

# 12 Keys



**to Authentic**

**WORSHIP**

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# ***12 KEYS TO AUTHENTIC WORSHIP***

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

The psalmist wrote, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul thirsts for You, O God" (Ps. 42:1). What a great analogy for the worshipping Christian! There is no doubt that a cool drink of water after a long run through the woods is pleasurable. Water, though, is more than a desirable experience for the deer; it is a necessity of life. So, for the Christian, is the presence of God.

Have you ever yearned to draw closer to God? Have you ever wanted to be able to express your love for Christ, but didn't know the "right way" to do it? Have you ever wished that your worship experience could be more "real"? If your answer to any of these questions is "yes," then this study is for you!

# LESSON 1



## THE FIRST KEY:

### *Worship from the heart*

As you begin your study of worship, understand that worship is a response; it is a reflection of what you think is important. It is the outworking of your devotion. If your greatest desire is to have a sporty and fast car, for example, and you pour your life into the business of acquiring such a car, then it would be correct to say that you "worship" that car. It is the most important thing in your life. Martin Luther made this remark, "Whatever your heart clings to and relies upon is your god." The plain fact is that all people worship--they just don't all worship the living and true God! So . . . what is the most important thing in your life? On what are you most willing to spend your time and energy? Comment. \_\_\_\_\_

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Read Ps. 115:4-7. Compare these verses with vs. 3. (Consider also Jer. 10:5-6). What is the significant difference? They created their Gods. Our God created everything. He does as He pleases. He is the initiator.

Read 1 Cor. 8:4-6. Paul is dealing with a situation which had immediate application in the Corinthian church of his day. What principle can we draw from this passage for today? Worship the true a living God. Don't let things and practices divert your attention from the object of true worship.

True biblical worship, of course, is not directed toward cars or houses or friends or family. We all know that such worship is idolatry. True biblical worship is directed toward the living and true God (See Ex. 20:4-6). It has as its foundational principle that our relationship with God is our life's priority. Our whole purpose of life is tied up in "glorifying God and enjoying Him forever." Worship is our way of

**Q: Is there anything in your life that you would never put aside or give up?**

saying, "there is nothing in my life more important than You, O Lord. I am Yours."

The Scripture uses several different words which have been translated "worship" in our modern English Bibles. Even though a single English word has been used for all, their meanings are quite different. One pair of words (Heb., *shachah* and Gk., *proskuneo*) means "to bow down," "to make oneself low," or "to give honor to another." The other pair of words (Heb., *Abad* and Gk., *latreuo*) means "to serve, to work, or to do," "to perform acts or service." The first group refers to how you see yourself in relation to your God; the second group refers to the means you use to demonstrate or act out that devotion. One, then, is an attitude and the other an action. When you hear the word "worship," which idea is dominant in your mind? **Heart-Attitudes or actions – what you are or what you do** Why do you think that this is so? **Background / experience / teaching / personal priorities . . . .**

Our English word "worship" is derived from an Anglo-Saxon word *worthscipe*, which means "to attribute worth to an object," or "to acknowledge the worthiness of another." To worship God, in the original sense of the English word, is to acknowledge His worthiness. Read 1 Chron. 16:25-26 and Ps. 96:4-5. These verses identically call our attention to the worthiness of the LORD. How should we view Him in relation to false gods? **Our God is holy, He is unique in the universe. The LORD is God of ALL!** Psalm 145:3 goes one step further in proclaiming the worthiness of the LORD. What does this verse say about God's greatness? **It is beyond our comprehension. If God did not choose to reveal Himself, He would be unknowable. (See Isa. 55:8-9).**

Which do you think must come first with regard to worship, attitude or action? **Attitude.** Is it possible to perform the actions of worship in such a way that they do not reflect a proper relationship with God? How might this be so? **By simply "going through the motions."** Can you give any biblical example of such worship? **Matt. 15:8-9, Amos 5:21-23.**

Read the following passages, Ps. 95:6, 138:2; Rev. 7:11, 11:16. What heart-attitudes are demonstrated in these verses? **Humility, Reverence, Honor, Fealty, Gratitude, Adoration**

Why is this important? **If these attitudes are absent, no action – no matter how "religious" it may seem – can be authentic worship. ATTITUDE → ACTION**

Psalm 100 gives us an outline for worship. Read through the Psalm and answer the following questions:

- 1) The people of God are commanded to do several things in this Psalm. List the "action words." Shout Worship Come Enter  
Give thanks
- 2) What is the relationship between the first two verses and the third verse? Authentic worship flows from the knowledge of God. Only those who know God, who acknowledge His greatness and worthiness, are able to worship Him.
- 3) What does vs. 4 teach us about coming into the presence of God? Authentic worshippers approach God with a heart-attitude of thanksgiving and praise.
- 4) What three things do we learn about God in vs. 5?  
He is good – all the time, in character and in deeds  
He loves us with an enduring / everlasting love  
He is faithful and will remain faithful through all generations – His promises are not just for their first readers, but are true for us and for our children as well.

**WORSHIP HAS TO BE REAL!**  
**We must be careful not to worship an imitation.**  
**We must be careful not to just imitate a worshipper.**

**KEY IDEAS:**  
**Worship is personal**  
**Attitude leads to action**  
**Our God is worthy of our worship**  
**Our worship is pleasing to the Lord**  
**The goal of worship is the presence of God**

# LESSON 2



## THE SECOND KEY:

### *Hear God's Call to Worship*

Read 1 Chronicles 16:8-13, 23-26, 28-29, 34-36. After David became King over Israel he determined that the Ark of the Covenant should be brought to Jerusalem. His first attempt was unsuccessful because he did not follow the Lord's directions for carrying the ark. Later, when he did carefully follow God's instruction that the ark was to be carried by the Levites, it was successfully brought to the place that David had prepared for it. The return of God's Ark to the place of worship was cause for celebration and rejoicing. The procession was accompanied by the sound of trumpets and cymbals, lyres and harps, the sounding of the *shofar* and the shouts of the people. David, the musician king, gave this Psalm (1 Chr. 16:8-36) to his music director to be sung as part of the celebration.



David used the imperative (a verb form used for commands) when he composed this song. Because of this we know that the Psalm was meant to be instructive. Look at the things that the Psalm says God's people should do?

*Give thanks* to the Lord  
*Declare* what He has done  
*Tell* of His wonderful acts  
*Look* to the Lord  
*Sing* to the Lord  
*Declare* His glory  
*Bring* an offering  
*Worship* the Lord  
*Cry out* for salvation

*Call* on His name  
*Sing* to Him  
*Glory* in his holy name  
*Seek* His face  
*Proclaim* His salvation  
*Ascribe* to Him glory and strength  
*Come* before Him  
*Give thanks* to the Lord

The purpose of these directions is to focus the attention of the people toward God and to His works. It is natural, right and proper for the people of God to worship Him and to declare His praise.

## **A PEOPLE WITH A PURPOSE**

Read 1 Peter 2:9. What are the words that Peter uses to describe the church?

a chosen people

a royal priesthood

a holy nation

a peculiar / God-owned people

What does Peter say is this "peculiar" people's purpose? To DECLARE the praises of God (refer back to David's instructions on the previous page)

Compare this verse with Isa. 43:21. According to Isaiah what purpose are God's chosen people to serve? \_\_\_\_\_

Who are called upon to praise the Lord in the following passages?

