

Walking Worthy

Disciplines that Sustain the Walk

Zion's Roar Holy Spirit Ministry
Bixby, Oklahoma



Book 3 - Chapter 05 – Study 06

Worship, Offering Your Whole Self to God

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A LETTER TO THOSE WHO SAY THEY WORSHIP GOD.

Brothers and sisters,

There are certain things that become so familiar that, after enough time has passed, we stop thinking about them. We know when they begin. We know what comes next. We know the words, the order, and the expectations. What once caused us to stop in wonder slowly becomes another part of our routine. It is not because we no longer value those things, but because familiarity has a way of making us assume that understanding naturally follows repetition.

I fear worship has become one of those things.

This thought has remained with me for some time now. Not because I believe believers have stopped worshiping, but because I wonder how many of us have become so familiar with worship that we have quietly stopped asking what it is the Father has desired from the beginning.

When our Lord spoke with the Samaritan woman, the discussion seemed to be about where people should worship. She spoke of mountains. The Jews spoke of Jerusalem. Yet Christ gently lifted the conversation above both places and said something that should never leave our minds. "The Father seeketh such to worship him." Those words reveal something precious about the heart of God. The Father is seeking worshippers.

Think about that carefully.

The One who created heaven and earth, who is not served as though He needed anything from our hands, who possesses all things already, is seeking something from His people. Not because He lacks it, but because we do. Worship has never existed to supply something that God is missing. It exists because there is

something within us that must continually be brought back before Him.

Perhaps this is why Scripture places such great emphasis upon the heart. Our Lord did not say the people refused to worship. He said, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." Those words have always unsettled me. Their lips were near. Their hearts were not. Outwardly, much appeared correct. Inwardly, something was terribly wrong.

I have often wondered whether I would have recognized the difference had I been standing there. Would I have looked upon them and concluded that everything was well because they gathered faithfully, prayed publicly, sang the psalms, and honored the traditions of their fathers? Or would I have seen what Christ saw? That question has humbled me more than once because it reminds me how easily outward devotion can conceal an inward distance that only God can truly see.

It has caused me to stop asking whether worship moved me and instead ask whether my worship pleased Him. Those are not the same thing. One places my own experience at the center, while the other places the Lord where He has always belonged.

I believe this is where many sincere believers slowly begin to drift. Rarely does someone wake up one morning and decide they no longer wish to worship God. The change is usually much quieter than that. It happens little by little, almost unnoticed. Without realizing it, we begin evaluating worship by what we experienced instead of what we offered. We leave asking whether we were encouraged, whether we enjoyed the singing, or whether the message held our attention, while giving little thought to whether the Lord received the honor that was due unto His name.

Brethren, if we are not careful, worship quietly becomes centered upon the worshiper rather than the One being worshiped. When

that happens, we have not merely changed our perspective. We have changed the very purpose of worship itself.

The more I read the Scriptures, the more I notice that true worship has never depended upon circumstances. Abel worshiped in a field. Abraham worshiped upon a mountain while surrendering the very son through whom God had promised to fulfill His covenant. David worshiped after being confronted with his own sin. Job fell to the ground and worshiped after losing his children and his possessions. Paul and Silas sang praises while sitting in a prison with wounded backs. John worshiped while exiled on Patmos. Their surroundings were different. Their circumstances were different. Yet the object of their worship never changed because the worthiness of God had not changed.

This has also caused me to notice something else. Whenever men truly encountered God, worship was never treated as a performance. Isaiah did not stand before the throne asking whether he enjoyed the experience. He cried, "Woe is me." The elders around the throne do not draw attention to themselves. They cast their crowns before Him. Abraham did not negotiate the cost of obedience before he worshiped. Mary did not calculate the value of her alabaster box before pouring it out at the feet of Christ. True worship has always forgotten itself because it has become overwhelmed by the greatness of God.

I sometimes wonder if that is what we have slowly lost. Not our songs. Not our gatherings. Not even our desire to worship. Perhaps what we have lost is our sense of His greatness. For when God becomes small in our thoughts, worship naturally becomes small as well. We begin expecting worship to satisfy us instead of remembering that worship exists because He alone is worthy.

As you read the study that follows, I ask only one thing of you. Do not read it merely to compare your practices with someone else's. Read it as one who desires to know the heart of the Father. Lay aside every tradition, every preference, every assumption, and

allow the Scriptures to speak for themselves. If they confirm you, give thanks. If they correct you, receive that correction with joy. There is no shame in discovering that we must grow. The only danger is refusing to grow after the truth has been placed before us.

My prayer is not that this study would simply increase your knowledge about worship. My prayer is that it would deepen your worship of God Himself. For the Father is still seeking worshippers, and I desire with all my heart that, when He looks upon us, He would find men and women whose lives have become living sacrifices, offered willingly, humbly, and joyfully before Him.

May the Lord grant us such hearts.

Written in Love, Truth and Instruction by John, servant and disciple of Christ, Zion's Roar Holy Spirit Ministry.

For a deeper understanding of John's message request study:

B3-C05-S06 – Worship: Offering Your Whole Self to God

Worship Offering Your Whole Self to God

Scripture commands that we worship YHWH, to exalt, revere, and adore His name, offering Him our whole self in love and obedience.

