

Intro

Welcome to the Mountain Podcast. The Mountain Church is dedicated to helping people love Jesus and the people they encounter every day. Today, you will listen to our most recent Sunday sermons.

So sit back, relax, and let Jesus speak to you wherever you may be. And now, this week's sermon.

Samuel Goulet

It's been fun preaching on the series we're on right now, which is a series that's connected to our home group. So if you're in a home group, that is the sermon-based series home group. Then the home group and the discipleship time is on subject with what we are teaching on, which is design and purpose.

So week one, I covered the basic foundation. Foundational Elements of Design and Purpose. And today I'm going to be talking about transformation. Transformation. Because this is a critical part of our walk with God.

So if you missed last week, just a little bit of a recap. Design is something that has happened before we were even born. God intricately wove us and designed us in our mother's womb. When we were unseen and unknown by anybody, God designed us. This is in Psalms, and it's a really beautiful fact. About every one of us is that there's an intentional God design on us. That's foundational. And as far as our purpose goes, there's a really beautiful purpose that God has for you, and it's in him. It's in his will. It's in his design.

So our design and our purpose are beautiful, scriptural, foundational elements of our journey and today we're going to be talking about what it looks like to be transformed with God and how important that is to our journey. How much purpose there is in us. To be transformed by God. I want to start with you, though, in John 7, 37 through 39. The reason I want to start there is because I want to give you a visual of what it looks like to live a life with God that is a transformed or a transforming life. And it's not just the act of receiving, it's the act of giving.

So there is a picture in John 7, 37 that's really helpful to that. It'll give us a vision to organize everything we're hearing today. And in 37 it says, "On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

So now this is a great picture for us to understand that in relationship with God, you are receiving a whole lot of amazing. But it's not just that it's supposed to pool up inside of you, but it's supposed to be overflowing. Or in this picture, it's a river that runs through us.

So in terms of transformation, you can't just stop it at me feeling better, me thinking better. It actually has to flow through you to you doing differently, talking differently, treating people differently. Healing will flow through you. Grace will flow through you. Mercy will flow through you. All of the ingredients, all of the character of God, the whole spirit of God was meant to flow in you and through you. Does that make sense?

So transformation should be seen as a river, not as a pool or as a swamp that collects the things from God only. You get it and it flows through. You get it and it flows through. Because part of our transformation journey is how we give. Because how we give does something. It really does something. Even in a small group setting. One of the things that I really love about small groups is that you get a chance to talk. And to actually say something about your faith. To say something that's frustrating you or bothering you. Say something that you don't understand. Say something that you're grieved by. And when you get that chance to share that, then God has the opportunity to be able to work it out in you. And you're working your salvation out with the Lord in discipleship. You're working out the way he thinks, the way he feels, and you're bringing up the way you think and feel so that you can be transformed by God. We don't bring these things up so we can stay the same. Confession is not meant to lead to static and staying the same. We confess our sins unto one another so that we may be healed. Talking about it. It's for the action of change. Not for the action of staying same.

So before we get into this, if you discuss where you're at, your frustrations, your sins, your challenges. Your grievances, if you discuss them in a way that is self-defending and self-righteous, I want to invite you today to move from self-defense and self-righteousness and move into a place of yielding to God those things which you think and feel. Does that make sense? Are you guys with me this morning? Should we turn off the lights in the house? Okay, I think you're with me. We're just going to go by faith here. The first step, though, to this process of transformation because it is receiving and then giving is the act of worship.

So I want to bring you to Psalms 100, 3 through 4. Now this sets up foundationally in scripture for us what we are made for. And what worship's all about. To some degree, so it says, know that the Lord, he is God. It is he who made us and we are his. We are his people and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving. And his courts with praise.

So now design has been connected to praise. Design has been connected that we were actually made to worship. We were made to glorify God. That's a really powerful statement for us that in our design, there is this really beautiful purpose for us to glorify God in worship. Now in Romans 12.1, we understand that worship is not just the act of singing. Or the act of praising God in songs on Sunday, but that truly the act of worship is much more about a lifestyle of worship than just the songs of worship and praise. Those are good. Those are powerful. Those have an impact on our lives. But it is not the end. It is not the end. Of the worship story for us, What worship is about in a transformational context is it is determining what we behold. Because what

we behold, we become. This is a foundational... Super functional. Ingredient to transformation. What you behold, you become. 2 Corinthians 3. 18. Says as much and it says and we all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image of From one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. Okay, so now we understand that as we behold God. We become more like that which we are beholding. Our attention and our focus has always been the crown jewel of transformation. This is actually where worship and praise songs really help. Is as you begin to praise and as you begin to worship, you begin to think about the nature of God. You begin to think about the spirit of God. You begin to spend time with God. And as you're spending time with him, you're beholding him. And there is an inspiration that's taking place on your life to repent, to soften up if you found yourself hard, to forgive people if you haven't forgiven, to let go of bitterness if you've got roots of it, and to get deliverance if you need deliverance. How many of you have been in worship and praise and you have been inspired to be more like God?

