

Swept off your Feet

Beyond Worship-as-Usual

Connecting with God for a Strong Finish

CHAPTER 2

The Father's Quest

Our Heavenly Father seeks worshipers. With supernatural vigilance, He rends the heavens to find them. God rips past outward appearances to lock in on His beloved target. He seeks men and women—boys and girls who recognize God as He reveals Himself and then respond accordingly.

*“Yet a time is coming and has now come
when the **true worshipers** will worship the Father
in spirit and truth for they are
the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.”*

John 4:23 NIV

No one escapes the gaze of our Heavenly Father. His discerning stare finds all that He is looking for. Peering beyond time and space, God looks for more than an appearance of devotion or token of piety. Jesus did not come to help us say and do religion better. He came to connect us permanently with His passionate love. True worshipers go beyond scripted songs or repetitive phrases. They respond with informed passion, committed purpose, and progressive insight. Religious parrots fall short when it comes to worshipping God in spirit and in truth.

As sights and sounds decorate perfunctory religion, God's attention settles on the solitary core of the human heart. He looks for more than superficial lip service delivered with a modicum of emotion. He sees

through exaggerated hype and flashy facades. With meticulous insight, God stares into command and control centers where values are determined and decisions are made. Our Heavenly Father knows what He is looking for and He knows precisely where to find it.

God operates with an irrefutable search warrant from heaven. His top priority however, is not tracking down tyrants and terrorists. Punitive action does not dominate His agenda. Our Heavenly Father seeks worshipers based on accurately informed convictions—that He alone is God. Rather than waiting for curious onlookers to stumble around until they accidentally find Him, God executes a rigorous search to find all that He is looking for. Motivated to the end, He never loses hope. If worshipers are to be found, our Heavenly Father will certainly find them.

Worshipers Connect with Reality

Connecting with an invisible God challenges our spiritual acuity, especially since He rarely speaks in audible tones. Nonetheless, our Heavenly Father summons us to where He is looking. While bystanders squint and strain to find the truth about God, worshipers broadcast their global coordinates straight into His throne room. They position themselves precisely where He promises to seek and find them. Worship serves as a primary connecting point because worshipers attract God's attention and they sustain His focus.

Motivated By Hope

God waits patiently as He scans the earth for reverent responders. He waits because plausible hope fuels His anticipation. Peering from heaven, our Heavenly Father hears the groans of prisoners. Filled with compassion, He sees those condemned to die.¹ The God of hope searches our decadent history to redeem the past and sanctify the future.

¹ Psalm 102:18-20

Our Heavenly Father looks at the present optimistically through eyes that concentrate on the future. His expectations never change because Jesus transforms conflict-riddled beginnings into celebrated finales. While we wait for a breakthrough in our connection with God, He waits for a breakthrough in His connection with worshipers.

Jesus said that His *“Father seeks”* worshipers. He seeks an intimate union with present day responders. Eventually, worshipers will populate earth en masse just as they populate heaven. Our Heavenly Father intends to embrace a generation poised for eternity whose time *“has now come”*.²

God’s Good Pleasure

Circumstances on earth provide a unique opportunity, one that residents in heaven no longer experience. Until we see and hear Jesus with fully restored senses, our response comes seasoned with faith. Faith offers a special advantage because it enables us to evoke God’s pleasure. Without this cherished ingredient of faith, *“it is impossible to please God”*.³ Jesus told Thomas, *“Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”*⁴ By faith, worshipers on earth connect with God’s good pleasure for a special blessing.

Shielded from heaven’s manifest glory, faith guides our focus to where God’s priorities lie. Connecting with His invisible qualities currently takes precedence over His visible features. He wants us to know who He is from the inside out, lest we overlook important details about His divine nature.

God’s invisible attributes include the fact that He is a spirit, ever-present, almighty, all knowing, unchanging, and eternal. God is self-existent, sovereign, holy, and wise. He is loving, merciful, gracious,

² John 4:23 NIV

³ Hebrews 11:6 NIV

⁴ John 20:29 NIV

compassionate, forgiving, kind, good, patient, joyful, righteous, truthful, just, faithful, and much more. Yet, He rarely exhibits a physical appearance or enunciates His audible voice. God has reserved audiovisual manifestations for the future, except for extremely rare circumstances on earth.

By learning to appreciate the value of God's inner characteristics, we prepare ourselves to keep His physical features in proper perspective. When Jesus finally appears to us, our relationship will be more than skin deep.

God Seeks Worshipers

Our Heavenly Father does not need worship to validate His status as God. Always operating at the pinnacle of perfection, He requires no further affirmation of His deity. Expressions of reverence contribute nothing to His supreme authority and they certainly do not stroke His ego. God knows the full value of His worth. He recognizes exactly how much honor and respect He deserves.

Worship is not what the Father longs to receive from us because He needs it. Instead, He wants to find individuals who recognize and appreciate the truth about Him. Jesus said, "...*true worshipers* [from the Greek word *proskunetes*, used once in the New Testament] *will worship* [from *proskuneo*, used 60 times in the New Testament] *the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers* [from *proskuneo*, a verb, curiously rendered only here as a noun, i.e., once out of 60 times].⁵ We are His worship.

Acts of worship are not the primary focus of the Father's quest. He concentrates on worshipers, not the mechanics of their worship. People are more important to God than the expressions that they generate. In other words, He is more interested in the worshipers doing the worship than the worship that they do.

⁵ John 4:23 NAS

Something about worshipers captivates our Father's attention. In short, they get it. Worshipers know who they are and they recognize God for who He is. The implications associated with these two truths transform worshipers from religious performers or spectators into a cohesive bride fit for an eternal union. Worshipers possess an eternal quality of life, which God favors. He recognizes their immense value and esteems their everlasting importance. Reverent responders to the glory of God are primed for a magnificent future with Jesus.

Unbelievers Primed for Worship

Writing to the Church at Corinth, Paul describes the response of an unredeemed worshiper. Transformed by prophetic insight, unbelievers are inspired to worship God with facedown reverence. Words of wisdom and revelation confirm God's presence by revealing secrets hidden in the heart. Paul wrote:

*But if all prophesy, and **an unbeliever** or an ungifted man enters [the assembly], he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will **fall on his face and worship God**, declaring that God is certainly among you. (1 Corinthians 14:24-25 NAS)*

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