



LIFE SCHOOL
INTERNATIONAL

THE WORSHIPING CHURCH

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Session 1

Time to Break the Alabaster Vial

This session covers:

- The introduction to the class
- The end-time call to become a worshiper
- Seven reasons why worship is important to this generation

Class Introduction

1. Worship is an essential aspect of the end-time Church.

- Praise and worship is the foundation for much of what God is doing in and through the Church in preparation for the Lord's return.
- Through worship, the Bride will cry for Jesus to "come" and take her away to the heavenly wedding feast.
- Through worship, God will bring down principalities and world-rulers by replacing altars of inequity with altars of praise.
- Worship is a significant key to the end-time moves of God.
- Growing as a worshiper and entering into the worship movement is essential in these end-times.

2. Sessions 1-6 focus on developing a heart of worship.

- True worship is not about singing, lifting of hands, or other actions; it is about the heart.
- Sessions 1-6 focus on how to worship in spirit and truth, how to come before a holy God with confidence, how to become a living sacrifice, and how to develop a heart after God.

3. Sessions 7-12 focus on topics that draw us into the heavenly throne room.

- These sessions show how worshipers can draw closer to God.
- Topics include the physical actions of praise, pressing into the heart of God, and worship as a weapon of spiritual warfare.
- Sessions 7-10 also examine the prophetic song, the integration of worship and prayer, and the importance of singing new songs.
- Session 11 offers practical advice to pastors, worship leaders, and others in leadership roles. This session describes how to develop solid praise and worship leaders, how pastors can transition their churches into the modern-day worship movement, and how to create a river of life in a worship service.
- Session 12 invites worshipers to join God's end-time throne room company.

Breaking the Alabaster Vial

1. Mary of Bethany poured sweet perfume on Jesus.

- As Jesus' death approached, Mary of Bethany—the same Mary who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to His words (Luke 10:39)—took an alabaster vial of costly perfume and anointed Jesus for burial (John 12:1-8).
- The disciples became indignant; they wanted to sell the expensive perfume and use the money to help the poor.
- Jesus allowed her to continue, saying that the poor can be ministered to at any time and that Mary did a good thing by preparing Him for burial.
- Mark 14:3-9
- Matt. 26:6-13

2. God is raising up a company of Marys who will anoint Jesus as King in preparation for His return.

- Like Mary, God wants us to discover the joy of sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to His words.
- Like Mary, God wants us to know that intimacy with Jesus is the most important thing in life, even more important than ministry and service.
- For Mary to own a pound of this expensive ointment was a rare luxury. Therefore, her act of worship was an extravagant and costly sacrifice.
- Symbolically, this vial represents our lives, especially our hearts; we are valuable, beautiful, and delicate to the Lord.
- Just as Mary broke open the alabaster vial, God wants to break open our hearts so that the sweet but costly fragrance of worship can come forth. God is looking for worshipers who will waste their lives lavishing affection upon Jesus Christ.
- He is looking for a broken, surrendered, and submitted people who will place Jesus above everyone and everything else, even good things like evangelism, missions, and ministry to the poor? Jesus wants us to make room in our schedules, our ministries, and our hearts for extravagant worship—worship that will fill the earth with the sweet aroma of His glory and prepare the way for His return.

All for His Glory

1. Jesus will return for a glorious Church.

- God is not returning for a defeated Church; He is coming for an overcoming, victorious Bride that has defeated rulers, principalities, and forces of wickedness that have plagued the earth.
- Jesus is coming for a glorious, end-time Church that will be without spot or wrinkle (Eph. 5:27).

2. The end-time Church will worship passionately.

- God is moving mightily in the earth. The sick are being healed, the bound are being set free, people are hungering for God, and the harvest is increasing.
- Praise and worship is at the center of these end-time moves of God. God is restoring true worship back to His Church.
- The worship movement, which is now spreading across the earth, is possibly the most visible aspect of what God is doing in this generation.
- Throughout the earth, people are praising and adoring God as they abandon themselves in worship. Captured by His presence, worshipers from every nation are expressing their passionate love for God in a manner never seen in our lifetime.
- It is time to join this worldwide worship movement—to jump into this exciting river that is flowing from God’s throne.

Seven Reasons Why Worship Is Important

1. God will fill the earth with His glory.

- God’s glory will increase as the day of the Lord draws near (Num. 14:21, Ps. 72:19, Hab. 2:14, Eph. 5:27).
- God will fill the earth with His character, His attributes, and His miracle-working power through the Church. (2 Cor. 3:18).
- Worship is a significant factor in this process.
- As we worship, we are transformed because seeing God as He is softens us to the Holy Spirit’s work in us. As we are transformed from glory to glory, the earth is filled with the glory of God.
- Through worship, God’s holiness, beauty, splendor, majesty, worthiness, power, wisdom, and strength become real.
- As we sing songs of worship and enter deeper into God’s presence, we experience His glory. We see God’s character, attributes, and power like never before. In the process, we are changed into His image; we give God permission to make us holy just as He is holy.
- Encountering the glory of God causes us to manifest the glory of God in the earth.
- In addition to God’s glory emanating from us, worship itself declares the awesome character, works, and love of God into the atmosphere. People with purified hearts worshiping in spirit and truth will fill the earth with the glory that comes through worship.

2. The first commandment will be first before Jesus returns.

- Many Christians believe in Jesus, but do not really love Him. They trust Him for eternity, they rely on Him as their provider, and they call on Him when they are sick or in a desperate situation.
- They love what Jesus can do for them, but they do not love Jesus for who He is.
- God will change this before Jesus returns.
- God is returning as King to judge, but He is coming *for* a bride. The Holy Spirit is making us ready as a worthy bride for Jesus. He is preparing us for our wedding day.
- To be ready for the Lord, we must fall in love with Jesus.
- Our Bridegroom King will not return for a wife that is lukewarm, entangled in the pleasures of the world, and committing acts of spiritual immorality. The worthy Bride will be passionately in love with Jesus.
- Jesus said that the number one commandment is to love God with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind (Luke 10:27).
- Although there are many ways to express our love for God, such as obedience, submission, and service, one of the most significant ways is through worship.
- Worship is a major way that the first commandment will be first in the Church before Jesus returns.

3. God calling us into an intimate partnership with Jesus.

- God is transitioning the Church from servants to partners.
- Though we are called to serve God, we can do so from a distance.
- When we serve God from a distance, we stay busy doing things for Him that might not be what He desires.
- Serving God at a distance is fine, but there is a higher call—to partner with Jesus from a place of intimacy, love, and friendship.
- He is drawing us close so that we can hear His voice clearly; then from this place of intimacy, we will know what He is doing and join Him in partnership.
- God is calling His Bride to arise and come along with Him (Song of Solomon 2:10).
- Worship is a primary way that we move into partnership with Jesus. As we develop the heart and discipline of a worshiper, our love for Jesus grows, and our friendship with Him deepens. Like John, we can lay our head upon His breast and hear His heartbeat (John 13:23). As a result, we can follow Him in obedience wherever He goes.

4. God will give us great authority through intimacy with Jesus.

- A little understood but important truth about the end-times is that the Church will be participators in end-time events, not spectators.
- In America, much of the end-time teaching depicts believers as spectators who are raptured away before things get really hard. There is little mention about the Church being in the earth during the end-times.
- In ever-increasing ways, God will use the Church to restrain the powers of darkness. This means that God will entrust great authority to the Church in the last days.

- This authority will come one way—from a position of intimacy with Jesus.
- The Book of Esther teaches that Esther saved the Jews from destruction because she was given great authority to defeat Haman and his ten sons. The king promised to give Esther whatever she desired, up to half his kingdom. Because Esther found favor in the eyes of the king, he extended to her the golden scepter of authority (Est. 5:2).
- Esther's authority came as a result of her submission, obedience, and her intimate relationship with the king.
- God will use the "Esthers" of our day to deliver God's people from the evils of the antichrist system.
- God is selecting and preparing Esthers to stand in the gap through intercessory prayer against the evil of the last days. One critical trait that these Esthers will possess is a heart of worship.

5. God is restoring the Tabernacle of David.

- God is restoring the Tabernacle of David. This work began during the early days of the New Testament Church, and it continues today (Acts 15:16-18).
- The restoration of the Tabernacle of David is an important event since it is connected to the harvest at the end of the age (Matt. 13:39).
- All day and all night, singers and musicians worshiped the Lord in David's tabernacle. These worshipers were continually in the holy of holies, seeking the face of the Lord, giving thanks to God, singing to the Lord, and remembering His marvelous deeds (1 Chron. 16:7-12).
- Though it is not yet clear exactly how the restored Tabernacle of David will take shape, one thing we do know—worship is vital.
- As the Tabernacle of David is restored, nonstop worship will open the heavens over cities and nations, thrones of inequity will be replaced with thrones of praise, the hearts of unbelievers will be tenderized, and the gospel of the kingdom will go forth unhindered.

6. We will win the war of the ages from a foundation of praise and worship.

- In the Tabernacle of David, as Israel worshiped, God fought Israel's battles and defeated their enemies.
- No nation stood a chance against Israel. David's army conquered the neighboring nations with ease (1 Chron. 18-20).
- Whenever Israel went to war, God sent praise first. Judah, which means "praise Yahweh," went first into battle (Judges 1:1-2).
- As we ascend in worship, we receive a mantle of power and authority, specific strategies to conquer the enemy, and the boldness and confidence to go to battle.
- Then as we descend in war, we have the tools to fight, our battle plans are carried out in the power of the Holy Spirit, and the enemy is defeated.
- God is using praise and worship today, blending it with intercession, proclamations, decrees, and prophetic acts to break through entrenched strongholds and demonic opposition so that God's Kingdom can advance in the earth.

7. Worship will give us strength to stand in the last days.

- As we approach the return of the Lord, both the light of God's glory and spiritual darkness will increase to unprecedented levels.
- God wants us to overcome every form of evil and stand strong in the face of severe trials—trials that will increasingly plague the earth prior to the Lord's return.
- The book of Revelation highlights the importance of worship in the end-times. By contrasting trials in the earth with worship in heaven, the book of Revelation shows us how worship positions us to stand, to overcome, to maintain our faith, and to live victoriously in the last days. Isaiah also shows us how worshipers will stand strong in the end-times (Is. 25:3).
- Paul writes that Abraham "grew strong and was empowered by faith as he gave praise and glory to God" (Rom. 4:20, AMP).
- As we worship, our inner man is strengthened, and we transition from the natural realm to the supernatural realm—giving us strength to stand and to triumph.

Worship is critical to God's purposes in this generation and for all eternity. Therefore, it is time for our worship to fill the earth—for each of us to break the alabaster vial and pour out the sweet perfume of worship on our King. Will you join this powerful work of the Holy Spirit?

Review Questions

True or False

- _____ 1. Jesus will return for an overcoming, victorious Bride who has defeated rulers, principalities, and forces of wickedness, commonly called a glorious Church.
- _____ 2. The alabaster vial that Mary used to anoint Jesus was a vial containing an inexpensive perfumed oil that was easily available to anyone interested in obtaining it.
- _____ 3. The breaking of the alabaster vial is a picture of a believer pouring out an extravagant sacrifice of worship upon Jesus in preparation for His second coming.
- _____ 4. One of the most visible works of the Holy Spirit in our generation is the worship movement that is sweeping the earth.
- _____ 5. The worship movement that is spreading throughout the earth is very important but it has no real connection to God's end-time purposes.
- _____ 6. God has spoken clearly in His Word that He will restore the Tabernacle of Moses in the last days.

Fill in the Blank

7. Ephesians 5:27 reads, "that He might present to Himself the _____ in all her _____, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be _____ and _____."
8. One reason why worship is so important in the last days is that we will win the war of the ages through _____ and _____.
9. In the last days, God will _____ the earth with His _____.
10. God is releasing great authority upon His Church in these days. One of the keys to positioning ourselves to experience this authority is _____ with _____.
11. Before Jesus returns, the _____ _____ will actually be first in the lives of many believers and they will truly love the Lord with all of their heart.

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12. God truly desires for us to make room in our schedules, our ministries, and our hearts for _____ worship that will prepare the way for Jesus' _____.

Matching

Place the letter of the correct answer in the blank space.

- _____ 13. Scripture verse(s) that most clearly speak(s) of God raising up a glorious church in the end-times.
- _____ 14. Scripture verse(s) that refer(s) to Mary breaking the alabaster vial.
- _____ 15. Scripture verse(s) that describe(s) the Tabernacle of David.
- _____ 16. Scripture verse(s) that support(s) the fact that the first commandment will be first in the last days.
- _____ 17. Scripture verse(s) that explain(s) in picture form that great authority will be released through intimacy with Jesus.

Possible Matches for 13-17

- a. 2 Chronicles 3:18
- b. Esther 5:2
- c. Habakkuk 2:14
- d. Luke 10:27
- e. Ephesians 5:27
- f. John 4:21-24
- g. Mark 14:3-9
- h. Acts 15:16-18
- i. Acts 2:42-45
- j. Judges 1:1-2

From the list to your right, choose the corresponding letter for three of the reasons why worship is important that were listed in Session 1.

- _____ 18.
 - _____ 19.
 - _____ 20.
- a. Worship prepares the hearts of the people for the preaching of the Word.
 - b. We will win the war of the ages from a foundation of praise and worship.
 - c. God is restoring the Tabernacle of Moses which will include anointed praise and worship.
 - d. God is calling us into an intimate partnership with Jesus.
 - e. The first commandment will be first before Jesus returns.
 - f. Worship helps believers overcome shame.
 - g. Singing a new song brings a fresh anointing to our services.

Session 2

Worship in Spirit and Truth

This session covers:

- The meaning of true worship
- Four key principles that define worship
- A summary definition of worship

Jesus Speaks About Worship.

1. Jesus encounters the woman at the well.

- As Jesus and His disciples traveled through Samaria, Jesus rested at Jacob's well. Thirsty from the long journey, Jesus asked a Samaritan woman for a drink of water.
- In the conversation that followed, she tried to shift the focus of the uncomfortable conversation from herself to the topic of worship. She said to Jesus, "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship" (John 4:20).
- Jesus responded by defining worship for all generations (John 4:21-24).

2. In this passage, Jesus highlights keys to effective worship.

- People worship what they know.
- God seeks worshipers.
- God is spirit.
- Worship is in spirit.
- Worship is in truth.

3. The next session addresses the first of these keys while the others are addressed in this session.

God Seeks Worshipers

1. God desires, even expects, His people to worship Him.

- Jesus said to the woman at the well, “For such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers” (John 4:23).
- The first four of the Ten Commandments make it clear that God expects worship. He tells us not to have any other gods before Him. God forbids us from worshiping graven images of anyone or anything. He is a jealous God who desires all of our worship and honor (Ex. 20:1-8).
- Worship is for God, about God, and empowered by God. Paul said, “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever” (Rom. 11:36).
- Understanding that worship begins with God is essential to becoming a true worshiper.
- From Genesis to Revelation, two truths leap from the pages—God is worthy of worship, and He is passionate for His glory to be revealed. In His worth and desire for glory, God seeks people who will worship Him in spirit and truth.

2. God is worthy of our worship.

- More important than any other reason, we worship because God is worthy of our adoration and honor.
- He spoke and the entire universe came into existence. God created the great expanse of galaxies, planets, and stars. By His words, the sun, the moon, and the earth were formed. He called into existence the fall, winter, spring, and summer. He created clouds, rain, darkness, and light. God created the largest animal and the smallest particle of an atom. God is all-knowing and all-powerful. He is majestic, beautiful, glorious, and awesome in His ways. God created the universe, but He also knows our names. He knows the number of hairs on our head, and He cares about every detail in our lives.
- The early church understood God’s worth. Paul wrote to Timothy, “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever” (1 Tim. 1:17). Jude closed his letter with these words about God’s worth: “To the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever” (Jude 25).
- God is worthy because He clothed Himself in human flesh through His Son, and He died for our sins so that we might be one with Him for all eternity.

3. God is passionate for His glory to be revealed.

- From the Old Testament prophets to the New Testament apostles, we see hints of God’s passion for His glory to be revealed.
- Isaiah wrote about God’s jealousy to be glorified above all others. He wrote that God’s sons and daughters have been created for His glory and that God will not share His glory with another. Isaiah showed us that all end-time events are leading to one end—that God’s name would be glorified throughout the earth (Is. 26:15; 42:8; 43:7; 48:11; 60:21; 61:3).

- Jesus came to make known the Father's name and to be glorified so that the Father would be glorified. He came, not seeking His own glory, but pointing the people to God's glory (John 12:28; 13:31; 14:13; 17:1-5).
- Even in the apostles' writings, the phrase "to the glory of God" is repeated often, suggesting that all of our actions are to bring glory to God (Rom. 15:7; 1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 1:20; 4:15; Phil. 2:11).
- God is passionate for His glory to fill the earth. God said, "But indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num 14:21). God wants our worship to fill our cities and nations with His glory as the waters cover the sea (Hab. 2:14).
- Therefore, God longs for those who love Him to declare His glory through their lives and their lips. God seeks worshipers who recognize His marvelous worth and are passionate about His glory. Our Father is seeking a worshiping generation that will acknowledge who He is and praise Him for the mighty works that He has done.

Worship is "in spirit"

1. God is Spirit.

- When Jesus spoke to the woman at the well, He informed us that God is Spirit (John 4:24).
- His words reveal the fundamental nature of God. We must not compare God with any material object on earth. Nor should we imagine that He is bound in any way to places or things.
- God is not pantheistic—the material world is not God. The tree in your yard and the animal in the forest are not God.
- However, God is omnipresent—He is everywhere at the same time. God is not bound to a particular place of worship.
- Since the time of Moses, the Jewish people thought that God dwelled in a particular place. He hovered over the tabernacle as a cloud by day and a fire by night. He also dwelled upon the ark of the covenant in the Tabernacle of Moses, the Tabernacle of David, and the Temple of Solomon. Even the Samaritans erected a temple on Mount Gerizim, and of course, the temple was the focal point of Jewish life until it was destroyed. So during Jesus' earthly ministry, everyone thought that God dwelled in a particular place. The people would go to the temple or the synagogue to meet with God.
- When Jesus spoke with the Samaritan woman, He informed us that worship was changing. Jesus taught us that worship would no longer be confined to a particular place. It was moving beyond the temple and the tent. Jesus instructed us that God is Spirit, and therefore, He can be experienced anywhere at anytime.

2. God must be worshiped in spirit.

- Though God is invisible and cannot be touched, we can fellowship with Him spirit to Spirit. Paul said, "The one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him" (1 Cor. 6:17). When we are born-again, our spirit is joined together with God's Spirit. Now, our spirit and God's Spirit are inseparable—they are one. Paul said, "The fellowship of the Holy Spirit...be with you" (2 Cor. 13:14).
- With our human spirit, we can have intimate fellowship with the Holy Spirit. That is why Jesus said that those who worship *must* worship in spirit.
- Worshiping in spirit is not a suggestion or an option—it is a command. Worshiping in spirit begins when our spirit connects with the Holy Spirit.
- As we learn to worship God in spirit, the place where we worship loses significance.
- God is building a worshiping generation of living temples—not constructed with the hands of man—but built with living stones. Paul told the Corinthians, "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you" (1 Cor. 3:16). The true temple of God is not in Jerusalem or Samaria; is in the heart of individual believers.
- Our hearts make up the spiritual house of God. It is the place where God meets with us as His Spirit communes with our spirit.
- True worship, therefore, comes from the heart—the place deep within us that houses our desires and convictions. From our heart, we release our emotions, meditate upon the truths of God, and direct our will. We love from our heart, and we worship from our heart. From our heart, our human spirit expresses worship to God. Individually, our hearts are temples of God, and therefore, we can worship Him anywhere at anytime.
- The corporate temple carries a much greater anointing than the individual temple. That is why God is fitting us together as living stones into a spiritual house where God dwells. Paul told the Ephesians that they were "being fitted together...growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2:21-22).
- Since individual believers are temples of God, imagine what happens when we are joined together in unity. As God fits us together, He is fashioning a spiritual temple where His glory can dwell. Church is much more than a building where people meet; it is the place where God dwells (1 Peter 2:4-5).
- We are exhorted to come boldly to the throne room and to enter the holy place with confidence (Heb. 4:16; 10:19).
- We no longer worship in a temple or a tent but in the spirit.
- God is melding together living stones as He builds a spiritual house of worship throughout the earth. This spiritual house is the place where we minister as priests to God, offering up spiritual sacrifices of praise and worship to Him.
- God is Spirit and we worship Him in spirit.

Worship is “in truth”

1. True worship originates from a heart that desires God.

- Singing for hours is not worshipping in truth unless what we say comes from the heart.
- In the days of His earthly ministry, Jesus spoke regularly about the hypocrisy of Israel’s leaders. He told the Pharisees, “You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men’” (Matt. 15:7-9).
- This verse records a timeless truth about worship. When we attempt to honor God with our words—or our songs—while our hearts are far away from Him, our worship is in vain. Worship in truth is our heartfelt response to the revelation of God.
- Many people sing worship songs, speak words of thanksgiving, read Psalms of adoration, and express praise while their hearts are far from God. As they honor God with their lips, they are thinking about the upcoming ballgame, what they will eat for lunch, or about how they will pay their bills. Perhaps they worship because it is Sunday, and they are supposed to worship. Or maybe they sing because everyone else is singing.
- Rather than having a passion for God that hungers to be near Him, their heart is filled with complacency, apathy, passivity, and distractions. This is not worship in truth, and therefore, it accomplishes little. True worship must be from a heart that desires God and is focused upon Him.

2. True worship comes from a biblical understanding of who God is.

- Another dimension of worshipping in truth is an accurate revelation of God. The second of the Ten Commandments reinforces this truth (Ex. 20:4-6).
- God calls us to worship Him in the reality of who He is. Though most of us no longer have idols in our homes, many of us do have a false image of God in our minds.
- We might view God as an angry judge who only wants to catch us in sin or as a distant God who cares little about our devotion to Him. In either case, we have created an image of God in our minds that is different from who He truly is.
- Paul articulated this truth when he wrote, “Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures” (Rom. 1:22-23).
- Each of us can exchange God’s glory for an image. Our image might be based upon what we want God to be like. Perhaps our image of God has been shaped by our earthly father, especially if he rejected or abused us. Whatever our false image of God is, our worship is not in truth if we have an incorrect perception of what God is like.