Yeah, right? You get in the presence of God and you're like, you know what's a good idea? Is being more like God in whom I am in his presence. Because you experience God and you're like, he's actually really loving. He's actually really kind, and there is a difference between God and I. And Psalms 100 says that, right? It says that he made us, but it says that we are sheep in his pastures. I believe it's extremely difficult to authentically live a lifestyle of worship if you're in pride. Believe the greatest posture for worship and praise truly is a posture of humility. Says it right there. We enter into his courts with thanksgiving and praise. Why do we enter into those places with that? Because we understand that he is our shepherd. We're just sheep. And sheep are kind of dumb.

So he didn't need to take us in, but he chose to take us in because he loves us. God lets us in not because he needs us to be in for him to be sustained. He lets us in because he loves us that much. John 3.16, the most famous verse probably, says it as much. For God so loved the world that he gave his only son. And whoever would believe in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

So the story for God letting us in is a story that should inspire us to be grateful. I'm just a bad sheep walking into the presence of God. And that doesn't have me coming in with my chest out. That has me coming in with a posture of gratitude. Thanks for inviting me to your party, God. Thanks for inviting me to your holy place. Thanks for preparing a table before me. Thank you. I'm so grateful.

So worship and a lifestyle of worship is not just songs learned, but it's actually a life authentically encountering a real God. And singing about that experience. Tsss. I would encourage you, if you sing worship songs with us or on the radio or on Spotify or whatever you're on, I want to encourage you that if the song's not true to you relationally yet, for you to seek that experience with God. If you're singing about a song of God as a healer or as a way maker. But you actually

haven't experienced a life with God where you trusted Him to make a way for you or to heal you, I want to encourage you to seek God as the way maker and the miracle worker in your life.

So that when you come to sing the songs, you're not singing somebody else's testimony. You're singing your own testimony. And look, it's not a condemning place to not have that testimony with God yet.

Right? So it's not out of condemnation, but it's out of inspiration that, that's who God is too? That's so cool. I'm drawn to experience the fullness of God by that person's testimony that said that he's a way maker and he's a miracle worker.

So if he's that, then that's pretty cool. Let me experience that as well. If God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, if he did it in their life, perhaps he'll do it in mine. And so I'm going to come from an authentic place of worship in my life where I've got things I've seen in God that I can sing about. And I can sing about for a long time.

Right? But I have things that I'm like, God, teach me about that. Show me your ways. Show me who you are in this, God. Because I sing about it, but I have yet to experience you in that way. I believe, but an authentic relationship I want to experience God in the fullness of who he is. I want to host it. I want to behold it. And I want to become it as I behold it. It is so easy to get caught up. And behold the cares of this world. It's so easy to behold the drama around politics or to behold the fear and the anxiety around our situations in our families. But if you behold those things too much, you start to become a child of it. You behold anxiety and anxious thought too much, you become a child of fear. You behold power struggle too much, and you start to become politically minded. The objective for us as believers is that while we're here on earth, we maintain our focus and our beholding on the Lord.

Yeah, he's going to put us on mission to do things to speak to things, to battle things. But truly, our foundation of transformation is that we are beholding the Lord, and we're becoming like the Lord that we're beholding. If you've spent a lot of time beholding things that aren't God, You'll maybe be able to take a look at your life and recognize that you are a child of those things you've been beholding.

So what needs to take place? Repentance. Repentance is to turn, right? It's to turn 180 from the focus in the walk you've had to a focus in a walk with the Lord.

So that your attention and your focus is on God. You're beholding him. You're pursuing him. And you're becoming more like Him every day that you choose to do that. This is a daily refresh. This is a daily refocus. Pick up your cross daily and walk with him. Transformation. Comes off the heels of beholding God in powerful worship. In praise. I have a couple of pragmatic things that I'd like to recommend. If you start your day and you're driving and you're commuting, wherever

you're going, I want to encourage you, throw on some worship music. Behold the Lord at the beginning of your day.

Some people say, hey, there's nothing wrong with a little bit of this music and a little bit of that music and a little bit of this music and a little bit of that music. But I will say to you this, is that you need to... Surround yourself with music and or worship that will help and be conducive to a perspective of God. And you need to surround yourself with relationships that will help that focus with God as well. Does this make sense? That which we consume in entertainment and that which we spend time with in relationship has a massive impact on our life.

So I'm not saying you can't have any non-believing friends, right? I'm not saying that you can't have some troublemakers that you're loving on and reaching out to. But I am saying, if all your Christian brothers and sisters are extinct in your life and you have none, and you don't go to a Bible study, and you don't surround yourself with people that really love God and have a perspective of God and are sheep in His pasture, I'm going to tell you you're making a mistake. For sheep in his pasture. I'm not saying don't go after the one lost sheep ever and just stay comfortable in your pasture, but I'm saying you've got to find yourself in his pasture. You've got to spend time with the shepherds. You've got to let him correct you when you're wrong. You've got to let them bring you away from land that you've started to live in that has wolves and lions and destruction. And you can't go the way you want to go. You've got to go the way the shepherd wants you to go. It's really hard to exercise this place of transformation if we haven't yielded ourselves to the Lord in humility to say, I'm a sheep in your pasture. I'm a sheep in your pasture. Okay. All right. I get it. I'm a sheep in your pasture. And you just let this thing really settle in, and it really bothers me, guys. It really bothers me to think of myself as a sheep. Have I ever told you this before? And if I get around to being like, okay, I'm a sheep. Okay, yes, I'm a sheep.

