

# **Worship, Part 1: “Overview of Worship”**

## **Various Passages**

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### **Personal Introduction**

Hi everyone. If you don't know me, my name is Eric and I'm one of the pastors at HMCC of Jakarta, and it's my privilege to preach the Word of God to us today.

### **Sermon Series Introduction**

Today, we're starting a new two-part sermon series called “Worship.”

In this first part, we'll give an “overview of worship,” and then next week, we'll look specifically at “corporate worship.”

So let's get right into it.

### **Sermon Introduction**

What comes to mind when you hear the word “worship”?

When I did a Google image search of “worship,” all I saw were pictures of bands on stage and dark rooms and bright lights and hands raised and people closing their eyes.

Now is that what comes to mind for you when you hear the word “worship”?

For many of us, I think we inherently *know* that worship entails so much more than that, but how we *refer* to “worship” often comes down to just those Google search images.

How many of us have said (or heard others say) something like...?

- “Will there be worship at that gathering?”
- “Ben is doing the worship today.”
- “With only 10 minutes, we really didn't have time to worship.”
- “By the last song, I was really worshipping.”<sup>1</sup>

So what's often meant by “worship” is a time of singing, a band, or some kind of experience.

But is that *really* what worship is? And more importantly, is that really what *Christian* worship is?

And if you're *not* a Christian and you wouldn't consider yourself religious in any way, does worship have anything to do with you?

These are some of the questions that we're going to address today.

### **The One Thing**

***Christian worship is seeing and responding  
to the worthiness of God in Christ.***

### **Scripture Introduction**

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<sup>1</sup> Bob Kauflin, “Why Define Worship?” November 10, 2005, <https://worshipmatters.com/2005/11/10/why-define-worship/>.

Each week, we usually preach expositional sermons through one passage of Scripture, but today we're going to take a different approach and look at various passages to address issues related to worship.

## **Overview**

We'll look at worship in three parts:

- I. What is worship?
- II. What is Christian worship?
- III. How should we worship God as Christians?

### **I. What is worship?**

The best and simplest definition I've heard for what worship is *in general* is that "Worship is our response to what we value most."<sup>2</sup>

Another way of saying that is: "Whatever is worth most to you is what you worship."

As one author says, what you worship is "whatever you look at and say, in your heart of hearts, 'If I have *that*, *then* I'll feel my life has meaning, *then* I'll know I have value, *then* I'll feel significant and secure.'"<sup>3</sup>

That could be money, beauty, power, intellect, security, status, approval, pleasure, people, or something else.

Understood this way, you could say that all a human being ever does is worship because we're all living *for* something and we're all driven *by* something; all our thoughts, desires, choices, actions, and words are all *responses* to what we value most.

We were *made* to worship God—to find our identity, meaning, purpose, and well-being in him.<sup>4</sup> But if we *don't* worship God, it doesn't mean that we *don't* worship anything at all. We were *designed* for worship, so we're *always* seeking to attach our identity, meaning, purpose, and well-being to *something*.

This isn't just a *biblical* principle, but this has been observed even by the *irreligious*.

David Foster Wallace, an American writer, at a commencement speech he gave at Kenyon College, he said this:

In the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship....

If you worship money and things, if they are where you tap real meaning in life, then you will never have enough, never feel you have enough. It's the truth. Worship your body and beauty and sexual allure and you will always feel ugly. And when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally plant you....

Worship power, and you will end up feeling weak and afraid, and you will need ever more power over others to numb you to your own fear. Worship your intellect, being seen as smart, and you will end up feeling stupid, a fraud, always on the verge of being found out....

They are default settings. They're the kind of worship you just gradually slip into, day after day, getting more and more selective about what you see and how you measure value without ever being fully aware that that's what you're doing.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Louie Giglio, *The Air I Breathe: Worship as a Way of Life* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Multnomah, 2003), 2.

<sup>3</sup> Tim Keller, *Counterfeit Gods* (New York: Penguin, 2009), xx.

