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Intimacy in Worship



Part 5 (991226 PM)

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The heartbeat of God's Word is worship. The driving message of God's Word is worship. The only thing God seeks is worship. The purpose of salvation is worshipping the God of Heaven.

- The Scriptures open in Genesis with God walking and talking with His Worshipers.
- The next book Exodus contains elaborate plans for a tent whose sole purpose was to bring worshippers to God.
- The longest book at the heart of God's Word is a manual on ways to Worship the God of the Universe.
- The rest of the Old Testament is a series of prophets lamenting the neglect and abandonment of worship by God's people who were to be a kingdom of Worshipers (priests).
- The Gospels open with the God of Heaven on earth seeking creatures who would be willing to be Worshipers.
- The Book of Acts records what happens when average people from every walk of life, every strata of society and every depth of sin are bound together with a common passion of being life long Worshipers.
- The Epistles are a manual on how to grow as worshippers.
- And God's Word closes with all of God's Worshipers at last Home with their Creator and Worshipping HIM!

Is your heart the heart of a worshipper?

What possibly has happened to us? Someone once said, "The immense tragedy of the contemporary church is that most people worship their work, work at their play, and play at their worship".

A. W. Tozer (1897-1963), a pastor for 44 years across the USA was a prophet to the modern church. This is what he preached:

We have lost our spirit of worship and our ability to withdraw inwardly to meet God in adoring silence. Modern Christianity is simply not producing the kind of Christian who can appreciate or experience the life in the Spirit. The words, "Be still, and know that I am God," mean next to nothing to the self-confident, bustling worshiper in this middle period of the twentieth century.

Tonight we should ponder William Temple's definition of worship :

"[Worship is] to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open up the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God."

So to quicken, feed, purge, open and devote our hearts to God, we should begin where we will end, around the Throne of God. Let's go there by way of [Hebrews 12:22-24](#). Please stand and seek our God as He speaks to us.

The Scriptures tell us that in the Church "you have come" (*right now!*) to these seven sublime realities:

- To the City of God, our final destination
- To myriads of angels, our faithful servants
- To fellow-believers, our fellow pilgrims
- To God, our focus of worship
- To the Church Triumphant, our faithful examples
- To Jesus, our beautiful Savior
- To forgiveness, our greatest possession!

If this does not create a wellspring of thanksgiving in our hearts and make us want to march to Zion, what will?

Genesis

Part: 15 [The Glory of Heaven](#)

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With heart quickened by God's Word ponder William Temple's definition of worship again only this time and measure our personal worship temperature and health:

"[Worship is] to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open up the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God."

Key to the New Testament church was awareness that God was with them, leading them. We must emphasize that they were *not* imagining this. God was truly present. And the realization that he was physically in their midst had a massive impact on the their exercise of faith. Great saints since have also experienced God's presence. In John Bunyan's church in Bedford, England, there is a poem framed in the wall of the anteroom from which the preacher exits to walk to the pulpit. It reads:

Enter this door As if the floor Within were gold, And every wall Of jewels, all Of wealth untold, As if a choir, In robes of fire Were singing here; Nor shout, nor rush, But hush, For God is near. And so he is! This is what we need.

Maybe we are in such a hurry on Sundays we don't pause in our hearts, and look upward into the face of God? How could we start? Try these simple steps:

- When you come in, find a seat and then immediately stop and offer to the Lord a prayer reflecting on how much you love and adore Him.
- Then try to preview some of the hymns to prepare your heart to meaningfully ascribe them to God.
- During the preaching of God's Word ask the Lord to speak to your heart through His Word, say 'Speak Lord, Thy servant is listening!'

The word **worship** is full of meaning, expressing the idea of falling down, prostrating oneself, and kissing the feet or the hem of the garment of the one honored. [1]

This type of worship that focuses on God and God alone is true spiritual worship. **Worship that is energized by the Spirit of God.**

How do we know we are operating in the power of the Holy Spirit? Here is a test. When Spirit[2] reigns , believers relate to the Word - teaching;

- Where the Spirit reigns, believers relate to each other - koinonia;
- Where the Spirit reigns, believers relate to God -worship;
- Where the Spirit reigns, believers relate to the world - evangelism;

That worship[3] is a presentation of our gifts to God. We read that these wise men "presented unto Him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh." The significance of these gifts is beautiful. Gold speaks of *Deity*, as a study of the Tabernacle makes plain. Frankincense gives forth its *perfume* only as it is brought into contact with fire. Myrrh speaks of *suffering*, and is associated with the death and burial of our Lord. Thus these wise men, by the gifts they presented to Him, expressed first, their faith in His essential and eternal Deity; second, their appreciation of the fragrance of His sinless life which should ascend, as a sweet perfume, to His Father; and third, their estimation of the virtue and value of His vicarious sufferings, by which the redemption of humanity should be accomplished.

The Tabernacle teaches us so much about the wonders of our Matchless God. Here are just a few of the lessons about the Lord.

