

Lesson 8: Growing In Worship

The Bible uses the word worship in two ways: In a general way and in a specific way. This lesson will discuss the concept of worship in both its general and specific meanings.

Worship-General Meaning

Man naturally runs from God. He wants God to leave him alone and he wants God's church to leave him alone. As we have seen, the Bible says that man in his natural sinful condition wants to live his own life, and not be committed to God and His Kingdom (the Church). But God in His eternal love goes after lost man. He knocks on the door of his heart with the glorious message of the Gospel. He saves man from sin, Satan, the world and hell. God removes from man's heart any guilt and fear of God. Man's response to the grace of God is his worship.

The Bible defines worship as our total response to the work of God in our lives. Adam, after he had rebelled against God, immediately tried to run and hide from God. Before Adam could return to God and again live a new life for the Lord (a life of worship), God had to act: God found him, restored him and promised him a Savior. Adam's new life in response to God's goodness was his worship.

Faith is required for a life that worships God. In many places the Bible tells us that we cannot worship God if our heart is not right before the Lord. Where there is no faith in the heart, people will not want to worship God with their lives.

Romans 12:1-2

What is a Christian's true worship? _____

According to these verses, what is our true worship a response to? _____

How does a life of worship show itself?

How must any worship of God be done according to Jesus? John 4:22 _____

A Christian acknowledges the Living God in all his ways and as he sets he presents himself as a living sacrifice he demonstrates his true worship before God. In the church services we are very aware of the presence of God. This is how we should live every minute of the day: aware that God is present all around us and in us. Just like we want what we do in church to be pleasing to God, so also we want our daily life to please God in every way. Our daily life is our daily worship. The courtesy, concern and consideration we show others on Sunday morning is called to carry over into the week day. Biblically, in this category of worship, there is no distinction between Sunday morning and Friday evening before God.

Worship--Specific Meaning

When God's love comes into the life of a person, he changes. He wants to gather together with his new spiritual family to celebrate God's goodness with praise and prayer and thanksgiving. He wants to gather with God's people on the first day of the week (or the day the congregation selects for corporate worship) to hear and learn God's Word, asking God's blessing on another week of life. The Bible calls the gathering of God's people to celebrate His goodness and learn is Word worship.

The key word to describe our Sunday worship is _____

God wants us to come to church celebrating with God's faithful people His blessings and goodness. What are some things you can celebrate about every week.

What is the 3rd Commandment? _____

What does the Third Commandment mean? _____

If our lives are only days filled with work and endless running around doing different tasks, they will soon become dry and empty. We need times of fun, relaxation, and enjoyment. In the same way, if we have no celebration and gather with God's people to praise Him, our spiritual lives will soon become _____

Hebrews 10:25

How is gathering for worship described here? _____

What happens to people who do not make weekly worship a discipline and habit? _____

The Bible tells us what we should include in our Sunday morning worship services. Consider the following verses:

Acts 2:42

Colossians 3:16

What are the things that should be part of our Sunday worship services? _____

Why is worship on Sunday mornings 2 - 2 and a half hours rather than one hour? _____

What should we do for those in our spiritual family who begin to neglect the teaching and instruction of God's Word on Sundays? _____

YOU WILL ONLY GET AS MUCH OUT OF WORSHIP AS YOU PUT INTO IT. If a person's worship life is dry and empty for a season, don't panic. That happens to each of us. The question is how does that person react to that period of time. I have to admit that I did not always react well to those times. In fact when Lynn and I were first married and at the Seminary for "our" final year we missed church three Sundays in a row. We didn't like where we were going because we were not being fed with food from the Bible. The excuses were easy. The time flew by. Finally Lynn and I looked at each other and realized what had happened. We had ignored the Living God. We will never react to "dry times" in that way again. Missing worship for reasons other than illness or infirmity will not happen.

We learned some things from that and other such episodes. Here are some good tips to help you get the most out of worship on Sunday.

1. Make sure you are a student of God's Word. If you are not into God's Word, worship will be empty for you.
2. Look forward to Sunday all week. God wants to fill that time on Sunday morning with a power and encouragement for a new week. He wants it to be truly a celebration time in your life. Look forward to it.
3. Go to bed early on Saturday so you can wake refreshed and ready to worship God with all your might. It is hard to celebrate when we are weary. (However, I agree with my father when he says, "I'd rather have them sleeping in church than at home.")
4. Pray as you come to church, that God would bless your hours at church, and use them as the spiritual strength you need to walk another week in the Lord's power. Pray during the week, asking God to not only move people to worship Him at His House but that the Word would bless all who attend.
5. Arrive early enough to find a place to sit. Praise God, it is getting harder to find "your" pew. And when you arrive early spend time in prayer asking God to prepare your heart in an attitude of Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Challenge.

6. Pray just before the Sermon begins that God would bless those 20-30 minutes.
7. Be sure to prepare before you come to church for the Holy Communion. On communion Sundays you will find three examination questions in the worship folder, which will assist in proper preparation. Take them home and refer to them for the next communion Sunday.
8. Bring your Bible to church and follow along with the sermon and the classes. Your Bible is your sword to defeat the attacks of Satan and the world. You need to become familiar with it and learn it completely.
9. Greet the visitors that come to worship and make them feel welcome. If you do not know someone, go up and meet them. Don't be shy. Shyness is often misinterpreted by people you don't know. As you become a Barnabas (a friend) your Sunday mornings will become richer for yourself. (Pray for the visitors as you see them in church. Something brought them there, perhaps even the Holy Spirit. Don't miss the chance to minister to them.)
10. Keep reminding yourself: I WILL ONLY GET AS MUCH OUT OF WORSHIP AS I PUT INTO IT.

Homework: Write a prayer, asking God to help you get the most out of worship. Mention the habits you wish to develop in order to get the most out of Sunday worship. Ask God to keep you aware that your whole life is your worship.