And then really thinking at this place of humility as a sheep, then my brain starts to go, well, you're a better sheep than other sheep. You're a more creative sheep maybe. You just jump a little further, you walk a little faster. You're a smart sheep. The rest of them not so. My brain, my flesh wants to be so original and unique. And it steals and it robs places of gratitude in the Lord. Because it starts to justify that I am blessed because of me to some degree. Humility is the way of praise. Humility is the way of worship. Humility is the way of transformation. The prideful person doesn't transform. They defend self. - Right is based on self, Defend self. It justifies self. It protects self. The way humility yields to God. Receives the Lord. Not my will, but yours be done. Not the emotions I feel right now. But the emotions that you feel. Not my ideology, but your ideology, Gunn. Not my way, but your way. Romans 12, 1 through 2 is a really extremely... I think it's visual, very visual for us to seeing. Worship. Become... Transformation. Romans 12, 1 through 2 says, I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies, present these bodies as a living sacrifice. Now, if you need help with that visual. Imagine we build an altar like Elijah did, and we throw your body on top. Living sacrifice. God puts fire on

that altar, and now you're on fire. Okay, now we're closer to the image of what we're dealing with, right? Holy Spirit's an all-consuming fire.

So you get thrown on the altar, and or you throw yourself on the altar as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. Which is your spiritual worship. It's your spiritual worship to present yourself as holy and acceptable to God. It's not your spiritual worship to sing a song. It's your spiritual worship to present yourself as holy and acceptable to God on the altar. Before him. Isn't that good? It's like before you take communion, make sure you take it in a worthy manner. Have you read this part in Scripture before? Before you enter into worship... Make sure you're entering into worship with a... With a mindfulness that you really need the blood of Jesus to be made holy. Okay. You really need Jesus in your life to cleanse you of all unrighteousness. Be sure to visit with the Lord before you start singing songs that may or may not be connected to your heart. Be sure to visit the Lord and say, God, make me clean like you're clean. By your blood, make me clean. God, I need your help to be holy and acceptable so that I can lay myself on this altar as a living sacrifice and I can give you my life in a reasonable manner.

Some think they're going to work themselves into a holy and acceptable through a lot of striving, right? A lot of striving, a lot of hard work, a lot of hard work. We'll get there. We just got to work really hard. Holiness and blamelessness is not about hard work. It's about receiving. The fire of God in our life. It's an all-consuming fire. It's a cleansing fire. Cleanses of all unrighteousness. And we can see this because right after it says, holy and acceptable, which is your spiritual worship, do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. There's a few ingredients in here to really understand. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed. By the renewal of your mind. It says, "Do not be conformed to this world, I pay attention. Whenever the Bible says, do not do something, I like to pay attention, because the Bible wouldn't tell you not to do something if it wasn't possible in Jesus to not do it.

So it says, hey, do not be conformed to this world. It doesn't say do your best. Yoda's this thing. It's do or do not. There is no try. Do not be conformed to this world. There is an absolute end to that idea. Not ifs, ands, or buts. Do not be conformed to this world. If you want to know what the calling is on your life, read Romans 12, 1 and 2. If you might not get a specific assignment or a calling, a specific mission field or job, but if you just work on Romans 12, 1 and 2 with God, you will know what your calling is for the rest of your life to some very high degree. It's your calling. You were designed to worship him. With your whole life. And this does connect to the song of your life. We have, I experienced people of all kinds. I experienced people that they just, the songs are everything. They're musicians, they're artists. They just, they love music. They live music. They breathe music and music is just the joy of their heart.

You know, who's like, this is my wife. Music just makes her alive in a way like nothing else does. She loves music more than me, I'm sure of it. It's just a joke, of course. But music makes her live. Music's not like that for me.

Right? I was not raised as some kind of like musician or some kind of person like that. I was raised in a completely alternative way as an athlete.

So most of your artistic and or emotional faculties needed to be set to the side or suppressed so that you could, you know, keep running while you have a broken ankle, right? Or keep getting in the game when you have broken fingers and faces, right? How many of you guys were raised with this kind of mentality?

Yeah, awesome. It's toughness, they say. It's toughness.

So I wasn't raised in this way where I, you know, I can easily relate to like a musician's way of living or thinking. And yet, I adore singing worship and praise songs to God. And it's not because I'm musical. It's not because I'm gifted in these ways or I'm a certain temperament or personality.

So if you're the kind of person that's trying to, like, take worship and praise music and just kind of, hey, Not a part of my Christian walk. I'm a little bit more, you know, I'm a little bit more. I grunt instead of sing kind of vibes.

You know this tough masculine idea, right? It is scriptural. That you were built for worship. You were designed for this capacity. This isn't reserved to some who are musical. We are all built and designed to worship and praise God. We're all built and designed to enter into his courts with thanksgiving and praise. We're all built in this way, guys. The only thing you can say and really understand and recognize is you may not do it like somebody else does it.

