

PREPARING TO SERVE

1. How would you define worship?
2. Is there a difference between private worship and worship within the church assembly?



Defining Worship

Pick up a book or two on worship or search for a definition of worship on the internet, and you will find that there are as many definitions of worship as there are writers. For our purposes let us try to define worship in this way: *“Worship is the expression of profound awe, amazement, and gratitude at the power, majesty, and glory of God overflowing in prayer, praise, submission and service.”*

In this lesson, we want to concentrate primarily on personal worship. If we are to be prepared to serve, we must develop a life of personal worship. We have spoken about Bible study and prayer. These are elements in our personal worship. In this lesson, we want to consider the “why” of worship. What is it about God that moves us to worship him?

The foundation of worship is found in creation. Because God is creator, we learned in lesson one, he is the one who has authority. Creation also makes God “worthy” of worship. The Psalmist writes in **Psalm 33:6-9**, *“By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host. He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap; he puts the deeps in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.”*

The Psalmist also writes in **Psalm 95:6**, *“Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!”* Note here that the worshipper recognises that God is his Maker. This realisation moves him to change his posture as he bows down and kneels.

3. Is there a correct posture for worship? What if anything does our posture show?

4. Read Revelation 4 and answer these questions.

- a. Who are the characters in this heavenly scene?
- b. What elements of worship do you see in Revelation 4?
- c. Who is the object of worship?
- d. What prompts the worshipers?
- e. What makes God worthy of worship?

The Object and Essence of Worship

God is the object of worship. As the one who is worshiped, he gives us instruction about how we approach him. Note that Jesus says in **John 4:23-24**, *“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.”*



5. What does “truth” have to do with worship? (John 4:22-24)

Jack Cottrell writes in *The Faith Once For All*, p. 445, “worshiping God ‘in truth’ means not just worshiping the one true God, but also worshiping him according to the fullness of his revelation of himself. This means that the more we know about God’s nature and works, the more rich and meaningful worship can be. In other words, the more we understand the nature and implications of his attributes, the more specific our praise for him can be. The more we know about his manifold works as Creator, Lord, and Redeemer, the more variety we can experience in our worship activities.”

Jesus told the Samaritan woman one must worship God not just in truth, but also in spirit. This is talking about “our spirit” and not the Holy Spirit. Our worship begins in our inner man. This tells us that worship is more than external acts, but includes the use of our minds and hearts as we contemplate the wonder and holiness of God.

Cotrell writes, “Indeed the very essence of worship is an inward attitude of the heart along with specific mental activity directed toward God . . . the object of our thoughts is God. We are concentrating or focusing specifically upon God, perhaps as our Creator, perhaps as our Saviour, perhaps as our Lawgiver, perhaps as our Comforter.”

6. Describe how we see a contemplation of God in the mind of David in Psalm 8?

7. Take 2 minutes and write down every attribute of God that you can.

8. Which of the attributes that you listed above is most important?

9. Which attribute seems to be most important to four living creatures in heaven in Rev. 4:8? (See also Isaiah 6:1-3)

Our view of God in his holiness is key to our personal worship. Seeing God as holy can be frightening. We understand holiness as separation from sin and purity. Our God is completely holy. When we see His holiness we recognize our own weakness and sin. We also see the One who deserves and demands our complete allegiance.

In preparation for the next lesson please answer as completely as possible the following questions.

1. Write out a prayer based on the holiness of God.
2. List (for your personal reflection) those things that keep you from having the type of personal worship that you desire.
3. What is your definition for stewardship?
4. **Memorise** Galatians 6:7.
5. Read 1 Corinthians 9:6-15 and answer the who, what, when, why, how questions like you did above.