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Week 31

Randy Robison

Hosanna Wong

MALE ANNOUNCER: The following program is sponsored by friends of Life Outreach International.

ANNOUNCER: Have you ever felt shame about the way you worship? Hosanna Wong reminds us that every person is perfectly and wonderfully made, and created to express their worship uniquely.

HOSANNA WONG: I want to help set you free from the idea that your worship has to only look one way or else. And I want to set you free from the idea that your spouse or your parents or your kids have to worship the exact same way as you. I want to unpack what the Bible actually says.

ANNOUNCER: "Uncomplicate It," next on "Life Today."

[music]

RANDY ROBISON: Welcome to "Life Today." I'm Randy Robison. Great to have you here. We're gonna follow up on a conversation, by the way, if you missed the first program with our guest today, Hosanna Wong, you can go to lifetoday.org, see all the programs there.

But there is a part of her book, a new book called "Uncomplicate It," that really caught my eye, because if you've been in the church a while, you've probably had some experiences where you see some different things and you wonder, "Is that right? Should I be like that? I don't know. I don't understand." And these things can become kind of hindrances, and if someone tells you you gotta do it this way, or you're not really a good Christian, now it gets into all sorts of mess.

And we're going to, as the title of the book says, uncomplicate some things for you by getting into what Hosanna calls praise-onalities, praise personalities. So, wonderful conversation today. I'm glad you're here, so enjoy. Hosanna, welcome back.

HOSANNA: Thank you for having me. I'm thrilled.

RANDY: I love this whole thing. Give me just an overview before we get into the specifics of the, what, of the seven different types?

HOSANNA: Yeah.

RANDY: What exactly do you mean by these personalities related to praise?

HOSANNA: Right, so I interviewed over 1,000 people around the world, and I asked them two questions. One, what has stood in the way of you connecting with God, which we talked about in the previous show. And then two, I also asked them, what is a unique way you have found to connect with God?

And people with all these different backgrounds, different places in their journey of faith, different ages all over the world, would share things that made them feel close to God. And often they would say, "Well, I know this isn't supposed to count," or "I know this is kind of weird," or "I'm sorry this is quirky." And just realizing like, wow, you don't have to feel bad for the way you connect with God. So I started just writing down the different ways people connected with God, and then I wondered, "Is this biblical? Is this supported in Scripture?" I noticed these seven different worship personalities, seven different bents that people had towards how they connected with God, and then I found them in Scripture all throughout the Old Testament and New Testament, different ways that different people with different personalities worshiped God in different ways.

And then when I discovered Jesus himself worshiping God in all seven of these ways, then I thought, "You know what? There's something to be said here about how God wants us to encounter him in different ways throughout all of our lives and throughout different seasons. Let me just give some language to it to help introduce it to people that this is biblical and it counts." So I found seven.

RANDY: Okay, so I was gonna--I'm laughing when you mentioned Jesus, because I'm looking at these going, "Well, I see myself here and here and here," and then over here, I'm like, "Yeah, not really," but like, you're gonna see yourself in different places, and it's all okay. It's just our different makeup, right?

HOSANNA: Absolutely, that's what I love about it. So they're worship personalities, I decided to call it your praise-onality, and it's not like a personality test where you're only one thing and you can only be that one thing your whole life.

It's like, you might be one to two to three, you might resonate with a couple this season of your life, and maybe in a different season of your life you'll relate to other ones. But I wanna help set you free from the idea that your worship has to only look one way or else, and I want to set you free from the idea that your spouse or your parents or your kids have to worship the exact same way as you.

I want to unpack what the Bible actually says. So there's seven, and in my book I unpack where they all are in Scripture, but I can give you just a really quick rundown of the seven.

RANDY: Well, let's start at the top if you don't mind, because that's where I found myself right off the bat.

HOSANNA: Okay, cool, that's what I would love. I'd love to describe the seven, and then maybe hear what yours are.

RANDY: Okay, all right.

HOSANNA: Does that sound good?

RANDY: Yeah, yeah, that sounds good. I can't wait to tell you about an experience that you validate, and I'm glad to hear it.

HOSANNA: Okay, perfect. Okay, cool, we'll do it, and then I'll guess what you are and you'll tell me. All right, here's the seven. Number one is the recreationalist.

