

Basic Training: What Does It Mean? Lesson 5
What is the Meaning of Worship?

1 Corinthians 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

- I. Review/Introduction
 1. Last week we spoke on: “What does it mean that there is one God?”
 2. We explored how that **there is one creator** of all things and that there is one Savior of all mankind.
 3. We read the Old Testament passages where God said He was the only one, there were none beside him, and **he was the only Savior**.
 4. We read the **first commandment that clearly states God’s priority: thou shalt have no other gods before me**.
 5. In the New Testament, we read Jesus’ answer to the question, “What is the greatest commandment?” According to Jesus, the **greatest commandment** is, “Here O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.”
 6. We then read further in the New Testament that **Jesus is identified as the Creator and Savior**.
 7. The bottom line is, **Jesus is God, the one and only God**. And unless we believe that, we will die in our sins.
 8. Jesus is not one of three, He is the only visible image God will ever have. Jesus will be on the throne in heaven, and all creation will bow and worship Him.
 9. So tonight’s lesson is: What is the meaning of worship?
 10. In researching tonight’s topic, I used as a reference a good book on the topic, Pentecostal Worship: A Biblical and Practical Approach, by author Gary D. Erickson.
 11. Worship is not a performance by professionals where the rest sit back and watch. It is not a buffet where we pick out what pleases us. It is not a dinner where we sit and wait for the food to be brought to us.
 12. The worship encounter is what you make of it, what you put into it, and how you press into toward God’s presence.
 13. Since we have already identified Jesus as God, a good starting point for our topic on worship is this: Jesus is the center of our worship.
 14. Some churches frown upon people raising their hands, shouting praises, dancing or leaping, or speaking in tongues. Their emphasis is keeping a traditional, liturgical formality in service, and they would consider those expressions of worship out of order.
 15. But when it comes to worship, we are not following a liturgical procedure because the how-to’s of worship are addressed in the Bible.
 16. But before we address the “how to” of worship, let us start with why we worship.
- II. Why worship?
 - A. God is great
 1. One great reason to worship God is simply because God is great!
Psalms 95:3 For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

2. *Psalm 104:1 Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.*
3. *Psalm 48:1 Great [is] the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, [in] the mountain of his holiness.*
4. To see God's greatness, we can simply look at a few of His qualities.
 - a. God is omnipotent: Luke 1:37.
 - b. God is omnipresent: Proverbs 15:3.
 - c. God is omniscient: 1 John 3:20.
 - d. God is Creator: Genesis 1:1.
 - e. God is love: 1 John 4:8.
 - f. God is truth: John 14:6.
 - g. God is holy: Isaiah 6:3.
5. There are many, many, many more words to describe how great God is.
6. But finally, another great reason to worship God is because God is searching for worshippers.
John 4:23 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.
7. Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was:
Matthew 22:36-37
36 Master, which is the great [NIV "greatest", NLT "most important"] commandment in the law?
37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.
8. In this introduction to worship, a good answer to "Why worship?" is because God is great, and worshipping God is the greatest commandment.

III. Our standard – the Bible

1. There are plenty of worship expressions revealed in the Bible, going back to the beginning of creation and looking ahead into eternity future.
2. Shortly after creation singing and shouting for joy were present. God asked Job, where were you when I was creating all things...
Job 38:7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God [angels] shouted for joy?
3. And on the other bookend of time, the book of Revelation reveals that eternity future will be full of worship to Jesus:
Revelation 19:4-6
4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.
5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.
*6 And I heard as it were the voice of a **great multitude**, and as the voice of **many waters**, and as **the voice of mighty thunderings**, saying, **Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.***

4. Also in the Bible, you will find that animal sacrifices were offered by worshipers for forgiveness of sins, but because Jesus sacrificed His life for our sins, there is no longer a need for animal sacrifices in worship.
5. But other forms of biblical worship not involving animal sacrifice ARE intended for worshipers today.
6. The phrase, “new song” appears 9 times in scripture to show that our worship must always be alive, new, fresh, and from the heart every time:
*Ps 33:3 Sing unto him a **new song**; play skilfully with a loud noise.*
7. We will now discuss things to do with our bodies during worship because we are called to glorify God with our body.
1 Corinthians 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

