

Worship the Creator

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh?” (Isa. 58:6, 7, NKJV).



God wants us to form a relationship with Him, and one of the ways we do that is through prayer. Through this we learn from the Creator Himself how we should be and act toward others.

Introduction

Worship—Different Versions

Exod. 32:6

From the time of the prophets to modern-day Christianity, various forms of worship have existed. Some people use the word worship to describe a particular piece of music or to describe some sounds. Similarly, many Christians consider their Sabbath or Sunday morning services to be worship.

However, amid the different versions of worship, we need to know God's idea of worship. To worship to His standards, we need to understand what God means by *worship*.

How we relate to God and humanity is an important part of worship.

"We have enough how-to-do-it books and not enough reflection on worship as a total biblical idea. Worship is a subject that should dominate our lives seven days a week."¹

The essence of worship is an inner, authentic experience of the heart. Christ confirmed this in the New Testament when He said, "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" (John 4:23, 24, ESV).

Contrastingly, some of the things that people worship, and the manner in which they do it, are nowhere near the value and magnitude of the Creator. To worship the Creator in spirit and truth is to engage in an act of reverence, adoration, and praise that is right, good, and pleasing to God. Therefore, we must recognize God as the Creator of the universe and everything it holds.

True worship leads us to salvation and puts us right with both God the Creator and our fellow brothers and sisters on earth. True worship makes us live as one family in Christ, showing compassion, mercy, and love to one another.

The same sin of idolatry that blinded the children of Israel exists even today. Many people, even in the church, have left worshipping the Creator to give adoration, praise, and reverence to objects and other worldly possessions.

However, as young adults in this generation, we need to understand that true worship includes how we live our lives on a daily basis. How we relate to God and humanity is an important part of worship. What we do on the outside must reflect what we are within. When we know God and value Him above everything else, we can experience a joyful satisfaction that leads us to perform acts of kindness to others while we maintain intimacy with the Creator.

1. David Peterson, *Engaging With God: A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), p. 21.

Ps. 115:1-8

Evidence *Concepts of Worship*

The act of worship has two major aspects: the inner essence and the public expression. The latter refers to the daily acts and services that we do in connection to worship. Paul alludes to this aspect of worship in Romans 12:1. One thing stands out from Paul's statement: whatever we do with our lives must match heavenly standards. That is spiritual worship.

To illustrate the inner essence of worship, Christ declared a type of faith that the Pharisees and the scribes demonstrated. He said, "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me" (Matt. 15:8, NKJV). Christ called this type of worship "vain" (verse 9), meaning zero, or nothing.

Worship is vain if there is no heart connection in it.

Worship is vain if there is no heart connection in it. Therefore, even if we perform many good deeds and go to church every Sabbath, if we don't have that intimate connection with God, our worship amounts to nothing.

In the act of true worship, we exalt God and acknowledge that He exists above us and is worthy of our affection, adoration, and attention. Exaltation can be direct (Exod. 15:2) through the proclamation of God's greatness, His absolute say on our lives, and the beauty and magnificence of His creation.

While exaltation involves recognizing God and His works, His nature, and His character, expression deals with declaring the truths that God has revealed to us in Scripture. In addition to acknowledging the facts about God and what He does, we must proceed to respond to what He has shown us.

Expression can be either physical or verbal. Singing songs of praise, clapping, kneeling or bowing in reverence, shouting, or lifting of hands are all examples of physical responses. On the other hand, verbal expression happens when we communicate to God our love and desire for Him and our need for His grace and His holiness.

In expressing ourselves in worship, we must focus on God and His character as revealed in the Bible. Our expression must have biblical precedent and support. Both exaltation and expression in worship must demonstrate faith in the finished work of Christ and glorify God.

REACT

1. Apart from exaltation and expression, what other concept of worship do you know?

2. Is it possible to do good deeds without having faith in God? Why does God consider this form of worship useless?

Beatrice Bernard, Kasarani, Nairobi, Kenya

Logos
Worship the Creator

Exod. 20:2–6;
Job 34:12;
Pss. 115:1–8;
146:5–10;
Isa. 1:17;
Mark 12:38–40

Idolatry and Oppression (Exod. 20:2–6; Ps. 115:1–8)

In His Word, God has given specific commands about how He wants us to worship Him. These commands show that the form and style with which we choose to worship God must match His standards, not ours.

In Exodus 20:2–6, God starts by reminding us of His position as the sovereign Creator and Ruler of all the things created, both seen and unseen. As such, the worship, glory, and honor that He deserves should not go to other things. If we stop worshiping God according to His standards, we lose spiritual direction and begin to entertain selfish ambitions. This eventually leads us to frustration, physical pain, and death.

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The psalmist also reminds us that the idols that people worship do not have the qualities of the Creator. God gave the first four commandments to define the type of relationship that should exist between Him and His children. In that regard, we are called to worship the Creator, who is the Author of our lives. When that happens, we can develop the right relationship with Him.