<sup>4</sup> Paul David Tripp, *What Did You Expect? Redeeming the Realities of Marriage* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2010), 33-34.

<sup>5</sup> David Foster Wallace, "This is Water" (commencement speech, Kenyon College, 2005), <https://fs.blog/2012/04/david-foster-wallace-this-is-water/>.

In other words, whether we realize it or not, we're *always* worshiping something and *what* we worship eventually *masters* us—or *owns* us. So who's your master? What owns you?

Let's take a moment to honestly assess ourselves. When you take inventory of your time, affection, energy, money, and thoughts, what does it reveal about what you worship?<sup>6</sup> What is it that you attach your identity, meaning, purpose, and well-being to? What is it, that if it were taken away, you'd feel like your life would completely fall apart?

If you're a parent, maybe you worship your kids. If you're single, maybe you worship a certain relationship. If you're working like crazy, maybe you worship financial security, a certain level of perceived success, or self-actualizing your own potential.

Whatever it is that we may worship, if it's *not* God, the Bible calls it an *idol*—a *counterfeit* god. And idols will *always* betray us; they *never* give us the life that they promise.

Just think about what stresses you out and causes you anxiety. It's probably something related to an idol. Idols are like kidnappers who will gladly give you chocolate after chocolate if it will move you closer and closer towards *enslavement*. Many of the idols that enslave you now probably once brought you great joy, but those joys *never* last. You always *eventually* find yourself in a pit of stress and anxiety and despair.

The sad irony is that we *think* we can find *life* in these idols, but the *reality* is that they end up *stealing* it from you. The sad irony is that we *think* that our lives would be *crushed* if we don't have these idols, but the *reality* is that if we have *all* those idols but don't have *God*, we would *actually* be crushed and we would have no life.

Who made the heavens and the earth and made each one of us? Who sustains our every breath and every heartbeat? Who gives us our resources, skills, talents, and experiences? Who judges whether we live or die? Who determines where we spend our eternity?

Without God, we *have* nothing and we *are* nothing. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork" (Ps. 19:1); all of *creation* worships God, but we *somehow* end up worshipping things in *creation* rather than our *Creator*. We make things we value *ultimate* things and we make the God of ultimate value just another thing.

And from God's perspective, that is *so foolish*.

In Isaiah 44, God describes a man who plants a tree, which God nourishes with rain. The man later cuts down the tree for wood; he burns half the wood to make a fire to warm himself and cook food, and then he uses the other half of the wood to make an idol for himself to worship, saying, "Deliver me, for you are my god!"

And God, who *created* and *provided* for that man and who *nourished* that tree, is just *flabbergasted* (or *completely shocked*) that the man would then turn around and *worship* that "block of wood" rather than his Creator and Provider. Listen to what God says in...

Isaiah 44:19 = No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say, "Half of it I burned in the fire; I also baked bread on its coals; I roasted meat and have eaten. And shall I make the rest of it an abomination? **Shall I fall down before a block of wood?**"

How many of us are attaching our identity, meaning, purpose, and well-being to our own "blocks of wood"? In God's eyes, it makes no difference if it's a *physical* idol or a *heart* idol; if we're worshipping anything else in creation besides our Creator and Provider, it's just as foolish as if we were worshipping a "block of wood."

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<sup>6</sup> Ligon Duncan, "What is Worship? (Lecture, Reformed Theological Seminary, November 8, 2016), <https://rts.edu/resources/worship-lecture-2/>.

So first, what is worship? And second...

## II. What is Christian worship?

If worship *in general* is our response to what we value most, then *Christian* worship is seeing and responding to the *worthiness* (or *value*) of God in Christ.

The word “worship” actually comes from an Old English word meaning “worth-ship,” so one author describes true worship as “*seeing* what God is worth and *giving* him what he’s worth.”<sup>7</sup>

In any discussion about Christian worship, we *have* to look at John 4, where in the middle of a conversation with a Samaritan woman at a well, Jesus himself *tells* us what it means to worship God in light of who he is.