- Paul prayed that “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him” (Eph. 1:17). Revelation from God will radically altar your perception and empower passionate worship.
- Ask God for a spirit of wisdom and a spirit of revelation in the true knowledge of Him. This prayer will shatter false images in our mind and prepare us to become abandoned worshipers. As we pray this, the Holy Spirit—who is the Spirit of Truth—will communicate the true nature of God to our hearts.

3. True worship is demonstrated by a godly lifestyle.

- Honoring God with our lips *and* our lives is what worshiping in truth is all about (Rom. 1:21-25).
- Many Christians worship on Sunday and carry out deceptive business deals on Monday. Others, after immoral acts on Saturday night, worship with the congregation on Sunday morning. Some even worship with outward demonstrations of affection while inwardly resisting the discipline and correction of the Holy Spirit.
- When we honor God with our lips but not our lives, we exchange the truth of God for a lie. We worship the creature rather than the Creator.
- True worship comes from a heart that honors God with our words and our works.

Defining Worship

1. The Hebrew, Greek, and English definitions of worship helps us understand its meaning.

- The principal Old Testament word for worship is *shachah*, which means to bow down, to depress oneself, or to prostrate oneself before a superior being in homage. There are also several other Old Testament words used to define worship. These capture the meaning of service and work as aspects of true worship.
- The principal New Testament word translated worship is *proskuneo*, which means to kiss the hand as a token of reverence; it is used in the New Testament to express respect or to make supplication in an act of homage to men of superior rank.
- The English definition of worship is extravagant respect, honor, or devotion to a divine being who exists in a state of worth or worthiness.

2. Summarizing the various meanings of worship, a definition is as follows.

Worship is a heart attitude—rooted in the knowledge of God’s worth and His passion to be glorified—that delights in honoring, thanking, and adoring Him through words, songs, service, and obedience.

Review Questions

True or False

- _____ 1. The primary point of Jesus' discussion with the woman at the well was to tell her not to worship on Mt. Gerizim but to worship at the temple in Jerusalem.
- _____ 2. God seeks worshipers to worship Him in spirit and truth.
- _____ 3. Since God is Spirit, God is not only everywhere, He is everything.
- _____ 4. God is worthy of our worship because it makes us feel better about ourselves.
- _____ 5. Three aspects of worshiping in truth include worshiping with a heart that truly desires God, having a biblical understanding of who God is, and living a godly lifestyle.
- _____ 6. God is totally fulfilled within the Godhead. Because of this, He has no interest in the earth being filled with His glory.
- _____ 7. In John 4, Jesus identifies five keys to effective worship.
- _____ 8. Even though there are many aspects to effective praise and worship, more than anything, worship is a heart attitude that desires to honor God with our life.

Fill in the Blank

9. In John 4:24, Jesus said that God is spirit, and those who worship Him _____ worship Him in _____ and _____.
10. In Matthew 15:7, Jesus said that when we honor God with our lips but our heart is far from Him, we _____ Him in _____.
11. God _____ worshipers.
12. People worship what they _____.
13. God is _____.
14. Worship is in _____.
15. Worship is in _____.

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Matching

Place the letter of the correct answer in the blank space

16. God is not worshiped in a specific place as much as He is worshiped in the _____.
17. If we are not worshiping in truth, our worship is in _____.
18. True worship originates from a person who is committed to live _____.
19. Worship is a heart attitude that is rooted and grounded in the _____ of God's worth and His passion to be glorified.
20. God _____ people to worship Him.

Possible Matches for 16-20

- a. World
- b. Seeks
- c. Temple in Jerusalem
- d. Vain
- e. Matt. 15:7
- f. Spirit
- g. Knowledge
- h. A lifestyle that honors God
- i. Like the woman at the well

Session 3

The Object of Our Affections

This session covers:

- Why we worship
- The principal that true worship is driven by an accurate revelation of God
- Six attributes of God that will empower worship

We Worship What We Know

1. Jesus told the woman at the well that worship comes from what we know.

- When the woman wanted to know whether worship took place at the temple in Samaria or at the temple in Jerusalem, Jesus said, “You worship what you do not know; we worship what we *know*, for salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22).
- Jesus’ response teaches us that worship is rooted in the knowledge of God—we worship “what we know.” The knowledge of God fuels our affections and deepens our worship.

2. Moses asked God to know His ways.

- Moses prayed, “If I have found favor in Your sight, let me know Your ways that I may know You” (Ex. 33:13).
- To know God in a deeper way, Moses prayed, “Show me Your glory!” (Ex. 33:18).
- The Lord answered Moses by descending in a cloud and revealing His goodness (Ex. 34:6-7).

- As God revealed His glory, Moses *experienced* God's compassion, grace, patience, lovingkindness, forgiveness, and truth. Moses *experienced* God's character, His ways, and His goodness. Moses received more than an intellectual knowledge of God; he encountered an experiential knowledge of God.
- Moses' response was to worship (Ex. 34:8).
- Every New Testament believer can experience God like Moses did. In fact, Paul said that the glory in the New Covenant was even greater than what Moses experienced (2 Cor. 3:7-8).
- Whether through one of those "God moments" where we encounter His glory in a miraculous way or whether we merely obtain new insight into a truth of Scripture, the knowledge of God motivates worship—it is the reason *why* we worship.
- Just as Moses worshiped in response to the knowledge of God, our worship will deepen the more we encounter God and experience His glory.

Where There Is Perfect Knowledge of God

1. A glimpse at the heavenly throne room helps us understand how worship deepens as we grow in knowledge of God.

- The knowledge of God is perfect in one place—the heavenly throne room (Rev. 4-5).
- John saw God sitting on a throne, glorious and magnificent like the brilliance of rare jewels. A beautiful emerald rainbow encircled the throne.
- Twenty-four elders, clothed in radiant white and wearing golden crowns, worshiped God.
- Peals of thunder, flashes of lightening, and sounds proceeded from the throne. Color, sights, and sounds fill the holy of holies. Before the throne were seven lamps of fire and a sea of glass like crystal. It was an awesome sight.
- The heavenly worshipers have a perfect view of the glory and majesty of God. They are absolutely devoted to God. Their gaze never drifts from His splendor and His beauty; nor are they ever distracted or complacent.
- They have perfect knowledge of God. Not surprisingly, worship is their preeminent activity (Rev. 4:11, 5:13).
- The place where God's majesty, holiness, and power are the clearest is the same place where worship is the most powerful, the most prolonged, and the deepest. Perfect knowledge of God results in perpetual worship.

2. To go deeper in God, most people must correct how they view God.

- The woman at the well had very little knowledge of the true God, and as a result, her worship was more ritual than real (John 4:22).
- Like the woman at the well, many of us attempt to worship a God whom we do not know.

- Many believers see God as angry, distant, and ready to pour out His wrath on every mistake.
- Others are trying to worship God in a certain place or at a certain time rather than experiencing God from the heart.
- People with these perspectives typically do not have a deep longing to worship. As a result, their worship consists of singing songs or performing ritualistic acts with very little sincerity.
- People need to see God as He truly is—joyful, loving, compassionate, and taking *pleasure* in His people.
- People enter into true worship when they have been captivated by God’s beauty and love.
- For a deep worshiper experience, many need their view of God corrected .

Six Attributes of God That Make Worship Real

The following six attributes are drawn from phrases in Revelation 4-5.

1. Understanding God's desire for us deepens worship.

- In Revelation 4:1, John hears a heavenly voice saying, “Come up here.”
- Just like John, God eagerly invites each of us to come before Him in worship.
- Our heavenly Father *seeks* worshipers. God does not just have a casual desire to be worshiped; He is actively seeking out worshipers from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. God yearns for people to worship Him.
- The Greek word for *seek* in John 4:23 means to covet earnestly, strive after, demand, or require. In His passion for us, God urges us to come boldly before His throne of grace (Heb. 4:16, KJV).
- Many people don’t feel good enough, righteous enough, or important enough to come into the presence of God. When people feel this way, they don’t come near to God. They may attend church, obey God’s Word, and even serve Him in ministry.
- But the Scriptures exhort us to draw near to God (James 4:8). Normally, people who don’t know God’s desire for them do not develop a heart of worship.
- The Bible clearly communicates God’s pleasure in us. The Psalmist wrote, “Let them praise His name with dancing; let them sing praises to Him with timbrel and lyre. For *the LORD takes pleasure in His people*; He will beautify the afflicted ones with salvation” (Ps. 149:3-4).
- God receives pleasure from our worship. He desires us and loves when we draw near to Him. In His delight for us, the Scriptures tell us that God rejoices over us with gladness, quiets us with His love, and rejoices over us with singing (Zeph. 3:17).
- Song of Solomon paints a beautiful picture of God’s desire for our intimate worship. King Solomon represents the Lord Jesus Christ, and the maiden symbolizes the individual believer as his or her love for Jesus awakens and matures.

- After the maiden has come into the King's chambers, she declares, "I am black but lovely" (Song 1:5).
- Even in her sin, she is still lovely and desirable to the King (Song. 1:6, 9-11, 15). In her blackness, the King brings her into the banquet hall where they feast together. He spreads his banner of love over her, nurtures her, and holds her (Song. 2:4-6).
- He calls her all together beautiful and without blemish (Song. 4:7). He says that she ravishes His heart (Song. 4:9) and that her love brings great pleasure to Him.
- God speaks over us in the same fashion as Solomon spoke over the maiden. Even in our weaknesses, He loves and desires us.
- Out of God's desire for us, He seeks and welcomes worshipers with open arms into His glorious presence.

2. Realizing that God receives great pleasure from our worship deepens worship.

- God not only desires our worship, He receives great pleasure from our worship.
- The twenty-four elders speak these words, "For thou hast created all things, and for thy *pleasure* they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11, KJV).
- God experiences pleasure. He delights in His people, His creation, His Son, and His own glory.
- He is happy in His holiness. The Scriptures describe God as laughing, rejoicing, full of joy, filled with pleasure, and overflowing with delight.
- Many people see God as an angry taskmaster who wants to beat us into obedience. Scripture, however, describes a God of gladness whose commands are a joy to keep.
- As we experience the pleasures of God, obedience comes naturally. We will become like David—a man who delighted to do God's will (Ps. 40:8). David also wrote, "In Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand are pleasures forever" (Ps. 16:11).
- God is so filled with joy that it overflows like a river from His heart. David goes onto say, "You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures" (Ps. 36:8). Springing forth from the overflow of God's happy heart is a river of pleasure that we can drink from.
- As we draw near to God in worship, God's joy will become our joy; His gladness will become our gladness; and His pleasures will become our pleasures.

3. Understanding God's holiness deepens worship.

- The four living creatures continually cry out, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come." (Rev. 4:8)
- Most people think of God's holiness as His sinlessness. Even though He is without sin, His holiness is much more than sinlessness.
- The word translated *holy* means separate. In His holiness, God is separate from sin, but He is also separate from every human frailty, weakness, defilement, and impurity. God is separate from anything that would make Him unlovely or less than glorious.

- God’s love, joy, and faithfulness are holy. There is not another who loves like God loves, rejoices like God rejoices, and honors his word like God honors His word.
- All of God’s attributes are holy—they are unique, set apart from every human form or manifestation.
- God is also beautiful in His holiness (1 Chron. 16:29, NKJV; Ps. 96:9, NKJV).
- God’s holiness is not His strict compliance with rules, regulations, or rituals; it is His breathtaking beauty. When John saw the beauty of the Lord in the throne room, he described Him as “a jasper stone [diamond] and a sardius in appearance” (Rev. 4:3).
- David wrote the one thing He desired more than anything else—to dwell in the presence of God and *to behold the beauty of the Lord*. The Amplified Bible defines God’s beauty as “the sweet attractiveness and the delightful loveliness of the Lord.” (Ps. 27:4)
- As the four living creatures gaze upon God, and cry out day and night, “Holy, holy, holy,” they are not just singing about God’s sinless nature. They are declaring the splendor, the beauty, and the majesty of God. They proclaim *holy* because God is different from any created being and high above any person or thing.
- God is happy in His holiness. He is beautiful, splendid, majestic, powerful, and strong in His holiness. As we receive a revelation of God’s holiness, it inspires awe, fear, and love in our hearts, resulting in deep worship.

4. Recognizing God’s worth produces a grateful heart and deepens worship.

- On three different occasions, Revelation 4-5 describes the heavenly worshipers crying out to the Lord, “Worthy” (Rev. 4:11; 5:9, 12).
- They declare the Lord’s worthiness because He created all things, because He redeemed mankind with His blood, and because He is the Lamb of God who was slain for the sins of the world.
- Whereas God’s holiness focuses on His character and beauty, God’s worthiness centers on what God has done. God is worthy because of His acts of righteousness, grace, mercy, sacrifice, and love.
- As we think about the cross, our salvation, or how God has blessed us, we are overwhelmed with feelings of gratitude and thanksgiving. Out of our appreciation for what God has done, all we can do is worship from a grateful heart.

5. Awakening to God’s majesty inspires awe and deepens worship.

- As the twenty-four elders worship before the throne, they fall down and cast their crowns before God (Rev. 4:10; 5:14).
- As these elders—who represent the mightiest of mankind—lay prostrate before the Lord, they place every crown of achievement, every reward for a victorious life, and every honor bestowed upon them at the Lord’s feet.
- The elders are in awe of God’s majesty. Their achievements pale in comparison to God’s kingly authority and awesome power.

- Isaiah saw his sin and frailty in the light of God's holiness. Undone, Isaiah said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 6:5).
- God's majesty inspires awe. Experiencing God's majesty produces the fear of the Lord within our hearts.
- "For the LORD Most High is to be feared, a great King over all the earth" (Ps. 47:2).
- People who have been caught up to heaven or have had prophetic experiences with the resurrected Lord have a common testimony. They describe feelings of great love along with awe-inspiring reverence.
- The Bible says, "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those around Him" (Ps. 89:7, NKJV). The Bible exhorts us to "fear God, and give Him glory...worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters" (Rev. 14:7).
- A revelation of God's majesty produces reverent worship.

6. Experiencing God's presence helps us enjoy God and deepens worship.

- There was another reason the twenty-four elders fell prostrate before the Lord in worship. They were also touched by God's presence.
- Experiencing the presence of God fills our hearts with pleasure, driving us deeper into worship.
- Experiencing God's presence helps us enjoy God and fills us with overflowing joy and pleasure.
- David had a similar motivation for worshiping God. He said, "In Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand are pleasures forever" (Ps. 16:11). David worshiped God because he experienced fullness of joy in His presence.
- In the same way, once we taste the joy of God's presence, we cannot live without it. We are driven to drink from the river of divine pleasures that comes by worshiping our magnificent Lord.

The Apostle Paul stated that he counted everything as loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus. He also talked about pressing on to know Him, both in the power of His resurrection and in the fellowship of His sufferings (Phil. 3:8-15). Paul exhorted us to follow his example and press on to a true knowledge of God. For out of the knowledge of God a true worshiper is born.

Review Questions

True or False

- _____ 1. Jesus told the woman at the well that worship comes from what we know.
- _____ 2. The place where there is perfect knowledge of God is described in Exodus 34:6-7.
- _____ 3. Understanding God's desire for us deepens worship.
- _____ 4. God's holiness not only describes His separation from sin, but it also describes His beauty and splendor.
- _____ 5. Understanding Jesus' worth, based upon what He did for us on the cross, deepens our worship.
- _____ 6. Enjoying God's presence is a reason people worship, but it is a selfish motive.
- _____ 7. Jesus told the woman at the well that worship was changing and that it is no longer just in a place but in an attitude.

Fill in the Blank

8. True worship is driven by an accurate _____ of God.
9. To go deeper in God, most people must _____ how they view God.
10. God _____ us, and, in fact, He receives great _____ from our worship.
11. Awakening to God's _____ inspires _____ and deepens worship.
12. The one place where the knowledge of God is the most perfect is the heavenly _____.
13. The clearest picture of the heavenly throne room recorded in scripture appears in Revelation Chapters _____ and _____.
14. People enter into deep worship when they have been captivated by God's _____ and _____.

Identify the six attributes of God that make worship real from the list on the right and place the correct letters in the spaces next to questions 15 through 20.

_____ 15.

_____ 16.

_____ 17.

_____ 18.

_____ 19.

_____ 20.

- a. God's righteous anger toward sin deepens worship.
- b. Understanding God's desire for us deepens worship.
- c. Realizing that God receives great pleasure from our worship deepens worship.
- d. God's correction in our lives deepens our worship.
- e. Awakening to God's majesty inspires awe and deepens worship.
- f. Experiencing God's presence helps us enjoy God and deepens worship.
- g. Understanding that God is Spirit deepens worship.
- h. Understanding God's holiness deepens worship.
- i. Understanding that God desires us to worship in truth deepens our worship.
- j. Recognizing God's worth produces a grateful heart and deepens worship.

Session 4

Confidence to Enter the Holy Place

This session covers:

- Principles from the prodigal son that will help us feel worthy to come before the Father in worship
- Five mindsets that make people feel unworthy
- Four reasons to have confidence before God in worship

Fervent Worshipers Have Confidence to Come Before God.

1. Many people feel unworthy to draw near to God.

- During times of deep, prolonged worship, the Lord's presence captivates most—they raise their hands, close their eyes, and enjoy God. A few stand almost lifeless, as though the presence of God never came into the room.
- One common mindset that keeps people from worship is that they do not consider themselves *worthy* to come into the presence of a holy God.
- They believe their sin is too great, their past too bad, or their present struggles too severe to be considered worthy.

2. Worshipers need a revelation of their worth.

- The Bible says that we are to have "confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus" and to "draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:19-22).

- Passionate worshipers have confidence to enter into God's presence. They know that God thinks they are special and that He believes in them. They feel worthy before God, and they accept His invitation to draw near.
- When Jesus shed His blood on the cross, He inaugurated a new and living way for us to come before God. Because of Jesus, we can come boldly before the throne of grace (Heb. 4:16).
- God wants to destroy every mindset that keeps us from knowing our worth so that we will come confidently and boldly before God to worship (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

This session is based upon principles drawn from the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). The prodigal said to his father, "I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men" (Luke 15:19). This parable shows us how unworthiness affects a person's willingness to draw close to God; it also illustrates how our heavenly Father views us, giving us confidence to draw near to God.

Five Common Reasons People Feel Unworthy to Worship

1. Past sins often produce a feeling unworthiness.

- Many people struggle with their past, some for their entire Christian life. They have a difficult time believing that the blood of Jesus washes them clean, no matter how ugly their past.
- Whether they sinned before coming to the Lord or after, many think that their past is too dark, too deep, and too prolonged for God to desire them as worshipers.
- For people who fall into this category, the issue is usually *desire*, not *forgiveness*. They have experienced God's forgiveness, but they do not feel God's desire for them. They mistakenly believe that God does not like them or enjoy them because of their past.
- They think that the person who accepted Christ as a child is far more desirable to God than they are. They know God loves them because the Bible says so; however, they believe that God does not like them, enjoy them, or desire them because they have made too many mistakes.
- People who struggle like this are reluctant to come into God's presence as a passionate worshiper. They desperately need to know their worth to God.

2. Strongholds of sin make people feel unacceptable to God.

- Many Christians believe that strongholds of sin make them unacceptable before a holy God. Because they struggle with particular sins, even years after their salvation experience, they believe that God is displeased with them. They wonder how God can enjoy them when strongholds keep them in bondage to sin.

- Many men struggle with sexual sin. When they are alone, the enemy floods their minds with sexually perverted thoughts, lustful desires, and sexual cravings. As these thoughts bombard their minds, it can eventually create a stronghold of sexual sin.
- Many people also battle thoughts of anger and bitterness. The enemy uses past wounds to torment their minds with thoughts of rage and revenge. They know what God's Word says about forgiveness, but they cannot seem to get these thoughts out of their minds.
- Others struggle with depression. They feel defeated, discouraged, and despondent. They wonder if it is even worth the trouble to attempt to worship.
- Addictions are another common stronghold. Some are addicted to alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, or pornography. These types of strongholds make people feel unworthy to come into God's presence.
- Often, people who struggle with strongholds believe that they must get victory *before* they can worship. They assume that God does not desire their worship since they are hopeless hypocrites.
- Although God promises us victory over every stronghold, He does not want us to withhold our worship until we overcome. God desires our worship in the meantime. In fact, worship is often how we overcome strongholds.

3. Shame from past events often hinders worship.

- Shame, which is a feeling of disgrace, dishonor, and extreme embarrassment caused by the improper behavior of oneself or another, is another reason why people feel unworthy to worship.
- Many people have been abused verbally, sexually, emotionally, or physically by a parent, spouse, close relative, a friend, or a stranger. Others have been raped or forced to perform acts too lewd to mention.
- When Adam sinned, he tried to hide from God because he was ashamed (Gen. 3:10).
- Many are like Adam. Shame haunts them, creating a chasm between them and God. Shame makes them feel unworthy of God's love and of His presence.
- Like Adam, people who struggle with shame have a hard time coming boldly into the presence of God.
- Shame causes potential worshipers to feel ugly and dirty—influencing them to withdraw from God.
- In Christ, God removes shame completely. Therefore, we can come into His presence with confidence. Christians who struggle with shame need a revelation of their worth in the eyes God.
- However, God not only covers our shame—He removes it completely, allowing worshipers to come into His presence with confidence.

4. Rejection often makes people feel unworthy to worship.

- Rejection occurs when love is withdrawn, knowingly or unknowingly. It can occur because of many reasons.
- It can result when a person is denied the opportunity to mature.
- Parents can reject their children with condemning words, lack of encouragement, and extensive discipline.

- Children can experience rejection from smothering love, such as overprotection, rigorous rules, and withholding responsibilities appropriate for their age.
- A spouse can experience rejection when their mate withholds affection or controls the marriage relationship.
- Divorce, death of a parent while a child is young, or any other traumatic loss can cause rejection.
- Millions have a root of rejection that significantly affects their relationships, their ministries, and more important, their worship.
- People with a root of rejection usually have a difficult time coming boldly before God. Because they feel unworthy to come into God's presence, they need a revelation of their worth.