Like, I wish I could do it like the guys up here do it. I can't. I can't sing like them. I can't play like them. I can play like three and a half chords on the ukulele, and that's it. Three quarters of a song, because one verse has this really hard chord progression I just can't do. And so I play like three quarters of Somewhere Over the Rainbow, and that's it. That's it. My friend Roz, when she worships sometimes, is Roz here today? She's not here today playing hooky, okay. We forgive her. She'll worship with the flag sometimes. You may have seen her and she waves it around and she worships. If you ask her about it, there's authentic praise and worship coming out of her. I've never worshipped with the flag in my hand. I've never done that before. You may have different skills and different things in your hands that you utilize. To worship or praise God. But I can tell you right now, there is no calling of God upon any of us that creates this exempt from singing praises to God. There is no design of Christianity where it does not include a very powerful and authentic and intentional worship and praise of God in song and in psalm and in melody. It may be a broke voice. It may be flagless and instrumentless, but nonetheless, we

must learn to be a people that enter into his courts with a song of praise and worship upon us. We must learn to develop these things. We must learn to understand that when we are actually doing these things, it is transforming us because what we behold, we become. And there is... Man, if you study out the human psyche, if you study out humanity. We think in narrative. We think in visual. We think in song and melody. We think in these ways. The retention ability for us on all of these things is so much greater when we sing it. It's so much greater when we see it. And I'm telling you right now, you've got to unlock the walk with the Lord that has melody, that has song, that has praise and worship. And as you unlock this place of relationship with God where you learn to express back to him who he is, it will change dramatically the way that you live your life. It'll change dramatically the way you try and become something different. Because to the tough-minded, hard-nosed, working type of person, you might think and you might approach Christianity where you just got to work a little harder so that you could be a little more like him. But 2 Corinthians 3.18 says it really well. As you behold the Lord, you become transformed by the same image. The only work that you and I really put in on being transformed by God is the effort of beholding. Fixing your eyes on the author and the perfecter of your faith. How crazy and how unsettling is it that our only role is to just behold him? And he changes us. It's very unfulfilling if you like things the hard way. I used to love suicides and ladders when I was playing basketball. I used to say if there's stairs or an elevator, I always take the stairs until recently. Because I really understood that I actually just liked kind of like hard, everything hard, constantly hard. And I just realized that my affection with everything being difficult and hard was actually not at all what God's call was on my life. This is something that I chose under some kind of premeditated idea that it would make me the best of the best. Now, you hear me tell you guys my testimony and my story with the Lord, but like, what's your story with the Lord? What is he doing in your life? What are you beholding in him and seeing that's in him that's not in you? And have you been disciplined to host and to entertain that very thing that he's working in your life? We've been disciplined in it. Have we been intentional with it? Don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. My wife reminded me that for those of you that need to get your kid out, As we're going to dedicate them here in just a few minutes, I release you now to go get your baby if you need to get your baby or your kiddo. We're extremely excited to dedicate these babies. We do something really fun. I'll tell you guys about it in a moment, but I'm going to grab the book just so I don't forget. And I'll tell you guys about this in a moment. My wife will be coming down as well, I think.

So maybe somebody could text her or holler at her, yell at her. Hey, Jess, come down. Maybe she hears us through the Orlando context or something like that. But just to finish this part, and then we'll get into blessing our kiddos in this place. At the end of Romans 12, 1 and 2, it's, do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. Renewal of your mind is actually really interestingly difficult. How many of you guys have said things like, this is just kind of how I am? Hey, at this age that I've gotten to now, this is just like, this is how I think. It's not really going to change here, you know? I've heard this confession from all kinds of

people all of the time. And it tends to be that the older you get, numerically, you start kind of growing in that age. It's a very great temptation to say, This is who I am. Take it or leave it.

That's so good.

Now. I just want to remind you though, like, This verse, Romans 12, 2, doesn't say... "up until you are old." It says, You'll be transformed by the renewal of your mind. Which means as believers and as followers of Jesus, none of us get to choose the calcified mind. The rigid way of thinking The hardened way of thinking If you look at what kept Israel out of the promised land. It was that they kept acting like Egypt Israelites. They kept acting like desert Israelites rather than embracing the next thing that God was trying to do. And now we can hate on them all day long because we're hindsighting their story, and we're looking retroactively at this thing. But look at your story right now and see how many ways is it tempting for us to calcify the way we think so we can get comfortable. To calcify the way we feel so that we can get comfortable and find our like-minded Stripe. How hard is it for us to truly... Lay our mind on the altar as a living sacrifice and let God rain down fire upon it. If you cherish your mind and the way you think more than you do receiving the fire of God, you're not going to lay your mind on the altar. You're going to reserve it because you're like, he's going to burn some of this up. And he might burn up stuff that I really like. He might burn up stuff that has made you money. He might burn up stuff that has made you popular. He might burn up stuff that appeases your fears. He might burn up stuff that helps you avoid pain and punishment. But this is where powerful worship comes into play. As you behold powerfully a powerful God.