Definition: Worship is the full surrender of heart, mind, and body to YHWH, expressed through love, obedience, and reverence, both privately and in the congregation.

True worship is always motivated by something greater than obligation. Throughout Scripture, God's people worship because of who He is, what He has done, what He has promised, and what He continues to accomplish in their lives. They worship Him as Creator (***Psalms 95:6***), as Redeemer (***Exodus 15:1-2***), as King (***Psalms 47:6-8***), as Savior (***Luke 1:46-55***), and because He alone is worthy to receive glory, honor, and power (***Revelation 4:11***). The more clearly we see God, the more naturally worship flows from our hearts.

Out of Worship grows; Love, Evangelism, Discipleship, Giving, Praying and Holiness. These are not separate from worship, but the fruit of it. When worship is genuine, love becomes natural, obedience becomes joyful, and holiness becomes a response rather than an effort.

Biblical Example	Expression of Worship	What It Teaches
Abel	Sacrifice	Faith offers God the best
Abraham	Obedience	Worship submits completely
Moses	Reverence	God's holiness humbles us
David	Praise	Worship celebrates God's greatness
Mary	Costly devotion	Worship holds nothing back
Paul & Silas	Praise in suffering	Worship is not controlled by circumstances
Heavenly host	Adoration	Worship continues forever

Worship is the act of ministering or showing YHWH how much, He is valued and adored. We must remember that any expression of worship is centered towards YHWH and for YHWH.

Throughout Scripture this pattern appears again and again. Noah worshiped after the flood by building an altar and offering sacrifices to YHWH (**Genesis 8:20-21**). Abraham demonstrated worship by obeying God's command to offer Isaac, declaring that he and the lad would "go yonder and worship" (**Genesis 22:5**). David refused to offer sacrifices that cost him nothing, teaching that true worship is never empty or convenient (**2 Samuel 24:24**). Paul and Silas worshiped while imprisoned, singing praises to God despite their suffering (**Acts 16:25**).

In heaven, the twenty-four elders continually fall before the throne, casting their crowns before Him and declaring His worthiness (**Revelation 4:10-11**). Whether through sacrifice, obedience, praise, suffering, or humble adoration, genuine worship always places YHWH at the center rather than ourselves.

*It is not just singing about Him. It is singing to Him.

*It is not clapping about Him, dancing about Him, bowing about Him. It is clapping, dancing, bowing, and whatever other form of worship you use, to or towards Him.

*It is YHWH focused and YHWH centered.

Worship is not performance, it is relationship. It is the response of a disciple who loves YHWH more than comfort or audience.

However, you apply this and wherever you apply this, do so to bless YHWH.

Psalms 26:12 (KJV) *My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD.*

Psalms 63:4 (KJV) *Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.*

Psalms 145:2 (KJV) *Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever.*

Luke 19:38 (KJV) *Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.*

2 Cor 1:3 (KJV) *Blessed be YHWH, even the Father of our Lord Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;*

Eph 1:3 (KJV) *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

1 Pet 1:3 (KJV) *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead,*

People worship Differently. Some are loud and expressive. Some are quiet and solemn. Scripture also shows that God's people worshiped in many different circumstances. They worshiped after great victories (**Exodus 15:1-21**), before impossible battles (**2 Chronicles 20:18-22**), in times of national repentance (**Nehemiah 8:6**), during seasons of grief (**Job 1:20-21**), while imprisoned (**Acts 16:25**), and in the very presence of God's heavenly throne (**Revelation 4:8-11**). Worship was never reserved only for life's happiest moments. It became the continual response of those who trusted YHWH regardless of their circumstances. Some kneel, some stand the whole service, some dance, others just sit. Some sing praise songs, others sing hymns, others sing only psalms, others chant. Some read their prayers, others write their prayers, others tell YHWH whatever pops into their minds at the moment, others speak in unknown languages. Some take Communion every week, others once a month, or even less often. Some worship in church buildings, others in storefronts, others in homes. For some, preaching is the centerpiece of worship, for others it's only a minor part.

Are there right and wrong ways to worship?

Of course, so what makes worship right or wrong?

Is it your posture, your music, or whether you raise your hands, clap your hands, or fold your hands?

Mark 7:7 (KJV) *Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* The standard is not just the method, but mostly the motive. YHWH looks at the heart. If our focus is Him, our worship is right. If our focus is self, even a song can become sin.

Worship is one of the most important spiritual disciplines in the Disciples' life. If you don't like worship, then you will not enjoy heaven because worship is the one thing we will be doing in heaven.

Revelation 5:13 (KJV) *And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.*

It is not just something we do as a warmup act for preaching of the Bible. It is something that we must do that has just as much importance as preaching of the Bible. It is an expression of love, gratitude, and reverence from our heart towards YHWH.

Many times, that heart towards Him expresses itself in what we say with our lips and what we do with our bodies.

John 4:19-24 (KJV) *The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. 21 Christ saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. 24 YHWH is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.*

In “YHWH is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” Is this Telling us that it does not matter how we worship because now we worship in spirit., or was Christ answering her as to having to go to a place and worship?