John 4:21-24 = Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 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. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

From here, we’ll look at three principles about the *nature* of Christian worship.

The first principle of Christian worship is that it is...

### A. God-centered

There is always an *object* to our worship; and for *Christian* worship, that object of worship *must* be *God*. Here, Jesus talks about worshipping God “the Father.”

That might sound obvious—that *God* is the object of our worship—but as we’ve already seen in ourselves in the first part, how prone we are to worship things in *creation* rather than our *Creator*!

And even if we think about how *Christians* talk about worship, it’s often talked about in terms of a time of singing, a band, or some kind of experience, but not so much in terms of *God* being the *object* of our worship.

Let’s go back to those common comments we’ve heard before and think about how we might reply with a *God-centered* perspective of worship.

- “Will there be worship at that gathering?”
  - “Yes, there’ll *definitely* be worship, but the *real* question is *who* or *what* we’ll be worshipping.”
- “Ben is doing the worship today.”
  - “I’m glad *Ben* will be worshipping God, but I hope *everyone else* will be joining in that worship of God too.”
- “With only 10 minutes, we really didn’t have time to worship.”
  - “Why do we need to ‘warm up’ to worship God when he’s *always* worthy of our worship?”
- “By the last song, I was really worshipping.”
  - “Then who or what were you worshipping *before* the last song?”<sup>8</sup>

Christian worship is not singing songs in a *vacuum*, but it’s seeing and *responding* to the worthiness of *God* in Christ.

<sup>7</sup> Tim Keller, “Worship Worthy of the Name,” Christianity Today, July 12, 2007, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2007/july-online-only/013006a.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Bob Kauflin, “Why Define Worship?” November 10, 2005, <https://worshipmatters.com/2005/11/10/why-define-worship/>.

Christian worship is also not just some musical *experience* you have. How many of us get chills down our backs when we hear an amazing singer on *The Voice*, or when we hear an amazing orchestra, or when we hear Whitney Houston hit that high note after the key change in “I Will Always Love You”? I can assure you that just because you get chills down your back and you’re having some musical—or even “mystical”—experience when you hear these songs, that doesn’t mean that you’re worshipping *God*.<sup>9</sup>

You may be listening to a biblically sound sermon, you may be singing “Holy, holy, holy,” you may be listening to someone pray a heartfelt prayer, you may be exercising your gifts to serve others, you may even be giving up your life for someone, but in all these things, if you’re not focusing on and responding *to God* as the *object* of your worship, then there’s no doubt that you’re worshipping someone or something, but it’s *not* God.<sup>10</sup>

<pause>

But how do we *know* that we’re worshipping the *one true* God?

Jesus says, “You worship what you do *not* know; we worship what we *know*.” He also says that true worshipers will worship God the Father “in truth.”

That gets into our second principle; Christian worship must be...

## **B. Christ-centered**

Jesus says in...

John 14:6 = ... “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Jesus is the “truth” that God has revealed and Jesus is the only “way” by which we can truly worship God.

Also, whenever John, the writer of this Gospel account, uses the phrase “in truth,” he uses it to refer to the truth of the testimony of Jesus Christ (cf. 2 John 1-4).<sup>11</sup>

So to worship God *in truth* and to worship God *in Christ* can be understood as synonyms. They mean the same thing.

Jesus is “the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15). Jesus is “the radiance of the glory of God and the *exact* imprint of his nature” (Heb. 1:3). Jesus is the full and final *revelation* of God (Heb. 1:1-2). Christ *perfectly* reveals who God is.

In other words, when we see *Christ*, we see *God*. That’s why Jesus could say to his disciples, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9), for he and the Father are one (John 17:11).

So *God*-centered worship must be *Christ*-centered worship.

<pause>

But Jesus says that “the hour is coming, and is now here” for this kind of worship, which means that something has *changed* in the way God’s people now worship compared to how they worshiped in the past.

And whenever Jesus refers to “the hour” or “my hour,” he’s referring to his death and resurrection.