So that you can overcome the very deepest core places of who you are. In a loving relationship, in a transformative relationship with God. Why does he let us in? Because he loves us. Why does he transform us? Because he loves us. He builds us up. He liberates us, he frees us, because he loves us. This is the nature of God. And the ending here, and then we're going to dedicate. All of our wonderful kiddos. The ending here to Romans 12.2 is that, in fact... We find out what God's will is for our life when we let him transform us. Emotionally, I get it. We want the instructions beforehand and we want to follow them. Just God, tell me what to do, I'll do it. But God delivers his will And he delivers his purpose in our life through Transformation. He writes, The instruction manual upon the template of who you are. You want to know what God's will is for your life? Let him transform you and reshape you. You'll find out.

That's why it's a walk of faith. We've got to trust God.

Speaker 1 | 32:55

Thank you for listening to The Mountain Podcast. The Mountain Church is located in Las Vegas, Nevada, with services happening every Sunday at 9 a.m. And 11 a.m. If you'd like to know more about the Mountain Church, please visit us at TheMTNChurch.com or watch one of our services on YouTube. Again, thank you for tuning in.

Speaker 1 | 00:00

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Speaker 2 | 00:27

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So our design and our purpose are beautiful, scriptural, foundational elements of our journey and today we're going to be talking about what it looks like to be transformed with God and how important that is to our journey. How much purpose there is in us. To be transformed by God. I want to start with you, though, in John 7, 37 through 39. The reason I want to start there is because I want to give you a visual of what it looks like to live a life with God that is a transformed or a transforming life. And it's not just the act of receiving, it's the act of giving.

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So now this is a great picture for us to understand that in relationship with God, you are receiving a whole lot of amazing. But it's not just that it's supposed to pool up inside of you, but it's supposed to be overflowing. Or in this picture, it's a river that runs through us.

So in terms of transformation, you can't just stop it at me feeling better, me thinking better. It actually has to flow through you to you doing differently, talking differently, treating people differently. Healing will flow through you. Grace will flow through you. Mercy will flow through you. All of the ingredients, all of the character of God, the whole spirit of God was meant to flow in you and through you. Does that make sense?

So transformation should be seen as a river, not as a pool or as a swamp that collects the things from God only. You get it and it flows through. You get it and it flows through. Because part of our transformation journey is how we give. Because how we give does something. It really does something. Even in a small group setting. One of the things that I really love about small groups is that you get a chance to talk. And to actually say something about your faith. To say something that's frustrating you or bothering you. Say something that you don't understand. Say something that you're grieved by. And when you get that chance to share that, then God has the opportunity to be able to work it out in you. And you're working your salvation out with the Lord in discipleship. You're working out the way he thinks, the way he feels, and you're bringing up the way you think and feel so that you can be transformed by God. We don't bring these things up so we can stay the same. Confession is not meant to lead to static and staying the same. We confess our sins unto one another so that we may be healed. Talking about it. It's for the action of change. Not for the action of staying same.

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So I want to bring you to Psalms 100, 3 through 4. Now this sets up foundationally in scripture for us what we are made for. And what worship's all about. To some degree, so it says, know that the Lord, he is God. It is he who made us and we are his. We are his people and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving. And his courts with praise.

So now design has been connected to praise. Design has been connected that we were actually made to worship. We were made to glorify God. That's a really powerful statement for us that in our design, there is this really beautiful purpose for us to glorify God in worship. Now in Romans 12.1, we understand that worship is not just the act of singing. Or the act of praising God in songs on Sunday, but that truly the act of worship is much more about a lifestyle of worship than

just the songs of worship and praise. Those are good. Those are powerful. Those have an impact on our lives. But it is not the end. It is not the end. Of the worship story for us, What worship is about in a transformational context is it is determining what we behold. Because what we behold, we become. This is a foundational... Super functional. Ingredient to transformation. What you behold, you become. 2 Corinthians 3. 18. Says as much and it says and we all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image of From one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. Okay, so now we understand that as we behold God. We become more like that which we are beholding. Our attention and our focus has always been the crown jewel of transformation. This is actually where worship and praise songs really help. Is as you begin to praise and as you begin to worship, you begin to think about the nature of God. You begin to think about the spirit of God. You begin to spend time with God. And as you're spending time with him, you're beholding him. And there is an inspiration that's taking place on your life to repent, to soften up if you found yourself hard, to forgive people if you haven't forgiven, to let go of bitterness if you've got roots of it, and to get deliverance if you need deliverance. How many of you have been in worship and praise and you have been inspired to be more like God?

Yeah, right? You get in the presence of God and you're like, you know what's a good idea? Is being more like God in whom I am in his presence. Because you experience God and you're like, he's actually really loving. He's actually really kind, and there is a difference between God and I. And Psalms 100 says that, right? It says that he made us, but it says that we are sheep in his pastures. I believe it's extremely difficult to authentically live a lifestyle of worship if you're in pride. Believe the greatest posture for worship and praise truly is a posture of humility. Says it right there. We enter into his courts with thanksgiving and praise. Why do we enter into those places with that? Because we understand that he is our shepherd. We're just sheep. And sheep are kind of dumb.

