

CELEBRATING GOD!

THROUGH PRAISE and WORSHIP
Praise is looking up to thank God
and Worship is reaching out to love God.

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ, and my wife, Valerija.

Jesus has been a constant companion since my conversion in 1978, and His constant encouragement has undergirded the writing of this book. In many difficult hours it would have been easier to quit and turn my back on the ministry, but He sustained me in those lonely and trying times. Never once have I ever sensed even the slightest disappointment from Him though I have failed many times. There has always been the constant assurance of His strength and hope with me, and for that I am eternally grateful.

But also "the wife of my youth", Valerija has been the greatest demonstration of God's love to me. In all the years that I have known her as a friend and wife, she has been the steadfast reminder of God's unfailing love; patient when wronged, quiet in her countenance, encouraging in her peacefulness, and a steady support through many trying years of developing the ministry that He called me into.

So to our Lord and my loving wife do I sincerely dedicate this first full-length book, all for the glory of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Dr. John F. McGeorge, Jr.

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PREFACE

"Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of Israel our father, forever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Thine is the dominion, O Lord, and Thou dost exalt Thyself as head over all. Both riches and honor come from Thee, and Thou dost rule over all, and in Thy hand is power and might; and it lies in Thy hand to make great, and to strengthen everyone. Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name" [1 Chron. 29:10-13].

David was truly in a state of intense praise and worship of God. This Psalm captures the authentic essence of praise and worship! And like David, God wants us to be men and women of praise and worship. So this book will help each student to discover what true, authentic, genuine, real and sincere praise and worship really are, as well as how to apply the principles of praise and worship to our daily lives.

One of the most importance themes of the Christian life is praise and worship. Much has already been written about these topics, and there are many good books available on the topic. However, seldom can one find all the dimensions of praise and worship together in one publication because the two topics are normally separated. Therefore, in order aid the read, this author has examined the whole Bible in order to present a complete Biblical picture of praise and worship in one text. Plus the author has provided a thorough analysis of the results and benefits of praise and worship, as well as given some practical insights for our individual and corporate worship. It is very important to understand what occurs in the heavenlies during our time of worship, and how it positively effects our lives because the more we understand, the greater will be the motivation to worship and praise Him from the depth of our heart.

God has created us to be recipients of His fullness so that we might serve as rivers of His blessings and fullness in our homes, jobs, schools, churches and nations. Hence, worship is one of the key principles listed in the Bible if we want to experience the fullness of His presence. Therefore, it is important to learn the nature of true praise and worship, and to practice it at home, church, and wherever we are if we are going to see the mighty working of His power in and through us here on earth.

So be edified and built up in understanding and practicing this great ministry of praise and worship to our Holy God in your life. For to Him alone belongs our greatest and highest praises and worship from now into eternity.

INTRODUCTION: MINISTRY TO GOD IS OUR FIRST OCCUPATION

Ministry to God has always been our first and highest occupation in life!

But how can we, as finite beings, minister to an Almighty, omnipotent, omniscience eternally sufficient God? Fortunately, the Bible lists several very specific ways to reach out and minister directly to Him. For example, we minister to Him through the giving of our tithes and offerings back to Him as a sign of love and appreciation for all that He has done [Deut. 12:4-6; Mal. 3:8; Proverbs 3; 9-10]. Also, the Bible says that we can minister to Him through our prayers and fasting which simply means that we seek after Him [Acts 13:1-3]. Furthermore, we can touch His heart when we dedicate our entire being to Him for service in His kingdom [Romans 12:1-2]. However, the primary way that we can bless or minister to Him on a daily basis is through our praise for all that He has done, and worship of Him alone [Ephesians 5:19; Col. 3:16; Hebrews 13:15-16; 1 Pt. 2:9] Thus, we will concentrate on these important aspects of ministry to God in this book.

To begin with, it is vital to recognize that from the beginning of time, God expected mankind to reach out to Him in gratitude for His good deeds towards us, and in adoration of who He is. Thus, from God's perspective, Praise and Worship were to be a normal daily activity for every man, woman and child. And it was to flow naturally out of our loving relationship with Him because it is innate, as well as inherent, to our spiritual nature. Hence, God assumed that our instinctive response to Him would be expressed in praise and worship. Therefore, we see throughout the whole Bible a story of mankind's response to God, either in true or false praise and worship.

So keep in mind that:

THE BIBLE IS A BOOK OF PRAISE!

THE BIBLE IS A BOOK OF WORSHIP!

AND THE BIBLE IS BOTH A BOOK OF PRAISE & WORSHIP!

This whole course will be based upon the Biblical principles of Praise and Worship revealed in the whole Bible, plus what He desires in our praise and worship, as well as practical insights on how to live a life of Praise and Worship.

OLD TESTAMENT VIEW

Every rule, law, regulation, Psalm, story and teaching has been written not merely to teach us history or merely how to live a godly life. But God inspired it especially for us to know how He perceives true praise and worship in our life. Worship is considered a lifetime activity, and one of the main themes that will carry on into eternity in heaven. But it is also an major earthly activity that we can perfect now to a great degree. So as we study this course or simply read the Bible, or live our daily lives, let His word and Spirit lead us into a deeper sense of praise and worship of Him.

WHAT PURPOSE DOES GOD HAVE FOR MY LIFE?

Oftentimes believers ask the questions: "What is the most important purpose of my life? Why am I here? What does God want of me?" And many good, but less than the best answers have been articulated such as evangelism, discipleship, holy living, and so on. However, the scriptures clearly delineate between our spiritual responsibilities to others, our personal spiritual disciplines, and our primary ministry to focus on God. When we focus first of all our whole life on Him, then we will experience more effective evangelism, discipline, holiness and prayer because it flows out our relationship with Him. He will open more of his thoughts to us, guiding us into a deeper revelation and walk with Him, and will pour out more of His Spirit's power upon us. But the focal point of true worship is God and our relationship with Him. Thus, if our priorities are in the correct Biblical order, the natural results and blessings will flow automatically out of a deep and abiding relationship with Him.

Consequently, true praise and worship cannot be a formal, regimented exercise, nor can it be a mere imitation of Biblical revelation. It must be a heart-to-heart relationship with God that naturally flows from love through praise and worship. Therefore praise and worship are always understood as "THE" first ministry to Him! Praise and worship are not only what He wants from us, but requires of us as an essential part of a living relationship with Him. Some may rebel against the idea of God's "requiring" praise and worship, but Jesus emphatically stated that He is seeking true worshippers! Why is this so? Because worship is the highest and purest form of communication with God. Worship is love for God, submitting to Him, depending upon Him and seeking Him in all our ways. We, therefore, have a basic and essential requirement of our relationship to Him: praise and worship!

Worship is the main theme of the whole Bible from the Garden till the coming of the new heavens and earth. The words "worship", "worshippers" and "worshipped" occur nearly 300 times in the Bible and consistently they indicate an expected pattern of life for all believers. In fact, it is one of the few things commanded of all the angels, believers and nations [Hebrews 1:6; Ps. 86:9]. In short, God requires or demands or compels worship from His people! But this is not a forced requirement, but one that He commands because it should naturally flow out of our inner desire to meet with and communicate with Him on a daily basis.

Yet, how often do we take seriously the commands to praise and glorify Him; shout, bless Him, give thanks, bow down, kneel before Him, sing a new song, offer sacrifices, honor, fear and serve Him? These are serious requirements revealed by God for our benefit **IF** we truly want a full, lively and dynamic relationship with Him! Consider, for example, the words of 2 Kings 17:35-36:

"...You shall not fear other gods, nor bow down yourselves to them nor serve them nor sacrifice to them. But the Lord, who brought you up from the land of Egypt with great power and with an outstretched arm, Him you shall fear, and to him you shall bow yourselves down, and to Him you shall sacrifice".

Reverence of God is more than a form of worship. And reverence carries with it numerous

and consequential repercussions for our life. This is why God is so interested in teaching us what is TRUE, PURE, GENUINE, AUTHENTIC and SINCERE praise and worship really are. There are ways to praise and worship which are not pleasing to Him; and there are many false gods around us who attempt to steal and sidetrack our devotion and worship away from the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth! Thus, these two verses will help us understand the challenges of yesterday and today, as well as enable us to overcome illegitimate and idolatrous praise and worship.

First of all, God gave 4 prohibitions against what would naturally lead to false worship if His people do not obey. In verse 35, God says that we are NOT to:

1) Since fear is a form of submission, we are not to fear another god because a) really there is no other genuine God, nor are there any gods who can harm us; we have nothing to fear. But b) if we fear the true God, then He will naturally provide for and protect us at all times. WHAT A BLESSING!

2) Have no allegiance for any other god or bow down in submission, reverence or obedience to false gods because a) it will demonstrate deference for and connection with some false god; b) it will lead others into idolatry through our wrong example; and c) will eventually turn our heart away from Him not only to the false god, but also to the inevitable immoral lifestyle always associated with false worship.

3) Do not be devoted to any other god or serve them because to serve is to a) promise our allegiance to that false god; b) devote ourselves in continual service to that god's principles all of our life; and 3) commit ourselves to the promotion of that god to others.

4) Do not give materially to any other god or sacrifice to this god in the form of our finances, time or talents because that would be stealing from the true God and giving to a false god.

From this verse alone we can see the downward digression and results of WORSHIPPING a FALSE GOD:

Fearing a false god> Corrupt Worship> Enslaved Service> Forced Sacrifice> Immorality

But, when we compare the Biblical principles of true worship, it will naturally progress to GENUINE BIBLICAL WORSHIP:

Fear of God> Genuine Worship of God> Service to God> Sacrifice to God> Holy Lifestyle

All genuine worship begins with a healthy fear of God. In the Old Testament, the fear of God

was often motivated by God's dramatic signs or His appearance in very dramatic events such as His coming down on Mount Sinai in thunder and lightning. But true worship of God should not depend upon such external pressures from God, but should be primarily motivated by a deep personal loving relationship with Him, not just fear of punishment for wrongdoing.

But why did God put these limitations on His people concerning the worship of false gods? Are they not unfair and too burdensome? Did not God know that anyone could accidentally slip into idolatrous worship? Plus, did God really expect His people keep these regulations?

God loves us from a pure heart, and He always has our best interest in mind. He does not want us to pollute or dilute our worship and devotion of Him. WHY? He knows the impending negative results of impure or diluted worship: separation from Him, on another, and schizophrenia within ourselves. Plus all false god will only bring destruction, depression, confusion and difficulties into our lives, and He does not want that for us. God loves us too much to want less than the absolute best for us; so He wisely places limits around us to protect us from evil, to promote godliness within us as well as to test our devotion to Him so that He can bless us even more through our obedience.

God's anger burns against all ungodly worship in whatever form it exists! WHY? Because ungodliness in worship begins with the rejection of the true God, that leads to the substitution and devotion to another god. He equates worship of false gods with hatred for Him; and being a jealous God, this deeply stirs anger within Him against all false and idolatrous worship! For example, when God delivered Israel from Egypt, He commanded their utmost devotion to Him. But they turned back to their false gods and complained against Him, so He destroyed everyone who harbored hatred in their hearts towards Him and had a devotion to false gods as demonstrated by their fear, bowing down, celebrating and sacrifice to the idols. So the negative commands from God are sound in principle because they are intended to keep us spiritually alive, healthy in body and mind, pure in heart, devoted to service of Him and directed into a deeper daily walk alongside of Him.

But secondly, God gave 3 affirmative conditions concerning worship. In verse 36 God says that they are to:

a) Fear Him, which is both positive and negative. Positively, it means to respect Him simply because He is Almighty and Holy; negatively, it means to fear punishment for any disobedience committed by His people. And this was intended to drive out rebellion within the people.

b) Bow down before Him in an act of respect as well as an acknowledgement of His power, position, authority and ownership of us as His people. Bowing was an outward function that should reveal the true attitude of the heart. And

c) To sacrifice to Him by always giving our first and best to Him as a gift of love, because everything already belongs to Him.

Fearing God is a reflection of the hidden attitudes of our heart. That is why true worship consists not merely in outward actions, but principally as the unveiling of our deepest beliefs of Him as expressed in our actions. For example, the Pharisees were considered the "godly" sect of their day. They "seemed" to have many "holy actions," yet they were actually hiding the true attitudes of their heart towards God! They did not have a righteous attitude or pure motives behind those actions. In fact, they had divided loyalties and impure worship, and that is why Jesus chastised them for being insincere. More times than not, their motive or attitude was really contrary to their actions; thus their actions were only a cover-up of the true state of their heart. So they were really worshipping, or uplifting, themselves instead of God. Hence, our first and foremost commitment and ministry throughout our entire life must be from the depths of our heart to Him alone. If we are to have a godly effect on our families, in our jobs, schools, churches, and nation, then we must devote ourselves to the worship in Spirit and truth to the One True God!

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How can keeping the commandments of God be considered worship?
2. Why is worship essential to our daily life?
3. Since God requires worship, how can it remain enjoyable?
4. Why is God so against the worship of anything else other than Himself?
5. Why should we express our worship in bodily form and not just in our hearts?

I. WORSHIP: FIRST THINGS FIRST

IN THE BEGINNING,

GOD CREATED MAN WITH THE NATURAL INSTINCT FOR WORSHIP!

HENCE, GOD INTENDED US TO BE WORSHIPPERS FROM THE BEGINNING!

PLUS,

THE SPIRIT OF GOD CREATED OUR SPIRITS. THEREFORE, ONLY HE CAN SATISFY OUR DEEPEST SPIRITUAL HUNGER FOR HIM THROUGH TRUE SPIRITUAL WORSHIP! [cf. Matt. 5 and Jas. 1:12 where the word "blessed" means fully satisfied because of our relationship with Him].

HENCE,

WORSHIP IS OUR LONGING TO RELATE TO AND EXPRESS OUR LOVE FOR GOD!

CONSEQUENTLY, TRUE WORSHIP REQUIRES A LIVING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD!

AND WORSHIP IS THE VITAL LINK BETWEEN GOD AND A FULFILLED LIFE!

Worship envelopes all of our daily activities, but we will look at that in more detail later. But for now, be aware that WORSHIP IS THE KEY TO A FULFILLED AND MEANINGFUL LIFE. WHY? Because our meaning in life comes from our Creator, and from no one and nothing else. All people worship, whether it be the true God, a false god, or something in all cultures. We simply cannot avoid worship because it is an inborn, involuntary part of our daily living. But not all people are satisfied in their worship. In fact, most strive for meaning through their worship, but they walk away with a deeper spiritual void than when they began; so they still leave worship unsatisfied, longing for something more meaningful in their worship. Consequently, when someone worships a false god or image, inevitably there is a personal spiritual void in their lives, a sense of emptiness even though they may have participated in significant spiritual activities. Thus, genuine worship will give us meaning, while false worship will steal any meaning in life that we may happen to have.

Only genuine Biblical worship of the true God can satisfy our deepest desires for a meaningful relationship with Him in our spirit. When we either fail to worship, or our worship is either shallow or lacking in breadth, then our spirit cries out of the spiritual emptiness within us: "Oh God, come and fill this void!" Only God can satisfy that longing; only He can fill that void and calm the restlessness of the searching soul. And only He can give our life meaning and make us whole when we give ourselves totally to Him.

Worship involves our dedication and devotion to whatever or whomever we worship. And the worship of anything or anyone else is a futile, empty search for God and meaning in life. Many people have worshipped at the altar of money, power, sex, possessions, and so on, but every one of these misguided worshippers has come up with an even deeper emptiness than before. THE REASON: simply because inanimate objects cannot satisfy the longings and needs of the living human spirit. Some people worship at the altar of "fear" that controls and dominates their lives unmercifully. Yet, it is the desire of the Almighty, Holy and Living God to set the captives free from false gods and false worship that they might experience a life of fullness, wholeness and joy. Others have worshipped at the altar of "self," seeking to be their own god. Yet after they have gained all that they thought was important, they sink into a state of despair and wonder why they ever thought that they could satisfy this spiritual emptiness. Still others have worshipped at the altar of "money, power, and/or possessions" and come up empty-hearted. So many have tried so much and yet achieved so little through this false and deceptive worship.

However, there is power, life, hope, peace and an excellent future for those who relate to and worship the One true God in their spirit. And there is peace that passes understanding to stand in His presence in an attitude of worship from day to day. Worship involves and requires a special relationship with Him; plus it triggers a divine response on our behalf that shakes the unbeliever, terrifies the ungodly, and yet stabilizes and affirms the true believer in his relationship with God through Christ. We shall delve into the depths of genuine worship to see what it really is and how we can properly worship Him alone.

FROM CREATION TILL TODAY

From the creation of Adam even unto this very day, worship has been imprinted into the very core nature of every individual who has every existed. It is God who has created our nature; therefore we draw near to our creator who desires worship from each of us because He implanted this key element into every fiber of our being. That is why it is only normal to find within every culture throughout all of history a story of worship of either the true God, or a god of man's own creation. Thus, the key point is this: man MUST worship. Within him is a need, desire, and intrinsic craving to worship One who is greater than he is, One who can save him from evil and deliver him from harm's way. Every act of worship, then, is a clarion call from every culture that only God is worthy of total worship.

Since God has inscribed worship in the very heart of mankind, consequently worship should be an expression of our authentic nature. If life is going to be lived to the fullest, then worship must be at the heart of our every activity, no matter how mundane or routine it may seem. Worship is all of life: every act, attitude, thought, desire, habit, and relationship. Life without worship is not life. And life with wrong worship is meaningless and hopeless.

Man's authentic nature was distorted and deadened by sin; and Adam and Eve's original sin has killed much of the authentic nature within every person. As we look at cultures and history today, we can examine the ruins of former temples used to worship false gods. Plus, we can see the digression and eventual destruction of every culture that has ever turned away from the true God and

sunk into the pit of heathen worship. Therefore, whenever a person, family, state, or nation acknowledges the true God and worships Him in spirit and truth, that culture has grown and prospered in many ways. We can see the long-term effects on whole nations of true and false worship.

How did true worship originate? True worship comes only out of our spirit, and that is why it touches all of our life because out of the spirit comes the issues of life. But, many have inadvertently tried to substitute genuine worship with either soulish, intellectual, or emotional expressions. Yet, each such attempt has failed totally to satisfy or to perpetuate itself! For example,

Worship out of one's mind is an attempt to find Him through knowledge, but it cannot fill our spirit.

Worship out of the will is an attempt to find meaning through obedience, but it cannot fill our spirit.

And worship out of the emotions is an attempt to find security through feelings, but it too cannot fill our spirit.

True worship comes out of our spirit and positively effects our soul, animates our bodies and motivates us to live a life worth living for God.

The Holy Spirit in our spirit normally ignites worship when we desire to draw close to Him. Yet, it certainly will effect our will, mind, and emotions as we express our adoration of Him through our lips and deep within our spirit. Worship is kindled daily when we are being immersed in the Word of God. And, likewise, worship will be channeled through our daily expressions of love for God and others.

When God first breathed the breath of life into Adam, it was more than physical life that He breathed into him; it was spirit and life that were implanted into mankind. Thus, God breathed the life of worship into him, and he was totally open to respond to God in worship and service. In fact, Adam was also totally open to fellowship with God: heart-to-heart, mind-to-mind, emotion-to-emotion. So when He came into the Garden, Adam naturally worshipped His majesty, holiness, and spiritual beauty. Surely Adam's heart burned with the desire to be with God daily, to worship and adore Him and to carry out all of His commands as mere acts of love expressed in deeds.

WORSHIP IS MENTIONED FIRST

Worship was clearly the first and highest occupation of man and the heavenly host from the beginning! In fact, it should be noted that worship is mentioned in the Bible first, and praise second. So, obviously, the first family understood God's priority of worship even before praise. The principle of "first mention" in scripture means that we should pay close attention to the first mention of any Biblical principle because God considers it of first importance. Therefore, in God's eyes, it is THE first priority of our life and must be our first and highest occupation at church, home, school, work,

or wherever we are. If we divert our energies, talents, efforts, resources, and finances to anything less than the first and best God desires, we will fail to achieve a deeper relationship with Him, miss out on the true meaning of life, and fail to fulfill the first and highest order of God's business: worship from the heart.

When God first created the heavens, it is clear that He created the angels to worship Him. For example, He asked Job where he was "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." [38:7; also see Genesis 1:1 with Nehemiah 9:6] These passages clearly speak of the original angels in worship. And, of course, Job was not there when He created the worshipping angels of heaven. Also, Satan was created and ordained to be the chief Cherub, and to lead the heavenly choir and orchestra in their eternal ministry of worship [Job 38:7; Isaiah 14:11-12; Ezekiel 28:13-16]. Thus, their first and continual occupation of the heavenly host was worship of God alone.

For the angels to reject this first occupation, or even to think about substituting something else for first place in their lives, was blasphemy of the highest order and rejection of God. Whether in the heavenly realm or among mankind, whenever worship is relegated to second or third place, or out and out rejected, mankind openly rejects God, His wisdom, and blessings which is the same rebellion Satan instituted in heaven--resulting in chaos, loss, and darkness in the spirit realm. Thus, rebellion against God and true worship has terrible, long-term, negative effects upon life and eternity.

Biblically, one of the first occupations of mankind was the worship of God through sacrifices [Gen. 4:1-5] and music [4:21]. Both Cain and Abel understood beforehand this principle of giving a sacrifice or gift to God from their first fruits as an act of worship. Thus, worship in all its forms--whether music, song, sacrifices, etc.--is very close to God's heart and of first importance in life. Sadly, Satan (who first perverted worship in heaven by directing it to himself) was cast down to earth and has for centuries attempted to pervert genuine worship on earth through the line of Cain. Interestingly, through Cain's line came the first mention of musical instruments in the Bible [Gen. 4:21]. So, apparently, the perversion of music was high on the list of Satan to pervert as quickly as he could. And today we see that in the form of rock or heavy metal music.

False or counterfeit worship now exists everywhere on earth. In modern terms, the rock stars are living examples of such false and ungodly worship. But also the discos are centers of false worship where many people go and sway before their god; or even those who advocate abortion are worshipping the "god of self" over the demands of the God of life. But that is not the end of the story. In these "last days" God has renewed the spirit of praise and worship in His church, and will continue to do so until He comes for a worshipping bride! And He has promised to "rebuild" the Tabernacle of David, which emphasizes the importance of worship and sacrifice to God. Hence, true worship is gaining much ground in the Church and world.

"Worship" is to revere, honor, esteem, and bow down in submission to "the" one who is greater than the worshipper. Satan chose to worship himself, so he bowed before his wisdom and plans for dominating mankind and saw these as the image of "god." But this was not sufficient for

him. Unsatisfied with self-worship, he sought to bring all mankind into bondage to himself through the worship of knowledge, pride, philosophy, power, money, the flesh, humanism and anything that could captivate man's spirit and soul. And this was quite evident in the first temptation and subsequent fall of Adam and Eve. When Satan tempted Eve, he was offering to her a chance to be like a god, though not in the true divine sense because he played on her misunderstanding of the word "God." [He meant "god" and she understood "God."] Thus, she began to worship knowledge and self-determination as conceived by Satan. Today, Satan continually tempts everyone in the same ways, but we are not ignorant of his schemes as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 2:11. Interestingly, one of Satan's first temptations of Jesus follows along these same lines when he told Jesus to bow down and worship him, and he would give Him all the kingdoms of this world. However, Jesus nullified and overthrew Satan's temptation through the powerful and emphatic fact that "...it is written, 'YOU shall worship the Lord Your God, and serve [that is, fulfill your duty to Him], Him only'" [Matt. 4:10].

Worship was the first ministry God gave to the heavenly host. But it was defined and limited to worship of Him. So it was worship from heaven to heaven. After He created Man, our first ministry was a continuance of this pivotal ministry of worship from earth to heaven! Now all of creation in heaven and earth were worshipping God, and what a glorious scene it was!

However, Satan rebelled in his heart against God's limits on worship and began to pervert heavenly worship. At first, he took one-third of the heavenly choir with him into spiritual exile; then he carried his deceptive ways to earth in order to lead mankind into spiritual exile through Cain by perverting music on earth. This began the redirection of music from God to Satan and the flesh. What a terrible day that must have been when Cain's line so willingly gave up their worship of God for a lesser being, one who actually hated them and desired to enslave them instead of setting them free. But in these last days, God is rebuilding the Tabernacle of David to restore to the Church heavenly worship on earth: "After these things I will return, and I will rebuild the Tabernacle of David which has fallen, and I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, in order that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord" [Acts 15:16-17].

Let us, therefore, know and understand what perfect worship really is so that we can learn and participate in true and pure worship. If we engage in perfect and true worship, then we will lead mankind to God again! Think of it:

THE RENEWAL OF DAVIDIC WORSHIP SHOULD ULTIMATELY LEAD TO
THE RENEWAL OF THE NATIONS.

What a magnificent ministry! God has placed within our hands a marvelous opportunity to literally touch the nations through genuine, true, pure, and thoroughly Biblical worship. So take time to ask Him for His understanding and wisdom as you study this course, and to conform your ways to His.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. In what ways do all people show that they are worshippers?
2. Why does worship satisfy us much more than anything or anyone else?
3. How is it evident that worship is written into our nature?
4. Why is soulish worship a poor substitute for spiritual worship?
5. What are some modern examples of false worship in your culture?
6. How did Satan tempt Eve and Jesus to pervert worship?
7. Why is it so important to restore genuine worship to the Church today?

II. The Beginning of Worship: Definitions

Definitions

Worship has often been understood as an emotional response to God, rather than as a spiritual act of glorifying and serving Him. True worship requires responsibility on the part of the worshipper to seek Him out in order to glorify and serve Him. Hence,

TRUE WORSHIP ==produces==> SPIRITUAL ACTION

We may or may not have particular feelings at the time we worship, but we will always have actions to demonstrate our inner attitude towards Him and not just some inner feelings.

Others, however, have often restricted worship to some type of external forms we employ in church services, such as clapping hands or singing only choruses. But WORSHIP IS FAR RICHER than mere form and deeper than mere emotions. In fact, it should be understood that while worshipping God, we should:

- a. want to enter His holy presence
- b. desire to bless Him above all
- c. most of all, enjoy His presence

The joy of being with God is a key factor in engaging in and practicing true worship. And true joy comes out of our spirit as He touches our spirit because we know that we are in intimate contact with God who is Spirit. To be in the presence of the King of kings, accepted, loved, and encouraged by Him draws us even closer to, and more often with, Him. Worship, therefore, should be an enjoyable, exciting, exhilarating, and powerful event, anticipating each encounter with Him.

Strictly speaking, there is an important spiritual difference that needs to be recognized and accepted:

WORSHIP is not PRAISE AND PRAISE is not WORSHIP

Certainly, there are some similarities and overlapping between the two. Biblically, they are interconnected and normally flow together; yet they are distinguishable at many points. So we need to keep in mind that God sees them differently and expects us to understand that and demonstrate it in our practice.

Too often, Praise has been understood but called Worship, which is unfortunate. Hence, we need clear and definitive definitions so as not to merge the two into one: what God has separated, let us not try to join together. Otherwise, we will diminish what He expects in worship and confuse what He has revealed in the Word. One very good example of true, genuine worship is when Moses

went up to Mount Sinai to worship God for 40 days. In those 40 days, God reached down and touched Moses' spirit, transforming him into a dynamic and steadfast leader. But, even more important, Moses reached up and touched God's Spirit out of the fullness of his own spirit, thereby creating an unbreakable intimacy between the two. And when Moses had worshipped God out of his whole spirit, then God touched him again, and filled him with His glory that was even visible to the people around him. So, as with Moses, we need God to nudge us to Himself so that we can reach out to touch God with our spirit so that He can fill us afresh with His glory, sending us forth to go and touch others.

Let us, then, launch into an understanding of each in a logical order so as to comprehend the richness of praise and worship and the abundance of their blessings.

I. PRAISE DEFINED AND ELABORATED

A COMPREHENSIVE DEFINITION IS THIS: *It is the expression [i.e., the giving of thanks] of our appreciation to God for His [many acts of] goodness and blessings that we have experienced.*

1. It is the EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION [or GIVING OF THANKS], which means to speak well of Him, to express our gratitude for what He has done for us; compliment Him; commend, congratulate, or approve Him for what He has done.
2. It is the giving of thanks TO GOD because He alone is worthy of our praise, but also He is due our praise. Since He has done much for, to, and in us, we should praise Him who took interest in us as His people.
3. It is giving thanks to God FOR HIS GOODNESS in actions done on our behalf. Our response to His actions for us is to vocally express our deepest gratitude for receiving such benefits from Him.
4. And it is the giving of thanks for God for His good actions and all the BLESSINGS HE HAS GIVEN to us for life and godliness. Such blessings come out of His loving nature towards us, always wanting to do good as well as to give to us.

Thus, praise becomes a deep expression of the human soul towards God our creator for all that He does to enable us to live a more godly and peaceful life.

However, praise will be seen now as a bit similar to, but distinguishable from, worship. In one sense, praise is far more intense and vocal than worship; yet it has the similarity of looking to God as the source of our life and reason for our being thankful in life.

II. WORSHIP DEFINED AND ELABORATED

A COMPREHENSIVE DEFINITION IS THIS: *It is the adoration and celebration of God in His presence in all of His glory, in all of His holiness, and in all of His worthiness out of our spirit*

as inspired by the Holy Spirit to minister to Him in a way that will please and bless Him and produce in us a lifetime of service and devotion to God to fulfill His desires.

1. **IT IS ADORATION**, expressing honor, devotion, veneration, and respect to God through vocal praise. Adoration means "to speak highly of or to lift up another for who they are and what they have done; to exalt and even idolize the one who is worshipped." So the adoration of God is the lifting up of Him in the presence of others because He is worthy to be exalted above all.

2. **AND CELEBRATION**, publicly expressing our devotion to Him in a festive-like atmosphere. This idea depicts a time of great excitement during a festival occasion, such as when the Church gathers to exalt and lift up His name in public. Every time we gather as the body of Christ in worship, it is an occasion to commemorate, celebrate, and cheer the King of Kings in our midst. And we should come with expectation that He will draw near to us as we draw near to Him, leading us into an even deeper awareness of His greatness and holiness.

3. **OF GOD**, celebrating the One who is utmost in our life. Our worship should always point to God who created, sustains, and oversees our life. He also inspires our worship; therefore, He is the source, or power, behind genuine worship. But not only is He the source of worship, but He inspires us by His presence, power, works, accomplishments, and, above all, His character. Therefore, our worship is due to Him simply because of who He is and for no other reason. Yes, He is worthy of all worship in heaven and on the earth, but He is due our worship as an expression of His ownership of all living creatures.

4. **IN HIS PRESENCE**. It is not possible to worship God outside of His presence or the Holy of Holies where He dwells. In Ps. 100, we enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise that lead us into His presence where He dwells in His majesty. Only in His presence can we have a personal and intimate encounter with God in worship. And worship is always something we do when He is present, and really cannot occur without His presence as praise can. God is everywhere, but worship is more than just our acknowledging His omnipresence. Specifically, we honor His nearness to us. And it occurs especially where two or three gather together in His Name. Thus, worship is when we bring the present of ourselves to Him in celebration of who He is!

5. **IN ALL HIS GLORY**. This means "in all of His majesty, radiance, splendor, beauty, and perfections." God's glory is really His total character. Just as Moses wanted to see God, God told him that he would see His glory pass by, and he did. So, like a diamond with many facets, there is infinite beauty in God's character. And as we continually gaze into His face, we will infinitely discover more and more about Him and grow in depth and breadth in our worship of Him.

6. ***IN ALL HIS HOLINESS***. He is pure and perfect, untainted by any evil or imperfections. We can say that He is sacred because He is separated from us and everything that is created because we have imperfections; and He who is uncreated is pure and perfect in all of His ways, desires, thoughts, actions, and so on. And He is unbendable and untemptable in His ways because He is holy. Thus holiness describes the essential quality of His character and ways.

7. ***AND IN ALL HIS WORTHINESS***, in His infinite value and merit. It means that He is intrinsically excellent because of His pure qualities and actions. Whatever He thinks, does, desires, inspires, and so on, is always worthy, or infinitely excellent. Therefore, our worship responds to His excellence. And this should be an inspiration to us to worship Him in His excellence.

8. ***OUT OF OUR SPIRIT***, out of the very center of our being when we totally abandon ourselves to commune with Him, spirit to Spirit. Because He is THE Spirit, genuine worship must originate out of our spirit and, in turn, touch His Spirit. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:17, when we join ourselves "to the Lord" then we are "one spirit with Him". So whether in salvation or worship, it is spirit-to-Spirit which is the highest and deepest way of communicating worship.

9. ***AS INSPIRED BY HIS HOLY SPIRIT***. The Holy Spirit takes note of our approaching God through our praise and adoration of Him and ignites within us a desire to bless God and abandon ourselves in worship of Him. Worship is like God's invitation to us to come and join Him in Spirit to adore, magnify, celebrate and exalt Him above all. Thus, the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary to authentic worship. So it is not merely form that is needed, but depth and substance from the Holy Spirit who is the true activator, inspirer, and motivator of worship.

10. ***TO MINISTER TO HIM***, becoming so aware of Him and Him alone that we want to give the best gift of ourselves to Him as a way of honoring Him. Worship is a ministry to God, a giving of a gift of praise and adoration to Him out of the depth of our spirit as the most valuable gift we can give to Him.

11. ***IN A WAY THAT WILL PLEASE AND BLESS HIM***. God has prescribed what true worship is and Jesus calls it worshipping Him "in truth." So worship must be according to the ways He has revealed that are acceptable to Him because our purpose in worship is do what pleases and blesses Him.

12. ***AND PRODUCE IN US A LIFETIME OF SERVICE AND DEVOTION TO GOD TO FULFILL HIS DESIRES***. The result of genuine worship is the giving of our all in all to Him so that He, in turn, pours out of His Spirit His best into us to go out to conquer sin, Satan, and the world--overpowering the darkness of life and this world in order to bring in His light, life, and hope of eternal restoration.

