

MADE TO *W*ORSHIP

AN INTERVIEW WITH MONTE AND BETH COUSINEAU



AN INTRO FROM LESLIE:

We have been so blessed to have Monte and Beth Cousineau as our worship leaders at the Set Apart Conference in Colorado for the past several years. In over 30 years of ministry, I have met very few worship leaders like them. They both have such a pure and passionate heart for Jesus and an amazing gift of leading the Body of Christ into His presence through their music. Beth and Monte also have the rare ability to bring Christians from all backgrounds and denominations together through their Christ-centered worship. I am excited to share this interview with you, in which they communicate their heart for worship and offer important spiritual truths for building a deeper relationship with Christ.

Can you tell us a little about your journey to becoming worship leaders?

BETH:

It is, of course, hard to describe in a few sentences the journey the Lord has had us on our entire lives. Where we are now is so vastly different from where we started. From as early as I can remember (around four years old) I had a passion for singing and performing. But it was self-focused — all about me doing my thing on stage and having others entertained by it. That said, although I never had aspirations of becoming a “worship leader,” after giving my life to the Lord at age seven, there started to burn in me a passion for the Lord and to somehow use my singing gift for Him. At age 13, I was accepted onto a worship team and thought I had “arrived.” Little did I know this was just one stop on my journey in discovering what worship can be with its various expressions.



I was 22 when I started attending a church where ‘Spirit-led’ worship was a normal part of our gatherings. This was new for me. The pastor was in pursuit of the Presence of the Lord and facilitated making space for Him. I had never experienced anything like it and it was transformational for me.

It was at that church that I met Monte. We were both on the worship team and had many times in His Presence together. We began leading worship together for that church, started our relationship, eventually married, and now, over 30 years later, we have never stopped being in pursuit of God’s Presence.

What is your biggest desire or goal when leading others into worship?

MONTE:

That He would receive the attention, honor, reverence, and worship He alone is due. Other desires trail behind this, but this one is primary. Nothing else, no one else is worthy of worship. *He alone* is worthy.

What are some of the most common hindrances that keep Christians from understanding and experiencing true worship?

- Too much self-consciousness. Too little God-consciousness.
- Busyness — not making time for Him.
- Not understanding His love for us.
- Not seeing the overwhelming beauty of the Gospel.
- Listening to the lies of the accuser.
- Thinking that only in church gatherings is where worship happens. (Many people don't know how to worship on their own or feel uncomfortable doing so.)
- Staying content with what we've always known worship to be.
- Not being willing to be vulnerable with Him.

We've experienced all of these in our own lives. But it's been the work of the Holy Spirit shining light on improper mindsets and revealing truth that has brought us to the place of experiencing freedom in true worship.

What are some of the most important keys to really worshiping, rather than just singing worship songs?

BETH:

There are many, but for this article, we will focus on just three:

We must have a revelation of Who we are worshiping: When David says, in Psalm 34:3, "Oh, magnify the Lord with me," he wasn't saying we can somehow make the Lord bigger; for He cannot

be made any more infinite and all-powerful. But when we "magnify" Him in our own view, we are acknowledging His greatness and giving Him the proper place of honor and reverence in our minds, hearts, and lives.

We must have a revelation that we are worshiping the Creator of the Universe, the Father of Glory, and the King of kings. There is no one else higher. When we experience glimpses of His majesty, splendor, love, grace, goodness, mercy, kindness, worthiness (and the list goes on), we can't help but do more than just sing words to Him. It is not a casual thing. It is an awesome privilege and humble honor to worship Him, and we do that with utmost respect and reverence. He is truly worthy.

We must have a revelation of our need for a Savior: A number of years ago, when our children were young, they were swimming in Lake Michigan during a family day at the beach. Monte and I watched from the shore. We soon realized that Aria, our third-born daughter, was suddenly being "pulled out to sea" and dragged under the current. Immediately, Monte went after her. He did not dive under, but walked like an unstoppable machine through the rough current, even when the waters rose to his neck, keeping his eyes on her. He was determined to not lose sight of her and to save her. The feeling I had, as her mother, was such a desperate (and I mean *desperate*) dependence and hope that Monte would get to her in time to actually rescue her. I felt helpless and I knew *she* was helpless to save herself, she needed a savior.