5. Performance-based acceptance makes people feel unacceptable unless they perform well.

- Performance-based acceptance is a belief that one has to do certain things to be accepted.
- Some have been influenced by condemning preachers or a strict religious upbringing. Others have been scarred by parents who only approved them when they performed well.
- People with performance-based acceptance feel close to God when they perform well. When they do not perform adequately, however, they feel distant.
- Whatever way this mindset developed, performance-based acceptance affects worship.
- The prodigal son believed that his performance was unacceptable. He squandered his inheritance, he could not earn a living, and he worked with pigs. He thought his performance did not measure up to his father's standards. He saw himself working in his father's fields for the rest of his life. He thought he would have to earn back his father's approval.
- Because we rarely perform as we should, performance-based acceptance makes us live in a long distance relationship with God adversely affecting worship.

Any of these five belief systems separates us from God. These thinking patterns keep us working for God rather than enjoying an intimate relationship with Him. If any of these five belief systems affect you, knowing your worth will help you overcome, breakthrough, and become a fervent worshiper. Let's continue looking at the prodigal son to see our heavenly Father's desire for an intimate relationship with us and to help us feel worthy as a worshiper.

How Our Heavenly Father Views Us

1. His father ran to him.

- "And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him" (Luke 15:20).

- This verse expresses wonderfully the Father's heart for intimacy with us even in our weakness and sin.
- Upon the prodigal's return, the father did not wait for him to bathe or apologize for his past; he saw him a long way off, ran to him, and embraced him. His failures could not keep his father from joyfully hugging and kissing him.
- Our heavenly Father desires us in the same way. Whether it is our sinful past, strongholds that shackle us, abuse, rejection, or shame, this powerful parable shows how much the heavenly Father desires us. Though we feel unworthy, God runs to us in our weakness, embraces us in our sin, and kisses us in our shame.

2. The father put his best robe on him.

- "But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him'" (Luke 15:22).
- The robe was not old, dirty, or worn out; it was his father's best robe. It was new and beautiful. The son did not have to put the robe on himself. The father commanded his servants put the robe on him immediately.
- The robe signifies the father's love, compassion, and eagerness for a close relationship with his son.
- God longs for an intimate relationship with us; therefore, He robes us with His righteousness so that we are accepted in His presence. The Bible says, "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ (Gal. 3:27). And Isaiah writes, "For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels" (Is. 61:10).
- Referring to this position of righteousness, Romans 5:9 states that we have "now been justified by His blood." The Greek word translated "justify" means to acquit, to vindicate, or to pronounce righteous.
- God says about us, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more" (Heb. 10:17). Our past will never be held against us. Our sins have been completely forgiven. Therefore, we can have confidence before a holy God.
- Our robe of righteousness is much more than a legal pronouncement of acquittal. It is a robe of beauty. When Isaiah described our robe of righteousness, he compared it to the beauty of a bridegroom and bride on their wedding day.
- We may feel like shameful sinners because of our past, but God thinks we are precious, lovely, and desirable. He considers us pure virgins (2 Cor. 11:2) and a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9).
- Even after we are saved, we all fall short of God's righteous standard. Strongholds make us feel unworthy. We wonder how God could accept us into His presence with our severe struggles. God's answer to us every time is that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:8-9).
- Understanding our position of righteousness in Christ helps us feel worthy to enter the presence of a holy God.

3. The father put a ring on his finger.

- The father not only gave his prodigal son a robe, he also put a ring on his finger. The ring was much more than a gift; it was a symbol of power, authority, honor, and dignity.
- In his mind, the prodigal did not deserve the privileges of being a son.
- His father thought otherwise. The father immediately welcomed his son back into the family, restored his rights of sonship, and replenished everything he had squandered away.
- Paul writes about each of us, “Therefore, you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God” (Gal. 4:7).
- We have all felt unworthy to live in the house of the Lord with its privileges and responsibilities. Knowing that our Father immediately positions us as sons when we come to the Lord—giving us privileges, honor, and authority—reassures us that regardless of our weaknesses, we can come into His presence in worship.
- All the traits that the ring represents mature in us as we walk with the Lord. However, the ring tells us that even from the beginnings of our walk with the Lord, we are not a pauper called to serve the King; we are sons of the King of kings and, as royalty, God has invited us to feast with Him at the banquet table in His presence.

4. The father put sandals on his feet.

- The father also put sandals on his son’s feet. The prodigal had walked in his own shoes for a long time. His sandals were dusty, dirty, and worn out.
- The father put new sandals on his feet immediately. These sandals were different. They were the father’s sandals. The sandals represent God’s grace.
- A simple definition of grace is God’s power directed toward our weakness. Jesus defined grace when He told Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9).
- We don’t walk with God in our own strength; we walk with Him by His grace. We are saved by grace, but we are also sanctified by grace. None of us can become holy without God’s grace. God’s grace empowers us to overcome our past, breakthrough strongholds, experience healing from shame and rejection, and rest in God’s acceptance.

A predominant belief is that we must come to God based on our goodness, worth, and value. Often, we try to work our way to God based on our performance and perfection. As we have seen in this session, nothing could be further from the truth. We don’t have to change before we come into God’s presence. It is in His presence that we are changed. As Paul writes, “We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:18). God loves us too much to leave us as we are. But while He is transforming us into His image, He welcomes us into His house as worthy vessels through the blood of Jesus. To grow as worshipers, we need to remember an important truth conveyed in this session: No matter what we have done, where we have been, or where we are now, we can come boldly before God’s throne in worship.

Review Questions

True or False

- _____ 1. Many people need confidence in who they are in Christ to become fervent worshipers.
- _____ 2. God desires for believers to get sin out of their life before they come before Him in worship.
- _____ 3. People who feel shame often cannot enter into deep worship because they feel unworthy.
- _____ 4. The story of the prodigal son illustrates the heavenly Father's attitude toward us even in our weakness and sin.
- _____ 5. People who feel unworthy are usually the most powerful worshipers because they know they need to get right with God.
- _____ 6. Strongholds of sin make people feel unacceptable to God.
- _____ 7. Past sin rarely makes believers feel undesired by God.
- _____ 8. Even following deep repentance, serious failures in our lives will make us feel as though we cannot come into an intimate relationship with the Father.

Fill in the Blank

9. Hebrews 10:19-22 reads as follows, "Therefore, brethren, since we have _____ to enter the _____ by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us _____ with a sincere heart in full _____ of faith, having our hearts sprinkled _____ from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."
10. Worshipers need a revelation of their _____ to become fervent worshipers.
11. In the story of the Prodigal Son, the Father put upon the son His _____, a _____, and _____.
12. The Father's best robe symbolizes the believer's _____ of _____ that comes through his justification by the blood of Jesus.

13. Even though our past sin and present failures often make us feel as though we are destined to be no more than a slave who works in the fields, our heavenly Father tells us that we are still worthy to be a _____ in the house.

14. God does not want us to get our life in order before we come into His presence because it is in His _____ that we are transformed (2 Corinthians 3:18).

15. The father's ring that he placed on the Prodigal Son is a symbol of _____, _____, _____, and _____.

Identify the five common reasons people feel unworthy to worship from the list on the right and place the correct letters in the spaces next to questions 16 through 20.

_____ 16.

_____ 17.

_____ 18.

_____ 19.

_____ 20.

- a. Rejection often makes people feel unworthy to worship.
- b. Shame from past events often hinders worship.
- c. God declares us righteous by the blood of Jesus.
- d. We should have confidence to enter the Holy Place.
- e. Past sins often produce a feeling of unworthiness.
- f. Understanding that God desires us to worship in truth deepens our worship.
- g. Performance based acceptance makes people feel unacceptable unless they perform well.
- h. To be accepted by our heavenly Father, we must earn our way back from past failures.
- i. Strongholds of sin make people feel unacceptable to God.

Session 5

Offering up Isaac

This session covers:

- Five areas of surrender that marked the life of Abraham
- The principal that surrender is a vital aspect of worship
- Five areas of surrender that will help us mature as worshipers

Worship Requires Surrender

1. Abraham's life is marked by surrender.

- Abraham waited for more than twenty years for the fulfillment of God's promise. He devoted his entire life to pursuing his God given vision. God had answered his prayers, rewarded his faith, and fulfilled His promise.
- God gave him Isaac, the son of promise. Now comes the ultimate test. God asks him to take Isaac, his beloved son, and sacrifice him on the mountain of God's choosing.
- No, now comes the ultimate test. God asks him to take Isaac, his beloved son, and sacrifice him on the mountain of God's choosing.
- Not only did God ask Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. The Scriptures call it worship (Gen. 22:5).
- God asked Abraham to surrender Isaac as an act of worship.

2. Sincere worshipers embrace a lifestyle of unconditional surrender.

- The Christian life is a call to surrender. Jesus tells us clearly that to follow Him, we must yield to His Lordship.

- Jesus said, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me” (Luke 9:23). In addition, Jesus described the kingdom as “a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Matt. 13:45-46). God’s kingdom is worth selling everything to obtain it.
- The Scriptures also teach that surrender is an essential aspect of worship.
- Paul describes surrender as an integral aspect of worship when he writes, “I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship” (Rom. 12:1).
- To worship God in spirit and truth, we must become living sacrifices—people who respond with an emphatic “yes” to every call to surrender.

The life of Abraham is marked by surrender. As we study Abraham’s life, five areas of surrender emerge. These areas are like a spiritual map that every true worshiper must follow. They highlight choices that each of us must make to grow as worshipers.

Five Areas of Surrender That Mature Us as Worshipers

1. Worshipers must surrender home and family.

- The first thing Abraham had to surrender was his home and family. God asked Abraham to leave his country, his relatives, and the comfortable surroundings and close relationships of his father’s house and move to another land (Gen. 12:1).
- God asks the same of us. To develop a heart of worship, we must lay everything at the feet of the Lord Jesus. He calls us to surrender our jobs and careers, our children, our mates, our parents, our homes, and all of our possessions.
- God may never ask us to leave our hometown, but we must remain open to whatever He desires. God may never ask us to do something our parents or loved ones disagree with, but we must be willing. He may never tell us to quit our jobs to serve Him, but we must be willing.
- To grow as worshipers, we must surrender our home and family to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

2. Worshipers must surrender compromising relationships.

- Abraham had a close relationship with his nephew, Lot. Other than his wife, Lot was the only family member that journeyed with Abraham from Haran.
- Abraham and Lot had grown close; yet there came a time when God called Abraham to separate from Lot. Strife had entered into their relationship, especially between their servants (Gen. 13:5-11).

- After separating, Lot moved to Sodom where the people were “exceedingly wicked and sinners against the Lord” (Gen. 13:12-13). When two angels visited Lot, the men of Sodom came to his house in order to have sexual relations with them. Lot refused, but he offered his two virgin daughters instead. Thankfully the men rejected his offer; nevertheless, this incident revealed Lot’s true nature (Gen. 19:1-11). Later, to preserve their family line, Lot’s two daughters made him drunk and had relations with him (Gen. 19:30-36).
- Compromise characterized Lot. Lot moved to a place of compromise, and as an act of compromise, he offered his virgin daughters. This act must have communicated compromise to his daughter’s because they had sexual relations with their father.
- On the other hand, after separating from Lot’s compromising lifestyle, God expanded Abraham’s destiny. God clarified, reiterated, and even extended His plans for Abraham (Gen. 13:14-18).
- Abraham’s response was worship (Gen. 13:18).
- Each of us have had close friends, acquaintances, and habits that could easily lead us into compromise. Remaining in these relationships and continuing in these habits can seduce us away from God, or at a minimum, hinder us from growing in our relationship with God.
- The language and lifestyle of compromising relationships hinder our walk with God. God gives us a choice. To grow as a worshiper, we must choose to separate from compromise.

3. Worshipers must surrender everything that is held dear.

- Abraham loved Isaac, but he also loved Ishmael dearly.
- When God said that Sarah would give birth to his child of promise, Abraham fell on his face laughing. Sarah was ninety years old—far beyond the normal childbearing age. Abraham responded to God’s promise saying, “Oh that Ishmael might live before You” (Gen. 17:18).
- Abraham’s response reveals his unbelief that Sarah would conceive, but it also demonstrates his sincere love for Ishmael, his beloved son.
- On the day Isaac was weaned, Abraham celebrated with a great feast. To his surprise, God told Abraham to drive Ishmael and Hagar into the wilderness. Isaac was the heir of God’s promises—not Ishmael—and the two could not coexist. “The matter distressed Abraham greatly because of his son [Ishmael]” (Gen. 21:11, emphasis mine).
- Even though Abraham loved Ishmael dearly, and the thought of driving him into the wilderness distressed him greatly, he obeyed God. Once again, Abraham’s surrender was an act of worship.
- Each of us have Ishmaels in our life. Periodically, we have dreams, goals, visions, plans, relationships, activities, or even mindsets that are dear to us. Holding on to these, however, distracts us, divides our loyalty, and keeps us from following God fully.
- Maturing worshipers cannot hang on to improper relationships, distracting possessions, compromising pleasures, or consuming careers. Those seeking God’s fullness must focus on their God-given destiny. This means all Ishmaels must go.

4. Worshipers must surrender their vision.

- In addition to surrendering Ishmael, Abraham also had to surrender Isaac. Offering Isaac as living sacrifice was a major test for Abraham.
- Isaac was his beloved son. But he was also the fulfillment of Abraham's vision and dreams, the bridge to his God-given destiny.
- Abraham had already left his homeland and his family. He had surrendered Ishmael and had patiently waited twenty-five years for Isaac. Now God was asking him to kill the son of promise. If Isaac died, Abraham's life would have been wasted. We know the story. God provided the ram, Isaac was spared, and Abraham's vision was fulfilled.
- Like Abraham, God calls every worshiper longing for God's fullness to surrender their kingdom dreams. God asks each of us to lay our call, our purpose, and our life vision on God's altar.
- Laying down our Isaac is different than laying down our Ishmael. Even though God blessed Ishmael and his descendants greatly, Ishmael was born of the flesh. Surrendering our Ishmael requires us to lay down things of the flesh. Surrendering our Isaac, on the other hand, requires us to lay down dreams and visions born of the Spirit.
- Laying down Isaac is the pastor surrendering his church or the worship leader letting go of their position. Surrendering Isaac is laying our kingdom dreams at God's feet.
- Many times, as He did with Abraham, God provides the ram, and our vision, dreams, and goals are spared. But this is not a guarantee.
- To grow as worshipers, we must surrender those things born of the Spirit and allow God to mold them, change them, or remove them.
- By so doing, we pass a major test and demonstrate that God is more important than even the dreams He has placed within us.

5. Worshipers must surrender their lives.

- Writing about Abraham, Paul stated, "Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb" (Rom. 4:19).
- By the time Sarah conceived, Abraham was truly a living sacrifice; he was "as good as dead." Abraham surrendered his life to God as an act of worship.
- Though most of us will not die as martyrs, God calls us to become a living sacrifice.
- Yielding our lives is the ultimate act of surrender.
- Periodically, maturing worshipers must go to their own Garden of Gethsemane and offer themselves as a living sacrifice, saying as Jesus did to His Father—not My will, but Yours be done (Luke 22:42).
- Throughout our lives, God allows us to be tested with adversity. In these tight places, when we choose to become living sacrifices, we prove ourselves as true worshipers of God. Worship involves surrender because laying our lives down conveys to God, like nothing else, that He is the "pearl of great price."

Worship is much more than a song. It is a heart that places God far above anything or anyone else in life. A sincere worshiper must embrace a heart of surrender.

Review Questions

True or False

- _____ 1. Abraham is noted for his faith and not for a lifestyle of surrender.
- _____ 2. When Abraham was preparing to go to the designated place to offer up Isaac, he referred to what he was doing as worship.
- _____ 3. Surrender is an important aspect of worship.
- _____ 4. Romans 12:1-2 is a very important Scripture passage, even though it does not refer to surrender as a part of worship.
- _____ 5. Sincere worshipers embrace a lifestyle of unconditional surrender.
- _____ 6. Worship is more about singing, clapping, and praising than it is about lifestyle choices.
- _____ 7. Worshipers must surrender their vision.
- _____ 8. Worship comes from a heart that places God far above anything or anyone else in life.

Fill in the Blank

9. Abraham's life is marked by _____.
10. The five areas of surrender that are identified in this session form a _____ that every true worshiper must follow.
11. Romans 12:1 reads as follows, "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy _____, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of _____."
12. The first area of surrender for many believers is to surrender _____ and _____.
13. A false statement is that because _____ was born to Hagar, Abraham did not really love him that much. And because of this, surrendering him was not that difficult.

14. Worshipers must surrender _____ relationships.

15. Worshipers must surrender everything that is held dear, their _____, and even their life.

Match the Scripture reference that correlates with the area of submission recorded in this session. Place the letter of the correct answer in the blank space.

_____ 16. Worshipers must surrender home and family

_____ 17. Worshipers must surrender compromising relationships

_____ 18. Worshipers must surrender everything that is held dear

_____ 19. Worshipers must surrender their vision

_____ 20. Worshipers must surrender their lives.

a. Genesis 21:9-11

b. Genesis 12:1-3

c. Genesis 22:1-3

d. Luke 22:42

e. Genesis 19:1-11

Session 6

A Heart after God

This session covers:

- The connection between a heart that seeks after God and a heart of worship
- Three attributes from David's life which made him a man after God's heart

The Importance of a Heart After God

1. True worshipers have a heart after God.

- Christians can enjoy the experience of worshiping the Lord—signing upbeat praise songs and slow songs of worship—but still seek their own kingdom. We can find great joy in God's presence while still living for ourselves.
- The Lord desires worshipers who both love His presence and live to do His will.
- God is looking for men and women with a heart after His heart.

2. David was a man after God's heart.

- Most would agree that King David is the greatest worshiper of all time. If we include the Psalms, which illustrate David's deep longing and adoration for God, more insight is offered about his worship than any other biblical character.
- He worshiped with singing, instruments, lifting of hands, celebration, and dance. He brought the ark of God's presence to Zion where he established day and night worship before the Lord. He longed to look upon the Lord's beauty, majesty, and splendor.

- David was also “a man after My [God’s] heart, who will do all My will” (Acts 13:22).
- David’s heart for God and his passion to worship are integrally connected. His heart for God made him a worshiper, and his heart of worship made him a man after God’s heart.

This session focuses on three traits that made David a man after God’s heart. This is important to understand because David’s heart for God made him a worshiper, and his heart of worship made him a man after God’s heart. By studying David, we can discern the virtues that will mature us as worshipers.

A Heart Devoted to God’s Purposes

1. David devoted his life to pursuing God’s purposes.

- He was dedicated to God’s will, to establishing God’s kingdom in the earth, and to following God fully.
- Though David did great things for God, he also broke God’s law and committed grievous sins.
- His affair with Bathsheba far exceeds what most of us would even consider doing. When David discovered she was pregnant, he tried to manipulate the situation so that Uriah, her husband, would return from the battlefield to be with her. When this didn’t work, David had Uriah killed in battle.
- Running for his life from King Saul, David joined the Philistine army—Israel’s archenemy. For more than a year, the future king of Israel fought against his own country (1 Sam. 27:1-12).
- David committed adultery, murder, and treason. David was not God’s most obedient servant. His sins stand out just as much as his worship.
- God still calls him a man after His heart.
- One reason is that David’s heart was fully devoted to God’s purposes.

2. In contrast, Saul devoted his life to his own purposes.

- Saul was rebellious and stubborn (1 Sam. 15:23). He was devoted to building his own kingdom, more concerned with man’s opinions than God’s.
- Saul only obeyed God when it was convenient, and even then, his obedience was selective. Saul was selfish, proud, and independent.
- After defeating the Philistines, Saul and his army gathered in Gilgal, waiting for the Prophet Samuel. As the Philistines prepared to retaliate and Samuel did not come as planned, the people began to scatter. Desperate for God’s favor, Saul disobeyed Samuel’s directives and offered a sacrifice. When Samuel arrived, he rebuked Saul for his disobedience and prophesied Saul’s demise as king (1 Sam. 13:1-14).

- In another instance, Saul's army had conquered the Amalekites and captured King Agag. Again, Saul disobeyed Samuel. Saul destroyed everything that was worthless and despised. Yet he spared King Agag and preserved the best of the spoil for himself and the people (1 Sam. 15:1-35).
- When Samuel arrived, Saul responded, "Blessed are you of the LORD! I have carried out the command of the LORD" (1 Sam. 15:13).
- Deceived, Saul thinks he has obeyed God fully because he destroyed most of the spoil. Saul did obey, but only partially.
- He carried out God's commands when it was convenient, but he disobeyed when it cost him something.
- In both instances, Saul obeyed the people—not the voice of God. If Saul had really wanted to build God's kingdom, rather than his own, he would have obeyed the Lord's voice instead.
- Saul's kingship was rooted in the honor and glory that he would receive. He told Samuel, "I have sinned; but please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and go back with me, that I may worship the LORD your God" (1 Sam. 15:30).
- Saul even consulted a medium. By this time, the Lord had stopped speaking to him. Whenever Saul inquired of the Lord, he received no answer (1 Sam. 28:6). Desperate to keep his kingdom, Saul turned to the forbidden practice of witchcraft (1 Sam. 28:1-19).
- Saul was a self-centered man whose interests, motivations, and actions were not focused upon God. Saul was building his own kingdom, not God's kingdom; he was devoted to his own purposes, not God's purposes.
- God chose his replacement, and in so doing, selected a man *for Himself* (1 Sam. 13:14). David would build God's kingdom in Israel.

3. Whereas Saul exalted himself, David desired to exalt God.

- David's heart was much different than Saul's.
- Saul called the people's attention to himself. After defeating a garrison of Philistines, Saul sounded a trumpet so that his name would be exalted in the land (1 Sam. 13:3-4).
- In contrast, David wanted to defeat Goliath so "that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel" (1 Sam. 17:46).
- Even in his weaknesses, David pursued God's purposes fully. He desired God, lived for God, and wanted to see God's name honored in the earth.

4. David waited on God to exalt him.

- Shortly after pronouncing the end of Saul's reign as king, Samuel anointed David as the future leader of Israel. Only a teenager at the time, David had to wait more than ten years before his kingship would begin. During this delay, David waited patiently upon the Lord and His timing.
- David's first assignment after being anointed as king was to serve Saul as his armor bearer (1 Sam. 16:21). Increasingly, the Spirit of God grew upon David and lifted from Saul (1 Sam. 16:13-14, 1 Sam. 18:6-9).