WORSHIP comes after we have entered into His courts with praise (Ps. 100:4), and He draws near to us so that the Holy Spirit comes upon us to:

- a. initiate our desire to worship Him
- b. empower our actions of worship
- c. lead our response to His presence through worship
- d. direct our concentration and focus upon Him in worship
- e. control the results of our worship to bless Him with all of our being.

In true, deep worship, we often lose our awareness of others because we are so absorbed in Him and He is clothed with us. Worship, then, is the presenting of ourselves as a gift to Him and He envelopes us in and with His presence.

Just as in Acts 4, when the disciples became afraid and poured out their hearts to God in prayer and adoration, He drew close to them and began to shake the whole place because the power of God always precedes the presence of God. He shook what could be shaken in them so that they went about boldly, conquering every power whether it was spiritual, political, social, or economic to the glory of God. His presence was drawn into the earth by the true worshippers. So His seeking them is not merely to bless them, but to channel through them His blessing upon the nations and peoples of the earth.

THUS: worship will always produce not only an inner spiritual response, but also a physical response because we are totally consumed with Him and, therefore, not consumed with our problems, needs, others, or anything else.

KEY PRINCIPLE: By definition, we can worship anything that we place inordinate value on such as money, things, ourselves, position, and so on. Therefore, this definition places God at the center of our worship; therefore the music, singing, dancing, and all other forms used during worship should serve as aids to help us focus in and concentrate upon Him; and none of these forms or tools should ever detract us from our concentration and celebration of Him who is present. Worship can only come out of our spirit because true worship is spirit-to-Spirit; therefore, we cannot inspire, initiate, or motivate it, but only God can through His many delightful ways.

THEREFORE, WORSHIP IS:

- THEOCENTRIC: it focuses on God***
- CHARISMATIC: because the Holy Spirit inspires it***
- SPIRITUAL: because it is between God the Holy Spirit and our spirit***
- WHOLEHEARTED: total release of our spirit into His Spirit***
- TOTAL: we present our whole being to Him***
- EDIFYING: it blesses God and strengthens us for service***
- SPONTANEOUS: untaught and unscripted, it cannot be planned***

- COMMUNICATIVE:** *our spirit communing with God's Spirit in spirit*
- HONORABLE:** *man placing ultimate value on God*
- PERSONAL:** *one on one even in corporate worship because it is man relating to God in and through the spirit/Spirit*
- DIVINELY INSPIRED:** *God initiating our response to who He is*
- EMOTIONAL:** *outpouring of our inner feelings and attitudes towards God*
- LOVING:** *our worship leads us to loving service on behalf of God*
- INTENSE:** *can be intense without intense outward expression*
- REVERENTIAL:** *being in awe of Him in all of His glory and beauty*

III. PRAISE AND WORSHIPPED LINKED TOGETHER

WORSHIP is the greatest of all gifts that we can give to God. PRAISE, on the other hand, is simply our giving thanks to God for what He has already done to us or for us.

The PROCESS OF ENTERING INTO PRAISE is best enumerated in Psalm 100 as follows:

STEP 1: Verse 4. We enter into His gates through OBEDIENCE, desiring to praise and bless Him. True praise comes out of our desire to bless God, not from forced submission. We must voluntarily want to praise Him.

STEP 2: Verse 4. We enter WITH THANKSGIVING. The Hebrew word "toda" means "to make declarations openly, verbally and in song about the greatness of God's character and works from a grateful heart." True praise is a declaration of God's goodness to us as the fountain of His character.

STEP 3: Verse 4. "Entering the courts," means to PREPARE OUR HEARTS to magnify Him, then to move towards the holy place and, ultimately, to the Holy of Holies where God dwells in holiness. True praise cannot be satisfied with a half-hearted effort, but the giving of our whole heart to Him.

STEP 4: Verse 4. With PRAISE. The Hebrew word "tehillah" means "to sincerely and deeply recognize God for what He has done, and to joyfully give thanks to Him." True praise is to credit God alone as the One who has interceded on our behalf for good.

STEP 5: Verse 5. The Psalmist LINGERS IN THE COURTS OF PRAISE but is left without complete satisfaction in worshipping God. There must be something deeper and greater than praise, so worship then enters the process when He draws us more and more into

Himself, a coming closer into His divine presence. We begin to shift our focus from praise to worship because we are increasingly aware of His presence with us to the negation of all others. And the music will naturally slow down so that our whole being will be lifted up to gaze upon Him without distraction. Then we become overwhelmed not only by Him, but also WITH Him. And as we do, we move into the holy place and eventually the Holy of Holies.

Worship is pressing into God, to give all we can of ourselves to Him. And the closer we get, the more reverential we will become and humble ourselves in the presence of His mighty holiness, seeing Him in all His beauty and marveling at His glory. And we will be so centered on Him that we will forget those around us, our problems and needs. Thus we have entered into the Holy of Holies. And when we have tasted of His holiness, we will naturally bow in His presence and long forever to be with Him. Once He has touched you in worship, you will never be satisfied with anything less than true and full worship. We are then spoiled by the best of heaven. The deepest need and yearning of the heart is for God's presence; and worship is the key to the inbreaking of His holy presence into our lives, churches, families and nations. So let us enter into a covenant with Him to praise and worship Him for who He is.

This Psalm is like ascending the throne of grace into the very presence of God; and our praise, too, should ascend to the highest heavens in fullest thanksgiving of Him who is mighty, caring, compassionate, loving and patient. Let us ascend into the Holy of Holies to bless Him who is truly worthy of all blessings!

A KEY TEXT to aid us in worship is Psalm 42:1-2: "as the deer pants [longs for because of his great thirst and desire] for the water brooks, so my soul pants for Thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before [see the face of] God?" Worship is the hungry heart yearning to come into God's presence to see Him, gaze upon His holiness, to magnify His whole being, to bless Him and ultimately to be satisfied with Him as in no other way.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why should worship be enjoyable?
2. How can we enter into God's presence?
3. Write your own definition of "worship."
4. Why should worship produce an inner response in those who worship God?
5. Why must true worship be personal?
6. How would you define praise?
7. How is worship a "longing for" God?

III. KEY TO WORSHIP: A LIVING RELATIONSHIP

There is one primary **KEY TO TRUE WORSHIP**: a living relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Relationship is the real key to worship. Having the right forms, music, atmosphere, and so on, cannot create a true worshipper. Worship comes out of our relationship with God through Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. It cannot be overemphasized how important it is to have a personal, ongoing and living relationship with Him because a positive and complete response to Him in this personal relationship will always lead to worship. And without a living relationship, we will never enter into genuine worship. That is why many have a form of worship, but not a living worship because the relationship with Him is either lacking, stale or nullified by traditions. Therefore, it is time to seek Him with all our heart, to walk in an intimate relationship with Him and to be true worshippers of the living God.

A relationship implies a) intimacy between two people, b) communication, c) fellowship, d) commitment, e) honesty, and f) love and g) respect between two people. And in worship, this type of relationship must exist between God and His people if our worship is going to be as full as possible. And intimacy in worship is Person-to-person, Spirit-to-spirit. But an intimate relationship with God is not normally automatic or the immediate intertwining of two people because intimacy is developed over time through a process. When we come to a holy God to worship Him, He is able to see into our lives and notice what will hinder an intimate relationship with Him. In His love for us, He must take us through a process of cleansing before we can enjoy true intimacy and develop a life of worship towards Him. And we can see this cleansing process in three stages:

1. He will first of all reveal sin in our life in order to prepare us for intimacy.
2. Then He will begin the process of removing every sinful thing from our life in order to prepare us for renewal.
3. And finally, He will refill us with His Spirit that draws us closer to Him.

Once we have gone through a cleansing process, then we are ready to enter into a life of worship towards God and growing intimacy in our relationship with Him. But as in any relationship, there again is a process of growth in our relationship with God. Complete worship requires a full and mature relationship with God that comes out of our spirit and not merely out of our soul or mind. Thus, we should experience 5 aspects of growing in worship:

1. **GROWTH IN LOVE** or commitment to God. When we are in love with someone, our thoughts, desires, actions and hopes are all concentrated and directed towards being with that person. Nothing is too great to give, and no task is too hard to perform because we are in love! When we leave that person, our thoughts are "When shall we meet again?" As we grow in love with God, our every longing will be to be with Him, to worship Him in spirit and truth, and to pour out our lives in praise and worship of Him. Is your love like that? It should be because we are to reflect His love, and we will eternally grow in understanding the full dimensions of it even as

Paul says in Ephesians 3:17-19!

2. **GROWTH IN MUTUAL ACCEPTANCE.** God unconditionally accepts us right now where we are and as what we are. We do not need to do anything to obtain His love, nor can we do anything to increase His love for us. His acceptance is based solely upon what Jesus did for us on the cross and in the Resurrection; thus we are accepted even before we accept Him. So as we grow in our understanding of His acceptance for us, we will naturally grow in our acceptance of Him as a Father, friend, protector, provider, and even as a disciplinarian! And, therefore, our worship will grow out of that acceptance.

3. **A BONDING** or uniting with God. Bonding is the uniting of two people spirit-to-spirit. This is a special event often experienced by new fathers and mothers with their first-born child. There is an immediate, instantaneous and complete attachment of the parents to the child. And as the child grows up, the child's bonding will become more and more real and expressed in simple acts of love for their parents. Likewise, our bonding with God will grow as we know more and more about Him and His love for us, and we will inherently pour out our praises and worship of Him in loving acts as a child will for his parents.

4. **GROWTH IN FAITHFULNESS** to Him in all things. One of the most important characteristics of a growing relationship with God is faithfulness. Faithfulness simply means being loyal to complete your commitments to God, and being trustworthy. True intimacy depends upon faithfulness! If we are going to grow in genuine worship and to experience God drawing closer and closer to us, then it is incumbent that we grow in faithfulness to Him, His word and the mission that He has called us to.

5. **GROWTH IN UNDERSTANDING** Him and His ways. Peter admonishes us to grow in knowledge and grace (2 Pt. 3:18). God is not against knowledge, but in favor of knowledge leavened with love. The more we know God and who He really is, the more we will want to draw closer to Him, to know Him better and to reflect His nature through our own character since we are partakers of His nature or characteristics (2 Pt. 1:4).

All five aspects add to our worship. And as we grow in each aspect, our worship of God should broaden progressively.

All relationships are developed over time and knowing more about each other. The more we know God, the more we will want to worship Him simply for who He is. A true relationship is a total unveiling of ourselves before God, having no shame in each other's presence--unlike Adam and Eve had after they had sinned. Because He has bought us with the precious blood of Jesus and cleansed us from our sins and transferred us into His kingdom, we should come without shame into His presence. But even when we sin, Jesus is our advocate before the Father to plead our cause on our behalf for the Father to continue to invite us into His holy presence: "My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have a Advocate with the Father,

Jesus Christ the righteous" [1 John 2:1-2]. So our Father in heaven has provided our continual entrance into His presence, a continual drawing of us into His throne room in worship and adoration of Him. The more we are willing to unveil ourselves and the more we allow Him to search the inner depths of our life to reveal and remove all that offends Him, the more He will reveal Himself to us and draw us closer to one another. Intimacy requires the willingness and participation of two people, God and you. Allow Him to purify you daily for a growing life of worship.

Also, keep in mind that we worship what we know about God! Many people see God as a fearful judge, unwilling to forgive their sins. In fact, some have even misinterpreted 1 John 3:20 believing that it means this: if our heart condemns us because of our sins, God will condemn us even more. What a serious misinterpretation! The verse says exactly the opposite: if our hearts condemn us when we sin, God who is far greater will not condemn us but provide the way out of sin. Our knowledge of God affects our relationship and worship, negatively or positively.

God's character is like a diamond. We can continually gaze in awe at its beauty, brilliance, perfection, majesty, and uniqueness. And because of its incredible value, we treat diamonds with respect, reverence, and gentleness. Similarly, the more we know about Him the greater our worship will become. Let us, therefore, look at some of the characteristics of God that will enable us to grow in our knowledge, relationship, and worship of Him:

1. GOD IS LOVING. Paul writes that "because of His great love with which He loved us..." He made us alive in Christ [Eph. 2:4]. God's love for you is very great; therefore, we can bask in His all-consuming love! What inspiration this should have for our worship when we meditate on His great love constantly being poured out into us! [For further study, read: Deut. 7:7-8; Jer. 31:3; Rom. 8:35-39; Eph. 1:4-5; Heb. 12:6; 1 John 4:8].

2. GOD IS ALL POWERFUL. David says that "once God has spoken; twice I have heard this: that power belongs to God" and Jesus said that "all power has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" [Ps. 62:11; Mt. 28:18]; thus we can rest assured in His all-consuming ability to do everything that is needed to aid, protect and support us in life. [For further study, read: Job 38:4-6; Ps. 29:4; Rom. 1:16, 20; 1 Cor. 1:18, 24; Heb. 1:3; 4:12].

3. GOD IS GOOD. Paul says that the "goodness of God leads you to repentance" [Rom. 2:4]. Even when we have sinned, we are drawn into His goodness because we know that He will treat us kindly and properly. And we are assured that whatever He does, it is good and excellent. [For further study, read: Ps. 52:1; 119:68; Nah. 1:7].

4. GOD IS FAITHFUL. Paul declares that "God is faithful" (1 Cor. 1:9)! Therefore, whatever He says He will do, and there is no going back on His Word. God is totally dependable. When He declares that He will protect us under His wings, we can rest assured that He will. There should be no doubt in our hearts or minds about God's will or His willingness to care for us as a Father cares for His children. We can

totally depend on Him. [For further study, read: Deut. 7:9; 32: 4; Pss. 30:9; 36:5; 89:2-3; Isa. 11:5; 38:18-19; Lam. 3:23; Rom. 3:3; 1 Thess. 5:24; 2 Tim. 2:13; Heb. 10:23].

5. GOD IS RIGHTEOUS. "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Thy throne" [Ps. 89:14]. What a dramatic declaration about God and His actions! In short, righteousness says that everything that God does is right and correct and the best for us! To meditate on this fact alone should cause us to gaze in awe of the only One who never does anything wrong, but always is right in what He does: a spectacular truth that should prompt us to continual worship. [For further study, read: Pss. 97:2; 129:1ff; Prov. 19:17; Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; 2 Tim. 4:8; Heb. 6:10; Rev. 16:5; 19:8].

6. GOD IS WISE. Wisdom is the ability to see what needs to be done and to choose the correct ways to do it. In short, it is simply showing good judgment. God is always wise, constantly showing His good judgment in all that He does. Paul speaks of the "depth of the riches.... of the wisdom...of God" [Rom. 11:33]. He knows God is always wise. [For further study, read: 1 Kgs. 3:28; 2 Chron. 9:23; Ps. 104:24; Prov. 2:6; Ezek. 28:12; Dan. 2:20; Lk. 11:49; 1 Cor. 1:24; 2:7; Eph. 3:10].

7. GOD IS TRUTHFUL. John says that we must "know Him who is true" [1 Jh. 5:20]. In this day of constant lies and untruthful statements by so many leaders, it is nice to know that God is truthful all the time, and this should be a stabilizing fact for our worship. [For further study, read: Jer. 10:10; Rom. 3:4; 1 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 3:7; 6:10].

8. GOD IS SUPREME. God rules over all circumstances, people and events and directs them to fulfill His purposes. And only the Supreme God can do that! In every detail of our life, He is at work; and we can trust Him to bring good out of all circumstances regardless of whether they are actually good or bad. [For further study, read: Job 42:3; Ps. 135:6; Eph. 1:11].

9. GOD IS SOVEREIGN. God is not dependent upon anyone or anything to accomplish His will. He is not under anyone, but is sovereign over all. He works independently of the created universe. So even when circumstances seem to control or limit His effectiveness, we should meditate on the fact that He is truly sovereign and uncontrolled by anyone. [For further study, read: Pss. 115:3; 135:6; Dan. 4:35; 1 Tim. 6:15].

10. GOD IS UNCHANGEABLE. God does not change for anything or anyone. He is consistent and constant! James says it best: "...the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow" [1:17]. The saying "what you see is what you get" would be appropriate for this fact. God does not have hidden motives nor deceives us with appearance. NO! What He is never changes and what He said (and says) will

never change. Thus we are comforted in the fact that He alone is an unchanging constant. [For further study, read: Deut. 32:4; Mal. 3:6].

11. GOD IS HOLY. His eyes are too pure to behold iniquity because within Him there is no evil thing! Holiness is not only a separation from sinful ways, but it is the inner quality of purity. And our God is absolutely holy in all that He thinks, does and desires. [For further study, read: Ex. 15:11; Isa. 6:3; 1 Pt. 1:16; 1 Jh. 1:5].

12. GOD IS PATIENT. God is slow to anger because He is patient and believes that we are willing to be changed as He convicts us of the need to change. He does not react to our actions, but acts to form us more and more into His image. And His patience is an essential quality to the process of our growth. [For further study, read: Ex. 34:6; Num. 14:18; Pss. 86:15; 103:8; Rom. 15:5; 1 Pt. 3:20].

13. GOD IS GRACIOUS. God gives us favor even when we least deserve it because He is a giver. He understands our weaknesses and penchant to do wrong and evil because we lack inner strength. He is gracious to us to grant us all that we need for life and godliness to overcome and conquer. [For further study, read: Ex. 33:19; Acts 20:24; Rom. 3:24; 5:21; 2 Tim. 1:9; Heb. 4:16].

14. GOD IS MERCIFUL. God feels our pains and cares about our every detail of life. His mercy never ends because He loves us completely. Therefore, He reaches down into our pain and suffering even when it is self-inflicted, touches us and draws us back to Himself. His mercy is a kindness that heals and soothes the hurting. [For further study, read: Pss. 57:10; 59:16; 136:1; 145:9; 143:12; 2 Cor. 1:3; Eph. 2:4; Tit. 3:5].

15. GOD IS JUST. Many believers ignore what seem to be negative traits of God, such as His justice, severity or wrath. Psalm 76:10 says, "for the wrath of man shall praise Thee; with a remnant of wrath Thou shalt gird Thyself." And Paul speaks about the "severity" of God in the same breath that he speaks about the kindness of God [Rom. 11:22]. Thus, Paul does not want us to forget the fact that He is also a God of discipline--not only for the non-Christian [they will experience His wrath], but also for the believer who falls away from His will or willfully disobeys His commands [they will experience loving discipline]. And this alone should motivate us to obey Him as much as the fact that He loves us enough to discipline us to come back into line not only with His will, but also to experience once again His blessings and provisions. His justice and discipline is an essential characteristic of God, necessary to correct us and to discipline the ungodly so that they might turn from their sins to salvation. Hence, God's justice is loving and important to the salvation of mankind. [For further study, read: Ps. 95:11; Mt. 3:7; Rom. 1:18; Heb. 12:28; 1 Thess. 1:10; Rev. 19:1-3].

Of course there are many more characteristics that could be listed about God, but the above

list should help to motivate each believer to know God better so as to develop a deeper relationship with the One whom we worship.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why is it necessary for God to cleanse us before we enter into worship?
2. Why is a personal relationship essential to our worship?
3. What are 5 ways we can grow in worship?
4. Why is knowing God's character important to a vibrant life of worship?
5. What are some of God's characteristics that you need to grow in? And how can you personally grow in them?

IV. FOUNDATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP

a. Worship Was God's Original Purpose.

From the beginning of creation, God's eternal purpose for all living creatures was that they were to be worshippers of Him. Genesis to Revelation records continual acts of praise and worship to God by all of creation. So without a doubt, worship is the highest form of communication with God, as well as adoration of God! We could say it is God's Spirit in us stimulating and responding to God in heaven: a divine cycle of total communication.

The angels, who were created before Man, were created with the definite function of worshipping: "You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire; you were blameless in your ways" [Ezekiel 28:14-15a]. Michael led the warrior angels; Gabriel led the messenger angels; and Lucifer/Satan led the praise and worship angels. Ezekiel 28 indicates that Satan led the angelic orchestra and choir in praise and worship continually before the throne of God. So it seems that God had devoted one entire section of the heavenly host just to praise and worship Him. But when Satan fell, he took 1/3 of the angelic host with him, thus leaving a void in the heavenly worship department.

It is interesting to note that music has been an important part of worship from the beginning of time--both pagan and divine worship have employed music. For example, the ungodly line of Cain invented instruments of war and music (Gen. 4:21-22) and we can only speculate why these two went together. But other pagan examples of the perverse use of music in worship is when Israel abandoned God in the desert to worship the golden calf (Ex. 32:17-18); Nebuchadnezzar used musical instruments to induce worship of the golden image (Dan. 3:5-7); Herod was seduced by the sensual music and the dancing of Salome; and the whore of Babylon employed satanically-inspired music before God's angel destroyed Babylon: "and the sound of harpists and musicians and flute players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer" (Rev. 18:22).

Even though Satan left a void in the worship department, God was not without worshippers in heaven. In fact, the remaining angels still are continually giving praise to God. For example, it says in Rev. 5:9: "and they sang a new song..." [cf. Rev. 4:8-11]. And in heaven there is a new song of worship being sung by the redeemed: "and they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth" (Rev. 14:1-3). But even Satan and the demons will one day eventually worship God because they will have to bow the knee in honor of Him as all creation will do.

b. God is the Source of Worship

Worship in both the Old Testament and New Testament is a concept that originated with God and was communicated to mankind from the beginning. Adam and Even intuitively understood what God desired of them in worship. So all worship is, and must be, initiated by God! Only He can

motivate and initiate our approach to Him because our relationship was broken by our sin; thus He re-established it so that we could fulfill His highest calling to worship Him. Because He alone created, rescued and redeemed us, He alone deserves our full worship. So out of what He has done for us our natural response should be to honor, adore, revere, respect, and worship Him. Thus, the essence of true worship is not out of our emotions, but out of our spirit.

c. Man Is The Instrument of Worship

Worship is a function of the human spirit to celebrate God through the Holy Spirit. Animals, which do not have a spirit like ours, cannot worship God as we do. God desires that all people would worship Him, but most have turned away from Him and worship another god [just as Adam and Eve turned away from Him and worshipped knowledge and the serpent]. He has chosen His people to be the instruments of praise and worship to Him. We are the tangible instruments of worship: it begins in our spirit and flows out in our bodily celebration of Him. We are true worshippers when we are inspired in our spirit by the Holy Spirit to adore and worship God in heaven as expressed in our words and actions.

d. God is the Recipient of Worship

All worship is to be directed to God in heaven. He sits on the highest throne and calls upon His people to lift up their eyes to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And even when we bow before Him, we are acknowledging Him in His heavenly glory and position.

e. Worship: Drawing Near to Touch Him in Spirit

Interestingly, in the Old Testament, drawing near to God was part of what He desired from His people. It is not a new concept, but a greatly misunderstood view that He longs for us to draw near to Him.

In Isaiah 50:8, God says that anyone who contends with Him can draw ["nagash"] near to Him. The Hebrew word here means "to come near to the God, but to remain at a distance and to respond to Him in respect." But He longs for more than distant communication, even if it is to argue with Him. What He desires is our coming into an intimate contact with Him spirit to Spirit. In the Old Testament, "qarab" means precisely that: "Oh draw near to my soul...[Ps. 69:18]; "Guard your steps as you go to the house of God, and draw near to listen...[Ecclesiastes 5:1]; "Thou didst draw near when I called on Thee..." [Lam. 3:57]. As we draw near to Him, He promises to draw near to us because God deeply desires our fellowship, or intimate contact, on a daily basis.

But how should we draw near to Him who is so holy and high and lifted up? The Book of Hebrews gives us three clear steps into the Holy of Holies.

1. Hebrews 4:16: We can and should come "boldly," or with confidence, before the throne of grace where we will find mercy and grace in our time of need. It means to literally come into His presence

without shame or hesitation and with assurance that we have the right to come before Him. Like children who can approach their father anytime without fear, God says come confidently in spirit so that we are spiritually present with Him in the heavenly throne room.

2. Hebrews 7:19: We should come with "hope" that He will accept us in His presence and not cast us out. He guarantees us an audience with Himself, a listening ear no matter what we have to say. Hope means to have expectation of being accepted by Him into the heavenly throne room where we can communicate heart-to-heart, one with another.

3. Hebrews 10:22: It says, "let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith...." A sincere heart is one that is true, genuine and honest. Our heart is not divided, partly devoted to God and partly to something else. That would be deceitful and duplicity. But God calls us to honesty and openness in our relationship with Him--not to attempt to hide part of our heart that is dedicated to sin, self, Satan, the flesh, or the world. We are to come sincerely because our hearts have been cleansed by the precious blood of the Lamb from evil and because we want to be with Him.

COME CONFIDENTLY ==> COME HOPEFUL ==> COME SINCERELY

RESULTS:

We touch the very heart of the Almighty, Everlasting, and Infinite God!

Three steps into the heavenly throne room give us complete access to God. How great an opportunity we have to hear what the God of the universe is saying, that is, to listen to Him! But we come literally to bless Him in His throne room. As Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 5:1, we should come most of all to listen and bless Him, not so much to lay out our needs and petition before Him.

Jesus said that if He would be lifted up, He WOULD draw all men to Himself [John 12:32]. And His death on the Cross was essential to open the door of opportunity to draw near to God.

And in the New Testament God commands us to draw near ["eggizo"] to Him for two primary purposes that are essential to our daily lives as well as the ministry of worship unto Him:

1) to save us, because "He is able to save forever (i.e., completely) those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" [Hebrews 7:25]. This verse intimates that part of Jesus' intercessor ministry is to pray us into His presence, so the Redeemer of the whole earth yearns for that close contact

with His people.

2) for cleansing us, because through His sacrificial death He will "make perfect those who draw near" [Hebrews 10:1]. He desires our presence more than we do; and He desires to cleanse us continually so that we may have the deepest, warmest and closest relationship possible.

REMEMBER, worship is directed to Him, to give Him a gift to remember that we were there. It is like perfume that lingers long after the person has departed. The aroma of true worship lingers in the presence of God as a reminder of our being with Him. And, likewise, the glory that touches our lives by being in His presence lingers in our lives long after we have left His heavenly throne room. And this glory, like that of Moses, can be seen in our lives and will literally touch the lives of others around us if we will only worship Him in spirit and truth.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why is worship the highest form of communication?
2. Why is worship more important to God than anything else?
3. Why must God stimulate or motivate worship within us?
4. Why should we draw near to God?
5. How is New Testament worship different from Old Testament worship?
6. What are the 3 steps of progression in drawing near to worship God?
7. When we touch God through worship, what should be the results in our life?

V. PRAISE IN BIBLICAL CONTEXT

David commands us to "sing praises to the Lord, who dwells in Zion; declare among the peoples His deeds" [Ps. 9:11]. But Jeremiah also says, "Thou art my praise" [17:14] because He healed and saved Jeremiah from many disasters. For the prophet, it was important to publicly exalt God for what He had done, as well as acknowledge his gratitude for His superior abilities to do what Jeremiah could not do for himself. Likewise, Moses said that "He is your praise and He is your God, who has done these great and awesome things for you which your eyes have seen" [Deut. 10:21]. So praise is seen generally as a response to God's actions on our behalf, and especially when we witness His powerful intervention in difficult circumstances because only God can do great and awesome things. But praise is more than that: it is also the impact that it leaves on us when we think about His great and awesome accomplishments. Hence, Nehemiah declared that our "highest praises" belong to God, and to no other [9:5]. We are to give our greatest praises to God because He alone is the great and awesome God and there is no other.

But remember that GOD IS THE SOURCE of our praise. And the Bible gives us three reasons why He alone is the source:

- 1) It is He who will "put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God" [Ps. 40:3].
- 2) David also says that we should pray that God would "open my lips, that my mouth may declare Thy praise" [Ps. 51:15].
- 3) Isaiah says that He will give us a "mantle of praise" to declare His goodness and excellencies among the nations.

So praise is not only a response to God's actions, but God Himself also energizes it.

a. Old Testament words for Praise

1. HALAL: occurs 160 times in the Old Testament and has a variety of meanings. For one, it means to make a show as "in the midst of the assembly I will praise [i.e., make a show of] Thee" [Ps. 22:22]; or it can mean to boast, as in Ps. 102:18 where it says "that a people yet to be created may praise [or boast of] the Lord"; or still, celebrate when it says "I will praise [celebrate] Thee among a mighty throng" in Psalm 35:18; rave, as in Psalm 107:32 where it says "let them extol [rave about] Him also in the congregation of the people"; glory in, as in Psalm 64:10 when David says "All the upright will glory in Him"; shine, when it says that the king "appointed those who sang to the Lord and those who praise Him [shine] in holy attire [2 Chronicles 20:21-22]. Of course, the meaning includes actual praising, but the emphasis is on the magnificence of those who were praising God.

2. TEHILLAH [from Halal]: occurs 57 times in the Old Testament. It means to sing

forth or "let my lips utter praise" [Ps.119:171]; or to celebrate Him in song as the Prophet says, "the earth is full of His praise" [Habakkuk 3:3]; boast about Him in word and music as Moses says, "He is your praise" [Deut. 10:21].

3. SHABACH: occurs only a few times in the Old Testament. It means to shout loudly "because Thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips will praise Thee [i.e., shout about Thee, Ps. 63:3]; shout in triumph because "to Thee, O God, of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for Thou hast given me wisdom and power" [Dan. 2:23]; glory in victory or "praise the Lord, all nations" [Psalms 117:1].

4. ZAMAR: It means to play stringed instruments such as the harp and lyre mentioned in Ps. 108:1-3 because "I will sing praises, even with my soul".

5. YADAH: It means to give a confession of thanks because "with my mouth I will give thanks abundantly to the Lord" [Ps. 109:30]; extend our hands in thanks to God [Ps. 33:2]; and in submission as "all the sons of Israel, seeing the fire come down and the glory of the Lord upon the house, bowed down [in submission] on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshipped and gave praise to the Lord" [2 Chronicles 7:3].

6. TOWDAH [from Yadah]: It means to extend our hands in adoration and thanksgiving [Ps. 42:4]; or sacrifice where Asaph says, "He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me" [Ps. 50:23].

7. BARAK: It means to kneel in adoration. That is to kneel because of His presence, power and position as it says, "Come let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker" [Ps. 95:6].

b. New Testament Words for Praise:

1. AINEO: It means to celebrate [Romans 15:11]; lifting our voices to God as in Luke 19:37: "and as He was now approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen. Thus their praise was responsive to the mighty workings of Jesus.

2. EPAINEO: It means to applaud as Peter says in I Pt. 1:7, which our strong faith, though tested by fire "may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Can you imagine heaven applauding because of our strong faith? That is an awesome thought to realize God will applaud with the heavenly host those who stand firm in the faith! But it also means to commend as Paul says, "to the praise [or commendation] of the glory of His grace" in Ephesians 1:6.

3. EULOGEO: It means to speak well of, as Zacharias did when God loosed his tongue "and he began to speak in praise of God" [Luke 1:64].

4. DOXA: It means to give glory, even when the Pharisees told the blind man who was healed by Jesus to "give glory to God" [John 9:24].

5. EUCHARISTEW: It means to be thankful, as the 24 elders were before the throne of God in heaven, "saying, We give thanks, O Lord God, The Almighty, who art and who wast, because Thou hast taken Thy great power and hast begun to reign" [Rev. 11:17].

6. EUCHARISTIA: It means to give thanks verbally, as the living creatures do before the glorious throne of our God and King [Rev. 4:9].

LESSONS FROM OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT PRAISE WORDS

1. Praise involves physical expression of our inner spiritual attitude.
2. Praise involves vocal expression as a desire to glorify God.
3. Praise involves emotional release because of our joy towards Him.
4. Praise involves a sign of respect and honor of Him who has helped us.

c. When Do We Praise?

1. NOW. Ps. 42:2 says, "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before [or see the face of] God?" Praise is always a now event! Praise should not merely be a response to the good that God does for us, but should be in waiting for every activity and event of our daily lives. So remember that praise must be in the "now" of our life.

2. WHEN WE ARE IN DISTRESS. Ps. 42:11 ask, "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance, and my God." Distress is often an overwhelming event in the life of each person; but the Psalmist, who was no stranger to distress, knew the importance of praising God while "under" the pressures of life. God knows the future distresses we will encounter and wants us to realize that if we can praise Him while under pressure, we will have matured to the point of acknowledging that He is really in control and is using each stressful events to form our character and mold us into the people He wants us to be.

3. IN THE MORNING. Ps. 57:7-8 says, "My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises! Awake, my glory; awake, harp and lyre, I will awaken the dawn!" David speaks of beginning his day with praises of God. And spiritually this is a very wise thing because if we can begin our day with our focus on Him, then we will naturally look to Him for all of our provisions for that day. In fact, Solomon says that if we would acknowledge Him in all of our ways or activities, then He would make our paths straight [Proverbs 3:6]. Thus praise opens the door

of our heart to acknowledge Him so that He will intervene on our behalf to turn all events to good for us.

4. ALL DAY LONG. Ps. 71:8: "My mouth is filled with Thy praise, and with Thy glory all day long." The Psalmist had captured the idea of the importance of praise that began in the morning and continued to the end of the day. In fact, his whole day was bathed with praises for God.

5. FROM MORNING TO NIGHT. Ps. 113:3 says, "From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the Lord is to be praised." The Psalmist probably had in mind the ministry of the priests in the Temple offering up praises to God on behalf of His people [cf. 1 Chronicles 23:30]. But this is a good general principle for our daily lives, as well.

6. AT MIDNIGHT. Ps. 119:62: "At midnight I shall rise to give thanks to Thee, because of Thy righteous ordinance." Even the Psalmist recognized the importance of nightly praise; and for every believer it should be a fact of their lives to praise Him when they lay down to sleep and, if they awake during the night, to praise Him.

