

**Worship Matters Video Intensive with Bob Kauflin**  
**Session 11: Loving Your Family and Church**  
**(From Chapters 28-29 of *Worship Matters*)<sup>1</sup>**  
**Transcript**

Welcome to Session 11 of the Worship Matters Video Intensive. We've been spending a lot of time talking about our life, our meetings, our responsibilities, our purposes, our tasks. In these last two sessions we're going to focus on an often overlooked area of worship, and that is our relationships.

## **I. Worship is Loving Others**

In Matt 22, we're told that a lawyer came up to test Jesus with a question. He said:

*"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?' And he said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.'" - Matthew 22:36-40<sup>2</sup>*

I think we all get that the most important thing God cares about is that we love him, but what we often miss is that included in that command to love God is the command to love others. God-honoring worship consists of loving God AND loving those around us. We tend to limit worship to the songs we sing or what we do in a meeting when there's nothing about music here. God wants to receive worship through as much through our relationships he does through our songs. He's just as concerned about how we speak to others before and after our services as how we speak to Him during them.

Paul links glorifying God and our relationships specifically in Romans 15:5-6:

*"May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, [that's our foundation] that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, welcome one another as Christ welcomed you for the glory of God." - Romans 15:5-6*

### **A. Praying for Those Around Us**

Because our relationships are so important and are a means of worshiping God, we want to be sure to pray for those in our relational networks,

- that God would receive glory through them.
- to remind ourselves of what we can't do in and of ourselves
- that we might better know God's purposes for those relationships
- that we might grow in our love and care for those around us

We need God to love God and we need God to love others.

In this session we're going to look at the way we relate to our families, and then the members of our church. These are the people we're called to **serve**.

## II. Loving Your Family

**Whether you're married or single**, faithfulness in our family is a prerequisite for leadership in the church, and it's one of the primary ways we demonstrate to the world what exalting God *looks* like. These are some of the verses that that's based on:

- **An elder** must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? (1 Tim. 3:4-5)
- **Husbands** are to love, cherish, nourish, and provide for their wives. (Eph. 5:25-33)
- **Wives** are to respect, submit to, care for, and love their husbands. (Eph. 5:22-24; Prov. 31:10-31)
- **Parents** are to raise their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, with kindness and patience. (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21)
- **Children** are to obey, respect, and honor their parents. (Eph. 6:1-3; Col. 3:20)

Whatever role you serve in musically in your church, you most likely have family members—a spouse, children, parents, or even siblings—who may not appear with you on the platform, but are a primary way through which God wants to receive our worship.

Now, joyful sacrifice is going to be characteristic of faithful servants. We often give up normal patterns of family life so we might serve the church more effectively. It especially happens at times like Christmas and Easter! But our families should never be sacrificed on the altar of ministry.

One of the ways we fought that when our kids were growing up was to seek to involve them, to include them, in what we did as much as possible. They were involved in hospitality. When people were coming over, we encouraged them to participate in getting the house ready. They came in early to set up for the Sunday meeting as soon as they were old enough. They stayed late after meetings to hang out with people (though that wasn't always their choice or desire). They were involved musically. All those things helped alleviate the tension that exists between family and ministry.

One of the things we can do to head off that tension is to be faithful to invest in our families so that when crises arrive, your family will gladly let you serve. That means putting your family in your calendar first and guarding those times; I'm especially thinking of heads of households here. Things like family nights, day trips, family worship times, date nights, and meal times. Make sure those get in the calendar first. When my kids were growing up, six kids, we made sure every Sunday and Wednesday night, we were together. We ate most dinners together. My wife and I went out on a date night Monday nights. All those things were in the calendar, and so when I had to go do something else during the week, it

made it easier for the family to deal with that because they knew that they were going to be the first priority.

Your family should never feel as though they are fighting your ministry for attention, time, or affection because they ARE your ministry. And they're one through whom which God wants to receive glory.

### III. Loving Your Church

Leading people you don't love won't be very effective or honoring to God. We're called to love as we serve. We're called to love as we have been loved. (John 13:14-15; 1 John 3:16) The church doesn't need any more leaders who don't love those they're leading. That begins with:

- **Praying for them, especially** for those who seem unresponsive. Our church has a pictorial directory, so I pray through the directory, praying for the different members of the church. It might be in a website, it might be in your small groups, it might be spontaneously, just any way of keeping them before you so that you are always interceding to God on their behalf.
- **Hang out with the people in your church**, especially if you're in a new position. Find ways of just getting with them.
- **Look for opportunities to encourage and thank them.** That will head off our inherent desire to have them encourage and thank us. Be the first to do that. Find ways to encourage and thank them.

