

Worshiping the Living God

I. WHAT IS WORSHIP?

1. *Worship is a response to an invitation.*

Rev. 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.

2. *Worship is an act of surrender.*

Rom 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship. NIV

3. *Worship is an act of attention*

Matt 15:8-9 "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. 9 They worship me in vain; NIV

4. *Worship is an act of participation.*

Ps 95:6 Come, let us *bow down in worship*, let us *kneel* before the LORD our Maker; NIV

5. *Worship is an embodied activity.*

- a. As we engage in genuine worship, our hearts are stirred, *hands* are lifted, *knees* are bent, *heads* are bowed, *shouting and singing* arise, *dancing* breaks forth and all manner of physical activity begins to take place.

Ps 47:1 *Clap your hands*, all you nations; *shout to God* with cries of joy. NIV

- b. So we see that worship is *cerebral*, *emotional*, and *physical*. Body language in worship is *biblical*, *reasonable*, and *meaningful*.

II. WHY DO WE WORSHIP?

Augustine said, "*Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our souls are restless until they find their rest in Thee.*"

1. Our sense of *finiteness* seeks the *infinite*.
 - a. There is a longing for transcendence, something beyond
2. Our sense of *mystery* seeks *understanding*.
 - a. Who am I? Why am I here? Where did I come from?
3. Our sense of *insecurity* seeks *refuge*.

Ps 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in time of trouble.

4. Our sense of *loneliness* seeks *companionship*.
 - a. We all have a need to be known, accepted, and loved
5. Our sense of *guilt* seeks *forgiveness*.

Ps 51:1-2,10 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to the greatness of your compassion blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin....10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

6. Our sense of *anxiety* seeks for *peace*.

Ps 42:1 As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God....11 Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. NIV

7. Our sense of *brokenness* seeks *healing*.

Isa 53:4-5 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was

crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for *our well-being* fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. NAS

III. WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS IN WORSHIP?

1. *Adoration* expressed in *praise*

Ps 103:1 Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name. NAS

2. *Gratitude* expressed in *thanksgiving*

Ps 106:1 Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His loving-kindness is everlasting. NAS

3. *Repentance* expressed in *confession*

Ps 32:5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will *confess* my transgressions to the LORD"--and you forgave the guilt of my sin. NIV

4. *Dependence* expressed in *supplication*

Matt 6:11 Give us this day our daily bread.

5. *Submission* expressed in *surrender*

Mark 14:36 Father, not my will, but Thine be done.

6. *Commitment* expressed in *dedication*

Isaiah 6:8 Here am I Lord, send me.

IV. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE OBSTACLES TO WORSHIP?

1. *Pride*

2 Sam 6:12ff – Michal's offense at David dancing before the Lord.

- a. It was not her *sense of decency* that was offended; it was her *pride!* Beware of a deceptive dignity that really issues forth from pride.

2. *A gluttoned heart*

Mark 4:18-20 Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; 19 but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the *desires for other things* come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. NIV

- a. We fill our lives with possessions, activities, places to go, and things to do. We can literally choke our hunger for God.
- b. Jeremiah 29:13 tells us that when we search for God with "*all our hearts*," then we will find him. Our lives are crowded with far too many "other things."

V. What are the Results of Genuine Worship?

1. *Genuine worship will be rewarded by God.*

Matt 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

2. *Genuine worship centers our lives.*

- a. In Revelation 4:2 The first thing we see as we enter God's open door is a throne. Worship is *centering*. It gets us in view of and in touch with the throne of God.
- b. If there is no center, then there is no circumference. Life is incoherent.
- c. The result of worship is becoming a centered person. The truth be told, without responding to God's invitation to worship we are nothing but consumers.
- d. Elizabeth Barrett Browning:

*Earth's crammed with heaven, and every common bush
afire with God; but only he who sees takes off his shoes;
the rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.*