7. AS LONG AS WE LIVE. Ps. 146:2 says "I will praise the Lord while I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being." So praise is simply an accepted fact of life for every believer and praise should be the fruit of every believer during their lifetime.

8. IN THE HARD TIMES. Habakkuk 3:17-18: "Though the fig tree should not blossom, and there be no fruit on the vines, though the yield of the olive should fail, and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold, and there be no cattle in the stalls, yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation." The prophet understood that EXTERNAL EVENTS ARE NOT THE KEY TO OUR PRAISES, though they can, at times, help to stimulate our praise for God. But the prophet understood that praise really comes from our internal beliefs about God. Though things may fail around us, God is still true to His Word and consistent in His ways. Therefore, he says, "I WILL exult and rejoice in God."

9. IN EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS. Ephesians 5:20: Paul talks about being filled with the Holy Spirit, and that the evidence of that continual infilling will be our singing openly as well as in our heart, but also "always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father." The word "always" covers all times and events. So in the New Testament there is the extended application of this principle to all of life.

10. CONTINUALLY. Hebrews 13:15 says, "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of our lips that give thanks to His name". Thus God expects us to praise Him without cessation. Though we may be burdened down with many obligations and activities, continual praise is a lifeline to heaven's spiritual banks to refresh us and recharge us through the presence of the Holy One of Israel. [See also Ps. 34:1].

11. WHEN WE ARE HAPPY. James 5:13 asks, "Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises." James says that if our hearts are lifted up and unburdened, we should sing many praises. So here he

emphasizes the state of our heart as the key to praising God.

12. IN CHURCH GROWTH. "And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid" [Ezra 3:11]. So when we build His house [whether physical or spiritual], it is our duty to praise the Lord because He is the true builder of all things.

13. AT DEATH. "...Lift me up from the gates of death that I may tell of all Thy praises" [Ps. 9:13-14]. So when He delivers us from the great peril of death, our gratitude should overflow in praise because He overcame the power of death through Jesus Christ and delivered us time and time again.

14. IN OBEDIENCE. David says we should "sing praise to Thy name forever, that I may pay my vows day by day" [Ps. 61:8]. It is fascinating to see that PRAISE AND OBEDIENCE GO HAND IN HAND in David's mind. In fact, he wants to praise God because if it is genuine praise, then he knows that God "wilt prolong the king's life; his years will be as many generations" [v. 6]. Consequently, LONGEVITY IS A RESULT OF A LIFE OF PRAISE; it makes the spirit light and unburdened and does not take a toll on one's health. In fact, praise probably improves our health more than we can imagine.

15. FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION. "We will give thanks to Thee forever; to all generations we will tell of Thy praise" [Ps. 79:13]. Thus, praise is a generational function of God's people. So parents should teach their children, who teach their children, and so on to perpetuate the ministry of praise in the family and church.

16. IN HIS PRESENCE. "Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise" [Ps. 100:4] is probably the most commonly known Psalm. And the Psalmist instructs us that if we want to enter into His presence, it will always begin with praise.

17. 7 TIMES A DAY. "Seven times a day I praise Thee, because of Thy righteous ordinances" [Ps. 119:164]. Praise is seen as a function that occurs throughout the day, and probably at regular intervals. If only the world could see the people of God praise Him openly, there might be a greater awareness of God's presence and holiness in the lands.

19. IN ABUNDANCE. Praise the Lord when you have plenty, as Joel says: "And you shall have plenty to eat and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you" [2:26].

20. And lastly, IN JAIL. Praise Him even if we are put in jail for our faith [Acts 16:25] just as Paul and Barnabas did, "but about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God." In those very difficult times when they had been physically humiliated, beaten, were bleeding and surely feeling intense pain, Paul and Barnabas showed an inner spiritual strength. And when God heard it, He drew so close to them that the earth began to shake in His presence. So be aware that God's presence will cause people and the earth to tremble.

d. Why do we Praise?

The scriptures give numerous reasons for praising God, but as the reader examines all the verses listed below, there will be one very clear factor in each verse: WE PRAISE HIM BECAUSE OF HIS CHARACTER AND INTERVENTION ON OUR BEHALF. Unlike worship that does not depend upon God's intervening for us, praise is usually a response to something we know about Him or about what He has done for us. So let us examine the evidence.

1. FOR HEALINGS. We praise Him because He heals us. After the lame man was healed, the Bible says that he was "walking, leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God" [Acts 3:8-9]. Because of this great miracle, the people were FILLED with wonder and amazement not only at the miracle, but also at the fact that the living Lord had done a very notable thing. Wherefore we should praise Him for all hearings, whether immediate or over time because He is our Healer.

2. IT IS APPROPRIATE TO US. We also praise because "it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant and praise is becoming." [Ps. 147:1] The word "becoming" ("na'weh") means that it is suitable or lovely to see God's people praise Him.

3. HE IS GOOD. We praise God because the Lord is good: Psalms 106:1; 135:3. Solomon says in 2 Chronicles 5:13 to praise and glorify God because "He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting."

4. FOR HIS CHARACTER. We also "sing praises to His name, for it is lovely" [Ps. 135:3b]. The verse describes his character as gracious and loving.

5. BECAUSE OF HIS WORD. We praise His Word [Ps. 56:4, 10] because in His Word He reveals His character, His plans and His works on our behalf. It is "in God, whose word I praise."

6. HE IS OUR STRENGTH. We also praise Him because "The Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation; This is my God, and I will praise Him" [Ex. 15:2]. Moses saw the strong arm of the Lord and the destruction of the mighty Egyptians, and this filled his heart with a song because God saved a million people from extinction [cf. Ps. 59:17].

7. BECAUSE HE IS KING. The sons of Korah said that we should "Sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth" [Ps. 47:6b-7a].

8. ADD PRAISE TO PRAISE. And a rather interesting Psalm says "but as for me, I will hope continually, and will praise Thee [or literally: add upon all thy praise] yet more and more" [71:14]. Because God is our only hope of deliverance from evil, and because He continually delivers us throughout all of our life, the Psalmist says that he will add more and more praises each time he sees and experiences the deliverance of God! So our praise life should naturally grow.

9. FOR HIS JUSTICE. We should also "sing of lovingkindness and justice, to Thee, O Lord, I will sing praises."

10. HE LIFTS UP US. We should praise Him also because He will lift up our countenance in times of despair, adding a sense of peace and joy when all appears to be hopeless [Ps. 43:5].

11. FOR HIS NAME. We praise Him because of His glorious name [1 Chronicles 29:13].

12. FOR HIS POWER. David says that "we will sing and praise Thy power" [Ps. 21:13]. He had personally experienced God's power in his life and circumstances, so he had every reason to praise God's power.

13. IT IS PROPER. We praise God because "praise is becoming to the upright" [Ps. 33:1], and the word means it is fitting for us because we are created as vessels of praise, thus praising is simply fulfilling our call.

14. HE IS WORTHY. We also praise Him because "He is worthy to be praised" [2 Sam. 22:4] and because "great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised" [1 Chronicles 16:25].

15. FOR HIS ACTIONS. "Praise the Lord in song, for He has done excellent things; let this be known throughout the earth" [Isaiah 12:5]. Whatever God does, it is with excellence. Therefore, He desires our highest praise because He has achieved the highest quality of work.

16. FOR WISDOM. Daniel, in the midst of an ungodly nation, was able to say, "To Thee, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for Thou hast given me wisdom and power" [2:23]. He clearly acknowledges that his abilities were a direct gift from God.

17. FOR CHANGING OUR CHARACTER. And Paul says that the fruit of righteousness [i.e., a renewed character], which was a gift of Christ to him, filled him and therefore it was to God's praise [Phil. 1:11].

e. How Do We Praise?

It would be easy to simply prescribe a formula for praising God, but that would not be genuine. Praise must come as a PERSONAL RESPONSE to God's actions. But even though this is quite true, the Old Testament frequently says that the people were to praise God "as prescribed [literally, "as commanded"] by David the man of God" [Nehemiah 12:24] which deals more with the variety of ways rather than trying to structure our praise. It was a required and yet it was personal communication. And it is important to recognize that praise has form as well as substance. Since all praise belongs to God, He has described proper forms of praise that pour forth from our hearts to God. And in order to encourage proper praise, David appointed the Levites to lead praise [1 Chronicles 6:31]. Later on, "King Hezekiah and the officials ordered the Levites to sing praise to the Lord with the words of David and Asaph the seer" [2 Chronicles 36:30]. Consequently, it is important to have wise, mature praise leaders in the church to "lead" praise because the members are

more easily led than pushed into praise. So we will examine the "prescribed forms" of praise permitted by scripture.

1. WITH OUR LIPS. We are to praise God with our lips, as David says, "because Thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips will praise Thee" [Ps. 63:3]. So Praise CANNOT be silent or merely in our heart, but must be expressed verbally. David emphatically says "that my soul may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent" [Ps. 30:12]. So his actions will elicit and release our praise in song and words of adoration.

2. WITH OFFERINGS. We are to praise God with the offerings we bring to Him as Moses called them an "offering of praise to the Lord" [Leviticus 19:24].

3. WITH INSTRUMENTS. We are to praise God with instruments, as well. David appointed 4,000 Levities who would specifically praise "the Lord with the instruments which I made for giving praise" [1 Chronicles 23:5]. So God has appointed even the making of instruments for the specific purpose of praising God. It would be a good idea for the worship team in any church to dedicate all of the instruments for the sole purpose of praising God and to set them apart for this holy purpose.

4. WITH OUR HANDS. The Old Testament says that we can give "praise by their hands" [2 Chronicles 7:6], whether we do it by playing instruments or by clapping or even waving. So every believer has a God-given instrument, his or her hands, to praise Him.

5. LOUD VOICE. The Bible says that the Levites "stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel, with a very loud voice. [2 Chronicles 20:19]. So our vocal cords are divine instruments created for the praises of God.

So praise, in numbers 4 and 5, demonstrates that God has created us for praise and even given to us bodily parts to be used as instruments of praise. So often in the New Testament the writers emphasize the importance of our using our vocal cords to bless God. WHY? Because they understood them to be divinely created instruments to praise the living God. And if we use our voice to curse and speak evil, we are corrupting the very gift God has given for good!!

6. WITH JOY. Knowing how to praise God is only part of the basis for praising Him. Also our inward attitude is vitally important in how we express our praise to God. The Levites "sang praises with joy, and bowed down and worshiped" [2 Chronicles 29:30]. So praise cannot be merely prescribed, but must come out of a heart of joy for and to God. And the more we can know Him as a person and what He has done for us, the greater should be our joy for Him. In fact, the Old Testament says that we must "give thanks to the Lord with all my heart" [Ps. 111:1] and "let my soul live that it may praise Thee" [Ps. 119:175]. Therefore, praise is an action of the whole person: spirit, soul and body.

7. IN HOLINESS. When King Jehoshaphat had "appointed those who sang to the Lord and those who praised Him in holy attire, they went before the army and said, 'give thanks to the Lord, for His lovingkindness is everlasting'" [2 Chronicles 20:21]. So God prescribed even the type of

clothing to be worn during praise. But a literal translation of this verse means to "praise Him in the beauty of holiness." Thus God is prescribing the quality of the lifestyle of those who praise Him. If our life is holy, then our praise can be holy. But if we are living in, or hiding, some secret sin (no matter how we may attempt to praise Him outwardly), God says that our praise is unholy. Therefore, being moral is essential to proper praise.

f. Who Will Praise God?

1. THE CHURCH. One of the first acts of the New Testament church was to praise God regularly [Acts 2:47]. So our example comes to us from the very first body of believers.

2. NON-CHRISTIANS. The centurion "began praising God, saying, 'certainly this man was innocent'" [Luke 23:47]. So even the unsaved will praise God when they realize that God is pure and perfect.

3. WORKERS. The shepherds heard the message from God's angel and began "glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen" [Luke 2:20]. So upon receiving God's message of hope and salvation, the natural response was to praise God.

4. ANGELS. And even the angels, the "multitude of the heavenly hosts," were praising God [Luke 2:13]. And as we saw in the beginning, one of the primary ministries of the angels is to praise God.

5. PRIESTS. It is clearly stated that Solomon "appointed...the Levites for their duties of praise and ministering... [2 Chronicles 8:14]. Therefore, God specifically assigned the praise duty to the Levites.

6. SEEKERS OF GOD. Ps. 22:26 says "those who seek Him will praise Him." One of the results of seeking God is praise for Him as we get to know Him better.

7. THE REDEEMED. Ps. 30:4 says "sing praise to the Lord, you His godly ones".

8. KINGDOMS. Ps. 68:32 says "Sing to God, o kingdoms of the earth; sing praises to the Lord." So every political power has a responsibility before God to lead their nation in praise of God.

9. CREATION. Ps. 69:34 says "Let heaven and earth praise Him."

10. THE AFFLICTED AND NEEDY. Ps. 74:21 says "Let the afflicted and needy praise Thy name." Therefore, whenever we are down and troubled, we are commanded to praise Him.

11. FUTURE GENERATIONS. Interestingly, Ps. 102:18 even says "that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord". So God even looks into the future and sees every generation as created to praise Him. And this implies that we are created specifically for praise.

12. SERVANTS OF THE LORD. Ps. 113:1 says, "Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the

name of the Lord." And since we are His servants, we must praise Him.

13. ALL NATIONS. Ps. 117:1 says, "Praise the Lord, all nations; laud Him, all peoples." So God does not exclude anyone from the duty and responsibility of praise to Him.

14. BEFORE THE FALSE GODS. Another interesting verse says "I will sing praises to Thee before the gods" [Ps. 138:1]. So as believers, we are to praise God in the midst of all the false gods in our nations. Whether that god be materialism, power, a cult, or whatever, in the midst of these false gods it is important that we speak out our praises to the true and living God, as David says that "I will give thanks to Them among the nations, O Lord" [Ps. 18:49], whether they be friends or enemies of the Lord.

15. EACH GENERATION. Ps. 145:4 says "one generation shall praise Thy works to another." So each generation is responsible to be a living example to the next not only by passing on the praises of God, but to model a life to praise of Him so as to perpetuate the ministry of praise.

16. YOUNG AND OLD. "Both young men and virgins; old men and children. Let them praise the name of the Lord, for His name alone is exalted" [Ps. 148:12-13].

17. ALL WHOM GOD FORMED. Isaiah 43:21 says "the people whom I formed for Myself, will declare My praise."

18. CHILDREN. Matthew says "out of the mouth of infants and nursing babes Thou has prepared praise for Thyself" [21:17]. One of the greatest blessings for God as a father is to hear the praises of even the smallest ones because the formation of their future in their early days will make them true worshippers of Him later on in life.

19. THOSE WHO SEE GOD'S MIRACLES. Those who see the mighty works and miracles of God will instinctively give praise to Him for His power [Luke 18:43; 19:37].

20. THOSE WHO SUFFER FOR THEIR FAITH. Even the believers who suffer for their faith, whether in prison or somewhere else, will give praise to Him [Acts 16:25].

g. Where do we praise?

1. RELEASES THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS. "In the midst of the assembly I will praise Thee" [Ps. 22:22]. There should be a sense of total freedom to praise God when we assemble together as the church. Just as the sons of Korah said, "How blessed are those who dwell in Thy house! They are ever blessing Thee" [Ps. 84:4]. So we gather together to minister to God through our praises, and this should be a regular activity of the believers.

2. GOD'S GLORY COMES. We are to "bless our God, O peoples, and sound His praise abroad" [Ps. 66:8]. This is a mission call to go forth into the nations, praising Him as an act of witnessing.

3. GOD IS ENTHRONED. We are to "praise the Lord in the heights" [Ps. 148:1].

h. Results of our Praise:

Praise is an active ministry that brings results from the outpouring of our hearts to Him. God takes notice of our praise and He responds to us in several special ways.

1. Praise prepares the atmosphere to release the gift of prophecy into the body of believers. In 1 Chronicles 25:1-3 we see that when David chose the worship leaders, part of their calling and the results were that they "were to prophesy with lyres, harps and cymbals,...who prophesied in giving thanks and praising God." So the power of praise is also the motivator of prophecy.

2. 2 Chronicles 5:11-14 records that when the priests and Levities came forth praising God with song and instruments, that the glory of God filled the house so that no one could stand.

3. And, lastly, David says that God is enthroned in, or inhabits, the praises of His people [Ps. 22:3]. We already know that He is sitting on the throne of the universe, so what is David saying? That our praises acknowledge His everlasting rule and sovereignty that already exist over all peoples, nations and circumstances. So we simply open our eyes to the spiritual fact that He is enthroned.

Psalms 150 is a good psalm to summarize the whole picture of praise because the Psalmist begins with the emphatic statement to "Praise the Lord!" and then proceeds to tell us 4 things about praise:

1) Verse 1 tells us WHERE to praise God: "Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty expanse."

2) Verse 2 tells us WHY to praise God: "Praise Him for His mighty deeds; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness."

3) Verses 3-5 tell us HOW to praise God: "Praise Him with trumpet sound; praise Him with harp and lyre. Praise Him with timbrel and dancing; Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe. Praise Him with loud cymbals; praise Him with resounding cymbals," which clearly indicates that Jewish praise was very loud and animated.

4) Verse 6 tells us WHOM to praise: "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!"

So we see praise was an integral part of the Jewish religious life, and Jesus Himself must have participated in this very lively type of praise for God. And in Rev. 19:15 it says that we will hear a voice from the throne saying, "Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and great." Thus, our eternal preoccupation shall be one of praising God.

i. Sacrifice of Praise:

Hebrews 13:15 says that "through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name." Many people have interpreted this verse to mean that we praise God in difficult circumstances as a sacrifice unto Him. However, the actual interpretation of the verse is already within the verse itself: Hebrews defines a "sacrifice of praise" as simply the "fruit of lips". It does not speak of our circumstances at all, and frankly assumes that the circumstances are not essential to the giving of praise to God. Therefore, whether the circumstances are easy or difficult, the sacrifice is still the fruit of our lips!

A sacrifice is often understood as giving something that is hard to give, or a burden to give it or something I really do not want to give, but I will sacrifice in giving it. It seems that some think that a sacrifice is really a great hardship! But, Biblically, a sacrifice is an offering of love to God, a gift to Him freely and easily given that He desires [or commands] and we want to give. Even though the widow gave her last coins, she gave a gift to God and that was her sacrifice. Yes, she was now without any funds, but it was not hard on her because she had faith in God and she gave the money out of love for Him. Therefore, to give a sacrifice is to give a gift to the most exciting person in the whole universe, GOD! But also to give a sacrifice means to give something worthy and of value to the person to whom the gift is given! Hence, a true sacrifice is a gift freely and voluntarily given in love and holds great value to the giver as well as to the Receiver. So giving a sacrifice of praise means to give freely and fully from the heart, with joy and thanksgiving because we want to bless Him who will receive our praises!

Now there is a distinction generally between New and Old Testament sacrifices. The Old Testament spelled out in great detail the animal sacrifices that God commanded of His people in order to maintain a living relationship with Him. God gave great detail to His people to explain the quality of sacrifices that He required of them. Yet the Old Testament did not limit sacrifices to only physical gifts, but hinted at the revolutionized sacrifices of the New Testament: spiritual sacrifices. Psalm 107:22 says, "Let them also offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, and tell of His works with joyful singing." And Psalm 116:17 says that "To Thee I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and call upon the name of the Lord." But the Psalmist also says in 27:6 that it is a sacrifice of "shouts" and in 54:6 that this type of sacrifice must be given "willingly". Therefore, the Psalmist hints at the changes that will come later on when the Temple is destroyed and God reveals the nature of true worshippers and praisers. The New Testament took these hints and developed them more fully, especially in 1 Peter 2:5 where the Apostle says that "as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood" we are "to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

Therefore, there is the complete transition from animal sacrifices in the Old Testament to spiritual sacrifices in the New Testament. And the emphasis is not only shifted from the quality of the sacrifice offered, but the main point is that our sacrifices today must be inspired by the Holy Spirit if they are going to be acceptable to God. Interestingly, in Proverbs 15:8, Solomon says "the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord." WHY? Even though a non-believer can offer a sacrifice in accordance with the Old Testament Law, the practice was not

really inspired by the Holy Spirit nor intended to bring glory to God. So there is an important significance to the source of inspiration for giving the sacrifice. Because we are the Temple of God, our sacrifices must be spiritual because God is Spirit. But even though the New Testament stress is on "spiritual sacrifices," the motivation should also produce the giving of finances to God's works, as well as giving oneself to regular ministry in and outside of the congregational gathering.

But what does it mean, the "fruit of our lips"? Fruit is the result of growth and maturity. Therefore, the writer is saying that if we are walking in a constant, living, united fellowship with the Lord of heaven and earth, we will recognize His powerful sovereignty and praise Him in all circumstances. So the knowledge of the Lord is crucial to the sacrifice of praise, not our circumstances, because we praise the ruler of all people, circumstances, and events, whether they be easy or difficult.

Let me close this section on praise by simply citing the words of the prophet, Habakkuk: "God comes from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. His splendor covers the heavens, and the earth is full of His praise" [3:3]. What a glorious vision God has for all mankind, to fill the earth with His praise.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why does praise require physical demonstration?
2. Why should we praise God?
3. What does it mean to praise Him in holiness?
4. Are there any traditions in your life that need to be changed?
5. Review Psalm 150 and see if this type of praise is in your life daily.
6. When can you give a sacrifice of praise?
7. Is a sacrifice of praise burdensome or costly?
8. How does praise activate the gifts of the Spirit?

VI. WORSHIP IN BIBLICAL CONTEXT

a. Old Testament Words for Worship:

1. SHACHAD: occurs over 170 times in the Old Testament and is the only Hebrew worship consistently translated "worship," and it occurs in 39 of the Old Testament books. It is an attitude of the heart expressed in bodily form. It means TO DEPRESS before another or prostrate voluntarily or involuntarily [force is implied], to BOW DOWN, do reverence, fall before, prostrate, stoop, crouch or beseech humbly. In ancient times, one would kneel in the presence of one who was superior in order to openly acknowledge, honor and recognize the superior position of the other. But a person would fall prostrate before another to plead for mercy after a great military defeat or as a sign of total submission to the other. In our situation, it is both: submission and acknowledgement of the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. So let us humble ourselves not only in His presence, but also under His mighty hand.

KEY POINT: the magnitude of the action reveals the depth of our attitude. Lukewarm love for God cannot produce overflowing worship. Nor can a rebellious life prostrate before a holy God. Just as it says in Psalm 29:2, "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due to His name; worship the Lord in holy array [or the majesty of holiness]." Thus, the quality of our worship is just as important as the actions in our worship. In Gen. 22:15-18, God declares Abraham's actions as worthy and promises to "greatly bless...greatly multiply...and to possess the gate of their enemy"; his attitude was evident in his actions and was the reason for God so blessing him abundantly. Also see: Ex. 20:5; Psalms 2:11; 22:2; Jeremiah 2:8. (It can also be in a negative light, as in Isaiah 2:8: "...they worship the work of their hands.")

It is our adoration, veneration, exaltation and magnification of God. EVERY TIME THE WORD "SHACHAD" OCCURS, IT ALWAYS INDICATES SOME PHYSICAL ACTION. The spirit is so overwhelmed with God that we fall in His holy presence and want to express our inner feelings towards Him; and bowing down is one of the most worshipful acts we can perform. Worship, then, is visible action in a way that God, others, and we know is occurring. In the scriptures, 10 times it is recorded that people fell under the power of God, such as when His glory filled the Temple of Solomon or when Jesus said, "I AM HE." So the power of His presence is always overwhelming and produces voluntary or involuntary submission to His holy will.

It is interesting that we know a Muslim [which means "submission"] by his action of bowing down and praying at certain times each day, and they are unashamed to do so publicly. But why are we so restrained? Even in the church we struggle with submission in an open and expressive form? Could it be because we are not radically sold out to Him who calls all to submit? Who will cause all knees to bow and all tongues to confess Him as THE Lord [Phil. 2:9-11]? What is our answer? What is our response? It will truly reveal our inner desires and attitudes, and to whom we are really submitted.

2. SHARATH: It occurs about 100 times and means to SERVE or minister to as Hezekiah says in 2 Chronicles 29:11: "My sons, do not be negligent now, for the Lord has chosen you to stand

before Him, to minister to Him." The Levites ministered to God in song, worship and praise as a way of blessing and honoring Him [1 Chronicles 6:17; 16:4, 37]. And Samuel served in the Tabernacle as Eli's assistant, which was also considered ministry to God even though he was just a young lad at the time: 1 Sam. 2:11, 18; 3:1. But the main point of "sharath" is that the priest has a special relationship, or high rank, that allows him to stand in the presence of God. But it also means that he is close enough to God that God will listen to His servant and fulfill the requests that He accepts. So the priest is not afraid to speak directly with God.

3. **ABAD**: It occurs about 200 times and is translated "worship," but generally means to SERVE ANOTHER as a servant would. Exodus 3:12 says God promised Moses that "I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you; when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain" [i.e., serving Him there through sacrifices and so on]. cf. Gen. 15:14; Ex. 3:12; 4:23; 12:3. It occurs 12 times in Ex. 7:16-10:26 in Moses' dialogue with Pharaoh, each time meaning to serve in a religious context, such as offering sacrifice.

4. **SEGID**: It is translated worship 12 times and means to BOW DOWN as an outward expression of honor and an inward attitude of respect. However, it is always negative and in Dan. 3 it occurs 11 times in the context of worshipping a man or a false god.

b. New Testament Words for Worship: Key Words in the New Testament

1. **LATREUO** [also related is "latreia" which occurs 5 times]: It occurs 21 times and always is used in a religious sense of SERVICE, whether in the worship of the true God or strange gods. The Old Testament determines the actual meaning of the word, for example, as found in Luke 1:74 when Zecharias prophesied saying, "to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear." It means to serve or render service to someone with no thought of reward, and in Luke 1, to God who is our Deliverer. In secular literature it described the religious service rendered by the priest in the pagan temple.

This service comes out of the inner worship and a deep commitment of the heart; in the Old Testament, sacrifice and service were seen as one and the same thing. Thus prayer, fasting, serving and ministering in the Temple were different expressions of the one concept of worship [Numbers 16:9; Josh. 22:7]. Paul insisted on the inward motive being expressed in outward service [Romans 12:1ff].

KEY TEXTS: Acts 13:2 speaks of "ministering to the Lord" through prayer and fasting. You might ask, "How do praying and fasting minister to God?" That is a good question and needs to be explained. It means that we are: a) submitting ourselves in humility to obey Him; b) then devoting ourselves to Him to serve as His representative among the nations; c) to listen to His instructions, to discern His will and d) to carry it out under the anointing of His Holy Spirit. Also, in Romans 1:9 Paul says that it is "God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son." Paul was saying that all true service to God originates from our spirit to His Spirit. And that his preaching the Word which the Spirit had put into his spirit was a way of serving God because He

had instructed Paul to preach to the Gentiles. To do so, then, is carrying out His will, which is serving God. Philippians 3:3 says that true worship must be "in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus," which simply means that we must worship out of our spirit as inspired by the Holy Spirit within to bring or give honor to Jesus. We should be filled or bathed with His Spirit continually in order to point people to Christ who receives all the glory.

KEY CONCEPT TO LEARN: New Testament worship includes the Old Testament forms and manner, but is enlarged to move beyond our assembled gatherings to carry on in service in our daily lives--whether at home, school, work, shopping, or wherever we go. Thus, worship is what we do to bless God directly in worship services and how we respond to people, work, etc. The Bible commands that all we do, do as unto the Lord because it will either bless Him or hurt Him. For example, being on time is a blessing, but being late is hurtful; paying our bills on time is a blessing, but being late is hurtful. Someone will always be hurt when we fail to do what we should and when we should. Thus, New Testament worship is more than singing. It involves every daily activity. And how we live tells others whom we worship! That is amazing: our actions reveal our God! But which God (god) do they reveal? If through obedience to the Bible, then the true God, and if through disobedience, then a false god. That is why we need to be sure that we are devoted to the true God and that our actions correspond to His will.

2. SEBOMAI: This occurs 8 times. It means to FEAR, revere, feel a sense of awe or devote oneself to another as it says in Acts 18:7, "and he departed from there and went to the house of a certain man named Titus Justus, a worshipper of God, whose house was next to the synagogue".

3. GONU [also is related is "gonupeteo"]: It means TO BOW or bend the knee, or even full prostration. It expresses humility and reverence in the presence of almighty God and a sense of worthlessness in the presence of the only one who is totally worthy. Old Testament usage is found in 1 Kings 8:54; 2 Kings 1:13; 1 Chronicles 29:20; Daniel 6:10. And New Testament usage occurs in such places as Matthew 17:14 where it says "and when they came to the multitude, a man came up to Him, falling on his knees before Him..." Other examples can be found in Mark 10:17 and in Luke 5:8 where it is seen as a sign of repentance and faith in Jesus [cf. Luke 22:41; Romans 11:4]. It also means to kneel in an attitude of prayer as in Acts 9:40 where "Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed..." The placing of oneself in such a humble position before one of greater authority is a true act of worship.

4. PROSKUNEO: It occurs over 59 times. It is used EXCLUSIVELY of worship addressed to God or Jesus. It is derived from 2 words: "pros" which means "towards" and "kuneo" which means "to kiss." Therefore, it means to KISS THE HANDS OR FEET. This requires personal contact with the one you worship, and it demonstrates who God is: the One we bow down before. Ten times in John 4 the word occurs in the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. In Revelation, it occurs 24 times and is addressed to God or Jesus and centers on who He is and what He has done on our behalf. It also acknowledges His exclusive claim and right to our worship [Rev. 14:7].

5. KAMPTO: It occurs 4 times and means to BOW THE KNEE IN REVERENCE as in

Romans 14:11 where Paul writes, "as I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." The bowing here is combined with the public confession that He alone is God and judge of the whole universe.

6. Before ending this brief study of several of the New Testament words for worship, there are several other words that need to be briefly discussed in order to give us the fullest possible overview of the New Testament concept of worship. a) "LEITOURGIA" means ONE WHO IS RESPONSIBLE TO MINISTER to or on behalf of another, such as in 2 Corinthians 9:12 where others helped needy Christians. Paul says "for the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God." It is also in Philippians 2:17 where Paul is "being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith." Thus, serving is also worship in the New Testament context.

b) "LEITOUGEO" means to RENDER PUBLIC SERVICE at one's own expense or, more specifically, to serve God by fulfilling the office or ministry to which one has been called (as in Hebrews 10:11 where it says that "every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices....") They and we are to fulfill our calling. And in the New Testament, all have been called to a particular service or ministry, without exception, because to each has already been given gifts or ministries, and God will not revoke what He has given for serving.

c) "SEBAZOMAI" occurs only in Romans 1:25 where Paul negatively says that "they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator...." Here it means to HONOR AND BE DEVOTED TO another religiously, without hesitation or conflict.

d) "THERAPEUO" means to serve, as in Acts 17:25 when Paul is preaching to the Athenians and says that "neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things." It also has the more general meaning of rendering medical service, to heal, cure or restore to health as in Luke 9:1 when Jesus "called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons, and to heal diseases." Thus, personal physical service is rendered by healing their sickness.

New Testament worship is one of great joy and celebration, of having access to God and responding in action to Him and to those whom He places in the path of our life. Yet worship is also the release of our love towards God, that is, an expression of our joy in His presence; it is vocal as a way of verbalizing our adoration of Him; and it is physical as a way of giving our whole being to Him.

LESSONS FROM OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT WORSHIP WORDS:

1. Worship involves physical expression of total surrender to Him.
2. Worship involves vocal expression that leads to silent adoration.
3. Worship involves our spirit, soul, and body in response to His presence.
4. Worship is emotional because it involves our feelings.
5. Worship is voluntary because it is a release of our wills to serve Him.
6. Worship requires a release of our spirit first, then soul and body, as well.
7. And worship is reverential, our standing in awe of Him alone.

c. Why Do We Worship?

The WHY of worship really determines how we worship. If we do not have the right concept of why we worship, then our worship will be lacking the depth of commitment to WHOM we worship. So, why do we worship God?

1. BECAUSE OF WHO HE IS. In Phil. 3, Paul said the greatest thing in His life was knowing God [i.e., understanding and having an intimate relationship with], not the miracles, travels, churches he planted, and so on. It was knowing Him and making Him known. Thus, the more we know about Him as well as know Him, the more we will worship Him. But Who is the God we worship? He is the only Supreme God, righteous, wise, loving, kind, faithful, holy, omnipotent, omniscient, patient, good, unchangeable, gracious, merciful, truthful, and a God of justice and wrath. Worship is for God because it is His right to expect it from us; it brings great joy and pleasure to Him when we worship Him. However, it is also true that when we give Him pleasure, it will also bring pleasure to us. For example, bringing a gift to my wife brings her joy and gives me joy to see how much she appreciates it. Worship is God's enjoyment as we open our spirit totally to Him and He pours out His Spirit upon us. Isaiah 43 talks about the fact that before God there was no other God, and there is none after Him because He is the only God. And often in the Psalms the question is asked, "Who is like Thee?" No one, of course. So we are to gaze upon not only His

majesty, but upon His total uniqueness which is unlike the false gods.

2. Because HE IS WORTHY of our worship. In Ps. 18:3 David says that "I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; AND I am saved from my enemies." But in Ps. 96:4 he adds the concept that because He is worthy, "He is to be feared above all gods." Thus David understands that worship, which is an act of his whole life, led to deliverance from his enemies, and this he experienced personally and continually.

