



## The Seven: Worship

October 22 | Weekly Devotionals

### Day One: Where Worship Begins

It has been a hot topic since the beginning of the church, really. For centuries, people have argued, fought, and even entered into “wars” about it. There have been so many different ideas about it, that at times, we’ve lost sight of what God intended it to be.

Worship.

Everyone seems to have an opinion about it. How it should happen. When it should happen. Who it should happen for. Most of the heated discussion around worship stems from defining worship as music alone. Scripture tells us worship is so much more than the songs we sing. It’s more than a musical preference or style. It is beyond a weekly gathering. It is so much more.

So, what is worship then? It’s an integral part of our relationship with God. It’s a way we connect with Jesus. It’s how we both love him and love others. It makes us better disciples. We desire to make worship a priority. We want to seek God’s presence and honor in everything we do, doing it “all for the glory of God.”

According to the *New Bible Dictionary*, the word “worship,” is rooted in the Old English word ‘weorthscipe,’ meaning ‘worth-ship.’ The term “originally referred to the action of human beings in expressing homage to God because he is worthy of it.”

In *The Way of a Worshipper*, Buddy Owens writes, "Authentic worship is a response to an authentic encounter with the living God...When we worship God, we declare his worth. But in order to declare God's worth, we must first discover his worth. And that brings me to a question: What is God worth to you? To the extent you can answer that question, you'll be a worshiper. Your life will reflect his value, both in the things you say and, more convincingly, by the way you live...We worship God, not to win an audience with him, but because he first came seeking an audience with us."

Worship actually begins with God. It begins with his inherent worth, his pursuit of his people, his love and grace given to us, his power and authority over us. Worship begins with the love of God. God is the initiator of all worship by design. He is the Creator of it all. He first came seeking an audience with us. He reveals himself and only then do we respond.

*So, what is God worth to you?*

Take a moment to sit with that question and journal your response.

**Read Psalm 96 in your Bible.**

In verse 8 of this Psalm, the Psalmist invites us to "ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name." According to dictionary.com, The word "ascribe" means "to give, provide; to credit or assign, as to a cause or source; to attribute." This text invites us to credit or attribute God the glory he is due because of who he is. What does it mean to "ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name?" What would that look like on a daily basis?

Read through Psalm 96 again. Make a list of the actions of God, the Creator, and a separate list of the actions of creation and man. What is attributed to God and what is attributed to creation? What do you notice as a result?

Today, as you wrap up your time with God, take a moment to write your own letter or Psalm to God, telling him what he is worth to you.

## Day Two: Where Do You Bow Down?

In American culture, our only real understanding of bowing refers to a curtain call at the end of a theatrical performance as performers bow with the audience roaring in applause. In Eastern cultures, bowing is a sign of deep respect. In the ancient world, bowing low before a king was expected, something we don't have to practice much in our democratic culture.

Yesterday, we looked at what it means to "ascribe" worth to God, to give him the glory that is due his name. Today we're going to look at one way the word *worship* is defined in the Hebrew and Greek texts.

The term *worship* in the Old Testament translates to the Hebrew word meaning 'to bow down, prostrate oneself,' a posture indicating reverence and homage given to a lord, whether human or divine. The similar Greek word for worship (*proskyneo*) also means to bow down. This meaning of the word *worship* demonstrates surrender and submission towards the one to whom we bow.

Whatever we worship is where we've surrendered. Wherever we've bowed is what we've given lordship over us.

Each of the Scriptures below uses this particular definition of the word *worship*—to bow down, prostrate oneself; to surrender or submit in authority; to give reverence to.

Read through the following Scriptures with this definition of worship in mind.

- 1 Chronicles 16:29
- Psalm 95:6
- Psalm 99:5, 9
- Matthew 2:8-11
- Matthew 4:9-10
- Revelation 4:9-11
- Revelation 13:1-4

What do you notice as you read these Scriptures? What stands out to you?

We can bow before anything. It's probably a bit shocking to read through a text that includes the same word for worship we would hope would be aimed at God, but find it is actually aimed at the enemy. Anything can be the object of our affection. We can ascribe worth to anything.

Worship can also be defined as directing our affection and devotion toward someone or something in response to a perception of ultimate worth.

Where are your affections directed?

Where is your devotion directed?

What is really worth something to you?

Take a moment to allow these questions to settle in your mind.

Truly, what grabs your attention these days? Where do you spend your time? If you look at your calendar, your checkbook, your phone's screen time, what do you see? Does the reality of your life align with where you hope it would?

Choose one of the first three Scriptures previously listed and write it on a post-it note. Place it somewhere you will see it every day. As you go about your day, invite God to be the object of your affection and devotion. Ask him to lead you as you bow before him. Invite him to show you where there are other affections in his place as Lord.

### Day Three: Worthy of Worship?

Yesterday we took time to assess our affections. We answered some questions about where our devotion is directed. We looked at where we are bowing down, what we are worshiping. Today we want to take time to see if those places where our affections and devotions lie are truly worthy of our worship. As we begin today, look back over your answers to yesterday's questions about your affections. Keep them in mind.

Is the object of your worship worthy of worship?

Not everything can bear the weight of being ascribed ultimate worth. Created things cannot bear the weight the Creator alone was meant to bear. Let's take a look today at the only God who can bear the weight of ultimate worth—the only one who is worthy of our worship.

Read through John's account in Revelation 4:2-11 as he peered into heaven's worship of the living God.

Who do the twenty four elders say is "worthy?"

What do they say he is worthy of?

Why do they say he is worthy?

In Acts 17, Paul visits Athens and is distressed by all the idols in the city. He encounters an altar "To An Unknown God" in the midst of the idols. He proclaims to the men of Athens who the living God is and what he is like.

