

# **PLEASING GOD IN OUR WORSHIP**

**“An Introduction to Christian Worship”**



Prepared for the Equipping the Saints, Ministry of the Word  
by Pastor David Braden

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## PLEASING GOD IN OUR WORSHIP

### **Purpose:**

As I have invested much time and energy into the “Equipping the Saints” ministry over the past several years, I have become convinced of the necessity in all Christian training of getting the basic essentials right.

If I don’t learn the initial steps of a process correctly, the results that follow will be faulty and even useless and unproductive later on as I try to move to the next level of skill or in living a holy, more deeply committed and fruitful life.

A child learning to play the guitar first learns the rudiments of hand positions, note location, chords, fretting and simple plucking, strumming and arpeggios before trying to master the more advanced skills such as the tremolo or double barre. If he doesn’t master these elemental, essential skills, his progress as a skillful guitarist will be seriously impeded.

In a similar manner, a person beginning their Christian life, first learns the basic essentials, the foundations of the Christian life. Then we move on to the deeper matters of the faith. (Scripture identifies this as moving from milk to meat. See Heb. 5:12-14, 6:1 for comments on milk, solid food and the elementary principles of Christ.)

If the basics are not learned and practiced correctly, then what follows will be faulty. Our walk will be hindered and our fruit sparse.

Some of the basics that leap quickly into my mind are the devotional life, worship, prayer, faith and serving. And, in our “hurry-up society,” it’s much easier to get the mechanics down but overlook the heart in these vital areas of our faith.

The purpose of this introductory study is to revisit one of the most basic areas of the Christian life, that of worship.

As I study God’s Word and then observe the body of Christ at worship, I am convinced that we fall far short of God’s plan and desire for acceptable worship. In the process, we miss many blessings and run the danger of the consequences of false forms of worship.

Therefore, this introductory study is prepared with the goal of assisting Christians in learning to worship God in a manner that is pleasing and acceptable to Him. I also hope it will help to release the “blessing of acceptable worship” in a believer’s life.

This teaching is an expanded version of Lesson #4 in my workbook, Foundations of the Faith 102.

## Introduction:

A question that has been asked in every age since the beginning of time is:

Why am I here? What is my purpose for existing?

God does not leave us without an answer to this very important question:

I Pet. 2:9-10 “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light,...

In Jeremiah 13:11, the account of the “linen sash,” the Lord says: “...so I have caused the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah to cling to me...that they may become My people, for renown, for praise, and for glory...”

In John 4:23, Jesus says that the Father seeks such as these (true worshipers who worship in spirit and in truth) to worship Him.

In Rev. 4:11, the scene around the throne is one of worship in which the twenty-four elders are saying: “You are worthy O Lord to receive glory and honor...for You created all things.”

Psalm 150 closes the Psalter with a grand climax: “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.”

In one of the early church instruction manuals, the answer to this question is given: “to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.”

From the above citations and in numerous other passages throughout the pages of scripture (e.g. Phil. 2:5-11; Ezk. 36:22-30; Matt. 5:16; Jn. 15:8; Jn. 14:9-13; I Pet. 4:1-11), there is a consistent theme: that we were created to be worshipers, to bring praise and honor and glory to the living God.

Worship was at the very core of God’s plan in creation. It was the heart and will of God that men and women, created in the image of God, would desire fellowship with Him above all else. His plan was a fellowship based upon adoring worship of the Creator and Sustainer of all things.

Note the two key words desire and adoring in the above. God is looking for worshippers who desire Him and, in love, will offer up a worship of adoration to Him. These are key attitudes of the heart that need to be nurtured towards God in worship. (God is not looking for ritual or form but a disposition of the heart.)

In preparation for this holy purpose, God has placed the desire to worship within the hearts of every person on the face of the earth. And one of the most stunning facts of His creative activity is that although God placed within us the desire to worship, He allows us the freedom of choice as to where we will focus our worship.