3. Because of WHAT HE HAS DONE, is doing and will do for us. As it says Ps. 150:2 that we "praise Him for His mighty deeds" and in Ps. 107:1-2 that we thank Him who has redeemed us from the hands of our adversary. In our present time, an adversary can be human or angelic. Our worship, then, is poured out before Him because He really does keep the evil far away from us so that we are not destroyed. It says in 1 John 5:18 that "the evil one does not touch him." In the Greek, the word means "will not cling to"; so the devil may attack, but he will not be able to hold on to us, but will be repelled.

4. Because HE COMMANDS IT, as Moses wrote in Deut. 12:11-12: "Then it shall come about that the place in which the Lord your God shall choose for His name to dwell, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution of your hand, and all your choice votive offerings which you will vow to the Lord. And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God, you and your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates." God's command is a directive to us to never neglect what He requires [cf. Ephesians 5:19; Rev. 19:5].

5. Because IT IS "GOOD" for us to worship Him. In Psalms 92:1-2 and 147:1, the Psalmist says that it is noble, honorable and respectable to worship God and that is good. But the word "Tob" also means "morally acceptable," which implies that we have a moral obligation to worship Him--it is a duty, obligation and responsibility on our part owed to Him.

6. Because IT IS PROPER, which simply means that He deserves our worship. It also carries with it the connotation of being a suitable or befitting activity for us because He has created us to be true worshippers [Ps. 33:1]. Some think that it is not dignified to express openly our worship in lifting hands, clapping, shouting, dancing, etc.; but this attitude is contrary to the Word of God [cf. what happened to Michal who despised David's worship, 2 Sam. 6:14-23].

7. Because IT GLORIFIES OR HONORS GOD, and He promises that if we do it, "to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God" [Psalms 50:23; cf. 69:30].

8. Because HE SEEKS FOR WORSHIPPERS. There is no clearer statement from Jesus than in John 4:22-24 where He lays out at the earliest stage of His public

ministry that "the Father seeks true worshippers." There are few things in scriptures that tell us what God seeks, but here He has revealed the deepest desire of His heart. He knows that true worshippers live a life of worship because all of our actions, thoughts, desires, and plans are acts of worship to either Him, self, or another. [cf. Exodus 15:2]

9. Because HE CREATED AND CHOSE US TO WORSHIP HIM. God created everything with a clear purpose in life. And in 1 Pt. 2:9, Peter says that He chose us so that we "may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light." Thus, our life was partly given so that we might be worshippers. So everyone has the innate ability to worship God; but, unfortunately, many have turned their focus away from the Creator to the creature and, consequently, perverted and distorted the true concept of worship.

10. Because HE IS IN CONTROL of everything. Jesus said in John 17:2 that God gave Him "authority over all mankind," so that no one is conducting his/her life outside of the realm of His authority. Likewise, in Romans 8:28, Paul says that "all things work together for good to those who love Him, and live in accordance with His purpose." We see that not only does He control all events, people and circumstances, but also He will use all seemingly negative and positive events to benefit His people. So our worship is to Him who orders all things for good for His people.

11. Because ALL THINGS BELONG TO HIM, just as David says that "the earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it." So because God has created us to be worshippers, then He expects the whole of all creation [mankind, animals, physical universe] to worship Him. And often in scripture we see the metaphors that all nature is to worship Him, such "all the trees of the field will clap their hands" [Isaiah 55:12]. The whole earth groans for a release to fully express worship to God so they can be fully used for what God created them to be used for.

12. Because EVERYONE IS GOING TO WORSHIP HIM eventually. There could be no clearer indication in scripture than what Paul says in Phil. 2:9-11: because "God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." One day God will command everyone to bow and worship Him verbally and openly. This will be a great day for the redeemed, but an awesome day for the unredeemed. And what a great shout will be heard throughout the universe, all to the praise and glory of God!

d. Who Should Worship?

1. PEOPLE OF GOD [Ps. 79:13]; righteous [Ps. 140:13]; saints [Ps. 145:10];

redeemed [Ps. 107:1-2]; those who fear Him [Ps. 22:23]; and His servants [Psalms 113:1; 135:1]. The Psalms also stress the importance of our soul, or inner being, praising and worshipping Him [Ps. 103:1-3].

2. ALL CREATURES. "All flesh will bless His holy name forever and ever" [Ps. 145:21; cf. Psalms 148:11-3; 150:6]. The scripture seems to indicate that after the judgment, even those who will be placed outside of the presence of God [2 Thessalonians 1:9] will still be worshipping Him whom they must worship even in the deepest pain.

3. ANGELS. "Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts!" [Ps. 148:2].

4. EVERY NATURAL ELEMENT. "Praise the Lord from the earth, sea monsters and all deeps; fire and hail, snow and clouds; stormy wind, fulfilling His word; mountains and all hills; fruit trees and all cedars; beasts and all cattle; creeping things and winged fowl" [Ps. 148:7-10].

e. When Do We Worship?

Worship is most often understood as what we do on Sunday morning in our church services. There is a very limited concept of when worship actually occurs. However, the Bible is abundant with instructions as to when we should worship the Lord. In fact, worship in the Bible is seen as an ongoing, lifetime obligation on our part; so the scriptures only briefly mention when we should worship because it is assumed that worship will occur regularly and continually on our part.

1. We worship AT ALL TIMES. "I will bless the Lord at all times" [Ps. 34:1a]. God who lives outside of time sees our lives, as one continuum; therefore, time is not an essential element of worship because it is merely a way of measuring time or separating events. For God, worship is something that should normally occur all the time without concern for time.

2. We worship Him WHEN WE REPENT of our evils. Oftentimes the scriptures mention worship in the context of His mercy for us who are still sinning. For David says to God "to be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness, according to the greatness of Thy compassion blot out my transgressions" [Ps. 51:1]. And part of his reasoning was so that he could have a broken heart to offer true sacrifices to Him: "Then Thou wilt delight in righteous sacrifices" [v. 19].

3. We worship AT THE PLACE God says: "And He said, `Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain'" [Ex. 3:12]. Many times in the Old Testament God commands the Jews to worship at His altar, or at a mountain or specific place He had set aside for worship. So it is obvious that God chose the places of worship in the Old Testament times. But today, there is a greater freedom for worship because worship is no longer defined by where we worship, but mainly by how we worship: in spirit and truth [John 4:24], in holy array or "holiness"

[1 Chronicles 16:20], in reverence [Ps. 2:11], in the Lord's house [Jeremiah 26:2] which is now when believers gather together.

4. We worship WHEN WE BRING OUR GIFTS AND OFFERINGS to Him, as it says in Deut. 26:10: "And now behold, I have brought the first of the produce of the ground which Thou, O Lord hast given me. And you shall set it down before the Lord your God, and worship before the Lord your God."

5. We worship AT HIS FOOTSTOOL, or holy hill, as it says in Ps. 99:5, 9: "exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His footstool...and worship at His holy hill."

f. Where Do We Worship?

The Old Testament limited worship to a place designated by God; but in the New Testament, God has called us to go into the entire world to proclaim His excellencies [1 Pt. 2]. Therefore, He no longer designates a specific building but a general approach wherever He is.

1. In the place of worship: Psalms 22:22, 25; 100:4; 107:32; 149:1; 150:1

2. Among the nations: Psalms 57:9; 108:3

3. In the midst of people: Ps. 109:30

g. How Do We Worship?

Individual and corporate worship is essential to the Christian life. Individual worship is blessed, but corporate worship releases the full measure of God's blessings that can only occur there and not in an individual setting.

We should note that there is a difference between form and substance in worship. Having the form is simply the visible, external actions, but the substance is the internal, inner desires in our worship that can only come out of our spirit. Form without substance is false worship. For example, the Pharisees tithed properly; but as Jesus said, they were still unjust, unmerciful and unfaithful men [Matt. 23:23] because their actions did not come out of their spirit, or heart's desire to serve and bless God. If anything, their desire was to maintain power and position. To be true worship, external actions must reflect proper internal attitudes and desires.

True worship occurs when we give our best to God; therefore, the "how" of worship includes what is appropriate on each occasion, as well as what is most worthy to give to Him [cf. the sacrifice of Isaac]. And dependence on the Holy Spirit is crucial here. For example, each time we gather as the church, the Holy Spirit should have complete freedom to order or re-order our service. If we are going to grow in worship, then we need to be wary of doing the same thing in the same order every time. Even non-traditional churches and groups have developed stifling traditions that only quench the Holy Spirit. So the "how" of worship must be subordinate to the One who leads worship, the

Holy Spirit.

The form of our worship is defined by what the scriptures give as examples for us to follow. Listed below are Biblical examples of how God's people have worshipped Him in the past. But since God is creative, we should not limit ourselves to these forms as long as what we do brings honor to Him and is inspired by the Holy Spirit. [NOTE: Musical instruments are not specifically mentioned in the New Testament, which is interesting; but in the Jewish context, music was normal and acceptable].

True worship will have form (as described below) and yet freedom for the Holy Spirit to lead and mold as He flows. Form is how we worship, but freedom is the variety and touch of creativity in our worship. Freedom allows for spontaneity as well as variety without restricting or hindering. And, Biblically, worship involves the whole church; so it is only natural to expect each person to participate in, and to flow with the Spirit in, each service. In that freedom, we will oftentimes see a variety of worship forms occurring simultaneously in the same service. So do not be afraid of variety nor force conformity when the Holy Spirit gives freedom, as long as it is glorifying God and edifying the believers.

Also, keep in mind that even though there is a variety of forms, not all forms will be used in each service. In fact, the Spirit may lead us to concentrate on one or two aspects of worship on one occasion, and many on the next occasion. But whichever form or forms is inspired by the Holy Spirit, all of these forms are godly because God Himself prescribes them as acceptable.

1. Through MUSIC. God commanded the making of instruments as a means of worshipping Him. Musical instruments are tools of expressing our worship to God with sweet sounding melodies. God specifically says that music will be by a) the Priests, 1 Chronicles 23:5; b) David, Ps. 150:3-5; c) in heaven, Rev. 14:2. So music is a common form of worship. In Colossians 3:16, true music is from the heart and not from the head. Music was seen in the Old Testament and New Testament as essential to create the right spiritual atmosphere for prophecy (2 Kgs. 3:15-16; 1 Corinthians 14).

NOTE: Music is a very powerful instrument in the worship of God, as well as in other ways, too. For example, in Joshua 6 and 2 Chronicles 20, music was an essential spiritual weapon for WAR! In these passages, the author speaks of defeating a city and 3 armies arrayed against Israel. As the music, song, and shouting went forth to heaven, God proceeded to destroy His enemies in the presence of His people. Thus, we can see that God chose music as one way of calling down heaven's judgment upon those who opposed Him. But music is also an important ingredient in REVIVAL, as revealed in 2 Chronicles 29: "He stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with harps, and with lyres, according to the command of David...and the Levites stood with musical instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. Then Hezekiah gave the order to offer the burnt offering on the altar. When the burnt offering began, the song to the Lord also began with the trumpets, accompanied by the instruments of David...while the whole assembly worshiped, the

singers also sang and the trumpets sounded; all this continued until the burnt offering was finished. Moreover, King Hezekiah and the officials ordered the Levites to sing praises to the Lord with words of David and Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with joy, and bowed down and worshiped." King Hezekiah rebuilt the Temple and re-instituted the Temple service as originally given by God. And when he had consecrated the Levites and the Temple, music was an indispensable part of the spiritual renewal in Israel. A similar pattern is seen in 2 Chronicles 5 when Solomon dedicated the original Temple, and music was a large part of the worship service. In fact, God (who is worshipped constantly in heaven with music) directed the use of music in the earthly Temple as a counterpart of the real and final Temple that we will enter into when the new heavens and earth come.

2. Through SONG [native language or tongues]. Singing, especially in the Spirit, awakens our spirit to the presence of God and to receive from Him, as well. Singing is the natural melody that comes out of a heart full of God's joy and expressed back to Him in song. Specifically we see in scripture many who sang in worship of God: Moses, Ex. 15:1-2; Miriam, Ex. 15:20-21; Israel, Numbers 21:17; Deborah, Judges 5:1ff; Priests, 1 Chronicles 15:16; 23:5; Jesus' disciples, Mt. 26:30; Paul, 14:15. And the Bible says that even Jesus Himself sings in the midst of our assemblies: "I will proclaim Thy name to my brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will sing Thy praise" [Hebrews 2:12]. Other examples of song: Psalms 33:3; 51:15; 71:8; 100:2; 109:30; 145:21; 149:5; Mt. 26:30; 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Col. 3:16; 1 Pt. 2:5, 9. The ministry of the Old Testament priests enables us to understand how to worship fully today.

But singing should never be limited to known spiritual songs. We can also sing words of prophecy--words of encouragement, comfort, or exhortation (1 Cor. 14:3). So singing is simply one of form of expressing our heart's desire to God and others.

NOTE: Paul talks about 3 types of songs in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16:

a) psalms, b) hymns, and c) spiritual songs. A Psalm is simply the singing of a known Psalm from the Psalms of the Old Testament. Hymns are songs that have been inspired in the past and are now part of the church ritual, usually printed in hymnbooks. But spiritual songs are previously unknown songs (to the singer), spontaneously given by the Holy Spirit in the midst of a service, are new, and when sung are heard for the first time. Many of our hymns began as spiritual songs, but have now been recorded and are a regular part of our worship.

3. Through SHOUTING, which is an expression of jubilation and celebration of God, as it says in Psalms 47:1 and 132:16: "Shout to God with a voice of joy" and "her godly one will sing aloud for joy." The Hebrew word "rua" means "to raise a noise." Shouting is the emotional release of our jubilation for what He has done for us. [cf. 1 Sam. 4:5; 1 Chronicles 15:27-28; Psalms 35:27; Isaiah 12:6; Luke 19:37].

4. Through STANDING. It is difficult to really worship God while sitting because we "fold up" our bodies, which hinders one's ability to express worship with their

whole being. "Praise the Lord! Praise the name of the Lord; Praise Him, O servants of the Lord, You who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God! [Ps. 135:1-2; cf. 2 Chronicles 20:19; Ezekiel 44:15].

5. Through LIFTING HANDS, as David says in Ps. 63:4: "So I will bless Thee as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Thy name" [cf. Psalms 134:2; 141:2; 143:6; 1 Tim. 2:8].

6. Through CLAPPING. "O clap your hands, all peoples, shout to God with a voice of joy" [Ps. 47:1]. Clapping was seen as a normal part of worship in the Jewish community and has been carried over today into the Church. [cf. 63:4; 98:8; 134:1-2; 141:2; 2 Chronicles 6:12; Ezra 9:5; Isaiah 55:12].

7. Through BOWING OR KNEELING before God, as was common from the beginning. Often the Psalmist says, "Come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker" [Ps. 95:6; cf. 2 Chronicles 6:13; Dan. 6:10; Luke 22:41].

8. Through PROSTRATION. When the priests had prayed and dedicated the Temple in Jerusalem, the glory of God powerfully filled the House so that they naturally fell down before the only God of heaven and earth [2 Chronicles 5:14]. Prostration before God is the humblest form of physical worship that we can give to God. And even in heaven, falling down in worship of God will be normal throughout all of eternity, as the creatures and 24 elders are continually doing even now [Rev. 5:14].

9. Through SILENCE. Unlike praise, which is never silent, true worship sometimes requires silence in order to simply gaze upon Him, to express those unspeakable thoughts we have of Him, or to "soak" in His presence and holiness. As it says in Ecclesiastes 3:7, there is a time to be silent. Also, in Habakkuk 2:20, "but the Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth be silent before Him." Silence is often a way of recognizing and acknowledging His majesty, authority, and position of greatness.

10. Through MARCHING. In Josh. 6:2-5, God commanded the Israelites to conquer Jericho, but not in the conventional way. Praise, worship, shouting, and the blowing of trumpets when marching around the city were the new divine means of defeating an enemy. Marching is an acceptable way of godly worship.

11. Through TEARS. This is both a sign of worship as well as an act of worship because it is the pouring out of one's spirit in a deep cry. Ps. 126:5-6 says that "those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting, He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed, shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves with him". What the Psalmist describes is a turn of events: weeping and sorrow will be turned into joyful jubilation; but both forms are ways of worshipping God [cf. Luke 7:37-38; Acts 20:19].

12. Through JOY and LAUGHTER, as it also says in Ps. 126:2: "Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with joyful shouting." This is an expression of one's emotions and spirit in excitement and gratitude [cf. Job 8:20-21; Ps. 126:2].

13. Through PRAYER. Prayer is not merely requests, but a cry of the spirit to God to have mercy upon those who do not deserve mercy; to cry to God to save those who do not even want salvation; and a cry to God to come in salvation since this is still the day and time of salvation.

14. Through BOWING ONE'S HEAD. This is a sign of respect for the high position of another (1 Chronicles 29; 2 Chronicles 29).

15. Through DANCING (Ex. 15:20; 2 Sam. 6:14; Jeremiah 31:13; Psalms 149:3; 150:4). Dancing must be inspired by the Spirit and is often joined with singing [1 Sam. 29:5], can be spontaneous, can include skipping, whirling, leaping jumping, etc., and includes the whole body. It was prophesied that it would be restored: Jeremiah 31:4, 13. CAUTION: It is not for show, but to glorify God. It can be carnal, but if He moves us to do it and we refuse, that is rebellion. If someone begins to dance, we are NOT to be observers of those who are dancing; nor are we to stop our praise and worship because someone is dancing; nor should we limit it to only a few. [SEE APPENDIX for full explanation].

16. Through TONGUES. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14 that we can sing "with the Spirit," which is an exalted form of worship because tongues is a heavenly language inspired by the Holy Spirit in, and through, our spirit back to heaven. So there is, in one sense, a free and pure flow of God's truth through tongues.

There are 3 primary attitudes towards the "how" of worship:

- 1) Accept the total Biblical view and obey God's command to worship.
- 2) Reject and resist the Biblical view and live by the old traditions, or
- 3) Say, "The Biblical view is not my tradition, but I am willing to try to understand, so Lord help me to change and obey."

Ideally, #1 is the best attitude, simply to accept the truth of the scriptures and obey what God has revealed. But so often there is an ingrained attitude of resistance, especially when a person comes to understand that worship is very expressive and requires multiple changes in their attitudes and actions. They are being stretched beyond their "comfort zone." God is calling them to do something they may not be accustomed to, nor fully believe they should. Thus, many individuals and churches are dying because of a partial or total resistance to the full Biblical dynamics of worship. However, #3 can be the ideal for most believers. Even if they are not accustomed to the Biblical view of worship, if they are willing to learn and change where the scriptures clearly reveal God's will, then they will grow by grace into fuller worship. So let us pray for the move of God's Spirit to speak and move the body of Christ into genuine worship!

NOTE: If a particular form of worship is only mentioned in the Old Testament and not the New Testament, should we reject it today? This is a question that has been hotly debated and,

unfortunately, has divided some believers. But let us look at a simple reality: a) Jesus was a Jew, and the Old Testament forms of worship were His forms. Thus, Jesus understood worship to be very expressive, and surely He participated in it. b) When a Jew became a believer, did he suddenly exclude all of his former ways of worship? Of course not. The first believers continued meeting in the Temple and synagogues where they would have participated in Old Testament style of worship. So we can honestly say that Old Testament worship forms simply carried over into the New Testament Church, especially since they initially met in the Temple and synagogues, and later from house to house. So where the New Testament is silent, we must turn back to the Old Testament explanation and not sharply divide the Old and New Testament forms of worship. And unless the New Testament specifically deletes the Old Testament form of worship, we can rightly assume that it is acceptable to God today.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why must worship be expressed in outward bodily action?
2. How do our actions reveal the God we worship?
3. Why worship God?
4. What is the difference between "form" and "substance" in worship?
5. How can you have both form and freedom in worship? Does not one exclude the other?
6. Why does the devil attempt to pervert music in worship?
7. What are psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs?
8. Are the Old Testament forms of worship applicable today?
9. What is your attitude towards worship, and how can you change it for good?

VII. PURPOSE AND DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN PRAISE AND WORSHIP

Purposes

In understanding worship, it is important to know the purposes for worshipping God because that will enlighten and encourage us to grow in our worship. We are the New and Eternal Temple of God's presence here on earth and will one day be gathered into His eternal and holy presence in heaven. So knowing the purposes will help us to understand why we must be worshippers now all the time.

1. TO EXALT GOD AMONG ALL PEOPLE. 1 Peter 2:9 says that we are created, redeemed, and anointed to be priests in order to "proclaim the excellencies of Him." Therefore, our primary purpose in worship is to exalt, extol, broadcast, elevate, glorify, laud, celebrate, venerate, hail, praise, and honor the mighty Lord God of heaven and earth among all the people, and even to the heavenly host around us.

2. TO EDIFY, TEACH AND CORRECT OTHERS IN OUR WORSHIP. 1 Corinthians 14 speaks very clearly of edifying others, whether we sing in the Spirit or prophecy. But it also speaks of convicting non-believers of their sins when they come into our worship services because true worship will cause the ungodly to "fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you." What a powerful picture of worship, a convicting work of the Holy Spirit as God's people open up their hearts to Him so that even the non-Christians are convicted of their sins simply through the presence of God's people in worship as the Holy God draws near to them! So worship lifts up the mighty name of Christ who draws near to us to cleanse, correct, and edify His people; but it also leads others into obedience to Him.

3. TO EDIFY ONESELF. Spiritual growth is a primary goal of our Christian life, as Paul told the Galatians that he would labor "until Christ is formed in you" [4:19] and to "present every man complete [mature, perfect] in Christ" [Col. 1:28]. But once again, in 1 Corinthians 14, Paul emphasizes the importance of building up oneself through the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the context of church worship. Eight times he says that the use of the gifts of the Spirit in worship is to "edify," or improve, all others present. So as we seek to praise and worship God as a body of people, we should be aware of the fact that we and others will be built up spiritually in the midst of our worship if we worship from the depths of our heart to bless God and not merely to receive something from Him.

Distinctions

In order to understand worship, we have to distinguish it in all of its ways from praise. Otherwise, we will confuse and merge the two together and thereby diminish both.

1) INITIATOR OF OUR ACTION. Praise can begin in the mind, will or emotions and is a response usually of the soul and emotions for what He has done. So it originates in man and is

directed to God. Worship, on the other hand, can only begin in our spirit and is more concerned about Who He is. Therefore, it cannot originate with man, but is initiated from heaven by God in our spirit and flows from our spirit back to God in heaven as enabled by the Holy Spirit. Worship is much deeper than praise and purer than praise.

2) MOTIVATION FOR OUR ACTION. Praise is motivated by our need to thank God for His actions and to receive more help from Him in the future. Whereas worship is motivated by our desire to give gifts to Him. Praise comes because we are blessed; worship comes because we want to bless God. And our motivation in worship will also inspire our actions in the body: bowing, clapping hands, etc. But as Paul says, if it is not motivated/initiated by the Holy Spirit and is not genuine, then, at best, it is a performance.

3) FOCUS OF OUR ACTION. The focus of praise is primarily upon the gifts(s) God has given; but the focus of worship is the Giver. In praise, we concentrate on God's presents already given to us whenever they were given, whereas the focus of worship is to concentrate on His character and presence with us. Praise points to what a person has done; worship always points to the person himself.

4) DURATION OF OUR ACTION. Praise tends to be more of a momentary action usually in direct proportion to a recent action by God; worship is a continual lifestyle of submitting to Him and acknowledging Him in all of our ways.

5) PLACE OF OUR ACTION. Praise is the initial step into God's presence, but worship is what we do once we get there. Praise can be done from a distance, but worship can only be done in the personal presence of God. We praise before we enter, but we worship once we enter.

6) STYLE. The form of expression, or style, in praise and worship does vary: praise is more vocal, whereas worship may begin vocally, but often goes into silent adoration of Him Who is present. Praise is usually more demonstrative in its expression and more emotional; worship is more subdued in action and devotional and elicits deeper emotions of awe and adoration. When we begin to truly worship God, we realize that our vocabulary limits the breadth of our ability to express love to God, so it is only natural to enter into tongues and bodily expression of worship to God to compensate and expand our expressions of worship.

7) STRUCTURE. Praise can be learned, regulated, stopped at any moment, or even read without emotion or excitement. HOWEVER, true worship is unlearned, a spontaneous outflow of our spirit as His Spirit draws near to us; and it normally continues to flow without starting and stopping until we are totally concentrated on Him alone. Praise is seeing how His deeds have aided our lives, whereas worship is seeing the glory and beauty of His attributes as necessary for holy living. Praise has its emotional side reflected in joy, but worship has spiritual exhilaration [i.e., much greater than emotional excitement] in our spiritual contact with Him. Praise can originate in the flesh, soul, or spirit; but worship can only originate in our spirit.

8) EXPRESSION. Praise is joyous and invigorating; worship is more reverent, subdued, and respectful of the One who is present.

9) AIM. The aim of praise is to give thanks for what we have received from Him; the aim of worship is simply communing with, and growing in our relationship with, God. A natural by-product of both is our experience or emotional high as we draw into the presence of the King of heaven and earth--a very electrifying and dynamic experience. Therefore, we should seek to bless and delight Him, and not merely concentrate on ourselves or what we have or need from Him.

10) TIMING. Praise is almost always first in priority, followed by worship as we pour out our gratitude to God. But praise and worship can be mixed together so that there is a natural flow from one to the other, although it almost always begins with praise. Once we enter into worship, praise and worship can mix simultaneously in a beautiful flow of harmonious adoration and celebration.

In short we can say that:

A) PRAISE is talking and singing about God: one-way communication

whereas

B) WORSHIP is talking and singing to God: two-way communication

WORSHIP is unlike PRAISE in that in worship we have these:

- a) a CRAVING for God
- b) a COMMITMENT to Him
- c) a CONCENTRATION totally and only on Him

So the RULE OF LIFE in worship is this: Worship is when I am more conscious of God's presence than anything, or anyone, around me. I am lost in His presence and focused on Him. It must be initiated and empowered by God so that it will flow to Him.

HOW PRAISE AND WORSHIP FIT TOGETHER

Both praise and worship are essential and vitally important for our Christian life. One without the other is not really possible, just as the soul without the spirit is impossible. And the spirit without the soul leads to the inability to express our thoughts, will and emotions. Thus, our life without worship is diminished and deadened. Therefore, praise and worship must always go together. ONLY praise has priority in timing, but worship is a natural outflow of praise. Praise prepares us for worship, as indicated in the Psalms:

Praise and Worship are Linked Together

Psalm 95:1-2 [praise]--->v. 6 [worship]

Verses 1-2 say, "O come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; let us shout joyfully to Him with Psalms" =====> verse 6 says, "Come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." Thus, praise normally precedes worship and helps to initiate worship in our spirit because as we concentrate our mind on who He is and what He has done for us, then our natural posture is to concentrate totally on Him, which produces worship.

Psalm 96:4,7-8 [praise]--->v. 9 [worship]

Verses 4 and 7-8 say, "For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods...Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory of His name; bring an offering, and come into His courts" =====> which leads to verse 9 saying, "Worship the Lord in holy attire; tremble before Him, all the earth." Once again, we see praise as the door to open worship in the life of the individual and congregation.

The Church must never separate praise from worship because both go together intricately. One without the other will take away from our devotion to God and diminish our commitment to Him.

BUT THE KEY IS HERE: Praise without worship is not enough for God or us! In 2 Chronicles 5:11-14, Solomon dedicated the Temple, brought the ark in, sacrificed innumerable animals, but the glory of God did not descend until the people of God praised and worshipped Him in song and music: "in unison [a key ingredient to the calling forth of God's presence] when the trumpeters and singers were to make themselves heard with one voice to praise and glorify the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice accompanied by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and when they praised the Lord saying 'He is good or His lovingkindness is everlasting,' then the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God." Only then did the mighty presence of God descend upon the people so that they could not even stand in His holy presence. We see the crucial link between praise and worship, or service, as intimately connected. So let us never think that we can separate the two, or have an option to choose one or the other, but remember that our praises and worship are directed to God. He desires the two to always be together.

Praise and worship are always something we do, not merely something we think or feel. Praise and worship ARE OUR SPIRIT/SOUL IN ACTION through our body because without action praise and worship are dull, lifeless, and questionable, at best. So let our praise and worship always lead us to deeper devotion and service to God and on His behalf because Jesus said that we are to work while there is light. So let us go forth praising and worshipping Him with all of our might.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are the 3 primary purposes for worshipping God?
2. What are some of the clear distinctions between praise and worship?
3. How do praise and worship actually fit together?
4. Why did the presence of God come into the Temple in 2 Chron. 5:11-14?

VIII. A BROADER VIEW OF WORSHIP

Expanding our horizons in worship is necessary if we are to have a broader view of Biblical worship. We will now briefly explore some of the important aspects of worship as a way of enlarging our view and perspective.

a. CELEBRATING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Adam and Eve walked in the presence of God from the very first hour that they were alive, and enjoyed complete communion with Him out of their spirit. In fact, their bodies were uncovered and they were unashamed because they lived in the beauty of holiness. Their entire day was full of activities God considered as acts of worship.

In fact, worship is one of the very first activities mentioned in the Old Testament: sacrifices offered to God by Cain and Abel were acts of worship based on their attitude towards God. [Interestingly, without the inner attitude of humility and love for God, our outward actions are unacceptable to God, as was Cain's selfish gift.] Consequently, we must construct a theology of worship that includes not only the forms in our church services, but the attitude behind our worship that is with us all the time, as well as our understanding that worship always leads to service to and for God--in the church and to the lost and dying world around us.

Celebration is one way to explain worship: we are celebrating the presence of the King in our midst, and worship is the bringing of gifts and offerings to bestow upon Him [i.e., celebrate His coming into our presence]. Just as the wise men brought gifts to baby Jesus as a means of celebrating His birth, we, too, are to bring gifts of praise and worship to celebrate Him.

If we were to enter into the presence of the King of a great empire, what would our response be? One of humility, reverence, lowliness, restraint and yet a sense of wanting to say something worthy and important for the King to hear. We would not be frivolous or silly, but serious and totally concentrated on him. So it is with God Himself: we enter into the throne room of the King of Kings, Lord of the whole universe. And we should come with the same awe of who He is and a sense of respect and honor due to Him, as we would give to any earthly ruler.

Worship is our adoration, reverence and exaltation of the holy, almighty, all-powerful, and universal God. Therefore, our WORSHIP SHOULD MATCH THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PERSON in all of His majesty. What we really think of God and how much we really love Him are revealed in our worship or lack thereof. The more we value Him, the more we will demonstrate openly. Worship can be understood as the external act expressing the true inner attitude toward the person that we worship.

Worship is normally understood to be what we do in our church services on Sunday morning. But the Biblical concept of worship includes all of life and, in fact, is understood as our inner response to God that leads to outward service for God. To adopt new forms of worship on Sunday morning without adopting corresponding forms of service during the other days will deceive the

person into believing that they are true worshippers. But true worshippers have developed a constant inner attitude that is expressed in Sunday service as well as in the family, at work, at school, etc. So when we do gather on Sunday morning, it is not to have some spiritual experience, but to enter into the presence of the King of the universe, to celebrate Him and His presence, and to bring joy to His heart. Worship is expressing our celebration of Who is present with us all of the time.

b. CONSECRATION AND DEVOTION TO GOD

Worship is always an act of devotion and service to the living God because of His greatness and victory in our life. It is a craving of our spirit for the Spirit of God. And worship is very important to God: He gave detailed instructions about worship in the Old Testament [Ex. 25-31] that has carried over into the New Testament. Thus, worship and its forms are extremely important to God. Worship is the dramatic celebration of God in His complete worthiness in such a manner that He becomes the norm and inspiration for our living.

Interestingly, in the Old Testament, all Hebrew terms for worship are verbs that indicate some type of activity. He initiates worship in our spirit and we respond in action towards Him. The Old Testament and New Testament believers always translated their attitudes of worship into acts of worship.

Isaiah 43:7 says that God has created us for His glory: "Every one who is called by my name [in Hebrew it means "those whom God has put His name upon their heart as a stamp of ownership"], and whom I have created for My glory." He has created us to receive a measure of His glory in order to be better worshippers.

c. THE KEY TO MINISTRY

Ministry to God must precede ministry to man if we are going to be effective and follow the Biblical priorities!

Oftentimes we take new converts and immediately make them workers: they learn to witness, lead worship, etc. But God, in His wisdom, wants to make them worshippers first and then ministers second because out of worship will come true, effective service. If we substitute service for worship, we reverse the order of importance and begin to drown out the presence of God with all of our doing rather than all of our worshipping. Service should be an outgrowth of our worshipping God, just as Mary put listening to Jesus first and was commended, even though Martha was a doer.

a. Ezekiel 40:46: the Priests came "near to the Lord to minister to Him." Here, as New Testament priests, we must carefully hold to this principle of coming close to God to minister to Him, not merely to receive something from Him. So when we gather in our regular services, come with the expectation of doing ministry to God.

b. Ezekiel 43:19: Speaks specifically of the sacrificial activities of

those who "minister" to God.

Both verses from Ezekiel have the verb "sharat" and refer to the highest rank and function of the priests as servants to God on behalf of the people. Their ministry consisted of a) singing, b) worshipping, and c) praising God. This was a special privilege because they stood in the presence of our Master to delight Him in service.

c. Acts 13:2: They were committed to ministering ["leitourgeo": performing religious service to God in prayer and fasting] to Him first, and out of that He ministered not only to them as a body of believers, but ministered to the whole church and lost world by sending out Paul and Barnabas.

KEY TO EFFECTIVE MINISTRY: Whenever we minister to God first, He, in turn, will minister to us and through us to others. If we want to grow in ministry, then we need to grow in our ministry to God first.

d. JESUS' VIEW OF WORSHIP

Since He was born in a Jewish culture, it was normal for Him to see, experience and participate in Old Testament style of worship. This would include singing, dancing, praising, shouting, lifting and/or clapping hands, reading, offering, and so on. So whenever we read the Gospels, we must remember that He was living with the Old Testament form of worship, which He approved and did not negate.

