

Why Worship?

- A. The act of worship is something every Christian engages in and the concept of worship is a common part of the Christian vocabulary.
1. However, both the act and the concept of worship are not easily defined.
 2. The act of Christian worship does not conform to any specific action or series of actions and the concept does not fit neatly into a "five-to-ten-word" definition.
- B. This is illustrated by the fact that as many as seven different Hebrew words are used to describe both the actions and the concepts of worship.
1. Interestingly, all the terms in Hebrew related to the concept of worship involve some form of specific action.
 2. In other words, we cannot separate the concept of worship from the response and actions that worship elicits from the worshipper.
- C. The English word "worship" is derived from Old English *worthscipe*, meaning "worthiness" or "worth-ship."
1. So in its simplest concept, worship is to give worth to something.
 2. But Christian worship is not simply giving worth to "something" but
 3. is focussed on the Almighty Triune God.
 4. Because of who God is, and all he has done, revealed in the many names of God used throughout the scriptures, worship, that is ascribing worth to God, involves a multiplicity of actions on our part.
- D. A quick review of the Hebrew terms related to worship reveals both the many dimensions of the concept of worship and the range of responses or actions in expressing worship to God.
5. **Halal** is the most common term expressing worship, used 122 times in the Old Testament. It means to be clear (in sound or in colour), to shine, to make a show, or to boast. The implication is to make loud, clear sounds of praise. The Hebrew term also

Why Worship?

carries the meaning of being clamorously foolish, to rave, or to celebrate, thus to halal God means unbridled, exuberant praise. The English word "hallelujah" comes from a combination of the Hebrew words halal and Yahweh (or Yah).

6. **Yadah** is another common Hebrew term for worship (used 101 times) as well as a related word Todah (used 30 times). Both of these terms come from the root yad meaning "hand," and are an expression of worship that involves the use of hands: to hold out one's hands, or to give thanks or revere with extended hands in thanksgiving, praise and adoration. It may also mean to use hands in confession or absolute surrender.
7. **Barak** (used 80 times), comes from the root berech meaning "knee." Its use as an act of worship involves kneeling down before God. It can also mean to congratulate, salute, praise or thank. It implies giving reverence to God as an act of adoration.
8. **Shachah** (used 66 times), means to bow, stoop down, or prostrate oneself as an act of submission or reverence; to make obeisance or to fall or bow down in reverence before God.
9. **Tehillah** as a noun (related to the verb halal) is used 55 times. It means the offering of praise and celebration, specifically with hymns or songs of praise. It may also sometimes mean singing spontaneous new songs to God by adding words to a melody from the heart.
10. **Zamar**, occurring 45 times, has the root Hebrew meaning of touching the strings or parts of musical instruments. Its use as an expression of worship was in the playing of instruments accompanied by voices, to celebrate or give praise with instruments and voices.
11. **Shabach** (used six times), means literally to address in a loud tone, implying laud, praise or proclamation with a loud voice or a shout.
12. Through this brief review one can see the variety of concepts as well as expressions of worship in the scriptures. And one can also see how the concept of worship cannot be separated from specific acts or expressions of worship.

. 2:4-6)]

Why Worship?

- A. *Worship is not defined or limited to any specific action or context; rather, it uses every means and expression available to us: through all kinds of gifts, music, instruments, movement, art, colour, light, sound and language!*
- B. *Nor is worship limited or defined by location. When Jesus was asked about where one should worship, he responded by saying that true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. In other words, worship has less to do with location or context, than the content and the heart of worship. The two primary elements of true worship are spirit and truth.*
- C. *The heart of worship needs to be Spirit-led. We are led, inspired, and empowered in our worship by the Holy Spirit. The content of worship needs to be based on the truth as taught through the scriptures and it needs to be focussed on the one who declared "I am the Truth." True worship requires both qualities. If worship focuses only on content, even if it is entirely based on truth, it will become lifeless ritual; on the other hand, worship that is focussed only on the heart, with a lack of content, even with the desire to be led by the Spirit, will become like drifting breezes without direction.*
- D. *So, what is worship? Perhaps we can capsulize it by saying that worship is ascribing worthiness to the One who alone is all worthy, as an attitude of the heart, led by the Spirit and grounded in the Truth, finding expression through every means, media and instrument available to us; both intensively in times of consecrated devotion, and extensively through a lifestyle of devoting all we are and all we do as a reflection of our heart of worship to Him.*

**Resource: THE DWELLING https://www.24-7worship.org/pb/wp_874c8eac/wp_874c8eac.html*

Our Calling - Worship

1. Our calling, simply put, is one of extravagant worship, to worship with all that is within us and by every means available to us, without considering cost or benefit.
2. To learn what it means to worship extravagantly we look at two examples:
 - A. one from the Old Testament and one from the New.
3. The preeminent example of extravagant worship in the scriptures is David.

