GRACE INSIDER
JULY 2022

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Learn more and/or sign up for events at graceb3.org/events

BACKYARD BIBLE CLUB

Parents, look for one near you in July and save a spot for your children at graceb3.org/bbc

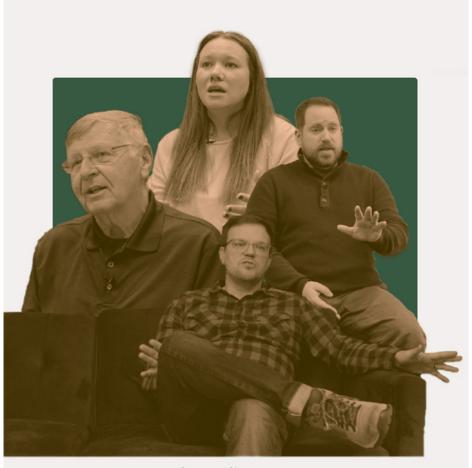


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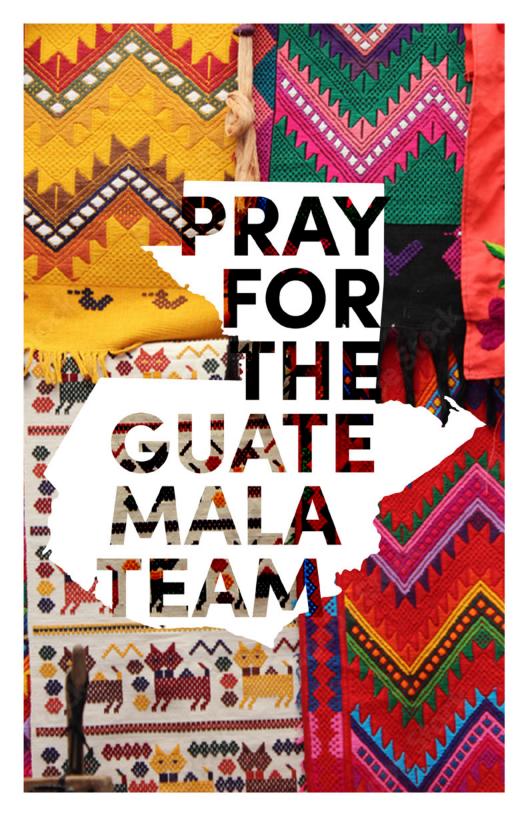
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By Pastor Paul Hansen

return to Guatemala with the Mission Mobility team, our fifth yearly trip to Guatemala.

During these trips, the team works alongside Bethel Ministries to **distribute wheelchairs and walkers** that they've been collecting all year.

They also **build metal homes** for Guatemalan families. These homes typically include a fuel-efficient wood stove, triple bunk beds and a poured concrete floor. The team does a lot of work while they're still state-side. In addition to wheelchairs and walkers, they have also collected **food, clothes, and blankets** to carry with them throughout the week and distribute in multiple locations.

HOW TO PRAY FOR THE GUATEMALA TEAM:

- for God to prepare the team's heart for what he will show them on this trip. For many, this will be their first trip.
- for all the passports to come through with plenty of time.
- for successful fundraising for various projects.







GUATEMALA FACT SHEET

Total Population 18,176,000 Number of People Groups 60 People Groups Unreached 1 Population in Unreached 900

IMPLANTING THE WORD

By Pastor Brooks Simpson

1 Peter - A Living Hope is the first of many Bible studies we hope to create as regular tools to assist us in becoming doers of the word.

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. ²⁴ For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. ²⁵ But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. James 1:22–25 (ESV)

A 2019 Lifeway study found that only one in three Americans who identify as Christian read the Bible every day. For most, the only exposure they have to the word of God is when they hear it preached on Sunday morning. Since the average Christian attends church less than twice a month, this means one-third of church-goers are likely engaged with God's word less than once every 20 days. Meeting God in this way places the normal Christian experience described in the Bible beyond the grasp of the average Christian.

James describes hearers who forget the word of God almost as soon as it's spoken. He contrasts hearers with doers of the word who act by living out their faith. So, how do we become doers of the word instead of hearers only?