John 4:20-24: Jesus explains that God wants a very specific and special type of worship. Therefore, we need to know His perfect way to worship and do it as James 1:22 says to "prove to be doers of the Word." In the verses of John, Jesus gives the 5 Keys to true New Testament worship! The word "worship" is used 10 times in these verses. Therefore, we can learn much about Jesus' eternal view of worship by unlocking the conversation between Jesus and this Samaritan woman. Interestingly, Jesus does not tell us the time, place, or even method of worship, but rather concentrates on the genuine nature of worship as the key to understanding worship today.

1. The PLACE of Worship. Verses 20-21 spoke of the Old Testament rule of worshipping in the mountain or in Jerusalem as a necessary requisite in order to have true worship. However, today there is no limit as to where we can worship God because He is everywhere. 1 Corinthians 6:19 says that because our body is now the Temple of the Holy Spirit, there are no limitations as to where we can worship. So wherever we are, we are the Temple and He is present. Thus, all restrictions have been removed and we are free to worship Him anywhere.

2. The TIMING of Worship is now, not in the past or in the future, because He is in the present, our "now." Jesus said in verse 23 that "an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father." Timing is no longer a factor in worship because we live in the "now" already, so there is no expectation of worship only in church services and buildings. Likewise, we are the "Temple," so we are free to worship whenever we choose because the time is always NOW!

It is important to recognize and act on the "now" theme of worship! Whether you are at work, home, shopping, playing or whatever, worship is for every moment of life. And it is important to recognize that He wants us to be free in our spirit to worship Him without hesitation or fear of what man may think. Therefore, the NOW of worship frees us to respond to Him wherever and whenever His Spirit moves our spirit to worship.

3. The CHARACTER of Worship is in "spirit and truth," as Jesus said in verse 23. If Jesus IS Lord of our life, then we can worship in spirit and truth. But what does that mean? First of all, it means that He has established certain qualifications for those who will be called true worshippers. In order to qualify, one must understand what He requires and then determine if he meets the standard.

Secondly, He is Spirit and therefore we must worship Him in a way that is like His nature: spiritual. But, specifically, what does it mean to worship "in spirit"? It means

- a) to be motivated by, or with, the Holy Spirit as the initiator behind our worship of God
- b) to be full of the Spirit so that we can worship "in the spirit" [cf. Phil. 3:3: We worship "in" the Spirit of God]
- c) that we worship through the Spirit because He is the connector between God and us as worshippers
- d) that we worship because of a spiritual relationship we have with God because our spirit touches His Spirit, which is the very center of man touching the very core of God
- e) that it is communication because it is spirit to Spirit, which is the highest form of communication
- f) it is directed by the Spirit to God in heaven.
- g) it is total concentration and focus on Him to the exclusion of all else.

But True Worship must also be "in truth." "In truth" means "as not concealing," or to do it openly--to worship OPENLY and not hide from others whom we serve. But it is also to worship in the ways that He has revealed as acceptable to Him, just as He did for the Old Testament worshippers. Nicodemus came at night to Jesus because He was probably ashamed of Him; but acceptable worship is to unashamedly declare Him before all mankind.

KEY CONCEPT TO LEARN: Jesus said that true worshippers MUST worship in spirit and truth. He qualifies the type of acceptable worship with a command: IT IS A MUST! Therefore, if we are going to please Him and grow in worship, the MUST of Jesus has to be accepted by every

believer so that we can move forward into true worship.

4. The PEOPLE of worship are "true worshippers" who worship not only out of their spirit, but also "in truth," which is in accordance with the ways that He has given to us as acceptable [see Section IV, g]. Therefore, as Jesus said in verses 23-24, these are the really spiritual worshippers! Soulful worship depends upon feelings and external motivation at one extreme because it is what "I feel"; but also soulful worship can go to the other extreme by saying it is what "I want" or what "I think" is best, which is a mere demand of the will and idea of the mind. True worship depends upon divine anointing, the divine descriptions already given in the Bible, and our inner attitude toward the God of the universe. True worshippers have form, but also power and unlimited energy to worship Jesus.

In scripture we are often told to "seek" Him while He may be found, or to "seek" first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. So, generally, we are the seekers. However, in our passage, God is said to be the seeker, and this is unique for God seldom seeks anything. It is true He seeks the lost, but here He is said to be the seeker of those who will truly worship Him. WHY? Because worship is one of the most important activities that His creatures can give to Him. And it is one of the few activities constantly occurring before His throne. So He is looking for those who not only will participate in worship, but those who indeed qualify to be called true worshippers for all eternity. So in John 4:23, God says that "He seeks" true worshippers. The word "seeks" [zeteo] is a present active verb meaning that He constantly, consciously, and willfully seeks after those who will worship Him as He has prescribed. He is actively seeking throughout the earth those who will worship Him in [by, through, and with] the Spirit and in the true manner He desires.

5. The PERSON we worship is our Father in heaven and His Son who revealed Him. God is the most exciting and wonderful Person in the whole universe. Therefore, we worship the BEST PERSON when we worship God Almighty. Every other religion has a god who is less than perfect, eternal, all-powerful, all-loving, all-wise, and holy. So as true worshippers, we point others to the only Person who should be worshipped. God is seeking for true worshippers who can identify the real God and not just worship a god. Thus, our worship is directed to not only a real person, but to the only true and total person.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How did Adam and Eve worship God?
2. If you were taken before God's throne, what would you do?
3. Why should worship always precede preparation for ministry?
4. Can worship prepare us better for ministry? How?
5. How did Jesus' view of worship change the Old Testament view?
6. What does it mean "to worship in Spirit"?
7. What does it mean "to worship in truth"?

IX. WORSHIP: OUR ATTITUDE MAKES THE DIFFERENCE.

Our attitude is the inner beliefs that we have about something and is determinative of how we respond to someone or something. In order to be a true worshipper of God, we need to have "godly" attitudes so that we can enter into genuine worship of Him who delivers and redeems us. But what should be our attitudes?

a. **HOLINESS.** This is our respect for His purity. God is so totally unlike anything that He has created and is so totally pure and untouched by sin, Satan, or the world, that He is completely holy. He is separate from us and unlike us in the purity of His nature. And when we come to worship Him, we must come through confession and the blood of the Lamb that cleanses us continually "because He is faithful and righteous to forgive [continual work] us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" [1 John 1:9]. But it means not only to be separated from everything that pollutes our lives, but also to be dedicated to serve Him in holiness.

WE CAN BE HOLY! WITHOUT IT WE CANNOT TRULY WORSHIP GOD! How can we do it? God 1) commands it in 1 Pt. 1:15-16: "Be holy in all your behavior because I am holy." It is not an option but a spiritual requirement. 2) He gives us the reason that we must be holy when David asks, "Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place? He who has cleansed hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood, and has not sworn deceitfully" because no one can come into His presence without being holy first [Psalm 24:3-4]. 3) He has already given us the ability and power to be holy; therefore, it is within our reach, as it says in Ephesians 1:4: "He chose us in Him...that we should be holy and blameless before Him." 4) He calls each of us individually and as the church, collectively, to be holy and to take responsible actions to remove all impurities. "Therefore, having these promises beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" [2 Corinthians 7:1]. And 5) He demands that the congregation pursue holiness as a goal so that their worship will be acceptable to God: "pursue peace with all men, and sanctification without which no one will see the Lord" [Hebrews 12:14]. Whenever we obey God's will, the results of holiness will be a clear conscience, an open heart, and a sincere desire to pour out ourselves into worship before Him [Hebrews 10:22] so that we can draw close to Him without burden, guilt or filth. **REMEMBER:** We must put away not only all unholy actions and attitudes, but any questionable action because without faith [i.e., a word from Him to do it], it cannot please God.

b. **HUMILITY.** This is our respect for His position, as Isaiah said in 57:15: "For thus says the high and exalted One who lives forever, whose name is Holy, 'I

dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.'" Humility is an attitude of the heart. It is the recognition of His high position and our lowliness (which does not exclude the fact that He has given us value). But humility also means to be dependent on God in our worship. It is not us, but Him, who initiates true worship by His Spirit in and through our spirit. So humility is having a clear view of God and ourselves simultaneously.

c. A BROKEN SPIRIT. This is our respect for His greatness. As David says in Psalm 51:17, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." David used the Hebrew word "Shabor" which means "to shiver, to break into pieces, or to reduce." But he also talks about a broken heart; the Hebrew word is "Dakah," which means "to crush" [i.e., stone that was crushed into talcum powder]. Brokenness is simply a state of having all resistance to God torn down and crushed so that He has total access to and through us and can produce beautiful worship. This is the process of preparing us to enter into His presence with the beauty He requires because David says that one thing he desires "all the days of my life, to behold the beauty [i.e., majesty, delightfulness, greatness] of the Lord, and to meditate in His temple" [Ps. 27:4]. In order to behold His beauty, we must learn to worship in the beauty of holiness.

d. GIVING. This is our respect for His expectation to receive from us. In Exodus 23:15, Moses gave the commands to God's people on how to worship Him, and he says that "you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread...as I commanded you, at the appointed time...And none shall appear before Me empty-handed." Again, this same command is reiterated in Exodus 34:20 [cf. Ps. 29:1-2; 100:4]. Unfortunately, more come to receive from God than give to Him. Yet God desires to receive praise and worship even more than we desire to receive good gifts from Him. Therefore, we must give the best we have to Him as an act of worship.

e. LOVING. This is our respect for His value because love "sees" value in the other person and is ready to serve them however that person needs. In this case, He is infinitely valuable and needs us to serve Him in worship. (1 John 4:16) Since God is love [agape], then we can only approach Him in love, which is the fulfillment of the greatest command: "Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" [Mt. 22:37].

f. SURRENDERED. This is our respect for His plans. A surrendered person is one who has submitted himself to another and has given up resisting or opposing the other person's will. As it say in 2 Chronicles 30:8, we are to "yield to the Lord and enter His sanctuary which He has consecrated forever, and serve the Lord your God." Being a surrendered worshipper allows us to yield ourselves in total abandonment to Him, just as Abraham surrendered to God when He asked him for Isaac. This was an act of worship. Thus, Romans 12:1-2 says that our "spiritual

service of worship" is to "present [i.e., yield] your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God."

g. THANKSGIVING. This is our respect for His actions. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says that "in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus". Our attitude for all that He does for us is summed up in whether we give thanks or withhold it from Him to whom it is due. So let us enter into His presence with thanksgiving.

THE KEY TO FULL WORSHIP, an undivided heart! David, in his last days, tells Solomon, "As for you, my son, Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts" [1 Chronicles 28:9; cf. James 4:8-10]. The Hebrew word for "whole" is "shelem" which means "the same, complete and restored." David is praying that Solomon will serve God with a heart just like God's, but also completely with partition; and it means to serve Him because God is the One who has restored Solomon to life through His sacrifices. Therefore, an undivided heart is one that is

- a) unwilling to compromise
- b) unwilling to divide loyalty with God and something else
- c) remains totally devoted and committed to him
- d) is united to Him in order to please Him as David says in Psalm 86:11, "Unite my heart to fear Thy name."

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why is our attitude so important in worship?
2. How did the Pharisees attitude affect their worship?
3. What is Pharisaical worship?
4. Why is holiness essential to genuine worship?
5. How can a divided heart hinder worship?

X. WORSHIP IN ITS FULL DIMENSIONS

A. Abraham: The True Worshipper

The first mention of worship in the Bible is with Cain and Abel when Cain "brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground; and Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions" [Genesis 4:3-4]. One interesting question to ask is this: How did they know what to offer to God? There are no previous requirements mentioned in the Bible, so the only way they knew what was acceptable to God was that He had already revealed it to them. So when Cain came with his sacrifice, which apparently was neither the first nor best, he knew in advance that it was not what God required. So God's reaction was surely expected by Cain. But Abel, unlike his brother, brought the best first because it belonged to the Lord. So our first worshippers knew the spiritual requirements of an acceptable sacrifice.

However, with Abraham it was quite different. In Genesis 22:5, in the midst of the most difficult sacrifice of his life, Abraham was truly and completely worshipping God by giving what He required, his only son, Isaac. "And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac...they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there, and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood" [22:6, 9]. Truly this must have been one of the most difficult acts of worship ever recorded in the Bible. This act of worship was an act of the greatest sacrifice any father could ever give to God, the giving up of his only son. God demanded not only the act, but He demanded the best, most costly and most precious Abraham had his son. Thus, for Abraham, God's command to worship was an act of obedience and faith--obedience in carrying out His command and faith in believing that He could raise even the dead. Abraham had to surrender to God before his act was acceptable.

We also see Abraham prostrating himself before the messengers of God as an act of worship [Gen. 18]. And out of that attitude and action came service to God. Again, this is seen in Gen. 24:52 where it says, "And it came about when Abraham's servant heard their words, that he bowed himself to the ground before [to] the Lord". Even the elders in Egypt worshipped before Moses when he brought the word of the Lord to them that He was about to deliver them: "So the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord was concerned about [literally, "had visited" where surely He felt their pains and sufferings] the sons of Israel and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed low and worshiped" [Ex. 4:31]. So the earliest Old Testament believers understood worship as a heart-felt love and devotion to God expressed in outward actions of humility.

B. The Tabernacle: Worship Style under Moses and David

Fifty-one (51) chapters of the Old Testament are devoted to the tabernacles, thereby showing their importance to God. "Tabernacle" simply means "tent." But unlike the Temple, the Tabernacle was a moveable dwelling that could be set up anywhere the presence of God was manifested. Its mobility allowed the priests to minister to God anywhere He chose. Today, every believer is a priest and can minister to God anywhere, anytime. This is a key principle in understanding Acts 15:16 when James prophetically speaks that God is now fulfilling the promise to rebuild the fallen

Tabernacle of David [cf. Amos 9:11-12]. The primary purpose of David's Tabernacle was for worship and is a type of the New Testament tabernacle. Even though there were sacrifices, the primary purpose was to praise God in His holiness everywhere. David's Tabernacle lasted only about 40 years; but it was pointing forward to the time to come when He would rebuild the fallen Tabernacle in us, Jew and Gentile alike. [cf. 1 Chronicles 16:1-7 with 37-42 and 23:2-5].

In order to fully understand and appreciate praise and worship, it is first necessary for us to understand the Old Testament and New Testament functions of priests before we look at the Tabernacle itself, since we are functioning as priests today in His temple.

5 PRIESTLY FUNCTIONS IN PRAISE AND WORSHIP

1. TO OFFER SACRIFICES. Formerly, it was to offer animal sacrifices to God [Ex. 29:38-39, 42] and now, "spiritual sacrifices" unto God because we are a spiritual house: "You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God..." and "...let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God" [1 Pt. 2:5; Hebrews 13:15]. Thus, we are bringing gifts to the living God.

2. TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR GOD'S WORK. Both Testaments speak of bringing tithes and offerings to Him [Gen. 14:18; Hebrews 7:1-3, 17]. Even Jesus used in a positive way the fact of giving tithes [Mt. 23:23].

3. TO BLESS GOD'S PEOPLE. The Old Testament is replete with such commands to bless the people of God [Leviticus 9:22; Numbers 6:23-27], but even now we are called to bless one another also [1 Pt. 3:9].

4. TO KEEP THE FIRE BURNING ON THE ALTAR. In the Old Testament, it was a literal fire on the altar of God; but for us today, it is to keep the fire of our hearts burning with praise and worship within us to bless God (Leviticus 6:9, 13). It should never become a ritual as it did in the Old Testament, a form that was done perfunctorily without meaning. Their hearts were not in what they were doing. A true priest understands the meaning of worship and puts his whole heart into it.

5. TO KEEP THE ALTAR CLEAN. Another function was to clean out the ash heap from the altar because, otherwise, it would negatively affect the fire on the altar and make it much more difficult to keep the fire going [Leviticus 6:10-11]. Ashes come from the past fires that have gone out. And, like worship, we can "remember" the fires of yesterday and stay concentrated on that. But God wants us to have a fresh fire everyday. Even though we may remember the glory of yesterday, we should press on today into a new attitude of praise and worship unto Him.

KEY: We are a kingdom of priests [Ex. 19:6a] as well as kings and priests [Rev. 1:6] who draw near to minister to Him, offering spiritual sacrifices of praise and proclamation unceasingly to God [1 Pt.

2:9].

Furthermore, the requirements to be a priest to offer up sacrifices to God were very particular because God accepted only those who met His strict requirements. A short analysis of their requirements will enable us to be better priests to God today:

7 REQUIREMENTS TO BE A PRIEST TO GOD

1. A priest must be CALLED by God (Numbers 16:5). This was a very limited calling and ministry in the Old Testament, even though it was God's desire that all would really be priests unto Him [cf. Ex. 19:6]. Today, God has removed that limitation and called all to be priests unto Him (Rev. 1:6 and 1 Pt. 2:6-9). This is a calling that every Christian can fulfill.

2. A priest must be DEDICATED in his heart to minister unto Him (Ex. 19:22). Dedication comes from outside of the worship cycle; therefore, as Paul says in Romans 12:1-2, we present ourselves to Him as an act of worship. Thus, we are dedicating our lives to Him.

3. A priest must be PERFECT (Leviticus 19:2). God would not accept a priest with any defect because it demeaned His holiness. Today, His call to holiness is our response to His desire for perfect worshippers [cf. 1 Pt. 1:15-16]. And holiness includes not only our attitude and thoughts, but also our behavior. Leviticus 21-22 details the high moral standard required of priests as a necessity to minister to God in purity and holiness. We should expect no less today.

4. A priest was CONSECRATED [i.e., set apart] and ordained by God for the work of ministry to God (Ex. 19:4-6; cf. 28:41). Only God could set apart someone and ordain him to a ministry. Today, He has set us apart as a holy nation, a ROYAL PRIESTHOOD to minister to Him [1 Pt. 2:9]. He has given us the highest calling possible in this life.

5. A priest must be properly CLOTHED (Leviticus 8:7, 13). God specified what types of garments the priests had to wear in order to come into His presence, and also specified the order and placing of the garments on the priest's body. He was very interested in details as a means of telling us that He does not overlook anything in our life. Today, He has specified 7 garments that are essential to New Testament priests, and we will detail them below in the next section.

6. A priest must be ANOINTED (Ex. 28: 13-15, 40-41; Leviticus 8:2). Oil was the symbol of the Holy Spirit that covered the priest with the presence of purity and power. Today, believers are to be anointed with the Holy Spirit from the beginning of their walk with God. Because worship is service unto God, Jesus said that we are to wait until the Holy Spirit comes UPON us before going out to serve. In Acts 2,

before they went out preaching and ministering, they received the anointing of God that led them to worship Him first as a form of service first and then went out to minister to mankind. How we often get it backwards, expecting Him to anoint our work first without ever really entering into His presence.

7. A priest must be CONTINUALLY CLEANSED from his sin (Gen. 35:2-3; Ex. 30:21; 40:12-13). The priests had to offer sacrifices for themselves, as well, because the priesthood did not guarantee perfection. The blood of bulls, rams, and so on, was essential to continuing their ministry in the Tabernacle and later the Temple. Today, we too must come before Him confessing our sins and receiving the continual cleansing work of God in our lives (1 John 1:9).

Once a priest met the holy requirements to be a priest and was able to perform the 5 primary functions of a priest, then he had to be properly clothed before he could enter into his ministry of service to God. The 7 priestly garments with which we are to be adorned with tell us a great deal about the life and attitude of a genuine priest:

7 PRIESTLY GARMENTS IN PRAISE AND WORSHIP

The Lord prescribed the type of clothing the priests and Levities were to wear in the Temple, and it gives us an idea of the quality of praise and worship that He expects from us. Each piece is essential in order to provide the full breadth of praise and worship unto Him.

1. SALVATION, because "her priests I will clothe with salvation" [Ps. 132:16]. God wants us to begin with a renewed spirit so that we have the desire to approach Him in praise and worship.

2. MANTLE OF PRAISE, as Isaiah 61:3 predicts will be our substitute for a "spirit of fainting." God wants us to come to Him rejoicing in what He has done for us. A heart of gratitude covers the whole person.

3. POWER, because Jesus is "sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high" [Luke 24:49]. The anointing with power from above empowers our worship of God and service for Him. Godly priests are powerful priests.

4. WITH CHRIST, as Paul says in Galatians 3:27: "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." Charisma without character is catastrophic. He expects godly character to be formed in our lives so that we come in truth and not in hypocrisy. We come revealing who and what we really are.

5. SPIRIT (1 Pt. 2:5). We are a spiritual house, and our worship must be of the Spirit and not of the flesh or soul. True worship always comes out of our spirit which is the core of our being or personality.

6. HUMILITY is an integral part of our spiritual anointing, as it says in 1 Peter 5:5: "clothe yourself with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." We must clothe ourselves with lowliness and meekness in the presence of a holy and almighty God as well in the presence of one another. A true priest recognizes the high position of God and comes bowing before Him, but also seeks to honor others around him, too.

7. RIGHTEOUS ACTIONS, as He revealed in Revelation 19:8: "and it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." We must clothe ourselves with acts of righteousness that are representative of God's actions on earth.

Ultimately, it is our goal to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven (i.e., to be perfected in our praise and worship of Him with a truly pure and humble spirit). 2 Corinthians 5:2 says that "we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven." In this earthly body we are limited in many ways, and that includes to some degree our ability to praise and worship God because our weak flesh hinders, at times, the willingness of our spirit to exceed the limits of our physical being. So our heavenly, divine clothing which is spiritual will one day be given to us so that we will no longer praise and worship Him with limits, but in unlimited ways.

Worship in the Tabernacle

Now let us look more closely at the worship in the Tabernacle. God gave the plans and pattern for the structure and what was to be done in the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was the most important place in the Jewish camp and was central to all of their lives. Coming to the Tabernacle represented four things:

1) A PLACE OF CONFRONTATION. Each person came with a sacrifice because of his/her unholiness in the presence of a Holy God. Before they could proceed to commune with Him, blood needed to be shed to remove the barrier between them and God--a cleansing had to occur, and only then were they acceptable to Him.

2) A PLACE OF SUBSTITUTION. Man was guilty and due to die, but God in His mercy provided a substitute through the offerings that He required of them.

3) A PLACE OF DEDICATION: those who approached God dedicated their lives to Him not only in service, but to be used by Him as He choose. Gen. 12:7; Ex. 20:23-26.

3) A PLACE OF DEDICATION. Those who approached God dedicated their lives to Him not only in service, but to be used by Him as He chose (Gen. 12:7; Ex. 20:23-26).

4) A PLACE OF WORSHIP. It was essentially a place of worship of God, a total

concentration on Him to please Him.

The structure of the Tabernacle itself provides many interesting spiritual lessons today for us. First, there was the outer wall of white linen, which represented God's holiness and purity. Second, the outer wall had only one entrance, which represented the idea that there is only one way to God, not several. Third, the brazen altar was the initial altar of confrontation between man and God, and this is where the animal sacrifices occurred. It represents cleansing, or as seen by their actions, judgment on sin and forgiveness through blood. As it says in Proverbs 28:13, confession comes before compassion; and for us, confession comes before worship. Fourth, there was the laver where one literally washed as a symbolic means of expressing renewal. After this the priest could enter into the smaller tent which had a holy place and inner sanctuary where God's holy presence was. Fifthly, in the holy place was the Table of Shewbread, or the bread of His presence, as it is interpreted. Thus, He is the life giver on a daily basis. Sixth was the golden lampstand which gave out a great light, thereby representing that He is the light of life. Seventh was the Golden altar, or altar of incense (offered up to Him continually), which represented communion with Him in prayer [see Ex. 21:14; 1 Kgs. 1:50-51]. And, lastly, the priest could now pass into the very throne room of God behind the veil where there was the Ark of the Covenant (which represented the Presence and Word of God) and the Mercy Seat, which represented complete forgiveness and acceptance by God. Pictorially, we see salvation at work through the Tabernacle worship, which Christ fulfilled in His lifetime.

In the tabernacles and Temple were 5 types of offerings [Leviticus 1-7], each having its own meaning and purpose:

1. Burnt offerings: these were sacrifices of love for His mercy.
2. Meal offerings: these were given as a commitment to spiritual service to God.
3. Peace offerings: these represented the healing and restoration of a broken relationship with God.
4. Sin offerings: these represented confession of guilt for specific violations of God's Law.
5. Guilt offerings: each person felt the guilt for their sins and God planned for the cleansing of their consciences threw this offering.

To summarize this section on the Tabernacle, it is exciting to look at the 7 acts of worship in the Tabernacle (1 Chronicles 29:20-22) over 2 days. This two-day event must have been a glorious celebration, and King David took the lead on behalf of the people. From verses 1-20, King David prepared the way for the people to worship God by doing three very important things that any good leader should do before his people will enter into genuine worship. **FIRST**, he presented financial gifts to God above and beyond what was required, and did it with much delight in the house of the Lord [verses 1-5] which called forth a similar response by the people [verses 6-9]. **SECOND**, he then blessed the Lord in the sight of all as a public example [verses 10-19]. And **THIRD**, he

commanded the whole assembly [v. 20] to do likewise. Amazingly, they responded with the seven acts of worship over two days as listed below:

Day 1

1. v. 20: Blessed the Lord: "BARAK" = knelt in adoration of God
2. v. 20: Bowed the head
3. v. 20: Prostrated before the Lord

Day 2

4. v. 21: Sacrificed to the Lord: gave Him what He required of them
5. v. 21: Brought offerings to the Lord
6. v. 22: Feasted [i.e., ate and drank] to the Lord
7. v. 22: With great rejoicing and joy in our God

If you capture the whole picture, you will understand that their acts of worship were not momentary activities, but wholehearted worship that took hours upon hours. So the people gave themselves totally to God in worship.

C. The Temple: Worship Style under Solomon

In once sense, the Temple is an extension of the Tabernacle worship; but for the first time it becomes a permanent point for worship, unlike the mobile Tabernacle. The Temple also added new dimensions to the Jewish worship, as well as reinforced most of the existing spiritual dimensions already in place in the Tabernacle worship. The new dimensions are the following:

1. There was now a National Celebration for the people of God at regular intervals (2 Chronicles 5-6).
2. Solemn assemblies were held to anoint a new priest or king (1 Kgs. 8:14).
3. Musical events were regular to symbolize the ongoing celebration of God (1 Chronicles 16:5, which included a priestly choir: 1 Chronicles 16:5; 2 Sam. 6:5).
4. The Law was read regularly in the Temple as a reminder of God's expectations of His people (Neh. 9:3-38).
5. Prayers were very common because even Jesus said that the Temple was a house of prayer (1 Kgs. 8:20).

And after the Temple had been established, the people regularly participated in worship. In 2 Chronicles 29:25-36, we can examine the 10 ACTS OF WORSHIP of God in the Temple:

- Act 1. v. 25f: There was music by the Levites who used a variety of musical

instruments to worship God.

Act 2. v. 27: Burnt offerings were offered to God not only because He required it, but because this was one way of giving a gift to Him.

Act 3. v. 27: Songs to the Lord were also intertwined with the burnt offerings as a way of celebrating what He had done, and was doing, for them.

Act 4. v. 28: The whole assembly bowed in His presence while the King and singers sang and played before the Lord until the burnt offering was finished.

Act 5. v. 29: Everyone sank down on their knees ["kara"] in reverence of Him.

Act 6. v. 30: As they continued to sing songs of praises with joy, they bowed their heads ["qadad"] in respect.

Act 7. v. 31: The assembly filled their hands with service [i.e., they brought offerings and sacrifices] to the Lord so that all the people were ministering all the time; this was not a part-time job, but a lifetime of service to Him. And today, every believer needs to see and understand the importance of serving God through sacrifices and praises.

Act 8. v. 31: They drew near to God. The whole assembly now drew close to God, not only to give their gifts, but also to draw closer into fellowship with God. Thus, worship is always a drawing closer and closer to the one we worship.

Act 9. v. 34: They consecrated themselves. Interestingly, this verse says that the Levites were "more upright of heart to consecrate themselves than the priests." Thus, true worshippers have removed all offensive things from their lives so that they can be holy before entering into the presence of a holy God to offer holy sacrifices. We must consecrate ourselves more and more to God.

Act 10. v. 35: Lastly, they offered the peace offering to God. They desired to walk in God's peace and joy all the days of their lives.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The New Testament lists 7 sacrifices that we are responsible to give to God: 1) We are to give OUR BODIES, or our whole being, to Him as Paul exhorts in Romans 12:1-2. 2) In Romans 15:16, Paul next speaks of our sacrifice as ministering to the Gentiles. Our second sacrifice is MINISTRY, to actually minister in His name and not hold back or wait for someone to appoint some task for us to accomplish. If each of us has a ministry already given by God, then let us sacrifice our comforts and move ahead in the Spirit, accomplishing all that He desires. 3) Paul says that he was being poured out as a "sacrifice" for the faith of those whom he was training. A life of FAITH which produces obedience, character, and holiness is a true spiritual sacrifice [Philippians 2:17]. 4) The Philippians provided Paul with

some necessary =financial support which, he said, was an "acceptable sacrifice" [4:18]. The GIVING to God's work of the financial resources that we have is a sacrifice that is pleasing to Him. 5) Already we have discussed in Hebrews 13:15 the sacrifice of PRAISE. (6) But also in 13:16, we are told, "Do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased." Our practical CARING for the general needs of others, then, is seen as a sacrifice. And 7) in Revelation 8:3-4, our PRAYERS are seen as sacrifices to God. So the New Testament lists 7 specific sacrifices or, better to say, gifts that we can give to God directly or indirectly by caring for those whom He wants us to care for.

FOUNDATION STONES OF THE TABERNACLE & TEMPLE. In examining the service of the Tabernacle and Temple, it is important to recognize that two foundation stones were necessary in order to have genuine, continual worship:

1. There was NO Sabbath rest. There is no vacation from Praise and Worship because God is always present in His Temple. Our praise and worship must be continually offered up to Him as genuine spiritual gifts.

2. Priestly functions always included Worship, Prayer, Music, Song and Sacrifices to God. As New Testament priests, our functions follow in the line of the Old Testament functions, as well.

Thus, upon these two foundational principles did all of the Old Testament worship depend. And, in once sense, it is still true for the New Testament believers.

D. Revelation: A Picture of Heavenly Worship

The Book of Revelation is a BOOK OF VICTORY and WORSHIP and is a key to the best and clearest picture of true, heavenly worship as it presently exists (and will continue on for eternity). In studying the Revelation given to John, we can understand our eternal function and even implement, to some degree, heavenly worship now on earth. So let us look into the Book to catch a glimpse of the present divine, heavenly worship:

A) Who is worshipped in Heaven? When we begin to think about the fact that everyone and everything in heaven is worshipping the same eternal God, we begin to realize that our total concentration will be on the Eternal and Living God forever. Therefore, we must begin to focus our thoughts and lives more on the One we should be worshipping today and will be worshipping forever.

1. THE ALPHA AND OMEGA (1:17-18). John had a very powerful experience when he encountered the living Christ in His heavenly throne room. And Jesus spoke to him with a resounding voice, saying, "I am the first and the last, and the living One." John fell at

His feet, not only in reverence of Him who sits on the throne of the universe, but because the power of His presence and holiness overwhelmed him. He was "forced" to bow down in fear of the Fearless One.

2. THE HOLY ONE (4:8). The four living creatures recognized the only One worthy of true and eternal worship, and that is why they sing to Him, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, The Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come." Even the animal kingdom will worship the One whose character is epitomized by holiness, or complete separateness, from every created thing and every unholy thing.

3. THE WORTHY ONE (4:10-11). The 24 elders fell down before Him and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever, casting their crowns before His throne in honor of Him who sits on the throne and gives us total victory as represented by the crowns. And they say, "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed and were created." The elders recognized His eternal power and plan in creating all things for His glory and honor.

4. LION (5:5-6). Also, John saw an amazing sight in the heavens when no one was worthy enough to open the book of heaven. Suddenly, one of the elders spoke ever so clearly that John should not weep because "the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals." So John saw the victorious One who was worthy to open the book and, therefore, worthy of all worship.

5. LAMB (5:13). And as the heavenly vision continued, John was given a fuller picture when, immediately, ALL created things [which probably includes all mankind and all animals] from all generations began singing, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." Suddenly, the whole universe is filled with the song of praise and

worship to Him who is ruling over all.

B) Who worships in heaven? Think about the powerful sound of millions and millions of voices worshipping God in heaven. All of us have heard large choirs sing with powerfully effective voices; but when all who are totally dedicated to God will gather in the heavens, what an overwhelming sound will be heard throughout the entire universe as we sing to Him from eternity to eternity!

a) 4:7 says, "and the FOUR LIVING CREATURES ...do not cease to say, `Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God, The Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.'" Even these unique creatures were created specifically to worship eternally before His heavenly throne.

b) 4:10-11 says, "the TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying `Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed and were created.'" Thus, the 24 who represent the original 12 Tribes of the Old Covenant and the 12 Apostles of the New Covenant will not only worship Him, but lay their greatest honor [crowns of authority] before Him who has all authority, power and honor in heaven and on earth.

c) 5:11-12 says, "and I looked, and I heard the voice of many ANGELS around the throne and...the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice `worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.'" The entire heavenly host has been commissioned to worship the Lamb of God who overthrew the enemies of God and rules absolutely over all.

d) 5:13 gives us a broader dimension of who is worshipping God when it says, "and EVERY CREATED THING which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things

in them, I heard saying `to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.'" Thus, God created all living things with the innate sense of worship. Therefore, it is only natural (whether in the animal kingdom or among people) that worship would be normal. In the animal world, it is common to see one who is the leader accepted with honor and, in one sense, worshipped. Among people groups, worship is one of the standard features of daily life. It is clear that we cannot live without worshipping someone or something because worship is an innate part of life.

e) 7:9 says, "After these things I looked, and behold, a GREAT MULTITUDE, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, `Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.'" Every nation will be represented before the throne in worship to God.

f) 15:2-3 says, "And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mixed with fire, and THOSE WHO HAD COME OFF VICTORIOUS from the beast and from his image and from the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God. And they sang the song of Moses...." The tribulation saints will not only pass through a great time of testing, but they will come out victorious, worshipping Him who overcame Satan and his forces here on earth. We see that worship from the heart will enable us to go through the very painful tribulations of life--not only surviving, but also worshipping in the midst of those difficult hours. Many who have suffered this fate for their faith have experienced a very special closeness to God

g) And in 19:1, "a loud voice of a GREAT MULTITUDE in heaven, saying, `hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God....'" At the end will be a great time of continual celebration of God "because His judgments are true

and righteous; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her." We will worship forever Him who overthrew the powers of darkness and those who walk in allegiance with him.