Ps. 30:4 His saints (holy people / those set apart for His purpose)

Ps. 32:11 The righteous (those made acceptable by God)

Ps. 33:1 The righteous / upright (straight or level, = match the standard)

Ps. 97:12 The righteous

Rev. 19:5-6 The servants of God (those who acknowledge the lordship of Christ)

## **A GOD WORTH A WORLD OF PRAISE**

God is worthy of praise and all of His creation ought to honor Him with praise and worship. Ps. 117:1 says that all nations (actually the word refers to Gentiles) and all peoples (tribes) should worship God. Ps. 150:6 teaches that everything that has breath (life, spirit?) should praise the Lord. Read Ps. 148. List those who are commanded to "praise the LORD." (Also see Ps 19:1-3, 145:10-13)

<u>angels</u>	<u>sun</u>	<u>moon</u>	<u>stars</u>
<u>waters</u>	<u>sea creatures</u>	<u>ocean depths</u>	
<u>lightning</u>	<u>hail</u>	<u>snow</u>	<u>clouds</u> <u>winds</u>
<u>mountains</u>	<u>hills</u>	<u>trees</u>	
<u>wild animals</u>	<u>cattle</u>	<u>small creatures</u>	<u>birds</u>
<u>kings</u>	<u>princes</u>		
<u>young men</u>	<u>maidens</u>	<u>old men</u>	<u>children</u>

You must not underestimate how much God values your worship. Read the first two commandments in Ex. 20. They teach us that:

- 1) You are to devote your life to the true and living God.
- 2) The living God is unwilling to share worship with anything false.

Jesus, in his confrontation with the devil, quoted, "Worship the Lord your God and serve him only" (Lk. 4:8). So you see, the honest worship of our God and Savior must not be taken lightly. Read and consider Isa. 45:22-24 and Phl. 2:10-11. **EVERY knee will bow – the proud will be brought low – even the lost will ultimately have to acknowledge God.**

Why is it important for the people of God to worship Him? **It is how we demonstrate our devotion to Him and our reliance upon Him.**

**Pride prevents worship!**

**KEY IDEAS:**

**Praise is the Christian's calling.**

**The saints of God should rejoice and sing.**

**All of God's creation should honor its creator.**

**Every knee will bow and every tongue will acknowledge God.**

# LESSON 3



## THE THIRD KEY:

### ***Acknowledge God's Greatness***

#### **WORSHIP HIM FOR HIS *HOLINESS***

Compare Isa. 6:1-3 and Rev. 4:8-11. On those occasions when we are granted a glimpse of heavenly worship we find the angels extolling the holiness of God.

To say that God is “holy” can mean a couple of different things. First, the word holy can mean “separated.” God is holy because He transcends in every way the things that He has made. In the whole universe, God is unique. Read Deut. 4:34-35; Isa 45:5-6, 22; Isa. 46:8-10. What does God say about Himself? He says that He (the LORD) IS God. There is no other true and living God. He also says that He is a God who knows and cares for His people.

Although we are called to be set apart as God's special people, we must recognize that perfect holiness is attributable to God alone (Rev. 15:4).

Second, the word holy can mean “pure and righteous.” These things are certainly true of God. He holy in His character and divine being; He is also holy in everything He does. Read 1 Sam. 2:2-10; Ps. 77:13-15; Ps. 99:1-5. No one can do what the LORD does because He rules in sovereignty and in power!

#### **WORSHIP HIM FOR HIS *MAJESTY***

God calls you to seek His presence and to come boldly before His throne; however you should never see your relationship with God as a casual one. Your God is holy and awesome and He must be worshiped for His majesty. He is your King and, when you come before Him, it should always be with respect and with honor. Read the following verses and write a short comment about each:

Ex. 15:11	<u>God is majestic in holiness and awesome in glory.</u>
1 Chron. 29:11	<u>God is exalted as ruler of heaven and earth.</u>
Ps. 8:1, 9	<u>God's name is majestic throughout the earth.</u>
Ps. 93:1	<u>God sovereignly rules over all He has made. He can't be overpowered or overruled!</u>
Ps. 104:1	<u>God absolutely in every way transcends His creation.</u>

## **WORSHIP HIM FOR HIS *GOODNESS***

Your God is majestic but at the same time your God is compassionate. Read Ps. 113:5-8. In these verses we see two pictures of God. The first shows Him far above everything He has made. The second shows Him reaching down to lift up the downtrodden. Isa. 57:15 presents a similar view of God. According to this passage, where does God dwell? In a high and holy place and with the contrite and lowly in spirit Read Ps. 34:8 and Ps. 119:68. What do these verses tell us about God? God is good, what God does is good, and we will be blessed if we take refuge in Him Read Ps. 145:1-9. In this Psalm David expresses several reasons why the Lord is worthy of praise. List the ones that stand out to you. God is powerful and His works are awesome; He is gracious and compassionate – He really does “feel our pain; He is good to all creation.

## **WORSHIP HIM FOR HIS *MERCY***

Read Ps. 103:8-12. What four aspects of God's character are found in vs. 8? Compassionate gracious slow to anger abounding in love Is it God's purpose to give you what you deserve? (vs. 10) NO!! Were it not for God's great mercy and His loving kindness we would all be lost and without hope. Everyone has sinned and fallen short. Read Rom. 5:8, 1 Jn. 4:9-10 and Eph 2:4-5. How did God deal with our lost condition? In the person of Jesus Christ He lived a righteous life for us, paid the penalty for our sin – all this while we were dead in sin and enemies of God. (SEE Eph. 2:1 and Rom. 5:10).

## **WORSHIP HIM FOR HIS *FAITHFULNESS***

You can know for certain that your God is unchangeable in His character and that His Word stands firm. What He says He will do and what He purposes He will bring about. Comment on the following passages:

Deut. 7:9	<u>God is a faithful promise keeper</u>
Ps. 36:5-6	<u>God is loving, faithful, righteous, and just</u>
Ps. 89:1-2	<u>God's love and faithful is as reliable as the heavens (everlasting)</u>

How does your knowledge of God's faithfulness affect your security as a believer? Consider 1 Cor. 1:8-9 and Php. 1:6. I know that God is able and determined to finish the “good work” He began in me. I am secure in Christ!

## **WORSHIP HIM FOR HIS *MIGHTY WORKS***

Read Rev. 15:2-4. In another vision of heavenly worship we see the assembly by the glassy sea and hear them sing the song of Moses. How do they describe God's deeds? (vs. 3) They are "great" and "marvelous" How do they describe God's ways? They are "just" and "true" (Like margins and framing!) What is the reasonable response? (vs. 4) Fear God, Glorify His name, WORSHIP before Him.

If we were to follow the instruction of Isa. 12:5-6, what would we do and why? Sing aloud (so you can be heard), Sing for joy. Because God is GREAT among US!

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### **KEY IDEAS:**

**God is Holy**

**God is mighty**

**God is faithful**

**God is a majestic King**

**God is good and what He does is good**

**God responds to us with loving-kindness**

## **7 SIGNS OF JESUS' POWER AND AUTHORITY IN JOHN**

Miracles in John are referred to as "signs." The signs are given to confirm the deity of Jesus.