²¹ Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. James 1:21 (ESV)

The implanted word James describes in verse 21 is designed to save us and bring about a harvest of righteousness. But in order to reap this harvest, the word must be meekly received and implanted. Notice that the word must be received if it is to be implanted. Receiving the

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word can come through hearing or reading, but one way or another, we need to get into the word so the word can get into us.

HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THE WORD INTO US?

We know that sermons alone are not enough since statistics demonstrate most of us only hear the preached word twice a month. On the off chance you, reader, are one of those Christians who attend church every week, that still only ensures you will hear the word four times in 30 days.

Nagging also doesn't work. Reading this article means you are motivated enough to care about what your church wants you to know, which means you already know you should be in the word and the word should be in you. So if you're not already engaging with God's word every day, telling you to "just get in the word" is like telling someone who hasn't run since high school physical ed class that if they 'just take up running' they will be healthier. It takes a training regimen to get from a non-runner to a healthy regular runner. If we are to be a church full of doers of the word, we need to train together to become such people.

HOW CAN WE TRAIN?

Grace is like any other church, composed of members with all sorts of maturity levels, strengths, and weaknesses. We as a staff aim to give everyone a practical way to read, understand, and apply the word in the context of a loving community that encourages each other along the way.

"⁷ Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; ⁸ for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come."

1 Timothy 4:7–8 (ESV)

^{#14} But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for

salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for **training in righteousness**, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:14–17 (ESV)

This fall, we will provide training designed to help you know, understand, and apply the word of God – a Bible study called 1 Peter - A Living Hope.

Each week you will take a small portion of Scripture and learn to approach it from three levels: observing what the text says, understanding what the text means, and applying it to your life.

Discussion questions are included each week to facilitate discussion in your small group. If you are not in a group, we encourage you to find one. A great way to start is to contact Connections Director Wade Summers at wades@graceb3. org.

One to two weeks after you have studied the text and discussed it, the whole congregation will hear a sermon on the same text.

NOTE: It is essential to do the individual and group discussion BEFORE hearing the sermon; otherwise your study and group discussions will tend toward rehashing whatever was preached instead of what God taught you through your interaction with his living word.

SAVE YOUR SPOT NOW AT GRACEB3.ORG/BBC

BACKYARD BIBLE CLUB

LOCATIONS

The time for all BBCs is 6:30-8pm.

JULY 11 - 14 NORTH LIBERTY 455 N. Colton Dr.

JULY 11 - 14MIDDLE AMANA
2990 128th Dr.

JULY 18 - 21
CORALVILLE
1932 Liberty Ln.

SUPPLIES

SUPP



By Worship Director Zack Stanton

N ASKING, "WHAT SHOULD OUR WORSHIP LOOK LIKE?" I'm not asking specifically about Sunday morning: What style of music should we use? Should we sing hymns? How many songs should we sing? How long should the service be? Should we do "special music"? Those questions are valid, but we're looking at worship more broadly. In last month's Insider, I asked what worship is, regardless of one's religious beliefs (or lack thereof), but this month we will tackle Christian worship.

I left you with two definitions of Christian worship to consider:

- a proper response to who God is and what he has done as revealed in his word
- an engagement with God on the terms that he proposes and in the way that he alone makes possible

We're going to unpack the first of these definitions. First of all, worship is a response. It doesn't begin with us, but with God. We respond to who he is — his intrinsic worth. While one aspect of worship is gratitude (for what he has done), his worthiness of our worship is not solely tied to his mercy in saving us.

We see in Scripture that angels worship him and facilitate the worship of heaven (Revelation 4), but the angels are not responding to God's mercy; God hasn't saved them! They are responding to his glory. He is worthy of worship because responding to his glory. He is worthy of worship because of who he is – a great, glorious, powerful, all-knowing, powerful, all-knowing, of who he is – a great, glorious, powerful, all-knowing, power

We also respond to God in worship because he is our Creator. Psalm 95:6 says, "Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." Psalm 100:3 tells us to serve the Lord with gladness and sing to him because "It is He who made us, and we are His." God him because worship because he made and owns uniquely deserves worship because he made and owns everything.