The woman merely stated; “*Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.*”

Christ was actually answering both. That we no longer need a place to go and worship. Even though having a place to go and

worship is nice and feels good, it is in a sense worthless unless we worship in spirit and truth.

Worshiping "in spirit" means that you mean it; that you're worshiping inside out, not just going through the motions.

Worshiping "in truth" means that you're worshiping the true God and not some created idol. It also means being truthful with your words and thoughts that are brought to worship; that you're not trying to put on a religious act to impress someone or impress yourself. Worship is an act of Love and the love to YHWH can only be shown by our obedience.

Throughout Scripture, worship consistently follows a revelation of God. When Abraham recognized YHWH's provision on Mount Moriah, he worshiped (***Genesis 22***). When Moses encountered YHWH proclaiming His holy name, he bowed and worshiped immediately (***Exodus 34:5-8***). When Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up, he confessed his sin before receiving his commission (***Isaiah 6:1-8***). When the shepherds beheld the newborn Christ, they glorified and praised God (***Luke 2:20***). When Thomas finally understood who Christ truly was, he confessed, "My Lord and my God" (***John 20:28***). Worship is therefore the natural response of a heart that has truly encountered the living God.

Worship Under the Old and New Covenants

Under the Old Covenant, YHWH prescribed sacrifices, priestly ministry, incense, feast days, and the Tabernacle and Temple as part of Israel's worship. These pointed forward to greater realities that would ultimately be fulfilled in Christ (***Hebrews 8:1-6; Hebrews 10:1***).

Under the New Covenant, believers no longer approach God through animal sacrifices or an earthly priesthood, for Christ has become our perfect High Priest and His sacrifice was offered once for all (***Hebrews 9:11-14; Hebrews 10:10-14***). Yet the principles behind true worship remain unchanged. God still desires reverence, obedience, thanksgiving, holiness, prayer, praise, and

wholehearted devotion. The outward forms that pointed forward to Christ have reached their fulfillment, but the heart of worship has never changed because God Himself has not changed.

Matthew 6:5 (KJV) *And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*

Matthew 6:6-8 (KJV) *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. 7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.*

Let's start by acknowledging that there are several key elements that are important in worship even if they are not applied all at the same time. Praise, confession, obedience, study, prayer, fasting, communion, involvement, giving.

Scripture gives examples of each of these. Ezra led the people in confession and worship after reading the Law (**Nehemiah 8:1-6**). Daniel worshiped through faithful prayer three times each day despite the threat of death (**Daniel 6:10**).

The early church devoted themselves to the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers (**Acts 2:42**).

Cornelius demonstrated worship through continual prayer and generous giving before hearing the Gospel (**Acts 10:1-4**).

These examples remind us that worship is not confined to one activity but encompasses every part of a life devoted to YHWH.

Worship Through Obedience and Daily Life

Scripture repeatedly joins obedience and worship together.

Abraham worshiped by obeying God's command concerning Isaac (**Genesis 22:1-18**).

Israel worshiped by observing the Passover exactly as YHWH had commanded (**Exodus 12:24-28**).

The Lord repeatedly declared through Samuel, "*To obey is better than sacrifice*" (**1 Samuel 15:22**), teaching that outward acts of worship are empty when the heart refuses submission. Worship therefore begins with surrender long before it is expressed through song or sacrifice.

True worship goes beyond music or emotion. **Romans 12:1–2** calls us to "*present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*"

Every act of obedience, every time we deny self and choose His will, we are worshiping. Worship is not confined to a church or a song. It is a lifestyle that says, "Your will be done."

John 14:15 reminds us, "*If you love Me, keep My commandments.*"

Love expressed through obedience is worship in its highest form.

Hebrews 13:15–16 reminds us, "*By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*"

Worship is not complete without doing good. Gratitude and obedience are the daily rhythm of a worshipping life.

Singing is a way to worship YHWH.

The most common form of Discipleship worship is singing. The Bible tells us to sing in our worship.

YHWH is not interested in whether or not you are a great singer with a beautiful voice. He wants to know that you are expressing the melody that has been given to you in your heart by Him.

The only excuse not to sing in worship is pride and self-consciousness. Worship is not about your comfort. It is about blessing YHWH and He wants to hear you sing.

Scripture repeatedly shows God's people singing during both victory and suffering. Moses and the children of Israel sang after crossing the Red Sea (**Exodus 15:1-21**).

Deborah and Barak sang after YHWH delivered Israel from Sisera (**Judges 5**).

David continually composed songs of praise throughout his life, both in triumph and in distress.

Paul and Silas sang praises at midnight while imprisoned, proving that worship is not dependent upon favorable circumstances (**Acts 16:25**).

Heavenly worship likewise includes continual songs declaring the worthiness of God and of the Lamb (**Revelation 5:9-13**).

Worship is not reserved for musicians, worship leaders, or those with special talents. Throughout Scripture, kings, shepherds, fishermen, widows, prophets, prisoners, soldiers, children, and entire congregations worshiped YHWH. Every disciple has both the privilege and the responsibility of glorifying God, regardless of ability, position, or circumstance.

Psalms 100:1-2 (KJV) *Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. 2 Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.*

Colossians 3:16 (KJV) *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

Ephesians 5:19 (KJV) *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;*

James 5:13 (KJV) *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.*

Raising hands and/or clapping in worship to YHWH

Should we raise our hands during musical worship, or keep them in our pockets?