<sup>9</sup> Ligon Duncan, “What is Worship? (Lecture, Reformed Theological Seminary, November 8, 2016), <https://rts.edu/resources/worship-lecture-2/>.

<sup>10</sup> Donald Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 2014), 106.

<sup>11</sup> Kevin Kim, “Worshipping in Spirit & in Truth” (sermon, Harvest Mission Community Church of Jakarta, June 23, 2019), <https://jakarta.hmcc.net/sermons/worshipping-in-spirit-in-truth/>.

So *prior* to Jesus' death and resurrection, true worship took place in Jerusalem in the *temple* where God's presence dwelled in a special way, through animal *sacrifices* for the forgiveness of sins, and through a *priest* as mediator between a sinful people and a holy God.

But *after* Jesus' death and resurrection, true worship now takes place *in Christ*, who himself is the perfect *temple*, the perfect *sacrifice*, and the perfect high *priest* on our behalf.

*Because* of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, worship has radically *changed*; there is no longer a need for a temple, a sacrifice, or a priest because we have all of that *in Christ*.

So we now worship the one true God *by faith* in the person and work of Jesus Christ on our behalf.

Christian worship is seeing and responding to the worthiness of God *in Christ*.

We see God *revealed* in Christ and we worship God *by faith* in Christ.

<pause>

But how do we get to *know* Christ?

We get to know Christ through *God's Word*—through *Scripture*.

In fact, Jesus *is* the Word of God. And Scripture itself attests that all of God's Word is ultimately about *Jesus* (Luke 24:27, 44-47; John 5:39, 46; Acts 17:2-3; 2 Cor. 1:20).

But how are we *enabled* to *see* and *treasure* Christ through God's Word?

That gets into our third principle; Christian worship is...

### **C. Spirit-enabled**

So *God* is revealed *in Christ*, *Christ* is revealed *in God's Word*, but only the *Holy Spirit* can *enable* us to see and treasure Christ through God's Word.

Jesus says that true worshipers will worship God not only "in truth" (or in Christ), but also "in spirit." To worship "in spirit" means to worship "by the Spirit of God."

Philippians 3:3 = For we are the circumcision, **who worship by the Spirit of God** and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—

God's Word says that we were all once spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1-3) and blinded from being able to see "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor. 4:4). We were once *incapable* of seeing and treasuring Christ through God's Word (Rom. 8:7).

But throughout John's Gospel account, he refers to the Holy Spirit as "the Spirit of truth" and the one who will *bear witness* about Jesus (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13).

So unless the Holy Spirit *makes* us spiritually alive and *opens* our spiritual eyes to *see* and treasure Christ through God's Word, we *cannot* genuinely confess faith in Jesus (1 Cor. 12:3) and so we *cannot* truly worship God in Christ.

But if we *are* genuinely believers of Jesus Christ, that's only *because* the Holy Spirit has *enabled* us to *see* and *treasure* the worthiness of God *in Christ*. And the Holy Spirit *will continue* to *bear witness* about Jesus to us through God's Word to *fuel* our worship of him.

And so, both our *salvation* and our *worship* are ultimately by God's grace.

When it comes to our *salvation*, the Father *sends*, the Son *accomplishes*, and the Spirit *applies* that salvation to us.

And when it comes to our *worship*, true worshipers worship the Father *through* the Son *by* the Holy Spirit. Christian worship is God-centered, Christ-centered, and Spirit-enabled. To God be all the glory.

<pause>

So first, what is worship? Second, what is Christian worship? And third...

### III. How should we worship God as Christians?

First, we worship God...

#### A. With our hearts

Quoting Scripture (Isa. 29:13), Jesus says in...

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

There is a way to worship God that Jesus describes as *vain* (or empty) worship. It *looks* like worship as praises to God are on people's *lips*, but it's only an empty *shell* of worship because their *hearts* are far from God.

God is after our *hearts* in worship. He's not after how loud we sing, how long we pray, how much we cry, or how much we serve, but he's ultimately after our *hearts*.