- Even so, he continued serving Saul faithfully, assisting him in battle and even playing the harp for Saul as evil spirits attacked. David did not try to replace Saul or promote himself into a position of authority.
- While fleeing from Saul's pursuit, David did not try to rush God's purposes or timing—though he had the opportunity to kill Saul twice (1 Sam. 18:10-16).
- Instead of acting on these thoughts, David said, "Far be it from me to touch God's anointed" (1 Sam. 24:6, 26:9).
- In David's heart, he knew that God would make him king in His way and timing. He did not have to interfere with God's purposes or plans. In a prayer of surrender, David even told the Lord, "My times are in Your hand" (Ps. 31:15).
- Even when Saul died, David did not presume that it was God's time for him to be king. Instead, he inquired of the Lord (2 Sam. 2:1-4). In response, God told him to go to Hebron where he would be anointed king over the house of Judah.
- Because David's heart was devoted to God's purposes, he waited on the Lord to exalt him.

5. David inquired of the Lord.

- Saul only inquired of the Lord when it was convenient. Even then, he only obeyed God when it was beneficial to him. Saul was a people pleaser who obeyed the fears and desires of his subordinates.
- David, on the other hand, inquired of the Lord on a regular basis. Desiring to stop Philistine attacks, David asked the Lord whether he should go and retaliate. The Lord told him to go. David's men, however, were afraid to fight. David took their fears to heart, and to ensure that he had heard correctly, inquired of the Lord once more. Again, God told him to go. David obeyed God's voice and defeated the Philistines (1 Sam. 23:1-5).
- Inquiring of the Lord was a mandatory discipline in David's life. Other instances of David inquiring of the Lord appear in 1 Sam. 30:8, 2 Sam. 2:1, 5:19.
- David knew that his success depended upon God. David was a skilled musician, a mighty man of valor, a warrior, one prudent in speech, a handsome man, and the Lord was with him (1 Sam. 16:18). Yet David was not presumptuous. Just because he was gifted and favored by God, David did not assume that he could do whatever he desired and continue to prosper.
- David knew that his success depended upon God, and therefore, he must obey God in order to accomplish His purposes. Moreover, he knew that to please God, he must inquire of the Lord and then obey His voice.
- This trait is necessary for every believer who wants a heart after God and desires to become a Spirit-empowered worshiper. If our hearts are devoted to God's purposes, inquiring of the Lord will become a part of our lifestyle. How else can we be devoted to His will? Otherwise, we are living for ourselves rather than God.
- True worshipers seek God's kingdom and His righteousness first. A practical way to do this is inquiring of the Lord.

6. David brought the ark to Zion.

- After seven and a half years ruling at Hebron, David became king over all Israel (1 Chron. 12:38).
- Almost immediately, David wanted to bring the ark—which housed the presence of God—back to Zion so that the people could worship before the Lord (1 Chron. 13:1-5). David said, “Let us bring back the ark of our God to us, for we did not seek it in the days of Saul” (1 Chron. 13:3).
- As king, one of David’s top priorities was to bring God’s presence back to Israel. For years under Saul’s leadership, there was not a real desire for the presence of God. As David began his thirty-three year reign over all Israel, he captured Jerusalem. Soon after this, he brought the ark of God’s presence back to Zion.
- Because David had a heart after God and was a passionate worshiper, he was determined to bring God’s presence to Israel. So he erected a tent on Mount Zion, put the ark in the center of it, and invited worshipers to sing praises to God continually.
- Under David’s leadership, worship was not an option—it was a mandate. David commanded musicians and singers to worship before the ark all day and all night. David not only desired God’s presence for his personal pleasure; he longed for God’s presence to permeate the entire land.
- A person with a heart after God longs to see His glory fill our churches, cities, and nations. True worshipers are devoted to filling the earth with Lord’s glory.

People with a heart after God devote themselves to God’s purposes. Many Christians live with one foot in the kingdom of God and the other in the world. Many go to church, but live for self. Their focus in life is not the kingdom of God, but food, drink, pleasure, security, and comfort. He wants us to live for something far greater—the excellencies of Jesus Christ. Our mindset should be what Paul wrote of in Philippians 1:21: “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”

A Heart of Faith

1. David took God at His word.

- He relied upon God for strength to defeat his enemies, favor to make him king, instructions for battle, and protection from those who hated him. David’s faith was sincere, even childlike.
- Goliath—the Philistines’ champion warrior—taunted Israel’s army. Bringing food to his brothers, David heard Goliath’s arrogant boasts. Immediately, David was filled with faith and responded, “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?” (1 Sam. 17:26).

- David was not taunting Goliath when he called him *an uncircumcised Philistine*. Rather, David was making a statement of faith. Since *circumcision* was a sign of covenant, David knew that he had a strategic advantage over Goliath—he was in covenant with God and Goliath was not. David knew God’s covenant promises of victory and protection (1 Sam. 17).
- He believed God would deliver him. When we read about David’s faith, we are both amazed and inspired. David said, “The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine” (1 Sam. 17:37).

2. David rested in God’s promises.

- There are more examples of David’s strong faith. For instance, before David would go into battle, he would inquire of the Lord.
- David knew that if God said go, He would give him the victory and the protection against the enemy.
- David took God at His word and relied upon Him for direction, protection, and success.
- David trusted God with his call, his life-purpose, and his destiny. David would not touch Saul—God’s anointed king of Israel. Rather than seize the throne in his own strength and power, David waited on God to make him king. Why? Because he believed that God would exalt him at the right time.
- David rested in God’s promise and ability to make him king, he did not strive to fulfill God’s word in his own efforts.

3. There is a connection between faith and a heart of worship.

- Let’s apply this principle to our lives, especially as it pertains to developing a heart of worship.
- How would you feel if a friend never believed a word you said? Suppose every time you told them something, they doubted it. Whenever you promised to do something for them, they did not believe you would actually do it.
- Their attitude would hinder your relationship.
- In the same manner, if we doubt God’s promises, blessings, love, and faithfulness, how do we expect to have a close relationship with Him?
- Close relationships are built upon of trust and intimate worship is built upon a heart that trusts God.

God longs for us to believe Him, to take Him at His word, and to trust that His promises will come true. Out of a lifestyle of believing God, we develop a heart after Him and grow as a true worshiper of the Lord.

A Heart Yearning for Intimacy with God

1. David had a strong desire for God's presence.

- Many biblical heroes—such as Abraham, Daniel, and Joseph—were men of great faith. Many others were devoted to God's purposes, for example Moses, Joshua, and the Old Testament prophets. But as a worshiper—as one desiring intimacy with God—none compares with David.
- Even more than his devotion to God's purposes or his faith, David's desire for intimacy with God is the greatest reason why he is called a man after God's heart. David longed for the presence of the Lord (Ps. 27:4, Ps. 63:1).
- David's entire life was one test after another. He spent years waiting for God to fulfill His promise, fleeing from Saul in the process. As king, David continued to face many challenges and responsibilities. He had to fight for the land, deal with the loss of a newborn, and withstand the insurrection of his son, Absalom. In the midst of these fiery ordeals, David received peace and pleasure in one place—the presence of God.
- David desired God's presence. He had to be close to the One who filled him with such pleasure and delight. As king, David could have anything he wanted (2 Sam. 12:8). David had access to all of the world's pleasures, yet his strongest desire was for the Lord's presence (Ps. 37:4, 16:11 and 36:8).
- Because David was touched powerfully in God's presence, he developed a hunger for God that never weakened. He was never content in the outer courts when he could live in the holy of holies. He continually longed for more of God.
- David's intense desire for God molded him into the greatest worshiper of all time.
- Likewise, our desire for God molds us into passionate worshipers. Hunger for God is essential in developing a heart of worship. God satisfies the hungry soul (Matt. 5:6). The worshiper who hungers for more of God will be satisfied by His presence.
- David received great pleasure from His intimate times with God. There is an integral connection between desire for God and our innate desire for pleasure. God has put the desire for pleasure deep within us. If we deny our need for pleasure, we will eventually succumb to despair, criticism, or anger. As worshipers, our challenge is to discover the pleasures of God's presence. As we drink from the river of God's delights, our hunger and desire for God intensifies until we are addicted to His presence, resulting in an insatiable appetite to spend our lives worshiping the Lord.

2. David was desperate for intimacy with God.

- Because David experienced deep pleasure in the presence of God, he developed a desperation for intimate times with the Lord (Ps. 42:1-2, 143:6).
- David's desperate heart is revealed when he brought the ark back to Zion. David would not stop until he achieved his goal. David's desperation resulted in a determination to overcome every obstacle that stood in his way.

- At first, he transported the ark incorrectly, resulting in Uzzah's death. Determined, he tried again, this time offering an animal sacrifice after every six paces. Once the Ark was in Jerusalem, David refused to place the ark in the Tabernacle of Moses. Instead, he erected a new tent and opened it so that all could be blessed with God's presence.
- After all of this, David still hungered for more. So he appointed singers and musicians to worship before the Lord continually (1 Chron. 13-16).
- David, desperate for God's presence, spent many hours in this tabernacle feasting upon God's goodness.
- David's desperation was not only for God's presence, but also to know God more deeply. He was desperate to know God, and as a result, he spent long and loving hours meditating upon the beauty of God's personality (Ps. 25:4-6).
- David was an intimate friend of the King. He knew God in a depth that was far beyond his time. David knew God as a Bridegroom, King, and Judge. He also knew God's emotions—both His gladness and His hatred of evil.
- David's discovery of God's joy and delights brought a new revelation of God to the world. He knew God as glad, joyous, even happy in His holiness. Until this time, God was only known as One who was terrifying in His majesty.
- David experienced God's splendor and beauty, and with each revelation, longed to know God in a deeper way.
- David's passionate pursuit to know God's ways, paths, and truths is a reflection of his heart of worship.
- Likewise, as we become desperate to experience God's presence and to know Him in His holiness, we will become true worshipers with a heart after God's.

3. David was passionate to worship the Lord.

- David's desire for God motivated him to worship the Lord with passion. He brought the ark back to Zion with singing, shouting, the trumpet, the ram's horn, cymbals, harps, lyres, and dancing (1 Chron. 15:25-28).
- David's wife, Michal, saw him leaping and dancing before the ark. Though she wasn't pleased, God was. He loved David's passionate expressions of worship.
- As a man after God's heart, passionate, affectionate, undignified worship flowed like rivers out of David's heart (Ps. 32:11, 63:3, and 63:5).
- David was not restrained by the fear of man or a desire to be respected. He was often undignified in the way he expressed his passionate delight.
- David did not worship the Lord with zeal and fervency because someone told him he should; David's passion flowed out of a heart that loved God, longed for Him, and found pleasure in His presence.

David's heart for God resulted in passionate worship. Jesus wants each of us to burn with a similar passion. Speaking to the Laodicean Church, Jesus says to each of us, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me" (Rev. 3:20). Jesus stands today at the door of our hearts, inviting us into an intimate worship experience. How do we open this door to deeper fellowship with God? Develop a heart that seeks after God.

Review Questions

True or False

- _____ 1. This session focuses upon the life of King David to illustrate a life that seeks after God.
- _____ 2. True worshipers have a heart after God.
- _____ 3. Whereas David exalted himself, Saul desired to exalt God.
- _____ 4. David had a strong desire for God's presence.
- _____ 5. David bringing the ark back to Jerusalem demonstrates his indifference toward worship.
- _____ 6. One of the features of the Tabernacle of David was 24-hour worship around the Ark of the Covenant.
- _____ 7. When David confronted Goliath, he said, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?".
- _____ 8. If we would choose a biblical character who was the most obedient to God, we would almost certainly choose David.

Fill in the Blanks

9. David was a man after God's _____.
10. One reason David had a heart after God was that he was devoted to God's _____.
11. David was also a man of _____.
12. David also had a heart that yearned for _____ with God.
13. David was _____ in His worship of the Lord.
14. David was noted for having a heart devoted to God's purposes, in part, because he _____ of the Lord.

Match the phrases below with one of the three traits that made David a man after God's heart. Do this by placing an a, b, or c next to the trait that it fits with. Each letter will be used twice.

_____ 15. David had a strong desire for God's presence.

_____ 16. David took God at His word.

_____ 17. David rested in God's promises.

_____ 18. David devoted his life to pursuing God's purposes.

_____ 19. David was passionate to worship the Lord.

_____ 20. David inquired of the Lord.

a. A heart devoted to God's purposes

b. A heart of faith

c. A heart yearning for intimacy with God

Session 7

Send Judah First

This session covers:

- The importance of praise
- Seven Hebrew words for praise
- A definition of praise
- Five purposes of praise
- Eight expressions of praise

The Preeminence of Praise

1. Judah, which means praise, always went first.

- As the sons of Israel broke camp, Judah led the way (Num. 2:9).
- When Israel went to war, Judah was first to battle (Judges 1:1-2, 20:18).
- The tribe of Judah always camped to the east of the Tent of Meeting, strategically positioned before the only entrance into the Tabernacle (Num. 2:3).
- Jesus came from the tribe of Judah.
- Among Jacob's twelve sons, Judah held a place of great prominence. Prior to his death, Jacob pronounced blessings and destiny over each one. In so doing, he said that his brothers would praise him, that he would defeat his enemies and then released to Judah the scepter of authority and the ruler's staff (Gen. 49:8-10).
- The tribe of Judah was blessed with a position of power, authority, and influence.

2. Even Judah's birth speaks of the importance of praise.

- Jacob married both Leah and her sister, Rachel. Jacob loved Rachel—who was barren—more than Leah. As we would expect, Leah longed for Jacob's love.

- With her first three children, each time Leah gave birth, she hoped to secure Jacob's love. Finally, when she gave birth to her fourth son, she ceased striving for Jacob's favor and rested in her circumstances. In her surrender, she declared, "This time I will praise the Lord," and she named her son Judah (Gen. 29:35).
- Judah means "praise Yahweh" or "may God be praised."
- Just as Judah held a special place in God's heart, praise holds a special place in His heart today. Praise is powerful, necessary, and a key to God's blessings.

3. Praise must be expressed.

- The dictionary defines praise as "to commend or to applaud based on personal worth or actions; to extol in words of song; or to magnify or glorify based on perfections or excellent works."
- We can praise God directly by telling Him His worth, or we can praise God indirectly by commending or magnifying God to others. Either way, praise focuses on who God is and on what He has done.
- The Scriptures tell us to sing praises, speak praises, declare praise among the people, and to praise with instruments, lifting of hands, clapping, banners, shouting, and dance (Ps. 9:11; 9:14; 33:2; 63:4; 47:1; 20:5; 27:6; 150:4).
- It is extremely important to note that praise must be expressed. Praise is only praise when it is demonstrated. We can meditate quietly on the Scriptures or wait silently for God's voice, but these actions are not praise.
- Praise demands that we voice our adoration and demonstrate our appreciation. Praise carries with it an air of excitement, celebration, and boldness. We will not all praise alike since each of us have different emotional make-ups.
- Though praise is *often* noisy and loud, praise is *always* demonstrated.

Seven Hebrew Words for Praise

There are seven Hebrew words translated "praise" in the Old Testament. Analyzing these seven words broadens our understanding of the full meaning of praise.

1. Halal

- Halal (haw-lal'), the most common Hebrew word for praise, appears 165 times in the Old Testament; in most cases, it is translated as praise.
- The word means to praise, celebrate, glory, sing praises, or to boast about. It carries the sense of shouting and jubilation.
- One definition of halal is to make a fool of oneself, to rave, or to act madly.
- The word hallelujah, which is used frequently in the Church today, originates from halal.
- Halal is often used in the plural, carrying the implication of a group of people praising God's greatness together.

- A good illustration of *halal* is when David brought the ark back to Zion with shouting, leaping, dancing, and blowing the trumpet (2 Sam. 6:14-16). Even though the word *halal* does not appear in this passage, David was praising God in the same way that *halal* describes.
- Several places where *halal* appears in the Psalms are: 18:3, 22:22-26, 48:1, 56:4, 69:30, 96:4, 117:1, 146:1, 149:3, and 150:3-5.

2. Yadah

- *Yadah* (yaw-daw') is used 114 times in the Old Testament, although it is not always translated as praise.
- It means to use the hand to throw a stone or to worship with thanksgiving and extended hands.
- This form of praise expresses thanksgiving because of God's acts of goodness.
- *Yadah* expresses the believer's acknowledgement of God's works and character, often in contrast to human failures.
- A good example where *yadah* is used is Psalms 118:15-21.
- Some places *yadah* is used in the Psalms are: 7:17, 9:1, 18:49, 28:7, 32:5, 33:2, 42:11, and 142:7.

3. Tehillah

- *Tehillah* (teh-hil-law') appears 57 times in the Old Testament.
- It means adoration, to praise by singing, the act of general or public praise, or the praise demanded by the qualities, renown, fame, and glory of the object of praise.
- *Tehillah* focuses on deeds or qualities that are worthy of praise and glory. This is the meaning in the word's first biblical appearance: "Who is like You among the gods, O LORD? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises [praiseworthy deeds], working wonders?" (Ex. 15:11, emphasis mine).
- Several places where *Tehillah* appears in the Psalms are: 22:3, 33:1, 48:10, 100:4, 119:171, and 149:1.

4. Zamar

- *Zamar* (zaw-mar'), used 45 times, means striking with the fingers, touching the strings, or touching other parts of a musical instrument.
- *Zamar* suggests playing instruments, making music with voice accompaniment, and celebrating with singing and music. One of its derivatives, *mizmor*, is translated "psalm."
- When David established his tabernacle in Zion, he set singers before the Lord and commanded them to continuously praise [zamar] Him. David said to them, "Give thanks to the LORD, call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples. Sing to Him, sing praises [zamar] to Him; speak of all His wonders" (1 Chron. 16:8-9).
- Other places where the word occurs in the Psalms are: 9:2, 27:6, 144:9, 147:1, and 149:3.

5. Towdah

- Towdah (to-daw') appears 32 times, and it means confession, praise, thanksgiving, or an act of adoration with extended hands.
- It is used for giving praise or thanksgiving through songs or hymns.
- Note how towdah is used to praise with thanksgiving: "Enter His gates with thanksgiving [towdah] and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name" (Ps 100:4).
- Several other places where towdah is used in the Psalms are: 26:7, 42:4, 50:14, 50:23, 69:30, 95:2, 107:22, and 147:7.

6. Shabach

- Shabach (shaw-bakh') appears 11 times in the Old Testament, and it means to address in a loud tone, to laud, to praise, to commend, or to congratulate.
- Shabach often means to triumph through praise. Psalm 106:47 states, "Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the Gentiles, to give thanks to Your holy name, to triumph in Your praise."
- Other references to *shabach* in the Psalms are: 63:3, 117:1, 145:4, and 147:12.

7. Barak

- Barak (baw-rak') is a significant word that appears 330 times in the Old Testament. However, this word is only translated as "praise" once in English—and even then, only in the King James and the New King James versions.
- Barak means to kneel, and by implication, to bless God as an act of adoration. Note the use of *barak* in Psalm 72:15: "He shall live; and the gold of Sheba will be given to Him; prayer also will be made for Him continually, and daily He shall be praised" (NKJV).
- Barak adds another dimension to our understanding of praise—the humble acknowledgement that God is our source of all good things.
- Other places where *barak* is used in the Psalms are: 100:4, 103:1-2, 103:20-22, 104:1, and 145:1-2.

Summarizing these seven words, we see that praise originates from a heart of humility (barak). From a heart of thanksgiving, praise acknowledges God's character and His mighty works (yadah, towdah). Praise declares both to God and to others His renown, fame, and glory (tehillah). Praise is at times loud, boisterous, and celebrative (halal, shabach). In addition, praise is often voiced through singing and music (zamar). Summarizing these Hebrew words, a definition of praise follows:

Praise commends, extols, or magnifies God from a thankful heart for His character, attributes, works, ways, fame, and glory—either directly to God or indirectly to others—through words, singing, instruments, and other celebrative demonstrations.

Five Purposes of Praise

1. God is worthy of our praise.

- The first and foremost reason to praise God is because He is worthy to be praised (Ps. 18:1-3).
- He is worthy because of His majesty, beauty, holiness, love, grace, goodness, and faithfulness.
- He is worthy because He has saved us, redeemed us, and blessed us abundantly.

2. We draw near to God with praise and thanksgiving.

- Approaching God in the Tabernacle of Moses paints a wonderful picture of how we draw near to God's presence through worship.
- The Tabernacle of Moses only had one entrance or gate into the outer court. The outer court contained the altar of sacrifice and the brazen laver. As worshipers approached God, they would enter through the gate and proceed to the altar of sacrifice.
- The gate to the tabernacle faced east, where three of the tribes of Israel camped. The tribe closest to this gate was Judah, which we know means "praise God."
- Psalms 100:4 states, "Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise." In this passage, thanksgiving is the word *towdah*, which we know from our previous discussion is an act of praise or thanksgiving through songs or hymns. Praise is the word *tehillah*, which means adoration that is demanded by the qualities, renown, fame, and glory of the object of praise.
- Adding more insight, Hebrews 13:15 states, "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name."
- Upon entering the Tent of Meeting, the worshiper would see the altar of sacrifice. In Old Testament times, worshipers would approach the Lord with an animal offering, symbolizing the surrender of their life (Lev. 1:1-3). On this side of the cross, however, we are fortunate that Jesus has become the once and for all perfect sacrifice. As Hebrews 13:15 states, we are exhorted to bring a sacrifice of praise.
- As we praise God for what He has done, we enter through the outer court gate. In our journey towards the holy of holies, our praise then places us on the altar of sacrifice in surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- Praise is not the ultimate destination of the true worshiper; however, it is a critical step in the journey toward God's wonderful presence.

3. Praise releases faith.

- Faith empowers us to overcome every enemy of body, soul, and spirit so that we live in the victory that God has ordained.
- When we feel discouraged or fearful and every little grasshopper seems like an intimidating giant, we should praise.
- When we don't feel like a nation-shaker or a history-maker and our faith seems small and weak, we should praise.

