasn't enough?

For some the first response is "Oh God!" which might be an expression of desperation or maybe accusation. But for King David, his cry to the Lord in Psalm 7:6, "wake up, my God, and bring justice," was an invitation.

What difference would it make if God entered your world of details and questions? He longs for the invitation to reorder the atmosphere through your worship. You were never meant to go at it alone; his presence is for you and when he comes he will bring change. We'll uncover this reality in today's session.



COMING TOGETHER

If someone new has joined your group this week, please take a few minutes to introduce yourselves. Let's begin with a question designed to set us up for the session.

- 1. What is the worst weather storm you've ever experienced?
- 2. What lasting idea from the last session has been on your mind this past week that you would be willing to mention to the rest of the group?



LEARN & WORSHIP TOGETHER

Video Session 2

Throughout the sessions in *A Life of Worship* we are joining a living room worship setting, hearing a teaching by Pastor Dave as well as stories from people whose lives have been transformed in the presence of God during worship. We'll also be invited to actively participate in the worship experience. Even if singing in your small group setting feels like a stretch personally, we encourage you to take the chance. The host will turn up the volume to allow everyone to sing, but not stand out in an uncomfortable way. Let's get started.

Use the space below for notes, questions, or comments you want to bring up the discussion later.				

Acts 16:23-26

They were severely beaten, and then they were thrown into prison. The jailer was ordered to make sure they didn't escape. So the jailer put them into the inner dungeon and clamped their feet in the stocks. Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening. Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors immediately flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off!

GROWING TOGETHER

In the questions that follow, we will review and expand on the teaching we just experienced.

- 1. "We all face days and seasons where we are either defined by our circumstances, or we rise above them and worship God through the storms." What do you think Pastor Dave meant by this statement?
- 2. Let's look again at the story of Paul and Silas. Have someone read Acts 16:23-26 from the left.

What were the literal effects that came as a result of their worship?

- 3. How might these effects parallel what can happen spiritually when we praise God?
- 4. What effect did Paul and Silas' praise have on the other people in this story?
- 5. How might your praise affect people within your circle of influence?
- 6. Pastor Dave highlighted two steps we must take in order to move forward in victory through a life storm:
 - a. Make a decision to worship based on an act of faith, not emotions.
 - b. Release your song of praise.

Discuss why these are important.

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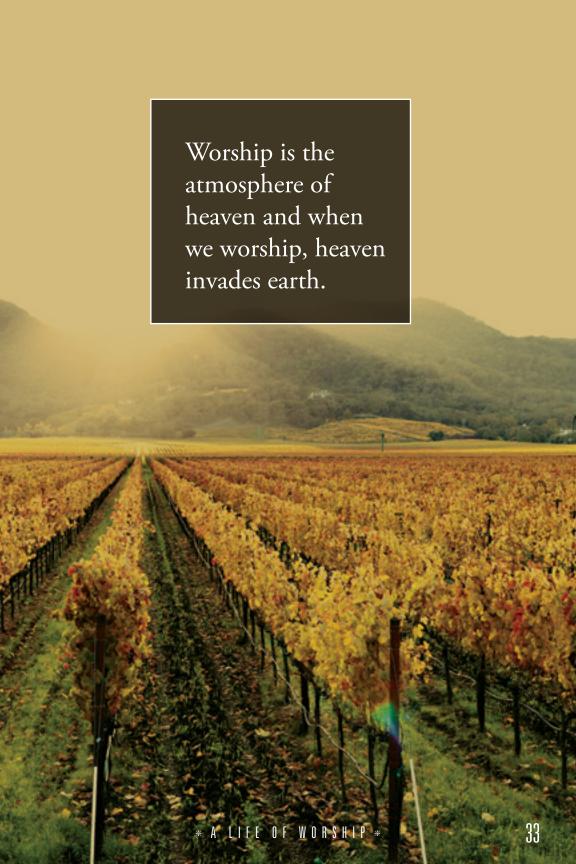
Day 1: Psalm 22:3

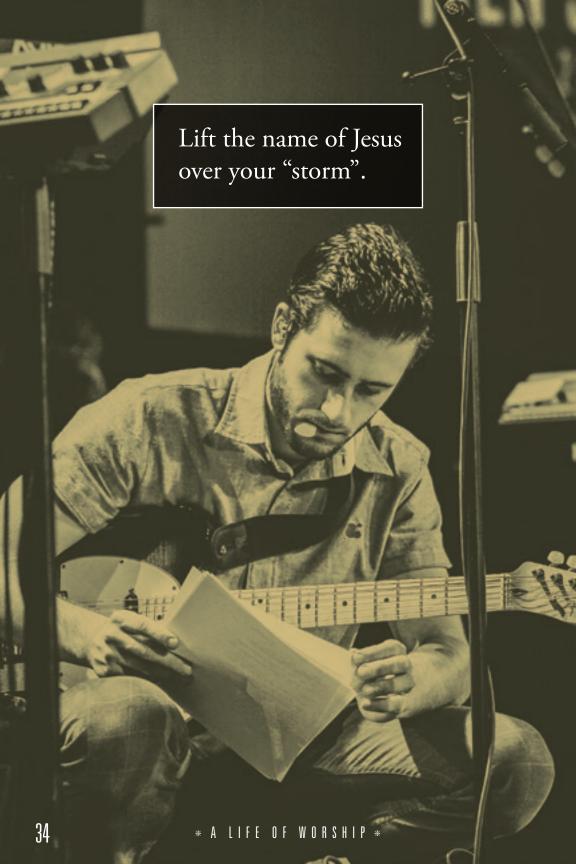
Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

In the original language, enthroned is the word *yashab*, which means to inhabit or rest upon. The word for praises is *tehilliah*, a musical term for a song of praise. When a storm of uncertainty swirls about us, we can invite the presence and power of God to come near and rest upon our situation and our minds by simply offering songs that exalt the Lord.

Response

how it will resolve? Picture God's throne established in the midst of that issu Using your own words, begin to worship and exalt God over this area. Write out below any impressions you receive from God.		





Day 2: Psalm 22:1-2

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? Why are you so far away when I groan for help? Every day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer. Every night I lift my voice, but I find no relief.

A common ingredient often found in adverse seasons is the sense that God has abandoned us or at the minimum gone silent. How can you worship during those times? The key is to realize your worship isn't based on emotions and it may go against the grain to what comes naturally. Lifting your voice in praise during difficult seasons is a decision, an act of your will and an expression of your faith. Like other areas of life when you invest without seeing an immediate return, you do it because it's wise and it's right. As you're faithful to do your part, you can be assured God will do his. You may not feel the breakthrough, but God has promised to inhabit the praises of his people.

In what sense do you identify with King David's desperate expression of feeling

Response

diversity chancinged you to grow this week:	God had abandoned him? How has the idea of offering praise in the face of adversity challenged you to grow this week?		