Many have said that the raising of hands in worship is a modern thing and not traditional Christian worship. Worship in its truest form is singing a prayer to YHWH. There is biblical precedent for both the lifting of hands and the clapping of hands as an act of worship.

When a child runs up to their father and lifts their hands what do they want?They want to be picked up by their dad.

When a person surrenders to someone in authority, what do they do?They lift their hands.

The lifting of hands is a type of body language that shows intimacy between a child and their father and a sign of surrender to authority.

Nehemiah 8:6 (KJV) And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

Psalms 141:2 (KJV) Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

1 Timothy 2:8 (KJV) I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

Clapping is a universal sign of applause.

Who is better to receive our applause than YHWH?

You clap for your sports teams, for a good movie, for a politician who says something you agree with, so start clapping for YHWH. He deserves our applause for what He has done for us.

Psalms 47:1 (KJV) O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.

Kneeling and/or bowing down as a form of worship

Probably one of the least used yet most sincere form of worship is bowing down. Whether you get flat on your face or on your knees, bowing down is a sign of surrender and reverence. This posture appears throughout Scripture whenever people become overwhelmed by the presence of God.

Abraham bowed before YHWH (***Genesis 17:3***).

Moses quickly bowed his head and worshiped after the LORD proclaimed His glorious name (***Exodus 34:8***).

Joshua fell upon his face before the Captain of the LORD's host (***Joshua 5:14***).

The wise men fell down and worshiped the young Christ (***Matthew 2:11***).

In heaven, the elders continually fall before God's throne in worship (***Revelation 4:10***).

Bowing is therefore one of the clearest biblical expressions of humility before the Majesty of heaven. It is also the form of worship our flesh and pride resists the most.

However, it is a very legitimate form of worship. It takes great humility not to care about what others are thinking and just humble yourself before the Lord.

Psalm 95:6 (KJV) *O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.*

Romans 14:11 (KJV) *For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to YHWH.*

Philemon 2:10 (KJV) *That at the name of Christ every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;*

Worshipping YHWH By Dancing

Dancing is often mentioned in the Bible. The first instance is found in ***Exodus 15:20*** when Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, led the Israelite women in dancing following the miracle at the Red Sea. It served as an expression of worship and celebration.

Exodus 15:20 (KJV) *And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.*

David also offers a positive example of dancing used as an expression of worship. ***2 Samuel 6:16*** states, "*And as the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the Lord;*"

The Psalms also mentioned dancing as an expression of worship in ***Psalm 30:11; 149:3; and 150:4.***

Matthew 11:17 notes dancing as a symbol of joy that accompanied music (also ***Luke 7:32***).

Psalm 149:3 (KJV) *Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.*

Matthew 11:17 (KJV) *And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.*

Luke 7:32 (KJV) *They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.*

However, two important considerations should also be noted about dancing. First, dancing is mentioned both positively and negatively in Scripture, depending upon how it is used. In addition to the positive examples above, dancing was also associated with pagan worship.

Exodus 32:19 (KJV) *And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.*

Dancing was not mentioned in Scripture related to the church gatherings of the New Testament. Whether dancing actually occurred during early church services is unknown, but it is not specifically mentioned and is certainly not required to worship YHWH.

A look at the Bible's overall discussion of dance reveals that it can be used for good or for evil. This illustrates an important principle found throughout Scripture. It is not merely the outward action that determines whether worship is acceptable, but the heart and the object of worship. The Israelites danced before YHWH after His deliverance at the Red Sea (**Exodus 15:20**), yet they also danced before the golden calf in rebellion (**Exodus 32:19**). The same outward expression produced entirely different results because one honored YHWH while the other honored an idol. Those who enjoy dancing can use it for YHWH's glory, as a form of celebration and worship, and even as a way to serve the body of Christ. However, dancing can also be used in the worship of other gods and used for other evil purposes.

In terms of dance in the church, the Bible offers the advice that, "All things should be done decently and in order" (**1 Corinthians 14:40 (KJV)** *Let all things be done decently and in order.*). Each local church can determine how, when, and if dancing is permitted

within its activities, so long as it fulfills a godly purpose. Outside of church activities, Christians need not fear dancing, so long as dancing is used in positive rather than negative ways.

Though some groups have viewed all forms of dance as evil for Christians, the Bible does not support this view. Instead, it offers a more balanced approach that dance can be used for YHWH's glory yet also can be used for wrongful purposes. The Christian must seek to fulfill **1 Corinthians 10:31 (KJV)** that teaches, *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of YHWH."*

Postures of Worship.

Scripture tells us that the postures of worship may include standing, kneeling, prostrating ourselves, eyes lifted up, eyes cast down, and hands raised. We do not see one specific posture universally required in worship, and neither do we see one specific "authorized" expression of worship.