This might be you if you engage with God best through the outdoors, through nature, through movement, perhaps on a hike or at the gym. Two is the beholder of beauty. This might be you if you engage with God best through beautiful things, maybe a portrait or a photo or a flower. Creative things literally make you feel closer to your Creator. Three is the soul fire.

This might be you if you engage with God best through outward expressions of worship, perhaps raising your hands or having a dance party to worship music in your kitchen. Now, it's important to note that not everyone is a soul fire, so some of us might be in a worship environment and see someone worshiping God in a really expressive way, and we might think that looks a bit much, or a bit performative, or a bit fake. And if you're not a soul fire, it might be fake for you. But if you're a soul fire, holding it in might be the most fake thing you can do.

RANDY: That's a great point.

HOSANNA: So if you're a soul fire, certainly don't be distracting. Always honor the environment you're in. But if you're a soul fire, that's a wonderful way you've been wired. You must find time in your life to blast worship music in your car, or have a dance party in your kitchen, to the glory of God.

The fourth is the sacred space seeker. This might be you if you encounter God best through traditions, perhaps through Communion, perhaps through Lent, through traditions. And we never wanna worship traditions more than we worship God, and we don't want to misunderstand or misuse them, thinking that we must do any spiritual practice in order to be saved.

You are only saved by God's grace when you put your faith in Jesus. And also, it's possible that through structure, you encounter God best. So if that's you, if you can practice those

things without legalism, without believing you have to do it to be saved, it is a beautiful way you're wired. Maybe have some traditions in your life to the glory of God.

RANDY: And without judgmentalism, I will add, where you're looking at other people thinking they're doing it wrong because they're not doing it like you.

HOSANNA: One hundred percent, because you might be a sacred space seeker, they might not be. The fifth is the interior expert. This doesn't mean you're an expert at yourself, but this does mean that you're naturally introspective. You are very naturally inclined towards silence and solitude. You're very comfortable alone. Any sacred space is sacred to you if it's your solo space. And you might have a bent towards nostalgia. When you play certain music, it literally brings you back to a certain time of life where you remember the goodness of God. Some of these people have a bent towards journaling as well. If that's you, you might be number five, the interior expert. Six is the thoughtsmith.

This might be you if you engage with God best through engaging with your mind. Maybe you're reading a passage of Scripture you've read before, but then you see something in it you've never seen and a light bulb goes off in your mind and fire's ignited in your bones. Geeking out is like a spiritual practice to you. You might be a thoughtsmith. And then the final one is number seven, the artist of people. And this might be you if you encounter God best through people. Perhaps photos are not your canvas and portraits are not your canvas, perhaps people are your canvas. And maybe you have a natural bent towards hospitality, putting on the dinner parties as your spiritual gift, or perhaps a bent towards service. I know a lot of people who set up and tear down at their church, and they would say, "I literally feel closer to God when I do this." And here's what must be said, and I know this is your heart too. We never wanna worship the way we worship more than we worship God. We never want to say, "Well, I'm a thoughtsmith, so that's why I never volunteer anywhere." Like, no. Throughout your life, I hope that you worship God in all of these ways at different times in your life.

We never want to worship the way we worship. And also, we never want to worship a worship style. We never want to be someone who says, "Well, I only go to a church if it's exactly like this. It has to look like this, have music like this, the building has to be like this, or else." No, I hope your faith is so real and so personal that you can have an encounter with God in a Catholic church, in a charismatic church, at a soup kitchen while you're volunteering, on your couch, or on a hike, to the glory of God. We never wanna worship the spaces that we're in. We only want to worship God. And also, if you ever feel stuck in your faith, I would say, if you're stuck right now in your faith, consider the way you're already naturally wired. What would bring your soul to life and help you enjoy God? Do that this week. Which of these seven, or three of these seven, really stick out to you? Okay.

RANDY: Okay, well, I also want to say that there have been--some of these were like, I was not raised that way, and so it was just more ignored, not like it was preached as wrong or anything, just kind of-- And then there was a point in my life where something happened that I went, "I see God in this, and I've never even looked here." So on the ones that aren't

natural or not trained, or a little just different, I think that it's just another opportunity to maybe explore. And you're not gonna just become--be that person all of a sudden, but you might get an appreciation, and it might help you understand other people better.

