

LIVING A LIFE OF WORSHIP

First of all, how do we define worship. It is the adoring response of all that the believer is - mind, emotions, will and body - to all that God is and says and does.

It is the *act of freely giving love to God*.

Another definition - "it is the response of the human spirit to a manifestation of the glory of God." The word "worship" comes from an old English word meaning "**worth-ship**". To worship God is **to express His worth**.

When we worship, it is not to give *worship the honour or focus*. **Worship honours another**. Worship is not music or the songs we sing, no matter how much feeling we put in them. It is not giddy, flippant, shallow or superficial. It is not body posture or facial expression. *Just because we do some bodily action doesn't necessarily mean we are worshipping*.

One of the main reasons for man's existence is to have fellowship and communion with God. That's what He created us for. Is 43:21. We **cannot separate worship from our fellowship with God** for there could be no fellowship outside of a worshipful relationship. Worship is **primarily for God's purpose**.

Why Should Worship Of God Be A Priority In Our Lives?

i) It Has Priority In Scripture

God obviously saw it as a priority for His people because He **mentions it so many times in His Word**. In Genesis we see Adam fell when he failed to worship God. In Revelation, all history culminates in an eternal worship service in the presence of our glorious Lord.

ii) Jesus Made It A Priority

a) *He called it the greatest commandment* – Mark 12:30 “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” This was not just a head knowledge, worshipping only with our minds or just from the soul realm. It **involves our total being, body, soul and spirit**.

b) *He taught us to worship first before petition in His model prayer*.

Luke 11:2 “And He said to them, When you pray, say, Our Father, Who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name...” We cannot just come to God when we want something. We must **come to Him first in relationship**.

In order to praise and worship God for who He is, **we must know Him; His nature, His desires, His plans, His heart**. It is impossible to praise and worship a God you do not know personally. **The more we know God the more we will want to worship Him and the deeper our worship will take us**.

Like any relationship, **this requires time and constant communication** between both parties. *Example* - not talking with your wife or spending time with her.
We cannot expect to build a deep relationship with God if we are not prepared to find the time to meet with Him daily. This must become *our lifestyle*.

iii) **It is what the Father is looking for**

John 4:21 - 24 - " But the hour comes, and now is, when the *true worshippers* shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for *the Father seeks such to worship Him*.
God is Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth."

Jesus was saying that **'worship must be in keeping with God's nature, which is spirit**. In other words, God is not an object. You do not worship Him like you would an idol. *Worshipping in spirit is from my person to God's person and also involves the intellect, emotions and will.*

Spirit actually means "rushing wind". The word for spirit, "pneuma" means "wind" or "spirit" and is derived from the root word "pneo", which means "to blow" and is a root word which is translated Spirit. *Worshipping in the spirit denotes worshipping under His influence or under His control.* We can worship God in the dimension of the Spirit by speaking and singing in tongues. This gives expression to our deepest feelings about God where ordinary words fail.

A key element to worshipping God is learning about Him. Thus, unless you have an informed worship, you do not have proper worship. When Jesus said we must worship in truth, the word truth here is "alethia" which means true, and is derived from the word "alethes" which literally means "to take notice". To worship in truth Jesus was saying that God is looking for His children to literally **"take notice of the truth"** about Himself. Worship is specifically accomplished when those that know God, (understand His true character) *take notice of all that is true about Him.*

When we worship God in truth, we take faith in His unchanging Word. We allow the Word to take root in our lives and this will produce the fruit of worship. *The more we know God the deeper our worship will take us.* Our worship must never be based on anything except the truth of God. If we worship only for the experience, or to be noticed, or to gain recognition, or for traditions sake, we are certainly missing the mark.

As New Testament believers, *our approach to Father God in relationship and worship is in His Son Jesus Christ*, the Truth, in other words, not through another law but a Person. Jesus gave the woman of Samaria a startling revelation. The time had come, He told her, when *worship would be centred not in a certain locality, but true worshippers would worship in spirit and in truth.* In other words, Jesus was saying that God, being spirit, is not localized in manmade temples, and His worship is spiritual communion rather than ritual, in the heart rather than from a literal altar.

No longer would it be necessary for the disciple to visit the Temple to meet with God, for he is a temple himself with the Spirit of God within him. The *temple priest* has been

superseded by the priesthood of the believer. Jesus was affirming that acceptable worship no longer depends upon regulated expressions at certain places or specified times. Through Jesus, our spirits have been liberated to serve and praise in His presence at all times and in every place.

