

LIVING HOLY

Life Application: Recognizing that the holiness of God requires holiness in our worship of Him.

Key Verse for Meditation: Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. – Psalm 29:2

Focus Scriptures: Exodus 3:1-7; 1 Chronicles 16:29; Psalm 26:4-8; John 4:23-24; Hebrews 10:19-22; 12:28-29

Entering God's Presence

One of the greatest privileges we have as Christians is to worship God. Most of us have grown accustomed to attending church regularly and communing daily with God, but whether worshipping corporately in a Christian assembly or individually in the privacy of our own devotions, we must never allow the act of worship to become commonplace.

Worship is not merely getting upon our knees out of a sense of obligation and reciting a few rote phrases. It is the act of adoring, exalting, honoring, praising, thanking, and recognizing all that God is. As we worship Him, we may sing, speak, meditate, and sometimes even weep. All this must be done with



purity and integrity of heart (see Psalm 15:1-5, Proverbs 28:9, and Matthew 5:8).

As we begin to worship, we should first “check our baggage at the door.” Whenever we engage in any worthwhile activity, we set aside anything unrelated and concentrate on the purpose at hand. For example, we would never bring a crossword puzzle or homework to a job interview. Likewise, we should try to hold off thoughts relating to job, home, hobbies, or activities when we enter into worship.

It may help to remind ourselves that we are about to come into the presence of the most important Being in the universe, One who is deserving of our undivided attention.



Lesson Key: To worship God is to recognize His holiness and His worthiness, and to acknowledge in appropriate ways the value of what we see in Him. The Bible speaks of this as “glorifying God” or “giving glory to God,” and views it as the primary duty of man. Our methods of worshipping together as part of the Body of Christ can never be a substitute for direct and personal fellowship with Him in prayer, praise, and devotion.

We want our attitude to be one of sincerity, reverence, and humility when in God's holy presence.

Because we are approaching a holy God, we must approach Him in a holy manner. We should wholeheartedly and quickly take care of any spiritual deficiencies that come to mind, for these will hinder us from worship. This, of course, includes clearing up any offense we have committed against God or man (see Matthew 5:23-24). This is also a good time to confess our limitations and weaknesses—not an exercise in defeatism, but rather the evidence of a humble spirit, which serves to further magnify the power of God. (See Paul's views on this in 2 Corinthians 12:5,10.)

Since worship involves our voluntary and purposeful expression of the attributes of God, we might wish to praise Him by drawing from our observations of the world He created and controls. We can also recall our own life experiences, testimonies of other Christians, and the accounts recorded

in the Word of God. It should not take long for us to move into worshipping the great "I Am" of the universe for His righteousness, holiness, majesty, power, love, mercy, and kindness.

Worship could also revolve around the scriptural names given to God. What wealth of inspiration we can find as we ponder Him as Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Holy One, Lamb of God, Bread of Life, Son of God, Savior, Chief Cornerstone, Righteous Judge, and Light of the World!

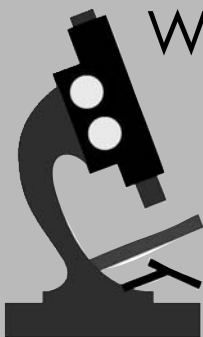
The depth and quality of our worship of God are directly proportional to the closeness of our relationship with Him. For that reason, we must daily add to our knowledge of Him by studying His Word and interacting with Him through prayer and obedience.

Remember, God longs for your worship. No one else's time spent at His feet can substitute for yours! – *From an article by Polin Ho*



"A man can no more diminish God's glory by refusing to worship Him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling the word 'darkness' on the walls of his cell."

– C. S. Lewis, *Christian apologist and author*



Word Search

The Prophet Isaiah had a vision of God that was unforgettable. He recorded in Isaiah 6:3 how angels, in the presence of God, continually said to

one another, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." In the Hebrew language, the repetition of words was to give them a profound emphasis. It would be equivalent to using bold letters, capitalizing the word, or concluding with multiple exclamation marks.