This means that worship will not be unique to Christians. Throughout history, mankind in countries throughout the known world, have proven a need to have someone or something to worship.

Everyone will worship something.

If people don't worship God, what will they worship?

- idols,
- traditions,
- prominent features within creation, i.e. sun, moon, stars,
- creatures within creation,
- financial security,
- science, technology, knowledge,
- fame, attention, respect (a popular comedian of my time enhanced his reputation with his oft-quoted complaint: "I don't get no respect.")
- power and control,
- whatever makes the pain go away,
- whatever makes me feel good,
- whatever hides the pain,
- whatever fills the empty spot,  
to name a few.

## I. What is Worship?

One of the difficulties in attempting to assess worship is that it is, in essence, an internal process known only to God and the worshiper. It cannot be seen by the human eye.

It is internal to each individual. (although...the facial expressions and level of participation give us some clues; e.g. If someone is sleeping during the worship or texting a friend, then it's fairly certain that he is not participating in the worship.)

Outer forms and practices do not necessarily reveal that true worship is taking place. We can repeat the words and sing the songs, clap our hands, raise our hands, leap and dance, etc., but is true worship really happening?

In the OT, the most common words for worship are *salah* and *sahah*.

The principle meanings of these words are:

- to bow down
- to prostrate oneself out of respect

- to serve (Did you know that serving is an act of worship?)

In the NT, the primary word for worship is proskuneo.

Pros –towards

Kuneo – to kiss

Therefore: “to kiss towards”

In Psalm 2:12, the author exhorts the heathen who are trying to “cast off God’s chains” to:

- serve the Lord with fear, and
- rejoice with trembling,
- to kiss the son lest He be angry and they be destroyed.

Here, the exhortation to “kiss the son” is an exhortation to worship at His feet. (The Israelites knew what this meant.)

This word (proskuneo) is used approximately 60 times in the NT, 24 of those being in the book of Revelation.

Worship can be defined as showing/giving honor, reverence and homage in thought, feeling or action.

Some other words which help to describe worship are:

- adoration
- respect
- recognize greatness
- honor
- showing submission by bowing, kneeling or prostrating ones’ self

Worship can be shown towards men, angels, or other "spiritual" beings and figuratively to other entities, ideas, powers or qualities.

For the Christian, worship is to be directed specifically, only and supremely to God.

Ex. 20:1-6 reveals God’s explicit instructions to His people regarding worship.

In this passage, He tells us that:

- We are to have no other gods before Him,
- We are not to bow down before idols; and
- He is a jealous God but shows loving kindness and mercy to those who love Him and keep His commandments.

While at Shittim (Num 25:1-4), the people became involved in false worship. They sacrificed and bowed down to idols and, as a result, became joined to Baal of Peor. And you cannot be joined to Baal and Yahweh at the same time because he is holy and will not share His glory with anyone or anything.

God told Moses to kill all the leaders who were responsible for this idolatry. This demonstrates God's strong attitude against those of His people who engage in false worship.

From these examples we know that God has established our worship to be offered only to Him, and that that we are not to put anything else before Him.

Worship is to be our expression of love, honor, gratefulness and submission to God.

## **II. Why Should We Worship?**

Rev. 4:11a tells us that God is worthy of our worship. He has worth, merit, and value because of who He is and what He does. This entitles Him to our worship.

Another reason we should worship is that God is our Creator. Everything that exists, both animate and inanimate, owes its existence to His Word of power. Rev. 4:11b

He is holy, enthroned in the praises of His people. Ps 22: 3

Attempts can be made to define "holy" by the use of words, but the saints of the Scriptures didn't really "know" holiness until they encountered it. See Isa. 6 and Rev. 1 for examples of two men who encountered the holiness of God and their unique responses.

One of the consistent responses to holy visitors on the earth or encounters with "the holy" was the response of fear.