Read what Paul tells the men of Athens about God in Acts 17:24-28.

What do you notice about God in this text? From this text, what is he like?

It's ludicrous to worship something made by our own hands, isn't it? But isn't that what we do when we choose a created thing to worship or hold our affection? How often do we take the place intended for God alone and fill it with something that isn't God? Something that has absolutely no power? We craft a false god, a false savior, but God doesn't live in temples built by the hands of humans. He wasn't created. He is the Creator. He isn't fashioned. He alone fashions. God doesn't need us. He doesn't need our worship. Yet, he welcomes us to worship him.

When we worship him, he doesn't say, "Thanks for the reminder, guys. I forgot that I was God." He has the ability to speak and create complex things. He doesn't need us, *but because of his great love for us*, he made a way for us to come into his presence and to have a personal relationship with him. This fact alone makes him worthy of our worship.

Re-read Acts 17:24-28. Take some time to write a response to God as you read. What would you like to say to him?

Prayer for the day:

Lord Jesus, you alone are worthy to receive glory and honor and power. You alone are worthy of my worship for you created all things. In you I live and move and have my being. Give me courage to worship you alone. Show me what it looks like to give you all my affection and devotion. Amen.

## Day Four: Pursuing God's Presence

Throughout this week, we've been defining worship, naming where our affections and devotion truly resides, and naming Jesus as the only one who can bear the weight of our worship.

Our desire for worship as a priority includes seeking and desiring the presence of God. So, why would we desire that and ultimately what does that look like?

Let's begin with a simple question: do you know the God of the universe wants to just be with you?

God created us for relationship with him. When sin entered, that relationship was broken. Jesus left heaven, put on flesh, and came down. He became Immanuel, "God with us." He went to the cross and gave his life to mend that broken relationship once and for all. He rose from the grave, conquering sin and death so we could experience the love of God in its fullness. When Jesus went back to heaven, he sent the Holy Spirit to be our guide, to live in us so we would have the indwelling presence of God.

God has always wanted to be with his people. His presence is what changes us. As we worship him, we will seek him in all we do.

Today we're going to read through some Psalms, the "prayer book" of the Bible. These Psalms are prayers written to God. Today, we get to make them our prayers, too.

As you read through each Psalm, think about what it means to seek God's presence in your life. Read through each Psalm slowly. Mark words or phrases in each that stand out to you. Invite God to show you what it means to want to seek his presence.

### **Read Psalm 27:1-14.**

What stands out to you in this Psalm? Which words or phrases are most significant? What is God inviting you to with these words? Write a prayer based on the words of this Psalm.

**Read Psalm 84:1-12.**

What stands out to you in this Psalm? Which words or phrases are most significant? What is God inviting you to with these words? Write a prayer based on the words of this Psalm.

**Read Psalm 63:1-11.**

What stands out to you in this Psalm? Which words or phrases are most significant? What is God inviting you to with these words? Write a prayer based on the words of this Psalm.

What is the one significant thing you've seen in your time with God today? Write it down.



## Day Five: All for the Glory of God

So far this week, we've defined worship as directing your affection and devotion toward someone or something in response to a perception of ultimate worth. We've looked at the Hebrew and Greek understanding of the word worship as bowing down before someone in reverence. We've discussed God being the only one worthy of our worship. We've examined what it means to seek God's presence.

As we continue our conversation of worship, we want to talk about what it means to honor God in everything we do. What does it look like to live "all for the glory of God?"

Romans 12:1 says, "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." The Greek word for worship in this text is *latreia*, which means "service, worship, the state of a hired laborer, the business, or duties." This understanding of the word worship should stand out to us, especially when we define worship as music or singing together in a service.

This text is showing us that when we worship (*proskyneo*—bow down), it will lead us to worship (*latreia*—service, duties). When we bow our knee to Jesus, we will be about his business. Because we bend our knee to Jesus, our lives will be different. We will serve him and bring him honor and glory.

1 Corinthians 10:31 says, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." In this passage, Paul is addressing questions about whether believers should eat food sacrificed to idols. He simply says, whatever you do, just do it for God's glory. If what you are doing brings honor and glory to God, it is right and good.

So much of the time, we look at worship as an adjective rather than a verb. We think of worship music or a worship service or gathering. If that is the case, we can make a case for worship driving, worship grocery shopping, worship conversations, worship sports, worship studying, worship reading, worship talking, worship working, worship resting. The options are endless! If worship is the focus, it will bring glory to God. This is what Paul is inviting us to do. Worship Jesus with our very lives by bringing him honor and glory in *everything* we do.

So, what does that look like exactly? Let's continue to read some of Romans 12 to see what Paul suggested.

**Romans 12:1-21.** As you read the text, notice all the actions described.

Which actions stand out as you read through the text? Which actions are easiest for you to do? Which actions are more difficult? Why? Which ones do you need to invite the Holy Spirit to help you with? Which ones do you need accountability in order to grow in them?

D.L. Moody once said, "The problem with a living sacrifice is that it keeps crawling off the altar." This statement is so true. We just don't like to stay in the place of sacrifice. It's hard to bring glory to God in everything we do. It takes time and cooperation with the Holy Spirit. God's deep love and grace for us invite us to crawl back up to the altar as many times as we need to. His grace doesn't run out when we don't serve him well.

*The Message* translation states Romans 12:1 a little differently. It says, "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." God wants our everyday, ordinary life—the places where we eat, breathe, work, love, laugh, and live.

Wherever you are in living your everyday ordinary life, invite God. He's waiting to meet you there.

Write a prayer today inviting God to lead you in your everyday, ordinary life. Where do you need him to help you bring him glory in what you do? Invite him to help you.