Moreover, if our values and practices spring from Him, we shall know how to relate with our fellow humans in a manner that brings glory and honor to God's name. Idolatry, as the psalmist says, simply takes us back to the bondage of sin and the interests of the world.

A Reason to Worship (Ps. 146:5–10)

In Psalm 146, the psalmist underscores the point that God is the sovereign Creator of the universe; and if we trust in Him, He can bless us abundantly. Even in our physical weaknesses, we still have a reason to worship the Creator. When we are weak and trust in Him, He can bless us because He sustains the needy who trust in Him.

As opposed to idols that cannot render any form of help (Ps. 115:1–8), we can rely on the Creator for help because He is forever a faithful God. As the writer of Hebrew observes, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful” (Heb. 10:23, NKJV).

Another lesson that the psalmist points out here is that God can bless us because He delights in sustaining the weak and the needy. Many times, we see the needy and the suffering as neglected. Sometimes we think they did something wrong to deserve their misfortune.

However, the Bible explains that the weak and the oppressed have a place in God's heart, especially when they trust in Him. The psalmist agrees that the

Lord “executes justice for the oppressed” (NKJV). This shows that any act of oppression upon the less fortunate members of society will be judged, and no oppressor will escape the wrath of God.

Religious Oppressors (Isa. 1:17)

God requires us to do good deeds at all times and not to stand idle. The prophet Isaiah emphasizes that the oppressed need protection and support.

In our societies, the oppressed are more vulnerable and exposed to wrongs, especially under poor or weak administration of justice. In such situations, it’s the duty of people with influence in the community to protect the weak and the oppressed.

In the lenses of God, we are all His children regardless of our situation under the sun. The first line of protection, therefore, comes from God. All the same, as children of God, we also have a duty to relieve the oppressed by offering support where necessary. God will pronounce judgment on those who overlook this duty and inflict wrong on the weak and suffering. In acts of benevolence, justice, and support for widows and orphans, we emulate the example of God, who is the Source of our values.

By learning to do good deeds, we adopt the practice of living righteously by upholding God’s character. And when we judge the fatherless, we demonstrate true worship to the Creator by defending, delivering, and practicing justice to the needy in our society. To God’s faithful who may be weak and suffering, there is good news that God Himself is fighting for you.

“The Lord will be our avenger. Though men disregard us, he takes care of us. He will aid the destitute, and will defend their cause.’”¹

Mercy and Faithfulness (Mark 12:38–40)

During His ministry, Christ witnessed situations in which religious leaders used their positions to fleece innocent and weak members of the society.

Using the example of the scribes, who were the official teachers of the law, Jesus taught that these people were more interested in what they could get than what they could give. In their long robes, which were unsuitable for manual labor, the scribes used their religious positions to obtain wealth from the unsuspecting public and the oppressed.

Are we any different? We prefer red-carpet treatment and fine-linen garments. We cherish titles. We command respect. However, these could have a poisonous effect on our relationship with the Creator. Christ taught that if anyone wants to be the first, then he must be a servant first (Mark 9:35). As Christians in this age, we must remember that the responsibility of stewardship is not only for the ordained church ministers but also for every member.

REACT

1. In what ways do we behave as the scribes in our era?
2. What are some of the sources of modern-day idolatry?
3. What can we do as young adults to help others see Christ in us?

¹ John Calvin, “Isaiah 1: Verse 17,” *Calvin’s Commentary on the Bible*, <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/cal/isaiah-1.html>.

Testimony

Doing Good in Worship

Exod. 32:6

“Jehovah, the eternal, self-existent, uncreated One, Himself the Source and Sustainer of all, is alone entitled to supreme reverence and worship. Man is forbidden to give to any other object the first place in his affections or his service. Whatever we cherish that tends to lessen our love for God or to interfere with the service due Him, of that do we make a god.”¹

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A couple of days after God had specified how He wanted the children of Israel to worship Him, the people changed their minds and yielded to the pressures of the world.

“Aaron feared for his own safety; and instead of nobly standing up for the honor of God, he yielded to the demands of the multitude. His first act was to direct that the golden earrings be collected from all the people and brought to him, hoping that pride would lead them to refuse such a sacrifice. But they willingly yielded up their ornaments; and from these he made a molten calf, in imitation of the gods of Egypt. . . .

“How often, in our own day, is the love of pleasure disguised by a ‘form of godliness’! A religion that permits men, while observing the rites of worship, to devote themselves to selfish or sensual gratification, is as pleasing to the multitudes now as in the days of Israel. And there are still pliant Aarons, who, while holding positions of authority in the church, will yield to the desires of the unconsecrated, and thus encourage them in sin.

“Only a few days had passed since the Hebrews had made a solemn covenant with God to obey His voice. They had stood trembling with terror before the mount, listening to the words of the Lord, ‘Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.’ The glory of God still hovered above Sinai in the sight of the congregation; but they turned away, and asked for other gods.”²

REACT

1. The people of Israel worshiped a golden calf. What idols do people worship in our time?
2. What are the consequences of worshipping idols or objects?

1. Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 305.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 317.

Deut. 10:17–22

How-to *The God of Gods*

Worshiping in the twenty-first century could be tricky for many reasons. In an era when technology and resources have developed a great deal, we could easily get sidetracked if we use them in the wrong way.

However, with so many distractions out there, we still have a reason to worship God. One thing that stands out about God is that He is incomparable. In Deuteronomy 10:17–22, Moses speaks to Israel about the attributes of God that place Him above everything else. He begins by describing God as the Omnipotent God of gods.

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It is important to realize that God created the entire universe and everything that's in it. However, knowing that is one thing, and doing what God wants is another. Nothing, seen or unseen, can match the value and the sovereignty of the Creator.

The Bible makes it clear that God executes “judgment for the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment” (Deut. 10:18). When we love God and worship Him as our Creator, we adopt the same attributes. We will have mercy toward the suffering and the oppressed; we will support the poor and clothe the orphans.

What does this tell us? As long as we uphold the rulership of God and His value in our lives as the Creator, we shall be able to extend acts of mercy and kindness to our fellow people in need. Even in an age where Satan works harder to deceive God's people, we still have a reason to worship the God of gods.

We worship Him for several reasons:

He is the Creator. God created all things. The planets, galaxies, and stars are all works of God. Above all, when we look at ourselves in the mirror, we see the image of God (Gen. 1:26, 27).

He loves us unconditionally. Regardless of how we feel towards Him, despite our prevailing circumstances, God loves us immeasurably. And He has a plan for our future (Jer. 29:11).

He is faithful. God will remain faithful to us even when we're unfaithful to Him. When we stray, He leads us back to Himself.

REACT

1. What other qualities of God do you know that cause us to worship Him?
2. How is God's love evident in the lives of the less fortunate?
3. Why do you worship God?

Jayne George, Homabay, Kenya

Opinion

Worshiping as a Church

Isa. 58:14

When we worship, we should exalt, glorify, honor, and praise God in a manner that is pleasing to Him. Through contrite submission and humble supplication, our worship must demonstrate our loyalty to God for giving us the opportunity to escape the bondage of sin.

Worshiping as a church plays an important role in rekindling the spiritual fire, as witnessed on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4). It also brings us together to study God’s Word and to pray and fellowship. It’s one of the greatest ways of keeping God’s grace in our lives.

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Individual, private worship is not bad, but, as one author puts it, “There’s an element of worship and Christianity that cannot be experienced in private worship or by watching worship. There are some graces and blessings that God gives only in the ‘meeting together’ with other believers.”¹

Here are some of the blessings we experience when we come together as a church to worship the Creator:

Corporate worship awakens our spiritual vigor. When we worship together, we support each other. Unity in prayer can yield amazing results. Martin Luther once said, “At home, in my own house, there is no warmth or vigor in me; but in the church when the multitude is gathered together, a fire is kindled in my heart and it breaks its way through.”²

Community brings assurance. Being part of a church community assures us that we are one family in Christ. Worship in our local churches points to the worship in the collective church of which Christ is the head (Rev. 7:9).

Corporate worship makes us advance in our faith. During community worship, we participate in building, encouragement, and consolation (1 Cor. 14:3). At the same time, worshiping together as a church helps us behold Christ together. “We all . . . are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another” (2 Cor. 3:18, ESV).

REACT

1. When should we worship God corporately and when privately?
2. How does worshiping as a church help us execute social justice?

1. Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NAV-PRESS, 1991), p. 92.

2. David Mathis, “Kindle the Fire in Corporate Worship,” *desiringGod* (blog), May 19, 2014, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/kindle-the-fire-in-corporate-worship>.

Exod. 20:2-6

Exploration

Worship in Spirit and in Truth

CONCLUDE

God requires us to recognize His presence in our lives through worship. He wants us to render true worship that brings honor and glory to His name. If we worship Him in Spirit and truth, we can have a lasting connection with Him in our hearts, and this will be demonstrated in our actions. Besides, God has provided, in His Word, everything that we need for our spiritual growth and development. The truth in the Bible sets us free to worship God and to serve our fellow humans by His standards.

CONSIDER

- Writing down 10 differences between an idol and God the Creator. Keep reminding yourself of the differences and ask God to give you the power to worship Him alone.
- Making a worship timetable for the whole week. Ask God to help you follow the timetable so that you can worship Him each day.
- Practicing different activities that constitute worship, such as singing, praying, meditation, and extending acts of mercy and kindness to people in need.
- Forming a worship group in your church that can meet once or twice a week to connect to God as a community. Write down some of the changes you experience when you worship as a group.
- Imagining some of the things that people consider amazing, such as the tallest buildings, fastest cars, or any other thing that people might consider worthy of worship. Write down reasons why these things cannot take the place of God in your life.

CONNECT

Revelation 14:6, 7; Psalm 95:6; 1 Chronicles 16:29; John 4:24.
Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, pp. 16, 17.
David Peterson, *Engaging With God*, pp. 20–26.