

GOOD/BEAUTIFUL COMMUNITY

The *Christ-Centered* Community

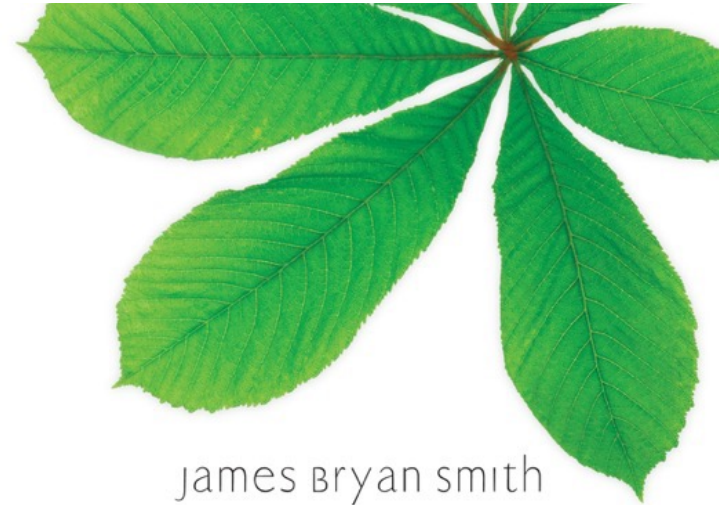
The *Worshipping* Community

The *Reconciling* Community

The *Hopeful* Community

The *Encouraging* Community

The *Serving* Community



james bryan smith

the good and beautiful COMMUNITY

FOLLOWING THE SPIRIT, EXTENDING GRACE,
DEMONSTRATING LOVE

"The best practice I have seen in Christian spiritual formation."

—DALLAS WILLARD

To be clear, this God we're commanded to worship is a servant God, one who grew up a peasant under empire, washed the feet of his disciples, rode a donkey into Jerusalem, and wept at his beloved friend's graveside. This is a God who "emptied himself," "humbled himself," and...



DEBBI
THOMAS

...“became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:7–8). This is no narcissist. This is a God who commands my worship so that my heart can be softened into servanthood, gentleness, humility, and love. This is a God who offers me the practice of worship as a gift. Not for God’s benefit, but for mine.



DEBBI
THOMAS

Worship truly is as natural as breathing. We're wired to do it: to flock to objects of devotion, to pay exquisite and adoring attention to things that draw our gaze and elicit our respect, to put pretty things on pedestals. We're wired to ascribe greatness to people, places, ideas, and objects outside ourselves.



DEBBI
THOMAS

Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him.

HOLY
BIBLE

LUKE

4:8

You are worthy, our Lord
and God, to receive glory
and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they existed
and were created.

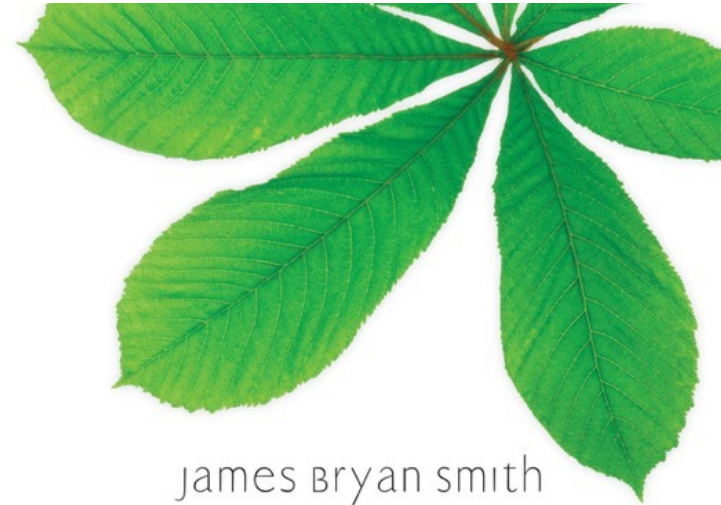
HOLY
BIBLE

REV

4:11

FALSE NARRATIVE #1

Worship is a personal matter
meant to inspire the individual.



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While we can (and should) worship privately, and we can (and hopefully) experience inspiration, that is not the primary reason for corporate worship; it is not about individual inspiration but rather the transformation of the person within, by and for the community.

