

LESSON 8: THE ROLE OF SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES IN SPIRITUAL GROWTH (Part 3)

Study in Depth

Corporate Spiritual Discipline: Worship

A. What Is Worship?

"To worship is
To quicken the conscience by the holiness of God,
To feed the mind with the truth of God
To purge the imagination by the beauty of God
To open the heart to the love of God
To devote the will for the purpose of God". William Temple

- Worship is not a human invention. Rather, it is a divine offering.
- Worth + ship = worthy of reverence and honor
- When we worship, we declaring God's worth. (Rev 5: 12-14)
- Worship is an act of honoring God because of His great worthiness to be honored.

1. *Worship is a celebration.*

- Worship is essentially the celebration of the acts of God in history.
 - God's creation
 - His Provision
 - His Covenant and Redemption
 - The Victory of Jesus on the cross over Death, Satan and Sin
 - The manifestation of God's power through the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- Worship is practicing the presence of God in every experience.

2. *Worship is a dialogue. (Isaiah 6.1)*

- Worship is both a revelation and a response.
- God takes initiative in the revelation of Himself to us and we respond in worship.
 - **Moses** (Ex.3.6) *And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.*
 - **John** (Rev.1.17) *When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand upon me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last".*

- **Isaiah** (Isa.6.5) *And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"*

- **Daniel** (Dan 8.18) *As he was speaking to me, I fell into a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me and set me on my feet.*

- God revealed himself to His worshippers through:
 - Bible
 - Nature
 - Holy Spirit
- When we see His holiness, we will realize our inadequacy and unworthiness.
 - Apostle Paul
(Eph 3.8) *To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.*

(1Tim 1.15) *The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And I am the foremost of sinner...*
 - Note the journey from “least of all the saints” to “chief sinner” in the above verses.

3. **Worship is an offering.**

- The purpose of worship is not primarily to receive blessings from the Lord but make offerings to God.
 - The Old Testament people presented offering in the form of sacrifices.

(Ps. 96.8) *Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts! 9 Worship the LORD in holy array; tremble before him, all the earth.*
 - The New Testament also emphasizes ‘giving’ as central theme in worship.
 - Offer the gifts in sincere faith and total obedience.
- Worship is more than speech, it is action; it is acting on the Word of God in faith.
 - Our action toward God (worship) is motivated by His action toward us (redeeming love).
(1Pet.2.5; Heb.13.5)
- Worship is the offering of our total selves to God.
 - Outward gifts are results of inward dedication.
 - The highest expression of giving is offering ourselves to God.

(Rom12.1, 2)

I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

- God has created us to worship and commanded us to worship him also. (Ps150)

B. What Are The Characteristics Of True Worship That Pleases God?

1. Genuine worship must coincide with the nature of God.

(John 4.23, 24)

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him.

God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

- God is spirit. Therefore, any worship that is to reach God must be spiritual in nature.

a. Worship of Repentance [God is holy]

(2 Sam 12.20) *Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he went into the house of the LORD, and worshiped; he then went to his own house; and when he asked, they set food before him, and he ate.*

- Instead of rebelling against the hand of God, he repented. He wrote Psalms 51 and 32 (psalms of repentance).

b. Worship of Submission [God is Almighty]

(Job1. 20, 21)

Then Job arose, and rent his robe, and shaved his head, and fell upon the ground, and worshiped.

And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return; the LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

- He submits to God's plan for his life even though he neither likes it nor understands it.
- (Rom.8.28) *We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.*

c. Worship of Devotion (Gen.22.1-18)

2. Genuine worship must be centered in the spirit.

- Genuine worship of God is not the fleshly displays we sometimes call worship.

- We are subject to time, space and matter. But God is spirit; He is not limited to these. So it is not important where or when you worship but how you worship.
- David worshipped the Lord in two distinct manners.

- He danced before the Lord with passionate zeal. (2Sam 6:14-16)

16 As the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.

- He sat before the Lord in humble amazement. (2 Sam 7.18)

Then King David went in and sat before the LORD, and said, "Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house that thou hast brought me thus far?"

- You cannot tell how much gas is in a car by hearing its horn.
- Worship is an event that happens externally but it always begins internally within the spirit of man.

3. *Genuine worship must be constituted upon the reality of who God is. (John4.24)*

- True worship arises out of the spirit.
- True worship must be practiced in truth.
- Worship must be built upon the knowledge of who God is.
- How can you learn about God and about His nature, His love, mercy, grace, character, and judgment? Only through His Word and through our walk with Him. Hence, a systematic exposition of the Word of God is necessary in a worship service.
- Worship is an expression of praise from the heart, toward a God who is understood and truly revealed.
- Worship is receiving a revelation about God and then rendering back homage for His greatness and His glory.

4. *Genuine worship must be concerned with the glory of God.*

- God seeks genuine worshippers.
- Worship for any other purpose other than God's glory is not true worship.
- Worship is God-centered.

(Ps 95:1, 2) *We are to “sing for joy **to the Lord,**” we are to “shout aloud **to the Rock of our salvation,**” we are to “come **before Him** with thanksgiving,” and we’re to “extol Him with music and song.”*

- David danced and shouted, but he did it “before the Lord.”
- We need to make sure our music is ‘Christocentric’, not man-centered.