1. **Changing water into wine** – Jn. 2:1-11 - Jesus Christ has the power to initiate change situations and hearts.
2. **Healing the nobleman's son** – Jn. 4:46-54 – Christ's power always exceeds our expectations; Jesus didn't have to go with the man in order to heal his son.
3. **Healing the paralyzed man** – Jn. 5:1-17 – Jesus is lord of the Sabbath / God's providence is always available.
4. **Feeding the 5000** – Jn. 6:1-14 – Jesus Christ is the bread of life; God's providence is always sufficient.
5. **Waking on water** – Jn. 6:15-21 - Jesus Christ is greater than any difficulty or danger that we may have to overcome.
6. **Healing the blind man** – Jn. 9:1-7 – In the physical and the spiritual realms, man's hopeless situation is simply opportunity for Jesus.
7. **Raising Lazarus from the dead** – Jn. 11:1-46 – Jesus is the master of both life and death.

These "signs" should increase our faith and to inspire our worship.

# LESSON 4



## THE FOURTH KEY:

### *Express your faith*

You know from your study of God's Word and from your own experiences, that God doesn't always provide His people with a smooth road to travel as they walk with Him. Jesus promised his disciples that, "In this world you *will* have trouble" (Jn. 16:33). Read that verse. How did He say that they were to respond and why? "Take heart" ("be of good cheer"), Jesus has overcome the world. NOTE: "in Christ" we have peace. Re: "this world" SEE Jn 17:11; 1 Pet. 2:11; 1Jn. 2:15-17).

i.e., by their  
evaluation

True worship is an expression of your *faith* in God. ~~To some people,~~ faith is an unfounded hope that something good is going to happen. This is not a good description of biblical faith. When the Scripture speaks of faith it is speaking of an individual's *trust* in God's *promise, power* and *faithfulness*. It is one's assurance that God is a keeper of promises and that He is both wise and good. Anything that comes to pass in the believer's life is seen in the context of God's good and perfect will. Read 1 Thess. 5:16-18. In what circumstances is it right to give thanks to God? ALL circumstances. Read Rom. 8:28. What kinds of things does God work together for the good of those who love Him and who are called according to His purpose? ALL things.

### TWO BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

Read Job 1:13-22. Four messengers came to Job to bring him news. What did each of the messengers tell Job?

- vv. 14-15 His livestock were taken and his servants killed by Sabians
- vs. 16 The "fire of God" (lightning??) killed his sheep and servants
- vs. 17 His camels were taken and his servants killed by Chaldeans
- vv. 18-19 His children had been killed in a windstorm

Job did two things in response to this news. What were his two actions?

He expressed his grief  
He worshipped God

NOTE: There is no inconsistency in this.

How did Job explain his actions? (vv. 21-22) He knew that everything comes from the hand of God and what God does is good. God gives and God takes away.

Read 2 Sam. 12:15-20. Who was the child that had been struck ill? (vs. 15) The son of Uriah's wife by David What did David do about the child's illness? (vs. 16) Pleaded with God, fasted, and spent his nights on the ground. What happened to the child? (vs. 18) The child died How did David respond when he was informed about the child's condition? (vv. 19-20) He washed himself, changed clothes, worshipped God, and broke his fast.

Do you think these two men responded in a reasonable way? Why or why not? Yes. Their response was based on a firm faith in God and acknowledgment of His sovereignty. [Remember Gunner in *Byzantium* ]

## **WORSHIP GOD IN "TRUTH"**

In both of the examples above (Job and David) we see individuals who have learned to trust God and to accept what they receive from His hand. They have learned to worship God as He really is; as a God who sovereignly rules over all that He has made. They both recognized that the Lord is worthy of worship even when we don't understand what He is doing. Whatever God does is "right!" Read Isa. 55:8-9. What does this passage teach us about God? God's ways and thoughts are higher than ours; we can't always expect to understand them – that's why our understanding of events must not be the basis of our worship of God.

In John 4:24 Jesus says, "God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." To worship God "in truth," one must be willing to "let God be God." The worshiper does not presume to judge God. The worshiper honors God and acknowledges His worthiness.

## **THE REFINING FIRE**

I am told that the average person wouldn't even recognize a precious metal if he saw it in its ore state. Gold or silver ore doesn't look special at all. It is only when heat is applied and the impurities are removed that the beauty of the pure metal begins to show. Then a luster and a richness becomes apparent that was hidden before. Then the metal becomes malleable; it can be shaped and molded into a thing of beauty. **You are much like that raw ore; full of both impurities and promise.** God uses the

circumstances of your life as a refining fire, to burn away the impurities in you and to make you pure, holy and pleasing in His sight.

Read the following passages and comment on each:

**Ps. 66:8-10** Praise the Lord, He has kept us and refined us. Discuss vv. 11-12.

**Mal. 3:1-4** It is Christ's purifying and refining that makes us useful to God.

**Isa. 48:10** Affliction (tribulation) is God's refining furnace

**Acts 14:19-22** Troubles do not = a lack of God's direction or blessing

**2 Cor. 4:17-18** We should view our present from the eternal perspective

**1 Pet. 1:6-9** God's purpose is to refine, purify, strengthen our *faith*.

**Heb. 12:9-11** God's refining of our lives leads to holiness, righteousness, & peace.

**James 1:2-4** It is our faith (ability to keep trusting) not our strength that is tested.

It is easy to acknowledge and to honor God when you are comfortable and when you feel secure. And you should praise the Lord at such times, because He is the source of your comfort and your security. Paul wrote, "rejoice in the Lord always . . ." "Always" includes the good times. It is not so easy, though, to offer praises to God when times are difficult. Of course, "always" includes difficult times as well. Perhaps this is why the writer of Hebrews speaks of a "sacrifice of praise" (Heb. 13:15). Our God is good "all the time," and is always worthy of worship and honor. Trust Him. He is faithful!

**Our worship must not depend upon our circumstances matching our expectations!**

#### **KEY IDEAS:**

**God is in charge**

**God wants us pure and holy**

**Everything God does is good**

**Our worship expresses our trust**

# LESSON 5



## THE FIFTH KEY:

### ***Connect Praise and Prayer***

**Prayer** is very much a part of Christian **worship**; it is direct communication with God. Prayer can be a private matter, spoken or unspoken; or prayers can be corporate, usually offered by an individual in an assembly of believers. **It is important that you see prayer as a more than coming to God with your requests and desires.** While these things are certainly part of prayer, **your prayer life must also include praise and thanksgiving.**

The best example of the rich prayer life is, of course, found in Jesus' life on earth. Throughout the gospel accounts we find Jesus praying in all situations. Prayer was an important part of Jewish worship in the first Century, and Jesus' disciples were certainly familiar with the priestly prayers offered at the Temple and the prayers of the synagogue services. Still it was to Jesus that they came with their request, "Teach us to pray" (Lk. 11:1).

You are no doubt very familiar with the formula for prayer that Jesus taught his disciples. Notice that it begins, not with a petition, but with praise-- "Our Father in heaven, holy is Your name . . ." We can hardly speak those words without thinking of **Ps. 100:4**, "enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise . . .," or **Ps. 95:2**, "Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song." The acknowledgment of God and the giving of thanks is the natural starting place for the believer's prayer.

**Take the time to read and discuss all of Psalm 100 and Psalm 95:1-7.**

## PRAYER AND TRUST

Anxiety = the emotional result of a negative expectation. It is the opposite of hope and indicates a lack of faith.

