

Worship: The Key to Living the Abundant Christian Life
2 Corinthians 3:18
Part Eight

Christ came into this world to give life and life abundant according to **John 10:10**. So how can believers who have come to Christ, by grace through faith, enter into the abundance of that life that they have received?

Worship is the key to abundant living! Worship is the key to unleashing the abundance of the Christian life, for worship is the key to getting our hearts right before God, and if our hearts are right before God then the Spirit of God will fill us and the life of Christ will flow through us to the praise of His glory, as we day by day are transformed into the very image of Christ, not by the strength of our might, but through the strength and power of His might, the strength and power of our triune God.

And this is the truth that I have tried to highlight for you over these past few months as I have shared with you these messages that I have entitled **“Worship: The key to living the abundant Christian life”** and have developed for you a diagram that I have entitled: **“Living above the Line.”**

And what has been my hope in all of this? That God will use this series of messages and this diagram as it unfolds week by week not only to provide us a better understanding of the dynamics of a worship filled life but that God would also use this series of messages and this diagram to help fuel our appetite for worship and that our appetite for worship would become so voracious that each and every facet of our lives would become an extension of our worship and an expression of our love and affection for God. This is my hope.

What biblical truths support the belief that worship is the key to living the abundant Christian life?

The first truth was that the God of heaven, our creator, alone is worthy of worship (Psalm 19:1-6; Isaiah 6:1-8). And how did we illustrate this in our diagram? Turn your note page over and write “GOD” sitting on a chair at the top.

And what was the second truth? The second truth was that though the God of heaven, our creator, alone is worthy of worship, mankind is unable to come into His presence to worship Him because they are spiritually dead (Romans 5:12). And because they are spiritually dead they are cut off from God. Turn your note page over and add three stick figures with upraised arms and a line above them at the bottom of your diagram. And what did this result in?

When spiritual death spread to mankind this meant that the whole of mankind became idolaters, whether that meant worshipping idols made with human hands or erecting idols in their hearts. And then what did mankind's idols become? They became their masters. And how did we illustrate this truth in our diagram? Now add a circle above each stick figure with the words "master #1," "master #2," "master #3" to your diagram.

What a miserable, wretched, spiritually bankrupt condition we were once living, as we sought to satisfy the emptiness of our souls, caused by our separation from God, with the stuff of this world, but this is exactly where we were.

And this miserable life of futility would have continued if God had not had mercy upon us. And this led us to the third truth. Though mankind could not break through the barrier of sin, God, as an expression of His love, did break through that barrier by sending His Son into this world to die for our sins (1 Peter 3:18). So how did we picture this truth in our diagram? Now create an open space in the line and extend a cross upward through the opening on your diagram on the back of your note page.

So does the Bible teach us that God broke through the barrier of sin that had separated us from Him, through the death of His Son? Yes! But we would not have known this unless this message that the Scriptures refer to as the gospel had been made known to us. So how did we picture this truth in this diagram? Now draw a Bible at the base of the cross on your diagram.

So after we by the grace of God heard the message of the gospel, and by the grace of God had responded in faith to the gospel by turning our backs on our former masters so that we might enter through the door that God had opened for us, what happened next?

God immediately joined us to the life of Christ through the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit, according to **1 Corinthians 12:13**, and thus we became alive to God and were then immediately able to enter into the presence of God, having been made the righteousness of God in Christ, according to **2 Corinthians 5:21**.

And what did we become when we entered through that door that God had opened for us through the death of His Son into His presence? This question brought us to the fourth truth.

Those who choose by grace through faith to enter into God's presence through the door that He has opened will become His worshippers and will therefore experience the filling of the Spirit (Romans 12:1, Ephesians 5:18). And how did we illustrate this truth? Draw a figure bowed before the throne of God.

And as long as we remain bowed before God in worship, we will continue to be filled with His Spirit, and as long as we continue to be filled with the Spirit, we will continue to experience the abundance of Christ's life.

So how will we know when we are living in the midst of that abundance that flows from Christ's life and that is produced when we are worshipping God? There are a myriad of different ways. But for this series of messages, and for our diagram, I have chosen to isolate only a few of them. So, what were those particular ways that I have chosen to isolate?

Those who bow before God in worship will experience joy (Psalm 84:1-4). So how did we represent this in our diagram? On your diagram draw musical notes being lifted up to God from the kneeling figure. And what kind of joy is this? It is the joy of the Lord. It is a Spirit-produced joy that flows from the assurance that we know God and that He knows us and that He, in spite of whatever circumstances we may be in, is working everything together for good, and will ultimately deliver us from this present world into the glory of heaven. And what is another way that the abundance of Christ's life will be manifested through our worship?

Those who bow before God in worship will experience satisfaction (Psalm 63:5; Psalm 36:5-8). So how did we illustrate this kind of satisfaction that comes through worship in our diagram? Draw a fat stick figure. And what

kind of satisfaction is this? It is the satisfaction that comes when the deepest longing of our soul has been satisfied and leaves us feeling as if as we lack for nothing. And what is another way that the abundance of Christ's life will be manifested through our worship?

Those who bow before God in worship will experience strength (Psalm 63:6-8). And how will we picture this on our diagram? Draw a picture of a strong man. So, what kind of strength is this? It is God's strength which, when drawn upon through worship, will deliver us from any struggle we might be having with any sinful impulse or act.

Joy, satisfaction and strength are a few of the manifestations of the abundance of Christ's life that we should expect to experience when we are bowed before God in worship, no matter what the circumstances of our lives might at any given particular time.