So he didn't need to take us in, but he chose to take us in because he loves us. God lets us in not because he needs us to be in for him to be sustained. He lets us in because he loves us that much. John 3.16, the most famous verse probably, says it as much. For God so loved the world that he gave his only son. And whoever would believe in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

So the story for God letting us in is a story that should inspire us to be grateful. I'm just a bad sheep walking into the presence of God. And that doesn't have me coming in with my chest out. That has me coming in with a posture of gratitude. Thanks for inviting me to your party, God. Thanks for inviting me to your holy place. Thanks for preparing a table before me. Thank you. I'm so grateful.

So worship and a lifestyle of worship is not just songs learned, but it's actually a life authentically encountering a real God. And singing about that experience. Tsss. I would encourage you, if you

sing worship songs with us or on the radio or on Spotify or whatever you're on, I want to encourage you that if the song's not true to you relationally yet, for you to seek that experience with God. If you're singing about a song of God as a healer or as a way maker. But you actually haven't experienced a life with God where you trusted Him to make a way for you or to heal you, I want to encourage you to seek God as the way maker and the miracle worker in your life.

So that when you come to sing the songs, you're not singing somebody else's testimony. You're singing your own testimony. And look, it's not a condemning place to not have that testimony with God yet.

Right? So it's not out of condemnation, but it's out of inspiration that, that's who God is too? That's so cool. I'm drawn to experience the fullness of God by that person's testimony that said that he's a way maker and he's a miracle worker.

So if he's that, then that's pretty cool. Let me experience that as well. If God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, if he did it in their life, perhaps he'll do it in mine. And so I'm going to come from an authentic place of worship in my life where I've got things I've seen in God that I can sing about. And I can sing about for a long time.

Right? But I have things that I'm like, God, teach me about that. Show me your ways. Show me who you are in this, God. Because I sing about it, but I have yet to experience you in that way. I believe, but an authentic relationship I want to experience God in the fullness of who he is. I want to host it. I want to behold it. And I want to become it as I behold it. It is so easy to get caught up. And behold the cares of this world. It's so easy to behold the drama around politics or to behold the fear and the anxiety around our situations in our families. But if you behold those things too much, you start to become a child of it. You behold anxiety and anxious thought too much, you become a child of fear. You behold power struggle too much, and you start to become politically minded. The objective for us as believers is that while we're here on earth, we maintain our focus and our beholding on the Lord.

Yeah, he's going to put us on mission to do things to speak to things, to battle things. But truly, our foundation of transformation is that we are beholding the Lord, and we're becoming like the Lord that we're beholding. If you've spent a lot of time beholding things that aren't God, You'll maybe be able to take a look at your life and recognize that you are a child of those things you've been beholding.

So what needs to take place? Repentance. Repentance is to turn, right? It's to turn 180 from the focus in the walk you've had to a focus in a walk with the Lord.

So that your attention and your focus is on God. You're beholding him. You're pursuing him. And you're becoming more like Him every day that you choose to do that. This is a daily refresh. This is a daily refocus. Pick up your cross daily and walk with him. Transformation. Comes off the

heels of beholding God in powerful worship. In praise. I have a couple of pragmatic things that I'd like to recommend. If you start your day and you're driving and you're commuting, wherever you're going, I want to encourage you, throw on some worship music. Behold the Lord at the beginning of your day.

Some people say, hey, there's nothing wrong with a little bit of this music and a little bit of that music and a little bit of this music and a little bit of that music. But I will say to you this, is that you need to... Surround yourself with music and or worship that will help and be conducive to a perspective of God. And you need to surround yourself with relationships that will help that focus with God as well. Does this make sense? That which we consume in entertainment and that which we spend time with in relationship has a massive impact on our life.

So I'm not saying you can't have any non-believing friends, right? I'm not saying that you can't have some troublemakers that you're loving on and reaching out to. But I am saying, if all your Christian brothers and sisters are extinct in your life and you have none, and you don't go to a Bible study, and you don't surround yourself with people that really love God and have a perspective of God and are sheep in His pasture, I'm going to tell you you're making a mistake. For sheep in his pasture. I'm not saying don't go after the one lost sheep ever and just stay comfortable in your pasture, but I'm saying you've got to find yourself in his pasture. You've got to spend time with the shepherds. You've got to let him correct you when you're wrong. You've got to let them bring you away from land that you've started to live in that has wolves and lions and destruction. And you can't go the way you want to go. You've got to go the way the shepherd wants you to go. It's really hard to exercise this place of transformation if we haven't yielded ourselves to the Lord in humility to say, I'm a sheep in your pasture. I'm a sheep in your pasture. Okay. All right. I get it. I'm a sheep in your pasture. And you just let this thing really settle in, and it really bothers me, guys. It really bothers me to think of myself as a sheep. Have I ever told you this before? And if I get around to being like, okay, I'm a sheep. Okay, yes, I'm a sheep.