HOSANNA: One hundred percent. I see the ways I'm naturally bent, and when I wanna grow in my faith, like, me discovering God through the worship personalities that were not my natural bent really just opened up a whole other world to me, and it did help me understand my husband better.

It helped me understand my mom better, my friends better. And then now, when I'm introducing some of my friends to Jesus, I'm not overcomplicating it for them, saying, "Well, now, experience God the way I do." Instead I'm trying to figure out what unique relationship they could have with God in the way they're uniquely wired.

RANDY: All right, what do you think I am?

HOSANNA: Okay, close your eyes, close your eyes, and I'm gonna tell people at home what I think you are. All right, ready? Okay, we're ready, we're ready. We're ready to hear what you think you are. No, I'm just kidding.

RANDY: Well, I'll tell you my story then.

HOSANNA: Okay, tell me your story.

RANDY: You've been to Colorado. Do you snow ski by chance?

HOSANNA: Oh, I don't.

RANDY: I love snow skiing. That's like my thing. You know, my dad played golf and he would fish, and I'd be like, "Yawn," and I'd wanna go get on the top of a mountain and come flying down at terrifying speeds. At the backside of Keystone, one of my favorite resorts in Colorado, there's a run called Elk Run. It's a glorious, very steep--I think it's blue, but dear God, it's a little scary.

But at the top of that lift, you can see the continental divide. I don't even know how many miles. It just stretches out like this. And I have been up there oftentimes on weekends, on Sundays, you know. Someone called me and said, "Are you going to church?" And I was like, "Uh, this is my cathedral."

HOSANNA: Beautiful.

RANDY: And I realized, yeah, I mean, I feel closer to God, not because it's, what, 11,000 feet or so up there, but like, look at what he did. Oh my goodness. And you just, you know, if you know Psalms, they'll start coming to mind about creation and the beauty and the glory. And I wasn't taught.

I was taught you're supposed to be in church in a building on Sundays, and I realized at some point, in my thirties or something, like, you know what? I'm connecting with God out here. Yeah, I'm snow skiing, I'm doing what I love, but I'm taking the time to bring God into. I'm not separating my recreation from my relationship with God. Look at this beauty.

HOSANNA: Beautiful.

RANDY: Okay, so did you guess that that was one of mine?

HOSANNA: I guessed 1, which was recreationalist, outdoors in nature, and then I guessed 7, which is artist of people, because you're naturally good at conversations, but that doesn't mean that's what makes you feel close to God. I'm also good at conversations, but it is not what makes me feel closest to God.

RANDY: I would agree.

HOSANNA: Okay, so.

RANDY: That's interesting, okay.

HOSANNA: Maybe half-right.

RANDY: Oh, let's see. The other one, I mean, you know, there's a little soul fire, but yet also, it's kind of funny because I'm actually on the worship--I volunteer on the worship team at our church. I'm just a background singer or play whatever if it's needed, but they don't need it. They have professionals. So I've been and done a lot of worship kind of stuff because I love worship.

But when I'm in a church and everybody's bouncing, I'm usually pretty calm. And it's not because I'm necessarily self-conscious or not connecting, it's just that I'm not naturally as expressive as some other people. And I got to a point where I'm like, that's okay. The connection's still there. So, a little soul fire?

HOSANNA: Yeah, the point isn't, what do you think other people are, and how does it look for other people? The point is, how can this look for you, so you can connect with God for real and worship him for real, and have an authentic relationship with God?

And this is just to give you language for it. You might think of 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 other things that help you connect with God.

RANDY: And I think that's the freeing thing in this conversation, if you take it with the right lens. And I think that is to always remember all of these things, because the other way that I would connect, I would say, is with solitude.

I'm very comfortable alone, and I love the mountains, and I will go to the mountains and I will ride a bike or hike or something, and I will stop and I'll sit, and I will just think about

everything. And that grounds me, that centers me, I think, you know. But again, I invite God into that, because that's the point, I think, of all of this sort of color to the conversation, is that the only way to connect with God, the only way to get through life, the only way to be who he has designed us to be in our uniqueness is to stay connected to him.

HOSANNA: Right.