But now I would like to look at another manifestation of the abundance of Christ's life that we should also expect to experience, not a point in time but over time, if we would in fact consistently remain bowed before God in worship

So, what is this next particular manifestation of the abundance of Christ life that we should expect to experience while bowed before God in worship over time?

Those bowed before God in worship and who remain bowed before God in worship will be progressively transformed into Christ's image (2 Corinthians 3:1-18).

We were not saved to remain the same people that we were prior to our salvation! We were saved so that we might be transformed into the very image of Christ. And how will this transformation take place? This transformation will only take place over time, as we choose to remain consistently bowed before God in worship. And I believe **2 Corinthians 3:18** makes this very clear to us.

So now let me read this verse for you and see if this is not so. **“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are**

being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”

This verse links Moses’ transformation as he worshipped God with an unveiled face in the “tent of meeting” after he returned back from Mount Sinai as recorded for us in **Exodus 34:29-35** with the transformation that should be taking place in our lives if we, as the ministers of the new covenant also with unveiled faces, choose to enter into the presence of God for the purpose of worship. So now let us take a closer look at this transformation that Paul spoke of in **2 Corinthians 3:18**.

He begins with the word **“but.”** And what is the significance of this word? When Paul used the word **“but,”** he was contrasting what he is about to say concerning servants of the new covenant with what he has just said about the children of Israel in **verses 14-17**.

The children of Israel had consistently heard the Old Covenant Scriptures read to them, which should have prepared them for the coming of the Messiah. But it did not prepare them. Why? It did prepare them because their hearts were hard, and because their hearts were hard, they had a figurative veil over their hearts keeping them from seeing the glory of God in the reading of the Old Covenant Scriptures. This is what we learn from **verses 14-17**.

And what was the consequence of this? Their inability to see the glory of God in the reading of the Old Covenant Scriptures made it impossible for them to see the holiness and justice of God as clearly as they should have, which unfortunately led them to conclude that they through keeping the Law could be saved or perhaps better said that they through their manipulation of the Law could be saved. What a joke. But to them it was not a joke. It made perfect sense to them in light of their spiritual confusion, which had been brought on by the hardening of their hearts.

“But” what was true of them is not true of us, the servants of the New Covenant. Our hearts are not hard. We, through the gospel of Christ, were able through faith in Christ to see the glory of God when we entered into His presence with an “unveiled face,” very much like Moses when he went into the tent of meeting with an unveiled face and was able to see the glory of

God. And this is why Paul was able to go on to say in **verse 18**, **“But we all, with unveiled face.”**

But we need to be careful here. The glory that Moses saw when he entered into God’s presence and worshipped God in the tent of meeting, in **Exodus 34:29-35**, would not be the same glory that we will see when we enter into God’s presence and worship Him. And what do I mean by this?

Let us continue to read **verse 18**. And what does it say **“But we all** [all Christians or in other words all members of the new covenant community], **with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord.”** So based on these words, why would I say that the glory that Moses saw when he worshipped God would not be the same glory that we will see when we worship God?

When Moses entered the tent of meeting and beheld the glory of the Lord or in other words Jehovah God, it most likely was limited to some kind of sensory display of God’s presence, through either light, fire, smoke or a combination of such things. And this display of God’s glory was certainly impressive. But this display of God’s glory to Moses, I believe, pales in comparison to what we now are able to see as servants of the new covenant, when we come into His presence to worship Him. Why would I say this?

Moses saw a manifestation of the glory of the God in the tent of meeting but he never was able to see the very image of the glory of the God. But we can. And why is this?

The image of God’s glory that Paul spoke of here in this verse and that God has provided us **“as in a mirror”** is **Christ**. Christ, in this verse, is the image of the glory of God.

Let me now read for you **2 Corinthians 4:6** and see if this is not so. **“For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”** So who is the image of the glory of God in **2 Corinthians 3:18** based on **2 Corinthians 4:6**? Christ is the image of the glory of God.

And when we come before God to worship, to view His glory we are as in a mirror looking into the face of Christ. And what will happen as we do this? We will be progressively transformed into His image the very image of Christ.

So let us go back to the verse and see if this is not so. **“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory.”** Our lives will progressively become like Christ’s. Hallelujah!

And how does Paul conclude his thoughts concerning this transformation that is taking place as we behold the glory of the Lord as in a mirror and that will be consummated when we stand before Him? He concludes with these words, **“just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”**

When Paul said, **“Just as from the Lord the Spirit,”** he was communicating to his readers and to us that this human transformation can only be done by the **Spirit**. And what are the steps that the Spirit will go through to accomplish this transforming work as we are bowed before God before in worship?

The Spirit will, according to **Ezekiel 36:27**, drive us to the Word of God. So how did we represent this in our diagram? On your diagram draw an arrowhead pointing back to the Bible. And He will do this by supplying us a desire to obey it.

And after we are there feeding on God’s Word, He will use the Word, according to **Hebrews 4:12**, to slice us and dice us in such a way that even the thoughts and intentions of our hearts are laid bear before Him.

And once this has happened, what will happen? Hopefully we will once again draw up into God’s presence and will, in response to all that He is and has done for us through Christ, bow before God. And as soon as we do this, the Spirit of God will continue to fill us, the life of Christ will flow through us, and we will progressively be transformed into His image.

May God give us the grace to bow before Him in worship and to remain consistently bowed before Him so that we might progressively be transformed into the image of Christ.