- B. In his lifetime David was known as a shepherd, a fugitive, a warrior and a king. Yet none of these roles was his ultimate calling. The primary purpose and calling on his life was that of a worshipper –
- So much so that after having reigned over Israel for forty years (seven in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem), and after establishing the Kingdom of Israel so that it had peace from all its enemies, the scriptures at the end of his life simply refer to him as "the man anointed by the God of Jacob, Israel's singer of songs." (2 Sam. 23:1)
2. Many of these songs are recorded for all generations that followed him in the Book of Psalms, and these varied expressions of worship recorded here which characterised his life were indeed borne out of his experiences as a shepherd, fugitive, warrior and king.
 1. **As a shepherd**, he is singing and making music to the Lord in the quietness of seclusion and anonymity. He learned there to sing, ***"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not be in want..."***
 2. **As a fugitive**, he worshipped in a time of desperation and insecurity, ***"Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge ... You are a shield around me, O Lord ... When I am afraid I will trust in you, in God whose word I praise."***
 3. **As a warrior**, he declared in worship ***"The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?... Praise be to the Lord my Rock who trains my hands for war..."***
 4. **And as a king**, he looked to the true King of Israel and worshipped the King of kings, ***"I will exalt you, my God the King ... The Lord reigns, let the nations tremble ... May all the kings of the earth praise you, O Lord ... Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom."***
 3. When David's kingdom was established in Jerusalem and he brought the Ark of the Covenant, representing God's presence and glory, back into the city,

- C. we find him leading the whole house of Israel in celebration **"with all their might before the Lord, with songs and with harps, tambourines, sistrums and cymbals."**
 - D. He himself led the assembly as he **"danced before the Lord with all his might" to the shouts of the people and the sound of trumpets. (2 Sam 6, I Chron. 15)**
 - E. He continues with the extravagance of this worship by blessing all the people and giving "each Israelite man and woman" a loaf of bread and cakes of dates and raisins – by all counts several million cakes – some party!
2. After placing the Ark in the Tent he had prepared for it, he appointed levitical worshipers to continually be present before the ark **"to make petition, to give thanks, and to praise the Lord."**
- A. Some played lyres and harps, and others sounded cymbals and blew trumpets regularly before the Ark (I Chron. 16).
 - B. In fact, he had 288 Levites, young and old, trained and skilled in music for the Lord (I Chron. 25). For all generations of worshipers that followed him David truly set the bar for extravagant worship!
2. **Our New Testament example of extravagant worship**
- C. Mary of Bethany, a sister to Martha and Lazarus. This was the Mary who we find sitting at the Lord's feet, drinking in every word he said, the one about whom the Lord said,
 - D. **"Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."** – the same Mary who once again falls at the feet of Jesus after her brother died. A short time after this Jesus was coming back to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast, the Passover during which he would be betrayed and handed over to be crucified. But first he made a stop in the village of Bethany. (Matt. 26:6-13, Mark 14:1-9, Jn. 12:1-8)
 - E. Mary, overcome with love and devotion to her Lord, wanted to express her worship in the most lavish way she could think of. Suddenly an idea began to form in her mind. She had heard of the time earlier when Jesus was invited to dinner at the house of another Simon, a Pharisee. (Luke 7:36-50) A "sinful woman" had come in

and poured her perfume on his feet. Rather than rebuking her for her inappropriate behaviour, Jesus recognized her heart of overflowing love, forgave her sins and spoke his peace over her.

- F. Mary, perhaps thinking "Before my Lord I am no better than this sinful woman" and not saying anything about this to anyone, took along her alabaster jar of pure nard, (a very expensive perfume from India which was normally only used in the anointing of kings or priests. Valued at about a year's wages it would normally be kept as an heirloom, or used as a dowry). Then, while they were reclining, she broke the jar, extravagantly pouring the perfume on his head and feet. Then, just like the 'sinful woman' she untied her hair in the most undignified way and began to wipe his feet with her hair. As the whole house was filled with the fragrance of this perfume, perhaps Mary thought of and whispered these words from the Song of Songs "While the king was at his table, my perfume spread its fragrance." (S of S 1:12)
- G. The reaction of some of the disciples was predictable. Such extravagance made no logical sense; in fact, it appeared wasteful and foolish. But Jesus, knowing that within one week this body would be mutilated beyond recognition and killed, said that this perfume was saved for this hour of anointment and actually served as a preparation for his burial.
- H. This extravagant worship we witness in David and Mary is borne out of a heart of love and passion. In the fire of this love the worshipper does not first stop to consider the cost or reaction of others.
1. The approval of man is not what motivates such a worshipper, nor does their possible disapproval hinder.
 2. One's own dignity or reputation is of no concern when the worshipper is driven by the fire of passion and love.
- I. When David returned home after the worship celebrations to the criticism and sneering of his own wife, he responded that his worship was "before the Lord – I will celebrate before the Lord." And when the disciples expressed their indignation at the extravagance of Mary's worship, Jesus responded "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me." In other words, the only thing

