Worshipping God

What do you think it means to worship God?

If you asked most Christians, they would likely tell you that worshiping God is when we sing songs to Him. In fact, most churches call the opening part of their service the "worship time," referring to the music that is played and sung. However, singing praises to God is a very small piece of what worshipping God is all about.

How We Worship God

John 4 provides the story of a Samaritan woman who encountered Jesus at a well. Samaritans were viewed in an extremely unfavorable light by the Jews, and the fact that Jesus addressed her at all was quite shocking to her. Take a moment to read John 4:1-26.

In John 4:23-24, Jesus said: **23 "But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."**

The Greek word for "worship" is προσκυνέω (porskuneo), which means to kiss the hand of another in reverence or to fall on one's knees and touch the ground with the forehead as an expression of deep reverence. In essence, it is to submit oneself to another with great reverence.

This is what worship is all about. It is a deep reverence and honoring of God for what He has done in your life and in the life of all others.

In what ways do you think you are worshiping God?

Worship Is for God

This Greek word is used 60 times in the New Testament and is used in relation to God in all but one of those instances. It is either used to talk about how people worshipped Jesus or how they worshipped God at the temple. What this tells us is that our worship should always be centered on God.

However, this is not always true. The one exception is in Acts 7:43, which is talking about how the people were worshiping the figures of false gods. What this shows us is that our worship can stray.

God commanded us against this. As part of the Ten Commandments, He told His followers that they were not to "bow down" to false gods. The Hebrew word for "bow down" (שחה) has the same meaning as the Greek word προσκυνέω. God commanded us to not honor nor worship false gods.

However, the "worship" of the false god does not have to be a figurine or a god by another name. You can worship other types of idols such as money, fame, people, or

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power. People worship their job, physical parents, phone, spouse or children. There are even those who worship themselves.

Can you think of some ways that you have seen others worship idols or false gods?

What are some ways that you have done this?

Why do you think it is important that you not worship false gods?

So, What Is Worship?

To understand how to worship, we must first recognize what it is. We have established that it is a great deal of reverence for God. That is true, but we want to talk about what it truly means to revere Him.

As mentioned, the singing part is what is most often associated with worship. Most churches have a "worship pastor," but the truth is that every pastor on the staff should be a worship pastor. Worship does not end when the music stops.

The reason behind this is quite simple. Worship is nothing more than my deep reverence for God, which should never stop. I should always be worshipping God. Just as I am commanded to never stop praying, I am also told to never stop worshipping God.

Psalm 34:1 reads: **I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.**

When I am praising God, I am worshipping Him. I am proclaiming how amazing God is. That is worship. Honoring and recognizing the brilliance of God is part of worshipping Him, and this Psalm tells us that we should never stop doing this.

This makes it clear that worship is not to only when you sing songs. After all, unless you live in a musical, you are likely not always singing. Therefore, your worship of God has to occur in other times in your life.

When are times in your day that you are worshipping God?

When are times in your day when you could be worshipping God?

While you should always be worshipping God, proclaiming how amazing He is, God does not want you doing so with a hypocritical heart. In Matthew 15:1-9, Jesus is speaking against the Pharisees and their willingness to break the Law of God to follow their own traditions.

In Matthew 15:8-9, Jesus said, "**8 This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; 9 in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.**"

This leads us to one of the most important parts of what worship is all about – a deeply felt desire to honor God in all we do. Not perfect, but a desire to truly do as God asks.

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Do you feel like you are worshipping God with your life?

In what ways do you feel you are doing so?

What are areas where you need to improve?

How You Can Worship God

If worship is a deep reverence for God and this is seen in a person's desire to honor God, then it is time to talk about how one can worship Him.

What You Say

How do you think your words demonstrate your worship for God?

Just as how many view that singing is what worship is all about, others believe that it is the praise we give to God that is the only way that we demonstrate our worship for Him. However, it is our complete language that demonstrates our reverence for Jesus.

How do you think that saying negative things, like gossip or swearing, demonstrates a lack of reverence for God?

There is no doubt that when we proclaim the glory of God that we demonstrate our worship for Him. However, when we're out gossiping about others, swearing or using foul language, or speaking in ways that insight conflict or division, we are not demonstrating any kind of reverence. In fact, we're doing the very things that God commands us to not do.