Day 3: Psalm 22:4-5, 9-10

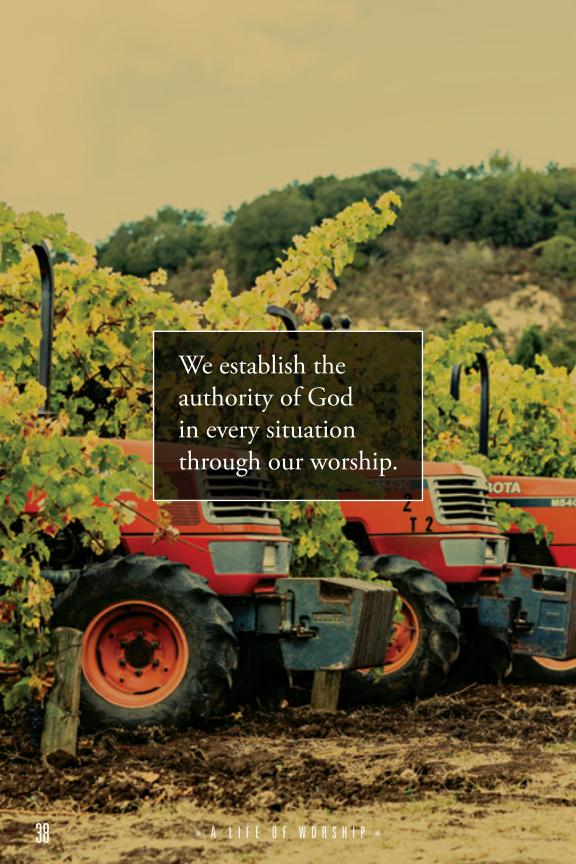
Response

Our ancestors trusted in you, and you rescued them. They cried out to you and were saved. They trusted in you and were never disgraced. Yet you brought me safely from my mother's womb and led me to trust you at my mother's breast. I was thrust into your arms at my birth. You have been my God from the moment I was born.

As David continues in this psalm, he transitions from "why have you abandoned me" to reminding himself of God's faithfulness. When you're hard-pressed for words to sing, follow David's example and draw from the well of past victories when God's provision was your only lifeline.

What are three examples of when God came through for you and brought the provision, the answer or deliverance?		
VI.		





Day 4: Psalm 22:19-21

O LORD, do not stay far away! You are my strength; come quickly to my aid! Save me from the sword; spare my precious life from these dogs. Snatch me from the lion's jaws and from the horns of these wild oxen.

King David experienced many days when enemies surrounded him. He knew aloneness and the sense of overwhelm. Fatigued and without options, David threw himself at God's mercy. He voiced his vulnerability and frustration; David was brutally honest if anything and you can be as well. The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 15:4 that the stories and truths found in the ancient scriptures were written for our instruction, to give us hope and encouragement. David's example of honesty is for us.

Response
The presence of the Lord is a place of safety for you, not a place where you need
to perform. Express your own vulnerability to the Lord today.

Day 5: Psalm 22:22-24

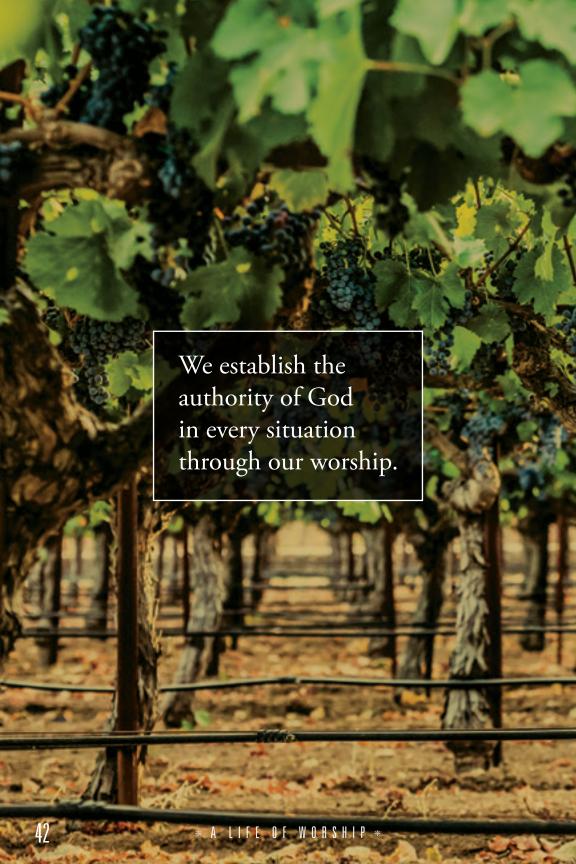
I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters. I will praise you among your assembled people. Praise the LORD, all you who fear him! Honor him, all you descendants of Jacob! Show him reverence, all you descendants of Israel! For he has not ignored or belittled the suffering of the needy. He has not turned his back on them, but has listened to their cries for help.

What we meditate on will drive our speech and our actions. Jesus said the words we speak come from the heart. As we continue through this psalm, King David sets the example of exalting God's name, his character, prior to the rescue. David's mind and his mouth are fixed on the assurance that God has heard his cry for help and the Lord will not ignore or belittle David's difficulty. One of the most challenging times from which to worship is the time of the *middle* – the time between the crisis onset and the deliverance. Worship from a place of faith knowing he has heard you.

Response

reverence to God today in your time of worship. Praise him knowing he has		
heard you today.		





Day 6: Hebrews 13:15

Response

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that openly profess his name.

Depending on the season of life, praise may feel like a costly sacrifice, but God has promised to dwell within that praise – so give it. Don't let any situation rob you of your ability to sing out. Praise is your invitation for God's presence and power to change your atmosphere. Remember King David's declaration: I will praise.

Have you experienced extreme seasons? How did or	how could have worship
affected those times?	Ī

THIS TIME IT'S PERSONAL

44

MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 91:1:

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

Do you remember making forts in the living room when you were a kid? Sofa cushions, blankets, end tables, chairs - everything was used to create a private fortress where secrets were told and anything seemed possible. How about now as an adult, have you ever wished there was still a place like that — simple in design yet a place to rest and dream again? A place distanced from all the demands? Well there is and it's for you.

In today's session, we'll focus on what the Bible refers to as "the secret place". It's a place King David frequented, where Jesus often slipped away to and where he encouraged his followers to go.



COMING TOGETHER

Let's begin with a question designed to set us up for the session.

- 1. When you've had a full day and you need to unwind, what do you like to do? What is it about the place or activity that draws you there?
- 2. Who would like to describe one significant discovery you've made in the first two sessions that stands out to you?