He is worthy because of His mercy and truth. Ps 115:1

Another important reason we should worship is found in II Chron. 20:20-22. In this passage, a multitude of people from Ammon, Moab and Mt. Seir had come out against the people of Judah. They consulted the Lord and He instructed them to "sing to the Lord and praise the beauty of holiness."

When they did, God set ambushes against their enemies which were then routed by the army of Judah. Here we see that God helps His people in battle when they worship Him. Praise is one of the weapons of our warfare. This is especially true when we are under attack in our personal lives.

Ps 145 is a Psalm written by David in the last year of his life. In it, he uses 39 adjectives and phrases to describe God thereby demonstrating His worthiness to be worshipped.



Ps 18:1-3 says “I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies. These verses reinforce the teaching of God’s deliverance when His people praise Him.

Zech. 14:16-17 refers to God as the Lord and as the King. It further states that for those who do not go up to worship, there will be no rain. They shall receive the plague with which the Lord strikes the nations that do not come up to keep the feast of tabernacles (to worship). That will be their punishment. We, as God’s people, have been invited to worship Him. This passage strongly indicates God’s displeasure with those who refuse to worship Him.

### **III. Why do people worship?**

We have already discussed the fact that people are designed to be worshipers of the true God. We recognize that it’s something God has placed within us.

However, many people have decided to focus this desire for worship in areas other than the only One who is worthy to be worshiped. The principle dynamic that is operative here is submission. Worshiping the true God requires our loving submission. Worshiping false gods requires no real submission because false gods are merely wood, stone or metal and have no life, no breath, no strength, no power, no authority.

People will worship because:

- It is a tradition in the home
- It is a part of our culture to go to church
- Some people go to church because “there is something in it for me.”  
Their motives are purely selfish.

Who can blame them when they hear our 21st century prosperity preachers offering them the worldly things they desire. The thought enters the mind: “I’d like a piece of that action,” but it’s strictly a “what’s in it for me” attitude.

There are many others reasons why people worship; but some do go to church to be in the House of God and to offer a sacrifice of praise and adoration to a worthy God.

And some worship God in the daily routines of their lives demonstrating that worship is not just something they do on Sunday at church, but who they are, i.e. principally a worshiper of the living God.

#### IV. How should we worship?

Worship is not restricted to what we do in our church services. Worship is a way of life - we are called to be worshipers. Every day is a day of worship.

Worship can have a variety of forms.

Luke 10:39 In this passage, Mary is seated at Jesus feet in a home listening to His teachings. She is showing honor and respect by sitting at His feet and by listening to His teachings. As we sit in our homes with the Word on our desk or lap, submitting to its instructions and commands, we are worshipping.

Ps. 107:32 provides an illustration of group worship, an assembly of people and a company of elders.

In John 12:3, Mary anointed Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair. Here we see a costly sacrifice as this quantity of oil would have cost a year's wages. In addition, she shows humility, adoration and submission in her act of wiping His feet with her hair. This was really an amazing act of devotion to her Lord. (Note also the impact of her "true worship" on the disinterested observers.)

Another stunning act of worship has been provided to us by King David.

When the ark of God was being returned to Jerusalem after having been taken away by the Philistines for a period of time, David danced around the ark with all of his strength and energy in a simple linen robe. The term for dancing here seems to describe a whirling dance. Other passages of scripture indicate that dancing expresses joy and is a form of jubilant worship. David was overjoyed and worshipped without inhibition at the return of God's presence to the temple. (I would like to have been a "fly on the wall" to witness this incredible scene.) See II Samuel 6:12-15

Hab. 3:17-18 tells us that we should worship in the midst of need. When we have nothing, it's still time to worship. "Yet, I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." is definitely a description of praise and worship.

Worship can be expressed through a number of different ways:

Ps. 33:2-3 singing,  
playing the harp or a stringed instrument,  
singing a new song,  
playing skillfully,  
shouting for joy

Ps 95:1-6 shouting joyfully with Psalms  
with thanksgiving

The physical postures of this verse, kneeling and bowing down, indicate reverence, respect, honor and worship.