When Monte carried her to shore (praise the Lord!), our family surrounded her and wept. We knew we had almost lost her. In that huddled moment, we recounted to our children that Jesus had done that very thing for us — we were drowning in our sin, being pulled under, unable to get free, unable to save ourselves, and Jesus came after us, rescuing us from those waters.



OH, MAGNIFY THE LORD WITH ME,
AND LET US EXALT *HIS* NAME TOGETHER.



ALL FOR HIM ALL THE TIME



Now, as her mother, can I somehow relate to you how utterly grateful I was to the Father for sending Monte to rescue Aria? My words fail. I was also so thankful to Monte, who could have just stayed on shore — concerned that he could lose his own life trying to save her. But he didn't. He left everything and went after her. I just had to keep saying, "Thank you, Father, for sending Monte! And thank you, Monte, for rescuing her!" I had to express my utter gratitude.

It is this same depth of thankfulness we feel when we read Scriptures like Ephesians 2 with fresh eyes and open hearts, and realize how we were like Aria, in desperate need of a Savior. The revelation of this reality will cause a kindling of the fires of gratitude and authentic worship.

We must realize that worship is a lifestyle: Paul says in Romans 12:1, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper worship" (NIV).

In light of how much mercy the Father has poured out on us, it is a natural response to live our lives in ways that express our utter gratitude for all He is and all He's done for us. Living holy and acceptable and pleasing to Him is our natural, true, and proper worship. (See Romans 12:1.)

"All for Him, all the time" should be our heart's cry. From this place, everything becomes worship unto Him: changing diapers, cleaning toilets, loving our spouses, serving our churches, extending forgiveness, honoring our authorities, giving our

employers our best ... it's *all* worship. And when we take time to worship Him with singing, it should simply be an extension and expression of how we are living all of the other moments of our lives.

How would you encourage someone who has a desire to cultivate a heart of worship, but is not sure how to begin?

MONTE:

God is relational. He longs to be with us. Make time and take time to be with Him ... *today*. Then, do it again *tomorrow*. And the next day ... just keep coming to Him consistently, over time. Time with Him can look like different things. Spending time in the Word, meditating on God-realities and truth found in Scripture, time in prayer, stillness ... with openness and a disposition bent toward Him. All of these can lead us to worship as the Holy Spirit reveals the Father and the Son to our hearts.

I can say from experience, the more you come to Him consistently, in vulnerability, with no agenda, trusting the leading of the Holy Spirit, you will cultivate a heart of worship. His worthiness is overwhelming. We often just need to still ourselves from busyness long enough to see Him in the reality of who He is.

Even as I write this, I'm moved to tears as my heart is overcome with Him. There has never been and there never will be anyone like Him. And as you turn your attention and affection toward Him your heart will well up with worship.

SEE HIM IN THE REALITY
OF WHO HE IS



Can you tell us more about your ministry and some of the worship resources you have available?

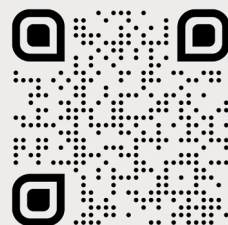
One of the ways we feel called to serve the Body of Christ is to help facilitate intimacy in worship (and its many facets) through corporate and personal worship gatherings, music projects, and other content and materials. It is our desire to never be the focus, but rather host His Presence, and then get out of the way for people to see and encounter Him.

In light of this desire, the Father led us to record a live album on the Ellerslie campus, which captured the voices of the Church worshipping. The album is called "Holy: When the Whole Church Sings" and it is available on most streaming platforms. You can also stream it from our website at **MonteAndBeth.com**.

To get in touch with us, you can fill out the contact form on our site, or email us at info@monteandbeth.com.

Beth is also a certified vocal coach and has a voice and performance coaching company called **Created To Sing**. Our eldest daughter, Liberty, is also a certified voice teacher, and works for Created To Sing. Both Beth and Liberty offer in-person and virtual lessons. For more information or to schedule a free consultation or voice lesson, please email info@createdtosing.com. There is also information about Created To Sing at MonteAndBeth.com.

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