- Praise releases faith, and faith turns our giants into grasshoppers (Num. 13:32-33).
- Romans 10:9-10 contains a powerful concept that helps us release faith. Paul said, "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." This verse does not only pertain to our salvation, but the principles here relate to every aspect in our walk with God.
- The Scriptures exhort us to speak what we believe. Combining the confession of our mouth and the faith in our heart, we are positioned to walk in victory.
- As we wait for God's promises to be fulfilled in our lives, we voice our faith through praise.
- When we don't have the faith to believe for victory, our praise builds and releases our faith.
- Praise is the voice of faith, and faith is the key to victory.
- As praise becomes the confession of our mouth, our faith is released.

4. Praise builds a throne for God.

- Psalm 22:3 says, "Yet You are holy, O You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel." In this verse, praises is the word *Tehillah*, which means to praise publicly through songs or to adore God because of His renown, fame, and glory.
- Enthroned is the Hebrew word *yashab* (yaw-shab'), which means to dwell, remain, to sit as judge, or to inhabit. It is commonly used for God dwelling on His throne (1 Kings 22:19, Ps. 47:8).
- Putting the expanded meaning of these two words together, we see that praise builds a throne for God.
- In our analogy of the Tabernacle of Moses, the holy of holies pictures God's throne room. Just as God's glory came from the Ark of the Covenant in the holy of holies, God's presence emanates from His throne today.
- When we praise, we build an invisible throne that God's presence dwells upon.
- If we desire to worship before the throne of God, then we must build His throne with our praises.

5. Praise defeats God's enemies.

- Whenever Israel went to battle, they carried the normal weapons of the day, but they also possessed unique armaments. Their weapons included musical instruments and their voices of praise.
- When Israel defeated Jericho, the walls came down through the ark of God's presence, the shouts of the people, and the sound of the trumpets (Josh. 6:12-16).
- Second Chronicles records another instance of victory over Israel's enemies through praise (2 Chron. 20:21-22).
- When King David took Jerusalem, he established continual praise and worship before the Lord (1 Chron. 16:6). As a result, Israel's enemies were defeated, and her borders expanded (1 Chron. 18:1-4), even to the degree promised by covenant to Abraham (Gen. 15:18).
- When praise went forth from the people, God routed their enemy.

- Praise is a powerful weapon in spiritual warfare. As the Church goes to war over cities and nations, there is a place for binding, rebuking, and standing in faith. But God is also anointing praise, proclamation, and declaration as weapons of spiritual war. Through praise, the walls of Jericho will once again come down.

Expressions of Praise

1. Singing

- When God created the world, the Bible says that “the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Job 38:7).
- Singing has occupied a foundational place in praise throughout history.
- Psalms 9:11 states, “Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in Zion; declare among the peoples His deeds.” Other places where we are exhorted to sing praise include Ps. 149:1 and Eph. 5:18-20.
- We sing praises to celebrate, express gladness, demonstrate trust, and to execute the purposes of God in the earth.
- God calls for songs of praise in the morning and night.
- Choruses, hymns, new songs, and spiritual songs are all appropriate.
- Singing is a very important aspect of praise because music is powerful. Music has the ability to bypass our minds and touch our hearts. Singing softens our heart and prepares us to receive from God. Unlike anything else, music touches our emotions and releases passion, affection, compassion, and intensity.
- The Scriptures call us to sing loudly, joyously, and boldly, not just listen to someone else sing or to sit silently while everyone else in the room praises jubilantly.
- Singing is the foundation of powerful praise.

2. Instruments

- The Bible says, “Praise Him with trumpet sound; praise Him with harp and lyre” (Ps. 150:3).
- Instruments not only add pep to our praise songs, God calls us to praise Him with instruments, sometimes even without singing.
- Following David’s anointing as king, the Lord’s presence lifted from Saul and rested upon David. In turn, an evil spirit began to torment Saul. Understanding the power of musical instruments, Saul wanted David to refresh him with his harp (1 Sam. 16:16). As David played, the evil spirit lifted from Saul, and he became well.
- Power is released when we praise God with instruments. Instrumental music softens our hearts to God’s presence. At certain times, a prophetic anointing can even fall upon the instruments, ushering the Lord’s presence into a service.
- There is power in praising God with instruments.

3. Clapping

- Clapping is an important expression of praise.
- Clapping expresses celebration, promise, and victory. The Bible says to “Clap your hands, all peoples; shout to God with the voice of joy” (Ps. 47:1).
- Several Hebrew words translated clap define clapping as a sign of a compact or agreement; an indication of satisfaction or abundance; an expression of exultation or great joy; striking an object; or sounding a trumpet.
- In several places in the Old Testament, clap is used to describe the shaking of hands or striking of hands in an agreement or compact, such as a covenant (Prov. 6:1; 17:18; 22:26). When we clap our hands in praise, we declare that God’s covenant promises will be fulfilled in our lives.
- Clapping also acknowledges that God is good, that His provision is abundant, and that we appreciate His great favor bestowed upon us. Clapping is a way of saying to God and others, “Thank you for all You are and do.”
- Clapping also conveys victory over God’s enemies. One of the Hebrew words for clap is used when Jael defeated Israel’s enemies by driving a peg into Sisera’s temple (Judges 4:21). This same word is used to describe the strong west wind that “drove” the locusts into the Red Sea (Ex 10:19). We clap as an indication of our faith in God’s victory.
- Praising God through clapping is much more than just keeping the beat of the music; it is a powerful tool of praise used to drive the enemy back and to bring forth victory.

4. Shouting

- Repeatedly, God calls us to shout. The Bible says, “Shout to God with the voice of joy” (Ps. 47:1). Just like clapping, shouting is much more than just making a loud noise.
- The shout expresses exceeding joy and great triumph. Shouting declares and activates God’s victory over His enemies.
- Perhaps you remember the story of Balaam and Balak. Balak, the king of Moab, hired Balaam to curse Israel. But Balaam could not do it. There were several reasons why, but one reason was that “the shout of a king” was among them (Num. 23:21).
- The shout of the king is the authority of the King of kings released through the shout.
- When Israel took Jericho, they shouted the walls down (Josh. 6:16). Second Chronicles 13:13-16 records another example of the shout. In a battle between Israel and Judah, the priests blew the trumpets, and the men of Judah raised a war cry (shout). In response to these shouts, God helped Judah defeat Israel.
- Shouting has a specific purpose when it is released as an act of praise. The shout is our battle cry; it declares victory over every enemy and obstacle. The shout announces God’s triumph and the fulfillment of His promises. Jesus will even return with a shout (1 Thess. 4:16). The shout releases God’s authority into a situation, activating the Lord’s victorious power.

5. Lifting of hands

- Several Scriptures command us to lift our hands in praise (Neh. 8:6; Ps. 28:2; 63:4-5; 134:2; 141:2; 1 Tim. 2:8).
- Some of the Hebrew words for praise suggest the lifting the hands.
- The lifting of our hands tells God that we yearn for Him, His presence, and His touch. When a child sees his father enter a room, he lifts his hands and runs to him. In a similar manner, when we long for the embrace of our heavenly Father, we reach out for Him.
- Lifting our hands is also a statement of victory. Just as a football player lifts his hands after a score, we lift our hands as a statement of God's victory.
- The Scriptures even speak of God waving His hands in victory on behalf of His people (Zech. 2:9-10; Is. 19:16-17).
- Lifting our hands in praise declares God's victory over our enemies, and it demonstrates our passionate love for God.

6. Standing, kneeling, bowing, and lying prostrate.

- Standing, kneeling, bowing, and lying prostrate before the Lord all express our adoration.
- Standing shows God that we respect Him.
- Standing helps us remain alert and focused and keeps us from becoming passive in our worship.
- Kneeling, bowing, and laying prostrate before the Lord express humility, submission, awe, and reverential fear of God (Ps. 95:6, Rev. 4-5).
- Standing, kneeling, bowing and lying prostrate each express outwardly our inward feeling of honor and respect for God's holiness and majesty.

7. Dancing

- God calls us to praise Him with dancing. The Bible says, "Let them praise His name with dancing; let them sing praises to Him with timbrel and lyre" (Ps. 149:3).
- Other Scriptures also record God's people praising in the dance (Ps. 30:11; Ps. 150:4; Jer. 31:4; Ex. 15:20; Luke 15:25; 1 Sam. 18:6).
- When David brought the ark back to Zion, he celebrated before God with leaping and dancing (2 Sam. 6:16).
- Several Hebrew words translated as dance convey shades of meaning, such as to twist or twirl in a circular motion, to skip about, and to leap. In the Bible, dancing is commonly associated with singing and playing musical instruments.
- Dancing is a way to celebrate our excitement about God and His goodness. When we are downcast, dancing turns our mourning into joy. Dancing demonstrates our joyful anticipation of King Jesus coming to rule the earth.
- Dancing is also a powerful act of spiritual warfare. Psalm 91 tells us that we are to tread upon the cobra and trample down the serpent. As we dance before the Lord, it is as though we dance upon the enemy's head.
- Much of the Church still considers dancing before the Lord wrong, even evil. This view is prevalent despite the Scriptures that encourage it. Nevertheless, the dance is an important aspect of praise.

- God encourages us to dance because it helps us celebrate His goodness, overcome depression, and crush the enemy.

8. Banners

- The Bible says, "We will sing for joy over your victory, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners" (Ps. 20:5).
- In the Bible, banners helped rally an army or a nation. Banners were most commonly used for military campaigns. Generally, a large flag was erected on a hill, which signaled for the blowing of war trumpets (Is. 5:26, 18:3; Jer. 4:6).
- When the Israelites fought the Amalekites at Rephidim, Moses held up his hands as a living banner, symbolizing God's victory over His enemies (Ex. 17:8-16). After the battle, Moses built an altar and called it "Jehovah-Nissi," the Lord is my banner (Ex. 17:15).
- Solomon used banners of victory to describe the beauty of his bride. He wrote, "Who is this that grows like the dawn, as beautiful as the full moon, as pure as the sun, as awesome as an army with banners?" (Song. 6:10).
- Today, banners are used as instruments of praise to express the Lord's victory. With each color and symbol, we declare an aspect of God's victorious character.
- Blue often symbolizes the heavenly realm; gold, God's glory; green, new life, prosperity, and growth; red, the blood of Jesus; silver, redemption in Christ; and white, bridal purity.
- Many times, the waving of banners in worship leads to breakthrough in circumstances and over geographic areas.
- Banners add far more than festivity to our times of praise; banners bring breakthrough against the enemy and enforce God's victory in spiritual warfare. Banners are both instruments of praise and weapons of war.

The ultimate destination of the worshiper is not the outer court of praise but the throne room of God. Nevertheless, praise is how we enter the gates of the outer court, surrender our lives on the altar of sacrifice, and build a throne for God's presence to dwell upon. Praise is the pathway to God's glorious presence.

Review Questions

True or False

- _____ 1. The reason for highlighting Judah in this session is because Judah means "praise Yahweh."
- _____ 2. Zamar, Halal, and Yadah are all Greek words that are translated praise.
- _____ 3. One reason we praise is that we draw near to God with praise and thanksgiving.
- _____ 4. One of the words translated praise means to make a fool of oneself, to rave, or to act madly.
- _____ 5. Even though instruments are important, we are never encouraged to praise with instruments.
- _____ 6. The only purpose for clapping during praise is to help keep the beat.
- _____ 7. Praise defeats God's enemies.
- _____ 8. Many Christians dance before the Lord even though the Scriptures do not encourage dancing.
- _____ 9. Praise must be expressed.

Fill in the Blanks

- 10. There are _____ Hebrew words that are translated praise.
- 11. One of the purposes of praise is that it builds a _____ for God.
- 12. Praise also defeats God's _____.
- 13. Banners help express God's _____ over His enemies.
- 14. The _____ expresses exceeding joy and triumph.
- 15. Praise releases _____.

Match the expression of praise with the appropriate purpose of that expression of praise.

- _____ 16. This expression of praise celebrates our excitement about God and His goodness, it turns our mourning into joy, and it is a powerful act of spiritual warfare.
- _____ 17. This expression of praise shows our respect and humility toward God.
- _____ 18. This expression is the foundational expression of powerful praise.
- _____ 19. This expression tells God we yearn for Him, we receive from Him, and also is a statement of victory.
- _____ 20. This expression adds a festive atmosphere to our praise but it also expresses victory over our enemies.

- a. Lifting of hands
- b. Banners
- c. Singing
- d. Dancing
- e. Standing, kneeling, and bowing

Session 8

Pressing in to God

This session covers:

- The principle of pressing in to God through worship
- The Tabernacle of Moses as model of how to press in to God
- The difference between praise and worship
- Ways to press in to God with our body, soul, and spirit

An Essential Trait for the Serious Worshiper

1. The woman with the issue of blood “pressed” in to Jesus (Mark 5:25-34).

- The gospels tell the story of a woman plagued with a hemorrhage (an issue of blood) for twelve years.
- In her desperation, she came to Jesus for healing. When she touched His garment, “The flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction.”
- This woman, so desperate and determined for a healing touch, *pressed* through the multitudes to Jesus.
- Her faith and persistence exceeded everyone else in the crowd. As a result, she was healed of her affliction.
- This story is a beautiful illustration of our need to press in to God. Those who hunger for God, and subsequently, press into Him, will experience His presence, glory, and favor at much deeper levels.

2. Every serious worshiper must learn to press in to God in worship.

- Paul talked about pressing into God as an important lifestyle trait that every believer should possess (Phil. 3:12-14).

- Paul wanted to press through every obstacle in order to know God better.
- We need to press through every hindrance and distraction that keeps us from intimacy with God.

A Journey through the Tabernacle

1. The tabernacle is no longer a literal place, but a place in the spirit.

- In a literal sense, the Tabernacle of Moses no longer exists. On this side of the cross, every believer is a part of the spiritual temple that God is building in the earth. We worship in the spirit and have an open invitation to come boldly before God's throne of grace.
- Therefore, the throne room—that part of the tabernacle we call the holy of holies—is not a literal place; it is a place in the spirit where we encounter God spirit to Spirit.
- As worshipers, we must press in to this place in the spirit. The Greek word for "press in" or "press on" means to pursue as in a footrace or to run swiftly in order to catch some person or thing.
- This phrase suggests pushing through every hindrance of body, soul, and spirit so that we can worship God in the spiritual holy of holies. This is where we encounter His glory, His love, and His blessings. This is where we hear His voice, experience fullness of joy, and are transformed.
- To get to this wonderful place, we must press through every distraction, care, worry, and obstacle that would separate us from God. Pressing in to God is well worth the effort, but it does require focus, time, and energy.
- Therefore, the Tabernacle of Moses offers an excellent pattern of how we must press through the hindrances of life into God's glorious presence.

2. The tabernacle was divided into the outer court, the holy place, and the holy of holies.

- As worshipers began their quest towards the holy of holies, they entered the outer court through the only gate of the tabernacle (Ex. 27:16).
- In the outer court, animals were sacrificed daily on the bronze altar (Ex. 28:30). Behind the altar was the bronze laver (Ex. 30:18). Here the priests washed themselves before entering the holy place. Think of the laver as a place of reflection and cleansing.
- Set apart from the outer court, the holy place contained the golden lampstand, the table of showbread, and the altar of incense (Ex. 25:30-31, 30:1). The golden lampstand, which required a constant supply of oil to emit light, is a picture of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The table of showbread symbolizes the Word of God, which is like our daily bread. The altar of incense illustrates the priestly ministry of prayer and intercession.
- The third compartment of the tabernacle was the holy of holies. The only furniture in the holy of holies was the ark of the covenant (Ex. 25:33, 26:33). Upon this ark was the mercy seat, which was composed of two golden angels facing one another. God's glorious presence rested on the mercy seat, and from the mercy seat, His presence hovered over the tabernacle like a cloud (Ex. 40:34, Lev. 16:2).

- Another name for the tabernacle was the Tent of Meeting. Here in the Tent of Meeting, worshipers would come to meet with God, to hear His voice, and to worship in His glorious presence.

3. The Tabernacle of Moses illustrates how we press in to God's presence.

- Imagine yourself standing outside the tabernacle. Your goal is to press through the activities of the tabernacle gate, the outer court, and the holy place in order to meet with God in the holy of holies.
- The journey begins with thanksgiving and praise because that is how you enter through the gate into the outer court (Ps. 100:4).
- You come to the bronze altar, and instead of sacrificing an animal, you offer a sacrifice of praise. In so doing, your life becomes a living sacrifice to God.
- Progressing onward, you come to the bronze laver. Here you allow the water of the Word of God to cleanse away the cares of the world, worries, anxieties, and fears (Eph. 5:26). As you sing the Word of God, the Holy Spirit washes away the stains upon your soul.
- You are cleansed from the influence of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Your spirit begins to arise. You come alive to God's promises and His greatness.
- However, your journey is not yet complete. You must not stop in the outer court, but continue pressing towards God's presence. Now you must enter the holy place.
- In the holy place, you encounter God in a deeper way. God touches you here with His Spirit and His word.
- Entering the holy place, your praise begins shift into worship. You begin to recognize the Holy Spirit's voice, leading, and gifts. You receive words of knowledge that give insight, words of wisdom that offer direction, and prophecies that declare the purposes and intentions of God.
- You begin to flow with the Holy Spirit as your spiritual senses are awakened at the lampstand. Then, as you worship at the table of showbread, you begin to feast upon Jesus—the Bread of Life. His words, His love, His ministry, and His faithfulness come alive.
- Satisfied with Christ, your desires for the world fade away. Still in the holy place, you minister at golden altar of incense. Here you begin to pray and intercede for God's purposes to be fulfilled in the earth.
- You have pressed deeper into God's presence and are no longer praising—you are worshipping.
- Nevertheless, there is another place where you must go. Few go there and even fewer remain—this place is the holy of holies.
- In the holy of holies, there is no unnecessary activity. No distractions. No works of the flesh. No defilement. Here you look upon the ark of God's presence through the torn veil. Here His glory dwells, and His touch transforms.
- Here you minister to the Lord and touch the invisible throne of God. In the holy of holies, you meet with God face to face.
- In the holy of holies, we no longer ask for or desire anything except more of Him. We see who He truly is, and we declare His worth.
- Like the woman with the issue of blood, reaching this place in the spirit is worth every effort of pressing in to God.

The Difference between Praise and Worship

As we press into God, our spirit-man grows stronger than the natural drives of our body and the impulses of our soul. As a result, we move into real worship. This section will help us understand how to move from praise to worship.

1. It is difficult to distinguish between praise and worship.

- Many people say that praise declares who God is whereas worship responds to who God is.
- This is a good starting point, but the Scriptures are not that cut and dry. Typically, what we think of as worship, the Bible calls praise, and what we think of as praise, the Bible often calls worship.

2. Praise takes on a different character from worship.

- Drawing heavily from Bob Sorge's explanation in his book, *Exploring Worship*, several differences are as follows.
- Praise can be distant, but worship is intimate. When we praise, we may not feel close to God. We declare God's greatness with emotion and energy, but still feel distant. In contrast, we normally feel the presence of God when we worship. We may even sing the same worship song, but something has changed; we have progressed from the outer court into the throne room of God.
- Praise is always seen or heard, but worship is not always evident to an observer. Typically, praise is loud and demonstrative. Vibrant praise may include clapping, shouting, dancing, or banners. Worship, on the other hand, is usually quiet, soft, and peaceful. Though worship can be loud and powerful, there is often little outward expression.
- Praise is often directed toward others, while worship is normally directed toward God. Although praise can be directed toward God, it often declares God's greatness to others, to our own flesh, and even to the demonic realm. Worship, however, is always directed to God. Whether loudly or softly, worship expresses *to God* how much we love and adore Him. In real times of worship, we do not concern ourselves with others. We focus on God, direct our attention to God, and express our adoration to Him alone.
- Praise is typically faster, accompanied by driving songs with a strong beat whereas worship is often a slower, softer sound. Shouts, clapping, and banners usually accompany praise whereas worship is more simple. In intimate times of worship, less is usually more—less sound, less instrumentation, and less of the externals add to a greater worship experience.

3. Worship moves us from the flesh to the spirit.

- Since we commune with God at a spirit to spirit level, our spirit-man must grow stronger than the natural drives of our body and the inward impulses of our soul.

- Remember: Jesus said that true worshipers will worship Him in *spirit*.
- When we press into God, our spirit-man is strengthened and our flesh is subdued. We are then in the spirit, ready to worship God.
- With this background, in the next section we will discover practical ways to move from the flesh to the spirit.

Pressing In With Our Body, Soul, and Spirit

1. Each of us have a body, a soul, and a spirit.

- Every believer in Jesus Christ is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19).
- Our temple is made up of three basic parts—body, soul, and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23).
- We are spirit, we have a soul, and we live in a body.
- With our body, we interact with the world around us. We talk, walk, and experience life through our five senses.
- With our soul—which is our mind, will, and emotions—we think, choose, and feel. Our mind is our intellect, the place where we reason, calculate, and reach logical conclusions. Our will is our chooser. With it, we decide whether to obey God or do our own thing. Our emotions are our feelings.
- With our spirit we commune with God. “The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD, searching all the innermost parts of his being” (Prov. 20:27). Furthermore, Paul said, “The one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him” (1 Cor 6:17).
- Just as the journey through the tabernacle illustrates pressing in to God, we must learn to worship with the whole man—body, soul, and spirit. The scripture calls on us to praise and worship the Lord with our whole man (Ps. 103:1-5).
- As we do so, we press toward God’s throne, and our spirit-man arises above the cravings of our body and the dictates of our soul. As a result, we encounter God’s wonderful presence.

2. We must press in to God with our body.

- Through our body, we interact with the world around us.
- Our bodies are made of flesh and bones along with cravings and desires.
- Our bodily desires drive us to nourish ourselves with food, get the sleep we need, and seek pleasure in life.
- At times, our cravings take control of us. We want things that are sinful or harmful. Or we desire good things at the wrong time.
- Praising with our body helps to silence our cravings.
- Clapping, singing loudly, standing, waving banners, dancing, or shouting redirect the desires of the body from the natural world to the Lord.

3. We must press in to God with our mind.

- Often during times of worship, our minds drift towards other things. We think about everything but God.
- To press into God in worship, we have to keep our mind focused upon the Lord.