RANDY: I look at the fruit of the Spirit, the patience, the peace, the joy, and we should have these things. And I don't know if they told this to me directly, but the way I took it was, I have to work harder to be more patient, to be more kind, to be more gentle, and maybe someday I'll find some joy. And I realized, at some point in life, I had it totally backwards.

You can't stop an orange tree, a healthy orange tree, from producing oranges. You can't stop a healthy banana tree from producing bananas. And I realized, you can't stop a healthy believer from having the fruit, the result of the Holy Spirit, when we do what Jesus said, which is to stay connected to the vine.

HOSANNA: Right, amen.

RANDY: So where do you--how do we enjoy all these things? As we kind of dissect them and understand them and all that kind of thing, how do we enjoy them and keep the main thing the main thing? That would be the question.

HOSANNA: Well, I love that you referenced John 15 where Jesus says, "Abide in me and I will abide in you." That's what you're talking about, right? Like, remaining in him. "Like a branch connected to a vine, you must stay connected to me to produce fruit. Without me, you'll accomplish nothing." You're referencing John 15. That's a paraphrase of what Jesus says in John 15. And in "Uncomplicate It" I go through a journey of interviewing different vineyard growers all over the world to discover, how can we flourish, how can we be like branches connected to vines? What does that look like for all of us? Let me just tell you and leave the audience with one thing I learned in the hills of Tuscany.

I met a vineyard grower named Nicolo, because of course his name was Nicolo, and I said, "How would I start the most flourishing vineyard ever? Give me the ten best steps." And he said to me, "I don't have ten best steps for you. Instead I have one question for you. What is your soil? Where are you starting from? What are you made of?" And he started pointing to other vineyards and he said, "The soil from that vineyard is nothing like the soil from over there. And that soil, it has more shade. This one has more sunlight." He said, "I can spend my life interviewing and asking other vineyard growers all over how they grew their vineyards, and I should. I should learn from people who have grown before me." He said, "At a point, I want to be encouraged, I want to be inspired, but I can't spend my life obsessing over how they grew a vineyard on soil I do not have. At one point, I need to take everything I've learned and all their wisdom, and look at the soil I'm working with." And I would encourage anyone listening today, if you wanna have a flourishing relationship with God, the answer is not to just look at how everyone else has a relationship with God and

fixate on how they did it on soil that you do not have, because you might come from soil that people could not imagine coming from. You might come from soil people couldn't imagine being from. And there might be other people that come from soil you've never imagined. The best way to have a real, authentic relationship with Jesus is to look at what you're starting from. Where are you from? What's your background?

What have you overcome? What are your questions about God? What do you need from him today? What are you made of? And from where you're starting from, where you really are, invite God into your real life. Do you feel busy? Invite God into the busyness. Do you feel filled with shame? Invite God into what you feel shame about. And then start to spend real time with him in your real life. Consider your praise-onality and the ways you can enjoy God, and from where you're starting from, that is how you will start and continue not just any vineyard, but one that is flourishing and filled, not with just lots of fruit, but good fruit that will last.

RANDY: So good. This has been fun.

HOSANNA: This has been so fun.

RANDY: I love it. And you know, all the different ways we connect with God, the point is to connect with God, and that's what he wants to do. If you want someone to help walk you through whatever you're walking through, we do have a prayer line where someone will just pray with you, so give us a call. We just--we'll take the time and just listen and lift up your request to the Lord, because as Hosanna's stressed now for two programs, it's really about us connecting with him. God wants to connect with us. We make it complicated, so let's uncomplicate it.

And you know, one of the cornerstones of simple gospel preaching and living it out is the act of serving others, the pausing to see the need of someone else, and filling that need. Very simple. We have an opportunity to do that today. There are some needs. We're in a unique position with other community of servants to fulfill that need.

We're going to invite you into that today. Some of you have been a part of this, and we have seen fabulous results of sharing God's love in word and deed. Thank you. Others of you, this may be the first time you see it. Wherever you're at, I hope you will pray about being a part of this outreach, because the need is real, the situation is urgent, and you are the answer. Watch this.

[music]

ANNOUNCER: For 68-year-old Menpei, this is just one of up to four times a day she must make this journey to retrieve water. Her only water source: a hole in a river bed. It is not only a source for water, but also a source of sickness and disease.