We can conclude, therefore, that the raising of hands and/or the clapping of hands during worship is an appropriate expression of worship, although neither is required for worship. **John 4:24 (KJV)** says, *"YHWH is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."* Worship is a spiritual event, and true worship comes from the heart. If our worship is not heartfelt, it doesn't matter what posture or expression of worship we use. If our worship is from the heart and offered according to God's revealed truth, YHWH delights in such worship. Sincerity and truth belong together, for the Father seeks those who worship Him in spirit and in truth. (**John 4:23-24**)

Beware of Self-Made Worship

Scripture warns that sincerity alone does not make worship acceptable. Worship must be offered according to God's revealed will rather than according to human preference. Moses instructed Israel, *"What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not*

add thereto, nor diminish from it" (Deuteronomy 12:32). Paul likewise warned against "will worship," describing religious practices that appear wise but are rooted in human commandments rather than God's instruction (*Colossians 2:20-23*).

Throughout Scripture we see the danger of self-made worship. Cain chose his own offering. Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire. Saul presumed to offer sacrifices he had no authority to offer. The Pharisees elevated human traditions above the commandments of God. Each reminds us that worship is not defined by what pleases us but by what pleases YHWH. True worship begins by asking, "What has God commanded?" rather than, "What do I enjoy?"

Conversely, Scripture also records examples of worship that God rejected. Cain brought an offering that was not accepted while Abel's offering was received (*Genesis 4:3-5*).

Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before the LORD and were judged immediately (*Leviticus 10:1-3*).

King Saul presumed to offer sacrifice contrary to God's command and lost his kingdom (*1 Samuel 13:8-14*).

Christ rebuked the Pharisees because they honored God with their lips while their hearts were far from Him (*Matthew 15:7-9*).

These examples remind us that sincere emotion alone does not make worship acceptable. True worship must be offered according to God's revealed will.

Misunderstandings About Worship

One of the greatest misunderstandings about worship is believing that it begins when the music starts and ends when the last song is finished. Scripture presents worship as something that begins long before believers gather together. A heart that has been walking with YHWH throughout the week naturally joins the congregation in praise. Corporate worship is not intended to replace personal worship but to overflow from it as believers glorify God together.

Psalms 29:2 (KJV) *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.*

It seems to be a common thing to complaint about church services.

"I didn't get anything out of that today." "I didn't get anything out of the sermon." "I didn't get anything out of that service." "I guess her song was all right, but I didn't get anything out of it."

Does any of that sound familiar?

A. Purpose of Church Gatherings

First, let's get the most important question out of the way; What is "Church" supposed to be as a whole?

Church is a common place where believers and disciples are supposed to gather for the sole purpose of:

1. Being YHWH's Son, the Christ as a group of believers and disciples.

Matthew 18:20 (KJV) *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

2. Worshiping and praising YHWH.

Psalms 122:1-4 (KJV) *I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. 2 Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. 3 Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: 4 Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.*

Psalms 150:1-6 (KJV) *Praise ye the Lord. Praise YHWH in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. 2 Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. 3 Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. 4 Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. 5 Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. 6 Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.*

Colossians 3:16 (KJV) *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

Isaiah 56:7 (KJV) *Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.*

3. Praying as a whole.

Acts 1:24 (KJV) *And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,*

Matthew 18:20 (KJV) *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

4. Fellowshiping and encouraging one another.

The early church demonstrated this beautifully. After Pentecost they continued daily with one accord, praising God, sharing meals together, encouraging one another, and growing in favor with the people while the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved (**Acts 2:46-47**). Their fellowship was not separate from their worship; it was one of its natural expressions.

Hebrews 10:24-25 (KJV) *And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

Colossians 3:16 (KJV) *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

Acts 9:31 (KJV) *Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.*

Ephesians 4:14-16 (KJV) *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; **15** But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: **16** From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

5. Studying and teaching the word of YHWH.

Learning God's Word has always been an act of worship because it is an act of submission to His authority. When Ezra opened the Book of the Law, all the people stood, blessed YHWH, answered "Amen, Amen," lifted their hands, bowed their heads, and worshiped with their faces to the ground before the Scriptures were even explained (**Nehemiah 8:5-6**). Their reverence reminds us that receiving God's Word is itself an act of worship.

Acts 11:25-26 (KJV) *Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*

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1 Timothy 3:14-15 (KJV) *These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: 15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of YHWH, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

Luke 4:16 (KJV) *And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.*

6. Having Communion – Breaking of bread.

ACTS 2:42 (KJV) *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

7. A place to hang out with the family of believers.

Even our Lord demonstrated the importance of gathering with God's people. Luke records that attending the synagogue on the Sabbath was Christ's custom (**Luke 4:16**). Though He frequently worshiped privately in prayer, He also faithfully gathered with others for the public reading and teaching of God's Word. His example reminds us that personal devotion and corporate worship are companions rather than competitors.

1 Corinthians 12:13 (KJV) For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Corporate and Private Worship

Scripture presents both private and corporate worship as necessary parts of a disciple's life. Christ regularly withdrew to pray alone (**Luke 5:16**), teaching that worship includes personal communion with the Father. Yet it was also His custom to gather with God's people in the synagogue on the Sabbath (**Luke 4:16**). The early church likewise continued steadfastly together in doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers (**Acts 2:42**).

Private worship develops our personal relationship with YHWH. Corporate worship unites the body of Christ in praise, prayer, encouragement, teaching, and mutual edification. One should never replace the other. The disciple who worships only in private neglects the fellowship Christ established, while the disciple who worships only in public often lacks the private devotion that gives life to public worship. Scripture calls us to both.