C) Why do we worship? The mere fact that we will be in His presence is enough for us to worship Him. Simply being allowed before His throne will impact us so powerfully that we will want to worship Him. But Revelation gives several specific reasons for our worship of the living God.

1. HE IS WORTHY, or of the greatest value of anyone to receive our worship: the angels, the living, the dead, and all animals will say, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing" [5:12]. Notice that in all of these times of worship there is no prayer, no petition, and no requests, but total concentration on God alone in worship.

2. HE IS THE CREATOR because He created all things, whether animate or not: "for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created" [4:11].

3. HE IS THE REDEEMER who redeems the lost through His precious blood: "for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation" [5:9]. How great is our redeemer who can save the whole world! So in honor of His great redemption we worship Him.

4. HE IS THE RULER who made us kings and priests to serve Him, as John hears the saints singing in heaven, "And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth" [5:9-10; cf. 1:6].

D) How do we worship Him? "How" means more than form. "How" will become an expression of our spirit being poured out in adoration and celebration of the One who walks among His people. The forms

described below must be a genuine expression of the heart towards God.

1. Through WORDS of adoration and exaltation, spoken out of the depth of feelings towards Him who reigns, rules and executes His plans throughout the whole earth (5:11).

2. Through SONG, which is merely putting our words into melodies in honor of Him who sits on the Throne (5:12; cf. 4:11; 5:9-10; 5:13).

3. By BOWING DOWN or prostrating before Him, to acknowledge the honor due to Him, but also to acclaim, honor, esteem, revere, hail, laud, hallow, admire and praise Him (1:17; 4:10; 5:8, 14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4).

4. In KNOWLEDGE and UNDERSTANDING, because He reveals Himself to us. Then we begin to fathom the true depths of His holiness, power, truth, wisdom and glory. Thus, the more we know about Him, the more we will honor Him as the One Holy God of heaven and earth.

E. The Holy Spirit in Worship

The KEY TEXT here is Exodus 40:15 where the Lord tells Moses, "You shall anoint them even as you have anointed their father, that they may minister as priests to Me; and their anointing shall qualify them for a perpetual priesthood throughout their generations." Thus, the Holy Spirit is the essential element in genuine worship, whether we speak about the Old Testament priesthood or the New Testament priesthood of all believers. Without the Holy Spirit, it is impossible to have genuine worship because it is He who:

- a) INITIATES authentic worship. He moves upon our spirit to open up and let the flow of our spirit touch His Spirit.
- b) INSPIRES, i.e., arouses in us the desire to worship Him.
- c) LEADS by setting the mood and direction of each service.
- d) AIDS us in our weaknesses and in His power we can flow with Him.
- e) ENERGIZES us by giving us strength to stand, lift our hands, bow, pray, cry, etc.
- f) CONTROLS our worship through restraining fleshly expressions as well as satanic intervention, if we follow His lead.
- g) GUIDES us into a lifestyle of service to God.

So worship is not merely our spirit responding to God's Spirit, but rather God's Spirit in us worshipping through us.

NOTE: 1 Corinthians 12:3. In pagan worship, it was understood as normal that the god you worshipped would lead and inspire certain speech. But when the Holy Spirit is truly in control, He will restrain the ways of the flesh, as well as excessive and irreverent ways of worship. But people have to be taught, just as Paul was teaching the believers in Corinth, that the Holy Spirit did not inspire such ungodly statements that "Jesus is accursed" [1 Corinthians 12:3]. The Holy Spirit is the safeguard against excesses because He glorifies Christ. Practically, there must be the restraint of the Holy Spirit as exercised by and through the leadership of the church to be sure that everything is done decently and in order. Good leaders will participate in the worship services wholeheartedly, but also carefully watch over the people to be sure that they do not enter into excesses or exhibitionism.

Because there are things in us that hinder worship [see section XII below], the Holy Spirit comes to set us free from bondage, works of the flesh, satanic control, and whatever else hinders or restricts the unlimited flow of God's Spirit in and through our spirit. So when the Holy Spirit frees us, we can begin to worship God "in spirit" in a way that is acceptable to God.

The Holy Spirit is creative and prevents our worship from becoming stale traditions or dull.

He has a variety of ways for us to worship God [see Section VI. g, above]. Therefore, our worship under His anointing will remain fresh, exciting, and full of joy and expectation.

But holiness is at the heart of true worship. God fellowships with those of like nature: like attracts like. The more of God's Word which dwells in us [Col. 3:16], the more we are conscious of His holy presence and the more we will become true worshippers. David said in 1 Chronicles 16:29 that we are to "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" and "worship the Lord in holy array"--literally, "in the majesty of holiness" [Psalms 29:2] and "the splendor of holiness" [Psalm 96:9].

What does it mean to worship in holiness? It means at least 4 things:

- 1) The One we worship is holy.
- 2) The Inspirer of our worship is holy.
- 3) We as worshippers are to be holy for our worship to be acceptable.
- 4) Our form of worship must be holy, acceptable--prescribed by God and, therefore, holy.

1 and 2 concern God and He will always be holy, but 3 and 4 are what we must care for ourselves. We must grow in holiness if we are to continue in worship and fellowship with a holy God. But to grow in holiness means to grow in our sensitivity to sin and hatred for it in our lives and in the lives of others around us. To walk in sin is to desensitize us to the promptings of God's Spirit, so we must remove from ourselves all that offends God because His eyes are too pure to behold [i.e., accept] iniquity: Habakkuk 1:13 says that "thine eyes are too pure to approve [literally, "look at"] evil, and Thou canst not look on wickedness with favor." Holiness, then, is the essential character of God and must be part of us who worship Him.

Also, how we worship God is as important as actually worshipping. God has prescribed in great detail the form of worship that is acceptable to Him. Some may think that this is not freedom if we have to follow some prescribed set of rules for worship. But the Old Testament is replete with great detail about worship because God would not leave it up to man to decide, knowing that all worship degenerates into pagan forms if not strictly taught. Now this is not to take away our freedom but, in fact, gives us true freedom. God has described a variety of forms; and if any believer would simply study all the forms allowed by scripture, then they would not only see many forms, but within each form there is variety, for example, such as music. So enjoy the freedom of worship as He inspires which form would be most pleasing to Him at a particular time. And always keep in mind the command "to learn what is pleasing to the Lord" [Ephesians 5:10]. He is God and we are His people; therefore, our duty is to learn what He wills and to do it.

God wants CONSISTENT and PERSISTENT worshippers. But what does this mean? A consistent worshipper is one who is growing "regularly" in holiness and service to God in all areas of life. This would include such small things as paying a bill on time or doing house work with excellence. Inconsistent worshippers do not stress or work at being holy. A consistent worshipper cannot be walking in sin, consciously or unconsciously. God hates sin and we are to "hate evil, do good," as Amos 5:15 says [cf. Proverbs 8:13]. Therefore, any believer who consistently sins blocks the flow of God's Spirit in worship and shows a lack of fear for Him because we are to "hate evil" as

a sign of loving God [Psalm 97:10].

But God also wants persistent worshippers. God wants one who is not content with mediocrity but who is always "pursuing" excellence in all things. He knows that he is not perfect yet, but presses on towards holiness and doing the business God has for him. As it says in 2 Corinthians 7:1 and Hebrews 12:14, we are "perfecting holiness in the fear of God" to "pursue ...sanctification." They we are to energetically strive for the best, excellence!

Our form of worship is like a gift that we bring to God. If we offer it with our whole heart, in sincerity and joy, then He will receive it gratefully from us. But, and here is a KEY POINT: Our worship will rise only to the level of our holiness and desire to grow in holiness. If we are not challenging ourselves regularly to grow, change, and to know God better, then our worship will begin to become stale, formal, and lifeless.

Because God is holy, He expects our worship to be holy. We, as vessels, must be pure as well as the manner of how we worship must be holy. We must rise to His level rather than expect Him to come down to our level.

Therefore, before we can consistently enter into true worship, the Holy Spirit must confront us about unholy relationships, habits, thoughts, desires, and so on. And His purpose is to convict us, to lead us into confession of our sinful ways so as to break free all unholiness in our lives, and then to crush/destroy all impurities and refine us with His holy presence--purifying and changing us into greater vessels to fill with His holiness and glory, to make us channels for Him to flow through to bless others and even whole nations [James 4]. Anyone can praise God, but not everyone can worship Him because holiness is essential to true worship. The deeper we grow in worship, the greater will be holy confrontations between God and us. He wants to remove the depth of unholiness in our lives so that we can grow in worship. The purer the vessel, the greater the worship. So let us pursue holiness with all diligence.

True worship will also require a greater and growing vision of God. We worship what we know about God; thus, He wants to continually expand our vision of Who He is so that we can respond more to His perfect and infinite nature. Because He is infinite, our worship can grow infinitely.

F. 9 Benefits of Praise and Worship

Hosea was a man who understood the pain of God that comes when we turn away from Him and fail to worship Him as He desires. For example, 6:1-3 says: "Come, let us return to the Lord. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; he has wounded us, but He will bandage us. He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day that we may live before Him. So let us know, let us press on to know the Lord. His going forth is as certain as the dawn; and He will come to us like the rain, like the spring rain watering the earth." God calls out for us to return to Him, that is, to draw near to Him. And, amazingly, He promises 5 things that He will do as we draw near: a) heal us, b) bind up the brokenness of our lives, c) revive us whose lives are nearly extinguished, d) raise us

up, and e) He will come to us. What great promises He has if only we will return to Him!

We should never worship God in order to receive anything, but we should worship Him because of our commitment and obligation to bless Him. However, it is true that there are benefits that we will receive from our worship of Him, but this is simply a by-product of our obedience to His will. So let us look briefly at some of these spiritual benefits that are derived from true worship.

1. RELEASE FROM SPIRITUAL HURTS AND BANDAGES. Oftentimes we are bound in spirit either because of depression, defeat, being overwhelmed by events around us, a sense of inadequacy, or even by evil spirits assigned against us. So how can we break free of such bandages? The Psalmist says in 147:1-3 that worship and praise build up, but also allow God to heal, bind up wounds, and break us free from the past bandages. Worship and praise of God will draw Him closer to us to heal and minister to us! James says that if we humble ourselves before Him and draw close to Him, then we can resist the devil and he will flee [3:6-8]! The greatest and surest way to draw close to Him is through strong praise and worship. When your heart and soul seem down, that heaven and earth are against you, set your mind to sing praises from your heart to worship Him who will deliver and set you on high places. And Paul and Barnabas certainly experienced this while in Philippi.

2. BLESSINGS. Worship of God will release His blessings into our life as He ordains--whether they are spiritual, physical, or otherwise. Psalm 67:5-7 says, "Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the peoples praise Thee. The earth has yielded its produce; God, our God, blesses us. God blesses us, that all the ends of the earth may fear Him." He blesses those who really worship Him which, in turn, will serve as a great witness to the whole earth that God is with true worshippers. [cf. Psalms 147:7-8] However, we must never concentrate only on the material blessings that may or may not come. As New Covenant believers, our greatest blessings are spiritual, such as joy, love, peace, power, and so forth.

In the following numbered sections (3, 4, 5, and 6), Jeremiah 33:6-11 lists four benefits of praising and worshipping God. It would be good to read the verses first, however:

"Behold, I will bring to it health and healing, and I will heal them; and I will reveal to them an abundance of peace and truth. And I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and I will rebuild them as they were at first. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned against Me, and by which they have transgressed against Me. And it shall be to Me a name of joy, praise, and glory before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear of all the good that I do for them, and they shall fear and tremble because of all the good and all the peace I make for it. Thus says the Lord, 'Yet again there shall be heard in this place'...the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who say, 'Give thanks to the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, for

His lovingkindness is everlasting'; and of those who bring a thank offering into the house of the Lord. For I will restore the fortunes of the land as they were at first', says the Lord."

3) PEACE where there has been war and strife:

Jeremiah 33:9, 11 ==> v. 6 [cf. Isaiah 60:18]

4) PHYSICAL HEALTH and COMPLETE HEALING where there has been sickness and brokenness:

Jeremiah 33:9, 11 ==> v. 6 [cf. Proverbs 17:22]

5) God will RESTORE spiritual and material FORTUNES that have been stolen or destroyed by the enemies:

Jeremiah 33:9-11 ==> v. 7

6) VICTORY over sin, Satan, and the world:

Jeremiah 33:9, 11 ==> v. 8

When we concentrate on Him, we gain in power and perspective, and thus grow in our ability to overcome sin, Satan, and the world. But when we divert our worship to something else, we lose because the worship of false gods always leads into sin, moral decay, and hopelessness [cf. Exodus 20:5; see also Hebrews 9:9; 10:2]. As Jesus said in John 4:24, we are to worship in "truth," which means "true character," so that we can grow and overcome all evil.

7. ETERNAL REWARDS. Worshipping God in persecution and being glad brings eternal rewards that await us upon entrance into heaven, as Jesus said in Matthew 5:11-12: "Blessed are you when men revile you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great." And Paul took this literally when he was beaten for witnessing and thrown into a Philippian jail [Acts 16].

8. INCREASED JOY. Worshipping God releases God's joy more and more as the joy of the Lord is our strength because He is pleased with our worship. Luke 24:52-53 says, "And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising God."

9. GOD INTERVENES. Worship moves God to intervene on our behalf, especially when man and Satan work to harm or destroy us and the ministry to which He has called us. In Acts 4:23-31 and 16:25-26, we see very clearly when the believers called upon the Lord, and began to worship and praise Him, that God took note of their need and immediately interceded on their behalf. So even though Satan or man would attempt to do us harm or stop the work of the Lord, praise and worship call God into action on our behalf because if we can praise and worship Him in these situations, then we are acknowledging His absolute sovereignty and wise planning

even in persecution [cf. 2 Chronicles 20].

G. 14 Results of Praise and Worship:

There are additional results that occur not only during worship, but continue even after worship. We should see the larger picture of what actually happens over the long-term in our worship. Worship...

1. CALMS THE TROUBLED SPIRIT (1 Sam. 16:14-23). Saul was tormented by demon attacks and oppression because he had opened the doors to the spirit world through his sins. We see through David the power of music when it says, "It came about whenever the evil spirit from God came to Saul, David would take the harp and play it with his hand; and Saul would be refreshed and be well, and the evil spirit would depart from Him" [verse 23]. Worship and praise through music have a soothing effect up the spirit and mind to bring refreshment and renewal.

2. Allows the Holy Spirit to ACTIVATE THE SPIRIT'S GIFTS. In 2 Kgs. 3:15-16, the prophet Elisha understood that worship oftentimes seems to energize, activate and stimulate prophecy as he said, "Bring me a minstrel. And it came about, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him. And he said, Thus says the Lord...." Therefore, it is important to recognize the place of worship as a necessary element to stimulate the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. To try to move in the gifts without worship will usually be more difficult. Even Paul saw the importance of worship with his spirit and mind as part of the process of entering into the move of God's gift for the Church [1 Corinthians 14; cf 1 Chronicles 25:1-7].

3. Prepares us to engage in SPIRITUAL WARFARE. Satan was the chief cherub. He knows the power of praise and worship and will always try to hinder us because it is a powerful weapon against his kingdom. Interestingly, when King Jehoshaphat fell down to worship God, the Levites stood up to praise and worship Him with a loud voice in preparation for a great battle. On the day of the battle, the king appointed those who would praise and worship God as their plan for defeating the enemy and God did, in fact, destroy their enemy: "Jehoshaphat stood and said, 'Listen to me, O Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, put your trust in the Lord your God, and you will be established. Put your trust in His prophets and succeed.' And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who sang to the Lord and those who praised Him in holy attire, as they went out before the army and said, 'Give thanks to the Lord, for His lovingkindness is everlasting.' And when they began singing and praising, the Lord set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; so they were routed" [2 Chronicles 20:18-23; cf. Ps. 18:3]. War in the heavenly does occur during our times of praise and worship because Satan and his legions are behind all evil armies in the world. And when the Body of Christ lifts up their voices to God in genuine praise and worship, then He draws close to intercede and thwart the plans of the enemy. There is power in praise and worship, not in and of themselves, but because the God of heaven and earth

draws close to those who bless Him so that He will bless them.

4. Leads God's people into a DEEPER COMMITMENT to obedience and holiness in our lives. Isaiah 6:1-10 recites Isaiah's vision of God in heaven--at first he was horrified by the depth of his own sin, but when God had cleansed him, he was a vessel ready for service in worship of Him who had cleansed him completely because now he was totally committed to God. When God asked, "Whom shall I send?" then Isaiah knowing that there would be strong resistance, said, "Here am I. Send me!" Now he was totally dedicated, sold-out to God, and was willing to do whatever God asked, no matter the consequences.

5. Releases GOD'S POWER on His people for ministry (2 Chronicles 20; Mark.6:41-43; Acts 2:4:24-31; 16:26). Interestingly, in Acts 2, there was worship first in tongues, then preaching, and then signs and wonders. So worship is one means God uses to endow His people with power to overcome and to minister to those in need. Ministry without power is fruitless. But ministry with power and character is enduring and powerful.

6. Releases us into SERVICE AND MINISTRY to others. Acts 13:2 gives a brief description of some leaders worshipping God through prayer and fasting, and God's response through the Holy Spirit was the command to "set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." God had already called them into full-time ministry, but only now was He releasing them into service.

7. TRANSFORMS OUR LIVES from the inside out. Romans 8:28-29 gives us the promise of transformation: "We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed [i.e., transformed] to the image of His Son". Romans 12:1-2 gives our responsibility in process of transformation: "Present your bodies" to God and "renew your mind" which will lead to transformation. The more we release ourselves to the Holy Spirit in worship, the more we will become like Him, as it says in 2 Corinthians 3:18--a step by step, gradual, but continual "metamorphosis" in our life, just as a moth "metamorphizes" to become a butterfly.

8. DRAWS GOD CLOSER to us and blesses us [Ps. 22:1-3]. James 4:7-8 states ever so simply the importance of submitting ourselves to Him and drawing near to Him. There is no better way than through worship because He will draw closer to us and will bless and keep us from the evil one.

9. CLEANSSES US IN SPIRIT as well as creates an ethical purity in our attitude and actions. James 4:8 implies that the drawing near of God will have a cleansing effect upon our lives so that we can stand more surely in His peace, power and presence against the presence of all opposition before us [cf. 1 Corinthians 14].

10. BRINGS A HARVEST in our labors [Psalms 67:5-6]. Ps. 136 several times says to give thanks to Him with the result of a harvest in our lives, whether spiritual or material, depending on the need God sees at the time.

11. EDIFIES OTHERS. In 1 Corinthians 14:26 Paul talks about the result of genuine worship, the edification of those who are present. One goal of worship is not only to touch the heart of God, but also to touch the lives of those who have joined together to worship God, as well. Also be aware of the fact that some who come may not be able to worship God due to various problems or pressures; but when we openly pour out ourselves in loving worship, then God will directly minister to those who are bound in spirit, mind, or body.

12. PLEASES GOD. One of the greatest benefits of worshipping and praising Him is that it pleases God: "I will praise the name of God with song, and shall magnify Him with thanksgiving. And it will please the Lord better than an ox or a young bull with horns and hoofs" [Ps. 69:30-31]. Like a Father, His heart is lifted up when He hears the voices of His people pouring out their adoration to Him.

13. SERVES AS A MEANS OF EVANGELISM, turning people back to God. David says in Ps. 40:3 that "he put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; many will see and fear, and will trust in Him." Even Paul stressed this benefit in 1 Corinthians 14:24-25 when he said that the gifts of the Holy Spirit, released through worship will convict the unbelievers, disclosing the secrets of their hearts, and they will fall on their faces [an act of true worship and fear] declaring that God is among His people. What an awesome sight that must be to see hundreds and thousands of God's people gathered together in corporate worship, to sense the powerful presence of the holy God, and to see the gifts of the Spirit flow forth, convicting the lost of the need to repent before the Great Day of judgment comes upon the earth! If only God's people would take seriously this means of evangelism and use it regularly in the streets and centers of their nations, what a difference it would make, what an impact it would have upon the lands!

14. DESTROYS SPIRITUAL STRONGHOLDS to set captives free from sin, Satan, and the world. God's prescription for overcoming Jericho was praise and worship--overthrowing enemy barriers, opening the way for God's people to annihilate their enemies, and to release the land from the sin that so had spiritually polluted the native population: "And it shall be that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people will go up every man straight ahead...So the people shouted, and priests blew the trumpets; and it came about, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, that the people shouted with a great shout and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight ahead and they took the city" [Josh. 6:5, 20; cf. Ps. 22:3].

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important to know the requirements to be a priest?
2. How does the structure of the Tabernacle help us to understand worship today?
3. What are the 7 New Testament sacrifices? How are they different from the Old Testament sacrifices?
4. What do you think heavenly worship will be like?
5. Why is the Holy Spirit essential for a believer to be a consistent and persistent worshipper?
6. What are some of the benefits of Praise and Worship?
7. What are some of the results of Praise and Worship?

XI. WORSHIP AS SERVICE TO GOD

Want to **REVOLUTIONIZE** your concept of work? Or school? Or shopping? Or housecleaning? Or raising children? Well, here is one of the most revolutionary concepts in the Bible that is seldom taught: WORK, in the eyes of the Lord, IS WORSHIP! Worship is not merely limited to our church services, but involves every act and detail of life, whether large or small. So catch this revolutionary concept, and God will transform your view of life in many exciting ways.

Worship is a lifestyle and is much more than what we do in a church service. In order to be a true worshipper, it is necessary to expand our Biblical horizons and develop a theology of worship. It is sad that we have spent so much time in developing our theology of salvation, God, Christ, church, etc., but have neglected one of the most important ideas of Christian living and service: WORSHIP. We would never think of leaving people to their own ideas about Christology, Soteriology (salvation), etc. So why do we leave people to develop their own ideas about worship without defining and spelling out the Biblical concept in detail? Probably because we do not think that worship is very important or broad-based in scripture. But below you will find a wonderful overview of work as worship.

Worship is more than celebration or a momentary act in the church. In the New Testament, worship is also a lifestyle of consecration to God in service [Romans 12:1-2]. Thus, the word "worship" includes the concepts of adoration and service towards others, on behalf of God, as an ambassador (in its whole concept). That is why Paul says in I Corinthians 14:26 that everyone has been given a spiritual gift in order to serve and edify others. Or as Peter says, that "each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another" [1 Pt. 4:10]. Thus,

***GOD SEES OUR WORK AS WORSHIP AND HE HAS
EQUIPPED US TO SERVE OTHERS AS A GENUINE ACT OF
WORSHIP.***

Poverty-stricken spirits cannot enter into rich worship of God. Nor can lazy believers express full worship to God. Nor can those who are burdened down with sins and the pressures of life enter into living worship. Therefore, before we can, or should, enter into true worship and not merely some forms of external expression, our hearts need to be:

A) RENEWED by the Holy Spirit, as it says in Ps. 51:10: "renew a steadfast spirit within me."

B) REFRESHED in our relationship with the living God by repenting and returning to God "in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" [Acts 3:19; cf. James 4:5; 1 Pt. 5:6]

C) RE-DEDICATED, giving ourselves to service on His behalf by presenting "your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God" [Romans 12:1]

As you review the scriptures listed below, one factor will stand out in all: WORSHIP and SERVICE are undeniably linked and intertwined with one another. One cannot exist without the other, and one naturally leads to the other. Consequently:

WORSHIP must be linked with SERVICE

and

WORSHIP must result in SERVICE

and

SERVICE must flow from WORSHIP

KEY CONCEPT TO LEARN: Keep in mind that whomever we worship, we will serve. WHY? Quite simply, worship means that we have dedicated ourselves to another, we are devoted to them, have respect for them, are loyal to them, and we will minister to, or serve, them. Service is a clear indication of who or what we worship and a natural outgrowth of our devotion to the one we worship. You might simply say:

WORSHIP IS SERVICE IN ACTION

The Old Testament Hebrew word for "serve" confirms this: "abad" occurs 290 times, generally meaning "to worship, obey and enslave." But in specific references to serving God, it always means "a joyful, liberating experience of worship and service." And, Biblically, because work can be worship, then our work [whether at home, school, in the factory, a shop or wherever] should be seen as unto the Lord and as a joyful, liberating experience, not as drudgery or a painful experience. We should get excited about going to school, or to work, shopping, etc., because it should be seen as an act of worship unto the Lord.

In Exodus 8-10, 11 times Moses tells Pharaoh to "let My people go that they might serve Me [God]." The Hebrew word is "abad." Moses was demanding freedom from bondage or enslavement to a false god [Pharaoh] because the people were truly devoted and enslaved to the One True God. So they needed to go and celebrate Him in joyful worship away from Egypt.

God's greatest requirement in maintaining true, genuine service is that we must "fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve ["abad"] the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the Lord's commandments"...but also "You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve ["abad"] Him and cling to Him, and you shall swear by His name. He is your praise and He is your God" [Deuteronomy 10:12, 20-21]. Service and worship are intertwined because whomever we worship from our heart, we will serve. Hence,

Fear ==> Obedience ==> Love ==> Service of God

Genuine service begins with the fear of the Lord and is undergirded by obedience to His commands and love of Him. Accordingly, the Pharisees and others who had an outward form of service but an inward indifference towards God did not really fear Him; therefore, they could not obey and love Him. So, if for some reason you do not enjoy your work, school, housecleaning, or other activity, check to see if you understand that this is really worship, and whether you really fear Him, obey and love Him. This is a momentous need for every Christian.

Our attitude is also quite important in how we serve the Lord. Joshua says, "Serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul," but also, "Serve Him in sincerity and truth" which will be indispensable if work is going to be joyful and liberating. Worshipping and serving, then, are linked together as two halves of a whole.

Work <=====> Service

Even Jesus said that we cannot serve two masters: God and money. Amazingly, He listed the alternative god as money which is probably as much a symbol for the material world as meaning "money," itself. So true worship of God will produce true service for God. I encourage you to devote yourself to Him alone and His plans because He will anoint and empower you to serve Him mightily all the days of your life. And studying the texts below will enable you to understand God's view of work and service as linked together.

BIBLICAL BASIS FOR WORSHIP AS SERVICE

Old Testament

- a. Ex. 20:5: "You shall not worship or serve them [i.e., idols]." In this second commandment, God knew that whatever we worship always leads to service. So He demanded total loyalty from His people because the two concepts are always intimately tied together.
- b. Ex. 32:8: When Moses delayed on the mount, the people began to rebel against God. And the Bible says that they worshipped and sacrificed to the golden calf. Again, worship requires devotion that leads to service--and in this case, sacrifices. Religious devotion to a god always flows from the one we worship.
- c. Deut. 4:19: Moses commanded the people not to worship and serve the heavenly planets that God had created for our benefit. Amazingly, people understood that these heavenly spheres had some influence over their lives; and if they acknowledged that they were god, then

their life would be devoted in service to them. For one thing, this false worship was idolatry, but it was also burdensome and enslaving. Worship or service to the true God has the exact opposite effects of worshipping or serving a false god.

d. Deut. 5:9: Again, this is the reiterating of the second commandment [see (a)] given at Mount Sinai where worship and service are intertwined as one truth with two aspects. Here God also reminds His people of His judgment for the disobedient: He will allow the evil influence of sin to pass to the third and fourth generation of those who reject Him and serve and worship other gods.

e. Deut. 8:19: Moses said that "it shall come about if you ever forget the Lord your God, and go after other gods and serve and worship them, I testify against you today that you shall surely perish." Worship can never be separated from service. And with all worship there come positive or negative results. Worship of God leads to life where as worship of a false god leads to death.

f. Deut. 11:16: "Beware lest your hearts be deceived and you turn away and serve other gods and worship them." God would not allow ignorance to overtake His people. So He made it very clear that deceptive worship always lead to deceptive service or, naturally, to spiritual slavery.

g. Deut. 17:3: Moses said that if anyone goes and serves and worships any false god, this is a detestable thing and that they are to be put to death. God has emphatically stated that He hates this! Worship of any false god is wrong!

h. Deut. 30:17: Worship is a turning of the heart to devote oneself to that which is most important to the worshipper. That is why Moses says "if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them...." Moses links true worship not only with service, but also with rejection of any other god because worship leads to obedience. Maybe one reason why so many believers are weak in their spirit is because their allegiance is not fully to God, but divided among many others as well.

i. 1 Kgs. 9:6, 9:9: Moses once again links the "turning away from following God and not keeping His commandments" with going after other gods to serve and worship them. Truly there is a definite link because whomever we worship, our heart is devoted to turning

towards them, following them, keeping their word, and turning away from others. And it seems that many people follow the one who gives them the most pleasure also. Therefore, if we want to be mighty in the Spirit--overcoming all sin, Satan, and barriers in our lives--we must devote ourselves to Him from the heart, to keep His commands and serve Him with all that we have.

j. 1 Kgs. 22:53: Ahaziah, King of Israel, "served Baal and worshipped him and provoked the Lord God of Israel to anger according to all that his father has done." Two principles are set out in this verse: 1) we follow in the sins of our fathers and b) our serving and worshipping any false god provokes God to anger and discipline. But all godly discipline is to correct, instruct and redirect one back into the path of life.

k. 2 Kgs. 21:21: Amon "walked in all that way that his father had walked, and served the idols that his father had served and worshiped them." "Like father, like son" is so true in the worship of God. If the father follows after a false god, so will the sons and daughters. So the principle of keeping ourselves in the love of God, to serve and worship Him, is essential.

l. 2 Chronicles 7:19-22: Solomon, in the prayer of dedication of the greatest Temple ever built, laid out the same principles that worship and service go hand in hand. "But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you and shall go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will uproot you from My land which I have given you, and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight, and I will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples. As for this house, which was exalted, every one who passes by it will be astonished and say, 'Why has the Lord done thus to this land and to this house?' And they will say, 'because they forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers, who brought them from the land of Egypt, and they adopted other gods and worshiped them and served them, therefore He has brought all this adversity on them.'" Worship is the opposite of forsaking, it is attaching oneself to another in devotion and commitment.

m. Dan. 3:12: Daniel was caught in quite a controversy when he refused to serve and worship the golden image of the King. He was blamed for failing to serve and worship it. But even though he was under the threat of death, he did not give way to the pressures of even a whole nation, but set himself to serve and worship only the true

God. So his heart was set on pleasing God through his devotion and service.

New Testament

a. 1 Corinthians 10:31: Paul makes a rather simple statement by saying all that we do must be to the glory of God [or the revealing of His character]. So our worship and service must be bathed in our devotion to God and must reveal that devotion.

b. Col. 3:17: "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God." He says that our words and deeds should be done as a representative of Christ with thanksgiving in our heart to God.

c. Col. 3:23-24: And our attitude and actions should be done "heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men...because it is the Lord Christ whom you serve." Why should it be done heartily? Because our attitudes and actions should reveal the depth of worship we have to God. And if we are devoted totally, there will be an excitement about serving and working for Him.

4 RESULTS OF TRUE WORSHIP AND SERVICE

1. Matt. 5:23ff: being reconciled to another brother or sister when there has been a breach in the relationship. Jesus said, "If you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering." Jesus gave strict instructions about worship, service, and relationships within the Body of Christ. True worship and service must result in the constant nurture and renewal of healthy spiritual relationships.

2. Luke 10:25ff: keeping God's commandments and serving your neighbor in anyway that you can. The parable of the Good Samaritan easily spells out for us the importance of worship and service. The lawyer who came to Jesus wanted to know what he needed to do to "inherit" eternal life. At first, Jesus asked him his opinion, and the lawyer rightly enumerated the commandments. But Jesus said that worship must be more than this--it must extend to service in action to others. For example, the hurt man in this parable was seen in need and pain by a priest and a Levite, but they continued on to the place of worship without stopping to serve the wounded man. However, a foreigner stopped and did all he could to relieve the hurt man--caring for him and providing what he could. So after telling the parable, Jesus asked, "Which of

these three do you think proved to be a neighbor?" And the lawyer rightly answered, "The one who showed mercy." Worship encompasses service to our neighbor wherever there is need or opportunity.

3. John 4:20-24: recognizing that you can worship God anyway at anytime. This passage has already been explained in great detail. So Jesus simply says the ways of worshipping and serving are limitless if we will only seek every opportunity to bless God through worship.

4. James 1:27: by ministering to the needy and rejected, as well as keeping oneself free from the sinful stains of the world, flesh and devil. As James so accurately says, "This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world." Worship and service must result in caring for the less fortunate, hurting, and needy people around us, especially in the household of God. Because if the Church will not care for its own, then we send a message to the world that our faith is not practical, but superficial and aloof.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why can work be considered worship?
2. What should be our attitude about work? School? Housework? Or any activity?
3. How are worship and work connected to one another?
4. Why is the fear of the Lord essential to serving God?
5. Why are the genuine results of work as worship?