Ps 150:4      timbrel,  
                    dance,  
                    stringed instruments,  
                    flute

Certainly, the use of dance in worship would also imply the use of creativity.

Ps 150:5      musical instruments,  
                    loud, clashing cymbals

In I Chron. 25:1-7, David establish a choir of 288 skilled musicians for worship in the tabernacle. (Can you imagine the power of 288 voices that were not electrified?)

Ps 150:6 tells us that everything that has breath should praise God.

When the temple was restored, Hezekiah had 120 priests who lifted up their voice with trumpets, cymbals and instruments of music (a full orchestra) and praised the Lord. 2 Chron 5:11-14

The result of their worship was that the cloud of God's presence filled the temple. The fact that God did come and take up His residence in the temple indicates that He was pleased with their worship.

Note also the singular form of voice in the sentence above. This indicates there was a unity among the worshipers.

Music is a tool that we use in unison with the act of our worship to God in our church service. It ushers in the presence and the move of God – not because of the music, but because God's people are worshipping Him.

“Our hearts are bowed – our hands raised – we are acknowledging that He is our God – we love Him – and that we are forever committed to love and serve Him.”

If I were to characterize the expressions of worship above, it would be:

- joyful,
- loving
- diversified,
- creative,
- unified,

- loud,
- prepared,
- with thankful hearts
- without inhibition

There are two sections of the Psalms that are particularly noteworthy with regard to worship; Psalms 95 -100 and Psalms 145 – 150.

The last 6 Psalms of the Psalter are pure praise...no supplications, no petitions...simply praising God for His greatness and His goodness. Using these Psalms in praying or praising is a great way to begin the day.

Psalms 95-100 in particular, describe for us many different ways of praising. In fact, nearly all of Book IV of the Psalter (Psalms 90-106) can be categorized as praise.

102 is a prayer for help and 106 is a confession of national sin but the rest are almost entirely praise and worship with a focus on God's character, who He is and what He does.

A simple summary of these Psalms is:

- 90 His eternal nature
- 91 Our protector
- 92 Our vindicator
- 93 His majesty
- 94 He is our avenger.
- 95 A call to worship and obedience
- 96 A call to worship, to sing to the Lord
- 97 The glory of God
- 98 Praise to the judge of the world
- 99 God is holy.
- 100 A call to praise
- 101 David's pledge of integrity
- 102 A prayer for help
- 103 God's goodness
- 104 He is Creator and Provider
- 105 He is faithful
- 106 Confession of national sin

If you don't know how to worship, a good beginning would be to read and reread these Psalms until you catch a glimpse of our Creator and something of the spirit of the authors who were godly men at worship.

In addition to the above characterizations of God, Psalms 95-100 present a number of different forms of worship:

95

sing to the Lord  
make a joyful noise  
giving thanks  
worship and bow down  
kneel

96

sing a new song  
bless His name  
declare His glory and marvelous works  
revere Him  
praise Him greatly  
ascribe (to assign as an attribute) to the Lord glory and strength  
ascribe to Him the glory that is due Him  
bring an offering  
come into His courts ((for us today = coming to the sanctuary (church central  
auditorium) where He is worshipped))  
speak to the nations  
The creation is exhorted to rejoice.

97

rejoice  
be glad  
give thanks

98

sing a new song  
make a joyful noise  
break forth into joyful song  
sing praises  
sing praises with the lyre and the sound of melody  
sing praises with trumpets and the sound of horns

99

extol the Lord (lift up/praise)  
worship at His footstool  
worship at His holy mountain

100

make a joyful noise  
worship with gladness  
Come into His presence with singing.  
Enter His gates with thanksgiving  
His courts with praise.

give thanks  
praise  
bless His Name

These phrases are filled with outward forms and inward attitudes.