Steps To Grow Into Worshiping Jesus All The Time

Listen to what one man[4] who spent years meditating on worship has written: Worship is something we do. Studying the theology of worship and debating the forms of worship are all good, but by themselves they are inadequate. In the final analysis we learn to worship by worshipping. Let me give a few simple steps that I hope will help in the experience of worship.

Cultivate worship. First worship must become a daily habit. learn to practice noticing God's presence sometime each day.

1. **Ask** God to enable you to follow Paul's words,

"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17).

2. **Punctuate** every moment with inward whisperings of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving.

[Psalm 55:17](#) Evening and morning and at noon, I will complain and murmur, And He will hear my voice. NASB

3. **Schedule** times of personal worship and confession and Bible study and attentiveness to Christ, your always present Teacher.

[Colossians 3:16](#) Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. NASB

[Joshua 1:8](#) "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. NKJV

4. **Bring this atmosphere to our public worship so that our gathered experience of worship just becomes a continuation and an intensification of what you have been trying to do all week long.**

Psalm 42:1-2 As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God.2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? NKJV

Vary your worship. Second, try to learn how to worship God in many different settings of worship.

1. Worship God when you are **alone**.
2. Have **home groups** not just for Bible study, but also for the very experience of worship itself.
3. Gather little **groups of two and three** and learn to offer up a sacrifice of praise. Many things can happen in smaller gatherings that, just by sheer size, cannot happen in the larger experience. **All of these little experiences of worship will empower and impact the larger Sunday gatherings.**

Prepare for worship. Third, determine to prepare for the gathering of the church for worship.

1. **Quiet your heart** on Saturday night by going to bed early,
2. **Always prepare** for Sunday with personal examination and confession,
3. **Warm your spirit** by going over the hymns and Scripture passages that will be used on Sunday,
4. **Guard your heart** by gathering early before the actual worship service and filling the room with the presence of God. Here is how you can have one of the most vital ministries at Tulsa Bible Church - Try coming ten to fifteen minutes early and sit with your Bible open in a seat here in the worship center. Start by praying for the instrumentalists that they will be aided by the Lord in ministering the worship music, then the orchestra pray around each person, then for the choir to be full of the Holy Spirit, then the soloists, ensemble and others, then for our worship leaders, then for the ministry of the Word to be Spirit empowered.
5. **Engage in spiritual worship** by letting go of inner distractions so that you can really seek God with all your heart.

Present yourself for worship. Fourth, willingly offer yourself to the Lord as an instrument for worship.

1. **Mortify your pride** by learning to let go of my agenda, of my concern, of my being blessed, of my hearing the word of God.
2. **Use the language** of the gathered fellowship is not "I," but "we."
3. **Offer your submission** to the ways of God, and your submission to one another in the Christian fellowship.
4. **Desire for God's presence** to rise up in the group, not just within the individual. This is what it means to become of one mind, of one accord.
5. **Cultivate a life** of complete spiritual dependency. Dependency means we completely dependent upon God for anything significant to happen. The work is God's and not yours.

Preserve your worship. Fifth, guard yourself from exposure to harmful habits that deadens worship.

1. **Guard your soul**: there is no better way to erase worship than to turn on the TV when you walk in the house after church. Sunday afternoon football, and sports in general, with the incessant beer commercials and inane chatter, is a sure-fire way to flatten out-one's spiritual brain waves.
2. **Encourage your family**: or the whole family will suffer - "You want daddy to look at your Sunday school paper? In a moment, son. . . at half-time maybe."
3. **Seek God completely**: Men, if you're the kind who sits in church fretting because you've already missed the 1st quarter of the game and wonder when the preacher is going to end, you will rarely get anything out of the service!
4. **Purge your spirit**: Have you ever tried dieting your spirit? Stay away from any "Junk food" of the soul, cancer causing agents, high worldly cholesterol that hardens your spiritual arteries?
5. **Avoid over exposure**: Some of us are in the high skin cancer risk category. So what do we do? We stay away from exposure to those deadly UV rays. Well, all of us are prone to soul cancer that eats away at our worship so we should avoid very much exposure to TV rays. They distract, deaden and deflate the welling up of our souls in worship to God!
6. **Do a self examination**: If you can't fast from TV, web surfing, video games, newspapers and magazines for a week then you are very weak and at risk spiritually.

Guard your worship. Sixth, drown all distractions with overflowing prayers of gratefulness to GOD.

1. If there is noise or distraction, rather than fussing and fuming about it, learn to take it in and conquer it.
2. If little children are running about, bless them. Thank God that they are alive and that they have energy.
3. Become willing to relax with distractions-they may be a message from the Lord. When I am preaching, I love to have babies and little children in the congregation because sometimes they are the only ones that I can be sure are alive! Learn simply to receive whatever happens in a gathered worship experience, rather than feeling that distractions somehow deter you from worshipping God.

Give your worship. Seventh, practice offering actual sacrifices of worship to GOD.