- We must intentionally direct our thoughts upon God, our love for Him, and our desire to meet with Him in worship.
- One night during a storm, Jesus was walking on the water towards His disciples. When Peter recognized the Lord, he asked if he could come to Jesus. Of course, Jesus said come. As Peter began walking on the water, he kept his eyes focused upon Jesus, and he stayed afloat. As soon as Peter was distracted by the wind, however, he sank (Matt. 14:22-33).
- In a similar manner, as we press in to God in worship, we must keep our mind focused upon God, His character, and His works.
- If we become distracted and lose our focus, our journey toward the throne room is hindered. To press in to God, we must resist every distraction and remain focused upon Him.

4. We must also press in to God with our will.

- Our will is our chooser. With it, we make choices. When thoughts race into our minds, we choose what we act upon.
- You might get to church and think, "I really don't like today's song list." Or, "I stayed up too late last night. I am just too tired to worship." Perhaps someone offended you right before church started. These, along with many more issues, create complacency during worship.
- With our will, we decide whether to be complacent or determined.
- To press in to God, we must be determined. We must choose to press in. We can choose to overcome every obstacle that comes our way.
- Those who decide not to press in because something wasn't just right will remain in the outer court.
- We must be determined to press in to God if we want to experience intimate times with God behind the veil.

5. We must press in to God in spite of our emotions and with our emotions.

- Our emotions express our feelings. We might feel happy, excited, discouraged, angry, or fearful.
- When we are excited or happy, it is easy to release our emotions in worship. When we are sad, depressed, angry, or fearful, however, it is not so easy.
- We cannot allow our feelings to dictate whether we press in to God.
- Paul and Silas were cast into prison. They were beaten with rods, and their feet were placed in stocks. The Bible says, "About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them" (Acts 16:25).
- Surely, they did not feel like praising.
- Nonetheless, they responded by praising God. To press in to God, we must learn to praise in our joy and in our discouragement.
- Not only do we praise in spite of our emotions, we also praise with our emotions.
- Jesus said that the first commandment was to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.
- Worship is one significant way to express our love. To love God with our entire being, therefore, we must worship Him with our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

- To press in to God, we must put all of our emotions into worship. For some, this will result in visible expressions of praise. For others, this will be more subdued. In either case, releasing our emotions in worship helps us move closer to the throne of God.

6. As we press in with our body, mind, will, and emotions, our spirit awakens to worship.

- Worship begins when our spirit rises above the cravings of the senses, the distractions of the mind, the complacency of the will, and the flightiness of the emotions.
- When our spirit is strong, our faith, expectancy, and love for God are strong.
- Our spirit is alert to God's presence. We hear God's voice and respond with words of love.
- We are now worshiping in spirit and in truth.
- In response, God fills our hearts with His presence, and we encounter His glory, beauty, and majesty.

The Bible says, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (James 4:8). As we press in to God in worship, God will fulfill His promise and draw near to us. The Old Testament priests are a good example of those who draw near to God. They ministered to the Lord and to the people. They kept the fire burning in the lampstand and brought fire to the altar of incense. As the priests of old, let's draw near to God by pressing through everything that would hinder our ministry to Him. As those who earnestly desire His presence, let us press in to God.

Review Questions

True or False

- _____ 1. Every serious worshiper must learn to press in to God in worship.
- _____ 2. The Tabernacle of Moses still exists on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.
- _____ 3. The Tabernacle of Moses can illustrate how to press in to God.
- _____ 4. The story of the woman with the issue of blood demonstrates how pressing in to God brings us into the presence of God.
- _____ 5. Pressing in to God refers more to moving through a crowd of people than pressing through the issues of our body, soul, and spirit.
- _____ 6. Worship takes on a different character than praise.
- _____ 7. As we press in to God, our natural man grows stronger than our spirit man so that as our natural man rises above our spirit man, we move into real worship.
- _____ 8. True worship begins to take place when our spirit man begins to truly commune with God.

Fill in the Blanks

9. According to 1 Thessalonians 5:23, men and women are comprised of three parts: _____, _____, and _____.
10. Most people would say that a man's soul is comprised of his _____, _____, and _____.
11. Mark 5:30-31, which is an important passage of scripture for this session. It reads, "Immediately Jesus, perceiving in Himself that the power proceeding from Him had gone forth, turned around in the crowd and said, 'Who touched My garments?' And His disciples said to Him, 'You see the crowd _____ in on You, and You say, "Who touched Me?"'"
12. The Tabernacle of Moses is divided into three compartments: the _____, the _____, and the _____ of _____.

13. In comparing the Tabernacle of Moses to the composition of man, the outer court relates to our _____, the Holy Place relates to our _____, and the Holy of Holies relates to our _____.

14. In understanding the difference between praise and worship, praise can be distant, but worship is _____; praise is always _____ or _____ but worship is not always evident.

15. Praise can be directed toward others whereas worship is almost always directed toward _____.

Match the appropriate part of our body, soul, and spirit to the way we press in with that aspect of our body, soul, and spirit.

- _____ 16. To press in with this part of our being, we must overcome the cravings of our flesh through celebration and praise.
- _____ 17. To press in with this part of our being, we focus our thoughts upon God.
- _____ 18. To press in with this part of our being, we must worship with this aspect of our nature and in spite of this aspect of our nature.
- _____ 19. To press in with this part of our being, we must make a choice or be determined to press in to God.
- _____ 20. As we do the above actions, this part of our being awakens and arises to commune with God.

- | |
|-------------|
| a. Spirit |
| b. Mind |
| c. Body |
| d. Emotions |
| e. Will |

Session 9

Going Deeper

This session covers:

- The call to go deeper in worship
- How to go deeper in worship
- A detailed look at the new song, the spiritual song, the prophetic song, and songs that minister to the Lord

Going Deeper in Worship

1. From the heavenly throne room, there is a cry for us to go deeper in worship.

- Deep is calling unto deep (Ps. 42:7).
- God wants to bring us deeper into His presence and awaken dormant desires within us.
- God's prophetic cry is for the deepest place in our heart to connect with the deepest place in His heart.
- Quite possibly, this call is the most urgent invitation of the hour.

2. There are four types of songs that help us go deeper.

- In the quest to go deeper, many have discovered certain practices that have enhanced worship.
- One of these practices is to add four types of songs to the normal pattern of worship.
- These include new songs, spiritual songs, prophetic songs, and songs that minister directly to the Lord.
- By blending these songs with the other principles already discussed, we can experience God in a deeper way.

New Songs

1. Throughout Scripture, God calls His people to sing a new song.

- In nine different Scriptures, God emphasizes singing a new song. One example is Psalm 33:3, which states, “Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully with a shout of joy.”
- David enjoyed singing new songs (Ps. 144:9). In fact, David escaped from the pit of destruction by singing a new song (Ps. 40:3).
- In other places, God commands us to sing new songs (Ps. 33:3, 96:1, 98:1, 149:1; Is. 42:10).
- In the heavenly throne room, the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures sang a new song (Rev. 5:9). Moreover, the 144,000, purchased as first fruits from the earth, sang a new song (Rev. 14:3).
- Because God is creative, He always does new things (Is. 42:9). For each new thing, God calls for a new song (Is. 42:9-10).

2. Singing new songs increases the anointing during times of worship.

- Singing new songs on a regular basis—perhaps more than any other practice—deepens worship.
- We can sing new songs that we have written and new songs that others have just released. We can also sing older songs that have been released for awhile, but are new to us. Either way, new songs keep the worship fresh.
- If we could measure the anointing during worship, it would most likely show that our most anointed times are when we sing new songs.
- The first few times we sing a new song, a fresh anointing is activated. Following this, the anointing intensifies with each singing. After a few months of regular singing, however, the song’s anointing peaks and then declines. A while later, the song that everybody once enjoyed becomes stale—almost impossible to bear.
- Once a song’s anointing reaches this point, put it away for a season. Later, if you intersperse it with other new songs, the anointing might return, but rarely to the initial level.
- Please do not underestimate this simple point: Fresh songs usher in the presence of God.

3. New songs accomplish several important purposes.

- New songs express God’s cutting-edge sound and message to the Church. Throughout church history, God has released prophetic sounds and messages through new songs. Today’s worship sounds vastly different from the Gregorian Chants, the hymns of Charles Wesley, or even the choruses of the Charismatic Renewal. Even with the new waves of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements of the 1990s and the new millennium, the sounds have changed dramatically.
- Newer songs tend to be more vertical than horizontal, exalting God directly rather than praising Him indirectly. Moreover, newer songs are inclined toward intimate themes of God’s love, holiness, and worth.

- New songs express the unique vision, message, and purpose of a local church. Some churches are slanted more towards evangelism, some more to discipleship, and others to intercession. Worship songs express the specific vision of the local house of God. Worship speaks the now message of the individual congregation.
- Regularly learning new songs is essential to staying fresh, prophetic, and on the cutting-edge of the modern-day worship movement.

Spiritual Songs

1. Spiritual songs emanate from the Spirit of God and help worshipers sing their unique song to the Lord simultaneously with others.

- Paul said, “Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and *spiritual songs*, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:18-19).
- Spiritual songs are spontaneous songs of the moment that arise from our spirit unto the Lord.
- The spiritual song is sung either in our native language or in tongues (1 Cor. 14:15).
- The spiritual song greatly enhances worship and is a beautiful way to exalt the Lord.

2. We sing spiritual songs when we sense the leading of the Holy Spirit to do so.

- After finishing an anointed song, worshipers often sense the Spirit leading them into singing a spiritual song. Usually, people begin softly, but as the Holy Spirit leads, the song builds in intensity and strength.
- Often, the song peaks then subsides. Much like an ocean wave, it feels like waves of God’s Spirit moving in the midst of worship.
- When a group of people spontaneously moves into free worship—each uniquely expressing their love, thanksgiving, and adoration—the room resonates with majestic sounds as if heaven has come to earth.

3. There are great benefits to singing spiritual songs.

- Spiritual songs help us breakthrough. Singing spiritual songs, especially in tongues, overcomes spiritual hindrances in worship. Spiritual songs help breakthrough invisible ceilings that hinder meeting with God.
- Spiritual songs grab the attention of every worshiper in the room. During the preceding chorus, if some were not fully engaged, the spiritual song helps to awaken them and refocus their heart in worship.
- It is as though God Himself has joined the worship experience. No longer do worshipers perceive that they are just singing songs. Everyone is alert because they become aware that God is present.

4. How to move into the spiritual song.

- To move into the spiritual song, first try to sense the Holy Spirit’s direction.

- Then you can either hold a single chord, repeat a single chord, or vamp.
- The dictionary defines vamping as an improvised accompaniment consisting of simple chords in succession.
- Once the background music has been set, the worship leader can begin to worship in their own words or in tongues. Then the congregation joins in with their own words or in tongues. As worship begins to arise, the Holy Spirit takes control and directs the spontaneous worship as He desires.
- Be led of the Holy Spirit and make room in times of worship for spiritual songs. Draw upon the spiritual song to enhance your times of worship and to help you go deeper into God's presence.

The Prophetic Song

1. The prophetic song adds a rich dimension to our worship experience.

- A prophetic song is a form of the spiritual song and is defined as a divine utterance sung to the Lord or to believers.
- The prophetic song has a rich history in Israel, especially in David's Tabernacle. The prophetic song was used regularly in the Tabernacle of David. David set apart musicians "to prophesy with lyres, harps and cymbals" and singers who "prophesied in giving thanks and praising the Lord" (1 Chron. 25:1-3).
- The singers praised "according to the words of God" and they "sang [prophetically] in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, harps and lyres" (1 Chron. 25:5-6, emphasis mine).
- Many believe that a large number of the Psalms were birthed as prophetic songs in the Tabernacle of David.
- As God has restored the office of the prophet back to the Church, the Church has become prophetic. In turn, the prophetic song has once again become prominent and is available to all who desire it.

2. Three benefits to the prophetic song.

- First, the prophetic song brings breakthrough. There are many times when we are going nowhere in worship. It is as though God doesn't even hear us. In times like these, the prophetic song usually breaks through the lethargy of the people and the spiritual opposition keeping us from God's presence.
- Second, the prophetic song provides a now element to worship. Just as prophecy brings in a now word, the prophetic song puts the now word to music. The prophetic song may express the Father's heart toward His children, the Bridegroom's heart toward His Bride, or our heart toward God. Many times, prophetic songs convey love, worship, and adoration. At other times, the prophetic song exhorts in faith or guides with wisdom and discernment. When we worship with the prophetic song, we express the words and the mood desired by the Holy Spirit for that particular meeting.
- Third, the prophetic song remains with us. Rather than just sharing a prophetic word, singing a prophetic utterance repeatedly for several minutes writes the message upon our hearts. When someone prophesies, people may hear it, but the message may not have a lasting impression. On the other hand, singing prophetically makes the prophetic word easier to remember.

3. How to initiate the prophetic song.

- We sing prophetic songs in the same way that we sing spiritual songs with one exception. Rather than everyone in the room singing spontaneously, a member of the worship team begins to sing a phrase that the Holy Spirit has impressed upon them.
- In contrast to the spiritual song, the prophetic song begins with one person singing while everyone else listens. As the prophetic song goes forth, the Lord will often add to it. Then the entire congregation joins in and sings the Spirit-inspired song.
- Do not worry about the melody or the beat. The Holy Spirit will lead you.
- The words are more important because God is speaking. If possible, keep the song simple. If the song has a simple melody and simple words, it is easier for the congregation to join in with the worship team.
- Singing choruses and hymns written by others is great. But the prophetic song takes us to a level that singing previously published songs usually cannot take us.

Songs That Minister Directly to the Lord

1. Inner court songs minister to the Lord more than other types of songs.

- The words we sing determine whether or not we minister directly to the Lord.
- Acts 13:2 shows the Antioch Church—which depicts the Church under construction in this generation—*ministering to the Lord*.
- In Ezekiel 44, the Lord describes worshipers that will “come near to Me to minister to Me” (Ezek. 44:15).
- Reading through Ezekiel 44, two types of ministry are highlighted: Ministry to the people in the outer court and ministry to the Lord in the inner court.
- From these passages, we see that ministry to the Lord, which only takes place in the inner court, is what blesses God’s heart the most.

2. The words of inner court songs focus directly on the Lord.

- As worshipers minister to the Lord in the heavenly throne room, the words are all about God and God alone (Rev. 4-5).
- The worship songs center on God’s holiness, worth, majesty, power, might, and works. Words like “holy, holy, holy is the Lord God the Almighty” and “worthy is the Lamb who was slain” fill the heavenly throne room (Rev. 4:8, 11; 5:9-10, 12-13; 7:10, 12-13; 15:3-4; 19:1-2, 6).
- Heavenly worship is ministry to the Lord motivated by His holiness, worth, righteousness, and justice. Heavenly worship has very little to do with man and everything to do with God.
- Our worship is often different. Many times we focus on songs with a certain beat, tempo, or mood. Often, our worship centers on our surrender, our destiny, and even our weaknesses.
- Frequently, we sing about God rather than to God. The highest form of ministry to the Lord, however, uses words that express to God His greatness and His worth.

3. The words of inner court songs differ from the words we sing in the outer court.

- Using the Tabernacle of Moses, let's analyze our lyrics as we progress toward the holy of holies. As we praise our way into the tabernacle, our words naturally focus upon God's acts. Whether we sing of our destiny and purpose, God's healing, His provision, or His victory in our lives, our words revolve around us.
- As we progress into the outer court, we come to the altar of sacrifice and the laver. This is the place of surrender, death to self, and cleansing. Outer court worship, therefore, revolves around these themes. Words such as "I surrender all to You, Lord," "I present myself as a living sacrifice," "Cleanse my hands and my heart," or "Wash me with Your word" fill our mouths. Though songs with these types of words make excellent worship songs, there is a deeper place.
- As we enter the holy place, we see the lampstand, the table of showbread, and the altar of incense. This is where we encounter the Holy Spirit, feast upon the Word of God, and engage in prayer and intercession. We worship with words such as "Holy Spirit, come," "Open my eyes that I might see You," "Your word is a lamp to my feet," "I need you Lord, Jesus," "I worship You," and "I ask for the nations." All of these are significant worship themes, but are still not the same words used in the heavenly throne room.
- Entering the holy of holies, our words change again. We worship with words such as "Holy, holy, holy are You," "Worthy are You to receive all honor and glory," "Your ways are good and righteous," and "Your judgments are true."
- Our attention shifts from the Lord's works to the Lord's worth. Our thoughts move from surrender, sanctification, and submission to His greatness, beauty, holiness, and righteousness.

4. The words of inner court songs express the deep longings of our heart.

- In outer court worship, I sing of my surrender to God. I sing words like "I surrender all to You." In the inner court, I am so captivated by God that all I can do is surrender. In outer court worship, I ask God for cleansing and purity. I sing words such as "purify my heart, O God." In inner court worship, I am so consumed with God's holiness that my heart longs to be pure.
- In the outer court, I cry out for the Holy Spirit to come. In the inner court, He has come, and I worship in His presence.
- The differences are subtle, but critical if we want to go deeper into God's presence. Often, we select songs because we like the beat and the rhythm without considering the words. The songs we select should have a fresh sound and have words that take us deeper into the holy of holies.

Adding these four types of songs to your worship experience will enhance your worship. Pay close attention to them and develop your skills in using them. Sing to the Lord new songs. Cultivate your skills in singing spiritual songs. Step out in faith to sing prophetically. Select songs that exalt God directly. As you do this on a regular basis, you will go much deeper.

Review Questions

True or False

- _____ 1. In this generation, there is a cry coming from the heavenly throne room to go deeper in worship.
- _____ 2. Spiritual songs are a very important aspect of going deeper in worship but we cannot find a reference to them in the Scriptures.
- _____ 3. The prophetic song is defined as a divine utterance sung either to the Lord or to others.
- _____ 4. All types of Christian songs minister to the Lord equally.
- _____ 5. The words of inner court songs differ from the words we sing in the outer court.
- _____ 6. Revelation 2 and 3 depicts the heavenly throne room and records the words to songs that minister directly to the Lord.
- _____ 7. Spiritual songs can be sung either in our native language or in tongues.
- _____ 8. God prefers “the old favorite” songs to new songs.
- _____ 9. Session 9 addresses four types of songs that help us go deeper in worship.

Fill in the Blanks

10. Songs that minister directly to the Lord most often contain words that focus directly on the _____.
11. Three benefits to the prophetic song are: 1) prophetic songs bring _____, 2) prophetic songs bring a _____ to worship, 3) prophetic songs _____ with us.
12. Two benefits to the spiritual song are: 1) spiritual songs bring _____ and 2) they grab the _____ of every worshiper in the room.
13. Singing new songs increases the _____ during times of worship.
14. The words of the inner court songs express the _____ of our heart.

15. Spiritual songs emanate from the Spirit of God and help worshipers sing their _____ song to the Lord simultaneously with others.

Match the following Scriptures with the appropriate statement.

_____ 16. Describes that the spiritual song can be sung either in our native language or in tongues.

_____ 17. Best place to find the words to songs that are sung in the heavenly throne room.

_____ 18. Records God's exhortation to sing a new song.

_____ 19. Place where the prophetic song is described.

_____ 20. Place in Scripture where the spiritual song is identified as a form of release of the Holy Spirit.

a. 1 Chronicles 25:1-3, 5-6

b. Revelation Chapters 4-5

c. Ephesians 5:18-19

d. 1 Corinthians 14:15

e. Psalm 33:3

Session 10

The Worshiping Warrior

This session covers:

- Worship as a weapon in spiritual warfare
- Biblical examples that combine worship and warfare
- Four ways to ascend in worship and descend in war

Uniting Worship with Warfare

1. God is integrating worship with spiritual warfare to advance His kingdom.

- Most people would not connect worship and spiritual warfare. We worship to honor and enjoy God, and we enter spiritual warfare either as a defensive measure for protection or as an offensive action to advance the kingdom of God.
- In our day, God is doing a “new thing” as He unites worship and warfare.
- God is calling us to ascend in worship and descend for war.
- When we ascended in worship, we receive prophetic strategies and are clothed with spiritual authority. When we descended for war, we have greater power to advance the kingdom of God in the earth.
- This session examines four practical ways that God is using worship as a weapon in spiritual warfare to advance the kingdom of God.

2. The joining of worship and warfare depends upon prophetic revelation and apostolic authority.

- Modern-day prophets and apostles are essential to the joining of worship and warfare.

- Paul said the Church is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone” (Eph. 2:20). The restored end-time Church will be built upon the same foundation.
- Most are familiar with the prophet. Prophets hear the voice of God, bring prophetic strategy to the Church, speak forth God’s word with power, and equip others to know God’s voice.
- Since the restoration of the apostle is a more recent work, we might not be as familiar with the function of an apostle. The Greek word for apostle means one sent with orders, a messenger, a delegate, or a sent one.
- Paul is a good example of a “sent one.” The Holy Spirit sent him to the Gentile world to bring a new thing called Christianity. As he went, Paul evangelized, preached, and taught. His *apostolic task*, however, was to *breakdown* ancient traditions, to *breakthrough* demonic opposition, to *birth* the New Testament Church, and to *build* up the Church so that it would prosper and multiply.
- Paul’s task was similar to Jeremiah’s: “I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant” (Jer. 1:10).
- The apostles in the early church operated in great power and authority. As they traveled the earth, they challenged demonic rulers over cities and nations—breaking through ancient strongholds.
- Modern-day apostles have the same responsibility to breakdown, breakthrough, birth, and build. The Holy Spirit sends apostles and apostolic teams to cities and nations as repairers of the breach. They break down traditions and breakthrough demonic opposition. Then they birth new wineskins of biblical truth and build the last day Church in a geographic area.
- Once again, God is using the apostolic and prophetic Church to bring breakthrough.
- The joining of worship and warfare depends upon prophetic revelation and apostolic authority.
- Prophets and apostles are equipping the Church to become worshiping warriors who ascend in worship and descend in war.
- When we ascend to the throne room, we are clothed with prophetic strategy and apostolic authority; then, when we descend in war, we have the power and the tools to breakthrough all demonic resistance.

Ascending in Worship, Descending in War

1. The battle for Jericho illustrates the integration of worship and warfare.

- The idea of ascending in worship and then descending in warfare is not a new concept. It is God’s pattern throughout Scripture.
- In the story of Jericho, Joshua led the sons of Israel across the Jordan to take their inheritance. Led by the priests, the people marched around the city for six days in silence. On the seventh day, the priests blew the trumpets, and the people shouted. The walls came down, and Israel captured Jericho.
- Led by God, the *people* brought down Jericho’s impenetrable walls with a march, a trumpet blast, and a shout.

