



Sunday June 04, 2017
The Worship Series
Part 1: Understanding Worship

Introduction:

The dictionary defines worship as the act of expressing love, adoration, respect and honor for someone or something.

It derives its meaning from '*worth-ship*' - esteeming something very highly.

As humans, we are all designed to worship whether we realize it or not – to be totally in awe of something or someone so as to give ourselves completely over to and be greatly influenced by that something or someone.

Everybody worships, not just the religious ones.

Everybody worships – something or someone. But, the object of worship differs.

For some, the object of worship could be creation itself (a person), for others it could be money or power or position, an ideology.

The church talks about worship and spends time & effort in worship.

So, is worship the time spent in *singing*?

Is it a *genre of music*?

What Is Worship?

1) Worship is the recognition of who God is!

In the very act of recognition we do 2 things – identify and acknowledge.

We *identify* from having met /encountered.

We *acknowledge* (i.e) accept and admit to be true.

So, worship is encountering and acknowledging God's *existence*, His *nature* and *character* – His Majesty, Greatness, Goodness, Infiniteness, Holiness, love.

Psalm 95:6, 7

6 O come let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our maker.

7 For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture, And the sheep of His hand.

Hebrews 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him

Recognition of His Holiness - Psalm 29:2, Psalm 99:5, 9



2) Worship is reverence for God!

To revere is to regard or treat with adoration and utmost fearful respect.

Yes the Lord is our Father. He calls us His friends. He is also the soon and coming King of Kings and Lord of Lords whose eyes are like flames of fire and His feet like fine brass (Rev 2:18)

Psalm 5:7

But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy; In fear of You I will worship toward your holy temple.

Psalm 96:9

Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him all the earth.

3) It is communion with God!

Communion is the sharing or exchanging of intimate thoughts and innermost feelings.

Worship is going beyond the surface and getting real with God.

Sharing intimate thoughts and feelings requires a close relationship – intimacy.

Without relationship and intimacy there is no worship.

JOHN 4:24

²⁴ God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

In spirit – out of our innermost being.

4) Worship is our response to an encounter with God!

REVELATION 1:12-17

¹² Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. ¹⁴ His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; ¹⁵ His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; ¹⁶ He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. ¹⁷ And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, ^[a] “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.

REVELATION 4:9-11

⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

¹¹ “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honour and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”

So, we see that worship is definitely more than the songs we sing though we worship him with songs. Worship is not about a certain kind of music though we worship him with our musical instruments. Worship is certainly not ‘*the act before the main act.*’

Worship defies definition.



True Worshipers & spirit and truth Worship

JOHN 4:23-24

²³ *But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.* ²⁴ *God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*"

In spirit

-The true worshiper worships from his heart, from his inner-most being, from the core of his being, with everything within him, NOT half-heartedly, lacking in zeal.

MATTHEW 15:8-9

⁸ *'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.'* ⁹ *And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'*

Sebomai (Greek) - devout, religious worship having the right form, words, pious actions but no heart and therefore empty and useless in God's eyes.

-It is the spirit of man reaching out, crying out, to the Spirit of God. Worship is a spiritual activity.

In truth

-The true worshiper worships in sincerity, without any pretense or hypocrisy.
-The true worshiper worships as prescribed in God's Word for God's Word is truth.

JOHN 17:17

¹⁷ *Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.*

John 4: 23 'For the Father is seeking such...'

It is interesting to see that God the Father is actually seeking (looking for and desiring to find) true worshippers. Let us seek to be true worshippers.

John 4:24 'those who worship Him must worship...'

The Lord Jesus categorically states that the true worshippers must worship in spirit and truth. He does not leave us any options.

Our expressions of worship could keep varying from being very formal to being more spontaneous with creative arts and dance; with the worship songs sung by huge choirs with orchestral backing to a contemporary band or even 1 person leading with a single or no instrument but one thing that must remain constant and unchanging in our worship is that it has to be in spirit and truth.

So, it's not about worshipping God however one feels like it but to please His heart in worship, the way He desires it.

Shaw-khaw (Hebrew) - to prostrate, bow down, fall down flat, revere, beseech

Proskuneo (Greek) - to kiss the hand, to prostrate, to adore and revere

2 word pictures of worship in the Bible.



