

TREK 101

Christian

Discipleship

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

By Donald S. Whitney

LESSON 4 WORSHIP

“Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.” Philippians 2:12b
(NLT)

A Ministry of Rockpointe Church

Lesson 4

WORSHIP

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(This Lesson Adapted from Donald Whitney's *Spiritual Disciplines For The Christian Life*)

A. WORSHIP INVITATION

READ ALOUD Psalm 95:1-6 “Come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. ² Let us come to him with thanksgiving. Let us sing psalms of praise to him. ³ For the Lord is a great God, a great King above all gods. ⁴ He holds in his hands the depths of the earth and the mightiest mountains. ⁵ The sea belongs to him, for he made it. His hands formed the dry land, too. ⁶ Come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord our maker, ⁷ for he is our God. We are the people he watches over, the flock under his care.” Psalm 95:1–7 (NLT)

1. Think about a time when you really felt close to God in worship. What do you think made that time special?
2. “Godliness without the worship of God is unthinkable” Donald Whitney
 - i. How does your spiritual journey verify or contradict this statement?
3. As you have listened to people talk about worship, has their comments/thoughts been positive or negative? Any examples?

B. WORSHIP OBSERVED

1. Individual/private Worship. **Read Isaiah 6:1-8.**
 - i. Describe the scene. Place. Emotions. Senses. Posture.
 - ii. Who are present?
 - iii. Who is the focus?
 - iv. What are some responses and who made them?
2. Corporate/public Worship. Read Revelation 4:1-11
 - i. Discuss same questions listed above.
3. What are some elements that you discovered from these passages that are essential to experience worship?

C. WORSHIP DEFINED

1. Worship comes from Saxon word meaning “worthship”. Worship then is variously defined:
 - i. To ascribe proper worth to God; to pay homage to
 - ii. To focus on and respond to God
 - iii. To know, to feel, to experience the resurrected Christ

- iv. Celebration of the Christ event
 - v. Praise and thanks to God for what He has done, is doing and will do.
2. Since God and what He has done for us in Christ is the focus of worship, we must know who God is to experience authentic worship.
 - i. Agree or disagree with that statement?
 - ii. How do we know who God is? God revealed Himself to us through:
 - 1) Creation. Romans 1:20
 - 2) Scripture. 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21
 - 3) Christ. John 1:14; Hebrews 1:1-2.
 3. Authentic worship is our response to God as He *reveals* Himself, and not just as we want Him to be.
 - i. What are some qualities of God that make Him worthy of our worship?
 4. Robert Webber in his book of the same title says “worship is a verb”.
 - i. What do you think he means?
 - ii. What are some implications of worship if indeed it is a verb?
 5. **Read aloud Matthew 15:8–9** “ *‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. 9 They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.’*”
 - i. Describe what you think it means to “worship God in vain”.
 - ii. See Matthew 23:23-24 for additional insight.
 6. **Application.** Considering what has been discussed about worship, defend and/or dispute the following statements.
 - i. “I can worship just as well on the golf course or the beach as in church.”
 - ii. “Of course I worship God, I attend church.”
 - iii. “I don’t get anything out of church (worship). It is so dull and boring.”

D. CONCERNS AND INSIGHTS ABOUT WORSHIP

(This section is adapted from Robert Webber’s book entitled, *Worship is a Verb*)

1. Concerns about worship
 - i. Much of worship is centralized in the pulpit/stage.
 - ii. The congregation then becomes little more than an audience.
 - 1) This tends to make worship a passive experience vs. active/responsive.

- 2) What is your response when a fellow worshipper says “amen”, lifts their hands or even stands when no one else is standing?
- iii. Worship style is often fixed and minimizes participation.
 - 1) As a worship participant, what are some ways you’d like to participate in worship?
 - 2) You are the worship leader. What are some things you’d do to encourage congregational participation?
 - iv. The awe and reverence of worship is tremendously reduced if not gone.
 - 1) For example, many worship services are centered on a seasonal, national and secular calendar (Mother’s Day, Thanksgiving, Memorial Day).
 - 2) Few focus on the sacred seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, and Pentecost.
2. Insights that can help us take a fresh approach to worship.
- i. Worship is the primary work of the church.
 - 1) The church is first a worshipping community. Other functions such as evangelism, education flow from that.
 - 2) Read Acts 2:42-47.
 - a. What did they do?
 - b. What was their priority?
 - c. What were the results?
 - ii. Worship is a source of spiritual renewal.
 - 1) How has worship (private and public) nourished you?
 - iii. God speaks and acts in the worship therefore it can be an active experience. I don’t have to a part of an audience but a participant.
 - iv. The atmosphere and encouragement to worship can be enhanced through variety of symbols of our faith such as visible baptistry, the Cross, Communion Table and hymns, banners, drama which celebrate the Christ event rather than entertain.
3. **Application.**
- i. Do you resonate with any of the concerns mentioned?
 - ii. Which, if any, of the insights would enhance your worship experience and response to God?