- The role that worship played is detailed in the five chapters preceding the battle of Jericho. For example, they consecrated themselves (Josh. 3:5), they established a memorial to commemorate crossing the Jordan (Josh. 4:7), and they reaffirmed their covenant relationship with God (Josh. 5:2-9). More directly, when Joshua encountered the Captain of the Hosts before going to battle at Jericho, he “fell on his face to the earth and worshiped” (Josh. 5:14, NKJV).
- The victory at Jericho was a result of God’s people worshiping prior to warring. As Israel enthroned God in worship, the Captain of the Hosts released His awesome power, and the walls of Jericho came crashing down.

2. Jehoshaphat’s army used worship to defeat their enemies.

- When Moab and Ammon attacked Judah, Jehoshaphat sent worshipers before the army. As they praised and thanked God, the Lord fought their battle and routed their enemy (2 Chron. 20:21-25).
- Again, we see God’s people worshiping prior to warring. The Bible says, “Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the Lord, worshiping the Lord” (2 Chron. 20:18).
- As they ascended in worship, God gave them divine strategy and authority. They then descended to watch God deliver them from their enemies (2 Chron. 20:15-17).
- Once again, the victory was won by worshiping warriors who ascended in worship and descended for war.

3. The Tabernacle of David also illustrates worship as a weapon in spiritual warfare.

- After David brought the ark back to Zion, he “appointed some of the Levites as ministers before the ark of the Lord, even to celebrate and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel” (1 Chron. 16:4).
- As continuous worship arose to God, the Lord defeated Israel’s longstanding enemies, such as the Philistines, Moab, Edom, Ammon, and Amalek.
- Through worship, David extended his rule to the Euphrates River (1 Chron. 18:1-4, 11).
- Israel worshiped and God warred on their behalf expanding their land and advancing His kingdom.

4. God employs this same strategy today.

- God is once again at war with His enemies. As partakers of the New Covenant, we no longer war against flesh and blood, but against “the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12).
- Our warfare is spiritual. We fight against the demonic powers that attack our families, friends, leaders, and ourselves. We also war in the spirit for cities and nations. Just as Joshua warred with the inhabitants of Jericho, we must war with the demonic rulers and principalities that govern our cities so that the Kingdom of God can advance.

- In this dramatic conclusion to history, we will be far more than spectators—we will be participators. The overcoming Church will restrain the spirit of anti-christ and go to war on behalf of the Kingdom of God.
- How will this work? In the same way we have already seen. We will ascend in worship and descend in war.
- The Book of Revelation gives us a brief, but powerful glimpse at this soon coming end-time drama.
- Revelation 18:20 declares, “Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her.” The American Standard Version translates this last phrase as “God hath judged your judgment on her.” At the end of the age, God will destroy Babylon in response to our judgment of her.
- Another example is found in Revelation 8:1-5. In this passage, the prayers of the saints move the angels to release judgments to the earth. In fact, most of the events in the Book of Revelation are activated by the prayers of the saints.
- Not only is prayer instrumental in the last days, but worship is as well. In contrast to the terror of the great tribulation, we see worship taking place in heaven. The four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, the angels, and the saints are all consumed with worshiping the Lord (Rev. 4:8-5:14; 7:9-17; 14:1-5). Reading through Revelation, we see worship surrounding God’s judgment on sin and His activation of other end-time events.
- For example, when Jesus breaks the scrolls to initiate end-time judgments, we see the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders falling before the Lord in worship (Rev. 5:6-8). They are each holding a harp and a bowl—depicting worship and prayer.
- In the midst of worship and prayer, God releases end-time events to earth.

Four Ways to Ascend in Worship and Descend in Warfare

1. Begin to worship with a kingdom perspective.

- Most people worship because they love God and because worship allows them to experience God’s presence. Though we still worship for these same reasons, God is expanding our perspective. God is empowering worship with a kingdom perspective.
- God is desiring that we know that our worship is *changing* our cities, nation, and the nations of the earth.
- Not only does worship prepare the way for the pastor’s message or for ministering in the gifts of the Spirit; it also brings God’s kingdom into the earth.
- Just as God graced the early Church with the authority to advance His Kingdom, He is giving us authority to open the heavens over cities, regions, and nations. Worship is one of the primary ways that God is doing this.
- With the emergence of the apostolic and the prophetic Church, God is releasing greater prophetic strategy and increased apostolic authority. God gives us these wonderful gifts for one reason—to bring His kingdom from heaven to earth.
- When we worship with a kingdom mindset, we become agents of change. Our worship brings God’s Kingdom from heaven to earth—changing circumstances in the Church, our government, or the world.

- For example, out of worship, we might pray for an issue facing our nation. Or perhaps our worship becomes a heartfelt cry for the Bridegroom to come. Maybe our worship shifts to declaring God's word over our city or to prophesying God's future plans.
- Our worship opens the heavens and changes the earth through praises, prayers, declarations, and prophecies.
- Embracing a kingdom mindset in worship will change the types of prophetic words you receive. In the past, prophetic words were usually just for the people in the room. With a kingdom mindset, God frequently releases prophetic words that bring breakthrough beyond the walls of the Church.
- Since the true prophetic word releases impartation into the spirit realm, it changes circumstances in the earth.
- God is awakening His Church worldwide to worship with a kingdom perspective so that His glory may fill the earth.

2. Join worship with intercessory prayer.

- Throughout the ages, worship has been an integral component of prayer.
- One Hebrew word for prayer, *tephillah* (tef-il-law'), means intercession, supplication, and by implication, a hymn. God used this word when He said, "My house will be called a house of *prayer* for all the peoples" (Is. 56:7). David also used this word when he concluded his book of worship songs. He wrote, "The *prayers* of David the son of Jesse are ended" (Ps. 72:20).
- Worship is intermingled in the definition of prayer.
- The dictionary defines intercede as acting between two parties with a view to reconcile or to mediate on behalf of others.
- The Greek word translated intercession means to make entreaty on behalf of others (1 Tim. 2:1-2, NKJV).
- For many, intercession does not involve worship. Whenever a church meets for intercessory prayer, we might sing a couple of worship songs, share needs, and then pray. For the most part, our prayers focus on the lost, the sick, and people with family or financial needs.
- In recent years, God has changed the Church's entire approach to intercessory prayer. God has given many a burden to pray for cities and nations, key leaders in authority, the end-time harvest, and the Church worldwide.
- God has also incorporated worship as an integral component of prayer.
- Many have discovered a fresh approach to integrating worship and prayer. For example, God has used the International House of Prayer (IHOP) in Kansas City, Missouri to teach many how to blend worship with prayer.
- The Kansas City prayer model is based upon Revelation 5:8, which depicts the elders holding a harp in one hand and a bowl in the other. Known as Harp and Bowl Prayer, IHOP teams shift between times of worship and times of prayer. They worship for a while and then pray. Following brief periods of prayer, the worship team sings spiritual or prophetic songs. After a period of spontaneous worship, the prayer leader directs the group back to prayer and then on to more worship. Each session varies considerably, but all of the two-hour prayer sessions have one common element—the commingling of worship with prayer.

- Churches that want to adopt the Harp and Bowl prayer model should customize it to fit their own philosophy of ministry and the gifting of their people. Nevertheless, many have discovered that mixing worship and prayer is a powerful way to pray beyond the walls of the Church.
- Worship adds an indispensable component to intercessory prayer. Worship tenderizes our hearts and awakens our spirits—empowering us to pray with much greater intensity over a longer period of time.
- Worship also attunes our ear to God’s voice so that we hear His strategies for prayer. Furthermore, worship makes room for the prophetic song, which is a powerful tool that enables everyone to sing God-inspired prayers in unity, creating a much higher level of agreement.
- Combining worship and prayer also maintains energy in the prayer meeting. When one person after another prays lengthy prayers, many drift away mentally. As this happens, the spiritual energy dissipates and our prayers lose effectiveness. By worshipping in our prayer meetings, we stay awake and maintain the spiritual energy required for effective prayer.

3. Worship prior to warfare.

- Throughout the Bible, we see God’s people worshipping to gain strength, courage, direction, and authority prior to battle. As we ascend in worship, we receive prophetic revelation that equips us to wage an effective spiritual war.
- Increasingly, God is empowering His Church to ascend in worship, gain prophetic insight from our times of worship, and then pray our revelation until we sense a release. As we sense the Holy Spirit leading, we shift from praying to saying.
- Our prophetic declarations become powerful trumpets in the heavenlies that break down walls and open the heavens for God’s purposes to be fulfilled.
- After we have prayed through an issue for a city or a nation, we can transition to Spirit-led declarations, proclamations, or decrees.
- Declare means to make known clearly and emphatically.
- Proclaim means to publicly declare or announce in a solemn, official, or formal way. Typically, a proclamation is insistent, proud, or defiant. Proclaim also carries the meaning of praising or glorifying openly.
- A decree is an order usually having the force of law, or it is a judicial decision on a matter.
- God has empowered the twenty-first century Church to declare, proclaim, and decree. In Ephesians 3:10, Paul teaches that the Church is to declare so that “the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.”
- Every song of praise that we sing and every word of Scripture that we speak declares the wisdom of God into heavenly places.
- At times, the Holy Spirit will lead to a more formal time of proclamation against the enemy, where we proclaim the written judgments of God. Psalm 149 says that the high praises of God are in our mouth and a two-edged sword is in our hands to “execute the judgments written.”
- After we have prayed through an issue for a city or a nation, we transition to Spirit-led declarations, proclamations, or decrees.

- Periodically, the Lord leads the Church to strategic locations for prayer assignments—high places where the enemy has an entrenched stronghold. As He leads, God commissions the Church to bind the powers of darkness and to open the heavens for the gospel. Whereas the Church once tried to pull down strongholds by directly addressing them, the Lord is now leading the Church to proclaim God’s written judgments over the assigned areas. As a result, the Church is releasing God’s power and breaking through demonic strongholds.

4. Worship as warfare.

- Not only does worship precede warfare, worship is warfare.
- When we worship with a kingdom mindset, our faith is activated and the heavens open. Let us not minimize what takes place when we worship. Our praises build a throne for God’s presence, and His presence always defeats the enemy.
- During the days of Eli, the Philistines defeated Israel and took the ark of the covenant to Dagon’s temple—their chief demonic god. When the ark rested in this temple, the Lord’s presence caused Dagon to fall over and break apart. At the same time, in every Philistine city where the ark was transported, the people were infected with tumors, and the city was filled confusion. As you would expect, the Philistines finally sent the ark back to Israel (1 Sam. 5:1-6:21).
- In this example, Israel did not have to sound the trumpet, shout, play an instrument, or even fight. In fact, the sons of Israel were not even there. God’s presence and His presence alone defeated the enemy.
- The same is true today. When we worship with a kingdom mindset, God’s presence always defeats the enemy. Worship is a powerful instrument of warfare.
- Appropriately, we think that worship comes *before* warfare. Our mindset is that we worship before we pray, bind, or proclaim. While this is true, worship in itself is a powerful tool of warfare.
- The following three step process will lead you to victory. First, pray fervently. Second, as the Holy Spirit, leads move from praying to saying. Declare God’s victorious power over the enemy. Third, upon sensing the prompting of the Lord, move from declaration to worship. Often, it is in this final step of worship that breakthrough comes in its fullness.

The Church has entered a new season. Whether we like it or not, we are at war. We must expand our mindset and integrate worship into our spiritual warfare. We ascend in worship and descend in war because we are desperate to see the heavens opened over our cities and because we long to see God’s power released from heaven to earth. In these critical days, let us all become worshiping warriors.

Review Questions

True or False

- _____ 1. In our day, God is doing a "new thing" as He unites worship and spiritual warfare.
- _____ 2. The rise of modern day apostles and prophets has nothing to do with the joining of worship and warfare.
- _____ 3. When we worship with a kingdom perspective, we worship with our minds set upon the Lord as our healer, provider, savior, or deliverer.
- _____ 4. Worship prior to warfare is one of the four ways described as a way to join worship and warfare.
- _____ 5. Worship as warfare is not one of the four ways to join worship and warfare.
- _____ 6. Joining worship with intercessory prayer is one of the four ways to join worship and warfare.
- _____ 7. Another way of joining worship with warfare is worshipping with a kingdom perspective.
- _____ 8. David bringing the ark back to Mount Zion illustrates worship and warfare.

Fill in the Blanks

9. As the sons of Israel began to take the land for the first time, the battle of _____ illustrates the integration of worship and warfare.
10. Years later King _____ used _____ to defeat Israel's enemies.
11. The reason that the Tabernacle of David illustrates worship as a weapon in spiritual warfare is because when the tabernacle was in operation, Israel _____ its boundaries to its promised covenant boundaries.
12. As we combine worship and warfare, we _____ in worship at which time we receive prophetic revelation and then we _____ with apostolic authority in warfare.

13. The four techniques of combining worship and warfare are: 1) Worshiping with a _____ perspective, 2) joining worship with _____ prayer, 3) worshiping _____ to warfare, and 4) worship as _____.

14. Worship prior to warfare refers to worship followed by prophetic _____, _____, or _____.

15. First Samuel 5:1-6:21 describes the Ark of the Covenant causing the statue of Dagon to fall over and problems to come upon the Philistines. This story illustrates _____.

16. One important reason that the Holy Spirit is now raising up the Church to combine worship and warfare is because He is also raising up the modern day offices of the _____ and the _____.

Match the appropriate Scripture with its application.

- _____ 17. The Battle of Jericho
- _____ 18. Jehoshaphat's military victory
- _____ 19. Worship as warfare
- _____ 20. Worship prior to warfare

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Ephesians 3:10b. 2 Chronicles 20:21-25c. 1 Samuel 5:1-6:21d. Joshua 6:16 |
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Session 11

Building a Worshiping Church

This session covers:

- Practical advice to pastors, worship leaders, and others in leadership roles who want to build a worshiping church
- Principles that will help leaders transition their churches into the worship movement
- Five keys that will help leaders develop a worshiping church

Keys That Will Help You Build a Worshiping Church

1. This session is specifically designed for leaders.

- Pastors, worship leaders, those involved in leading a worship ministry, and others in leadership roles will benefit from the principles discussed in this session.
- You can build a worshiping church if you implement these principles with perseverance.
- Building a worshiping church is not easy, but it is well worth the effort.

2. Five keys to building a worshiping church.

- Cultivate a desire to worship in your own heart.
- Cultivate a desire to lead your church into deeper expressions of worship.
- Structure your service for worship.
- Teach on topics that inspire worship.
- Develop your worship team.

Key # 1: Cultivate a Desire For Worship In Your Own Heart.

1. Pastors and worship leaders must have a desire to worship in their own hearts.

- David said, "Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Ps 37:4). When our desires originate from delighting in God, He gives us what we want.
- As a leader who desires to build a worshiping church, you must first desire to worship God *yourself*. People in the church follow their leader.
- If we want our people to be dedicated worshipers, we must first be a dedicated worshiper.
- If we do not worship in our alone times with the Lord or if we do not worship during church, our churches will not develop into worshiping churches.

2. Pastors and leaders must incorporate personal and private worship into their lifestyle.

- Worshiping churches stem from pastors and worship leaders who make *personal worship* a part of their *lifestyle*.
- Many times worship leaders are selected just because they have a nice voice or can play an instrument. Even though these are necessary qualities, worship leaders must first be private worshipers.
- The people we lead become like us, and they follow us where we go. If we are worshipers regardless of whether we are with other people or alone, the people we lead will be worshipers.

3. Pastors and leaders must set the example when their church gathers to worship.

- In many places, pastors do not worship with the rest of the church.
- Many act as though worship is for everyone but them. They often sit while everyone else is standing. They look over their notes for the message or speak to an elder while everyone else is singing.
- Far worse, many pastors do not even enter the room until the worship is almost finished.
- Frequently, pastors go through an entire service without even attempting to worship.
- There are major problems with this type of attitude. When pastors act like this, they imply that worship is not important or that they are beyond the need for worship. Their actions declare that worship is a low priority in their church.
- Since *God often gives direction during worship*, pastors with this type of attitude cannot even discern what God wants to do in the service.
- If we want to build a worshiping church, we need to ask God to transform us into a worshiper.

Key # 2: Cultivate a Desire to Lead Your Church Into Worship.

1. Pastors need a desire for their congregation to be worshipers.

- From the foundation of personal worship comes a natural longing to lead a church of passionate worshipers.
- A worshiping church will not be built out of a casual wish, but rather a deep yearning for every member of your church to develop into a true worshiper.

2. Building a worshiping church requires a long-term commitment to change.

- Transitioning a body of people into real worshipers takes much time and much energy on the part of the pastor.
- Pastors must cast the vision for worship, teach about worship, encourage worship, and develop a worship team.
- People do not develop into worshipers over night. Both their attitudes about worship and their desire to worship change slowly.
- Transforming people into worshipers is not a simple task; it requires extensive commitment and dedication.

3. A church will embrace whatever the pastor emphasizes.

- Building a worshiping church is hard work. Therefore, pastors must make worship a high and an ongoing priority.
- If we merely teach about worship for a short period of time, but do not implement worship, we will not build worshiping churches. For example, if all you do as a pastor is to teach a twelve week sermon series on the issues of this class, you will most likely accomplish very little.
- You must implement the principles of this class into your worship ministry. For example, if you want the prophetic song to be a part of your regular ministry, teach your congregation to hear God's voice; then give time and opportunity for the prophetic song.
- Every step of the journey will require great energy and attention. There will be problems to solve and issues to resolve.

Key # 3: Structure Your Service for Worship.

1. The goal of every pastor and worship leader should be to create a river of life in their services.

- Ezekiel 47 speaks of a day when water will trickle from the temple until it grows into a powerful river—producing life wherever it flows. Ezekiel states that “every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes, will live” (Ezek. 47:9).
- There is life in the river of God.
- This same passage also states that “the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt” (Ezek. 47:11).

- As leaders, we must allow God's river to flow, and lead people into this river because this is where God will touch them. If we leave them in the swamp, they will dry up and wither away.
- As New Testament believers, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that from our "innermost being will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38).
- When we come together as God's temple to worship, the river will flow (1 Peter 2:5; Eph. 2:21-22).
- As we praise God with voices of thanksgiving, we build an invisible throne that God's presence rests upon (Ps. 22:3).
- As we continue to praise Him, a spiritual river begins to trickle from the throne. As our praise shifts into worship, this river grows increasingly deeper until we must swim to stay afloat. Everywhere this river flows brings life, fruit, and healing.
- As pastors and worship leaders, our first task is to ensure that God is enthroned with praises. Then our responsibility is to discern where God's river is flowing and direct the service into the river. We must carefully avoid the swamps of man-made traditions and dead religion because this will only produce death.
- Once believers drink from the river of life, they will desire to get into the river at every meeting.

2. As leaders, we need to structure our services so that the river can flow freely.

- We must make it easy for everyone to enter into God's presence.
- As God pours out the new wine of anointed worship into the earth, only those with the proper wineskins will be able to contain it. Though the wine is available to all, old wineskins will burst and the new wine of worship will be lost (Luke 5:36-39).
- Therefore, we must develop new wineskins that can hold the new wine of the modern-day worship movement.
- For many, our old wineskin services—interspersed with rituals, traditions, and announcements—can not contain the new wine of deep and prolonged worship.
- We need new wineskin services that are flexible to the free flowing river of life.
- This means that many pastors will have to restructure their entire worship service. As leaders who want to build worshiping churches, we must analyze our meetings and ruthlessly eliminate unnecessary traditions, rituals, and programs.

3. Learn how to worship continuously.

- Nothing drains the anointing from a service quicker than programmed interruptions. A preprogrammed service that flows from one song to an announcement to a prayer back to another song will rarely bring in the presence of God.
- Continuous singing helps worshipers focus their attention on the Lord—not on the programmed activity of the moment.

- Frequently, the Lord will interrupt the flow of the service by directing prayer, ministry, declaration, or some other Holy Spirit led activity; however, as leaders we should not plan interruptions in our worship times. Interruptions stop the flow of the river.
- When an interruption stops the river's flow, it can be difficult to get the river flowing again. Though it can be done, it usually does not reach the same level of anointing as before.
- To build a new wineskin for worship, we need to worship continuously and remain sensitive to the Holy Spirit's direction.

4. Allow God to direct your steps.

- The Bible says, "The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps" (Prov. 16:9).
- What a wonderful principle to live by—especially when we are responsible for leading a group in worship.
- We should always prepare and plan. We select the songs for the day. We practice the songs before the service. We prepare our sermons. We pray for God's direction and blessing. As we plan and prepare, however, we must remain flexible so that God can direct our steps.
- As the service begins, we surrender our plans to the Holy Spirit.
- As you begin to worship, listen for God's voice. Once He speaks, we follow His direction.
- Continue this simple pattern throughout your worship time. Listen and obey.
- As leaders, do not allow programmed interruptions in your worship. God has a much more exciting program planned than you do. If we let Him direct our plans and make room for His presence, He will show up in wonderful and exciting ways.
- By doing this, you will often leave a service in awe of God's presence. You will feel this way because you made your plans, but allowed God to direct your steps. And He did wonderful things in your midst.

5. The pastor is the worship leader.

- In many churches, there seems to be a longstanding tradition where the pastor is uninvolved during worship.
- Perhaps pastors have been taught that it looks more spiritual to look over sermon notes. Or maybe coming in late makes them appear as if they don't need a touch from God. Whatever the reason, this must change if you desire to build a worshiping church.
- *Pastors: You are the worship leader of your church.* Most likely, you will delegate the lead singing to someone else. Nevertheless, you are responsible to direct the flow of worship while the singing takes place.
- If you accept this responsibility, God will direct you in the flow of the service for that day. He will give you prophecies, words of knowledge, words of wisdom, prayer, and proclamations during the worship. He will show you what He wants to accomplish during worship. This task should not be delegated to someone else.
- Divine order in worship is essential.