XII. HINDRANCES TO WORSHIP

How often do we come to church knowing that we need to, and should, worship God, but fail to enter into worship and, frankly, only have a mere appearance of worship? Inside, we cannot enter into deep fellowship with God. Our worship lacks substance or godly meaning behind it; it's a routine we can do with hardly thinking. Empty form! **GOD IS LOOKING FOR MORE THAN THAT FROM US.** How often did God cry out, "I do not want anymore of your sacrifices, that is your form!" as it says in Isaiah 1:10-15: "What are your multiplied sacrifices to ME? says the Lord. I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed cattle, and I take no pleasure in blood of bulls, lambs, or goats...Bring your worthless offerings no longer," and on goes the list of things God rejects. So what does He want? HE WANTS YOU! Just as a husband knows that he should express his love for his wife, oftentimes his performance is unconvincing. So it is true with us, also. We know that we should worship God, but our performance falls far short of what we should do and He expects of us. Worship without heart is not worship! Call it what you want, but God does not see it as worship. He sees it as idolatry because it is worshipping the forms and traditions in place of the Almighty God.

It is self-evident that many people do not enter into worship and that worship appears to be more of a burden than a blessing. And since God commands not only praise but also worship, we are confronted with the fact that anything that hinders our worship must be removed from our lives. Excuses [such as, "I will not; I cannot not; others are watching..."] are not acceptable. Therefore, let us examine the hindrances and solutions to these hindrances so that we can move on with worship.

1. **IGNORANCE OF WHAT IS TRUE WORSHIP.** Often the problem lies here--people just do not know because they have never seen anything different from their own church worship, or no one has ever taught them differently from what they see. **SOLUTION:** Education is essential to developing true, full and exciting worship. Eight (8) times Paul says, "I do not want you to be ignorant," and God commands us to renew our minds in His truth [Romans 12:1-2]. Thus, we have the knowledge we need to learn [the Word of God], and the command to do it [you renew yourself]. So God has not left us without all essential aids.

2. **PAST PAIN.** Many true worshippers are hampered by their internal, personal struggles that stem from their past. Maybe they were verbally abused by their father, abandoned by their parents, constantly belittled for their lack of achievement, and so on. So why should they worship God the Father; maybe He will treat them the same way? **SOLUTION:** Whatever happened, it has crushed their spirit. The Bible says that God will never reject those who have been crushed by life [Leviticus 26:44; Job 8:20]; but He will make a way for them to be healed because Jesus came to bind up the broken hearted [Luke 4:18]. **KEY TEXT:** Ps. 22:1-8: David cries out to God but receives no answer to his pain and lack of understanding. He says, "My God, my God, WHY hast Thou forsaken me?...O my God, I cry by day, but Thou dost not answer." And there is no reply! How discouraging! But David says, "Yet Thou are holy." So he still honors God for who He is, which is a sign of true worship, and he reflects on His past faithfulness to him and says that he was never "disappointed" in Him; yet he says He will praise God. He will heal the brokenhearted, bind up our wounds, and give us a mantle of praise and worship in place of our sorrow and pain. So press on to

worship Him who is worthy and working mightily in you and me, as Paul says, "God is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" [Philippians 2:13].

3. PRIDE OR SELF-WORSHIP, "ME FIRST." This concerns concentration on oneself [be it problems such as weight, loss of love, finances, needs, wants, etc.]. This is proclaiming self-allegiance to, and bowing down before, the "image" we want to maintain. And since true worship always concentrates totally on God, self-worship negates true worship. SOLUTION: James says that "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble" [4:6]. So the solution is to turn our problems over to God to solve, then confess our pride and humble ourselves in His presence so that we can worship Him from a pure heart with pure motives. And ask God to keep us humble.

4. AN UNGRATEFUL HEART. A lack of gratitude points to an attitude of "I deserve" rather than "I ask in dependence upon Him and let Him make the final decision." It means that we are unhappy with God and what He has done for us, given to us, and planned for our lives. And Paul says that in these last days many will be "ungrateful" [2 Timothy 3:2], and this will be a great hindrance to true worship. Much of the distorted teaching in the Church today is self-centered rather than God-centered. Therefore, some false teaching and teachers are producing ungrateful, self-centered congregations. SOLUTION: Remember that "He himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men" [Luke 6:35], and this should motivate us to confess our ingratitude for all that He has done for us [and the list is innumerable!], and then GIVE THANKS for all that He has done for us, given to us, and planned for us.

5. SIN. It breaks communion with God; therefore, it inhibits us in His presence and restrains the Holy Spirit from ministering through us back to God. "But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God" [Isaiah 59:2; cf. Ps. 66:18]. I think that we should be honest with ourselves and the church, that if we enter into His presence while there is sin in our life against another; or we withhold the sacrifice of praise, worship, money or whatever else He requires; or we present less than what He demands, He has promised to "DRAW NEAR TO US IN JUDGMENT." He is not deceived by our actions, but has unveiled our attitudes that need to be exposed to the burning and consuming fire of His holy presence. In short, forms of praise and worship cannot hide our disobedience. David greatly praised God but was disobedient in one important detail about how to carry the ark: 1 Chronicles 15:2 (only the Levites could carry the ark, not a cart or other men). And his sin caused God to kill one man [1 Chronicles 13:7-10]. David was angry and yet afraid of God at the same time, so he ran from His presence. In time, he repented and followed God's ways. SOLUTION: Return to the Lord our God with all of our heart [Mal. 3:7; 2:15-16 twice mentions to "take heed to our spirit"]. If we will begin with confession of our sins [attitudes, actions, thoughts and desires], He will forgive us and cleanse [present tense] us continually (1 John 1:9).

6. SELF-CONDEMNATION. Satan condemns, but God commends. Satan wants us to feel unworthy, inferior and unforgiven. But God wants us to know that HE CHOSE us and has forgiveness for us if we would only ask. Self-condemnation can be a form of pride, but most often it is the result of a broken heart. SOLUTION: "There is THEREFORE no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" [Romans 8:1; cf. 35-39]. Hence, look to Him who accepts us and can never reject us. But even if our "heart condemns" us, "God is greater than our heart and knows all things"

[I John 3:20]. Therefore, we should meditate on what He thinks of us and not listen to the voice of our heart, others, and Satan. And, in faith, accept His appraisal of you and me: "I am accepted in the Beloved, uncondemned!" Consequently, believing His Word will stimulate our worship for Him.

7. **BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS.** Jesus said that you cannot love God whom you cannot see when you do not love your brother whom you can see. Broken spiritual relationships in the church hinder spiritual unity in the body of Christ; therefore, much of our inability to really worship is due to our inability, or unwillingness, to solve personal relational problems and enter into a healthy, spiritual relationship with all others. We can bring our money, sing our songs, and raise our hands; but without reconciliation all the time, worship will be hindered. SOLUTION: Mt. 5:23-24. If you come to worship Him and remember that a brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift at the altar and go be reconciled to your brother or sister first; then come with an open heart and clean hands [cf. Ps. 24:3-4]. A little humility of reconciling will go a long way to releasing the blessings of God through praise and worship.

8. **WORLDLINESS.** This is having our thoughts and desires centered on the things or problems of the world. Being worldly-minded instead of heavenly-minded means to enthrone the temporal things of this life and to dethrone God. SOLUTION: "Do not love the world, nor the things in the world" [1 John 2:15]. But, "If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is" [Colossians 3:1]. And keep meditating on "whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things" [Phil. 4:8; cf. 1 Pt. 5:7; Proverbs 4:23]. So we should accept what God has given us in life and not seek after, strive for, or desire to have more, but diligently pursue His will to worship Him with a pure heart and mind, in the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

9. **LUKEWARMNESS.** Some people have an indifferent attitude towards God and worship: "It really does not matter. He is not all that interested in what I do but with the attitude in my heart." SOLUTION: God is interested in who we are and what we do. He has prescribed the forms of worship, so it does matter how we worship God. Many times when someone uses this excuse, it really reveals the lukewarmness of the heart and not a desire to genuinely worship God in a quiet way. Therefore, Jesus says, "So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth" [Revelation 3:16]. It is incumbent that we heed the words of God: "Return to Me, and I will return to you" [Mal. 3:7].

10. **REBELLION.** Some people openly refuse to worship God even though He commands it. They may have legitimate excuses because of bad examples, or because of exhibitionists who have distorted true worship, and so on. But I am thinking more of those who know that they should worship and stubbornly refuse. 1 Sam. 15:23 says that rebellion is "as witchcraft," inspired by Satan and, therefore, the ultimate hindrance of worship. SOLUTION: "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time" [1 Pt. 5:6; cf. Hebrews 13:17]. Humility says, "I will do what God wants without thought to myself." Thus, humility is a key to entering into His presence.

11. DISCOURAGEMENT. Many people come with many burdens upon them and the inability to give them to God. Their hearts are troubled, their minds filled with negative thoughts. They are unable to worship Him because all they can see and think about are the problems. SOLUTION: "Casting ALL your anxiety up Him, because He cares for you" [1 Pt. 5:7] Also, "Let your requests [that means no complaints] be made known to God" [Philippians 4:6] because if you "cast your burden upon the Lord...He will sustain you" [Psalm 55:2]. He saw what was coming to discourage you, but has made provision for you to overcome and rejoice. So take heart that He is with you to sustain you and carry you through every difficulty. Rejoice and worship the One who cares for you so much.

12. ANGER. Some people have anger in their hearts towards others or situations that have occurred in their lives. Anger is simply wanting to judge [and, in some cases, destroy] one who has hurt them. But, ultimately, it means that they are angry with God for allowing these things to happen to them. SOLUTION: "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you" [Ephesians 4:31-32]. Kindness and forgiveness are the antidotes for anger.

13. WORRY. Worry is the inability to see God's solution in a given problem. It is an expression of doubt and unbelief. SOLUTION: Focus your eyes and mind on those who have gone before you through many battles of life, such battles as economic, family, medical, and so on. We need to fix our heart and mind on Jesus who is creating and finishing our faith in Him, even in the midst of difficult circumstances, just as it says in Hebrews 12:1a-2: "and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross." The key here is endurance, even during what seems to be a hopeless situation. But the verse ends by saying that after enduring the Cross, He "sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." So do not worry, but endure; and you will receive a great reward. [cf. Phil. 4:6-7]

14. DEPRESSION. This is when we are mentally, emotionally, and spiritually exhausted and overloaded. We simply cannot handle the daily routines of life and collapse because we have worn thin our mental, emotional and spiritual defenses. Any little problem takes on enormous dimensions in our thinking, and drains us of our abilities to cope with stress and pressures. SOLUTION: "Yet those who wait for [or hope in] the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with [or sprout] wings like an eagle, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary" [Isaiah 40:31]. So set aside time to get away from it all. Come into His presence, unpressured to do anything, and He will refresh you [Acts 3:19]. And let others minister to you rather than your trying to minister to others.

15. DO NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND GOD. Worship is our response to who He is. But if we do not really know Him--or seldom reflect upon His nature or only run to Him in emergencies--then we cannot really worship Him because we have a small concept of God. SOLUTION: Paul, at the end of his life, was able to reflect on all of his successes and think about what was most

important to him. Amazingly, it was NOT what he had done, but it was "the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" because He wanted to "know Him" [Philippians 3:8, 10]! So we can get to know God's character better and better. And the more we know Him, the more we will worship Him.

16. TRADITION. Some people are hindered because they have never worshipped God except in very limited ways all their lives. They cannot change because they have idolized their form or traditions of worship rather than accept the full freedom He gives us in worship. We need to remember that traditions are simply religious rules that have lost their spiritual significance. Traditions probably served an important purpose for a time, but when that purpose is gone, people need to change their traditions. However, some are more willing to hold to their traditions (which give no life) than to Him, the LIFE-GIVER, who is greater than all traditions. SOLUTION: In Isaiah's day, the same problem existed. In Isaiah 29:13, he says if God's people draw near to Him "with their words and honor Me with their lip service, but they remove their hearts far from Me, and their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote," He will deal with His people because traditions take away life, joy and freedom from worship. In fact, tradition quenches creativity and life. So to restore the full freedom of worship, we should do as Jesus said: follow the Word of God and not the traditions of man [Matthew 7:5-9]. In many churches it will become a struggle to overcome those who are so faithful to their lifeless traditions; but, like Paul, appeal to the older men and exhort the older women to change [1 Timothy 5:1-2].

17. FEAR OF OTHERS. Some are afraid of what others will think IF they worship God in an open and expressive way, or they are afraid of being rejected or losing a friendship if they worship God differently than others do. Thus, the fear of man binds our spirit and limits our worship. SOLUTION: The Fear of the Lord will reduce the significance of man in our eyes because "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" and the "beginning of wisdom" [Proverbs 1:7; 9:10] The fear of man and fear of God cannot go together, therefore, the more you fear, honor, respect, and admire Him, the less you will fear man. And, besides, some people TRY to strike fear in others. But if we are "strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might" [Ephesians 6:10], then we will recognize this scheme and overcome it to victorious worship.

18. SATANIC OPPRESSION. Satan obviously hates God and hates true worship because it restricts his kingdom [cf. Mt. 4:8-10]. He will do anything to discourage, sidetrack, or stop true worship. So never be surprised by his attacks or attempts to dilute, pollute, or confuse worship. One of the key approaches Satan uses is false guilt. We "feel" guilty about something, but we cannot quite put our finger on it. God convicts us of specific sins, but Satan tries to confuse and overwhelm us with an unspecified sense of wrong. If there is not a clear knowing what you did wrong, it may be satanic. SOLUTION: "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" [James 4:7]. There is no spiritual mountain too tall that cannot be overcome in Christ because "He gives us the victory" over all satanic attempts "through our Lord Jesus Christ" [1 Corinthians 15:57].

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What hindrances can you think of in your life towards true worship?
2. What new concepts of worship have you learned in this course that you were ignorant of before?
3. Are there any broken relationships that bother you and hinder your worship of God?
4. Do you feel fully accepted by God or partially self-condemned?
5. What should you remove from your life in order to enable you to more freely worship God?

XIII. HOW TO BUILD UP OUR PRAISE AND WORSHIP

We **can** grow in our praise and worship, and God actually expects us to grow and mature as praisers and worshippers. Sometimes we want to come into the presence of God with our praises, but we "feel" dry and uninspired--or filled with everything but a desire to praise and worship Him. Therefore, it is important to realize that we can "command" ourselves to praise God because praise is not dependent upon feelings; it is a response to all the good things that God has done for us! As David so often said, "Bless the Lord." That was a command to himself! If we want to grow and mature in our praise and worship life, we must sometimes take control sometimes of our own mind and soul and demand that they respond to God. And as we compel ourselves to praise, we will be propelled into worship as He draws near to the one who wants to grow in praise and worship.

KEY PRINCIPLE: There are no acceptable excuses as to why we do not praise and worship God more. The one who understands this Biblical principle will far excel past those who simply wait for some feeling to overwhelm them before they enter into His presence. I am sure that, oftentimes, David and many others did not "feel" like praising and worshipping God; but they knew--and this may be the most important key to growth here--they KNEW that they should, and must, no matter what they felt or did not feel. Therefore, my dear Reader, please stand tall and strong and tell yourself, "I can praise God no matter what." Just as Paul and Barnabas sang praises to God in their physical pain while sitting in a jail, we, too, can offer up our praises to God because we have the ability. We just need to motivate our desire. God is waiting for you and me to grow in our life of praise and worship, and as we do grow, He will send us forth with a greater anointing and authority to conquer and overcome all barriers that stand in the way of His glorious presence. So go forth praising and worshipping God, and grow in this vital ministry that will go on for eternity.

The Bible gives at least 8 ways that we can grow in praise and worship. So let us examine each briefly, and may He enable us to use these wonderful gifts in our lives, family, and ministry.

1. Learn from the Bible:

A lack of Biblical knowledge is an enemy of true worship. The Bible is the most complete book about true worship; and until we have a total picture of what the Bible says about worship, we will be spiritually poorer in our worship. Therefore, the more we study and meditate on the Psalms and Old Testament teaching about the Tabernacles and Temple, the more we should know about God whom we worship and how we can worship Him. Then we will become true worshippers.

2. Guard our Emotions:

Praise and worship are emotional, but not emotionalism! The difference is important to understand if we are going to have genuine praise and worship. Emotionalism is the source of our actions, whereas emotions should be the normal result of our praise and worship of God. Sometimes it must be recognized that we really do not have joyful emotions in our praise and worship. So if we depend upon our emotions to stimulate us to praise and worship God, then we will not because our source is dry. But if we accept the fact that emotions--whether of joy, sorrow, and so on--are the

result of reaching out to touch and minister to God, then we will command our spirit and soul, like David, to praise and worship the living God.

3. Take time to listen:

Worship is, at times, silent (as mentioned previously). But praise is always expressive and outgoing. Therefore, if we want to build up genuine worship in our lives and churches, then there needs to be a time of silence to listen to the voice of the Spirit speak to our spirit. "Rhema" is the immediate, living word of God to His people at a time when they need to hear a fresh word from heaven. If we are always ministering to Him without taking the time to listen to what is on His heart, then we will miss one of the greatest blessings of worship! Therefore, building up genuine worship requires a time of silence in the presence of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And His voice will pierce our silence, renew us with His presence, and refresh and invigorate us to go on in the harvest set before us.

4. Express love to God:

Praise is generally stimulated by what He does for us. Therefore, it also includes acknowledging Him in His greatness. But worship is honoring Him for who He is without concern for what He does! It is more than mere acknowledgement, but adoration and exaltation of the greatest Person alive. So we need to express our love to Him so that He will draw near to us, and fill us more with His presence which will stimulate greater worship for Him.

5. Pray and Sing in Tongues:

Why is the use of tongues so important in developing an adequate life of worship? Many Christians think that tongues are an option that we can choose or reject. But the New Testament is full of instances where either tongues was a normal occurrence or was seen as a regular part of our personal and corporate life. So, tongues are important because they are the purest heavenly languages that any believer can speak forth. It is the Spirit of God speaking through our spirit back to God. And since all true worship is directed to Him, if it originates with Him, it will be the highest worship to God. And if we continually pray in tongues, our hearts will be more sensitive to God's Spirit, and it will purify our spirit more and more so as to be a purer and greater vessel of worship wherever we are.

6. Give thanks in all circumstances:

Paul says in I Thessalonians 5:18 that "in everything gives thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." Worship is adoration and celebration of God out of the depth of our hearts. If we are filled with bitterness, complaints, grumbling, and so on, because of our circumstances, then we will never develop a life of worship. In fact, such negative thoughts and actions will only pollute and dilute our worship and praises. Therefore, giving thanks always is a way of offering ourselves back to God, knowing that He sovereignly is working through all circumstances for good in our life. Sometimes it seems almost impossible to understand that good will come out of some difficult

events; but God, who is sovereign over all, is providentially directing everything to bring a blessing into our lives. So giving thanks before we see the results is an act of faith based upon His revelations that will produce a greater and purer worshipper.

7. Live a holy life:

Holiness is one of the essential characteristics of God and, therefore, one of the greatest qualifications of a true worshipper. In fact, it is mentioned hundreds of times throughout the scriptures. All of our activities are either holy or unholy; there is no middle ground. I Peter 1:15-16 says, "But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, 'You shall be holy for I am holy.'" Holiness means to be separated from every evil thing, whether it is an attitude, action, relationship, thought, or whatever. It also means to be dedicated to God, to be like Him: HOLY. Therefore, if our worship is to be holy and acceptable to Him, then our lives must be pure, unpolluted, and dedicated to service in His Name. So to perfect and grow in worship, God must 1) confront us with our sins, striking fear within our hearts so as to hate sin as He does and to reject it; 2) He must remove the root of sin from our lives as only He can do because He sees us with clear eyes and only He alone knows how to remove the root of love for sin within us; and 3) then He will refill us with holiness so we can stand against sin and have no taste within us for sin. A holy life is a true life of worship.

The prophet Zephaniah says that if God's people will repent, then He "will turn shame into praise and renown in all the earth." God, in His mercy and justice, desires to use His people as a blessing to the nations. But much depends on our obedience to His will. And even if we turn away from Him, He will continue to convict us and press us to repentance so that we will again become a people of praise in order to bless the nations.

8. Fast, Praise, and Worship:

Fasting is the abstinence of food and sometimes drink for a period of time. But whenever a Christian fasts, it must be connected with a specific spiritual purpose if it is to be of any benefit to the believer. In our context of praise and worship, the New Testament mentions it several times. In Luke 2:37, Anna "...never left the Temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers; and at that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God...." The Temple was the house of God where prayer and worship were to be offered to Him continually; and Anna understood the importance of fasting as an integral part of worship. In fact, fasting made her increasingly sensitive to the Holy Spirit's work. How can we know that? Jesus was presented in the Temple where probably hundreds of other people were present at the time Mary and Joseph brought Him there; yet only Anna and Simeon [who had a specific promise from God], were sensitive enough to recognize the Savior of mankind. Fasting will sensitize us to God's Spirit and His works in our midst.

Acts 13:2 records that in Antioch many "were ministering to the Lord and fasting," and the result was that "the Holy Spirit said, 'set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" Once again we see that fasting is connected with worship. And in both texts cited, the believers were "serving" or "ministering" to the Lord. Worship is precisely that: serving or

ministering to Him.

In the total context of worship and the Church at large, fasting has numerous purposes and results that would be important simply to touch on briefly:

Old Testament Examples

1. In times of defeat, it is important to humble ourselves before God to seek why we have lost a battle in life. After Saul and his army were destroyed, the people took the bodies and fasted for 7 days [1 Samuel 31:13].
2. When under attack from our enemies [spiritual or human], fasting is an appropriate response. In 2 Chronicles 20, Jehoshaphat called for a complete fast throughout Judah because Moab and Ammon and the Meunites were attacking them. As they humbled themselves before God, praying and seeking Him, the Spirit of the Lord spoke and said, "Do not be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's." What a great surge of power and victory went through the people as they heard the Word of the Lord promise intervention and delivery! So fasting was a humbling of the people in light of an impossible situation that was beyond human redemption.
3. Fasting is oftentimes associated with confession of sin and repentance, as in Nehemiah 9:1. The people were guilty of a grave sin, and fasting was a sign of repentance and the breaking of the spiritual yoke of sin in their lives. Thus, fasting can serve as a cleansing process in our lives.
4. Fasting can also serve a vital purpose of seeking to know God's will when circumstances appear to be wrong, or God's people are in distress and under reproach. In Judges 20:26, the sons of Israel fasted and "inquired of the Lord" to know His will, what to do next. And God answered them. But also, in Nehemiah 1:3-4, the prophet saw and understood the cause of Jerusalem's distress and reproach: their sins. He then abased himself on behalf of a broken people, and sought the Lord with tears and fasting. Thus, fasting is a time of seeking to know God's will when we thought we already knew it and to intercede on behalf of a people broken by their own sins and rejection of God and His law.

New Testament Examples

1. Jesus demonstrated that fasting is sometimes necessary before

going into a spiritual battle with the evil forces of wickedness. In Matthew 4, He had been led by the Holy Spirit and had fasted for 40 days before He was to face the enemy of all darkness. And in His physical weakness, He was enabled to meet the challenge through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, to discern the enemy's schemes and God's answers, and to speak forth in such power that the enemy was even frightened of Him, fleeing in fear. Fasting may seem to weaken the body, but it will strengthen our spirit and increase His power flowing through our lives.

2. In Matthew 17:21, the disciples faced a demonic challenge to the divinely given power and authority, but to no avail. Why? Jesus had given them sufficient power and authority, but where did they go wrong? The answer is really quite simple: they had "assumed" that all they had to do was simply speak, that no other seeking of God was necessary in order to obtain authority over the demonic spirits. But this would cause them to walk in pride: I HAVE the power ALREADY! So Jesus made known to them that fasting is necessary sometimes in order a) to keep the disciples humble and dependent upon Him and b) to discern the true spirit that is controlling a person or circumstance. Fasting will make you more sensitive to the Holy Spirit and to the evil spirits that permeate much of our societies. Therefore, it is essential when we encounter difficult spiritual circumstances to take time to fast and seek Him who will reveal and anoint to overcome the powers of evil.

3. In Acts 14:23, Paul established a good precedent before the appointing and commending of elders to the body: prayer and fasting. It would be wise in our day of constant spiritual challenges and comprises to pray, pray, pray with fasting in order to rightly choose those who He has called, anointed, and appointed to the task of serving the Body and nation in order to have the very best spiritual leaders that can be chosen for His Church.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What excuses have you used to limit your worship of God?
2. How should you deal with those excuses?
3. Do you take time to be silent and listen to God speak to you?
4. What should you do to improve your time of worship?
5. Are you grateful for everything God has given and done for you?

XIV. INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY, AND CORPORATE WORSHIP: DEFINED AND DISTINGUISHED

Worship is when the presence of God enters into our presence: a communion of the Holy Spirit with our human spirit in the presence of a Holy God. And true worship must take place on 3 levels of life: personal, family, and corporate. All three are essential to a healthy Christian life, and one without the others will create a spiritual deficiency in the life of the believer. Therefore, it is imperative to understand and develop all three levels of worship because part of our growth is dependent upon this approach. Pictorially, we can say:

Personal Worship => Family Worship => Corporate Worship

Individual praise prepares us for worship generally. But individual worship prepares us for family and corporate worship. So each stage is connected with the other stages and is essential to the growth of the next stage of worship in our whole life.

But before we define and distinguish among these three stages of worship, it is important that we understand a key principle to life:

WHATEVER THE INDIVIDUAL IS, THE FAMILY BECOMES;
AND WHATEVER THE FAMILY IS, THE CHURCH BECOMES;
AND WHATEVER THE CHURCH IS, THE NATION CAN
BECOME!

It is important to recognize the foundational priority of individual worship first before the family and church. But equally important is to practice worship at home first before we attempt worship in the church. If we will follow God's priorities, we will see a greater release of His power and holiness upon His people, both individually, corporately, and nationally. We would call this revival; and in this day, we need it badly!!!

THE 3 STAGES OF WORSHIP

a. **INDIVIDUAL WORSHIP DEFINED:** This is one of the greatest joys for the individual, to privately enter into His presence in the secret place we choose. Private worship is the **TOTAL FREEDOM** that one has to worship God. Since no one else is present, the worshipper can freely, without inhibitions, worship God in all the ways he desires without restraint from others around him. In fact, this is the most personal type of worship; and some have found that in private worship they will express their love and gratitude to God in ways that they would never do around others. So freedom is the key to private, individual worship. How often David wrote, "Bless the Lord, O my soul"! He commanded himself to praise and worship God because God is worthy of all. And Psalms 63:5-6 and 119:164 speak of "offering praises with joyful lips," as well as praising Him seven times a day. Thus, praise and worship are deeply personal and expressive in individual worship [cf. Dan. 6:7-10].

Emphasis of Individual worship: In individual worship, there is usually the emphasis on a FREE, unstructured style as well as spontaneity. We can pour out our hearts to God from the very depth of our spirit, and there are no restraints upon us because what we say is only between God and ourselves. There is no fear of what others think or peer pressure to conform to the corporate style of worship. In fact, there should be no inhibition in private, individual worship. This should be the place of complete and open expression of love to God through all the ways allowed by the scriptures. The individual should have unlimited time to wait on and listen to the Lord. One of the greatest joys of individual worship is the total abandoning of oneself to Him who deserves the total self. Now, the scriptures seem to indicate that morning was the most normal time to worship Him. David says that "in the morning, O Lord, Thou wilt hear my voice; in the morning I will order my prayer to Thee and eagerly watch" [Psalm 5:3]. So he captured the idea of morning praise and worship, as well as waiting upon the Lord. Jesus seems to carry on this idea in Mark 1:35 where it says that "in the early morning" He arose alone to seek God, and as a Jew, prayer, praise and worship would have been a normal part of this morning time. So, in the beginning of our day, when we are fresh, is probably the best time to seek Him and pour out ourselves before Him--not only to bless and adore Him, but also to prepare ourselves to serve Him that day.

b. FAMILY WORSHIP DEFINED: Family worship is when the parents and children come together to seek and bless Him and to LEARN, collectively, HOW TO SERVE GOD. The greatest result of family worship is learning order and patience. In family worship, the parents normally lead the gathering and it is more directed because the children, in particular, are learning about worship. So structure is important here because children learn how to worship and where the defined limits are. But also, there is the great concern that all participate in the time of family worship, and here patience is a key. Even if one member may be overflowing with great joy and adoration of God, restraint is important so as not to smother other members, or quench their need to worship God because maybe they are not as outgoing as another family member. Each member should be very sensitive to the others and encourage, as well as give them time to worship God in their own way, even if it seems very simple and quiet.

Emphasis of Family worship: In the family, there is usually more structure; the emphasis usually lies on instruction and form as it says in Deuteronomy 6:6-7: "And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up." Particularly for the parents, there is the concern to train up their up children properly and to worship decently and in order. So family worship should include Bible reading, but it should also include a time to ask each other about any needs or burdens that can be prayed for, victories that can be shared, and then take time for singing and praying, encouraging each member to participate. At first it may seem awkward or embarrassing for a small child to sing or pray. But constant loving encouragement by the parents will eventually produce a true, profound worshipper of God because as the parents encourage the child, they will see that God Himself is the One who is really encouraging them to open their heart and mouths to worship Him. For more detail and a good example of Family Worship, see Appendix IV.

c. CORPORATE WORSHIP DEFINED: This is when the people of God gather together to corporately praise and worship Him. The primary consideration here is order and FULLNESS in worship. Since worship is expressly for the church, and everyone has something to contribute to worship, corporate worship must include order so that all can participate. But it also must include the fullness of all types of worship as inspired by the Holy Spirit. Normally, the style of worship is one of "variety in order" because God is not the author of disorder. But also there must be unity in the worship so that each part flows together with all other parts of the worship service and brings people closer to God. In corporate worship there will be "highs and lows"; there will be times of great expression and excitement, but also times of quietness and stillness in the presence of the Holiest of All. And, typically, praise will begin first with great loudness and expression, but will lead into worship which tends to be more quiet and deep in its expression of love and adoration of God.

Emphasis of Corporate worship: Corporate worship emphasizes the full expression of love to God through all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as well as unity in form. Every part and every participant wants to flow together in the emphasis that God has for the body that day; but also corporate worship highlights the importance of edifying others. Whatever is done in the worship service, each action and word, must be intended to benefit the others present, to bring them into a closer relationship with the living God, and to bring them into a deeper walk of holiness and service to Him whom they serve. But there are restraints in corporate worship because of the presence of others; so it is not normal to express openly deep personal matters. But in a very personal and genuine way, believers can express love and thanks for Him and what He has done.

Even though we have emphasized the primary focus in each style of worship, each style needs all 3 elements: freedom, instruction, and fullness. It is crucial to understand that each stage is necessary to the others as well as each reinforces the others. #1 without 2 and 3 will be superficial; 2 and 3 without 1 will be incomplete. #2 without 1 and 3 will be self-serving; but 1 and 3 without 2 will be incomplete. #3 without 1 and 2 will be inadequate; but 1 and 2 without 3 will be shallow.

SIMILARITIES AND DISTINCTIONS AMONG THE THREE

1. Similarities: all three stages of worship have overlapping similarities so it is important to recognize what is consistent among them:

- a) All three require a clean heart before entering into the presence of God because worship is done in the Holy of Holies, and only the clean in heart can enter into His holy presence.
- b) All three types of worship focus on Jesus because He is the center of our worship.
- c) All three employ songs and singing and Bible reading.
- d) All include prayer as an expression of adoration for God.
- e) All highlight the use of Biblical meditation when focusing upon Christ and His Kingdom.
- f) All three should involve our whole body in expressing our praise and worship to Him.

g) All three should have as the root cause a desire to lift Him up.

2. Distinctions: There are distinctions, which usually highlight the differences in emphasis more than being totally different from the other stages.

a) Personal worship tends to be more private and very personal in comparison with the other stages because one has the total freedom to express to God what is on the heart, without concern about what others may think.

b) Family worship tends to be more centered on structure and instruction of the family members, attempting to lead them into a deeper life of worship. In some ways, family worship may not have the dynamism of personal or corporate worship all the time.

c) Corporate worship tends to be more expressive in the use of different forms of worship and really is concentrated on edifying the other people around them.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How do the 3 stages of worship link together?
2. Why does what I do in my personal life effect my family, church and nation?
3. How can I improve my individual worship of God?
4. How can I improve my family worship time together?
5. How can I encourage others to participate more in corporate worship?

XV. WORSHIP LEADER AND TEAM: MEETING THE SPIRITUAL QUALIFICATIONS

The believers who lead worship will really make the difference in the type of spiritual atmosphere present. It can be positive or negative, depending on them. However, before the worship team can really lead the people, they need to know that they are:

1. spiritually qualified (see below)
2. they can lead the people into the inner throne room
3. how to lead the people into the presence of God
4. to know what to do when they get into His presence

That means that the worship team must:

1. come with something to give
2. come prepared to worship with all their hearts
3. come open to the "flow" of His Holy Spirit
4. and be flexible in their style of worship

SPIRITUAL QUALIFICATIONS OF WORSHIP TEAM

The worship team:

1. Must be called by God into this ministry. Having a talent is not enough, nor the first and highest qualification. Having an ability to play a musical instrument does not qualify one to lead worship or even be part of a worship team. There must be a calling and anointing from God on the life of a worship leader or team member.

2. Anointed by the Spirit to lead spiritual praise and worship. The anointing was an essential qualification of the Old Testament priesthood. So true worshippers can only lead worship: those who are anointed by the Holy Spirit.

3. Must be genuine worshippers themselves (John 4:23-24). You can only lead people to the depth of worship that you have experienced yourself. So if the worship team is going to lead God's people into deep, true worship, they themselves must be serious practicing worshippers in their individual lives beforehand.

4. Must be wise and mature spiritually. The depth of our heart is expressed in our worship, and a team of worshippers needs to be wise in how to lead a body of believers. Wisdom is simply seeing where God wants you to go, and maturity is knowing how to lead people to that point. Some worship leaders try to force the people to worship, and all they get is form without heart, which only makes for superficial worship. Or the team may not be serious enough for this monumental task, so the worship tends to be shallow, at best. Thus, a good worship team is wise and mature.