Paul Tripp, author of the article “Grace Gives Us a New Way to Live,” writes this:

The Bible uses many terms for the inner, spiritual, thoughtful, desiring, motivational you, but all those terms are gathered together and summarized by one big collective term: *heart*....

[T]he heart is the causal core of your personhood. It's the seat of your thoughts, emotions, desires, and motivations. It is the worship center of your self. The heart is the reason you do the things you do and say the things you say. You and I literally live out of our hearts.<sup>12</sup>

In other words, our hearts determine what we value most. And if worship is our response to what we value most, then God wants our worship to come out of *hearts* that value *him* above all else.

God wants us to *see* how much Christ is worth so that *he* becomes what we value most. And when Christ becomes the one whom we find our identity, meaning, purpose, and well-being, we cannot help but to *respond* with a heart that says with apostle Paul in...

Philippians 3:8 = Indeed, I count everything as loss because of **the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord**. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

That's the kind of heart that God is after in our worship—a heart that is *fully* satisfied in him, a heart that says, “If I have nothing and no one else but Christ, I have *more* than enough.”

So we worship God with our hearts, and second, we worship God...

#### B. With our whole lives

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<sup>12</sup> Paul Tripp, “Grace Gives Us a New Way to Live,” Crossway, January 02, 2021, <https://www.crossway.org/articles/grace-gives-us-a-new-way-to-live/>.

Romans 12:1 (NIV) = Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

In Old Testament worship, God’s people would come to present *sacrifices* to God as part of their worship; there were sacrifices of *atonement* for the forgiveness of sins (e.g. burnt offering, sin offering), but there were also sacrifices of *thanksgiving* and *praise* (e.g. fellowship/peace offering).

Now with Christ as our perfect and final sacrifice, “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29), we no longer have any need for sacrifices to make *atonement*. But now, “in view of God’s mercy” towards us in Christ, we *continually* offer our bodies as a living sacrifice of *thanksgiving* and *praise*.

And this is not just our *lips* or *hands*, but we offer our whole *bodies*—our whole *lives*. This is often referred to as “all of life” worship.

So what does “all of life” worship look like? The next verse tells us in...

Romans 12:2 (NIV) = Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

“All of life” worship does *not* look like a life *conformed* to the pattern of this world, but it looks like a life *transformed* by the *renewing* of our minds.

And what are our minds renewed by? God’s Word.

And God’s Word is not just meant to renew our *minds*, but it’s clear that our renewed minds should work its way out into transformed *lives*. We’re not meant to just *know* God’s Word, but we’re meant to *test* and *approve* what God’s will is (which is found in God’s Word). We’re meant to live a life of *obedience* to God’s Word.

But again, this life of obedience is not to make *atonement* for our sins—we *already* have that *in Christ*; rather, this life of obedience is to be our continual “living sacrifice” of *thanksgiving* and *praise* to our God in *response* to the unfathomable *mercy* he’s shown us in Christ.

<pause>

“All of life” worship can obviously look very different in everyone’s life but let me just share a few examples from my own life and you can contextualize what it might look like in your own life.

There are three things I do every morning when I wake up: I make coffee, I read the Bible, and I pray. My son knows that this is my “set apart” time with God and that he should do his best not to disturb me. Of course, that’s not always the case, but he knows that there’s something *special* about this time compared to any other time of the day.

In essence, I “set apart” the first hour of my morning as “holy” or devoted to the Lord. That doesn’t mean that the rest of the day isn’t devoted to the Lord, but setting apart a *portion* of my day as “holy” reminds me that the *whole* of my day should be “holy and pleasing to God.”

This is actually a principle that we see throughout Scripture.

- We set apart a tithe (or a tenth) of our income to God as a reminder that *all* that we have belongs to God.
- We set apart *one* day a week as holy to the Lord to worship God with his people as a reminder that *every* day of the week should be lived as holy and pleasing to the Lord and as conscious worship to God.

And so, I’ve set apart a *portion* of my mornings as “holy” as I spend time with God in the Word and prayer in order to be conscious of worshipping God *throughout* the day.