What Happens When We Worship God?

Worship does not add anything to God or change God.

a) Worship Transforms Us

What or whom we worship influences who we are and what we will become.

EXODUS 34:27-30

²⁷ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write these words, for according to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." ²⁸ So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments. ²⁹ Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. ³⁰ So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.

Moses didn't even realise that him being in the presence of God was having an effect on his physical body.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:17-18

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. ¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

In other words, as we surrender to God in worship, there is a marked change in our thoughts, motives, speech and action as we seek and behold the Glory of the Lord. We become more Christ-like in our thinking, speaking and behaving.

b) We Experience God's Presence

In worship, we become more aware of and experience God's presence.

In worship, knowledge becomes experience.

JAMES 4:8

⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

In His presence the believer experiences conviction of sin, fullness of Joy, refreshing and renewal of strength, supernatural power, and empowerment.

c) Worship Empowers Us To Rule And Reign

REVELATION 1:5-6

⁵ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed^[a] us from our sins in His own blood, ⁶ and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.



1 PETER 2:9

⁹ *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light;*

As priests we minister in worship and as kings we reign. Worship and reigning are intertwined because we are a royal priesthood. He has made us Kings and Priests.

Worshipping God In Difficult Times

PSALM 34:1

34 *I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.*

Abraham

Genesis 22:1-15

Vs. 5

And Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.'

David

2 SAMUEL 12:19-20

¹⁹ *When David saw that his servants were whispering, David perceived that the child was dead. Therefore David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" And they said, "He is dead."*

²⁰ *So David arose from the ground, washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house; and when he requested, they set food before him, and he ate.*

Paul and Silas

Acts 16:16-34

Vs. 25

But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

-Our worship of God is not based on our emotions (eg. 'feeling' close to God, being in a happy mood) but rather on the revelation of the unchanging truth of who God is.

-Worship is a choice that we make.

-Worship involves sacrifice.

-When we choose to worship God in difficult circumstances, we elevate the truth above our circumstances.

-When we worship God, we invite His rule and reign that changes the very atmosphere of our difficult circumstances.

Watch video *History of the Hymn 'It is well' – written by Horatio Spafford*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3lgJrLhb5Y&feature=youtu.be>

KEY TAKE AWAY

Worship is the recognition of who God is, reverence for God, communion with God and our response to an encounter with Him | The Father is seeking true worshippers | Worship changes us | We can worship God in difficult circumstances



LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Sunday June 04, 2017
The Worship Series
Part 1: Understanding Worship

This is a simple guide for use in Life Group discussions. Our objective is to focus on the application of the Sunday sermon - how each one is becoming a doer of the Word and building their lives on God's Holy Word. The Life Group meeting would normally last for 2 hours. Each Life Group would have up to 12-15 people.

Preparation

To prepare for the Life Group meeting, you can listen to the Sermon Key Points (sermon summary in five minutes) at apcwo.org. You can also review the Sunday Sermon PDF notes. Pray for the Life Group meeting and invite the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Welcome

The Life Group meeting may commence with a time of prayer, worship and a fun activity.

LISTEN to God's Word

Read the following Scripture passage(s): Psalm 95:6,7, Psalm 5:7, John 4:23,24, Psalm 34:1, Genesis 22:5, Acts 16:25

INVESTIGATE God's Word Together

Discuss these together, giving time for people to share their insights:

- 1) What attributes of God have you discovered recently that you can acknowledge in worship?
- 2) Where are you in your journey to becoming a true worshipper? What are some challenges that you have faced in offering 'spirit & truth' worship?
- 3) What are some practical keys to worshipping God in difficult circumstances?

Each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share one or two main learnings from the Scriptures read today and how they see themselves applying it into their specific life situations. Encourage each one to participate and share.

FELLOWSHIP by sharing your life and spiritual journey

Each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share anything from their walk with God, something God has been teaching them, a testimony of answered prayer or a specific challenge that they would like prayer for. Encourage each one to participate and share.



ENCOURAGE each other by praying and ministering to one another

Get into small groups of two or three and take turns to thank God and pray for each other. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Expect the gifts of the Holy Spirit to flow bringing healing, releasing miracles, prophecy, etc.

Regroup and close by thanking God together.