Read Php. 4:6-7. What does vs. 6 teach you not to do? **Be anxious (worry) about anything** What does vs. 6 say that you should do? **Present your needs to God.** What, according to vs. 6, should your attitude be as you approach the throne of God? **Have an "attitude of gratitude."** What is the promise of vs. 7? **The peace of God**

Notice the relationship between thankfulness and prayer in the following verses: Jas. 5:13; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess 5:17-18. Why do you think that a thankful attitude plays such an important role in the Christian's prayer life? **Praise and gratitude demonstrates a person's acknowledgement of God – it is an honest response to God's presence, goodness, and faithfulness.**

**Trust feeds worship -- worry impedes worship**

Read Matt. 6:25-33. Once again you are taught not to be anxious. What is anxiety? **It is a fearful outlook (SEE above)** What causes anxiety? **A lack of trust or hope in the faithfulness of God . . . or a lack of knowledge or understanding of God and His ways.** Do you think anxiety is detrimental to a person's relationship with God? If so, why? **Sure. it obscures one's view of God's gracious provision!** NOTE: **anxiety is always focused on the possible future, not on the actual present.** What is the "bottom line?" What are Christians to do? (See vs. 33) **Make God's kingdom and His righteousness your highest priority and let Him take care of the rest.**

Read and comment on each of the following passages:

**1 Pet. 5:7** **Give your anxiety to God . . . God cares for you [care = concern or interest OR providence & maintenance]**

**Ps. 55:22** **God will sustain you and protect you – he won't let you fall!**

**Ps. 62:8** **God is your refuge (i.e., a place of assured safety – no risk)**

**Prov. 3:5-6** **If you trust Him, He will direct you. (NOTE: you can't sail a docked boat – you can steer a parked car).**

Read **Eph. 5:19-20**. What does Paul instruct his readers to do "always" in vs. 20? **Give thanks for everything**

Read **Col. 2:6-7**. With what should the Christian "overflow?" **Thankfulness.**

Read the following and write down what each teaches you to be thankful for:

1 Cor. 15:57

Victory in Jesus

2 Cor. 2:14

That Christ's victory will become known through us

2 Cor. 9:15

READ 13-15. God's provision for, in, and through believers

Rom. 1:8

The gift of faith (and the Christian witness) seen in others

Rom. 6:17

Freedom from bondage (slavery) to sin

Php. 1:3

For the "fellowship of the saints" and partners in ministry

1 Tim. 1:12

For the calling and the empowering of God.

If time permits, use these questions as a point of discussion and practical application.

What are some specific things that God has done for you that you can thank Him for? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In what ways has His grace been manifested in your life? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **KEY IDEAS:**

**Trust feeds worship**

**Anxiety impedes worship**

**God has given us much to thank Him for**

**Praise is the foundation of our prayer life**

# LESSON 6



## **THE SIXTH KEY:** **Recognize the Benefits** **of Worship**

### **THE BENEFITS OF A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**

Read Ps. 103:2-5. What, according to this verse, are the benefits of knowing and serving God?

He forgives my sins (those things in me that cause God discomfort)

He heals my diseases (things in me that cause me discomfort)

He redeems my life (He can do this because it belongs to Him)

He crowns me with love and compassion (a demonstration of His grace)

He satisfies my desires with good things (He makes me content with God-pleasing things)

Read Eph. 1:3-14. Notice that the blessings of God are made available to those who are "in Christ." Even though God is good and He makes the "rain fall on the just and the unjust," it is clear that spiritual blessings come through Christ. Is there any way that you can know that you have received these "spiritual blessings?" (See vv. 13-14 and Rom. 8:16)

The presence of the Holy Spirit is the "guarantee" of our inheritance from God (i.e., sonship / adoption into God's family)

### **THE BENEFITS OF YIELDED HEARTS**

Read Matt. 23:12; Lk 18:13-14; 1 Pet. 5:5-7. What is the common warning in all these verses? Those who exalt themselves will be humbled by God. What is the common promise in all these verses? Those who are humble before God will be exalted.

In Isa. 66:1-2 we read:

"This is what the LORD says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the LORD. "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word."

Again you can see the importance of a humble and repentant heart and a respect for God and His Word. You can't expect that the works of your hands, no matter how well crafted, will be honored by God. God honors a pure heart. See Matt. 5:8.

This is a pretty good description of AUTHENTIC WORSHIP!

Read 2 Chron. 7:14. What four things does God require of His people? That they: humble themselves and pray and seek his face and turn from their wicked ways (= repent). What is his three-fold promise? He will: 1) hear from heaven, 2) forgive their sin, and 3) heal their land.

Read Ps. 33:12-22. Hope is one of God's greatest gifts to a nation. A people that is humble before God (i.e., a worshiping nation) is a people with a glorious future, because God's love is unfailing.

## THE BENEFITS OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Second Chron. 7:14 instructs God's people to "seek His face." You might recall that David's psalm, recorded for us in 1 Chron. 16:11, gives a similar instruction. In both the Hebrew and Greek languages (the original languages of the Old and New Testaments) the word which means "face" also means "presence." What do Ps. 95:2 and Ps. 100:2 teach us about how we should come into the presence of God? With thanksgiving (gratitude), with music and joyful songs, with gladness. Read Isa. 12:2. It is interesting that God Himself provides us with the means to come into His presence. This passage tells us that the LORD is our *strength* and that the LORD is our *song*. The psalmist writes in Ps. 22:3 that God "inhabits the praises" of His people [". . . you are the praise of Israel," NIV]. It is clear that, when worship is true, the Lord is present. Or, to put it another way, there is no true worship apart from the presence of God.

Read Ps. 42:1-2, Ps. 84:1-2. Describe the psalmist's attitude, as it is expressed in these passages He says that his greatest desire is to come into God's presence to worship Him . . . it is a yearning that can't be satisfied any other way!

## **GOD SEEKS TRUE WORSHIPERS**

God desires worship and calls worshippers.

Read Jn. 4:23. Most of the time when I read this passage I am drawn to the fact that God's people are called to worship Him in "spirit and in truth." That is such a profound truth that its significance makes it easy to miss the next phrase: "for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks." It is good for you to know that God is seeking people who honestly and fervently and biblically worship Him. God is calling you to be that kind of worshiper!

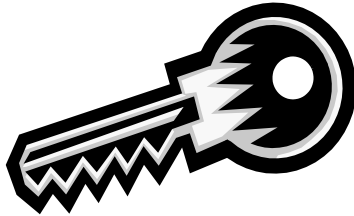
Read Ps. 50:23 in several versions. How do you understand the first phrase of the verse? "The KIND of worshipers..." Not all who come to worship are the same. It is the authentic worshiper, the honest worshiper that is able to please the Father. We should remember that praise is the Christian's calling – his "job 1."

We know that God has blessed us and we are thankful. It is an awesome thing, though, to think that somehow our worship blesses God and brings Him glory.

### **KEY IDEAS:**

**The Father seeks worshipers**  
**We are to seek the presence of God**  
**God is blessed by the praises of His people**  
**God Himself will exalt the humble of heart**

# LESSON 7



## **THE SEVENTH KEY:** **Let the Holy Spirit Lead**

### **THE NECESSITY OF A SPIRIT-LED LIFE**

Read Ex. 33:15-16. In what way is a believer different from an unbeliever? Read Jn. 3:3, 5-6; Rom. 8:9 and 1 Cor. 12:3. What brings the added dimension to a Christian's life? The presence of God's indwelling Holy Spirit Do you think the Holy Spirit is at work in the lives of all or just some Christians? Explain your answer. The Holy Spirit is present and at work in the lives of ALL believers . . . it is the Holy Spirit who enables us to believe. We wouldn't /couldn't be Christians if He wasn't working in our lives!