And then really thinking at this place of humility as a sheep, then my brain starts to go, well, you're a better sheep than other sheep. You're a more creative sheep maybe. You just jump a little further, you walk a little faster. You're a smart sheep. The rest of them not so. My brain, my flesh wants to be so original and unique. And it steals and it robs places of gratitude in the Lord. Because it starts to justify that I am blessed because of me to some degree. Humility is the way of praise. Humility is the way of worship. Humility is the way of transformation. The prideful person doesn't transform. They defend self. - Right is based on self, Defend self. It justifies self. It protects self. The way humility yields to God. Receives the Lord. Not my will, but yours be done. Not the emotions I feel right now. But the emotions that you feel. Not my ideology, but your ideology, Gunn. Not my way, but your way. Romans 12, 1 through 2 is a really extremely... I think it's visual, very visual for us to seeing. Worship. Become... Transformation. Romans 12, 1 through 2 says, I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your

bodies, present these bodies as a living sacrifice. Now, if you need help with that visual. Imagine we build an altar like Elijah did, and we throw your body on top. Living sacrifice. God puts fire on that altar, and now you're on fire. Okay, now we're closer to the image of what we're dealing with, right? Holy Spirit's an all-consuming fire.

So you get thrown on the altar, and or you throw yourself on the altar as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. Which is your spiritual worship. It's your spiritual worship to present yourself as holy and acceptable to God. It's not your spiritual worship to sing a song. It's your spiritual worship to present yourself as holy and acceptable to God on the altar. Before him. Isn't that good? It's like before you take communion, make sure you take it in a worthy manner. Have you read this part in Scripture before? Before you enter into worship... Make sure you're entering into worship with a... With a mindfulness that you really need the blood of Jesus to be made holy. Okay. You really need Jesus in your life to cleanse you of all unrighteousness. Be sure to visit with the Lord before you start singing songs that may or may not be connected to your heart. Be sure to visit the Lord and say, God, make me clean like you're clean. By your blood, make me clean. God, I need your help to be holy and acceptable so that I can lay myself on this altar as a living sacrifice and I can give you my life in a reasonable manner.

Some think they're going to work themselves into a holy and acceptable through a lot of striving, right? A lot of striving, a lot of hard work, a lot of hard work. We'll get there. We just got to work really hard. Holiness and blamelessness is not about hard work. It's about receiving. The fire of God in our life. It's an all-consuming fire. It's a cleansing fire. Cleanses of all unrighteousness. And we can see this because right after it says, holy and acceptable, which is your spiritual worship, do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. There's a few ingredients in here to really understand. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed. By the renewal of your mind. It says, "Do not be conformed to this world, I pay attention. Whenever the Bible says, do not do something, I like to pay attention, because the Bible wouldn't tell you not to do something if it wasn't possible in Jesus to not do it.

So it says, hey, do not be conformed to this world. It doesn't say do your best. Yoda's this thing. It's do or do not. There is no try. Do not be conformed to this world. There is an absolute end to that idea. Not ifs, ands, or buts. Do not be conformed to this world. If you want to know what the calling is on your life, read Romans 12, 1 and 2. If you might not get a specific assignment or a calling, a specific mission field or job, but if you just work on Romans 12, 1 and 2 with God, you will know what your calling is for the rest of your life to some very high degree. It's your calling. You were designed to worship him. With your whole life. And this does connect to the song of your life. We have, I experienced people of all kinds. I experienced people that they just, the songs are everything. They're musicians, they're artists. They just, they love music. They live music. They breathe music and music is just the joy of their heart.

You know, who's like, this is my wife. Music just makes her alive in a way like nothing else does. She loves music more than me, I'm sure of it. It's just a joke, of course. But music makes her live. Music's not like that for me.

Right? I was not raised as some kind of like musician or some kind of person like that. I was raised in a completely alternative way as an athlete.

So most of your artistic and or emotional faculties needed to be set to the side or suppressed so that you could, you know, keep running while you have a broken ankle, right? Or keep getting in the game when you have broken fingers and faces, right? How many of you guys were raised with this kind of mentality?

Yeah, awesome. It's toughness, they say. It's toughness.

So I wasn't raised in this way where I, you know, I can easily relate to like a musician's way of living or thinking. And yet, I adore singing worship and praise songs to God. And it's not because I'm musical. It's not because I'm gifted in these ways or I'm a certain temperament or personality.

So if you're the kind of person that's trying to, like, take worship and praise music and just kind of, hey, Not a part of my Christian walk. I'm a little bit more, you know, I'm a little bit more. I grunt instead of sing kind of vibes.

You know this tough masculine idea, right? It is scriptural. That you were built for worship. You were designed for this capacity. This isn't reserved to some who are musical. We are all built and designed to worship and praise God. We're all built and designed to enter into his courts with thanksgiving and praise. We're all built in this way, guys. The only thing you can say and really understand and recognize is you may not do it like somebody else does it.