that matters in worship is God's approval, to please him – to do a beautiful thing for him.

- J. The worship flowing from a heart of love and devotion is also not motivated by any consideration of possible benefits to the worshipper. Inevitably, when we worship God, or give of ourselves to Him in any fashion, his response is one of giving back to us ... **"a good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over," (Luke 6:38, 2 Cor. 9:6)**
- K. When David re-established the Ark of God's presence in Jerusalem and made certain that there was continual ("24-7") worship as ministry to the Lord, the Bible records that immediately thereafter "The Lord gave David victory wherever he went" ([2 Sam. 8:6, 8:14, 1 Chron. 18:6, 18:13](#)).
- A. When Mary anointed Jesus' body, he blessed her saying that this act of worship would never be forgotten: wherever this gospel is preached this story would be told.
- L. Worship opens the door to God's presence and does prepare the way for spiritual victories and transformation of both the worshipper and the environment.
- 3.** God does bless the worshipper in return; however, that is not why we are motivated to worship.
 - 4.** Our calling is not to worship in order to provide an effective platform for intercession or spiritual warfare (although the Spirit of God will sometimes lead us into this),
 - 5.** it is not first of all to bless us, our church, our city, nation, culture or the land (although that inevitably flows out of it)
 - 6.** Our calling is to worship only because he is worthy; we love him abundantly and worship extravagantly, without strings attached, because he has first loved us unconditionally, giving himself extravagantly for us.

We worship because of who He is and who we are – we are created to worship.

THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE.

1. The God who needs nothing, desires something - worship

M. John 4:23 New King James Version (NKJV) 23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

2. Praise is a glorious theme in the bible

A. A golden thread that runs through the scriptures

B. Two dimensions of worship

1. Praise dimension: The Sacrifice of praise....**Hebrews 13:15 - Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, [a]giving thanks to His name.**

2. Works Dimension: Sacrifice of works - **Heb. 13:16 - But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.**

3. Praise is Eternal

1. It's origin is in heaven

A. It's the ceaseless occupation of all of the glorious and eternal beings that inhabit all of heaven (Rev. 4:1-8; Isa. 6:3)

B. These have the closest and uninterrupted access to God

1. Those nearest to God are worshipers

2. Un-interrupted Access calls for uninterrupted praise - Psl. 34:1

4. Praise Associated With Planet Earth Since The Beginning -

1. ***Job 38:4-7 “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. 5 Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the [a]line upon it? 6 To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, 7 When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy?***

1. Beautiful picture of the creation of heaven and earth, of angels worshiping while the earth was being created.

2. It is the responsibility of the people of God on this planet to see to it that praise continues.

5. PRAISE: THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE

1. Praise is the appropriate way that the people of God respond to God as a King on His throne -

1. ***Psl. 22:3 But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel.***

2. God - a King whether we acknowledge Him or not

3. When we praise God, He takes His place upon the throne of our praises

1. This is our way of acknowledging His Kingship

4. This praise combined with thanksgiving gives us access to God's presence -
 1. **Ps1 100:4 Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.**

5. Thanksgiving brings us through the gates, but
 1. Praise brings us into the courts.
 1. Same thought in **Isa. 60:18 Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, Neither [a]wasting nor destruction within your borders; But you shall call your walls Salvation, And your gates Praise.**

2. What is the place of His Dwelling? - what is It's Nature?
 - A. God dwells in a land of peace and tranquility. Not only is there no violence or destruction there, but not even the sound of violence or destruction enter there
 - B. That's the place of God's presence

3. God bids us come into this land, i.e. His presence
 1. The way of access into the place of God's dwelling is through praise!
 - A. ALL IT'S GATES ARE PRAISE
 1. We cannot have access unless we come through the gates - all it's gates are praise

4. Without thanksgiving and praise, we cannot have access into God's presence.