Rewrite the last sentence of Rom. 8:9 to make it a positive statement. If anyone belongs to Christ, he has the Spirit of Christ.

Read Ez. 36:26-28 and Rom. 8:5-8. What is necessary if a person is to please God? He has to have the gift of the Holy Spirit and he must be yielded to (have their minds set on) what the Spirit desires (i.e., God's perfect will).

Andrew Murray, in his book *The Spirit of Christ*, makes the following statement which is worthy of your consideration:

"It is only where the Spirit truly and unceasingly has the entire lead and will rule in the life of worship that He will have the power to lead and rule in the life of practical obedience. If I am to deny self in my relationships with fellowmen, to conquer selfishness and temper and lack of love, I must first learn to deny self in my relationship with God."

## **THE BENEFITS OF A SPIRIT-LED LIFE**

Read each of the following and record your observations:

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT AND WORSHIP**

Read John 4:23-24; Php. 3:3 (Rom. 2:29) The Holy Spirit is our MEANS to true worship. He enables acceptable worship – there is not authentic worship of God in the flesh.

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT AND JOY**

Read Lk. 10:21; Acts 13:52; 1 Thess. 1:6 The Holy Spirit provides joy in both times of blessing and times of trouble. Remember: “the joy of the Lord is my strength.” (Neh. 8:10)

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT AND PEACE**

Read Rom. 8:6, 14:17-18 The Holy Spirit is the source of our peace – peace is one aspect of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). In Christ, through the Spirit we have peace with God and peace of mind.

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT AND FELLOWSHIP**

Read 2 Cor. 13:14; Php. 2:1-2 Christian unity is a unity of Spirit. He grants us fellowship with God and fellowship with one another.

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT AND POWER** →

*dunamis* = the ability to accomplish or bring to completion.

Read Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 2:4-5; Eph. 3:16-19; 2 Tim. 1:7 The ability to glorify God, to serve Him, and to share His love with others is ours in Christ through the Holy Spirit. (See Php 4:13).

Evangelical Christians know the Holy Spirit (Holy Ghost) to be the third person of the divine Trinity. We should note that He is referred to in Scripture by other names as well. In Romans 8, Paul calls Him "The Spirit of life," "the Spirit of God," "the Spirit of Christ," "the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead," and "the Spirit of sonship/adoption." Other biblical names for the Holy Spirit include "the Spirit of holiness" (Rom. 1:4), "the Spirit of truth" (Jn. 15:26), "the eternal Spirit" (Heb. 9:14), "the Spirit of grace" (Zech. 2:10; Heb. 10:29), "the Spirit of glory" (1 Pet. 4:14), and "the Spirit of the Lord" (Lk. 4:18; 2 Cor. 3:17). Jesus called Him the "Comforter," the "*parakletos*," our helper.

Think about how each of these names aids us in our understanding of the person and activity of the Holy Spirit.

Consider the following ways that the Holy Spirit works in your life.

- 1) It is the Holy Spirit who convinces us of sin and who enables us to trust Christ for salvation. (Jn. 16:7-8)
- 2) The abiding presence of the Spirit in our lives is the guarantee of God's promise of our redemption. (1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 1:13-14; Rom 8:16)
- 3) The Holy Spirit is our teacher; He provides us with illumination and understanding of God's word. (Jn. 16:13-14)
- 4) The Holy Spirit provides both the power and the wisdom necessary to minister effectively to the needs of others. (Rom. 8:26; 2 Cor. 3:6)
- 5) The Holy Spirit communicates the will of God to our spirits and inspires obedience. (Ez. 36:27)

Remember Jesus' words in John 4:24 and consider Gal. 3:3. Why is it important to "let the Spirit lead" as we come to worship God? If we don't, our worship will be fleshly, powerless, and displeasing to God. It will be nothing more than "noisy gongs and clanging cymbals." (Consider Amos 5:21-14).

### **KEY IDEAS:**

**The Holy Spirit is ever-present**

**We are to worship God in Spirit and in truth**

**The Holy Spirit is our comforter, enabler and guide**

# LESSON 8



## **THE EIGHTH KEY:** **Celebrate Christ**

### **WORSHIP IS A CELEBRATION**

Read Ps. 145:1-9. In these verses we get a picture for King David and the nation of Israel worshipping and praising and honoring the Lord. They celebrate God's goodness and joyfully sing of His righteousness (vs. 7). Of course there are times for quiet meditation and silence before the Lord our God, however, this is not the biblical norm. The presence of God is a place for celebration. The people of God are encouraged to rejoice, to shout, to sing, and even to dance before the Lord. Read Ps. 149:1-4 and 150:1-6. These psalms certainly seem to describe an attitude of celebration! What ways are given here by which the Lord might be praised? Sing, dance, make music. Utilize trumpet, harp, lyre, tambourine, dancing, strings, flute, cymbals of all kinds. NOTE: voice, body (dance) brass, strings, woodwinds, & percussion.

Read each of the following passages. How do you see the people of God celebrating in each?

- 1 Sam. 4:4-5 They raised a tumultuous shout!
- 2 Sam. 6:14 David danced before the Lord with all his might (strength / holding nothing back)
- 1 Chr. 15:29 Shouts, ram's horns, trumpets, cymbals, lyres, and harps
- Ezr. 3:10-11 They played instruments, sang praises, and shouted
- Ps. 30:11 Dancing (rejoicing)
- Ps. 33:3 SING a new song, PLAY skillfully, SHOUT for joy!
- Ps. 47:1 Clap your hands, shout with joy
- Ps. 71:23 Shout for joy, sing praises
- Isa. 12:6 Shout aloud, sing for joy

Do you think that a "spirit of celebration" is an important part of the life of the church? Why or why not? Joy and celebration are the natural response to the hearing of good news. A lack of celebration would seem to be an indicator of a lack of understanding of the Gospel – which IS good news. (SEE Luke 15:5-7, 9-10, 22-24).

## **GODLY WORSHIP BALANCES LIBERTY AND DIGNITY**

At the same time that we are directed to rejoice in the presence of God, we are also reminded to maintain an element of dignity. We are, after all, in the presence of the King of the Universe! Read 1 Cor. 14:40 and compare 1 Cor. 14:33. What is to be the manner of our corporate worship? We are to worship in a fitting and orderly manner. NOTE: this is not in conflict with Spirit-led worship. We always can trust God to inspire fitting and orderly worship!!

While, on the one hand, we are to worship God in a manner which freely expresses our joy, we must, on the other hand, be sure that it is an honest reflection of our relationship with Him. As we have already seen, if we are to please God, we must allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit of God and not by the desires of the flesh. There is much which might appeal to our fleshly nature that would be inappropriate for the worship of God! Read Eph. 4:30. How might one "grieve the Holy Spirit?" By being unmoved by His leading, by violating or rejecting the truth He reveals, by taking a low view of His power. The way to freely worship God and, at the same time, avoid the excesses that often accompany a worldly celebration is to let God Himself direct. Read Jn. 8:36 and 2 Cor. 3:17. Where is true freedom found? Where the Spirit of the Lord is / wherever hearts and mind are fixed on Christ

A godly celebration is an orderly celebration, a "regal" celebration; but, if it is directed by the Holy Spirit, it will also be joyful, inspiring, and beautiful.