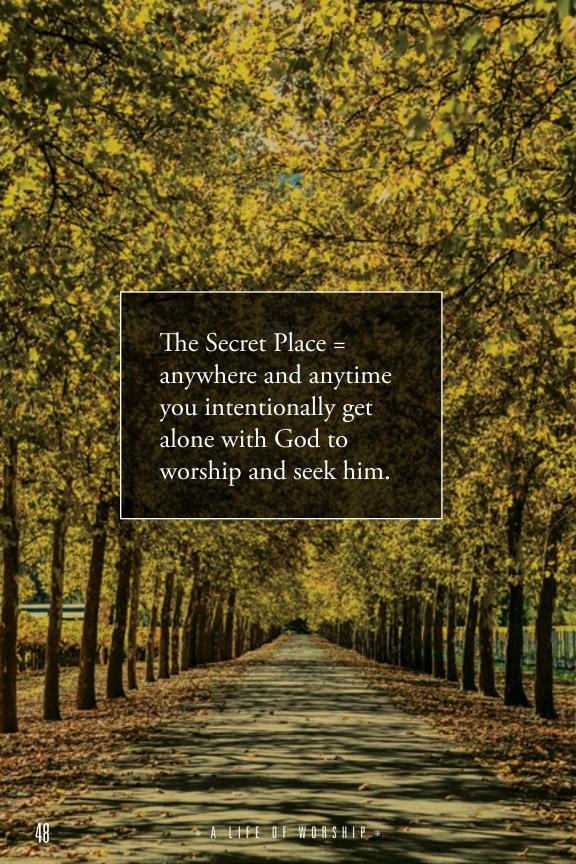


LEARN & WORSHIP TOGETHER

Video Session 3

Throughout the sessions in *A Life of Worship* we are joining a living room worship setting, hearing pointed teachings by Pastor Dave and stories from others whose lives have been impacted by the presence of God during worship. We trust your comfort level with worshiping with your small group and the congregation at church has grown and you're able to experience new levels of freedom. As we begin this session, remember to turn up the volume and let's once again lift our voices together.

Use the space belo	w for notes, questions, or comments you want to bring up i
the discussion late	:



GROWING TOGETHER

In the questions that follow, we will review and expand on the teaching we just experienced.

- 1. How did Pastor Dave define the secret place?
- 2. What's one of the hardest things for you about keeping a regular secret place?
- 3. Discuss some practical ways you can make the secret place more of a priority.
- 4. In the passage from Matthew 6:5-6, Jesus warned against desiring the attention that can be gained from praying in public. Could the same warning apply to worship? How can the secret place combat the desire to be noticed by others?
- 5. Share a time in your life when you've experienced the refuge of God. What was the result?
- 6. Pastor Dave said, "When our confession lines up with the Word of God, our song becomes our future; our confession becomes our spiritual reality." What did he mean?

Below is a list of essentials for the secret place:

- a quite place
- a Bible
- good worship music to help personal worship time
- time to wait and allow God to speak
- a journal to write down the ideas God impresses upon you.

We encourage you to make the Daily Reflections section a priority as it is designed to keep you connected with developing a lifestyle of worship as you go throughout your week. Each day's reading and response are intended to take about 10 minutes, which should fit into even the busiest schedule. Look forward to sharing what the Lord shows you with your group next week.

DAILY REFLECTIONS

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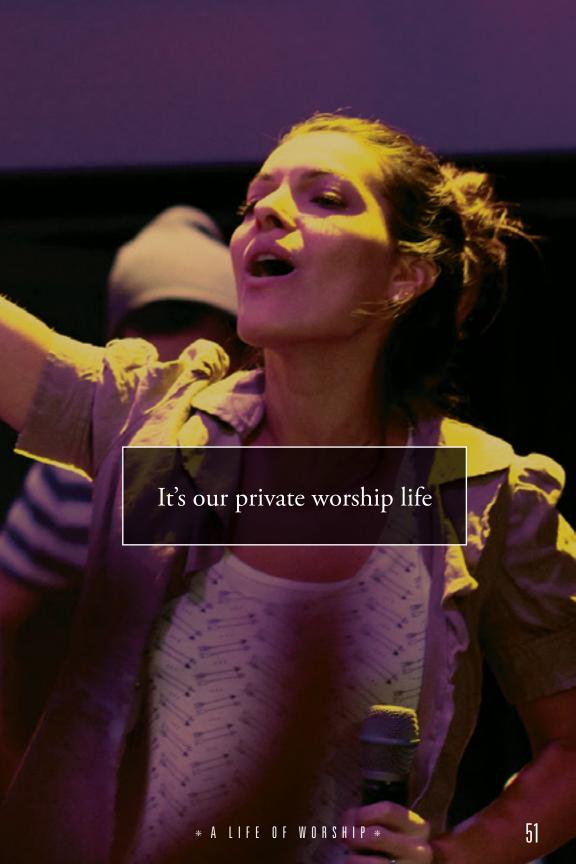
Day 1: Matthew 6:6

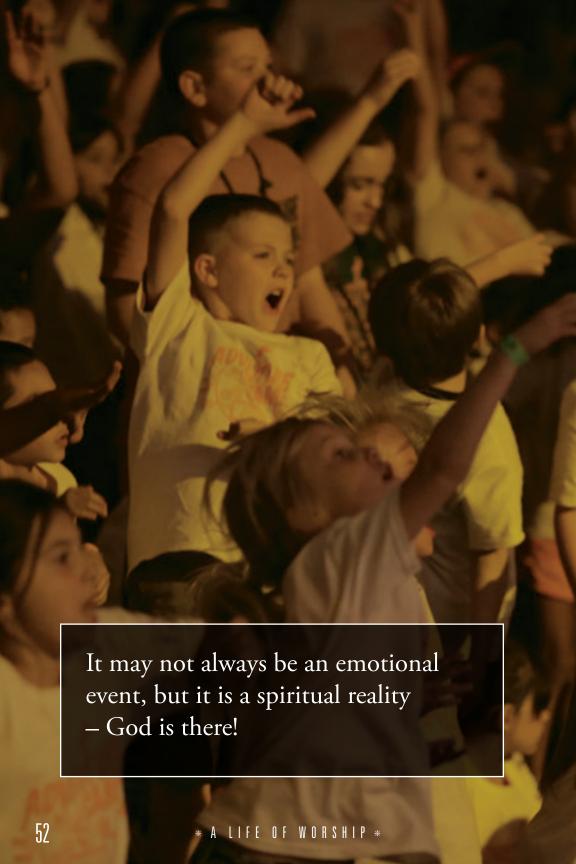
But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

God is in the secret place. Is there any other place on earth where we can boast of such a reality? When you go into your set apart place of worship and prayer, you can have full assurance you are in the very presence of God the Father. You may not always feel like he's there, but he is. It's a spiritual reality.