IV. Physical expressions of worship (**mouth, hands, feet, posture**)

A. The Mouth

1. The mouth is our greatest tool of worship because it reveals what is hidden in the heart, somewhat like a window:
*Luke 6:45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for **of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.***
2. Ways to use our mouths in worship are talking, shouting, singing, laughing, and speaking in tongues.
3. **Talking** is what we might do in a testimony:
Psalms 71:24 My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.
4. **Shouting** is a more excited expression of praise that involves a raised voice.
5. Shouting reveals internal emotions, positive and negative. Like when a child runs toward the road chasing a ball, we shout out in excited fear, or when a basketball player makes a winning shot, people shout and jump in excited happiness.
6. But how about shouting to our great God in worship? Shouting is an appropriate expression to God:
*Psalms 47:1 O clap your hands, all ye people; **shout unto God with the voice of triumph.***
*Luke 19:37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to **rejoice and praise God with a loud voice** for all the mighty works that they had seen;*
7. **Singing** to God in worship is another way to use our mouths in worship:
Psalms 47:6 Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.
Matthew 26:30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.
8. Singing is also appropriate when we are trapped in negative circumstances, like when Paul and Silas had been stripped, whipped, jailed, and bound:
Acts 16:25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.
9. **Laughter** is also an appropriate response in worship:
Psalms 126:1-2
I When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.

- 2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.
10. Those who have experienced Holy Ghost laughter or seen others experience it, realize that it is a high form of worship and not irreverent in any way.
 11. **Speaking in tongues** is a form of worshiping with our mouth that involves an utterance by the Spirit of God using our mouth to speak.
 12. Speaking in tongues has a three-fold purpose in scripture:
 - a. The initial evidence of receiving the Holy Ghost,
 - b. When interpreted, a way that God communicates a message to the church, and
 - c. A form of private communication with God in prayer, such as:
1 Corinthians 14:2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.
1 Corinthians 14:14 For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.
1 Corinthians 14:4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.
 13. **[slide]** So with the mouth we worship by: talking, shouting, singing, laughing, speaking in tongues.
 - B. The hands
 1. Lifting hands and clapping hands are appropriate expressions of worship.
Psalms 134:2 Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD.
1 Timothy 2:8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.
 2. Clapping hands is a sign of approval. We applaud a person who has performed well.
 3. We also can clap our hands to music to participate in the rhythm of the song.
Psalms 47:1 O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.
 4. Some sacrificial offerings were waved before the Lord which made for a special offering called the wave offering. We can worship with a wave.
 5. **[slide]** Hands: lifting, clapping, waving
 - C. The feet
 1. Feet can be used in worship through standing, leaping, running and dancing.
 2. We stand in order to show honor.
Ps 135:1-3
1 Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the name of the LORD; praise him, O ye servants of the LORD.
2 Ye that stand in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God,
3 Praise the LORD; for the LORD is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant.
 3. Shouting, running and leaping are also expressions of extreme joy and are used in worship. When a crippled man was healed:
Acts 3:8-9
8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.
9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God:

4. Response for bad treatment:
*Luke 6:23 Rejoice ye in that day, and **leap for joy**: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.*
 5. Jesus said that leaping for joy should be our response when people hate you, separate from you, reproach you and speak evil of you for Jesus' sake.
 6. Running and leaping are physical acts of worship, and are similar to dancing.
 7. We can also express joy through **dancing**:
*Ps 149:3 Let them praise his name **in the dance**: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.*
*Ps 150:4 Praise him with the timbrel and **dance**: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.*
 8. The word "dance" is used seven times in the Bible in relation to worshiping the Lord.
 9. A study of Hebrew and Greek words that are translated "dance" or something similar portray the following ideas: circle in joy, leap, play, dance, circle dancing.
 10. In a Pentecostal church, it is not uncommon to have what we might call "anointed dancing" [shouting] where the worshiper responds to a move of the Spirit of God by dancing. On the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, worshipers appeared drunk as they worshiped in this way.
 11. King David "*danced before the Lord*":
*2 Sam 6:14 And David **danced before the LORD with all his might**; and David was girded with a linen ephod.*
 12. **[slide]** Worship with our hands by: standing, walking, leaping, dancing
 13. Based on personal experience, I have found that when we begin offering physical expressions of praise to the Lord, like clapping, raising our hands, speaking praises to the Lord, leaping, or dancing, often, the Spirit moves on our obedience and takes us into deeper worship
- D. Posture
1. In addition to those physical responses in worship, is also our posture, like bowing, kneeling, and even laying prostrate.
 2. Bowing is a way to show respect to someone deserving of honor.
 3. Kneeling is similar but expresses a more extreme level of respect and honor and involves total submission.
 4. Bowing and kneeling are forms of expressive worship.
*Ps 95:6 O come, let us worship and **bow down: let us kneel** before the LORD our maker.*
*Gen 24:48 And I **bowed down my head**, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son.*
 5. Falling prostrate before the Lord is similar to bowing and kneeling, but is even more extreme showing an intense desire for complete submission to God.
 6. It is as though the person is presenting themselves before the Lord as a sacrifice.
*Matt 2:11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and **fell down, and worshipped him**: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.*
*Rev 1:17 And when I saw him, I **fell at his feet as dead**. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:*
 7. **[slide]** Worship with our posture by bowing, kneeling, laying prostrate.

- V. Conclusion
1. Our goal with worship should be to discover what the Bible says about acceptable worship that God desires, not just a personal preference.
 2. Not all forms of worship were accepted by God as God rejected the worship of those who tried to do it their way with a rebellious heart: Cain the first child ever born; Moses' nephews Nadab and Abihu; and King Saul.
 3. Malachi said God rejected the half-hearted worship of Israel:
Mal 1:8 And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.
 4. God doesn't want our lame offerings of half-hearted worship, but what comes out of a pure and passionate heart.
 5. A good rule of thumb as a Christian is: change your preferences and practices based on discoveries from scripture.
 6. When we come before the Lord to worship, we need to keep in mind that worship is a verb describing our actions, not a noun describing an event on the schedule:
1 Corinthians 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.
 7. Let us close with an illustration from a vision God gave to Ezekiel (Ezekiel 47:1-5).
 8. In his vision, he saw waters that flowed out from the altar, the place where worship began.
 9. An angel took him out 1,000 cubits going out the gate of the city and he arrived in waters that were to his ankles. Then he took him out another 1,000 cubits and the water was to his knees. He took him out another 1000 cubits and there the water was to his loins [waist deep]. But another 1000 cubits out and the water rose and became "waters to swim in."
 10. When you dive into this kind of worship experience, you may feel the fear of deep waters and want to remain in ankle-deep waters because it is more comfortable to you and you can remain safely in control of the experience.
 11. But as you move out deeper, the water will begin to have a stronger control on your movements, and you may have to "go with the flow."
 12. And if you are unfamiliar with how the Spirit flows, it may be uncomfortable or scary at first. But the greatest delight you can experience on earth, is moving in the Spirit that flows out of worship.
 13. Don't be content with the trickle at the altar. Keep moving out into the powerful river.
 14. For Ezekiel went on to describe many trees full of fruit grew by the waters, there was healing in the waters, many fish will be caught there, and wherever the river flowed, it brought life.
 15. Why don't we end this class by moving out into the waters and practicing some of active, heartfelt worship right now?
Psalms 48:1 Great [is] the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, [in] the mountain of his holiness.
 16. The next time we will consider the question, what does it mean to live godly? We will look at some basic Bible teachings on morality as well as the topics of modesty and gender-appropriate appearance.