## **TRUE WORSHIP FOCUSES ON CHRIST**

Read Dan. 7:13-14 and compare Matt. 28:18; Col. 1:17-18 and Rev. 1:12-18. Who do you think the "one like a son of man" is? Explain your answer. It is God the Son, Christ Jesus. SEE Rev. 1:12-18. "Son of man" is Christ's title for Himself.

According to Daniel's vision, how will "all peoples, nations and men of every language" respond to Him? They worshipped Him.

**Only Christian worship is true worship.** Even though that sounds like a narrow-minded and politically incorrect statement, remember that Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father except through me" (Jn. 14:6). The truth is that it is in Christ and Christ alone that we find our means to come into the presence of God the Father. Read Eph. 5:20; Php. 2:9-11; and 1 Pet. 4:11. Notice how Christ serves as the mediator between the church and God the Father. God receives praise, honor and thanksgiving *through* Christ Jesus the Son. Read 1 Tim. 2:5 where Christ's role as mediator is explicitly expressed.

## **REASONS TO CELEBRATE!**

### **CHRIST IS OUR REDEEMER**

Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:18-19

### **CHRIST IS OUR KING**

Lk. 23:3; Jn 18:37; Rev. 17:14

### **CHRIST HAS TRIUMPHED AND IN HIM WE HAVE VICTORY**

Rom. 8:37; 1 Cor. 15:57; 1 Jn. 5:4-5

### **KEY IDEAS:**

**In the Spirit there is Freedom**

**God is not the Author of Confusion**

**Christ is the focus of all True Worship**

**When we worship, we express the joy of our salvation**

# LESSON 9



## The three-part role of the priesthood:

1. The first was to minister in the sanctuary, (the tabernacle or the temple).
2. Secondly, priests were responsible for teaching the people the law of God.
3. Thirdly, when God's will was sought for the nation, it was the priests who prayed for guidance.

## THE NINTH KEY:

### *Know Your Priestly Role*

#### A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS

Read **Ex. 19:5-6**. It was God's plan that His people should be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. We know that Israel did not "obey God fully" and that it was necessary for Him to establish a priestly class to fulfill the functions of the priesthood. **Read 1 Pet. 2:4-5, 9**. Under the new covenant, the ideal of the **priesthood of all believers** is restored to the people of God. What are the two responsibilities of this priesthood? (see vs. 5 and vs. 9) 1) offer spiritual sacrifices 2) declare the praises of God (There is more on this on the following pages) **Read 2 Cor. 5:17-18**. What have we become since we have been reconciled to God? ministers of reconciliation What is "reconciliation?" A move from hostility to friendship (= atonement) Notice that Paul calls believers "ambassadors" in vs. 20. What does an ambassador do? represents his sovereign nation on foreign soil.

We represent Christ and the kingdom of God while living in the kingdoms of the world.

It is interesting to note that the very first Christian believers took their role as ministers of the gospel seriously. They were under such intense persecution that they were forced to leave their homes. **Wherever they went, however, they shared the gospel.** As a result, the church grew on a daily basis. **(See Acts 8:1, 4).**

In the centuries that followed, this ideal was abandoned and the church re-established a priesthood. One of the great benefits of the Reformation is that it restored to the church the concept of the priesthood of all believers. We need to look to no other person as a mediator between God and ourselves. All believers have access to the presence of God; all Christians may participate fully in the worship of God and the witness for Christ!

Read Matt. 27:50-51a. The rending of the temple veil was an actual historical event, but it is packed with symbolism. How do you understand its significance? The veil separated believers from the presence of God. Because of Christ's atoning sacrifice, every believer has personal direct access to God – since we are forgiven and cleansed by the blood of Jesus, the symbol of separation due to unrighteousness is no longer necessary

Sacrifices "acceptable to God":

- Self – Rom. 12:1
- Prayers – 1 Tim. 2:1-3
- Praise – Heb. 13:15
- Offerings – Php. 4:18

## OFFERING SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES

You might wonder, what spiritual sacrifices am I, as a member of the "kingdom of priests," to offer to God? You may find your answer in Heb. 13:15-16. From this passage we can see that your ministry has two parts. First, you are to offer up to God the sacrifice of praise. Second, you are to offer to others a sacrifice of service.

### THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE

Read each of the following passages and make one observation about the sacrifice of praise:

**Ps. 22:23** We are to praise, honor, and revere God. To do this we have to acknowledge God as God

**Ps. 34:2-3** We should tell others about God's goodness and encourage them to praise through our praise . . . "praise the Lord with me."

**Ps. 40:3** Our testimony of praise (giving God public credit for what He has done for us) will lead others to trust God.

**Ps. 50:23** We honor God when we offer Him thanks. An attitude of gratitude draws us closer to God and helps us see His hand at work

**Ps. 69:30-31** It is the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving that most pleases the Lord . . . better than the sacrifice of bulls and oxen.

This leadership is needed in church and home!

Review pg. 5, par 1; the two types of worship. One is praise, the other is service.

### THE SACRIFICE OF SERVICE

Read each of the following passages and make one observation about the sacrifice of service:

**1 Sam. 15:22** All real ministry/service is an obedient response to the call of God / the direction of the Holy Spirit. God prefers obedience to sacrifice.

**Ps. 51:16-17** God's desire is that we have hearts that are broken before Him (i.e., not proud), humble hearts, servant's hearts. SEE Matt. 20:25-28.

**Prov. 21:3** God wants the actions / works of His people to be right and just (in His eyes). NOTE: this is only possible when we are Spirit-led and Spirit-enabled.

**Hos. 6:6** God wants His people to acknowledge Him and to reflect His mercy and grace.

**Mic. 6:8** Christians should act with justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him (i.e., humble themselves to walk with Him ... His way, His course, His timing).

Discuss the application of what we have learned here.

## REPRESENTING CHRIST TO THE WORLD

Read Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15. What has Christ commissioned His followers to do? Go, proclaim the Good News, make disciples, baptize, teach them to obey Jesus' teaching. Jesus issued these "marching orders" to the eleven remaining disciples. Do you think these words apply to them alone, or to the church as a whole? Explain your answer. Mark 16:17 applies signs to "those who believe." The church is "those who believe." This is the ongoing mission of the church.

Read each of the following passages and notice how we are to represent Christ.

Matt. 5:16 Let your good works bring praise to God. Q: HOW do we direct praise to Christ and not to self? BE FAITHFUL

Jn. 15:8 Our fruitfulness (= spiritual fruit and reproduction) glorifies God. It DEMONSTRATES our relationship with Christ. BE FRUITFUL

Rom. 15:5-6 We are to have such unity of Spirit that we glorify God with one voice (i.e., all proclaiming the one true Gospel). BE UNITED

Rom. 12:9-21 Hate evil, promote what is good, be devoted to and honor one another, be zealous, joyful, patient, faithful . . . BE TRANSFORMED

Php. 2:14-16a We should stand out in the world because of our godly attitudes . . . no complaining, no arguing ("no biting, no fighting"). BE PECULIAR (SEE Tit. 2:14, 1 Pet. 2:9)

1 Thess. 4:11-12 Win the respect of outsiders/unbelievers in your community. "Live so that your friends can defend you, but won't have to." – Arnold H. Glasgow "Live in such a way that you would not be ashamed to sell your parrot to the town gossip." -- Will Rogers BE RESPECTABLE

Heb. 10:23-24 Be faithful and encourage others to be faithful BE COMMITTED

1 Pet. 2:12 Live in such a way that even unbelievers can see that your ways and your works are good. BE CONSISTENT

1 Pet. 4:11 Be quick to give God the credit for His gifts at work in you. The praise goes to Christ! (SEE 1 Cor. 4:7). BE HUMBLE

### KEY IDEAS:

**The Church is a Priesthood of Believers  
Christians serve as Christ's Representatives to the World  
You are to offer Sacrifices of praise to God and service to Men**

# LESSON 10



## THE TENTH KEY: Please God, not Man

If we are to honor God in our corporate worship, we need to determine what kind of worship pleases Him. We know from Jn. 4:23 that God wants to be worshiped in Spirit and in truth. We know, as well, that God wants to be worshiped with an undivided heart (See Ez 11:19; Ps. 86:11).