Response

Knowing by faith you have your H	eavenly Father's undivided attention, what
will you express to him today? Afte	r you have done so, listen for his response. It
, ,	t an impression – an unmistakable impression
won't likely be an addible voice, bu	t an impression – an unmistakable impression





Day 2: Psalm 91:1-2

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."

David knew the importance of running to the place of refuge - the place of God's presence. In his early decades, David faced aloneness, attempts on his life, false accusations and rejection. And those were at the hands of his "friends". Who will speak truth to you when your circle of trust has been minimized? You'll find truth in the secret place. *The Truth* will be with you. He will be your refuge and strength through every season.

Response		
Think about your current season of life. What specific area needs the deep		
influence of God's truth? Talk with him about it today.		
influence of God's tratif. Talk with finit about it today.		

Day 3: Psalm 5:11-12

Response

But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them sing joyful praises forever. Spread your protection over them, that all who love your name may be filled with joy. For you bless the godly, O LORD; you surround them with your shield of love.

When you come into the refuge of the Lord your safety is not left to chance. On your hardest day, through your worst storm, hope is present. His protection will result in your joy.

From these verses, write out the benefits of taking refuge in God. Does this mean no harm will ever come to a person who places their faith in God?		
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Day 4: Psalm 18:1-3

Dosponeo

I love you, LORD; you are my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my savior; my God is my rock, in whom I find protection. He is my shield, the power that saves me, and my place of safety. I called on the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and he saved me from my enemies.

In the video teaching this week, Pastor Dave spoke about this Psalm and the significance of aligning our thoughts and words with scripture. When we face challenging circumstances we can declare the sufficiency of God into the mix. Changing your vocabulary and practically inputting scripture will have a direct influence on your thought-life and environment.

Anticipate change.	ation.
5	
RI	

Day 5: Psalm 27:4

Response

The one thing I ask of the LORD— the thing I seek most—is to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, delighting in the LORD's perfection and meditating in his Temple.

From David's life we find numerous examples of what it is to prioritize the presence of God. In this psalm, David declares it is the one thing he seeks most. The Hebrew word translated *seek* speaks of a constant going after. It could be written that David made a well-worn path to the presence of the Lord. Can you picture that? He never tired of God's company, rather it was a lifetime of discovery and a relationship built on love.

What is the one thing you seek most? If there needs to be a shift in priority, what active step will you take this week?	
N.	
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Day 6: Acts 13:22

But God removed Saul and replaced him with David, a man about whom God said, 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart. He will do everything I want him to do.'

After years of running, David was enthroned as King of Israel. He faced all the pressures of leadership, family dysfunction and even personal moral failure. But scripture records, in both the Old and New Testaments, that David was a man after God's own heart. One of the main reasons we believe God viewed him in this way is because, in victory and failure, David found his home in the presence of the Lord. There, David received acceptance, forgiveness, direction and he was made right. A lifestyle of waiting in God's refuge resulted for David in a character that reflected his Lord.

Response		
How have you been challenged or changed this week by spending time in the		
secret place?		



MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 24:3-4:

Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol.

There's nothing like a powerful moment in God's presence. Sometimes it feels as though, in an instant, everything is just right when his presence surrounds us. As he draws near, the Bible tells us that among a multitude of wonders, God brings joy, rest, strength and clarity.

But have you ever felt there was something keeping you from experiencing these benefits? Have you endured times when you entered the atmosphere of worship and felt – nothing? There could be several explanations for this – some we may never know this side of heaven – but the Bible speaks of one cause in particular, a cause which begins and ends with us, that will result in our missing out on God's nearness.

In today's session we will explore this roadblock and unpack the idea that in order for our life of worship to continually change us, it can't be about us.



COMING TOGETHER

Let's begin with a question designed to set us up for the session.

- 1. Have you noticed the most random thoughts can invade your thinking right in the middle of worship? What are some distractions you've been hit with?
- 2. What lasting ideas from the previous sessions have been on your mind this week that you would be willing to mention to the rest of the group?



LEARN & WORSHIP TOGETHER

Video Session 4

Throughout the sessions in *A Life of Worship* we are joining a living room worship setting, hearing a teaching by Pastor Dave as well as stories from people whose lives have been transformed in the presence of God during worship. We trust your comfort level with worshiping with your small group and the congregation at church has grown and you're able to experience new levels of freedom. As we begin this session, remember to turn up the volume and let's once again lift our voices together.

Use the space below for notes, questions, or comments you want to bring up it he discussion later.				bring up in



GROWING TOGETHER

In the questions that follow, we will review and expand on the teaching we just experienced.

- 1. Consider Pastor Dave's paraphrase of Psalm 24:3-4: Who may ascend and enter the presence of the Lord? The one who has clean hands, a pure heart and is not focused on themselves but on God. What are ways we move the spotlight away from Jesus and onto ourselves?
- Read John's statement in John 3:30:
 He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less.
 How do we do this on a daily basis?
- 3. What comes to your mind when you consider the word surrender?
- 4. Discuss how these expressions of worship demonstrate a surrendered heart. Is one of these expressions more challenging for you to present? If so, why do you think that is?
 - a. Bowing/kneeling
 - b. Lifting our hands
 - c. Singing/speaking
- 5. Pastor Dave shared about Abraham's extravagant act of surrender. What are ways you can surrender your future, dream and hopes to God?

The Daily Reflections section is designed to keep you connected with developing a lifestyle of worship as you go throughout your week. Each day's reading and response are intended to take about 10 minutes, which should fit into even the busiest schedule. Look forward to sharing what the Lord shows you with your group next week.

DAILY REFLECTIONS

Take time between now and your next small group meeting to dig into God's word. Each day has a selected passage related to this session's theme. Journal your reflections in the space provide.

Day 1: James 4:8 (Voice)

Come close to the one true God, and He will draw close to you. Wash your hands; you have dirtied them in sin. Cleanse your heart, because your mind is split down the middle, your love for God on one side and selfish pursuits on the other.

From this verse and Psalm 24:3-4 (memory verses), three keys are identified to coming close and living in the presence of God:

- clean hands our actions;
- pure hearts our inward motives;
- no idols a surrendered life.

Response

, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	rship today, begin by focusing on these between you and the Lord. Be sure to thar
God for his gifts of forgiveness and §	•

Worship is always effective when Jesus is the center. 69 OF WORSHIP *



Day 2: Luke 12:33-34

Response

Sell your possessions and give to those in need. This will store up treasure for you in heaven! And the purses of heaven never get old or develop holes. Your treasure will be safe; no thief can steal it and no moth can destroy it. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

We are permitted to stand in the presence of God and experience his nearness once he has cleansed our sin. However, God will not force our cleansing upon us, this process must be initiated by our *surrender*. Over the next several days, we will look at specific areas of our lives we have been encouraged to yield.