I want to specifically address two kinds of people in the church we will most likely encounter: The critic and the encourager.

#### A. The Critic

Now, I pray that your church isn't filled with a lot of critics, but every church is sure to have at least one and probably more.

*"Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid."*

- Proverbs 12:1 (It's the only time we allowed our kids to use the word "stupid" growing up is in quoting that verse.)

*"Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning."* - Proverbs 9:9

God's saying that correction is a good thing, so what are we to do? Here's some ideas:

#### 1. Pray for correction.

We want to be wise. We don't want to be stupid. Pray for correction. Ask God to bring people into your life who will point out where you're making mistakes, where you're sinning, or where you could do things better.

Some of them (not all) are fearful of telling us what they really think. But we need to hear it.

## **2. Expect correction.**

Let me just say, I'm still working on these things, but we need to be reminded again and again. When I'm surprised by critical feedback, it's usually because I'm looking for praise. Only perfect and proud people never anticipate doing something wrong. None of us are in the perfect category, and we don't want to be in the second, so, expect correction.

## **3. Pursue correction.**

What? Yes! Pursue correction! Remember we don't want to be stupid. Pursue correction! Ask people you trust—your family, your pastor, friends, other leaders—for input. Ask them when they have time enough to think about an answer, not as they're walking out the door. "Hey, what do you think?" And make sure they're honest with you. Pursue correction. It's invaluable. It's a gift.

## **4. Ask follow-up questions.**

Often my first tendency when someone corrects me is to come back with a defense, come back with justification, come back for reasons why I did what I did, come back with shifting blame, explain why this was somebody else's fault—and I just want the conversation to be over and the focus off of me as soon as possible. It's really helpful to not do that and to ask questions, to hear further thoughts or explanation. It helps us hear more clearly and respond more humbly. If the criticism you receiving is serious, it might be helpful to involves others, or even get a pastor involved. It will also help you guard your own heart as well as the church. But it's good to follow up with, "Okay, what do you mean by that?"

## **5. Thank people for correction.**

I mentioned earlier, it's not always easy for people to bring corrections, so I want to thank someone for caring enough about me to take the time to come and share their thoughts with me, whether or not I agree with them.

## **6. Thank God for correction.**

Most criticisms are gifts from God. It be hard to see that in that in the moment. It may be hard to see that when words are brought thoughtlessly, with anger, or sarcasm, or judgment. But most feedback I receive isn't near as strong as I need to hear and comes from hearts that want to serve. Even when someone gives it sinfully, reproofs remind me of my own self-deception and they cast us upon the mercy of my Savior who covers all my sins. We can't cover our sins and we aren't supposed to. Jesus covers them.

## **7. View Correction in light of the cross.**

I came across this quote in an article called, "The Cross and Criticism," by Alfred Poirier. I find it so helpful:

*"In light of God's judgment and justification of the sinner in the cross of Christ, we can begin to discover how to deal with any and all criticism. By agreeing with God's criticism of me in Christ's cross, I can face any criticism man may lay against me. In other words, no one can criticize me more than the cross has."*

- Alfred Poirier<sup>3</sup>

I've heard it said more than once that the cross shows we were worth dying for. And in a sense that's true, **but we weren't inherently worth dying for.** God chose to send Jesus. Jesus willingly came to save us from our sins because he loved us. But the cross shows that if I were the only person in the world, my sins alone would have been sufficient to require the death of the Son of God, in my place, for me to ever be reconciled to God. Just my sins alone. No one is every going to say anything worse about me than that. So if I really grasp what the cross says about my sin, it will be a lot easier to receive criticism from anyone else. Fight hard to receive correction. If we don't, God says we're stupid. Let's be smart.

## B. The Encourager

As hard as it is to receive criticism, it can be equally hard to receive encouragement.

