



## Our Purpose: Worship God

**“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”**

Where do you see worship listed in this passage?

**Worship is a Means of God’s Grace**—it is a means toward Christ-likeness because worship sets our focus toward God and away from sin and temptation. Worship warms our hearts to the greatness and goodness of God and it fuels our faith. It reminds us of God’s faithfulness and power and gives us hope through trials.

**Worship is the Purpose for Our Existence**—God created us to operate according to His design and purpose and that purpose is to have fellowship with Him and to bring Him glory. When we worship God, we are fulfilling the meaning of our existence. It is true that we may glorify God and experience fellowship with God by loving others, serving as Christ did, sharing our faith and reading the Bible, but direct, heartfelt adoration of our glorious God is at the heart of His desire for us.<sup>1</sup> As one Christian author put it, “We are never so high as when we are on our knees.”<sup>2</sup>

### What is Worship?

1. *shachah* (Heb), *proskuneo* (Gk): “to bow down” or “pay homage”
2. *abad* (Heb), *latreuo* (Gk): “to serve or minister to; to perform sacred rites”

Both words convey honor and a humble presentation of oneself in homage and service to the one being worshiped.

- Worship is focusing on God: magnify, meditate, consider and spend time enjoying.
- Worship is our response to God’s Name: his identity as Creator, Redeemer and Lord.
- Worship is our response to God’s Deeds: praise, thanks, service and imitating his holy love.

### Who Do I Worship?

- The Living God! “*I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me*” (Ex 20:2-3).
- You become like the object of your worship: “*They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless*” (2Ki 7:15). Contrast: “*Those who look to him are radiant*” (Ps 34:5).

<sup>1</sup> Psalm 69:30-31; 51:16-17; Luke 10:41

<sup>2</sup> An Unknown Christian, *The Kneeling Christian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 15.

## How Do I Worship?

Worship prescribed by the LORD in the OT Law required an intricately detailed ritual involving animal sacrifice, a select priesthood, a specific location and specific dates and times. As we have seen, the OT rituals were visualized theology, expressing abstract spiritual lessons in concrete forms. After our Lord Jesus Christ's ultimate sacrifice of worship on the cross, the covenant between God and His people changed, and so did the form of worship. Jesus revealed this to the Samaritan woman in John 4:23-24: *"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."*

Worship in spirit: We worship by the indwelling Holy Spirit; we worship the Living God who is Spirit so He is not bound to a location or time; therefore, neither is our worship of Him.

Do you worship God in daily life?

Worship in truth: Through Christ God has been fully revealed to us. The greatness of His wisdom, power and love are revealed in truth and we worship him in response to who He is and what He has done. We bless, adore, praise, extol, exalt, sing, rejoice, bow down, give, serve, thank, clap, lift hands, dance, shout, confess and proclaim. Worship involves our entire being. *"Be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God."* (Col 3:15-16).

Do you express your worship of God with gratitude and emotion?

Service and Sacrifice: The first time the word 'worship' occurs in the Bible is the account of Abraham preparing to sacrifice his son Isaac. The death of God's only begotten Son is called "a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." The temple service and the animal sacrifices are over, but our service and sacrifice in worship continues in the new covenant. *"I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship"* (Rom 12:1 NASB). Our act of dedication to God and our faithful service to Christ are the offerings of worship we give.

Have you offered all of yourself to God in obedient service?

Ministry: What is your ministry? What is your attitude toward your ministry? The Apostle Paul revealed that not only were his ministry efforts done as worship, but the results of his ministry—the people he ministered to—were an offering of worship. *"...because of the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit"* (Rom 15:15-16).

Do you have an attitude and perspective of worship in your ministry?

Giving: When King David went to purchase land to build an altar to worship God, the owner offered to give it to David for such a noble purpose. David refused and said, *"No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing"* (2Sam 24:24). That plot of land became the location of Solomon's temple.

Do you have an attitude and perspective of worship in your giving?

## Do you worship your work, work at your play and play at your worship?

### God's Discipline and Worship

John 15 and Hebrews 12 reveal that hardships, trials, suffering and affliction are the tools of God to form his character deep into our being. Bruce Wilkinson, in his book *The Secrets of the Vine*, summarizes God's purposes in two ways:

**Discipline**—when we have sinned and have not repented, God will bring pain in order to get our attention so that we repent and make restitution. When we repent, the discipline ends.

**Pruning**—here God's purpose is not to bring repentance, but to prepare us to bear a bumper crop of Christ-like character and faith. We need to respond in trust and obedience, and the pruning lasts as long as God determines.

Pruning causes me to:

- ✓ Realize what's important—God's eternal kingdom
- ✓ Realize where my strength lies—in God's grace
- ✓ Realize who God is—my Creator, Sustainer and Owner
- ✓ Realize who I am not—self reliant, smart, strong
- ✓ Realize who I am—loved by God

Through Job's life, God teaches us the ultimate purpose in life, indeed, His purpose in pain is:

### Worship!

Job 1:21 *“Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.”*

Job 13:15 *“Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him.”*

Job 19:25-27 *“I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes--I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!”*

### We will either be whiners or worshipers!

*“Though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith...may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”* (1 Peter 1:6-7).

## Week 9 Homework

† Practice your memory verse: **Ephesians 5:1-2**

† Read Schwarz, pp. 275-281

† Read:

- Psalm 19, 34
- Psalm 73
- Psalm 96, 100

† Read “The Best Meal I Didn’t Enjoy” article.

† Choose 1 or 2 activities from this list to do this week:

1. Review the questions on page 2 of this handout as a help to evaluate the maturity of your worship. Make one decisive change in order to grow in this area and share that decision with a spiritual partner.
2. Write a psalm.
3. Take a 5 minute break during your workday and sing or hum a worship song to the Lord.
4. Find a partner and spend 10 minutes in prayer together adoring God for who he is and thanking God for what he has done.
5. Arrive early to church, sit down and prepare your heart’s focus before the worship songs begin.
6. Buy a hymn book and use it.
7. Offer yourself and the pain, affliction and hardship you are going through to God in surrendered worship and invite Him to fulfill everything He wants to accomplish by this pain in you and through you.