In these verses, what area of life did Jesus identify as one you need to relinquish					
What will be the benefits to living with this area of your life fully surrendered	1?				

Day 3: Proverbs 3:5-6

Response

Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.

When we consider all that is potentially knowable – there are known knowns, there are known unknowns and there are unknown unknowns. That's a mouthful for sure, but you get the point, if our knowledge and understanding depended on us alone, we'd be a mess. Fortunately, we have access to the greatest mind in the universe – the creator himself.

What are you being exhorted to surrender in these verses? What affect would this have on your decision process and stress level?					
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Day 4: 1 Peter 5:7

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.

Medical research shows 75-90% of all doctor visits are stress related ailments. Although our bodies are designed to handle stress, too much of it results in a condition known as distress. Distress is often the cause of a variety of diseases. Yet, here in the Scripture, God has gone ahead of us to provide the relief for stress.

Have you experienced physical illness associated with stress? What practical step				
can you take today to lower the stress in your life?				
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Day 5: Psalm 55:22

Give your burdens to the LORD, and he will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall.

The dictionary defines *burden* as a load or something you carry with difficulty. Burdens come in all shapes and sizes, but they are common to each of us, such as: responsibility, leadership, parenting, education and financial concerns.

Are you carrying more than you should? Take time now to transfer the burden

onto the Lord. Ask him for wisdom and direction on how to carry your appropriate responsibilities, but let him carry the heavy end.				
			=8.	





Day 6: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.

We were created with three dimensions: spirit, soul and body. Our spirit is the part of us that communicates with God; our soul consists of our mind, will and emotions; our body is the physical home. It may seem like our bodies are simply a temporary dwelling, but their purpose is far more significant than that alone.

Response	
According to these verses, what is the primary purpose of in mind, should we be concerned about fitness and health	
you need to make to fully surrender your body to the Lor	_
you need to make to rully surremeer your body to the Eos	d.



THE RIVER OF GOD



MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 46:4:

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.

If you had a tool you knew would positively influence the tone of your city, would you use it? We live in days of extreme and swift culture changes when opposition to biblical values confronts us on a daily basis. The good news is the people of God are not without the ability to make a difference. The Bible makes it clear our worship has authority to shift the atmosphere of the communities in which we live. Today we want to talk about the concept that our worship is bigger than us. Let's get started and learn more about what that means.



COMING TOGETHER

Let's begin with a question designed to set us up for the session.

- 1. What is one change you would like to see in your community?
- 2. What lasting ideas from the previous sessions have been on your mind this week that you would be willing to mention to the rest of the group?

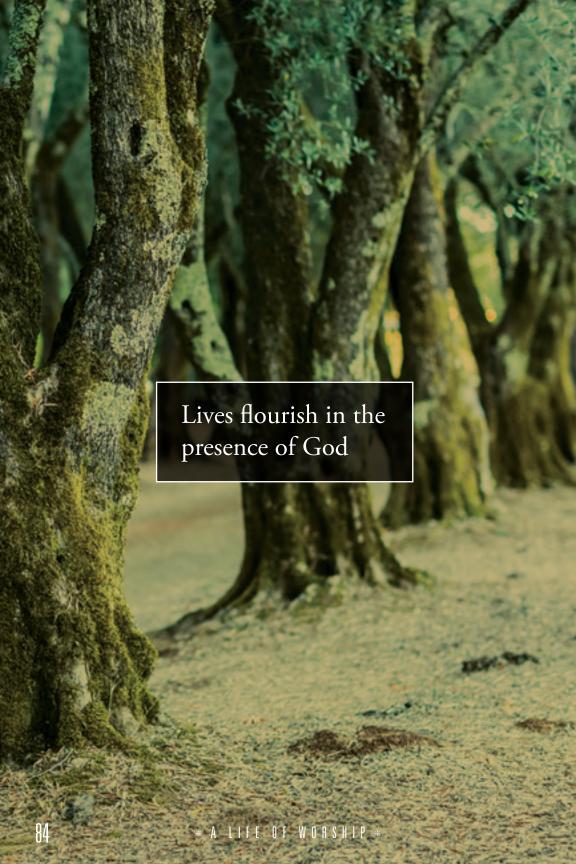


LEARN & WORSHIP TOGETHER

Video Session 5

Throughout the sessions in *A Life of Worship* we are joining a living room worship setting, hearing a teaching by Pastor Dave as well as stories from people whose lives have been transformed in the presence of God during worship. We trust your comfort level with worshiping with your small group and the congregation at church has grown and you're able to experience new levels of freedom. As we begin this session, remember to turn up the volume and let's once again lift our voices together.

•	below for notes, questions, or comments you want to bring up in
the discussion	later.



GROWING TOGETHER

In the questions that follow, we will review and expand on the teaching we just experienced.

- 1. Have someone read the verses below and then discuss why the analogy of a river and streams is an appropriate picture of our worship.
 - a. **Psalm 46:4:** There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.
 - b. **John 7:38:** He who believes in me, out of his heart will flow streams of living water.
- 2. Why is it important to release our river of worship?
- 3. Why might some be hesitant to lift their voices and outwardly give worship to God in his/her small group or church? How are these obstacles overcome?
- 4. Have you experienced a worship time at church that felt flat and the next week obvious power? Explain what you think Pastor Dave meant when he said the most influential factor isn't the band, leader or song list, but the worshipers.
- 5. Have a member from your group read Ezekiel 47:9 (below) and discuss the significance of singing over your family, your friends and your city.

There will be swarms of living things wherever the water of this river flows. Fish will abound in the Dead Sea, for its waters will become fresh. Life will flourish wherever this water flows.

The Daily Reflections section is designed to keep you connected with developing a lifestyle of worship as you go throughout your week. Each day's reading and response are intended to take about 10 minutes, which should fit into even the busiest schedule. Look forward to sharing what the Lord shows you with your group next week.

DAILY REFLECTIONS

Take time between now and your next small group meeting to dig into God's word. Each day has a selected passage related to this session's theme. Journal your reflections in the space provide.

Day 1: Ezekiel 47:1 and 1 Corinthians 6:19

In my vision, the man brought me back to the entrance of the Temple. There I saw a stream flowing east from beneath the door of the Temple and passing to the right of the altar on its south side.

Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself,

God never envisioned our worship to stay within the four walls of the church or living rooms. When true worship is offered with purity of heart, it can't be contained in one place; it arises and blesses God and it goes forth and accomplishes his purposes. Let's thank God today for the authority he has given us to worship and influence others. Remember, your worship is bigger than you.

Response

As you pray and worship today, envision your praise of God's power and
authority being poured out over the lives of your loved ones and into the streets
of your city.





Day 2: Ezekiel 47:9

There will be swarms of living things wherever the water of this river flows. Fish will abound in the Dead Sea, for its waters will become fresh. Life will flourish wherever this water flows.