C. Why Do We Need To Worship?

1. God commanded it.

- We want to be obedient to God.

2. God is worthy of it. (Rev 4 .11, 5; 11.12 and 7:11, 12)

- He is our Creator and our Lord

3. Worship brings us into His presence.

(Ps 100.4) *Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him, bless his name.*

- We became aware of His glory and greatness, of His majesty and power.
- We turn our attention from lesser things and focus on that which is ultimate.

4. Worship gives us His perspective on our situation.

- When we are in presence, we understand His power and ability.

5. Worship allows the Holy Spirit to transform our lives according to His purposes.

- Through worship, the Holy Spirit redirects our focus onto God and away from ourselves.
- In worship, the Holy Spirit gives us fresh experiences of God’s love and mercy.
- During worship, the Spirit gives us direction for the future. He can speak to us more clearly because our spirits are more finely tuned to Him.
- In the midst of powerful praise and worship, the Holy Spirit reveals the presence of the enemy and exposes his schemes/devices.
- Through wholehearted worship, the Holy Spirit changes our hearts and leads us into obedient lifestyles.

D. How Can We Develop A Worshiping Spirit?

1. We must have a meaningful relationship with God.

- Authentic worship of God can only be found in a relationship with Jesus Christ.
 - Salvation is the first step in developing a worshipful heart.
 - The only access to Father is through Jesus.

2. We must yield to the Holy Spirit.

- Worship of God is the work of the Holy Spirit in the spirit of man.
 - When we yielded to the Holy Spirit in our life, worship will be the result.

3. Our thoughts must be centered on God.

- Worship is the natural overflow of a mind filled with God's Truth.
 - When we meditate on the Word, we discover more about Him.

4. We must have an undivided heart.

- God and God alone is the focal point of our worship. (Ps 108.1)

5. We must have repentant heart. (James 4.8; Ps 66.18)

- Public worship is only a manifestation of private worship.
- Worship in the power of God enables the church to be the church.

Application

A. Reflect on the following aspects of worship and examine your own worship life.

(Source: Stormie Omartian's 'The Prayer that changes everything')

Worship is:

1. Not just a song; it's a way of life. It's not just for musicians and good singers, it's for everyone. It's not just 20 minutes once a week. It's an ongoing daily attitude that reminds us of His greatness and our dependency upon Him.
2. Coming in contact with the holiness of God by the power of the Holy Spirit and letting the beauty of His holiness rub off on you and make you beautifully holy and wonderfully whole.

3. Surrendering your life to God so that He can be powerful in you and demonstrate His power through you.
4. Fulfilling your purpose. When you are praising God, you are not just fulfilling a duty, putting in time, doing what is expected of you. You are opening a door, behind which you will find His purpose and destiny for your life.
5. Embracing God in all His glory. When you do, His radiance will illuminate the dark places of your soul, warm the cold places of your heart, and shine a light in your path.
6. Entering into God's presence expecting His love, peace and joy to overtake you no matter how you feel at that moment. It's proclaiming that He is bigger than anything you face.
7. A sacrifice because it is not something we naturally do. We have to want to do it. We have to decide to do it. We have to take time to do it. We have to make the effort to do it.
8. A place where we can drown out the voices of fear and doubt with a flood of adoration and praise. And as we come before the Lord, He reminds us of all that He is, and that increases our faith.
9. An act of faith where we demonstrate to our heavenly Father that although we don't always see His answers to our prayers, we still know His plans for us are for good.
10. Without full impact and power if we have unresolved issues with another brother or sister in Christ. True worship can only take place when we are free from animosity, bitterness, anger, or forgiveness.
11. Our greatest weapon of warfare. When we praise God in the midst of an enemy onslaught, his attack is weakened and he must flee.
12. Something we do for God, but in the process He gives far more of Himself to us than we can ever give of ourselves to Him.

B. Practical ways to begin cultivating a daily lifestyle of worship:

- *Make it a regular habit during the next few weeks to offer the Lord a "sacrifice of praise".*
- As you pray, read the Bible, do the dishes, take a coffee break or go for a walk, let your heart flow out toward God in praise. You can use the Psalms as a starting point to help you enter into praising God.
- *Take some time during this week to revere God's name.*
- Let the Spirit remind of the various names of God in the Bible and aspects of His character that these names reveal. Praise God for all that He is.
- *Take time to receive from God in worship.*
- Sit or lie in a comfortable place and listen to some worship music.

- Be alert for those words and images the Holy Spirit wants to impress upon you.
- Let your heart flow out to God in surrender and thanksgiving.

- *Imagine yourself worshipping God in heaven along with His angels.*

- Focus on God's holiness and tell Him He is worthy of your praise.

- Take your pride, accomplishments and whatever concerns you have and lay them at God's feet in surrender to Him.

- *As you attend corporate worship in the next few weeks, practice the presence of God on the way to the church/small group as a means of preparing your heart for worship.*

- Pray silently for those you see around you.
- Thank God for the day and all its possibilities.
- Ask God to bring to your mind things you should know about yourself and others.