Many times you will not "feel" like worship. Perhaps you have had so many disappointing experiences in the past that you think it is hardly worth it. There is such a low sense of the power of God, Few people are adequately prepared. But you need to go anyway. You need to offer a sacrifice of worship. You need to be with the people of God and say, "These are my people. As stiffnecked and hard-hearted and sinful as we may be, together we *come* to God." Many times I do not feel like worshipping and I have to kneel down and say, "Lord, I don't feel like worshipping, but I desire to give you this time. It belongs to you. I will waste this time for you."

Isaac Pennington says that when people are gathered for genuine worship, "They are like a heap of fresh and burning coals warming one another as a great strength and freshness and vigor of life flows into all."" One log by itself cannot burn for very long, but when many logs are put together, even if they are poor logs, they can make quite a fire. Remember the *counsel* of [Proverbs 27:17](#) that "Iron sharpens iron," and even rather dull lives can help each other if they are willing to try.

- So go, even if you don't feel like it.
- Go, even if worship has been discouraging and dry before. Go, praying.
- Go, expecting.
- Go, looking for God to do a new and living work among you.

What are The Fruits of Worship?

1. **OBEDIENCE:** Just as worship begins in holy expectancy, it ends in holy obedience. If worship does not propel us into greater *obedi*ence, it has not been worship. To stand before the Holy One of eternity is to change.

- [Philippians 3:3](#) For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, NKJV

2. **REPENTENCE:** Resentments cannot be held with the same tenacity when we enter his gracious light. As Jesus says, we need to leave our gift at the altar and go set the matter straight ([Matt. 5:23, 24](#)). In worship an increased power steals its way into the heart sanctuary, an increased compassion grows in the soul. To worship is to change.

- [Matthew 5:23-24](#) "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,24 "leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. NKJV

3. **MINISTRY:** Holy obedience saves worship from becoming an opiate, an escape from the pressing needs of modern life. Worship enables us to hear the call to service clearly so that we respond, 'Here am I! Send me'.

- [Isaiah 6:1-8](#) In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.3 And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" 4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts." 6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar.7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged." 8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I! Send me." NKJV

So that is what God desires. How did He make a way possible for sinners like us to Stay in His presence?

The Tabernacle Is God's Portrait of Christ "tenting" [John 1:14](#) Among Us

1. ENTRANCE: **discovering The Tabernacle:** God wants us LIVING IN His Presence. Psalm 100 in unison

- "I Will Enter His Gates with Thanksgiving in my Heart"
- [II Chronicles 5:11-14](#)
- [I Chronicles 16:4, 8-17, 23-36](#)
- "O Worship the King" #10
- "O God our Help" #52
- "Bless the Lord" #13

2. ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING: **discovering The Brazen Altar:** God wants us APPROACHING HIS HOLINESS (The Doctrine of Satisfaction) [Hebrews 10:4-14](#)

- "Worthy is the Lamb" #180

- "Jesus paid it all" # 210
 - "When I survey" #185
 - [Exodus 27:1-8](#)
3. LAVER: [Hebrews 10:19-25](#) { **The Laver of Brass**: God wants us CLEANSING OUR SINS (The Doctrine of Sanctification)
- "Nothing but the Blood" # 195
 - "Jesus I come" # 336
 - "Cleanse Me" #438/9
 - "Whiter than snow" # 436
 - [Leviticus 17:11](#)
 - [Exodus 30:18](#)
4. HOLY PLACE: [Hebrews 4:12-16](#) **The Veil Which Was Rent**: God wants us ENTERING HIS PRESENCE WITH BOLDNESS
- "Holy, Holy, Holy" #262
 - "Sweet Hour of Prayer" # 433
 - "Teach me Thy Way" # 395
 - "Jesus the very Thought of Thee" #79
 - "Channels only" [not in book]
5. LAMPSTAND: **The Golden Lampstand**: God wants us WALKING IN HIS LIGHT
- "Spirit of the Living God" #247
 - [Leviticus 24:1-4](#)
 - [Ephesians 1:17-18](#)
6. TABLE of the BREAD of the PRESENCE: [Hebrews 2:14-18](#) **The Table of Showbread**: God wants us NOURISHED BY OUR SAVIOR
- "Joyful, Joyful we adore Thee" # 1
 - [Exodus 25:23-30](#)
7. ALTAR OF INCENSE: **The Altar Of Incense** (30:1-10, 34-38) : God wants us PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT
- "Sweet Hour of Prayer" # 433
 - [Exodus 30:1-10](#)
 - [I Thessalonians 5:17-18](#)
8. ARK OF THE COVENANT: [Hebrews 13:8](#), 15-16, 20-21 **The Ark of the Covenant**: TRUSTING HIS PROMISES
- "Open our eyes, Lord" # 383
 - "Jesus led me all the way" [not in book]
 - "Near to the heart of God" # 497
 - "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" # 26
 - [Hebrews 9:1-9](#), 11-15
 - [Exodus 25:10-22](#)
9. CONCLUSION: **The Mercy Seat**: RESTING IN HIS SACRIFICE
- [Hebrews 13:20-21](#)
 - "Standing on Holy Ground" [Royce Wright]

[1] MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

[2] Hughes, Acts, p. 50.

[3] A. P. Gibbs, *Worship*, p. 45

[4] Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, p. 171-73.

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