Our river of worship brings a life giving influence to everything it touches and this is why Satan fights to keep us from offering it. As we declare God's greatness and his authority, supernatural power is released to sweep away depression, emotional turmoil and confusion - everything that stands in the way of us being the men or women of God we were designed to be. In word or song, proclaim God's character and ability to bring restoration and hope.

Is there a nation or a social cause on your heart, or perhaps a friend or family

Response

member that needs supernatural help? Now is the time to exalt the name of God over that situation or those people.			
that situation of those people.			
1			

Day 3: Ezekiel 47:12

Fruit trees of all kinds will grow along both sides of the river. The leaves of these trees will never turn brown and fall, and there will always be fruit on their branches. There will be a new crop every month, for they are watered by the river flowing from the Temple. The fruit will be for food and the leaves for healing.

Ezekiel writes the new crop will come every month, which speaks to fruitfulness in every season. No matter what season of life you're in - a time of fullness or leanness - your worship will water the potential fruit. The growth you experience in each season of life will be used for nourishment and healing. Life will flourish wherever the water flows.

Response	
Describe your current season of life. What type	e of fruit and healing would you
like to see?	
	1 10





Day 4: Psalm 8:1-2 (Voice)

O Eternal, our Lord, Your majestic name is heard throughout the earth; Your magnificent glory shines far above the skies. From the mouths and souls of infants and toddlers, the most innocent, You have decreed power to stop Your adversaries and quash those who seek revenge.

David writes, "from the mouths and souls of... the most innocent" power is released. The key to effective, atmosphere altering worship is not our eloquence, superiority or great theology, but our childlike faith and willingness to offer the expression.

Take a moment and talk to God with simple, nonreligious terms; consider how you would speak to a loving father and approach God in that way.				
7				

Day 5: 2 Corinthians 4:13

It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak.

Faith is a belief in something we haven't seen yet. One of the challenges we experience in prayer and worship is the time between speaking and singing out for change and actually seeing that reality take place. The key is faith. If you're tempted with weariness over a relationship or area of life, be encouraged today not to stop speaking and singing. Worship when you don't feel like it – believe and speak from a heart of faith. Faith is the currency in God's economy.

What declaration of faith w	vill you make	today?			
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Day 6: John 7:38-39a

"Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart." When he said "living water," he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him.

A natural river has a source and its power comes from every stream, inlet and tributary that contributes water to the river. Likewise, the river of worship is made up of "rivers of living water" that are released through men and women who understand they have something to release. The source is God, the release is to God, the affects and victories all belong to God, but in his kindness he has designed us to partner with him in spreading the power of the Holy Spirit to the world around us. God has given us a tool that will greatly influence our surroundings – let's use it, for his glory.

Response
Has your understanding of the breadth of worship's influence grown this week
If so, how?

GOING TO THE HOUSE OF GOD

THE RIVER OF GOD

MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 26:8:

I love your sanctuary, LORD, the place where your glorious presence dwells.

Do you sense anticipation and excitement when you think about going to church? Unfortunately that isn't the reality for everyone. Sometimes negative experiences or an episode with a mean Christian can zap our enthusiasm. However, Jesus said in Matthew 18:20, "For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them." So whether we're feeling it or not, the decision to enter the house of God is a great one, because God's presence will be there. In 1962, philosopher and scientist, Thomas Kuhn, popularized the term paradigm shift. The expression indicates a change from one way of thinking to another, a shift in assumptions. Typically, it's a shift we need – to see things from heaven's perspective instead of earth's. The paradigm shift happens in God's presence.



COMING TOGETHER

Let's begin with a question designed to set us up for the session.

- 1. What do you think draws people to church?
- 2. What is one unforgettable idea you are taking away from the last five sessions of *A Life of Worship*?

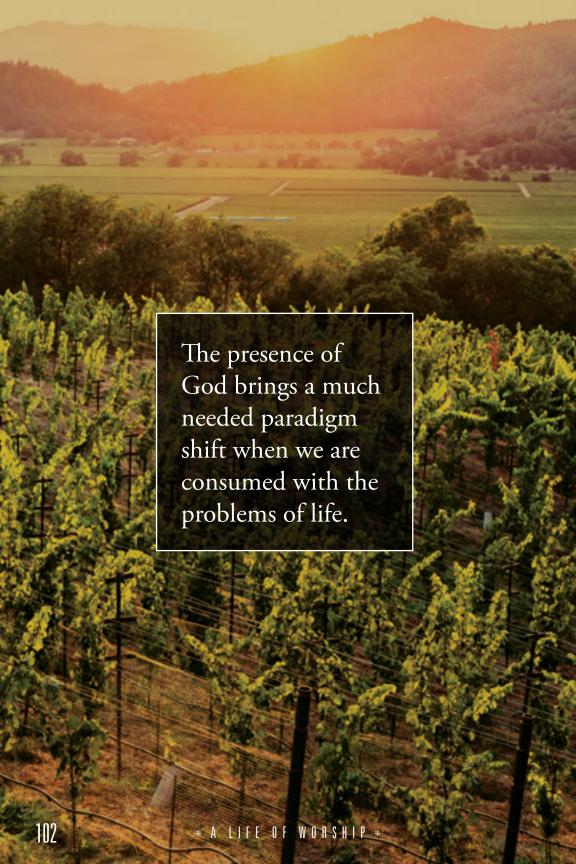


LEARN & WORSHIP TOGETHER

Video Session 6

Throughout the sessions in *A Life of Worship* we are joining a living room worship setting, hearing a teaching by Pastor Dave as well as stories from people whose lives have been transformed in the presence of God during worship. We trust your comfort level with worshiping with your small group and the congregation at church has grown and you're able to experience new levels of freedom. As we begin this session, remember to turn up the volume and let's once again lift our voices together.

the discussion	e below for notes n later.	s, questions, o	or comments y	ou want to	bring up in



GROWING TOGETHER

In the questions that follow, we will review and expand on the teaching we just experienced.

- 1. In the video, Pastor Dave said the difference between attending a church service vs. the house of God is whether or not we encounter God's presence. What do you think that means?
- 2. How do you identify with this idea Pastor Dave presented: In the place of worship our perspective is adjusted and we can see things differently?
- 3. Can you identify anything that keeps you from the house of God?
- 4. What happens in your heart and mind if you aren't consistently in the house of God?
- 5. What role does faith and expectation play in encountering God in worship?
- 6. Pastor Dave identified three benefits we gain in God's presence: joy, strength and renewed vision. Which one of these do you need the most at this time?

Here are some practical ways you can make the most of your weekend worship experiences:

- Get to church early.
- Avoid sensitive conversations before church (don't pick a fight).
- Invest in your personal worship library and fill your house and car with worship.
- Pray on the way to church.
- Come with expectation that God is going to meet you there.
- Don't leave your attendance to chance, make a plan and stick to it.