Take another look at the first definition on the previous page. We've established that God is intrinsically worthy; now let's unpack a response to what he's done for us. As Christians, unpack a response to what he's done for us. As Christians, unpack a response to what he's done for us. As Christians, unpack a response to what he's done for us. As Christians, unpack a response to what he's done for us. As Christians, unpack a response to what he's done for us. As Christians, unpack a response to worship one of the most powerful and joyful motivators of worship is gratitude. Our gratitude can be for how God graciously is gratitude. Our gratitude c

Throughout Scripture, we see God's people respond in worship with gratitude to God, and in the New Testament, what is specifically tied to what Jesus has done (see the whole book of Hebrews!). Gratitude is an essential element of true worship.

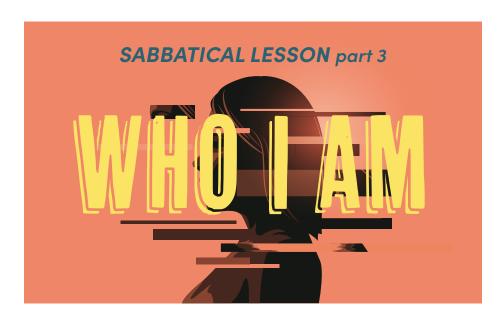
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"We can be moved to genuine worship by the beauty of nature or art, but apart from the revelation of God's word, we could end up worshiping those things rather than God."

The last part of the definition says that we respond to what we learn about God from his word. God's clearest revelation of both who he is and what he has done is through his word, so we must act on what it says. We can be moved word, so we must act on what it says. We can be moved to genuine worship by the beauty of nature or art, but apart from the revelation of God's word, we could end up worshiping those things rather than God.

In the coming months, we'll look at practical applications of how we respond in worship, but let's end with a crucial element that we struggle with in the Western church: our worship must be delighting in God. As theologian D.A. worship must be delighting in God. As theologian D.A. worship must be delighted to make worship delightful to us Carson says, "What ought to make worship delightful to us carson says, "What ought to make worship delightful to us himself is delightfully wonderful, and we learn to delight in himself is delightfully wonderful, and we learn to delight in himself is delightfully worship per se, but delight and delight in him — not delight in worship per se, but delight in God."

In Psalm 34:8, David says, "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!" This is why we respond to him in worship! His glory, his grace, and his goodness calls for a response of awe, gratitude, and joyful delight in him.



By Pastor Brooks Simpson

n September 24, 2021, I injured my back lifting a tree from my pickup truck. During the five weeks before my surgery, I could not sit, stand, or walk for longer than a few seconds before the pain would knock me down again. The Lord used my injury to unveil what I really believed about my identity. During that time, I was dependent on others for everything. In my state of helpless dependency, I felt useless and began to question my significance. In an attempt to shed these feelings, I toyed with the idea of recording a sermon from the floor. Fortunately, wise counsel from other staff shut that ridiculous idea down. Then. I realized I was finding my worth

in what I could do instead of who I am. And since I could not do anything, I felt useless. I knew better but couldn't shake how I felt.

If you have listened to my teaching for any length of time, you've heard me preach that doing always flows out of being. Who we believe ourselves to be determines what we do and how we do it. Our sense of significance and worth should come from who we are in Christ, not from what we do for him, from ourselves, or from anyone else. Before anything else, I am a child of God. I am redeemed, and my worth is not based upon succeeding in my role as a husband, pastor, father, friend, or neighbor. My

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righteousness is a gift from God, and he delights in *me* because I belong to him in Christ — this is the rock on which my identity rests. This is what the Bible teaches, and it's what I teach others. But, there's one major problem: I don't always believe it.

SEARCH MY HEART

After returning from surgery, I began to preach and teach again, and those feelings of uselessness subsided. Now that I could do something, I felt worthwhile. My back was healing, but I needed to address my heart.

The solitude of the sabbatical gave me time to think without distractions. Without emails, texts, meetings, and so on, my thoughts settled enough for God to open my eyes to see what was in my heart. I began reflecting over my last twenty-five years of ministry and saw personal and corporate failings. Included in these were failures to lead and to love – decisions which, in hindsight, I would not have made. It all started coming to the surface like flotsam after a flood, and it was ugly.