The citizens of Feldkirch, Austria, did not know what to do. Napoleon's massive army was preparing to attack. Soldiers had been spotted on the heights above the little town, which was situated on the Austrian border. A council of citizens was hastily summoned to decide whether they should try to defend themselves or display the white flag of surrender.

It happened to be Easter Sunday, and the people had gathered in the local church. The pastor rose and said, "Friends, we have been counting on our own strength, and apparently that has failed. As this is the day of our Lord's Resurrection, let us just ring the bells, have our services as usual, and leave the matter in His hands. We know only our weakness, and not the power of God to defend us."

The council accepted his plan and the church bells rang. The enemy, hearing the sudden peal, concluded that the Austrian army had arrived during the night to defend the town. Before the service ended, the enemy broke camp and left. The congregation's purpose to worship God on that never-to-be-forgotten Sunday paid dramatic dividends!



For Personal Study

1. The word *worship* occurs 111 times in the King James version of the Bible. What does worship mean to you?

2. Use the following Scriptures to identify some elements that are necessary if we want God to accept our worship. 1 Chronicles 28:9; 2 Chronicles 5:13; Isaiah 29:23; 66:1-2; Amos 5:21-24; Hebrews 11:6; 12:28

3. Why is it important to worship God? See 1 Chronicles 16:29 and Revelation 4:11.

The Sacrifice of Praise



We find in Hebrews 13:15 that the concept of praise to God is given a new dimension. "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."

The Apostle refers to our praises as a "sacrifice." When the Israelites offered a sacrifice, it had to be perfect. If it had any blemish, it was not acceptable to the priest or to God. The praises we offer God must come from a heart that is pure; otherwise they are not acceptable. The high priest could only examine the animal externally to determine whether or not it was perfect, but our High Priest knows the thoughts and the intents of our hearts. He knows what motivates the words we say, the thoughts we think, and the deeds we do.

The Apostle said for us to offer the sacrifice of praise "continually." Do we praise God enough? Consider the wonderful salvation that Christ offers and all the benefits which go with it—the peace, joy, and happiness we have. Above all, think about the hope of Heaven that is ours. How can we put a value on the knowledge that we will spend eternity with Jesus? Every moment of the day, our hearts should be filled with thanksgiving and praise. It ought to be like a spring bubbling up and flowing out of us all the time.

It is a wonderful thing to get into a real spirit of praise. It will build you up, it will strengthen you, it will encourage you. Through it, you can touch God! – *Excerpt from a sermon by Pete Friesen*



It is not necessary for being with God to be always at church. We may make a chapel of our heart wherein to retire from time to time to converse with Him in meekness, humility, and love. Everyone is capable of such familiar conversations with God, some more, some less. He knows what we can do...

Accustom yourself, then, by degrees thus to worship Him, to beg His grace, to offer Him your heart from time to time in the midst of your business, even every moment, if you can. Do not always scrupulously confine yourself to certain rules, or particular forms of devotion, but act with a general confidence in God, with love and humility...

When we are faithful to keep ourselves in His holy presence, and set Him always before us, this not only hinders our offending Him and doing anything that may displease Him (at least willfully), but it also begets in us a holy freedom and—if I may so speak—a familiarity with God, wherewith we ask, and that successfully, the graces we stand in need of. In [sum], by often repeating these acts, they become habitual, and the presence of God rendered, as it were, natural to us. — *From "The Practice of the Presence of God" by Brother Lawrence*



Bible Background

We read in Hebrews 12:28, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve [render religious homage, or worship] God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." There may be a danger of practicing a type of worship that is acceptable primarily to ourselves, or to those attending the worship service. While worship must communicate clearly to the gathered congregation, the Bible insists that it must above all be acceptable to God. And we can only know what is acceptable to God by a careful study of His Word.

4. What do you think is meant by the phrase, "the beauty of holiness," in 1 Chronicles 16:29? In what ways could holiness be considered beautiful?

5. Why do you think this phrase, "the beauty of holiness," occurs in conjunction with the concept of worship in the above verse?

6. What are some attitudes that hinder true worship? See Proverbs 15:29; Matthew 5:23-24; Luke 18:13-14; John 4:24.
