

Worship: The Key to Living the Abundant Christian Life

John 7:37-38

Part Nine

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.

So, 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 picture this on 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. And how did we picture this? 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 picture this? 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). And how did we picture this? 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. And how did we picture this? 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). So how did we picture this? 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. This is why I have shared with you that worship is the key to living the abundant Christian 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 those ways?

Those who bow before God in worship will experience joy (Psalm 84:1-4). And what kind of joy will that be? Those who bow before God in worship will experience the joy of the Lord! And how did we picture this in our diagram? On your diagram draw musical notes being lifted up to God from the kneeling figure. But this is not all.

Those who bow before God in worship will experience satisfaction (Psalm 63:5; 36:5-8). And what kind of satisfaction will that be? Those who bow before God will experience the satisfaction of the Lord! And how did we picture this in our diagram? Draw a fat stick figure. But again this is not all.

Those who bow before God in worship will experience strength (Psalm 63:6-8). And what kind of strength will they experience? Those who bow

before God in worship will experience the strength of the Lord. And how did we picture this in our diagram? Draw a picture of a strong man. But again this is not all.

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). So how does this progressive transformation take place?

As we come to God and bow before Him in worship, the Spirit of God, according to Zechariah 36:27 will drive us to the Word of God. How did we picture this? On your diagram draw an arrowhead pointing back to the Bible. And what happens after the Spirit drives us back to the Word? The Spirit of God will use the Word of God to slice us and dice us, or in other words to convict us of sin which will then lead us to confess and then ultimately over time produce progressive sanctification as put off sin and put on righteousness.

But we are not done. There is still another manifestation of the abundance of Christ's life that I would like to highlight for you. And what is that?

Those who bow before God in worship and consistently remain bowed before God in worship will be actively involved in spreading the gospel (John 7:37-39). This is not maybe or might, it is a certainty. Now why would I say this?

I would say this because this is what Christ promised. Let me read for you **John 7:38** and see if this is not so. **“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’”** This verse I believe clearly supports what I have just said about those who bow before God in worship and who consistently remain bowed in worship. They will be actively involved in spreading the gospel. So now let us look at this verse and its surrounding context more carefully and see if this is not so.

First of all, the events recorded for us in **John 7** took place during what the Jews called the Feast of Tabernacles, or in other words the Feast of Booths. So what was this feast all about?

Each day for seven days during the formal feast period a priest, accompanied

by a very large multitude of Jews, would carry water from the pool of Siloam to the temple in a golden vessel. At the temple the water was poured out into a bowl beside the altar from which a pipe conveyed it to the bottom of the altar, while at the same time wine was poured in a similar fashion on the other side of the altar. Why was this done? The water ceremony conducted each day during the Feast of Booths was a form of petition asking the Lord to provide rain for the next year's crop. This petitioning of the Lord through this activity is what was transpiring during the events in the early part of **John 7** right up to **John 7:36**.

But this backdrop of the Feast of Tabernacles became more than a backdrop in **John 7:37-39**. It became an opportunity for Christ to bring instruction to the Jewish people. So how did Christ do this? How did He change this backdrop of the Jewish feast into an opportunity to teach?

Christ, in **John 7:37**, changed the focus of the feast from liquid water that would provide life for their crops to the **“living water”** that would provide life for any thirsty soul. Let me now read for you **John 7:37** and see if this is not so. **“Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.’”** What a beautiful invitation.

The world is full of spiritually thirsty people, people who have been cut off from God by sin. It was true during the time of Christ and it continues to be true even today. But it does not have to be that way. We do not have to continue to be cut off from God, just as the Jews did not have to continue to be cut off from God.

All that people have to do in order to satisfy their spiritual thirst is to come to Christ, or in other words in terms of today all that that people have to do in response to the gospel of Christ is to come to Christ and embrace Him as their Lord and Savior. And if they do that their thirst will be satisfied.

But the blessing of having come to Christ and having our spiritual thirst satisfied is not for us alone. We have been blessed so that others might be blessed through us.

So now let me now read for you once again **John 7:38**, the verse we started with, and see if this is not so. **“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’”**

Christ never intended for us to be satisfied with going to heaven alone and our expectation based on **John 7:38** should be that we would not be going to heaven alone.

What did Jesus say in **John 15:16**? **“You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit.”**

But you might say to yourself, “But I am so inadequate.” And if this is what you are saying, you are speaking the truth in and of yourself. You and I are inadequate. But the Holy Spirit certainly is not.

Let us read **John 7:39**. **“But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”** Rivers of living water is the by-product of the Holy Spirit’s ministry in and through our lives. Our challenge is not to produce the rivers of water; our challenge is to release the Spirit (John 7:39).

How do we do this? We do this through worship! We do this by presenting our bodies as living sacrifices holy and acceptable to God, not just for a moment but seeking to do so continuously. This is our goal. This is what we are striving for. And as we over the course of our lives are better able to do this, what should our expectation be? As we bow before God in worship, and the Spirit of God fills us and the rivers of living water flow through us to others, those others will be impacted, and those that God has chosen from eternity past will come to Christ and be saved. This should be our expectation because this is God’s expectation for those who have come to come to Christ.

And this is the truth. So it should not surprise us, based on this expectation, that at very end of Christ’s ministry that He commanded His followers to **“make disciples.”** So where do we see this command? We see this command in **Matthew 28:19-20**. **“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I**

commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Now as we read these verses you might think that Christ gave His disciples multiple commands, but He didn't. There is only one main verb (MATHETEUSO) **“make disciples.”** **“Going, baptizing, and teaching”** are all participles, supplying for us various elements that would be required in the **“making of disciples.”** But the **“making of disciples”** is the command, and it is a command that we should not think is out of our reach. This is a command that is very much within our reach, in light of the promise that Christ gave his disciples in **John 7:37-39**. And if this command were not within our reach, Christ wouldn't have given it to us as a command.

And is this a burdensome command for those who are bowed before God in worship? No! It is not! When we are bowed before God in worship, and as the Spirit of God fills us, and as we experientially enter into the abundance of His life, it is the most natural thing in the world to want the river of life to flow through us so that others might be blessed as we have been blessed.

How can we experiencing the blessedness of having been set free from all other masters other than God Himself not want others to enter into the blessedness of that?

How can we experiencing the blessedness of being able to stand in the presence of God and view the glory of God in the face of Christ not want others to enter into the blessedness of that?

How can we experiencing the blessedness of the joy of the Lord, the satisfaction of the Lord, the strength of the Lord not want others to enter into the blessedness of that?

How can we experiencing the blessedness of progressive transformation, or in other words progressive sanctification not want others to enter into the blessedness of that?

Of course we will want them to enter into the blessedness of all of it and more! And because of this what will we do? As we bow before God in worship and remain consistently bowed before God in worship will be actively involved in spreading the gospel.

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So is the river of living water flowing through you? If it is praise God! If it is not then what do you need to do? Try harder? You need to bow before God in worship. And if you do this you will become involved.

But you might say, “I am worshipping God but I have no interest in actively spreading the gospel to others.” And do you know what I will say to you? “You are not worshipping God. There is something more important in your life than Him and His will for you.”

May God give us the grace to bow before Him in worship and to remain consistently bowed before Him so that we might actively involved in the spreading of the gospel.