The Daily Reflections section is designed to keep you connected with developing a lifestyle of worship as you go throughout your week. Each day's reading and response are intended to take about 10 minutes, which should fit into even the busiest schedule.

DAILY REFLECTIONS

Take time between now and your next small group meeting to dig into God's word. Each day has a selected passage related to this session's theme. Journal your reflections in the space provide.

Day 1: Psalm 84:1, 2, 4

How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of Heaven's Armies. I long, yes, I faint with longing to enter the courts of the LORD. With my whole being, body and soul, I will shout joyfully to the living God. What joy for those who can live in your house, always singing your praises.

As New Testament worshipers we too are called to enter the courts of God and experience his presence and power as we worship. It is in this place where we can best view life through the lens of God's perspective.

Response

berspective? Submit your ideas	and assumptions and welcome his paradigm shi
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Day 2: Psalm 16:11

Response

You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

We often confuse happiness with joy. Happiness is connected to the happenings in our lives. If our circumstances are favorable, we're happy, but joy is much deeper. Joy can be found even in the extreme atmosphere of loss. It's a quiet stability and hopeful strength that is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Joy is a treasure found in God's presence.

What is your relationship with joy today? Invite God to make any necessary	
perspective shifts.	

Day 3: Nehemiah 8:10

Response

And Nehemiah continued, "Go and celebrate with a feast of rich foods and sweet drinks, and share gifts of food with people who have nothing prepared. This is a sacred day before our Lord. Don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the LORD is your strength!"

Yesterday we read King David's declaration that there is joy in the presence of the Lord, today consider the prophet Nehemiah's observation of this same joy.

What did Nehemiah say about the Lord's gift of joy? How might your perspective shift if you were to grab hold of this truth? Whose strength are you relying upon today?	
H	
	File applicable





Day 4: Psalm 73:12-14

Response

Look at these wicked people — enjoying a life of ease while their riches multiply. Did I keep my heart pure for nothing? Did I keep myself innocent for no reason? I get nothing but trouble all day long; every morning brings me pain.

When our perspective is primarily horizontal and we consider the situation from our limited understanding, depression and confusion can set in. Things are likely to appear convincingly one-sided. This is why we need a paradigm shift - a change in perspective.

Have you felt there is an imbalance in God's accounting of blessing or patience			
How would you answer the writer of this psalm?			

Day 5: Psalm 73:16-17

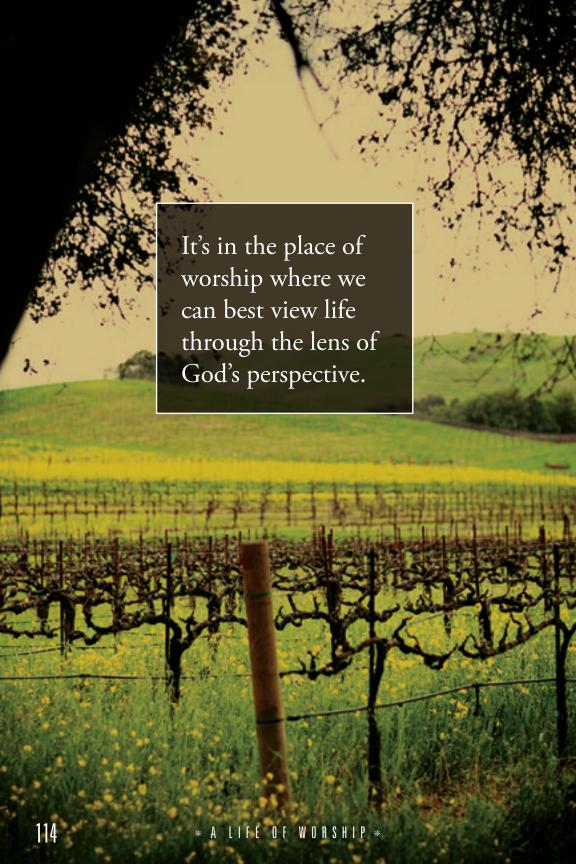
Response

So I tried to understand why the wicked prosper. But what a difficult task it is! Then I went into your sanctuary, O God, and I finally understood the destiny of the wicked.

According to Asaph, the writer of this psalm, correct perspective was found only within the presence of the Lord. He stepped in thinking one thing and came out with a new view.

What paradigm shift did Asaph experience? Have you experienced a change in thinking after being in the courts of the Lord in worship? If so, in what way?		





Day 6: Psalm 122:1

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."

Don't let anything keep you from gathering consistently with other worshipers and experiencing the presence and power of God. Much happens when we gather as a church that does not happen at the same level or with the same consistency when we worship alone. Come into the "sanctuary" and let God renew your vision, lift any depression and strengthen you for the journey.

Response Like King David, are you glad when you consider going to the house of the Lord? If so, why? If not, what are the hindrances?				

SMALL GROUP ROSTER

Name	Phone	Email

MEMORY VERSES

SESSION ONE

Psalm 100:4

Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise.

SESSION TWO

Psalm 22:3

Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

SESSION THREE

Psalm 91:1

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

SESSION FOUR

Psalm 24:3-4

Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol.

SESSION FIVE

Psalm 46:4

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.

SESSION SIX

Psalm 26:8

I love your sanctuary, LORD, the place where your glorious presence dwells.

PRAYER AND PRAISE REPORT

	Prayer Requests	Praise Reports
Session 1		
Session 2		
Session 3		
Session 4		
Session 5		
Session 6		

LAUNCHING YOUR SMALL GROUP

If you're starting a new group, try planning an "open house" before your first formal group meeting. Even if you have only two to four core members, it's a great way to break the ice and to consider prayerfully who else might be open to joining you over the next few weeks. You can also use this kick-off meeting to hand out study guides, spend some time getting to know each other, discuss each person's expectations for the group and briefly pray for each other. A simple meal or good dessert always makes a kick-off meeting more fun.

After people introduce themselves and share how they ended up being at the meeting, have everyone respond to a few icebreaker questions:

- What is your favorite family vacation?
- What is one thing you love about your church/our community?
- What are three things about your life growing up that most people here don't know?

Next, ask everyone to tell what he or she hopes to get out of the study. You might want to talk about each person's expectations and priorities.

Finally, set an open chair (maybe two) in the center of your group and explain that it represents someone who would enjoy or benefit from this group but who isn't here yet. Ask people to pray about inviting someone to join the group over the next few weeks. Don't worry about ending up with too many people; you can always have one discussion circle in the living room and another in the dining room after you watch the lesson. Each group could then report prayer requests and progress at the end of the session.

TO THE LEADERS

Small Group Leader,

Thanks for making the commitment to open your home and lead this small group. Our goal or the win for this series is helping people become lifelong worshipers.