What, you might ask, could prevent the people of God from pleasing God in their worship? Certainly worship of idols and other forms of false worship are displeasing to God -- the first two commandments teach us this clearly enough. But is idolatry a problem in the 20th century church? Explain your answer? **Oh yeah!! Materialism is all forms is idolatry, worshipping the church organization rather than Christ, putting faith in church leaders rather than Christ.** Putting idols aside for a moment, do you think it is possible to worship the living and true God in a way that displeases Him? Isn't God happy with whatever we might choose to offer Him! Many people think so; but let's search the Scripture together and see what God Himself says about it . . .

Consider the Roman Church's practice of honoring saints, for example

### WORSHIP

Isa. 29:13

**Religious words and works ≠ love for God**

Zeph. 3:16-17

**The Lord DELIGHTS in His people's faith and honest worship**

Isa. 12:2

**The Lord Himself gives strength and joy to those who trust Him**

The main components of corporate worship are: songs of praise, prayer, giving of offerings, and the proclamation of God's Word. Read the following passages and record what pleases or displeases God in each.

## SONGS OF PRAISE

Ps. 33:1-3	<u>Sing joyfully, sing and play and shout</u>
Ps. 47:6-7	<u>God, the King, asks us to sing praises unto Him</u>
Isa. 12:6	<u>Sing loudly and joyfully because God is in your midst!</u>
Amos 5:23-24	<u>God takes no pleasure in those who "go through the motions." Only honest praise pleases God.</u>

## GIVING OF OFFERINGS

Deut. 15:10	<u>A generous and willing heart opens the door for God's blessing</u>
Prov. 15:8	<u>You can't buy God's favor (grace)</u>
Prov. 21:27	<u>God knows the giver's motive</u>
Mal. 3:8-10	<u>The tithe belongs to God, to keep it is to rob God</u>
Matt. 6:1-2	<u>Give to honor God and serve his people, not to receive praise</u>
2 Cor. 9:7	<u>Giving cheerfully (willingly, gladly) is what pleases God</u>

## PRAYERS

Eccl. 5:1-2	<u>Our words never fool God. Worship and pray honestly</u>
Matt. 6:5,7	<u>Pray to God, don't do it to please men or gain their favor</u>
Lk. 11:9-10	<u>Be persistent in prayer – keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking</u>
Jn. 14:12-14	<u>We must pray according to God's will – we can't ask God to violate His own will or purpose.</u>

## PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

Ez. 33:30-32	<u>We are to listen to God's Word and do what He says</u>
Jer. 6:17	<u>We need to heed God's clear warnings</u>
Lk. 11:27-28	<u>The blessings of God come to those who HEAR and OBEY</u>
Jas. 1:22	<u>To hear without doing is self-deception</u>

In Prov. 29:25 we are taught not to fear man, but to trust God. The fear of what "others might think" or "what others might say" is probably the greatest hindrance to Christian worship. How do you think that fear of man might affect your worship? Nobody wants to be considered a fanatic or a zealot or a weirdo. Nobody wants to be an outcast. SOLUTION: Let the Spirit lead! Please God.

Read 1 Cor. 10:32-33. How, if at all, do you think that this passage applies to worship? State and explain your views. This passage deals with questionable areas where Scripture makes no clear statement or principle. Praising and Worshipping God is not – for the most part – questionable. We are to do it! Honest worship isn't a stumbling block to believers.

Write a paraphrase of each of the following passages that deal with the fear of man.

Isa. 51:12-13

God's power to save is greater than any man's power to harm.

(SEE Rom. 8:31).

Lk. 12:4

We SHOULD fear offending God. The wages of sin is death and eternal separation from God!

\*\*Jn. 12:42-43

Fear of man can prevent even those who believe from worshipping and serving God

This is a KEY verse!

You must remember that the focus of all true worship is Christ. You must also remember that all true worship is personal. You may worship with others, but true worship is a reflection--an external expression --of your personal, private relationship with God.

#### **KEY IDEAS:**

**God looks on the heart**

**We must be doers of the Word**

**Fear of man hinders the worship of God**

**Not everything called "Worship" is honoring to God**

# LESSON 11



The "church" is a special (peculiar) group of people who are 1) called by, 2) belonging to, 3) trusting in, and 4) serving the cause of Christ. It is NOT a building nor an organization of men.

## THE ELEVENTH KEY:

### *Find the Historical Perspective*

The worship of God in the church of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is built upon a rich tradition and heritage. God has had a "people" from the very beginning who desired to serve and honor Him. See Rom. 11:1-5. Even during those times when it seemed that faith was not to be found anywhere, still there remained a faithful "remnant." Today we refer to God's faithful people as "the church." The church, by definition, is "the assembly of believers." The Greek word for "church," *ekklesia*, is a combination of two words; one meaning "from," or "out of," and the other meaning "to call." The church, then, is that body of people who have been "called out of" the world and, at the same time, called into the kingdom of God. Read each of the following passages and note what each tells us that believers have been called from or what we have been called to:

1 Cor. 1:9 You have been called into fellowship with Jesus Christ

Eph. 1:18-20 Called to hope, to a glorious inheritance, to the power of resurrection.

Php. 3:14 Called heavenward (to win the prize)

1 Pet. 2:9 Called out of darkness (into His wonderful light)

1 Pet. 5:10 Called to eternal glory

We ARE the church  
whether we are gathered  
together or not!

The church may or may not be assembled; when the church does come together however, it is usually for the purpose of worship.

The earliest references to church gatherings in the New Testament present a picture quite different from the one in our minds when we think of "going to church." Consider the following verses: Acts 2:1, 4:31, 5:12, 12:12; Rom. 16:5; Phm. 1b-2 and list the places where believers met together. In one place (house – vs. 2), Solomon's colonnade (a porch on the east side of the temple), John Mark's mother's house, Pricilla and Aquila's house, Philemon's house

It is interesting to read the words that Ignatius, one of the early church leaders, wrote to the believers in Ephesus:

"Take heed, then, often to come together to give thanks to God, and show forth His praise. For when you assemble frequently in the same place, the powers of Satan are destroyed and the destruction at which he aims is prevented by the unity of your faith."

While there does not seem to have been any consistent "liturgy" to be followed when the early believers met together, the Scripture and the writings of the early church do show us some common elements. These would be: giving thanks; the singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs; prayers; the reading and teaching of the Word; and the administration of the sacraments (i.e., baptism and the Lord's Supper).