These days, I always close my time of prayer with the Lord's Prayer and some gospel truths that I need to remember throughout the day.

I pray something like, "God, my identity is *not* in how competent I am, how productive I am today, what I think of myself, or what others think of me. But my identity is forever secure *in Christ*. God, help me to rest in who I am *in Christ* and not in what I do. And may all that I do today be an *expression* of worship to you. I love you. In Jesus' name, amen."

I need to *consciously* "renew my mind" with those gospel truths because I'm so prone to *forget* them otherwise throughout the day.

<pause>

Also, before the pandemic, every day when I came home from work, I would stand in front of my front door. And before I'd open it, I'd lift up a short prayer: "God, help me to love and serve my family the way that you have loved and served me in Christ." And then I'd walk through the door.

Why do I do that? Because I'm *so tired* when I come home from work and the *last* thing I want to do is *serve*. I want to be *selfish*. I don't feel like I have much to give, so I ask God to help me to love and serve by giving me the strength and by fixing my eyes on Christ.

One truth that is constantly "renewing my mind" is in...

Matthew 16:24-25 = Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Following Christ is full of biblical *paradoxes*. But these are *truths* that we need to renew our minds with because they're *not* what the world says or what our flesh says, and these are truths that we need to test and approve in our lives.

When I come home from work, my flesh says, "The most satisfying thing you can do right now is be *selfish*." But Jesus says, "Deny yourself and follow me. Lose your life and you will find it." And so, I play with my kids even when I feel like I don't have energy to even sit up. I pick up individual grains of rice from the ground that my kids spilled while eating dinner. I wash dishes even though that's my least favorite chore to do. I manually clean the poop in the bathtub after one of my kids poops while bathing.

It feels like *dying* in the moment. But do you know what happens? I find *life*. I *enjoy* spending time with my family and they *enjoy* spending time with me.

Now do you know what would happen if I did *not* follow Christ in those moments and I decided to just be selfish? I would have a terrible marriage and a terrible relationship with my kids. And when my kids grow up, the only reason they'd ever spend time with me is because they feel *obligated* to as family, not because they actually *enjoy* spending time with me. Why would they enjoy spending time with a father who was always too busy or tired to play with them and who always saw them as interruptions and irritations to whatever he was working on?

You want to find life? Then deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus. There's no followership of Christ without a *cross*. You must *lose* your life to save it.

That biblical truth has renewed my mind more and more over the years. It's informed my understanding of what it means to follow Christ. I've tested and approved it a thousand times over in my life and I can attest that it is God's good, pleasing, and perfect will.

<pause>

So what about you? What does "all of life" worship look like for you in your everyday? What do you do to remind yourself to be *consciously* worshipping God throughout the day? What contexts do you find

yourself in where it's *so easy* to be selfish or fleshly? And what biblical truths can you meditate on to renew your mind and transform your life as you test and approve them?

"All of life" worship is *not* automatic, but *we ourselves* must offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—*nobody else* can offer our bodies for us. Nobody else can *worship* God for us.

We worship God with our *hearts* and with our *whole lives*. Worship is *seeing* and *responding*, *being* and *doing*. You cannot have one without the other.

<pause>

But at this point, I need to address some of us who may feel like you're being a hypocrite—or perhaps *others* are accusing you of being a hypocrite—because you're struggling to worship God with your heart and with your whole life.

You sing the songs, but your heart is not focused on God, so you think, "Why bother even singing then?" You serve others, but you know that your heart is still selfish and so you feel like you're just faking it.

Now let me *clarify* what it means to be hypocrite.

Being a hypocrite does *not* mean that you say one thing and then you do another. *Every single one* of us has done that because we live as sinners in a fallen world. Even the apostle Paul says, "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing" (Rom. 7:19). We *all* struggle to *always* do what we say, so that's not what it means to be a hypocrite.

