

Heaven will be a place of ever-increasing joy as we respond to an eternal revelation of the glory of God in Christ Jesus. As we look forward to heaven, it is important to understand that the kingdom of God is not just something that exists in the future, but something that exists now. We have the responsibility and privilege of establishing our citizenship in the kingdom now, as exiles, before we enter fully into the kingdom in heaven. As such, it is important to learn to be joyful in worship of Christ, because that is our everlasting future.

Day 1

Be Still and Quiet

In order to worship Jesus, which is to declare His worth, we must first learn to quiet our inner monologue. Why is this important? To declare the worth of Jesus, we must see the worth of Jesus, and to see the worth of Jesus we must have a revelation of the worth of Jesus. We cannot hope to reason our way to the worth of Christ. We cannot climb the ladder of heaven and hope to arrive at the pearly gates. We must accept the revelation of Christ that He gives us, we must quiet our inner voice so that we can listen to His voice. This is not, as it might seem at the outset, a mystical requirement but is instead very practical. To quiet your voice simply means to stop looking at Christ and seeing yourself instead. We very often miss what scripture is telling us because we already know. We have preconceived ideas, we have our own theories and ideas, and rather than engaging in scripture to listen to what the word says, we take our own understanding and sift the word through it. This does not mean that we pretend not to know anything when we read the bible, but that we work hard at putting aside our own agendas and the limitations of our own preconceptions. As well as being quiet, we must be still. We must understand that there is nothing that we can add to our salvation, that there is no act of righteousness that merits the love of God, and that all good things come from Him. When we are still and quiet, we are beginning to be ready to glorify Him.

Verses: Exodus 14:14, Psalm 4:4, 1 Thessalonians 4:11

Prayer Topics: Meditation, Listening, Curiosity

Day 2

Focus

The next thing we must do if we are to worship and enjoy Christ is we must focus. Focus is exceedingly difficult, especially in today's world of constant distraction. Most of us are never in a place of real quiet, where we have the opportunity to practice real focus. If you have ever tried to pray for an extended amount of time, you have probably found that your mind will start to drift into thinking about what you will do the next day, what bills need to be paid, or what childhood breakfast cereal was best (was it Lucky Charms or Captain Crunch Peanut Butter?) It is hard to really worship and enjoy the glory of Christ if we cannot think about Him long enough to really start to understand his glory beyond simple things we learned as children in Sunday School. Those things we learned as kids are true and good, but as we mature, we will have a greater chance of standing in awe of Christ if we can discern things about Him that are worthy of our stature as adults. Developing focus takes time and effort. It is a process that begins with setting a small goal and developing it over time. Maybe today you can only focus on meditating on a verse or aspect of Christ for 3 or 4 minutes without becoming distracted, but if you work at it you will gain a greater ability. Why is this important? Because many people find their spiritual lives to be dull and think that the bible only has simple truths for them that they mastered as children. If you never played a game that was more complicated than tic-tac-toe you would probably think that all games are boring, but if you went on to try to play chess or a complex strategy game, you would know

that games can be enjoyable and engrossing even for an adult. In the same way, your enjoyment of Christ will not grow if you fail to learn to focus.

Verses: Proverbs 4:25, Hebrews 12:1-2, Matthew 6:33

Prayer Topics: Center, Goal, Pinpoint

Day 3

Be Humble

The most challenging aspect of worshiping and enjoying Christ is the need to be humble. We cannot hope to glory in the excellencies of Christ as long as we hold a high opinion of ourselves. If we are the standard of glory, then Christ cannot hope to win our admiration and worship. As long as I am impressed with my own wisdom, my own virtue, and my own strength, I cannot stand in awe of His. It is often assumed that to have a low opinion of one's self is to be unable to take joy in life, but that is not entirely accurate. It is important to see that I have value as a child of God, but this value does not originate with me or my qualities, but with Christ and his love for me. I have value because Christ shed his blood for me. Therefore, the price that was paid for me gives me great value indeed. But the glory for my value is credited to Christ and his qualities of love, mercy, and generosity, not my qualities. But if I love Christ, I am not sad that the glory is not mine, but I am happy that all glory in heaven and on earth is His. The more glory that goes to Christ, the more I am elevated in Him. My humility serves to elevate Christ, and then, it elevates me as well. True joy and glory come from my humility and His glory, and so Christ's call for me to be humble is a great gift that leads to true worship and joy.

Verses: Micah 6:8, 1 Peter 5:6, John 3:30

Prayer Topics: Meekness, Obedience, Wisdom

Day 4

Elevate

In order to truly worship and enjoy Christ, I must elevate Him. How is this accomplished? Well, I ascribe to Him all value, glory, and honor. In anything in this world that I see any value in, I see the mark of His creation and the reflection of his nature and character. I understand that without Him, nothing in this world would have any goodness or glory at all. I ascribe to him, in word and deed, the honor that is due to His name. I think thoughts that are worthy of Him. I make sure that my speech is reflecting His majesty. I engage in actions that elevate his worth. This may seem like a terrible burden, but for the one who loves Christ it is a magnificent joy. To understand this, all one has to do is remember the first time they had a crush on someone. You would think about the person all the time, and all of those thoughts would be good. You would notice things that others wouldn't, and the things you noticed led to a greater evaluation of their worth. You would never say anything that was not complimentary about them, and would even write down glowing things about them that you would not allow anyone to see. You would take on difficult tasks to let them know how much you valued them, and these tasks would not be a burden but would be a joy. As we age, we get cynical about others, and we no longer take the same joy in elevating them that we did when we were young and idealistic. That is simply because no one in the world is perfect and we learn this the hard way as people disappoint us. But Christ is perfect, and so our efforts at elevating Him are never wasted.

Verses: Psalm 150:1-6, Psalm 100:1-5, Isaiah 25:1

Prayer Topics: Praise, Glory, Gratitude, Joy

Day 5

Enjoy

The final step is to enjoy Christ, because we haven't really worshiped if we haven't enjoyed. God is good, and we enjoy good things. God is the perfection of everything. What would it be like to have perfect love, perfect harmony, perfect health, or perfect wisdom? Think of all that is perfect, and thereby, all that is perfect in God. Think of all the perfection you will have access to when you are face to face with the divine in heaven. Think of all the limitless and never-ending joy that will be yours when you enter full into God's kingdom. What part of that joy can you experience today?

Verses: Romans 15:13, John 16:24, Romans 14:17

Prayer Topics: Bliss, Delight, Peace