Worship is not Supposed to be about “Getting something” Out of it.

Mary of Bethany beautifully illustrates this truth. She entered the house carrying an alabaster box of very costly ointment and poured it upon the Lord Christ, not because she expected something in return, but because He was worthy. Others criticized

what they considered a waste, but Christ declared that she had done a good work toward Him (**Matthew 26:6-13; John 12:1-8**). True worship is measured by what we desire to give to YHWH, not by what we hope to receive from Him. Worship is not about you and me. It's not about "getting our needs met." It's not about a performance from the pastor and singer and choir and musicians.

Worship is About the Lord

Psalm 29:2 (KJV) *Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.*

We are in church to worship. Not so much about getting. Most people go to church with the expectation of "getting" something out of it. Everyone needs to learn and understand that church worshipping is "JUST THAT", worshipping! There are other times and places where we are to get "Something"! for example, when we hear the sermon before or after worship or during bible studies, hopefully we "get" knowledge. At church gatherings, We "get" to be with Family and give and feel loved by others and listen to their praises to the Lord. We get to talk about Christ and glorify our Heavenly Father. We may even "get" some food. But as for worshipping, we are to give! Give our best to the Lord. Give our hearts out in prayer and worship. Just like we are supposed to "give" it all in obedience to the Lord!

Many people judge worship by how they feel rather than by whether God has been honored. Scripture never teaches that worship depends upon our emotions. David worshiped while fleeing from his enemies. Job worshiped immediately after losing his children and possessions (**Job 1:20-21**). Paul and Silas worshiped while their backs were bleeding in prison (**Acts 16:25**). In each case, worship was rooted in God's unchanging worthiness rather than changing emotions or circumstances. Feelings may accompany worship, but they do not define it.

We are giving glory to YHWH. Not to man.

When Solomon dedicated the Temple, the priests, Levites, singers, and musicians united with one voice to praise YHWH. As they worshiped together saying, "For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever," the glory of YHWH filled the house so completely that the priests could not continue ministering (**2 Chronicles 5:11-14**). Their attention was directed entirely toward God, and He responded by manifesting His presence among them.

We know that. At least we say we do. How many times have we recited, "...for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory"? And how often have we sung, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow..."?

We do so because glory is His right. He is "worthy of worship."

Self-centeredness Destroys All Worship

The opposite is equally true. God-centered worship transforms the worshiper. The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders in Revelation never draw attention to themselves. Every song, every crown cast before the throne, every declaration points to the worthiness of God and of the Lamb (**Revelation 4-5**). Heaven's worship is completely God-centered, providing the pattern toward which earthly worship should continually strive.

If my focus is on myself when I enter the church, seeking to have my needs met or to be entertained, then Christ has no part in it. He becomes my servant, and the pastor (and all the other so-called performers) are there only for me. It's all about me. Believers have strayed so far from the biblical concept of worship-giving YHWH His due in all the ways He has commanded-t's no wonder that churches have become more like concerts, stores and fast food places than a place of worship. All because that is what sells the most!

Preachers are trying to cater to the insatiable hungers of the people. Even to the best and most godly preachers, it becomes an almost impossible task. One week he gets it right and then, about the time he thinks he has it figured out, the congregation walks out grumbling that they got nothing out of the free meal he served that day.

Evangelism & Discipleship, Giving & Praying, Grow Out of Worship, Not the Other Way Around

Another powerful example is found during the reign of King Jehoshaphat. When Judah faced an overwhelming army, the king called the nation together to seek YHWH through prayer and fasting. Instead of placing soldiers at the front of the army, he appointed singers to go before them praising the beauty of God's holiness. As they began to praise YHWH, He set ambushments against their enemies and gave Judah the victory without them fighting the battle (**2 Chronicles 20:1-30**). Worship became the doorway through which God displayed His power.

The disciples were worshiping on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit filled them and drove them into the streets to bear a witness to the living Christ (**Acts 2**).

Isaiah was in the Temple worshiping when God appeared to him, forgave his sins, and called him as a prophet to the people (**Isaiah 6**).

It was in the act of worship that the two distraught disciples had their eyes opened to recognize Christ at their table (**Luke 24**).

The Lord Christ told the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, "Those who worship YHWH must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). That is, with their inner being, the totality of themselves, their spirit, not just their lips or their bodies going through the motions. And in truth--the revealed truth of how YHWH has prescribed worship to take place. He is not pleased with "just anything" that we claim as worship.

We must balance our worship between spirit (the subjective part: body, soul, emotions) and truth (the objective aspect: all that YHWH has revealed in His word).

We Are the Ones Who Decide Whether We Worship upon Entering the House of the Lord

Don't blame the preacher if you don't worship. He can't do it for you.

No one else can eat my food for me, love my cherished ones in my place, or do my worshiping for me.

No pastor can decide or dictate whether we will worship by the quality of his leadership or the power of his sermon. Whether I worship in today's service has absolutely nothing to do with how well he does his job.

I am in charge of this decision. I decide whether I will worship.