I thought about all the people who have left the church over the years. So many decisions, actions, or inactions that I regretted. Why did I do this? Why hadn't I done that? Why did we do that? Why

didn't we as a leadership team do it this way? I saw fruitfulness too, and I knew God had used me, but I could not shake the feelings of regret. Within all the regret, I questioned my ability to serve as a lead pastor. Like Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3), all I saw were my limitations. The negative thoughts frequently sounded like, "Sure you are a gifted teacher, but you will find a way to screw this up."

Some of you might be thinking, "Oh my, this guy has some serious issues." Others of you might be thinking, "Wow, that sounds familiar." That's why you and I all need the gospel. One morning about a month into my sabbatical, as I prayed, I began to vomit this half-digested stew of regret and self-loathing to the Lord. I told Jesus that I knew my line of thinking was off and asked him to address my heart and show me the truth. I guieted myself and listened for what he would reveal. Just as the Scripture promises, the Spirit of God searched my heart and revealed exactly what I needed to hear (Romans 8:26-27 and 1 Corinthians 2:9-16). Within seconds of asking God, he immediately brought this passage to my mind:

"12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but

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I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:12–14 (ESV)

God showed me that while I cannot undo my mistakes, I can put the past in the past and move forward. I can always trust him to do what I cannot do on my own.

Each day I brought Jesus all my insecurities and fears. One morning I prayed, "Jesus, what truth do you want me to hear regarding what I have come to believe about myself?" The Spirit flooded my mind with verse after verse. One passage God used was John 15:13-15:

"13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you." (ESV)

Jesus' words struck me like a hammer wrapped in velvet, powerful but gentle. It knocked me down and then lifted me back up. God's Spirit showed me that I put too much stock in my identity as his servant. I was constantly evaluating how well I was serving.

- Did I preach well enough? I could always think of something I shouldn't have said.
- Did I lead well enough? I could always remember something I should have done differently.
- Did I love well enough? I could always recall failing to love someone.
- Did my counsel make a difference? I could always recall someone who did not improve.
- Did my actions advance what God desired to do through Grace?

Despite whatever good the Lord had done through me, I focused on where I felt I had failed. But, as the Spirit brought verse after verse to my mind, I felt a truth impressed upon my heart.

Brooks, I don't need you as a servant. I want you as my friend. (John 15:15)

A SERVANT AND A FRIEND

Yes, I am certainly Jesus' servant, and so are you if you follow him.

But we are more than just his servants. Jesus wanted me to know that I am his friend. The Spirit let me know that I am loved not for what I have done or ever will do but because I am his friend. He chose to love me and counts me as his intimate friend. The Spirit helped me realize I placed too much stock in the leaky clay vessel and not enough stock in the treasure inside the vessel.

"7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies."

2 Corinthians 4:7–10

Paul rejoiced that he carried Jesus in his leaky vessel. I was upset that my clay jar leaked, and I had grown to dislike it over the years.

God reminded me that he does not need me because of what I can do, but he wants me for who I am – a friend. The more I prayed, the more the Spirit helped me remember his word and promises.

The Spirit reminded me of who I am.

- I am God's friend. John 15:15
- I am his adopted son. Romans 8:16-17
- I am his workmanship created to do good works. – Ephesians 2:10

The Spirit reminded me of his promises. (John 14-16)

- · He will be with me.
- · He will be my strength.
- He will be my wisdom.

Knowing and believing this allows me to take his yoke and rest (Matthew 11:28-29). I can forget what lies behind and press on towards God's future, God's calling. He will do the heavy lifting; I only need to accept his love and friendship. I can walk with my savior as a friend while I serve him and his people. And when I slip and fall, he will catch me.

We are not called to be *successful* servants but *faithful* friends who serve. The strength of our friend and savior will bring forth the harvest. Our task is to trust and walk with him as his friends and adopted children, and from that serve his body and our community for his glory. ***

SERMON NOTES	DATE:
MAIN IDEA:	NOTES:

SERMON NOTES	DATE:
MAIN IDEA:	NOTES:

- LISTEN TO SERMONS ON THE GO
- **EXECUTE SOLUTION EVENTS**
- GET ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AT YOUR FINGERTIPS
- + AND MANY MORE...



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