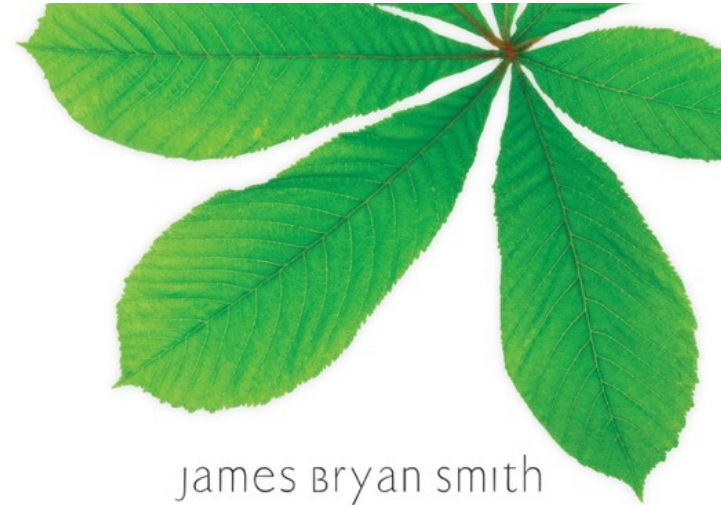


FALSE NARRATIVE #1

Worship is a personal matter
meant to inspire the individual.

TRUE NARRATIVE #1

Worship is a communal activity
meant to instruct a people
(and correctly wire us)



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I am not a liberal or a conservative.
I am an apprentice of Jesus.
I am simply trying to discern
that which is essential and that
which is non-essential...For me,
the basic teaching found in the
creeds is essential. Everything else
is nonessential. Not unimportant,
just not important enough
to divide over...



We worship because we are
a peculiar people whose roots
are in the future. We have a hope
that extends beyond this life on
earth. We tell our stories, learn
our language and share our life
in the presence of other followers
(*and seekers, doubters,
deconstructionists...*)



I believe deeply that we can worship individually and in many ways. Quiet times, nature, music of all kinds, books...But I believe even stronger that worship is at its best in community, where we bring our solitude worship moments with us to the worship community, and with songs, and prayer, and thanksgiving...



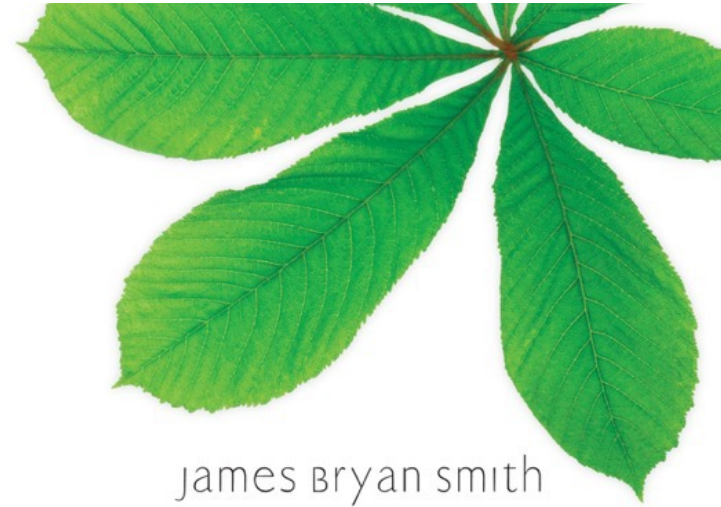
JOHN
FLYNN

...we join together to seek God,
Jesus and the Spirit – to wire us
in a way that brings us closer
to the Jesus who walked
among us.



FALSE NARRATIVE #2

Worship is an obligation
we owe to God.



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A common narrative is that we are obliged to worship God. It is used to motivate people to go to church. In truth, God does not need our worship. God is perfectly fine without it, but we need to worship. When we worship, we are aligned with the truth, and our souls function well when immersed in the truth.