The word "hypocrite" literally means "actor," like an actor in a play; it's a person who *intentionally* plays a role. In the Gospels, only *Jesus* uses the word "hypocrite" and he *never* uses it to describe notoriously sinful people like tax collectors and prostitutes. Rather, he *only* uses it to describe the religious teachers like the scribes and Pharisees, calling them "actors"—people who are *pretending* to be something before *others* that they *know* they are *not* before *God*.<sup>13</sup>

But there's a world of difference between *acting* and *struggling*, playing a *role* and fighting to *worship*.

When you struggle to focus on God when you're singing, you don't *stop* singing because you feel like you're being hypocritical. No, you *keep* singing and you *meditate* on what you're singing and allow those truths to sink deep into your heart so that you can then *respond* in true worship of God. You *fight* to worship!

When you struggle with selfishness as you serve others and you feel like you're faking it, you don't *stop* serving. No, you *keep* serving as a way to help you *pull away* from focusing on yourself and to *push you towards* focusing your attention on God and others he's placed before you. *How else* are you going to fight your selfishness? You're not *playing* a role; you're *fighting* to worship!

Remember, we don't worship God with any perfect worship *of our own*, but we worship God *by faith* in Christ as the only one who makes our worship acceptable and pleasing to God. And we *trust* that the Holy Spirit is *enabling* us to see and treasure the worthiness of God in Christ *more and more* as we continue to *fight* to worship God with our hearts and with our whole lives.

So we worship God with our hearts and with our whole lives, and lastly, we worship God...

### C. With God's people

We're going to look more extensively at this next week, but we *cannot* give an overview of worship without mentioning this.

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<sup>13</sup> H. B. Charles, Jr., "Trapped By Tradition" (sermon, Shiloh Church of Jacksonville, October 22, 2019), <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/trapped-by-tradition/id973263701?i=1000454490319>.

In Acts 2, on the day of Pentecost, when Peter preached the gospel and about three thousand people came to trust in Christ as their Lord and Savior and got baptized, do they all *disburse* and go their own *separate* ways to then *individually* worship God on their own with their hearts and whole lives?

Not at all. Pretty much the complete opposite.

Acts 2:44-47 = And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

God's people have *always* worshiped God *together* with other believers. They lived life *closely* with one another. They *knew* each other. They *sacrificed* and *gave* for each other. And what was the *result* of them worshiping God together? They were spurred on to worship God *all the more* and "the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved."

*Christian* worship has always been *communal* worship, which we'll look at more next week.

## **Life Application**

### **1. Take inventory of your time, affection, energy, money, and thoughts to see what it reveals about what/who you worship.**

Worship is not ultimately about what or who we *say* we worship, but it's about the *response* of our whole lives to what we value most.

So what does your life reveal about what or who you worship?

### **2. Read and discuss the Bible with someone else so that you/he/she may come to see and respond to the worthiness of God in Christ.**

God is revealed in Christ, Christ is revealed in God's Word, and the Holy Spirit enables us to see and treasure Christ in God's Word.

But for us, we must *position* ourselves under God's Word. I've been encouraged to hear that many of us have been doing that already at the start of 2021, but just want to encourage us to continue (or start) reading and discussing the Bible with others inside and outside our church.

Without being in God's Word regularly, our *seeing* and *treasuring* of Christ diminishes, and so our *worship* also diminishes. So let's help one another continue to see and respond to the worthiness of God in Christ by getting in God's Word together.

### **3. Reflect on the following questions: What does "all of life" worship look like for you in your everyday? What do you do to remind yourself to be consciously worshiping God throughout the day? What contexts do you find yourself in where it's so easy to be selfish or fleshly? And what biblical truths can you meditate on to renew your mind and transform your life as you test and approve them?**

And for us *as a church*, in view of God's mercy towards us in Christ, let's continue to *grow* in offering ourselves in *response* to him. This is our true and proper worship.

May we never remain stagnant in our worship of God, but *as a church*, until Christ returns or calls us home, may we continue help one another grow in seeing and responding to the worthiness of God in Christ.

## **The One Thing**

*Christian worship is seeing and responding  
to the worthiness of God in Christ.*

## **Conclusion**

Let's take some time now to respond to God's Word.