Proverbs 6:16-19 says, "**There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.**"

These are all things that are the exact opposite of worshiping God. Can you see in this passage how our words can demonstrate the opposite of reverence for God?

Our words should speak about the glory of God. They should proclaim who God is and what He has done and will do. Our words should also uplift others, edifying and building them up, not destroying them.

Keep in mind that when others are using language that demonstrates a lack of reverence for God, that can impact you as well. People telling questionable jokes, using foul language, or sharing gossip with you can tear at your spirit and create division between you and other believers.

If someone is using words to tear others down, you must confront the brother, pointing out the error of his ways. You also should avoid those who seek to create division. Romans 16:17 tells us specifically to "**watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid**

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them." If a person is trying to sow division among believers, you should stay away from him or her. That person's words can destroy the unity of the body of believers.

Why is it important that believers stay unified?

How do you think somebody's failure to worship God can lead to division?

Your Songs

While worship is not just about singing to the Lord, that is a part of it. Ephesians 5:19 tells us, "… **addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart**." We are to be singing songs about God to one another. James 5:13 tells us that if anyone is cheerful, "**let him sing praise**." We should glorify God and worship him because of how great He is.

Also understand that the songs that you sing and listen to impact you in the same way as the words you and others say. If you are listening to music that proclaims wicked messages, that is harming your spirit.

Do you think this is true?

Are there songs or artists that you listen to that can impact your spirit in a negative way?

Do you feel this is acceptable?

No one is telling you that all the songs you listen to must proclaim the glory of God. What we are saying is that the music you embrace will be an indicator of where your heart is. It is perfectly acceptable to listen to romantic songs that inspire you to love your wife or girlfriend more. It can be fulfilling to listen to music that encourages you to think positively or to persevere through difficult times. However, songs that tear down others, promote violence, or belittle groups of people do not edify you or God.

Your Actions

How do you think that your actions can worship God?

One of the most obvious ways is to read the Bible daily. If you want to worship God, you should have a strong desire to know who He is and how He wants you to act. This can be found by spending time each day in the Bible.

What are actions the Bible tells you to perform that would help you to worship God?

God wants you to worship Him by spending time with Him. Keep in mind that one of the definitions of worshiping was to bow down on one's knees in a posture of reverence. While you may not need to be on your knees in your room praying to God, it is still important to recognize that you must spend time with him every day. Your worship should be an attitude where you want to devote your time to Him.

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The problem is that many of us worship other things far more often than God. While you may not think about it in this way, the things that you spend the most time doing are really the things that you are worshiping.

Do you think this statement is true? If you do, what are things that you could be worshiping?

The actions you perform will tell you about what you are worshiping. It is a true indicator of your heart. It is important to honestly ask yourself if you are worshiping God or something else?

Your Talents

You have probably learned about spiritual gifts by now. These are gifts God has given you to edify and build up the church. He has also gifted you with special talents, like being a good mechanic, artist, or singer. He may gift you with strength, intelligence, great hand-eye coordination, or other similar talents.

These things should be used to glorify and worship God as well. Can you sing really well? You should be using that talent to worship God. Can you write music or stories? These could be used to glorify God.

Even talents that may not seem like they would be used to worship God can be used in this way. For example, if a person is a great construction worker, how can this be used to worship God?

In Luke 4:8, Jesus said, "you shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve." In how you serve is how you can worship God.

What are talents you have and how can they be used to worship God?

A True Worshipper Follows the Prompting of God

John 4:24 tells us, "**God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.**"

For you to worship God, your spirit must connect with His. In other words, the Holy Spirit must be a central piece of your ability to worship God. He directs you. He guides you in how to worship Jesus.

He also reveals to us how the Bible calls us to worship God. How many places in the Bible tell us how to worship Him. Psalm 71:8 tells us that my mouth should be "**filled with your praise**," and Psalm 150:6 tells us "**Let everything that has breath praise the Lord**!"

What are ways that you are worshiping God in your life?

How do you think the Holy Spirit is prompting you to worship God?

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Bible Passages for the Week:

Monday – John 4:23

Tuesday – Psalm 28:7

Wednesday – Habakkuk 3:17-18

Thursday – Hebrews 12:28

Friday – Colossians 3:16

Saturday – Pick a passage from Scripture that teaches you about worshiping God.

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