Read the following passages and note the elements of worship mentioned in each:

Acts 2:41-42	<u>baptism, teaching the Word, Lord's supper (or perhaps a fellowship meal), fellowship, and prayer.</u>
1 Tim. 4:13	<u>Reading, preaching, and teaching the Word</u>
1 Cor. 10:16-17	<u>Sharing in the celebration of the Lord's Supper</u>
Eph. 5:19-20	<u>Share the Word, sing praises, and give thanks</u>
Col. 3:15-17	<u>Give thanks; teach the Word; sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.</u>
1 Cor. 14:26	<u>Sing, teach, share spiritual messages . . . whatever strengthens the church.</u>

Many of the worship practices of the early believers seem to have been borrowed from those of the synagogue. This is natural, since the earliest believers were Jews. It is clear that it was not their desire to be anything other than Jews. They considered themselves to be the true Israel, so the Temple and the synagogues were theirs! It was only when opposition became insurmountable that they took the gospel to the streets. See Acts 2:46-47, 3:1, 9:17-22, 13:14-15, 17:16-17, 19:8-9. The main elements of synagogue worship--praise, prayer, and instruction based on reading of Scripture--are clearly evident in Christian worship through the ages.

Throughout the church's history styles of worship have changed and evolved. At certain times and places worship tended to be very formal while, at other times and places, it was more spontaneous and informal. The essential elements of Christian worship, however, have remained fairly constant. **It is important not to equate style with substance.**

Contrast formal and informal worship and what you consider to be the advantages and the disadvantages of each. complex/simple; casual/ formal; planned/spontaneous; liturgical/non-liturgical. These terms indicate contrasting worship styles and varying levels and kinds of participation by the worshippers. Liturgical styles tend to be well thought-out and self-consistent, but they also tend to be much more formal and constrain individual participation. Spontaneity and simplicity in worship allows for more immediate direction by the Holy Spirit and a much higher level of individual participation.

Do you think one is more pleasing to God than the other? Why? The Lord is interested in the attitude of your heart and the sincerity of your worship. If worship is biblical and real it will be pleasing to God.

Some see style as the point of difference between “true” worship and false worship. In reality though, it is not simplicity or complexity, robes as opposed to blue jeans, or hymnbooks rather than PowerPoint slides that determine the validity and vitality of worship. You can, after all, “go through the motions” in any style! On the other hand, you can worship sincerely and from the heart in any style!

The church through the ages has been called to honor God and to edify one another. Believers have endeavored to accomplish this by drawing upon all the means at their disposal. This should be our objective and our method as well. Find a way to express the joy of your salvation and to exalt the name of Jesus. Let the Spirit and Word build your faith and understanding. But above all, worship with your whole heart – this is pleasing to the Lord!

Don't come to church to meet your friends, come to church to have an encounter with God!

### **KEY IDEAS:**

**The Church is a people, called of God**  
**The Church can assemble anywhere, anytime**  
**The content of worship is more important than style**

# LESSON 12



## THE TWELFTH KEY: Live Your Life as Worship

In 2 Chron. 2:4-6 we read that Solomon's purpose was to build a Temple where God could be worshiped through sacrifice and the burning of incense. He understood, however, that God would not be contained in any building; it was a "Temple for His Name," a place where the God of all creation would be honored (Deut. 12:10-11; 2 Chron. 2:1). It was also to be a place of gathering for God's people at the times of the appointed feasts and was to serve as a site for "services of worship."

That old temple, in all its forms, is gone. The sacrifices to atone for the sin of the people are now unnecessary; the Lamb of God, the true and perfect sacrifice, has been offered once and for all (See Col. 2:16-17). And yet there remains a place where God's name is honored and where He is praised and worshipped.

Read 1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:21-22. What do these verses say about God's temple? **The church (i.e., believers, people) is the dwelling place of God's Holy Spirit. YOU are the temple of the living God!**  
You see, Christ is the true temple-builder, we are that holy temple, and the Spirit of Christ inhabits us! There is no need for believers to go to a particular place to worship God; God has come to us! Immanuel!

In Rom. 12:1 Paul refers to a particular kind of sacrifice. What does he say we should offer? **Our bodies (selves)** In what ways might you offer yourself to God as a sacrifice? **Materially and physically; we give our first and our best. Spiritual sacrifices = trust, praise, obedience, pride, selfishness, striving (SEE Matt. 16:24-25).**

The KJV calls this our "reasonable service." Why is this reasonable? (Consider 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 5:15; 1 Pet. 1:18-19). It is reasonable (or sensible) because Christ has redeemed us (purchased us by paying OUR debt with HIS blood, pain, life). Therefore we belong to Him; body, soul, and spirit.

Even as God was worshiped in the old temple, through sacrifice, He is worshiped in His new temple. Now, however, the sacrifice is one of will; sacrificing our fleshly desires--our purposes and agendas--for the sake of His. It is when we can honestly say, "not my will but Thine be done," that we have become living sacrifices unto God. Consider Luke 9:23.

Without in any way diminishing the importance of our assembling together (Heb. 10:25), it must be acknowledged that, for the Christian, the whole of life is continuous worship. True worship is free from the confines of Temple, synagogue, church building or meeting hall. Every action of a Christian's life; every word from his mouth should honor his Savior.



Read the following passages. What are we encouraged to do in each? When and where are we encouraged to do it?

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 1 Cor. 15:58     | <u>Always give yourself fully to the Lord's work</u>                    |
| Php. 4:4         | <u>Always rejoice in the Lord</u>                                       |
| 1 Thess. 5:16-18 | <u>Always be joyful, continually pray, give thanks about everything</u> |
| Gal. 6:9-10      | <u>do good to everybody at every opportunity</u>                        |
| Heb. 13:15-16    | <u>Continually offer sacrifices of praise</u>                           |

## **YOUR LIFESTYLE AS WORSHIP**

3 practical ways to honor God.

Worship is honoring God. As worshipers, then, we must be careful to live in such a way that our lives bring honor to Him. We are to 1) encourage one another in the body of Christ, 2) live in peace with our neighbors, and 3) be blameless in our relationships with those outside the faith.

Read the following passages. Consider in each, how your lifestyle reflects your relationship to Christ.

Rom. 12:11-18 Serve the Lord joyfully, patiently, and faithfully. Be a blessing, don't be proud, be fair, live at peace if possible.

Eph. 5:8-10 Live a children of light in goodness, righteousness, and truth doing what you know will please the Lord.

Php. 1:27-28 Conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ. Stand firm in one spirit and contend for the faith.

Php. 2:3-5 Humbly consider the needs of others. Put them before your own. Take on Christ's servant attitude.

1 Thess. 4:1 Live in order to please God – not to please other people and not self. Your purpose is to glorify GOD.

1 Thess. 4:11-12 Live a quiet (i.e., restful, peaceful) life. Earn the respect of others by your hard work. Remember "honest work honors God."

Titus 3:8 Devote yourselves (i.e., live sacrificially) to doing good (good = that which is in compliance with the will and purpose of God).

Jas. 3:13 Demonstrate your wisdom and spiritual understanding through humble works.

1 Pet. 2:12 Glorify God by doing such good works that even unregenerate unbelievers can see their goodness.

2 Pet. 3:10-11 Live holy and godly lives, remembering that your future (and your present purpose) is not anchored to this present world.

1 Jn. 2:3-6 Be obedient in everything you do. Jesus served the Father in everything He did and we are to be like Him. "Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did."

### **KEY IDEAS:**

**You are the temple of the living God  
Everything in your life should honor God  
You were bought with a price, you belong to Christ**