And, from the above, we can definitely say that true worship and praise should not be boring, but exciting and uplifting.

If these Psalms give any indication of how worship will be in heaven (and I believe they do), then what we see on earth as a form of worship is like seeing through a foggy window. We only get a small glimpse of true worship.

Worship is to be a beautiful expression:

- an overflow of a Spirit filled life.
- an outflow of what's in our heart – the Spirit of God, a love for God. -  
evidence of God working in our hearts.
- refreshes – reinforces – rebuilds.

An important thing to remember is - **We are the choir – God is the audience!**

And...worship is not about me. It is not even about whether or not I like the music or the song selections. (We do, however, need to review the words of the songs being sung to assure that we can “in truth” sing them.)

I heard a story some time ago about a church member who was complaining to the music director about the worship service.

The director thoughtfully replied to the grumblings: “Oh, what was it about the worship service that God didn't like?”

We know that all of creation worships God naturally, instinctively – man is the only created one that has a choice. If we choose NOT to worship God, we live at a level below the rocks and the trees.

### Spirit and truth

John 4:21-24 is an important passage to consider. In this account, we see Jesus talking with the Samaritan woman at the well.

He tells her that the time had now arrived when the true worshiper will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

There are several important truths that we can draw from His statement:

1. A person can only worship God if they are alive spiritually. This means that only a person who has been born again and now has spiritual life from above qualifies as a true worshiper.
2. This person qualifies to be a worshiper because they have encountered the Truth which is Jesus Christ our Savior.

It is through Christ Jesus, the one and only mediator, that we can approach God to worship Him.

3. This person must worship God from his spirit, his heart, his innermost being. It is not to be merely a physical expression or “lip service.” It is not sufficient to activate the mind to repeat the words of the song.
4. What we express from our heart through our lips to God must be consistent with what we truly believe; e.g. We can’t tell God we love him if we hate Him. In this case, it would be a lie and not the truth.

Our heart and words of worship must be consistent and not a lie. It’s called integrity.

In Isaiah 29:13, the Lord said: “Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from me,...”

This describes the disconnect between the lips and the heart that displeases God.

If we discover this situation within our own worship, the first thing needed is confession and repentance. We should then sing songs or offer praise to God with heart-connected words that are true of us.

## **V. Consequences of False Worship**

False worship is any worship that is not directed towards God. This includes false gods (idols) and things or persons to which we go to satisfy a need that God should satisfy.

In the Numbers 25 passage discussed in Section I, we discovered that God instructed Moses to kill the leaders who led the people into idolatry.

From Ex. 20:1-6, we saw that God was a jealous God. This passage also says that God will visit the iniquity of those who hate Him to the third and fourth generations.

In Zech. 14:16-17, God identified punishments for those who did not come to worship Him.

One of the primary reasons that God commanded the Israelites to destroy all of the inhabitants of the land He was giving them, was because they would lure His people into their idolatrous ways which God hated. Here we see that God's punishment of the wicked, idolatrous people was to be death.

We also know from the letters of Paul in the New Testament that those who worship idols will become like them, unseeing, unfeeling, unhearing.

## **VI. How can I have a Heart of Worship?**

A heart of worship is not brought about by having good praise music (although good music helps), nor is it a gift that only some have. God desires that we ALL be worshipers. (emphasis on the "state-of-being" verb) It is who God has created and called us to be. It is not a garment that we put on just for Sunday morning.

He desires that we live a life of worship, that it not be merely a "once a week" experience.

In 1 Peter 2:9-10 we are told how we were chosen "so that we may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness."

As noted earlier, mankind is inclined to worship a "supreme being," but the only true worship is that which is given to a true God – the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - YAHWEH.

A heart of worship is a byproduct of our love for the Lord. If He is in us, and we in Him, then our fruit will be apparent – including a desire to worship Him:

A heart of worship is obtained by developing a relationship with the object of our worship. We will become like what we worship.

