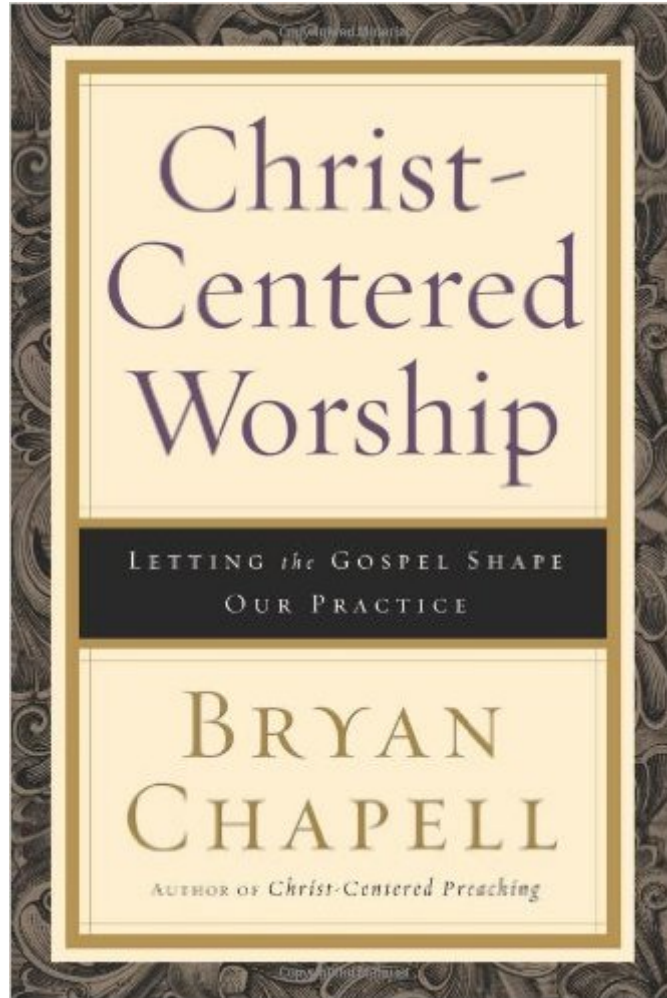


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# Christ-Centered Worship: Letting The Gospel Shape Our Practice



## Synopsis

The church's worship has always been shaped by its understanding of the gospel. Here the bestselling author of Christ-Centered Preaching brings biblical and historical perspective to discussions about worship, demonstrating that the gospel has shaped key worship traditions and should shape today's worship as well. This accessible and engaging book provides the church with a Christ-centered understanding of worship to help it transcend the traditional/contemporary worship debate and unite in ministry and mission priorities. Contemporary believers will learn how to shape their worship based on Christ's ministry to and through them. The book's insights and practical resources for worship planning will be useful to pastors, worship leaders, worship planning committees, missionaries, and worship and ministry students.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

People in my generation and down are prone to exaggeration. It's part of our cultural ethos. "That was the awesomest thing I've ever seen." "That was the nastiest thing I've ever tasted." "That was like a million times worse than anything I've experienced before." So in light of my generation's over-indulgence in superlatives, I preface what I am about to say by pointing out that this is one of those times when my superlatives actually should be taken at face value. Bryan Chapell's Christ-Centered Worship is one of the best books on worship I have ever read. It now rests firmly in my top three (not sure what the other two are, but I'm giving myself some wiggle room). Some may not want to read the lengthy review which follows, so I'll start with overall bullet points that I hope will

be helpful to people. \* Pastors, worship leaders, and worshipers who cherish a robust understanding and experience of the gospel should read this book. \* Evangelical worshipers interested in incorporating "liturgy" into their worship should start with this book. \* Evangelical worshipers not interested at all in liturgy should still read this book because it will wake them up to something profound about their worship practice. \* Liturgical worshipers interested in understanding the basis for their liturgy should start with this book. \* Liturgical worshipers who think they know all the what's and why's of their liturgy should still read this book, because I bet you'll be hit with at least one profound "aha" moment. \* The book is split into two parts, and the first part (pages 1-155) is the book's meat and potatoes. \* If you didn't get much out of Chapell's Christ-Centered Preaching (I'm one of those), don't count this book out.

I can't believe I am the first to review this book. Perhaps the rest who have read it are still sitting with their mouth open in praise or mental gears grinding or bent knees in repentance or continuing to experience some Aha moment. Usually I will express my gratitude to Dr. Chapell privately. As his former student, and one who has read just about everything he has written, sometimes multiple times (Christ Centered Preaching), Christ Centered Worship did not just inch up my favorites list, it pole vaulted to first place. Being a young pastor, I have learned so much about worship and its importance from many other of my heroes. I have not had the benefit of working as associate pastor and learning that way. It has been most trial and error, with lots of error and confusion (Thank God our church is so gracious), lots of podcasts by Tim Keller, DA Carson, John Piper, and others (thank God for the internet and these pastors who continue to teach me about the Gospel and Worship), and through lots of reading (thank God for kindle though I crashed it three times this morning trying to highlight and make too many notes in this book). I almost copied the whole thing! One of the things that has been so hard for me as a pastor is to see the historical flow of worship liturgy and its relationship to the gospel and why we do the things we do. Many of these things I learned at Covenant. But after preaching for 8 years, and having them "represented" so clearly pushes understanding and appreciate and freedom deeper and broader. In so many ways this was very practical. Let me give you three, in my words (not Dr. Chapell's), that will give you some "lived body detail" of the effect this book has had just in its first reading (definitely a re-read).

There are numerous books on worship printed; most of which take a side in the continuing and often heated discussion about worship. Having read many of these books, it is obvious that most conversations about worship center on style. Even well-meaning theologians try to back up personal

preference with scripture. The reality is that worship is not about style, it is and should be about the story of God and how we have been invited to participate. In *Christ Centered Worship* by Bryon Chapell, a well-known theologian, we are taken on a journey to investigate the worship practices and service outlines from church history. It is through this investigation that Chapell shows us that from the earliest inception of the organized church there has been a common story to tell in worship; the story of God. He points out that corporate worship is a model of our personal journey, a continuation of our daily conversation with God that is brought to a grander scale when believers gather. In one area of the book Chapell writes that worship can be seen in two simple words and how we respond to these words. The words: Glory and Grace. God reveals His glory, we are given the chance to respond. God reveals His grace, we are given the chance to accept and then respond through a surrendered life. As I read through the first part of the book I was waiting for the 'shoe to drop.' As Chapell exposes history I was waiting for him to say we needed to get back to the old ways, follow the liturgy of the historical church, including the songs and style of days gone by. The 'shoe never fell.' Chapell simply stated that it is not about style but about the story of God and how we expose the pieces of the story in worship and allow our congregations to respond.

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