When Mary sat before our Lord Christ, clearly worshipping, He informed a disgruntled Martha that her sister had "chosen the good part," something that "will not be taken away from her" (*Luke 10:42*). That something special was time spent in worship. Such moments or hours are eternal.

Lest someone point out that Martha could have worshiped in her kitchen by her service for Christ, we do not argue, but simply point out that she was not doing so that day.

Worship is something we do, not something done to us.

In the worst of circumstances, I can still worship my God. In the Philippian prison, while their backs were still oozing blood from the beating they'd received, Paul and Silas worshiped (*Acts 16:25*). Even if a church has no pastor and has to make do with a stuttering layman or some inept fill-in, I can still bow before the Lord, offer Him my praise, and give Him my all. I can humble before Him and I can bring my offering.

What I cannot do is leave church blaming my failure to worship on the poor singing, the boring sermon, or the noise from the children in the room. I am in charge of the decision whether I will worship, and no one else.

Someone has pointed out that ours is the only nation on earth where church members feel they have to have "worshipful architecture" before they can adequately honor the Lord. Millions of Christians across the world seem to worship just fine without any kind of building.

The insistence on worshipful music, worship settings, and worshipful everything are all signs of self-centeredness. The same type of setting Satan would like as a self-centered place to make anyone believe and feel good about themselves.

When the prophet Malachi put down his pen after writing the last book in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit fell silent for 400 years. A look at what worship had become in Malachi's day may tell us why:

Malachi 1:6-7, 11-13 (KJV) *A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? 7 Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible.*

11 *For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts. 12 But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. 13 Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD.*

What we do for our Lord Christ should never be "a weariness." Perhaps you've heard people complain, "Are we going to church again? Do we have to sit there and be bored?" No matter how large the crowd, it's sad to see a full church with empty people trying to overflow.

Weariness In Worship

One of the worst things we can do is half-hearted worship. Lukewarmness says, "I believe, I'm just not excited about it." Christ said to the church at Laodicea, "Because you are neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, I will spew you out of my mouth." (**Revelation 3:15-16**) That's not a place we want to find ourselves!

Renewal begins with gratitude. When we recall what He has done for us and how much mercy He has shown, weariness fades. Worship regains its wonder when gratitude replaces routine. Remembering the cross and the Spirit's presence awakens joy again.

Throughout the Psalms, the people of God repeatedly stirred their hearts to worship by remembering His mighty works. David remembered the benefits of YHWH and called upon his own soul to bless His holy name (***Psalms 103:1-5***). Asaph recalled God's marvelous deeds during times of distress (***Psalms 77:11-14***).

Israel was continually instructed to remember the Exodus so that future generations would never forget the faithfulness of God (***Deuteronomy 6:20-25***).

Forgetfulness weakens worship, while remembrance rekindles gratitude, trust, and joyful obedience.

Have you become weary in your worship?

We are to worship to the Lord with enthusiasm, not weariness. We should be excited about serving the Lord Christ. Every day should become sweeter.

How do we keep the wonder in our worship?

Isaiah answers that question for us. When he saw the Lord high and lifted up, heard the seraphim crying, "Holy, holy, holy," and beheld the glory filling the Temple, his first response was not excitement but humility: "Woe is me! for I am undone." Only after his sin was cleansed did he respond, "*Here am I; send me*" (***Isaiah 6:1-8***). Genuine worship always produces a greater awareness of God's holiness, a deeper recognition of our own sinfulness, and a renewed willingness to obey His calling.

Recognize the awesome nature of God.

Christ refers to God as "father". Fathers are to be honored.

"To honor" means to give weight to - to take seriously.

Do you take YHWH seriously?

Are you serious about your worship?Or do you come into His presence with a yawn and a sigh?

Masters are to be obeyed and given respect. Respect doesn't mean our worship must be quiet. The Bible says, "Be still and know that I am God," but it also describes drums, cymbals, leaping and dancing, praising YHWH with all one's might, and shouting unto

the Lord. This is not irreverence but joy-filled, overflowing worship.

Respect the Nobility of God

Our God is a great King. If we knew that a respected President or an earthly king planned to visit our worship service, what might we do differently?

Would we...

Make sure to be there?

Sing with more feeling?

Engage mentally in all that was said and done?

Totally focus on our honored guest?

The King of Kings will be present in our worship. May our praise rise to heaven like sweet incense, an offering worthy of our God - a great King.

2 Samuel 24:24 reminds us that true worship costs something.

David said, *"I will not offer to YHWH my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."*

True worship always involves surrender, whether it is time, pride, comfort, or desire.

The poor widow whom Christ observed in the Temple illustrates this principle perfectly. Though she possessed only two small mites, she willingly gave all that she had. Christ declared that she had given more than all the wealthy contributors because they gave from their abundance, but she gave out of her poverty (**Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4**). YHWH measures worship not by the size of the offering, but by the surrender of the heart from which it is given.

Every offering that costs us something becomes sacred. Our time, focus, and obedience are sacrifices that reveal the worth we place on YHWH.

Whatever the issue in your life is, the key is to worship YHWH who created us and knows everything about us - our failures, shortcomings, insecurities, hampering sins and fears.