Our prayer is for you to not just experience the *information* of this study, but that you and your group will experience the reality of who God is and the power contained when we all become focused on living a life of worship. We're praying for you as you lead and your group as they receive, "God, would you show every person the treasure you have in store for those who worship you in Spirit and in Truth."

Each lesson will invite your group to participate, therefore it is important for you to create an environment where people are free to join in, lift their voices and experience firsthand the principles presented by Pastor Dave and the team.

Turn it Up

Make sure your sound-system is turned up loud enough to encourage participation, and viewed on a screen large enough to allow people to feel as if they are part of the live worship moment. If the T.V. is set at a normal viewing volume, it is probably too quiet for this study. You will want it to be loud enough to where it feels like "you're there".

TIP: Before your group comes, put on the lesson for today and try it yourself.

A Safe Place

Due to the interactive aspect of this series, we recommend hosting your group at your house or other venue where it feels comfortable to enter into worship. This wouldn't be a good series to watch at the coffee shop, for obvious reasons.

Tools to Help

In this appendix you'll find a Small Group Roster on page 116, and a Prayer and Praise Report on page 118. These are designed to help foster connection within your small group.

- Small Group Roster In your first meeting share contact information so group members can make contact with one another. Be sure to update the roster as new members join the group.
- 2. **Prayer and Praise Report** At the close of each session, ask, "How can we pray for you this week?" Invite everyone to share, but don't force the issue. Be sure to write prayer requests and praises on your Prayer and Praise Report.

Leadership Involvement

Finally, this series is meant to introduce others within your group to the benefits and fulfillment that come with facilitating a small group. A different leader can easily lead this series each week. This will encourage multiple people to step into a leadership role. If you only have one or two people in your group who want to lead, that is okay too – it isn't mandatory to rotate leaders.

The video portions of this series are available as a DVD and HD download versions through www.tfh.org/alifeofworship.

We pray that this series truly is a life changing experience for you and your small group. We believe in you and can't wait to see what God does in and through this time.

COMMUNION TOGETHER

Small Group Leader,

In addition to the six sessions of live worship in your video content, you will find a "bonus session" where we lead the group in a time of communion. The purpose of this session is to assist you in facilitating an effective communion time for your group. Here are few practical steps that will make this a win.

- 1. **Let the group know** they will be coming to "the Table of the Lord" at the close of the final session. This communion service can be used at any time for any small group, but in context of this study, after the last session should prove most effective.
- 2. Prepare the cups and bread beforehand and be ready to pass them out at the conclusion of session six. On the video, we distributed the cups before we went into the worship song and then had two baskets of bread ready to pass around the room. As each person took the bread and passed it on Pastor Dave had them say, "This is the Lord's body broken for you," to the person receiving the basket. This is actually a very powerful and Biblical way of distributing the bread and effectively connects the people in the group.
- 3. Once you, as the leader, have given the instructions and prepared the room you can **simply push play and Pastor Dave will lead it from there**. *Make sure you have previewed the video and are comfortable with how it will flow.*
- 4. On the video, we give people an **opportunity to respond to the saving grace of God** and make a salvation decision to follow Jesus. If everyone in your group is a believer this will not be an issue or in any way awkward as part of the content. If there are people in the group who you feel would like to respond to the invitation you could simply follow up with a prayer and invite them to stick around after the group is over and talk to you. Let's do our best to not put people on the spot or create awkward moments for those who may be far from God or in a process of starting their journey of faith. I love the way James put it in Acts 15.

Acts 15:19

"And so my judgment is that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God."

The cross of Christ is the very centerpiece of our worship and provides the access we need to experience the love and grace of our Father.

Hebrews 10:22

Let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean.

I believe this will be a moment where your group will experience the power and presence of God and be changed in his presence.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING 101

Congratulations! You have responded to the call to help shepherd Jesus' flock. There are few other tasks in the family of God that surpass the contribution you will be making. As you prepare to lead, whether it is one session or the entire series, here are a few thoughts to keep mind. We encourage you to read these and review them with each new discussion leader before he or she leads.

- 1. **Remember that you are not alone.** God knows everything about you, and he knew you would be asked to lead your group. Remember, it is common for all good leaders to feel they are not ready to lead. Moses, Solomon, Jeremiah and Timothy were all reluctant to lead. God promises, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). Whether you are leading for one evening, for several weeks, or for a lifetime, you will be blessed as you serve.
- 2. **Don't try to do it alone**. Pray right now for God to help you build a healthy leadership team. If you can enlist a co-leader to help you lead the group, you will find your experience to be much richer. This is your chance to involve as many people as you can in building a healthy group. All you have to do is call and ask people to help. You'll probably be surprised at the response.
- 3. Just be yourself. If you won't be you, who will? God wants you to use your unique gifts and temperament. Don't try to do things exactly like another leader; do them in a way that fits you! Just admit it when you don't have an answer, and apologize when you make a mistake. Your group will love you for it, and you'll sleep better at night.
- 4. **Prepare for your meeting ahead of time.** Review the session and write down your responses to each question.
- 5. **Pray for your group members by name.** Before you begin your session, go around the room in your mind and pray for each member by name. You may want to review the prayer list at least once a week. Ask God to use your time together to touch the heart of every person uniquely. Expect God to lead you to whomever he wants you to encourage or challenge in a special way. If you listen, God will surely lead!

- 6. When you ask a question, be patient. Someone will eventually respond. Sometimes people need a moment or two of silence to think about the question. Keep in mind, if silence doesn't bother you, it won't bother anyone else. After someone responds, affirm the response with a simple "thanks" or "good job." Then ask, "How about somebody else?" Be sensitive to new people or reluctant members who aren't ready to say, pray or do anything. If you give them a safe setting they will blossom over time.
- 7. **Provide transitions between questions**. When guiding the discussion, always read aloud the transitional paragraphs and the questions. Ask the group if anyone would like to read the paragraph or Bible passage. Don't call on anyone, but ask for a volunteer, and then be patient until someone begins. Be sure to thank the person who reads aloud.
- 8. **One final challenge** (for new or first time leaders): Before your first opportunity to lead, look up each of the five passages listed below. Read each one as a devotional exercise to help equip yourself with a shepherd's heart. Trust us on this one. If you do this, you will be more than ready for your first meeting:
 - Matthew 9:36
 - 1 Peter 5:2-4
 - Psalm 23
 - Ezekiel 34:11-16
 - 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8, 11-12

OTHER RESOURCES FROM TFH WORSHIP

ALBUMS / EP

Strong in Me – Kids Worship Shine on Us Pages Eternity's King

LEADER RESOURCES

Equipping the Worship Team
Lessons for the Worship Team
Worship Central (www.tfhworship.com/worshipcentral)

See www.tfhworship.com