Like, I wish I could do it like the guys up here do it. I can't. I can't sing like them. I can't play like them. I can play like three and a half chords on the ukulele, and that's it. Three quarters of a song, because one verse has this really hard chord progression I just can't do. And so I play like three quarters of Somewhere Over the Rainbow, and that's it. That's it. My friend Roz, when she worships sometimes, is Roz here today? She's not here today playing hooky, okay. We forgive her. She'll worship with the flag sometimes. You may have seen her and she waves it around and she worships. If you ask her about it, there's authentic praise and worship coming out of her. I've never worshipped with the flag in my hand. I've never done that before. You may have different skills and different things in your hands that you utilize. To worship or praise God. But I can tell you right now, there is no calling of God upon any of us that creates this exempt from singing praises to God. There is no design of Christianity where it does not include a very powerful and authentic and intentional worship and praise of God in song and in psalm and in melody. It may be a broke voice. It may be flagless and instrumentless, but nonetheless, we

must learn to be a people that enter into his courts with a song of praise and worship upon us. We must learn to develop these things. We must learn to understand that when we are actually doing these things, it is transforming us because what we behold, we become. And there is... Man, if you study out the human psyche, if you study out humanity. We think in narrative. We think in visual. We think in song and melody. We think in these ways. The retention ability for us on all of these things is so much greater when we sing it. It's so much greater when we see it. And I'm telling you right now, you've got to unlock the walk with the Lord that has melody, that has song, that has praise and worship. And as you unlock this place of relationship with God where you learn to express back to him who he is, it will change dramatically the way that you live your life. It'll change dramatically the way you try and become something different. Because to the tough-minded, hard-nosed, working type of person, you might think and you might approach Christianity where you just got to work a little harder so that you could be a little more like him. But 2 Corinthians 3.18 says it really well. As you behold the Lord, you become transformed by the same image. The only work that you and I really put in on being transformed by God is the effort of beholding. Fixing your eyes on the author and the perfecter of your faith. How crazy and how unsettling is it that our only role is to just behold him? And he changes us. It's very unfulfilling if you like things the hard way. I used to love suicides and ladders when I was playing basketball. I used to say if there's stairs or an elevator, I always take the stairs until recently. Because I really understood that I actually just liked kind of like hard, everything hard, constantly hard. And I just realized that my affection with everything being difficult and hard was actually not at all what God's call was on my life. This is something that I chose under some kind of premeditated idea that it would make me the best of the best. Now, you hear me tell you guys my testimony and my story with the Lord, but like, what's your story with the Lord? What is he doing in your life? What are you beholding in him and seeing that's in him that's not in you? And have you been disciplined to host and to entertain that very thing that he's working in your life? We've been disciplined in it. Have we been intentional with it? Don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. My wife reminded me that for those of you that need to get your kid out, As we're going to dedicate them here in just a few minutes, I release you now to go get your baby if you need to get your baby or your kiddo. We're extremely excited to dedicate these babies. We do something really fun. I'll tell you guys about it in a moment, but I'm going to grab the book just so I don't forget. And I'll tell you guys about this in a moment. My wife will be coming down as well, I think.

So maybe somebody could text her or holler at her, yell at her. Hey, Jess, come down. Maybe she hears us through the Orlando context or something like that. But just to finish this part, and then we'll get into blessing our kiddos in this place. At the end of Romans 12, 1 and 2, it's, do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. Renewal of your mind is actually really interestingly difficult. How many of you guys have said things like, this is just kind of how I am? Hey, at this age that I've gotten to now, this is just like, this is how I think. It's not really going to change here, you know? I've heard this confession from all kinds of

people all of the time. And it tends to be that the older you get, numerically, you start kind of growing in that age. It's a very great temptation to say, This is who I am. Take it or leave it.

That's so good.

Now. I just want to remind you though, like, This verse, Romans 12, 2, doesn't say... "up until you are old." It says, You'll be transformed by the renewal of your mind. Which means as believers and as followers of Jesus, none of us get to choose the calcified mind. The rigid way of thinking The hardened way of thinking If you look at what kept Israel out of the promised land. It was that they kept acting like Egypt Israelites. They kept acting like desert Israelites rather than embracing the next thing that God was trying to do. And now we can hate on them all day long because we're hindsighting their story, and we're looking retroactively at this thing. But look at your story right now and see how many ways is it tempting for us to calcify the way we think so we can get comfortable. To calcify the way we feel so that we can get comfortable and find our like-minded Stripe. How hard is it for us to truly... Lay our mind on the altar as a living sacrifice and let God rain down fire upon it. If you cherish your mind and the way you think more than you do receiving the fire of God, you're not going to lay your mind on the altar. You're going to reserve it because you're like, he's going to burn some of this up. And he might burn up stuff that I really like. He might burn up stuff that has made you money. He might burn up stuff that has made you popular. He might burn up stuff that appeases your fears. He might burn up stuff that helps you avoid pain and punishment. But this is where powerful worship comes into play. As you behold powerfully a powerful God.

So that you can overcome the very deepest core places of who you are. In a loving relationship, in a transformative relationship with God. Why does he let us in? Because he loves us. Why does he transform us? Because he loves us. He builds us up. He liberates us, he frees us, because he loves us. This is the nature of God. And the ending here, and then we're going to dedicate. All of our wonderful kiddos. The ending here to Romans 12.2 is that, in fact... We find out what God's will is for our life when we let him transform us. Emotionally, I get it. We want the instructions beforehand and we want to follow them. Just God, tell me what to do, I'll do it. But God delivers his will And he delivers his purpose in our life through Transformation. He writes, The instruction manual upon the template of who you are. You want to know what God's will is for your life? Let him transform you and reshape you. You'll find out.

That's why it's a walk of faith. We've got to trust God.

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