2 Cor 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. "

Our worship will be a natural outpouring of our love for the Lord, as we have embraced the truth of our God and we are prompted by the Holy Spirit.

Worship is a state of the heart. We are able to worship when we:



- acknowledge that God is the creator of all and the one true Lord of Heaven and earth,
- accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and receive His Holy Spirit,
- acknowledge that He is the **only one** worthy of our love, adoration, devotion and allegiance,
- willingly submit ourselves to Him, mind, body and spirit, and
- rejoice that He created us, that we belong to Him and that He wants to dwell with us.

“Worship is all-consuming, because God is all-deserving. So, we live our lives eager to breathe every breath, think every thought and do every deed for the glory of God.”

Worship is an act of the will.

We choose to worship.

We don't have to wait for feelings to worship.

A good place to start is to try personalizing a Psalm by changing the third person plural to the first person singular (we to I) if needed and pray/praise it back to God.

Say it out loud.

Stay focused.

Think about what you are doing. (Don't shift to auto pilot.)

David upon occasion (Ps. 57:8; 108:1b) spoke to his soul and told it to awake. Tell your soul to wake up and offer up some really good worship to our God who is worthy for us to praise and worship Him.

David even told his instruments to wake up. (Ps. 57:8b; 108:2)

So...speak to yourself. Speak to your guitar or piano or flute, or to whatever instrument God has given you. Tell it to wake up and join you.

Envision yourself before God's throne. You are offering a sacrifice of praise to the living God, your Creator, your Savior. Is He pleased with your offering, with what He sees and hears? And, you know that He does see you and hear you, don't you?

Some excellent Psalms for this exercise are 8, 19, 29, 95-100, 104, 138, 145 - 150.

Another exercise from scripture is to sing a new song.

(Ps. 149:1) Take one of the above Psalms (or a Psalm of your choice) and try composing a new song to the Lord. Don't take the whole Psalm but just a paragraph or a few lines. The authors of the Psalms often move from theme to theme in the Psalm making it difficult to maintain the same musical theme throughout the Psalm. (e.g. A Psalm might change its focus in the following manner: statement of faith, petition, confession, praise, statement of confidence)

Don't worry about your voice or skill level. God already knows how you sound or how well you sing. And He can't be displeased with what He made because He said it was all good.

And finally...if you don't feel you have a heart for worship, you can ask our Father for it.

He will be more than happy to fulfill your request.

## **VII. Preparing to Worship**

It is important for God's people to actively prepare for times of corporate worship. Following are some suggestions that I believe will be useful for the body of Christ:

1. Be a worshiper though out the week. Each day of the week should be lived in worship towards God. (In the sections above, I have given a number of illustrations as to how this worship can take place; e.g. Mary sitting at Jesus feet receiving His Word, serving, singing and writing songs, etc.)
2. Take time before coming to a worship service to prepare. This can include confession of sin and repentance, recalling God's mercies and gifts of the week with a thankful heart, reciting a Psalm.

One of the best Psalms I know for preparing to worship is Psalm 100:

"Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands.  
Serve the Lord with gladness.  
Come before His presence with singing.  
Know that the Lord, He is God.  
It is He that has made us and not we ourselves.  
We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.  
Enter into His gates with thanksgiving  
And into His courts with praise.  
Be thankful to Him and bless His name.  
For the Lord is good.  
His mercy is everlasting,  
And His truth endures to all generations."

There are many phrases in the above Psalm that indicate an action of worship as one enters God's house to worship. (e.g. joyful shout, singing, thanksgiving, praise)

Another excellent Psalm for praising God is Psalm 150.

Committing these Psalms to memory is one way to have them accessible for praise at any time and in any place. Ps 150 can be praised while you're waiting for the red light to change at an intersection.