E. WHAT IS AUTHENTIC WORSHIP?

1. The continuum of worship styles/forms goes from the very liturgical format (Catholic, Anglican) to the very “free” style (Pentecostal, Baptist).
 - i. Which is correct worship?
 - ii. What criteria do you use to determine what type of public worship to attend?

2. **Read aloud John 4:23–24:** *“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”*
 - i. What does this passage reveal how God desires His people to worship?
 - ii. Context: Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan women. Her focus was **where** to worship. Jesus’ focus was on **How and Whom**.
 - iii. Jesus said God is spirit and with that turned the focus from physical-- a place of worship (for the Jew, the Temple) to spiritual; from outward to inward.

3. Key phrase: “in spirit and truth”
 - i. “in spirit”
 - 1) Requires that we be “born again,” and indwelled by the Holy Spirit. We cannot respond to God if we don’t know Him.
 - 2) Mind centered/focused on God. Distractions hinder our worship
 - 3) Means a heart open, repentant.
 - 4) With this we can respond with reverence, fear, adoration, contrition, trust, joy, gratitude, and hope.

 - ii. “in truth”
 - 1) Truth as revealed in the Bible. If our knowledge of God is deficient, then our worship is deficient. (The Samaritans only accepted the Pentateuch and rejected the rest of what we know of the OT)
 - 2) Worship is an expression of praise from the depths of our hearts toward a God who is understood through His Word.

 - iii. “Worship must engage your emotions and worship must engage your thought. Truth without emotion produces dead orthodoxy and a church full of unspiritual fighters. Emotion without truth produces empty frenzy and cultivates flaky people who reject the discipline of rigorous thought.” John Piper

4. Application.

- i. What would you suggest to a person who said, “I just don’t feel like worshipping”?
- ii. What does the above passage suggest about the place of the Bible in worship?

F. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE WORSHIP IS EXPECTED

1. Public Worship

- i. **Read aloud Hebrews 10:25:** Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
 - 1) What is God’s view about public worship?
 - 2) What does this suggest to those who say “my religion/faith is an individual matter”?
 - 3) The church is referred in the New Testament as a “body” (1 Cor. 12), a building (Eph. 2:21), and a household (Eph. 2:19). What do these images suggest about worship?
- ii. While the Bible does not prescribe a specific order for public worship, a generally accepted order might be:
 - 1) Preparation – Might include a hymn, an invocation calling for acknowledging God’s presence, confession
 - 2) The Word: read and preached
 - 3) The Table: experiencing the work of Christ through sight, sound, taste, smell
 - 4) The Dismissal – sent forth to do the work of the Kingdom.
- iii. **Application.**
 - 1) What attitudes do you think are important if you experience authentic worship? See Ps 37:4; 40:8, 100.
 - 2) How has casual dress influenced worship?
 - 3) How has technology such as use of smartphones with the Bible on them or sermon texts on screen influenced worship?

2. Private Worship

- i. **Read aloud Rom 12:1(ESV)** *“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”*
 - 1) So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an

offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Romans 12:1 (The Message)

2) And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:17 (ESV)

- ii. From these passages what are some ways to worship God privately?
- iii. What does it mean to you to “practice the presence of God”

3. Application.

- i. How does private worship influence public worship?
- ii. How does public worship influence private worship?

G. AXIOMS OF WORSHIP

1. We become like our focus. The more we focus on God and worship Him, the more we become like Him.
2. Worship is celebration and our response to God because what He has done for us in the Christ event.
3. In worship, God speaks and acts.
4. In worship, we respond to God and to each other.

WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE THIS WEEK TO IMPROVE YOUR PRIVATE WORSHIP?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE THIS WEEK TO IMPROVE YOUR PUBLIC WORSHIP?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.