The Life Of A Worshipper Has The Following Characteristics

i) A Thankful Life

To live a life of worship before God requires a thankful heart and attitude. Thanksgiving is a gate into the presence of God and as we give Him thanks and praise, He comes and dwells with us. Paul exhorts us in Eph 5:19-20 to "make melody in our hearts to the Lord, *giving thanks always* for all things." Thankfulness changes things. It changes attitudes, changes us, and changes situations. Eg. Jonah in Jonah 2:7-10

When we love God and have a thankful heart we are able to rise above the circumstances we find ourselves in. 1 Thess 5:18 & Phil 4:4. As we consider what God has done, is doing and will do in our lives, it brings us into closer intimacy with Him.

ii) A Sanctified, Holy Life

If we are to be true worshippers of God, we are to be a holy people, **separated unto Him - Holy in speech, thought and deed.**

Matt 5:8 - "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." God is a holy God and without holiness none of us will see God. **We are to be holy for He is holy.** We must be a person who is yielded to God's Spirit for it is as we yield ourselves to His Spirit, He changes us from from glory to glory. **Joshua 24:15 - "Choose ye this day whom you will serve".**

When we allow Christ to be revealed in our lives, there comes a hunger for purity and righteousness. We must crucify daily the deeds of the flesh with its passions and desires. Paul said to the Corinthians in 2 Cor 6:12 - "You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections." Let us set our affections on things above. Constantly presenting ourselves as living sacrifices.

iii) A Repentant Heart

God is looking for people that constantly *come with a repentant heart* seeking His cleansing and knowing that it's only by His grace that we can enter into His presence. One of the reasons why God said that David was a man after His heart was because he would always come to God in repentance when he made mistakes.

iv) A Humble Heart

By function, you should be committed *to serving*. You should be constantly involved with people. ie. whom he/she is leading. There should be **more concern about the "people" of worship** than the **"music" of worship.**

A true worshipper recognises that without Christ he can do nothing. God detests pride and if we ever get to a place where we think we've got it together and are better than others we are in serious trouble. Eg. Luke 18:9-14.

v) **An Obedient Heart**

The true worshipper is obedient to God's commands because they don't want to in any way grieve the one that they love. God considers obedience far more important than any external expression of worship. Eg. 1 Sam. 15:22 – “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to heed than the fat of rams.”

vi) **He Is A Lover Of God's Word**

It is **in God's Word** that **we discover more of who God is – His character and nature**. God can speak to us in a number of ways, but the most common way is by bringing revelation through the reading of His Word.

vii) **A Passion For His Presence**

In Him is our life, our health, our peace, our prosperity, our hope, our joy. He has created us so that everything we need is in Him.

God's command is that we love Him with our whole being - body soul mind and spirit. We must realise that there is *a longing within us that cannot be satisfied by anything else, but our intimate communion with Him*. We must so desire His presence in our lives that we allow nothing to take His place, or to distract us from knowing Him. No one else, nothing else can fulfil the cry of our hearts.

God the Father desires a people who are awakened in their affections and passions for Jesus. Like Mary in John 12:1-8 the true worshipper is prepared to give extravagantly unto God, holding back nothing. God requires our all and when we give it, the rewards are beyond compare.

Mary's sacrifice - a) cost her a lot in monetary terms (300 denari - a year's wages) b) was an act of public humility c) opened her up to criticism of the guests, d) it challenged the other not so devoted guests.

We constantly must ask the question - **"Can I ever pour too much cost, time and effort into achieving greater levels of worshipping God?"** When we consider Christ's love and sacrifice we realise that we could never give too much back to God.

viii) **A Person Of Faith**

A true worshipper becomes a man or woman of faith because they have built relationship with God and have come to know His attributes. They therefore have the confidence to believe that He will perform what He has promised eg. David and Abraham.

Benefits of Living A Life Of Worship

- i) ***You have God's attention.*** When we draw near to Him, He draws near to us.
- ii) ***You enjoy kingdom living .*** ie. righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.
- iii) ***You have His abiding presence*** because God comes and inhabits (dwells, to sit down, to remain or settles on) their praises. (Hebrew – ***yawshab***)
- iv) ***God's power is released*** in your life. Praise creates faith to believe God.
- v) ***The enemy is silenced.*** The Devil hates the sound of Jesus' name. In other words, praise and worship brings you into a life of victory.
- vi) ***Worship builds our relationship with God.*** As we worship we grow more and more in love with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.
- vii) ***Worship brings our lives into order.*** We can be under enormous pressures and our life totally out of control but when we begin to make worship of God a priority in our lives, things are brought into right order and perspective.