

**Topics in Practical Theology – Lesson 3 – Worship**  
Valley Bible Church Adult Sunday School  
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Discussion Question:

1. What do people often mean when they speak of worship?

... when the average person speaks of “worship,” it is usually the external things that are in view—liturgy, ceremony, music, kneeling, and other formal issues. I recently read the testimony of a man who left evangelical Christianity and joined Roman Catholicism. One of the primary reasons he gave for abandoning evangelicalism was that he found Roman Catholic liturgy “more worshipful.” As he went on to explain, it became apparent that what he actually meant was that Rome offered more of the accoutrements of formal ritual—candle burning, statues, kneeling, reciting, crossing oneself, and so on. But those things have nothing to do with genuine worship in spirit and truth. From *The Coming Evangelical Crisis*, John H. Armstrong, gen. ed. Chapter 10 HOW SHALL WE THEN WORSHIP? John F. MacArthur, Jr.

Everyone in the world worships something. From the most religious to the most secular, all people value something high enough to build their lives around it. John Piper in “What Jesus Demands from the World,” page 99.

The Definition of Worship

Dictionary.com – reverent honor and homage; adoring reverence or regard. To ascribe or attribute worth to something or someone. Honor paid to a superior being. To give homage, honor, reverence, respect, adoration, praise, or glory to a superior being.

Praise (aineo) – Giving joyful, verbal praise to God.

Luke 19:37 (humans); Luke 2:13 (angels); Luke 2:20 (individually); Rev 19:5 (corporately)  
Acts 2:42-47

Glorify (doxa) – Acknowledging that God is so transcendent and majestic and worthy to receive worship from His creatures.

Rom 15:6; Luke 2:20; 5:25; 18:43; Rev 15:4; 1 Cor 6:20

Serve (latreuo / latria) – service flowing from a pure heart; Good works that we do for God resulting from a heart of gratitude for what He has done for us.

Acts 24:14 and Phil 3:3; Rom 1:9; 12:1; Heb 8:5; Rev 7:15

Worship (proskuneo) - to kiss toward, to kiss the hand, to bow down, to prostrate oneself. The idea of worship is that one prostrates himself before a superior being with a sense of respect, awe, reverence, honor, and homage. Paying God the glory due His superior character. An attitude of devotion demonstrated by actions.

Rev 5:14; Matt 14:33; 28:9

## The Object of Worship

Since worship is paying God the glory due Him because of who He is then we need to understand who God is. The attributes of God can be categorized multiple ways, but are generally broken into two main groups – those that belong to God alone (incommunicable or divine) and those that are in some way found in man (communicable or personal).

### Divine attributes:

1. Simplicity – God is not a composite or compound being, He is spirit only. (John 4:24)
2. Unity – God is one in number, indivisible, and unique. (Deut 6:4)
3. Infinity – God has no bounds or limits. He is not limited by time-space. He is transcendent. (1 Kings 8:27; Acts 17:28)
4. Eternity – Free from succession of time. He exists endlessly from eternity past to eternity future. All past, present, and future events are equally vivid to Him. (Gen 21:33; Psa 90:2)
5. Immutability – God is unchanging and unchangeable. He is never inconsistent or growing or developing. (James 1:17)
6. Omnipresence – God is everywhere. (Psa 139:7-12)
7. Sovereignty – God is the supreme ruler. He is in control of all events. His is working out His perfect plan, according to the counsel of his will, for his own glory. (Eph 1)
8. Omniscience – God knows all actual and possible things (Matt 11:21)  
God knows instantly and effortlessly all matter and all matters, all mind and every mind, all spirit and all spirits, all being and every being, all creaturehood and all creatures, every plurality and all pluralities, all law and every law, all relations, all causes, all thoughts, all mysteries, all enigmas, all feeling, all desires, every unuttered secret, all thrones and dominions, all personalities, all things visible and invisible in heaven and in earth, motion, space, time, life, death, good, evil, heaven, and hell. A. W. TOZER
9. Omnipotence – God is all powerful and able to accomplish anything consistent with His nature. (Rev 19:6)

### Personal Attributes:

1. Justice – Moral equity, “no respect of persons.” (Acts 17:31)
2. Love – God seeking the highest good of displaying His own will. (Eph 2:4-5, 1 John 4:8)
3. Truth – Agreement to and consistency with all that is represented by God Himself. (John 17:3, Titus 1:2, Rom 3:4, Heb 6:18)
4. Freedom – Independence from His creatures. (Isa 40:13-14)
5. Holiness – Pure and separate from sin. (1 John 1:5)

"I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images. Isa 42:8

"You shall fear {only} the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name. Deut 6:13

Then Jesus \*said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.' " Matt 4:10

### The Priority of Worship

We have many responsibilities in our relationship with God, but our primary privilege is to worship Him. Let's look at the account of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42. Mary sat at Jesus' feet worshiping while Martha was distracted by the cares of the world. Worship is the one priority that supersedes all other activities in our lives.

### The Pattern of Worship

The pattern for true worship is found in John 4:19-24.

<sup>19</sup>The woman \*said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. <sup>20</sup>"Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you {people} say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." <sup>21</sup>Jesus \*said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. <sup>22</sup>"You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup>"But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in **spirit and truth**; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. <sup>24</sup>"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in **spirit and truth**." John 4:19-24

Spirit here has two implications. One is the human spirit as in Rom 1:9 "serve (worship) in my spirit". Not in religious trappings, but with our entire being (Deut 6:4-5; Psa 51:5-17). The other is in the Holy Spirit as in Phil 3:3 "worship in the Spirit of God". Only those who are born again can be true worshipers of God.

Truth has to do with worshipping God with knowledge and correct understanding based on His word.

Acts 17:23

Romans 1:18-19, 25

John 17:17

Psa 119:142; 160

Mark 7:6-8

### The Practice of Worship

Rev 19:10; 22:8-9; Matt 6:24 – God centered

1 Sam 15:22 – Obedience

Hebrews 12:28-29 – Gratitude motivated service

Heb 13:15 – Continually praising God

Rom 12:1 – Presenting our bodies a living and holy sacrifice

Phil 3:3 – Placing no confidence in the flesh

Eph 5:18-19 – Making melody with our heart to the Lord

Col 3:16-17 – Thankfulness in our hearts to God

### The Bottom Line

Worship does not just happen on Sunday mornings or at Growth Group when we sing a few songs. Worship is a continual action or ascribing worth to God as we meditate on His majesty, placing the worship of Him before everything, worshiping Him with our entire being with correct understanding from and in a manner consistent with His word.