There is power in worshipping God. If we want to see breakthroughs in our life and in the lives of others, then this is the

time to enter into deeper levels of worship both personally and corporately. It is only as we ascend to the throne room in worship that we can descend back into the harvest field here on earth, praying and warring for victory in every area of life. When you and I come boldly to YHWH's throne in worship and obedience, He gives us His plans and strategies for our lives here on earth. There is no way that we can walk in His peace, power, and perfect plan without a lifestyle of worship.

Throughout Scripture, genuine worship consistently produces obedient lives. Isaiah worshiped and then answered God's call, saying, "*Here am I; send me*" (***Isaiah 6:8***). Abraham worshiped before continuing in faithful obedience (***Genesis 22:5-18***). The disciples worshiped the risen Christ and then went into all the world proclaiming the Gospel (***Matthew 28:17-20***). Worship that never changes how we live has failed to accomplish its purpose.

It is amazing to see life from YHWH's point of view instead of our own. The problem with this is that the only way to be able to see life from YHWH's point of view is by seeing the whole picture. And it is through obedience and the study of the scriptures where YHWH will meet and show us His ways and His understanding to our reading and studying of His word.

We have been entering the days of Noah, and we must lay hold of this reality so that each one of us may stand firm, hold steady, and pray fervently as the days unfold before us. There is no storm that YHWH will not be able to conquer. If we worship Him in the midst of resistance, we shall see His victory. He can break through any obstacle when we make His will our lifestyle.

Most believers willfully remain at a distance from YHWH, by confining their interior life to a few routine exercises of piety and a few external acts of worship and service performed as a matter of duty. Such people are usually careful to avoid sin. They respect YHWH as a Master. But their heart does not belong to Him.

They are not really interested in Him, except in order to insure themselves against losing heaven and going to hell.

In actual practice, their minds and hearts are taken up with their own ambitions and troubles and comforts and pleasures and all their worldly interests and anxieties and fears.

A worshiping life is seen in the ordinary decisions made each day. It is choosing truth when deception would be easier. It is forgiving when the flesh desires revenge. It is praying when no one is watching. It is giving when no one applauds. It is serving when no recognition is expected. It is praising God during trials as well as victories. It is opening His Word with the expectation that He will speak. It is gathering with His people because He is worthy. It is confessing sin quickly, loving others sincerely, and ordering every part of life around His will rather than our own. In this way worship becomes far more than an event we attend; it becomes the continual offering of ourselves to YHWH.

YHWH is only invited to enter this charmed circle to smooth out difficulties and to dispense rewards.

Little do this type of people know that we all deserve hell and that heaven has not been attained because of the lack of Godly knowledge.

Godly knowledge and Godly understanding is what separates a true disciple from a simple believer and what directs our path to either hell or heaven.

Worship is not what we attend. It is what we become. Each disciple must choose daily whether to live as a spectator or as a living offering before YHWH.

From Genesis to Revelation, the testimony remains unchanged. Abel worshiped by faith. Noah worshiped with sacrifice. Abraham worshiped through obedience. Moses worshiped in reverence. David worshiped with thanksgiving. Isaiah worshiped in humility. Mary worshiped with costly devotion. Paul and Silas worshiped in suffering. The heavenly host worship continually before the throne. Though their circumstances differed, they shared one

common purpose: to glorify YHWH above themselves. Their examples remind every disciple that worship is not defined by a single posture, song, or ceremony, but by a life wholly surrendered to the One who alone is worthy.

Where do you stand today?

Every disciple will answer that question, not merely with words, but with the pattern of his life. Our priorities reveal our worship. Our use of time reveals our worship. Our obedience reveals our worship. Our generosity reveals our worship. Our response during suffering reveals our worship. Long before we speak with our lips, our daily lives testify to what, or whom we truly consider worthy.

Will you offer your whole self to YHWH in spirit, in truth, and in obedience, or settle for a routine that costs nothing?

The question is not whether we worship, but whom and how. Since the beginning of creation, humanity has never stopped worshiping. The only question has always been the object of that worship. Some worship idols made with hands. Others worship wealth, pleasure, success, reputation, or even themselves. Scripture teaches that every heart has a throne, and something or someone always occupies it. The disciple of Christ willingly removes every rival and gives that place to YHWH alone, declaring with both lips and life, "*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power*" (**Revelation 4:11**).

May our lives become living altars before YHWH, pleasing in His sight.

FINAL REFLECTION

Many people spend their lives searching for the "right" church, the "right" music, the "right" preacher, or the "right" style of worship. While these things have their proper place, Scripture continually directs our attention somewhere much deeper.

The question is not first whether we have found the right place to worship.

The question is whether we have become the kind of worshipper the Father is seeking.

True worship does not begin when the music starts, nor does it end when the gathering is dismissed. It begins when a heart willingly bows before God and continues every day through love, obedience, gratitude, humility, and faithful service.

Long before anyone hears your voice sing, God has already seen your heart.

Long before anyone notices your hands raised in praise, God has already watched how you have lived in secret.

Long before anyone sees your outward expressions of worship, God has already examined the offering you have brought before Him.

One day, every song will end.
Every sermon will be finished.
Every gathering on earth will come to a close.

But the worship offered from a heart that truly loved God will remain forever.

Do not be satisfied with merely attending worship.

Become a true worshipper.