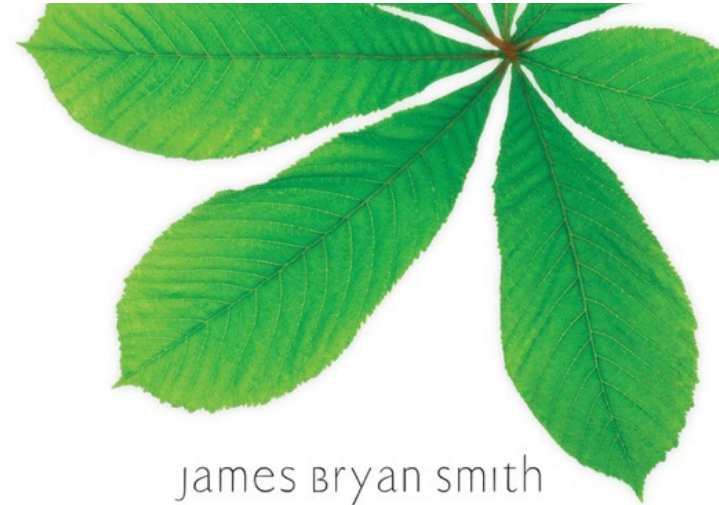


FALSE NARRATIVE #2

Worship is an obligation
we owe to God.

TRUE NARRATIVE #2

Worship is an invitation
given by God.



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Far from an obligation, worship is an invitation from a gracious God. Worship is our response to what God has done and is doing. Worship is an invitation from a gracious God who bids us to come and enjoy his beauty and goodness.



JAMES BRYAN
SMITH

For a day in your courts is better than
a thousand elsewhere. I would rather
be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
than live in the tents of wickedness.

HOLY
BIBLE

PSALM

84:10

C.S. LEWIS



While it is not an obligation,
worship is a gift I think we can,
all too often, take for granted.



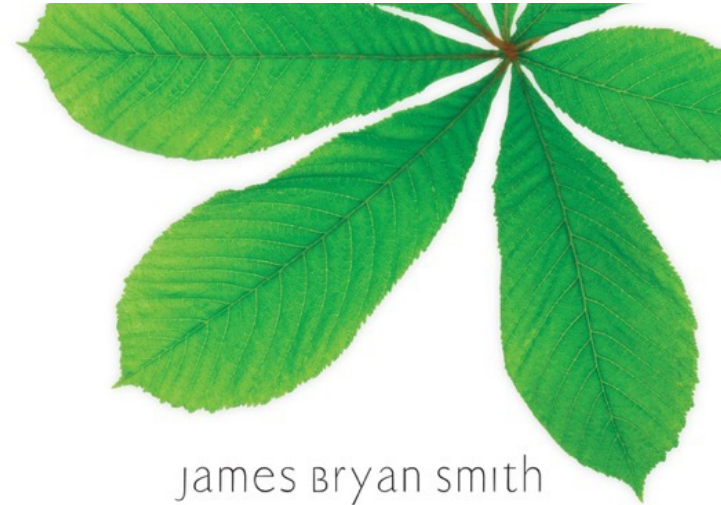
JOHN
FLYNN

FALSE NARRATIVE #3

The bible gives us clear instruction on how we are to worship.

TRUE NARRATIVE #3

Nowhere is all of scripture is there an owner's manual on how we are to do worship.



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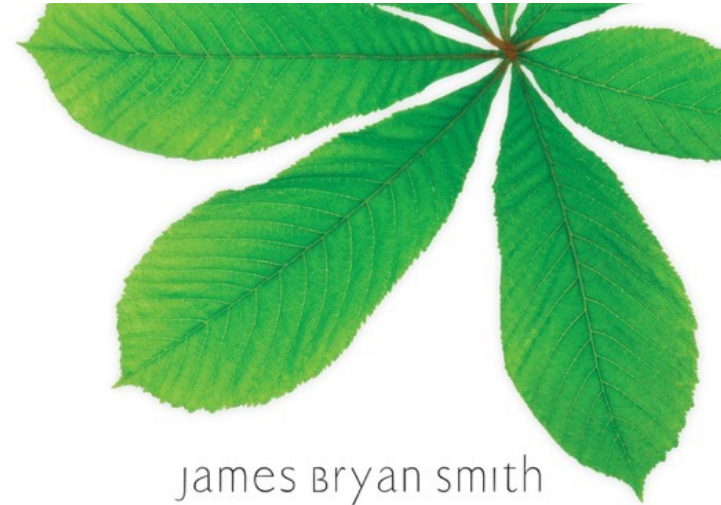
—DALLAS WILLARD

FALSE NARRATIVE #4

Worship music is a particular style that should only be practiced in a particular way and preferably with “sacred and not secular songs.”

TRUE NARRATIVE #4

There is no one true and pure music style for worship.



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**WHO IS VINTAGE
AS A WORSHIPPING
COMMUNITY?**