3. Come to church with a willingness and a desire to fellowship with God and His people.

4. While in the worship service:

- Focus our minds on God, who He is and what he does, while we sing.
- Block out distractions as we sing.
- Let our words be to God and not about God.
- Turn our hearts towards Him as we sing.
- Praying about things that come to our heart and mind while we are worshipping.
- Confession and repentance as He speaks to our hearts.

Let your whole life be a praise and worship to God.

**PRAISE the LORD!!!**

## ABOUT PASTOR DAVID

I grew up in Illinois; my wife, Brenda, in Oregon. It was a path of many twists and turns to get the two of us connected in California! We entered into our marriage covenant in 1986 after she had agreed to my proposal for a life of adventure. Brenda claims that she scarcely comprehended the adventure that our life would be simply by saying those two little words (I do).



We had both been Christians for a number of years and determined to make God the center of our marriage. In order to make a good beginning, we structured our wedding vows around the instructions of Scripture. We are convinced that this is the reason for our successful, growing relationship.

I received my BS in Civil Engineering in 1966 from the University of Missouri. Having taken ROTC in college, I next served as an officer in the U.S. Army, stationed in Germany.

After returning home to the states, I attended Golden Gate Seminary in California and received a Master of Divinity in 1972.

I worked for three Engineering companies before settling in with GE Nuclear Energy in San Jose, California. I finished my engineering career with 25 years of service at GE.

I was ordained a minister of the gospel in 1991.

Brenda is blessed with musical gifts and has played numerous instruments, e.g. bassoon, flute, guitar, piano, bass. She taught piano to children for 14 years until our move to Wilmington, NC. I also had some musical inclinations, growing up in a musical family in which everyone played at least one instrument. Brenda also has a heart for and is involved in a local “Special Touch” ministry, a ministry to people with disabilities.

Several years ago, we began attending Calvary Chapel San Jose, CA where Don McClure was pastoring. The emphasis on God’s Word and the presence of God’s Spirit in the worship kept us coming back until we felt confident that this was to be our church home.

Brenda became involved with the Praise team playing flute and singing. She also led the worship for two Women’s Bible studies. I became involved in the teaching ministry working principally with the mature adults class (ages around 50-95, they called themselves the “Sonshiners”) and also a young married couples class.

Even though we felt like we were settling into the San Jose Fellowship, in early 2004 we were presented with a company relocation, and we began to feel that God was leading us to a significant change, relocating from the West Coast to the East Coast. Little did we know what was in store for us in Wilmington, NC.

We often felt like Abraham who was told to leave his homeland but was given no information regarding what he would encounter when he arrived at his destination.

The next very shocking surprise was my early retirement, something we had not even considered when planning the move to the east coast. Nevertheless, God made it very clear that my engineering career of 37 years was soon to be ended. The retirement occurred almost 5 years in advance of my plan. But God had a bigger (and better) plan. One of my reoccurring supplications to God has been that I would rather be expending the main energy of my life teaching the Word of God than pouring it into the management of engineering projects and writing technical engineering reports. Now, God was giving me the desire of my heart.

I eventually came on staff with a local church and served for 7½ years as an associate pastor teaching Bible studies and ministering principally in the Equipping the Saints ministry. Brenda was involved in several ministries... Praise Team, Special Touch, hospitality/helps, Home Fellowships, to mention a few.

After a 1-year sabbatical in 2014, God has led us to begin a new fellowship which is called Safe Haven Berean Fellowship. Our focus is principally on the Word of God, with both Bible book studies and doctrinal teachings in progress at this time. Principal focuses are on the assurance of salvation, knowing what God in Christ has done for us, learning to live in a way that honors and glorifies God, and a continual focus upon our End Times preparations for our coming King.

Looking back now over the years that led us to this place in life, we are amazed at the Sovereignty of God and how he has orchestrated the events that have brought us to this place in this time. His loving and merciful hand has been seen time and again as he has opened doors and brought us quickly to where He wants us to be. He is, without question, an awesome God.



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