

# So what is this thing called, “Worship?”



Worship includes confession. Confession means coming to our senses and agreeing that what God has said has been right all along. Confession not only moves God to forgive us, but God also promises to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

## The Prodigal Son

### **The Younger Son Comes to his Senses**

“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ So he got up and went to his father.

### **The Father Celebrates his Son’s Return**

“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

### **The Older Son Complains**

“The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

### **The Father’s Challenges the Older Son’s Thinking**

“‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”

The younger son represents common humanity, prone to rebelling against the Father’s benevolent oversight and making decisions of self-damage.

The father represents our Heavenly Father, who celebrates our repentance and return.

The older son represents religious people who have lost their perspective on what is truly important.

The father’s challenge represents God’s call to change our perspective and learn to value what God values.

## People Focus



Jesus was focused on people. The majority of his time was spent in developing relationships. He defined his mission saying, "I have come to seek and save the lost." The church must serve the purposes of Jesus Christ above all.

## Church Focus



Sometimes the church can get over-focused on church matters and lose focus on people matters. While we certainly should pay attention to developing the ministries of the church, we must not let this distract us from the primary work of developing relationships.

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### Questions *for reflection or group discussion:*

Do you feel more like the younger son or the older son?

What keeps us from returning to God?

Do you think Hempfield is more focused on programs or people?



### Your Notes *what God is saying to you:*

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