Menpei fears for the health of her grandchildren when they drink this water, because she has already seen what it has done to her son, Tei. His stomach and ankles are bloated and swollen, all signs of a urinary tract infection, or worse. They have no money to see the doctor, but even if they did, it would not change their water source.

[speaking foreign language]

ANNOUNCER: Unfortunately, Tei is often unable to work due to his illness.

ANNOUNCER: Life is hard for Tei and his mother, Menpei. By simply introducing a clean water source, so many of their hardships could be alleviated, and with it, hope restored to their village.

RANDY: You know, when you see stories like that, the individual people and how they are impacted in various ways by contaminated water, you start to understand that Water for Life, this outreach that we do, that we've done for decades now to drill a clean drinking water source, putting a water well into a village, you realize that it's more than just an act of charity, when you do it from the standpoint of Christ, meaning we're doing this because we believe God has put us here to alleviate the suffering of others and to preach the good news of the gospel. It takes on, I believe, a whole new meaning. When you see the individual stories. Their story is difficult. There are other stories that are just tragic, you know? I've knelt next to graves of children who died from waterborne diseases. I've seen the pain of the parents or the grandparents who have lost oftentimes numerous children or grandchildren because they have the same water source. Until a solution comes to them, they will just cycle. There will continue to be death and illness and a lack of production, as you saw just now. What do we do?

We come and we break the cycle. We break the work of the enemy. It's a spiritual act as much as a physical act. So when I tell you that \$48 will help give clean drinking water to 10 people, yes, it will. But it'll do so much more than that. A gift right now of \$144 goes towards the water wells, and it will basically serve 30 people, because the average well is \$4800. That's based on the 350 wells that we drill over in 20 different nations this year alone. And we've done this for several years, so we see the benefit of it. A typical well will last about 70 years. That's why we call it Water for Life.

It'll serve about 1,000 people. But what you do today, your gift today, while meeting a practical need, while staving off sickness and death, it reaches beyond that. It becomes a spiritual act. What a blessing, what an honor. I hope you will be a part of this today as we give Water for Life, we give the water of life which is Christ. So here's my question to you. What would God have you do? Pray about it, and then do what he puts on your heart. It'll be a blessing to others and a blessing to you. Please go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can.

ANNOUNCER: Every day, far too many lives are lost to waterborne disease, and tragically, children under the age of five are the most vulnerable. Through Mission Water for Life, you

can give desperate mothers hope and precious children a future by helping provide clean, life-giving water before it's too late. Our goal this year is to drill 350 water wells in areas where the need is greatest, but it won't be possible without you.

Today, your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for 5 children. A gift of \$48 will help provide for 10, and \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime. In thanks for your gift of any amount, we'll send you "Prayers for my Spiritual Health." This beautifully-crafted prayer book will meet you in the places where anxiety, grief, and spiritual weariness run deep, guiding you through prayers for inner peace, emotional healing, and intimacy with God.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request the "Your Life of Prayer" bundle. This collection includes "Prayers for my Spiritual Health" along with "Prayers for my Physical Health" and the "Life Prayer" journal, three companions to help strengthen your walk with Christ. Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people, or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well, and request our inspiring bronze sculpture, "The Good Shepherd." Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

RANDY: It's really simple. There's a need, you're the solution, and together we can save lives. So I do hope you'll go on the phone, go on the web, however you prefer, make the best gift you can. Request Hosanna Wong's book.

I'd love to send it to you. It's a lot of fun and it's very liberating, so we'd like to get it in your hands today. Hosanna, it's been so much fun.

HOSANNA: Man, can you believe that time with God can be fun?

RANDY: You know what? I almost wanna say, can you believe that we've made it so complicated that it's not fun?

HOSANNA: Right, and I'm sorry for the ways we've done that. I think we can uncomplicate it now.

RANDY: We can, and you know what? It's real simple. Come back for more "Life Today." We'll try to give you some encouragement, and we appreciate you being here. Now go spend time with God however you want to. We'll see you again next time.

[music]

MALE: So it was five years of cumulative stress and trauma, and I had a breakdown.

ANNOUNCER: Next week on "Life Today."

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