5. Must be in submission to the local church leadership (1 Pt. 5:5). Team members must have respect for the local leaders, which is a sign of their respect for the Lord who has set those leaders over them. Submission to the leaders leads to submission to God who will lead them as a worship team.

6. Must be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's guidance. The Holy Spirit knows what God wants in each service, and the worship team is the key to leading the church into His presence. Therefore, there needs to be a real perception and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.

7. Must be known as ones who are faithful, holy in all of their behavior, humble, and honest: leaders must be worthy for others to follow. It is crucial that the worship team be known for their godliness; otherwise, the church members will think in their hearts about the ungodliness of the worship team and will reject them as leaders. This will only destroy the spiritual atmosphere of true worship.

Practical Considerations for the Worship Team

1. Plan in advance, because last minute planning usually misses the Spirit's leading. And if you always expect the Spirit to lead without any preparation, then you are trying to thrust your responsibilities on Him that you should have prepared for in advance. Often in the Bible God says prepare, plan, plot your way, and then the Spirit will lead us through our planning as well as add to it on the spot. God commends us for planning, not just waiting for Him to do everything and responding like robots. Proverbs 19:21 commends planning; it commends us for having many plans; it commends us to find the plans in our spirit and through the wisdom He plants in our minds because He speaks to and through the mind as well; it commends that we seek His counsel for which plans He has; and it commends us to test those plans against God's will and ways once we have them. So planning is essential to a good worship service.

In planning for worship, do not use unfamiliar songs. That will only distract the mind and spirit away from God because of the need to look at the words. There can be other times to teach new songs, but it is best not to do it in the primary worship service. So be sensitive and reasonable in using songs everyone already knows, and teach new songs at other times.

When choosing the songs for praise and worship, note the difference in tone of the songs. Songs with a loud beat will usually fall within the category of praise songs; but softer, more melodic songs fall usually within the range of worship songs. The praise songs must come first to set the atmosphere for worship. Seldom will one be able to enter into worship first, so the team needs to "break the ground" with praise and exhilarating thanksgiving to our God before there is heart-to-heart communication in the Spirit with God.

2. Flow with the Spirit. Every service is a little different and the Spirit has His plans [see Proverbs 16:1] for the type and style of worship. The Holy Spirit has a direction He wants to lead the people into, so the leader needs to be extremely sensitive to the flow of the Spirit. Personally, I think that every service should begin with music of praise unto God without someone's having to call us to

be quiet and to start praising God. A good, mature and sensitive worship leader can simply step up and begin and the people will sense the moving of God's Spirit and begin to enter into praise.

3. Prevent an interruption of the flow (the move of the Spirit). Sometimes leaders or members will interrupt the flow of praise and worship with a prayer, or announcement, or some other activity that distracts people from the leading of God's Spirit. The Worship leader MUST lead, and all others must follow--and that includes the elders. Neither the pastor nor an elder should lead, but the one who has been appointed as the worship leader. And everyone should learn to be submitted to his leading and flow with him. The worship leader, if he is mature, wise and sensitive to the Holy Spirit, will know when to call upon the people to pray, to ask the pastor to say something, when to be quiet, when to quiet the music or even stop it, and will know what to do as the Holy Presence of God approaches. So a wise and mature worship leader is essential to genuine, Spirit-lead worship.

4. Before worship can truly flow, confession of all known sin is necessary. A general confession is spoken for everyone, and then there is a time of specific confession by each individual. Since God is Holy and too pure to behold our iniquities, it is essential that we enter into His gates and courts cleansed from all known sin.

5. The worship leader must be one who is full of God's Spirit, serious, who can "roll" his burdens over on God, who commands respect, and has leadership abilities and calling from God.

6. The worship team must be skilled, called, and anointed of God to minister before Him and the people. Without this, it will become proud exhibitionism--or worse, Pharisaical. In 1 Chronicles 25:6-7 it says that the singers in the Tabernacle were "under the direction of their fathers to sing in the house of the Lord," and they "were trained in singing to the Lord." So the gift, calling and anointing of God is the beginning, but the development of the gift comes with training. Therefore, we must emphasize the importance of continual training to keep the gift sharp and attuned to the Spirit. The team needs to follow the leader so as to minister in harmony and unity.

7. The team members must demonstrate a respect for the ministry of worship that God has instituted. If they are not a people of prayer, holiness, devotion to God, and submitted to their elders and worship leader, they should not be on the team.

8. Everything the team does must point the people to Jesus: if they dress in a way that detracts from God's holiness, stirs wrong emotions or desires, or repulses people, it is wrong. If they are silly [i.e., not serious], it is wrong because it really reflects their attitude of irreverence which will only quench praise and worship.

9. Be on time. Leading by example is as important as the actual worship leading. And get a good night's rest the night before you lead the worship. One thing that will completely distract and distort genuine worship is a sleepy, late-starting worship team. So be wise.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why does the worship team need to meet certain spiritual requirements?
2. Why is the anointing of the Holy Spirit such an important requirement to lead worship?
3. What should a worship member do if he does not accept the church leaders?
4. Is age an important factor to consider for worship team members?
5. What does it mean to "flow with the Holy Spirit"?
6. How can a worship team build harmony and unity among themselves?

XVI. LEADING THE CONGREGATION IN WORSHIP

Greater detail is given in the course, "Worship Leader," by Dr. Ken Chant. So the suggestions here are only minimal help for those who will lead worship.

a. The Elements of True Worship

It is important to understand the elements of worship in public meetings so that we can understand whether or not we have moved into worship or are still in a stage of praise. Keep in mind that God is a God of "variety" and "creativity," so each service will be different from the previous one. Attempts to reproduce what happened before, as the "normal" order of worship will only quench and stagnate the Spirit's work. WHY? Because the Spirit will probably have a different emphasis in each service where He wants us to concentrate our focus. It is true that there is a normal order to the services, and we should not be against that. But if the form or timing becomes fixed and inflexible, then the Spirit will be quenched. So be open and flexible when it comes to worship, and let the Spirit lead and not be forced to fit our mold, which only becomes tradition anyway.

1. SINGING. This is probably the most frequently mentioned form of worship in the Bible. It occurs in heaven and on the earth. For example, in Revelation there is the a) Song of Creation [4:11], b) Song of Praise [5:9], c) Song of the Church [5:9-10], d) Song of the Living Creatures [5:13], and e) the Song that Never Ends [5:13-14].

2. PRAISING GOD for who He is and what He has done (Rev. 4:11). This can be in our native tongue, or in tongues and through the other gifts of the Holy Spirit. But an offering of thanksgiving should be a normal part of every service.

3. REVERING/WORSHIPPING HIM (Rev. 4:10). This whole book has been about the importance and essence of worship, and every good service must include this as second only to the teaching of God's Word. Because a church without worship is a church without joy and life, and just as the Word gives life and truth to His Body, worship gives reverence and power to the service.

4. INTERCESSION (Rev. 8:3). Interceding on behalf of another is part of our ministry of worship to God because as we pour out our heart to Him in joy and glorious adoration, then it will naturally flow into intercession on behalf of others to better know Him and worship Him as He really is.

5. REJOICING (Rev. 5:8). Celebration is a hallmark of any good worship service. And rejoicing in Him with the other members of the Body of Christ will bring a great joy into the church. And in difficult times, rejoicing is one of the very best spiritual medicines available to the body of Christ.

6. PROCLAIMING HIM TO OTHERS (Rev. 5:9). Proclamation, declaration, and announcing the good news are part of a dynamic worship service. After moving in praise and worship, the Spirit now wants to feed His Body, and an anointed word should flow forth to a hungry

people. Proclamation or, better, teaching and preaching will only extend the work of worship because His Word will equip us to live in the world and not be formed by the world.

7. SILENCE (Habakkuk 2:2; Rev. 8:1). Sometimes when He has drawn so close to us, there is a sense of awe in His presence that is beyond words. Therefore, a holy silence may come upon His church so that there is a genuine communing with Him. In one sense, we are "lost in the Spirit" because we are so totally aware of Him that everything, and everyone, seems to fade from our mind.

So a good worship service will include these minimal elements of worship. And as we examine our services, let us come with hope and expectation of change to strengthen and build up His Body.

b. Church Leaders in Worship

The elders have two primary responsibilities in the area of praise and worship: a) They need to appoint the worship leader and team so that they will minister directly under the elders' authority (1 Chronicles 16:4-5). Many times people with talent are accepted when they are not qualified. If God could appoint an entire tribe to be His priests, and then say that only those who met stringent requirements within that tribe could be priests, then it is evident that the elders must do likewise. One clear consideration for the elders is spiritual and physical age. The young have great zeal for God, but usually lack experience, maturity, and testing in their life. Consequently, they are usually good praise leaders, but often cannot lead true worship because their sensitivity comes with time, mistakes, and the mature evaluation of their mistakes. Thus, an older worship leader would be better than a new or young convert.

And b) they must set the pace, pattern and direction of worship because they are the leaders and example that others will follow. They must prove "to be examples to the flock" (1 Pt. 5:2-3), and they are to be THE example as they participate in worship (1 Tim. 4:12; 1 Corinthians 11:1). The worship leader leads, but the elders set the example for others to follow. Just as the musicians played and the prophet spoke, they function together but have distinctive roles.

If the elders do not flow with the worship and style the Spirit is leading them into, or if there is a great contrast among the elders and others, or division among them, then people will notice it and Satan will sow discord and division among the people and bring down the worship. But if the elders have great enthusiasm for worship, and flow together in unity and harmony, the criticisms will cease (or at least be silenced) because the members will obey the example of their leaders.

c. Practical Considerations

Tell the people to come with expectation to enter into His presence to minister to the Living God, to meet with Him to do serious business that day. Many believers come with no expectation of meeting God or even seeing Him move in their midst, so little happens. Or they are looking for signs and see none, so they leave disappointed thinking that God does not care and was not there anyway. So prepare the people to expect Him to come, as David says in Ps. 22:3. Read this psalm and see that

David came with a heavy burden in his heart, with hurts, and many troubles, but he came with expectations that because God is holy, He would come into their praise service.

The biggest question for the people is this: How do we enter into the presence of God? The congregation will have to be LED into worship rather than expected to simply enter into worship unaided. People desire to worship God; but without godly direction, they will follow the way of Baal and Aaron in forgetting the true God and worshipping a false god. Thus, strong leadership is necessary to lead the "sheep" into worship.

The congregation needs to be on time, come with expectation of meeting with God in praise and worship, and must be prepared with clean hearts and minds. They must also be willing to praise and worship with their whole heart and being.

The forms of praise and worship may vary from culture to culture, but the Biblical examples give us a variety of ways to express our love and devotion to God. We are free to use any Biblical example initiated by God or shown to be acceptable, or to be creative (as long as it is not sin, prohibited by the Word of God or distracts from who He is).

No one person can worship God completely. That is why when the whole congregation comes together, the corporate Body can completely worship Him.

Beware of manipulating the people to produce worship. We cannot inspire it and demand it from the people, but can only lead people to God. If someone says, "O.K., let's all now sing in tongues," it will have little or no effect if it is not from the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit inspires, spiritual worship explodes inside of us.

Worship must be led and not allowed to degenerate into structureless gatherings. It is clear from Paul's letters that each service had form and structure and was, indeed, being led (1 Corinthians 16:15-16; Phil. 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:12).

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How does silence aid our worship of God?
2. Why must the worship leader be the one to lead worship and not the elders?
3. Why is the response of the elders to worship crucial in leading worship?
4. What should we expect from worship?
5. How can you tell whether a worship leader is leading or manipulating?

APPENDIX I
Biblical Words for Praise and Worship

There are many Hebrew and Greek words that have been translated as "praise." But in order to see the vast variety and richness of these picture languages, I will list below many words not mentioned in sections V and VIII.

a. Hebrew Words for Praise

1. Halal []: occurs over 150 times and means to praise or boast; being sincerely and deeply thankful.
2. Hillul []: occurs only twice and means to rejoice or praise, especially during a festival [Leviticus 19:24; Judges 9:27].
3. Navah []: occurs only once and means to beautify or praise [Exodus 15:2].
4. Roman []: occurs only twice and means to extol or praise [Pss. 66:17; 149:6]
5. Shabach []: occurs 8 times and means to praise or commend someone for their acts or it can mean to calm, still or soothe.
6. Shebach []: occurs 5 times and means to laud or praise.
7. Tehillah []: occurs 55 times and means to praise or honor the one being praised.
8. Yadah []: occurs over 100 times in the Old Testament and means to confess, praise or give thanks.
9. Zamar []: occurs 46 times and means to sing, sing praises or make music or play musical instruments in praise.

b. Greek Words for Praise

1. Aineo []: occurs 8 times and means to lift our voice to God [see above].
2. Ainesis []: occurs only once in the whole New Testament and means praise as a sacrificial offering [Hebrews 13:15].
3. Ainos []: occurs only twice and means praise of God [Matt. 21:16; Lk. 18:43].
4. Doxa []: occurs over 150 times and means to give glory [see above].
5. Doxazo []: occurs 60 times and means to glorify, honor, magnify, extol or praise.

6. Epaineo []: occurs 6 times and means to applaud, commend [see above].
7. Epainos []: occurs 11 times and means to commend, praise or approve.
8. Eulogeo []: occurs 40 times and means to speak well of [see above].
9. Eusebeo []: occurs twice and means to praise [Acts 17:23].
10. Exomologeō []: occurs 10 times and means to confess, praise or acknowledge publicly.
11. Humneo []: occurs only 5 times and means to sing praise or laud.
12. Psallo []: occurs 5 times means primarily to play a musical instrument or sing a psalm.

Worship is described richly by many different Hebrew and Greek words. So the list below is meant only to supplement the previous explanations in Sections V and VIII. Even though some words for worship pertain only to idols, or are used in a negative sense, it is important to see the variety of words used.

c. Hebrew Words for Worship

Many Hebrew words either mean "worship" or describe the actions of worship. So in order to see the richness of the vocabulary, I will attempt to list every Hebrew word that applies to man as he worships either the true God or false gods, simply to have a complete list.

1. Abad []: occurs over 200 times and basically means to serve [see above].
2. Abida []: occurs 6 times and means to work or serve [Ex. 6:18].
3. Abodad []: occurs over 110 times and means to serve [Numbers 3:36].
4. Abrek []: occurs once and means to bow the knee [Gen. 41:43].
5. Athar []: occurs once and means a worshipper [Zeph. 3:10].
6. Barak []: occurs over 300 times and means to kneel to bless another [see above].
7. Kaphaph []: occurs 5 times and means to bow down or curse.
8. Kara []: occurs 35 times and means to bend the knee or sink in prostration.
9. Misheret []: occurs about 60 times and means service that is required in worship of God

[Ex. 12:6; 16:32-34; Neh. 12;45].

10. Natah []: occurs over 150 times and means to bow [Ps. 18:9].
11. Polchan []: occurs once and means to serve [Ex. 7:19].
12. Qadad []: occurs 15 times and means to shrivel up or bend low in reverence of another.
13. Sachaph []: occurs twice and means to prostrate.
14. Sagad []: occurs 4 times and means to prostrate, to bow oneself in honor and in worship [Isa. 44:15, 17, 19; 46:6].
15. Segid []: occurs 12 times and is always negative because it means to worship or honor a false god [Dan.3].
16. Seret []: occurs twice and means service [2 Chron. 29:35].
17. Shachach []: occurs 21 times and means to sink low [see above].
18. Shachad []: occurs over 170 times [see above].
19. Sharat []: occurs about 100 times and means to serve [Num. 3:36].
20. Shuach []: occurs 3 times and means to bow down [Ps. 44:25].

d. Greek Words for Worship

1. Gonu []: occurs 12 times and means to bow [see above].
2. Gonupeteo []: occurs 4 times and means to bow or lay before [see above].
3. Kampto []: occurs 4 times and means to bow the knee in reverence [Rom. 14:11].
4. Latreia []: occurs 5 times and means divine service or service of worship [Jh. 16:2; Rom. 9:4; 12:1; Heb. 9:1, 6].
5. Latreuo []: occurs 21 times and means to serve, religiously [see above].
6. Leitourgia []: occurs 6 times and means service.
7. Leitougeo []: occurs 3 times and means to serve or minister to.
8. Proskuneo []: occurs about 60 times and means to kiss [see above].

9. Sebasma []: occurs twice and means worship [Acts 17:23; 2 Thess. 2:4].
10. Sebazomai []: occurs once and means to serve.
11. Sebo []: occurs 10 times as means worship, worshiper or God-fearing [Mt. 15:9; Acts 16:14; 18:7].
12. Sebomai []: occurs 8 times and means to fear [see above].
13. Sebomenos ton theon []: occurs once and means one who fears God.
14. Theosebes []: occurs once and means a worshipper of God [Jh. 9:31].
15. Therapeuo []: occurs 44 times and means to serve [Acts 17:25].
16. Threskeia []: occurs 4 times and means to serve or worship in a religious context [Col. 2:18].
17. Threskos []: occurs once and means religious [Jas. 1:26].

APPENDIX II

Dancing in the Church: Biblical?

Dancing should not be the divisive activity in the church that it has been in recent years. In the Old Testament, dancing was almost exclusively associated with religious functions. Whereas today, in our modern societies, dancing is almost exclusively associated with Discos, night clubs and pagan worship. In order to have a Biblical view of dancing, it is important that our Biblical view NOT be colored by the pagan concepts that have, unfortunately, infiltrated our thinking. Therefore, a short and fairly thorough overview is necessary if we are going to develop a Biblically healthy view of dancing.

Old Testament

The Old Testament generally speaks of dancing in Israel and, therefore, gives us a good view of dancing. In Exodus 15:20, Miriam and the women who accompanied her went forth with dance and song in celebration of God and His victory at the Red Sea. The Hebrew word, "mekholaw," simply means "to dance as a company." And in light of the greatest victory they had ever experienced in their lives, the women showed their appreciation and gratitude openly to God for what He had done for the whole nation. And the same Hebrew word is used in Judges 11:34 when Jephthah's daughter goes out dancing to meet their father after his great victory over the Ammonites. So a company of dancers seems to have been quite normal in the Jewish culture.

David is the one most frequently associated with dancing in the Old Testament. In 1 Samuel 18:6-7 [cf. with 21:11 and 29:5], the women of Israel sing, dance, and play musical instruments as they go out to meet the great victor of God's army, David. And once again this is the Hebrew word, "mekholaw." But also there are two separate accounts of his dancing before the Lord recorded in 2 Samuel 6:14-16 and 1 Chronicles 15:29. In both instances, David dances before the Ark of the Covenant and two different Hebrew words are used. In 2 Samuel, "karar" means "to whirl about vigorously, without inhibition"--and that is precisely what David did. In honor of the coming of God's presence into the Tabernacle, he uninhibitedly rejoiced and celebrated before the living God, in spite of his wife's own personal pride and inhibitions. And in 1 Chronicles, "raqad" means "to stamp, spring about wildly with joy." David also leaped and twirled about because he was so joyful with the presence of God being in their midst. And a similar word, "chawl," is used in Psalm 30:11 where it speaks of David's rejoicing in dance after mourning.

There are other instances where dancing is mentioned in the Old Testament. In Lamentations 5:15, the lack of dancing is associated with mourning, so the presence of dancing should be associated with rejoicing in God. In Psalms 149:3 and 150:4, dancing is seen as a normal way of praising and worshipping God. So the Jewish community would have understood dancing as acceptable and certainly uncontroversial.

But the most unique mention of dancing is in Jeremiah 31. This is the chapter of hope and the New Covenant promised by God. He is revealing His future plans for the whole earth and the time of the New Covenant for the Jews and Gentiles alike. Interestingly, God speaks through the prophet

saying that "again I will build you...again you shall take up your tambourines and go forth to the dances" and "they shall come and shout for joy on the height of Zion...then the virgin shall rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old, together" [verses 4, 12-13]. It seems to be clear that the New Covenant was not excluding dancing as a way of celebrating the presence of God in the midst of His people. But the scriptures make clear that He will restore dancing to remove the sign of mourning, which in Lamentations means that there was no dancing. Thus, the New Covenant is a covenant of praise, worship, and dancing just as before, and we should respond in dance for what He has done for us.

New Testament

The New Testament assumes the Jewish style of worship without detailing a great deal about it. However, the clear and subtle passages make it clear that dancing in a vigorous form was a continuation of the Old Testament form.

In Matthew 11:17, Jesus used the Greek word, "orcheomai," which means "to dance in a row or circle in regular motion" [cf. Lk. 7:32]. Even though He was using this as a part of a teaching, His parables took from everyday life so that the people could understand His meanings. Therefore, we have to assume that it was quite normal in His day. Also, in Luke 15:25, the story of the prodigal son uses the term "choros" which means "to dance and sing in a circle." So if we think that God is like this son's father, then the servants who were dancing, singing, and playing music must be the servants of the father, or us who are servants of God. Thus, dancing was a normal way for celebrating a great victory and, in this instance, a bringing back to life the one son who was previously dead in his sins. Jesus here uses this word in a favorable context.

There are three other Greek words used in the New Testament that exemplify dancing, or at least a form of dancing, as acceptable. "Galliao" comes from two words: "agan," which means "very much or exceedingly," and "hallomai," which means "to jump or spring forth." Therefore, "Galliao" means "to exceedingly jump, leap, or spring forth as in dancing." This word is used of rejoicing when you are persecuted [Mt. 5:12]; of Jesus in Luke 10:21 when it says that "He rejoiced [leaped, jumped exceedingly] in the Holy Spirit." Many would say that this is not a dignified thing for Jesus to do; but keep in mind that He was not bound by the conventions of man, but committed to the Jewish style of life and worship as revealed in the Old Testament. So when it says that He exceedingly rejoiced and leaped, that is what He did. And the same word is used by Jesus when He spoke about Abraham's rejoicing to see My day [John 8:56]. This same word is mentioned in many other places [cf. Luke 1:14, 44, 47; John 5:35; Acts 2:46; 16:34, etc.]. 1 Peter 1:6 and 8 mention that in these last days we should "greatly rejoice" in Him and for all that He has done for us. Even though in the context "dancing, leaping or jumping" are not specifically mentioned, the word used carries that connotation. In light of what Peter has said about God and redemption, could we so quietly sit by and barely utter a thank you? I think not! But to rejoice in so great a salvation and coming inheritance would only include a natural physical response of jumping and leaping because we live in the victory of light over darkness, life over death, and hope over distress. So let us leap with joy.

And the last two Greek words are infrequent: a) "skirtao," which simply means "to jump,

skip or leap for joy" [Luke 1:41, 44; 6:23] and b) "hallomai," which means "to jump, leap or spring forth," as in Acts 3:8 when the lame man was healed and jumped about praising God--a normal response to so a great a miracle [John 4:14; Acts 14:10].

In conclusion, it is important to note that a few instances of dancing in the Bible are associated with evil [Exodus 32:19; Judges 21:21-23; 1 Samuel 30:16; Job 21:7-21; Matthew 11:17; 14:6; Mark 6:22; Luke 7:32]. But all of these instances occurred outside of the context of true worship to the One and Only God. They were either pagans dancing before their false gods or Jews who had turned away from God to celebrate something that was not god. So we cannot exclude or limit New Testament dancing on the basis of these texts but must look to the larger Biblical picture that not only accepts dancing, but also is favorably looked upon by Jesus and the Apostles.

However, keep in mind that dancing cannot be done in isolation from music. So the music that is used must not be sensual or pagan if it is going to produce godly dancing. In fact, much "Christian rock" is a misnomer because Christian music and rock music are from two different sources and worlds and cannot be genuinely mixed together if we are going to have Spirit-inspired dancing. At best, music should only be a servant in the worship service and not the real inspirer of worship because God alone is the only inspirer of true worship.

Dancing in the Spirit is not found in scripture, but dancing before the Lord is. So it is important to keep in mind that whenever an individual or group of believers dance in a church service, it must be done in the presence of God who is Holy and orderly. Therefore, with joy and rejoicing, to bring glory to the Lord's heart, let us restore the lost gift of dance to our church services as the Lord would inspire because as it says in Zephaniah 3:17, "He will exult over you with joy...He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy."

APPENDIX III Song of the Lord

The Song of the Lord is called a "spiritual song" by Paul in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16. It is new [which means "previously unknown"], spontaneously given by the Holy Spirit, sung by an individual as inspired, anointed and directed by the Holy Spirit, and generally occurs in a worship service. It has not been rehearsed beforehand [though it may be in the heart of the individual prior to the service] and is, therefore, improvised in a service. According to Paul, the song of the Lord is "speaking by the Spirit" [1 Corinthians 12:3] in the form of a song, either as a prophecy, tongue with interpretation, or word of worship, adoration or celebration of God in the congregation. And the content of the song is a prophetic word to the church or a word of encouragement, praise, exhortation or comfort to those who hear it. And there is usually an immediate effect upon the singer and hearers; it should inspire faith, hope, strength, and steadfastness in the midst of any trial, opposition, or difficulty standing before the people of God. It may provide answers to questions or inspiration to go on in the Lord. The melody of the song of the Lord is through the human vessel, and a good worship team should be able to improvise a tune that flows with the song of the Lord. And for those who have ever heard it, it is uplifting and kindles one's spirit to love and worship Him even more.

APPENDIX IV
Family Worship
by Valerija McGeorge

There is unity in a family on its knees before God. Every member senses the presence of a higher authority. Humanistic self-reliance is left far behind when the overwhelming presence of God and His peace are felt. Touching elbows with others' lives yielded to God helps reinforce allegiance to Him and to each other.

But, unfortunately, many moms and dads resist routine family worship. To them, the idea suggests interminable Bible reading and lengthy prayers. They may have been part of an unwilling audience when they were children, and they remember unintelligible, adult-oriented "family altars". Whatever the case, most parents agree that home is the prime learning place for worship, and worship is the spiritual force and atmosphere that binds a family together. Today's families need warm and close dimensions to face successfully a world of crumbling relationships.

A family devotional time offers parents a natural place to share scriptural truths and great Bible doctrines. Children can be taught to respond to God in faith with hope, holiness and obedience. And with just a little planning, family worship can be intriguing enough to keep the whole family interested, learning and worshipping. Creativity and ingenuity are the keys to successful home worship.

1. The Beginning

If your family has not had a time of worship together before, introduce it gradually. Keep the worship time short. Stop while interest is high. Refuse to let family worship be grim or boring. Try to discover and use new and different ideas, materials, and even times and places. Remember to pray specifically that the Holy Spirit will work through your efforts so that the family will grow into Christian maturity. Ask often that He will speak to the needs of each individual and that each may draw from the daily worship experience what is lacking in his or her life for that day.

2. The Time

The gathering to worship will never happen without a plan to choose a time when the family is unhurried and relaxed. Breakfast or dinner times have been traditional favorites. Your family worship time will be riddled with as many or as few interruptions as you choose to allow. Most interference can be handled quickly or postponed for a few minutes. Unplug the phone. Feed and change the baby beforehand. Send little ones to the bathroom before you begin. Make the small block of time scheduled for family worship the most important time of the day or week.

3. The Place

Hold family devotions in various places for a pleasant change of scenery: at the kitchen table, in the living room, on a porch watching a sunset, around one family member's sickbed. Let family members try to come up with different places to meet around the Word of God.

4. The Program

While having the same general content and goals, each gathering should be meaningful and interesting. The basic ingredients should be the same: worship, Bible reading, Scripture memorization, songs and prayer. But the end should be spectacular.

Basic Ingredients:

(A) Worship: worship is praising, loving and responding in the heart to God; being in awe of who He is; being in a spirit of submission to His will. Worship focuses on God Himself. Thoughts are turned directly to Him in adoration, seeing God in all His wonder and worshipping Him because of it.

Worship is not automatic with children. The attitude of worship must be taught by example and cultivated through experience. Since worship is a personal response to God, family devotions should allow for and attempt to elicit this response from each participant. Teach, yes, but then ask for even the youngest child's reaction to our Maker. Each day let the children tell how the Bible lesson applies to their lives and how it makes them feel about God. Stories and other tools can be bland, sterile instruments of teaching, or they can stir up feelings that will result in worship and adoration of God.

(B) Bible reading: naturally reading the Bible is a very important part of devotion. This is God speaking to you. There are many different methods of Bible reading. You might want to vary the reading. Sometimes read several chapters in sequence. Other times, choose verses on a single subject scattered throughout the Bible (use a concordance for help). Every so often have a "favorites week" when family members share their favorite verses. Or for a while, pick Bible passages that quote Jesus directly.

Vary your methods also: let each family member take a turn reading on a given night; allow silent reading occasionally; let the parents read a verse, then the children, and so on.

And remember that no matter what plan or methods you are using, you are feeding young hearts and minds. Explain tough passages [like all the 'begats'], define big words, clarify the basic ideas, and restate in ordinary language any difficult concepts. Just reading long paragraphs with big words will not get the job done. Make God's word clear and usable to each person.

(C) Scripture memorization: the greatest knowledge one can have is an understanding of the Word of God. By it we have eternal life through Christ. It is a guide for living. Knowledge of scripture combats wrong teachings and unsound doctrines. It prevents children from becoming entangled in "isms" and cults, and it will keep them from sin.

Here are some types of memorization: a) Give each verse a "title." It will help your children understand the verse, and it aids in recalling it when needed. Example: Ephesians 2:8 might be entitled, "Saved Through Faith." b) Put the verses and their references on handy index cards. They can be conveniently carried and referred to during the day. c) Read verses alternately. After several have read the same verse, one person can say the first part, followed by another saying the remaining parts of it. Then switch parts. And finally, each can say it individually and then all together. It is fun,

yet effective. d) Review a little each day. Retaining takes constant review. And e) print different verses on cards. Cut each card into pieces. Put the pieces for each verse in an envelope. Pass out the envelopes, and use a time to see who can put the verse puzzle together the quickest. Have each member read his or her assembled verse.

D. Prayer: Prayer is vital to family devotions, to make prayer time meaningful keep prayers brief. Make certain they concern what is going on in the family life and the world right around them. Include requests, praise, and thanks. Pray in ordinary language and be specific. Avoid generalities--rather than praying, "God, help Grandma," ask God for her special and specific need. Specific prayers are fervent prayers and can have specific answers. And fervent prayers accomplish much (Jas. 5:16). Such intimacy brings us closer to people, developing compassion and understanding of their problems.

If your family does not feel comfortable kneeling, do not kneel [the Bible gives multiple examples of different positions: kneeling, prostrating, sitting, lying down, walking, and so on]. Praying can be done in any position, out loud or silent, and children should know, learn and understand the variety that God gives to us.

Prayer time is not the time to lay out before God the shortcomings of other family members. Prayer time is not the time to sermonize. Make prayer time a special time when hearts are united in love before the throne of grace.

Extra Ideas for Family Worship

*Once in a while ask each child to come to devotions with something to share: a favorite scripture, a poem about God, a record, a song, Christian film, or discussion ideas.

*Play gospel music: words and music powerfully impact our lives and thinking, and the reformation used this method.

*Read the words of a favorite hymn aloud. Discuss what the author was trying to say. Find out something about the author, if possible.

*Let the children teach a new song they have learned in Sunday school.

*Buy or make puppets. Have one of the children tell a Bible story using the puppet.

*Discuss how the Bible has helped them lately.

*Discuss what God is like and how we can know Him and more about Him. Read Psalm 139; Job 37-39.

*Make up your own Bible quiz.

*Bundle up in rain boots, grab an umbrella and go for a walk in God's rain. Take time to look around, to feel the droplets on your face. Stop and wonder where they come from. Listen to the wind and watch the tree leaves move. Make patterns in the mud with your toes and talk about God. Credit God with all of nature around you. And when you get home, share a cup of cocoa and Job 37.

When To Teach What:

Kids are filled with super energy, abounding in unlimited potential for absorbing new ideas about God. Making God's treasures available at just the right times in a child's life will build solid foundations for Christian growth and experience.

Introducing abstract subjects like the meaning of baptism and communion will certainly not harm a child. In the beginning they will become familiar with the terminology and with the symbols themselves. Later on, understanding will grow, and the true meaning will unfold. But too much too soon can cause confusion in the child and disappointment in the teacher. And a very young child subjected to a battery of vague, symbolic concepts may cause them to see religion as boring and incomprehensible. The child may even form incorrect, concrete notions that will need to be corrected and relearned at a later date. [Some children connect communion with lunch, and magic with Christ's being everywhere].

But the right ideas introduced at the right times will have far greater impact and will lay a better groundwork, enabling a child to have continuing and exciting experiences with God.

One excellent chart that can be used as a guideline for what to teach and when is found in Alice Chapin's book, [Building Your Child's Faith](#); plus you can see from this chart at what age are the most important characteristics of a child, which Bible truths can be learned, and how you can teach it. Keep in mind that every child has a personal internal clock, some comprehending difficult concepts earlier than others.

Conclusion

We are made up of body, soul and spirit, so if we feed a child well and use healthy psychological principles, but ignore his spiritual development, we will be developing only two-thirds of a person [but, in reality, it is much less because the Bible says that out of the heart or spirit comes the personality; thus we raise a spiritually-crippled child]. And because we will all live somewhere after death [either in heaven or in hell, forever], I believe the development of a child's spirit is the most important of the three. "Psychological development will enable our children to live in society and earn a living, but spiritual development will enable a child to understand the meaning of life," because God calls upon them to be "light and salt" in a decaying society, and to be the spiritual as well as economical, political and social instruments of change towards God.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win" [1 Cor. 9:24]. I believe that we as Christian parents should consider ourselves in competition with the world, and especially in the area of training up children who will become the most mature in spirit, mind and emotions. So let us do our best with God's guidance, wisdom, love and power.