*"The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, and a man is tested by his praise."*

- Proverbs 27:21

Not many musicians receive encouragement well. Unless we're blatantly proud, it just feels awkward and uncomfortable. So what do we do with the encouragement that typically comes with leading? Here are some ideas:

- **Thank the person for taking the time to encourage you.**

Just like you thank a person for criticism, thank them for encouraging you. I don't have to evaluate the accuracy of their encouragement. All I know is that they made a point—they took the time—to express gratefulness when they didn't have to say anything. So I can sincerely and authentically and genuinely say, "Thank you so much for the encouragement."

- **If the complement is unclear, ask for clarification.**

We're not asking for more praise, it's just that it helps to know how God specifically worked in a meeting. You might respond with something like, "Thanks so much! So what is it about the meeting that encouraged you?" Now, if their second answer is equally vague or just unclear ("Well, I just thought it was really cool"), we don't have to press in. (We don't have to

say, “No, no, tell me what was so good about the meeting, because that would be awkward.) Typically, I’ll say something like, “We serve a great Savior, don’t we?” Because we do. And that points away from us to the one who makes all the fruit possible.

- **Express gratefulness for the opportunity to serve.**

My most common response when someone encourages me is, “Thank you. It’s a privilege and it’s a joy.” Because it is. The Psalmist says,

*“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 dwell in the tents of wickedness.”*

- Psalm 84:10

It is a pure joy to follow in the steps of Jesus Christ who came not to be served, but to serve.

- **Draw attention to the contributions of others. (1 Cor. 12:17-20)**

Most of the time when people encourage me, they’re unaware of the parts others played. I can increase their awareness. I can say something like, “You know what? I’m just grateful to be part of this team. These guys practice so hard.” One of the best ways to turn awkwardness into gratefulness is to remember how God has used others in my life. And when I’m actively looking for evidences of grace in other people, I have less time to think about myself.

- **Internally and intentionally “transfer the glory to God.”**

I first learned that phrase from C.J. Mahaney, who was quoting the Puritan pastor Thomas Watson. It means acknowledging that any benefit or fruit that comes through my life is because of God’s grace, and therefore all the glory is completely and rightfully his, not mine. So at some point, whether it’s after the meeting, or when you’re driving home, even before you go to bed at night, it’s wise to specifically give thanks to God for causing someone to point out the way his grace has been at work in your life and give him glory for it.

Of course there are many other kinds of church members we’ll encounter. **The song suggester, the volume judge, the spontaneous dancer, the frozen face,** and more. We just don’t have time to get into that. God can give us grace to love them all.

#### **IV. Loving by Leading Theologically**

Now, if you’re the leader or pastor of your church, one of the best ways we can serve and love and care for the members of our church is by leading them

theologically, with the gospel in view.

That might mean taking time to explain why we sing the songs we do. People come to our churches with all kinds of preconceptions about how music is supposed to “WORK” in our gatherings. They think it’s supposed to be this way, they like what they’re familiar with, they like what gets them moving, what sounds current, what sounds impressive. We want to help them understand that in our church, we use music so that ***the word of Christ might dwell in us richly.*** That’s the guiding determiner for why we sing the songs we do and why we do at all: it’s not popularity, it’s not cultural relevance, it’s not whether or not they are on the radio or CCLI charts, it’s not my personal preferences. As we teach people that, as we model that, it can not only head off confrontations, but it can stir their souls to love God’s glory in Christ even more. And in the end, there’s no way we can serve them better.

Well, this session has talked about loving the people that we serve. In the next and final session, we’re going to focus on loving the people we serve *with*.

**Session 11 Discussion Questions:**

1. What are some ways you can ensure that your family is not being sacrificed on the altar of ministry?
2. What are some ways you can express your love to people in your church?
3. How do you typically respond to criticism or correction?
4. How does the gospel change the way we would naturally receive criticism/correction?
5. What are some ways to receive encouragement?
6. What does it mean to love the people you serve by leading them theologically? How do you feel that you're doing in that regard? (Seek the input of those on your team and your pastor on this question.)

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<sup>1</sup> *Worship Matters* by Bob Kauflin, © 2008 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187, [www.crossway.org](http://www.crossway.org).

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<sup>3</sup> Taken from *The Cross and Criticism* by Alfred Poirier. *The Journal of Biblical Counseling*, Vol. 17, Number 3, Spring 1999, p. 19. [www.ccef.org](http://www.ccef.org)