

Godlike: Worship

Day 1

Many people struggle with how to get started on worship as a spiritual discipline. Most people will find some worship music and sing along, but many will feel self-conscious doing this, and the discipline will be put aside. It is important to remember that the first recorded act of formal worship in the Bible had nothing to do with singing, and was in fact, an ordinary activity. Cain and Able brought sacrifices before the Lord as worship. They took the fruit of their regular everyday activity and sacrificed it to God, giving it to Him to declare his worth. The activity was not special, but the purpose and the attitude were. The activity was devoted to God, transforming it into worship. The purpose of the discipline of worship is to turn each part of our lives over to God until we are obedient to Romans 12 and our bodies are living sacrifices. This happens when our whole lives are devoted to him, each thought, moment, and action being offered to Him to be used for His purpose. Since we have no physical temple to go to, no physical altar to lay our sacrifices upon, we do this spiritually by putting things under God's authority and control. It is no longer for our purpose and glory, but for his. We do this willingly and cheerfully. Imagine the die hard Dallas Cowboys fan. Game time is devoted to the team. The fan watches, supports, and celebrates willingly and joyfully. He gladly hands over his money to buy a ticket to the game, a jersey or a hat. He tells the people he knows about his team. He turns his car into a rolling billboard celebrating the Cowboys. These things get offered up and devoted to the

team. I'm not saying you must go buy Christian t-shirts and decals for your car. These are just labels. The issue is about purpose. Do your actions support the purpose of God? Is your car used for the glory of God? Is he in control? Has it been devoted to God? To get started today, think of one thing in your life that you can devote to God, and use it for His purpose joyfully today. This process of making your body a living sacrifice can begin today.

Verses: John 4:24, Isaiah 25:1, Hebrews 13:15

Prayer Topics: Praise, Sacrifice, Joy

Day 2

Attitude and Mindset

Worship has much to do with mindset. When Cain and Abel brought their sacrifices before God, mindset was key. The attitude that each had was seen in the physical act of sacrifice, so that the final outcome was dependent on this factor. Our worship and devotion to God will mainly be seen through ordinary things, and how we use these things. The things themselves will usually not change, only the purpose to which they are put. Because of this, we must get our attitude right, and in order to do that we must understand the basics of worship. To help with this task, check out the following article:

<https://simplyelliott.com/2017/02/the-discipline-of-worship/>

Verses: Matthew 4:10, Exodus 20:3, Isaiah 6:5

Prayer Topics: Gratitude, Works, Generosity

Day 3

Gratitude

Please read this article on worship before proceeding:

<https://fuller.edu/next-faithful-step/classes/cf565/gratitude-is-the-stem-cell-of-worship/>

The writer of this article has some important insights on worship and what can go wrong in worship. I agree with his diagnosis of the consumerist mentality that can overtake our sense of gratitude in worship, and I think it is important to expand on some elements of this situation that we find ourselves in all too easily. In our sermon on Sunday I spoke about the need to offer ourselves as living sacrifices as written in Romans 12. All worship of the ancient world revolved around the offerings and sacrifices brought to the temple, and our modern worship springs from these roots. I said that God does not need your stuff, but you need to sacrifice. When we worship, we are giving ourselves to God in thanksgiving for Him giving Himself to us. Our desire to do things well

in a worship service should not come from a desire to impress the congregation, but to offer the very best of ourselves to God. When we give our best, when we offer ourselves as living sacrifices, we experience the joy of unity with him, but the joy is not the point, in a sense. As an example, we know that it is better to give than to receive. Imagine a parent giving their children gifts on Christmas morning, then deciding to return them because the parent felt a lack of joy in the giving, even though the children were overjoyed with the gifts. We would certainly call that parent's maturity and selflessness into question. However, in another sense joy is the point, because it is the culmination. The gift giving is not complete, it hasn't done its true work, until everyone has experienced the sharing of the same joy. Until that happens, it sits unfinished, waiting for its culmination. We worship God because he is worthy, and because He has given Himself to us. In worship we give ourselves to Him by presenting ourselves as living sacrifices. In a sense, it doesn't matter how you feel about worship, it matters how He feels about it. In another sense, its not truly complete until you join in the joy. Don't be the older brother sitting out the party.

Verses: Luke 15:25-32, Colossians 3:15, John 16:24

Prayer Topics: Abundance, Excitement, Praise

Day 4

Theory and Practice

We live in an age of practicality. We want to hack everything. Life hacks, game hacks, car hacks, all designed to quickly get the most out of anything in our lives. We have internet gurus to tell us what to eat, how to exercise, and what supplements to take. We even have AI to give us just the information we are looking for as quickly as possible. The problem for us in this modern age is that we know how to get anywhere we want in life very quickly and effectively, we just don't know where to go. All of our destinations seem to disappoint once we arrive. Living life as a sacrifice to God is not a destination most people aim at, and it is not a destination that leads itself to quick explanations or life hacks. The transforming of our minds is one of the first steps, and this takes time and effort. We must have our lives transformed, and that is a work of the spirit that we participate in through the giving of each part of our lives to God. When we give our minds to God we seek to know and understand the will of God for our lives. We are motivated to seek the truth about God and the world, to understand how to act in the world in a way that honors God, and to know Him through obedience. Becoming a living sacrifice means putting in effort, because failing to put in effort means the withholding of our will. In short, when we give our lives to God in a spiritual act of worship we will seek to know his will so that we can do his will. To help get us started, check out this message from John Piper:

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/present-your-bodies-as-a-living-sacrifice-to-god>

Verses: Romans 12:1-2, Hebrews 10:12, 1 Peter 2:5

Prayer Topics: Obedience, Surrender, Confidence

Day 5

Thanks to Sylvester Warsaw, Jr for our devotional today

God created man/humanity to be in relationship with Him. We were originally created in the image and likeness of God resembling His nature, His likeness, His holiness. We were created to worship God, however, because of man's disobedience our relationship with God was severed. Because of Jesus and what He accomplished on the cross and His resurrection man has the opportunity to be redeemed to worship God in the beauty of holiness in spirit and truth. Worship is a lifestyle of new birth expressed outwardly. Worship is the expressed manifestation of our communion with God done in secret. Man was created to worship whether it be the true and living God or the evil one man will worship something, hopefully, it's the living God but it's our choice.

Worship should ground us in and connect us with God recognizing our dependence on Him in all things that allows us to live life that glorifies and honors Him alone. Worship is organic growing out of our experience with Him therefore worship is experiential. The

more you hunger and thirst for Him the richer the worship experience becomes because of a thankful heart. When our heart, mind and soul belongs to God the more we hunger and thirst for unbroken communion with Him.

Worship frees us from being caught up in

the affairs of this life because you've learned how and continue daily learning how to depend on Him by casting all our concerns on Him. Worship strengthens our heart by freeing us from the trappings and bondage of this world order. Worship is resting in the power and love of God while rejoicing in Him.

Worship is praising and thanking God for who He alone is and what He alone does, Psalm 103. We worship God because of His faithfulness to Himself because He can't deny Himself even if man denies Him, 2 Tim. 2:11-13. Because God is faithful to Himself, He's faithful to His creation and man. One of the joys I get when in the mountains early in the morning before daybreak is the awakening of nature when the night is transitioning to day and as the sun comes up you can hear the whole of nature bursting into this crescendo of praise praising God for being a part of His will. When God awakens us we should rise to worship Him in the beauty of holiness in spirit and in truth and not to play. There's more to worship than we know or think, however, with what God has taught us and teaches us about worship is more than enough for His grace and compassion to keep us rejoicing in Him with all that's within us, bless His holy and righteous name.