- It is good to give a considerable amount of freedom to your worship leader, the singers, and the musicians. They select which songs to sing for the service. They lead worship as they think appropriate. As they sense the Holy Spirit's leading, they also move into spontaneous worship, prophetic songs, prayer, or prophesying on their instruments.
- As you sense God's voice, you may ask them to sing a particular song or to change the order of the songs. But give your worship team a significant amount of freedom to hear from God and follow His direction. At the same time, both you and the worship team should understand that you are the worship leader.
- As pastor, you should start the service. You should be in the room from the beginning of the service. You should be the person listening carefully for the Lord's voice so that you know what He wants to accomplish. When you hear His voice, direct the worship team accordingly. If you hear nothing, say nothing. Normally, God will speak to you, and you should guide the service according to the Spirit's leading.
- If you sense that the worship team should continue on a song longer than planned, indicate this quietly to the worship leader. If God places a prophetic burden upon you, then prophesy. If others have a prophetic word, let them share it with you privately, evaluate it, and then determine if and when it should be delivered.
- As the pastor leading worship in this way, have three goals. First, try to maintain order without quenching the Spirit. Second, give everyone the liberty to express their own worship to God in a way that is not disruptive to others. Third, fulfill your God-given responsibility to oversee the service.
- Pastors, you must be engaged, listen for God, and direct your worship services as the Spirit leads. God will show you way into the river of life, but it is your responsibility to direct your congregation into the river.

Key # 4: Teach About Worship.

1. What you teach on affects your church's worship.

- For example, if you want your church to flow in the prophetic song, then you need to teach on learning to hear God's voice. How else will your worship team recognize that God is speaking to them prophetically?
- If you want your church to walk in apostolic authority—declaring and proclaiming breakthrough over cities and nations—you need to teach them that they are nation-shakers and history-makers.
- Teaching shapes the identity of your church, which in turn has a significant affect on your worship.
- Teaching does not refer to merely exposing people to an issue. We can teach on a topic for a few weeks and think that everyone fully understands the subject. Then we quickly move on to another topic. Normally, this type of approach does not have a long-term impact. Instead, we need to make disciples that incorporate our teachings into their lifestyle. For example, if we teach on hearing God's voice, we should help people understand how to hear from God and equip them to hear from God for themselves.

- There is a big difference between teaching and equipping, though both are necessary. Teaching expounds upon revelation, but equipping releases impartation. Teaching helps people understand what they can do; equipping empowers them to do it. You can teach on learning to hear God's voice in a few months. But for people to accurately hear from God on a regular basis, you must persist in training and equipping them. This might take several months or even several years. Equipping others to hear from God requires time and patience on your part.

2. Teach on how to hear God's voice.

- Knowing God's voice helps pastors and the worship team discern where the river is flowing in a service.
- It activates and empowers the prophetic song.
- It leads pastors to know when to proclaim, declare, or perform any action that God might desire for that day.
- Hearing God is essential for a church that desires to go deep in worship

3. Teach on people's identity in Christ.

- Believers need to understand who they are in Christ.
- When people know that God loves, accepts, and desires them because of the blood of Jesus, they usually respond by worshiping God with gratitude and affection.
- As people understand that God has redeemed them from the curse of the Law and has blessed them beyond imagination, they will worship Him.
- On the other hand, if people feel unworthy and unlovely to God, they are less enthusiastic to come into God's presence. Therefore, teach them who they are in Christ.

4. Teach about the Bride of Christ.

- When believers understand that they are the Bride of Christ it deepens their worship.
- Many have been taught that the Church as the Bride of Christ was merely a concept that illustrated a believer's relationship to God.
- The Church as the Bride of Christ is much more than a concept. As God continues to unveil the mystery of the Bride, believers everywhere are beginning to realize that they are betrothed as a Bride to the King of the ages, the Lord Jesus Christ. One day, Jesus will have a worthy Bride who partners with Him throughout eternity.
- Understanding this concept unlocks a multitude of emotions and affections within us that empower worship.
- Experiencing God's passionate love for us awakens burning love in our hearts for Him.
- Knowing God's desire for intimacy with us creates a yearning in our hearts to be close to Him.
- Feeling beautiful in the sight of the Lord puts a longing within us to be in His presence. As affections and emotions are awakened by teaching about the Bride of Christ, our churches will become lovesick for Jesus.

5. Teach people about their destiny.

- Many Christians believe they are worthless failures filled with sin and useless in God's kingdom. Nothing could be further from the truth.
- While we are all sinners, God does not view us as sinners; He sees us as saints. God has called us into partnership with Him to shake the nations of the earth.
- We are all people of destiny. Each of us has a powerful life purpose, unique spiritual gifts, and an anointing to advance the Kingdom of God. When people understand these truths, they typically worship God with gratitude and love. Teaching people that they are nation-shaking, history-making people of destiny creates mighty worshipers.

6. Teach on developing a heart of worship.

- Teaching on issues such as having a heart after God's heart; surrender; and God's worth, holiness, beauty, and majesty stimulates worship.
- Many pastors beat their people down. They use guilt, shame, condemnation, and the fear of judgment to stimulate worship.
- People will respond to this type of teaching, but only temporarily and externally. People who know they are loved, beautiful, highly esteemed, and blessed will worship from the heart.

Key # 5: Develop Your Worship Team.**1. Building a solid worship team takes hard work and perseverance.**

- Some pastors search everywhere to find seasoned musicians and singers to lead worship at their church. Many have discovered the hard way that this approach often creates far more problems than it solves.
- Rather than looking for experienced worship leaders, look for people with potential. People with limited experience tend to be more teachable, loyal, and submitted to the local vision of the church. *Develop people who don't think they can do it into people who can.*
- The people you train and release are far more likely to remain loyal to you and to your vision.

2. Select faithful men and women.

- The Bible says, "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).
- This Scripture presents an excellent way to select leaders for ministry positions.
- One of the first qualifications you should look for is faithfulness. While this principle applies to every area of ministry, it is essential to developing a quality worship team.
- Most pastors look for gifting as the number one criteria in selecting a worship team. Pastors look for people who are anointed and skilled in leading worship. They look for musical talent, a beautiful voice, and prior experience.

- This approach often fails. Many gifted and experienced leaders have their own agenda. Often, they are independent and rebellious. Most do not desire to move in the direction that God is leading you.
- Look *first* for faithful men and women. Make sure that each worship team member is loyal to you. Recruit people who understand your church's God-given vision and are dedicated to seeing it come to pass.
- You need people who support you and respond to what you ask them to do. You want people who will openly express their opinion about any issue facing the church, the worship team, or you. But once you have resolved the issue, they don't bring it up again.
- Many have a bad habit of rushing new attendees onto the team. As soon someone discovers that a new attendee can sing or play, we quickly ask them to join the worship team. We fail to evaluate the true motives of their heart and their submission to our vision. This rush to build your worship team creates problems. Ultimately, those who you thought would be such a great addition to your team becomes a thorn in your flesh.
- At times, new attendees may have opposing theological views, want to change the direction of the church, or disagree with ministry philosophies. These people become a source of disunity in your church—significantly impacting the anointing on your worship.
- Select people for the worship team who have been committed members of your church over a period of months. Select those who are faithful in attendance, generous in giving, supportive, and in agreement with your Church's vision.

3. Select people with proven character.

- The New Testament repeatedly teaches on the importance of character—especially in the lives of leaders. When Paul instructed Timothy about deacons, he said that deacons are to be “beyond reproach” and that they should be “tested” (1 Tim. 3:10).
- In choosing worship team members, we should only select people who have proven character. We understand that no one is perfect, but godly character is important for leaders. The worship team is no exception.
- Prior to being selected, worship team members should demonstrate maturity and faithfulness. When you test potential members in this way, your worship team will not just be singing songs—they will lead people into God's presence.
- Some leaders believe that getting people involved in the worship ministry makes them feel accepted, and therefore, helps them overcome certain struggles. Although this may be an excellent idea for certain ministries, it normally does not work for the worship ministry. By selecting people who have proven character that is beyond reproach, you will develop a worship team that will lead you deep into God's presence.

4. Establish a good work ethic on your worship team.

- Every pastor could share a multitude of stories about their experience with the worship team. Leaders not showing up for a service or forgetting practice. Not wanting to work to perfect their gifts or to discipline themselves to practice. Every pastor could come up with many examples.

- A strong work ethic is critical to developing an effective worship team.
- To be effective, worship team members must be prompt for services, dependable, and committed to practice. Without these traits, your worship team will not develop as it should.
- Encourage your worship team to prepare, plan, and develop their skills. As your worship team pursues excellence in this way, great benefits will ensue.
- Each pastor and worship leader should have basic expectations for your team. Expect them to meet together weekly for practice. Expect organized practices that enable the team to be productive. Expect them to learn new songs on a regular basis. Expect them to be on time and ready to begin services. Expect them to select songs for each service. Finally, expect them to develop their skills within their personal limitations of time and talent.
- Some people believe that preparation interferes with the work of the Holy Spirit. They believe that the less we prepare, the more we will trust in the Holy Spirit's power. Though over programming a service can hinder the anointing, preparation does the opposite—it enhances the anointing.
- As you establish a good work ethic for your worship team and at the same time create a supportive and joyful atmosphere among the team, then you will see the anointing increase and your worship go deeper.

5. Nurture unity among the worship team and between the pastor and the worship team.

- The Bible says, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, coming down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, coming down upon the edge of his robes" (Ps. 133:1-2).
- In this Psalm, King David reveals the connection between unity and the anointing. When there is unity, the anointing will flow in a service.
- We have all attended a worship service that was affected by disunity. Perhaps people were offended, upset with the pastor, or the worship team was frustrated with one another. When there is disunity like this, the flow of the anointing is hindered.
- One of the greatest hindrances to the anointing is disunity which involves the worship team. When worship team members are in disunity among themselves or with the pastor, God is limited in what He can do in a service.
- Therefore, as pastors and worship leaders, nurturing unity among the worship team is one of your most important tasks.
- Pastor, pray for the worship team regularly. Pray for unity and for resolution of specific issues. Encourage the team in their efforts. Complement the team for their positive accomplishments. Deal with issues quickly before they get out of hand. Pursue unity. For out of unity, the anointing will flow.

Review Questions

True or False

- _____ 1. This session offers five things that a member of a church can tell their pastor to do to build a worshiping church.
- _____ 2. This session is addressed to pastors, worship leaders, and other leaders to help them build their church as a worshiping church.
- _____ 3. It is true that it is relatively easy to build a worshiping church even if the senior pastor does not have much of a heart to worship personally.
- _____ 4. Pastors and leaders must set the example when their church gathers to worship.
- _____ 5. To build a worshiping church, pastors must structure their services for worship.
- _____ 6. The pastor is important but is not the worship leader.
- _____ 7. Musical skills are much more important than unity on the worship team.
- _____ 8. What the pastor teaches his people affects their worship.
- _____ 9. Anointing upon worship team members is more important than character.

Fill in the blanks

- 10. The goal of every pastor and worship leader should be to create a _____ of _____ in their services.
- 11. During times of worship, it is good not to allow preplanned _____ in the flow of the service.
- 12. It is important to learn how to worship _____ to create anointing in your services.
- 13. Building a worshiping church requires a long-term commitment to _____.
- 14. What a pastor _____ affects the church's worship.

Match the following statements with the appropriate one of the five keys for building a worshiping church.

- _____ 15. Establish a good work ethic on your worship team.
- _____ 16. A church will embrace whatever the pastor emphasizes.
- _____ 17. Learn how to worship continuously.
- _____ 18. The pastor is the worship leader.
- _____ 19. Pastors must set the example when their church gathers to worship.
- _____ 20. Nurture unity among the worship team and between the pastor and the worship team.

- a. Cultivate a desire to worship in our own heart.
- b. Cultivate a desire to lead your church into deeper expressions of worship.
- c. Structure your service for worship.
- d. Teach on topics that inspire worship.
- e. Develop your worship team.

Session 12

A Throne Room Company

This session covers:

- A description of the throne room company
- How the throne room company will rebuild the Tabernacle of David
- How God will prepare the throne room company
- An invitation to join the throne room company

A Call To This Generation

1. In these last days, God is building a throne room company.

- The Spirit of the Lord is drawing a nameless, faceless company of people into God's throne room.
- Without title, reputation, or recognition, this assembly will turn the world upside down because of one reason—they walk closely with God.

2. This company will be made up of people of all types.

- We are privileged to be alive as God builds a throne room company of humble, godly, and submitted servants.
- Some of these last day servants will be pastors and leaders, but many will be unknown saints who have quietly served the Lord and maintained Him as their first love.
- They will submit to the refining work of the Spirit and be transformed into a mighty army that will advance God's kingdom in the earth.
- One characteristic will set them apart from every other generation since the early church. They will have an intimate relationship with Jesus that ushers them into God's throne room.

- As they worship God in the holy of holies, they will be clothed with His power and authority. This throne room company will be used to prepare the way for the return of the Lord.
- This highly favored group is not restricted to a special few; it is made of people who have said yes to the invitation. God calls each of us to be made ready, to pursue intimacy with Jesus, and to become worshipers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Restoration of David's Tabernacle

1. God is restoring the Tabernacle of David in this generation.

- The Scriptures teach that this is an end-time event (Amos 9:11-12; Acts 15:16-18), and most present-day prophetic voices believe that we live in the days of its fulfillment.
- The restored Tabernacle of David and the throne room company are integrally connected.
- It will be God's throne room company who builds this spiritual tabernacle and ministers in it as priests.

2. David established the Tabernacle of David when he ruled as king.

- Immediately after David became king of Israel, he captured Jerusalem from the Jebusites.
- Then he established Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and brought the ark of the covenant into a tent he pitched on Mount Zion.
- Following this, David organized singers and musicians around the ark—the place where God's glory rested—to worship all day and all night. This became known as the Tabernacle of David (1 Chron. 11-16).
- Not only did God's presence dwell there, but it was also the place where God spoke to Israel's leaders (Num. 7:89).
- As worship rose from David's Tabernacle, the spirit of prophecy came upon the worshipers, resulting in both beautiful prophetic songs and specific strategies to defeat Israel's enemies.

3. During the days of the Tabernacle of David, Israel experienced her greatest transformation and expansion in history.

- As commander-in-chief, David's first military strategy was to enthrone the King of Glory—who is the Lord of heaven's armies—with praises (Psalm 22:3; Psalm 24).
- With worship arising before the Lord continually, David's next mission was to expand Israel according to the boundaries promised to Abraham (1 Chron. 18:3).
- Because God was lifted up as King over Israel, He fought on Israel's behalf and conquered all of her enemies. Consequently, no nation stood a chance against Israel during this time. David's army easily defeated the surrounding nations of Philistia, Moab, Hamath, Aram, Edom, and Ammon (1 Chron. 18-20).

- During the reign of David, Israel experienced the greatest transformation and expansion in the nation's history. Israel reached its height of power, prosperity, and growth as God was enthroned with praises. Even the wealth of the nations poured into Israel as continual worship ascended to God (1 Chron. 18:8-11).

4. Continuous worship was the "key" to Israel's success.

- David knew that praise and worship was the secret to Israel's victory in warfare and kingdom expansion.
- The worship methods employed in David's tabernacle became the standard for Israel's protection and military success.
- The "key of David" was so ingrained into Israel's culture that Jehoshaphat used praise and worship to defeat his enemies a hundred years later (2 Chron. 20).

5. The restored Tabernacle of David is a divine strategy for the last days.

- In a prophecy that is highly relevant in our day, Amos prophesied that the Tabernacle of David would be the divine key to possessing the nations in the end-times.
- Amos prophesied, "In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, and wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by My name" (Amos 9:11-12).
- In the New Testament Church, James showed that the tabernacle's restoration was interrelated with the salvation of the Gentiles (Acts 15:16-18).
- We live in the days when God is restoring the fervent worship, the prophetic revelation, and the apostolic authority that characterized the Tabernacle of David. As a result, God's kingdom will advance in unprecedented ways, enormous wealth will be transferred into the Church, the end-time harvest will be reaped, and God's glory will fill the earth.

In these last days, a throne room company of priests will minister in this restored Tabernacle of David. They will minister to the Lord in the holy of holies and bless His heart with abandoned worship. As a result, they will expand the kingdom of God in the earth and fulfill God's end-time agenda.

The Esthers Will Minister in David's Tabernacle

1. God is raising up Esthers in the last days.

- God is raising up a multitude of Esthers from around the world. They will submit to God's hand of discipline as He prepares them for their destiny.

- They will endure the intense preparation process, only wanting to please the King. Like Esther, this company will pursue intimacy with the King and find favor in His eyes.
- As a result, God will entrust to them the scepter of authority to defeat powers and principalities, preparing the way for the Lord's return.
- These Esthers will know that God has raised them up *for such a time as this*. They will accept the invitation to become a part of the throne room company.

2. The story of Esther shows how the throne room company will be prepared to minister before the King of kings.

- Most are familiar with the Old Testament story of Esther. King Ahasuerus ruled Persia from about 485 to 465 B.C. When he became angry with his wife Vashti, he searched the kingdom for her replacement.
- After an extensive selection process, Esther was chosen as queen.
- When a crisis arose in the land, Mordecai told Esther, "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?" (Est. 4:14).
- Esther willingly submitted to the eunuchs as they prepared her for the king. She was meek and obedient, always yielding to their heavy demands. She did not complain during the rigorous preparation process—she only wanted to please the king. When Esther was selected as queen, she developed an intimate relationship with the king and found great favor in his eyes.
- As a result, King Ahasuerus extended to Esther his golden scepter of authority and offered her up to half his kingdom (Est. 5:2-3).
- From her position of intimacy as the favored queen, Esther received great authority to defeat Israel's arch enemy—Haman and his ten sons.

3. These Esthers will build and minister in David's restored tabernacle.

- As Esther, the throne room company will be a distinct people. Because of their humility and meekness, God will delegate great power and authority to them. In turn, they will advance God's kingdom in the earth in unprecedented ways.
- These Esthers will know their destiny and develop an intimate relationship with the Lord. They will minister to Him in the holy of holies in the restored Tabernacle of David.
- As they ascend in worship, they will descend in war with God's scepter of authority. Clothed with God's presence, they will breakthrough powers and principalities so that the kingdom of God can prosper. This company will reap the end-time harvest and prepare the way of the Lord.
- Above all, the throne room company will be a worshiping army of priests who have embraced the truths we have discussed in this book. They will fall so in love with the Father and the Son that they will abandon themselves in worship.
- Like the woman with the alabaster vial, the throne room company will pour out extravagant worship upon Jesus as a fragrant aroma to God.

- They will press deep into the holy of holies with a resolve to overcome every distraction that would hinder them. Enthusiastically, they will praise the Lord with lifted hands, shouts, and dancing. In humble adoration, they will fall to their knees as they encounter God's holiness.
- Because they press into God, they will see God's glory and beauty in the throne room, where they will long to remain forever. Nevertheless, with a heavenly mandate burning in the hearts, they will descend for war.
- Endowed with understanding, power, and authority, they will execute the written judgments upon God's enemies.
- Just as Israel defeated their enemies through the Tabernacle of David, this throne room company will overcome every force of darkness through praise and worship.
- Their passion for God will also drive them to develop the heart of a worshiper. Like Esther submitted to the twelve months of preparation, the throne room company will yield to God's discipline. They will allow God to shape their soul and mold their character in way that pleases Him.

This class began with an invitation to break the alabaster vial and join the worship movement that is sweeping the earth. The Holy Spirit is searching the earth for all who will say yes to the invitation to go deeper and enlist in God's end-time army of worshiping warriors. Will you join God's throne room company who will rebuild the Tabernacle of David? Will you accept God's call to develop as a worshiper? Will you say yes to do your part in building God's last day worshiping Church?

Review Questions

True or False

- _____ 1. God is raising up a multitude of Esthers who will submit to God's hand of preparation, come into intimacy with Jesus, and exercise authority on behalf of the King of kings.
- _____ 2. The restored Tabernacle of Moses is a divine strategy for the last days.
- _____ 3. The Spirit of the Lord is drawing a nameless, faceless company of people into God's throne room.
- _____ 4. During the days of the Tabernacle of David, Israel experienced her greatest transformation and expansion in history.
- _____ 5. Continuous worship was a major key to Israel's success during the time of the Tabernacle of David.
- _____ 6. There is really no difference in the call to the end-time Church as to the church of any other generation.

Fill in the blanks

7. In the last days, a _____ will minister to the Lord in the holy of holies with abandoned worship.
8. In addition to restoring the Tabernacle of David, God is also raising up _____ to go through preparation and minister in authority and intimacy before the Lord.
9. The throne room company will live a lifestyle of _____ with Jesus and exercise _____ out of this lifestyle of intimacy.
10. This class began with an invitation to break the _____ vial and join the _____ movement that is sweeping the earth. The Holy Spirit is searching the earth for all who will say yes to the invitation to go deeper and enlist in God's _____ army of worshipping _____.

Answer Sheet

Session 1

1. T
2. F
3. T
4. T
5. F
6. F
7. Church; glory; holy; blameless
8. Praise; worship
9. Fill; glory
10. Intimacy; Jesus
11. First commandment
12. Extravagant; return
13. e
14. g
15. h
16. d
17. b
18. b
19. d
20. e

Session 2

1. F
2. T
3. F
4. T
5. T
6. F
7. T
8. T
9. Must; spirit; truth
10. worship; vain
11. seeks
12. Know
13. Spirit
14. Spirit
15. Truth
16. f
17. d
18. h
19. g
20. b

Session 3

1. T
2. F
3. T
4. T
5. T
6. F
7. T
8. view
9. correct
10. desires; pleasure
11. majesty; awe
12. throne room
13. 4;5
14. beauty; love
15. b
16. c
17. e
18. f
19. h
20. j

Session 4

1. T
2. F
3. T
4. T
5. F
6. T
7. F
8. T
9. confidence; holy place; draw near; assurance; clean
10. worth
11. best robe; ring; sandals
12. position; righteousness
13. son
14. presence
15. power; authority; honor; dignity
16. a
17. b
18. e
19. g
20. i

Session 5

1. F
2. T
3. T
4. T
5. T
6. F
7. T
8. T
9. surrender
10. spiritual map
11. sacrifice; worship
12. home; family
13. Ishmael
14. compromising
15. vision
16. b
17. e
18. a
19. c
20. d

Session 6

1. T
2. T
3. F
4. T
5. F
6. T
7. T
8. F
9. heart
10. purposes
11. faith
12. intimacy
13. passionate
14. inquired
15. c
16. b
17. b
18. a
19. c
20. a

Answer Sheet

Session 7

1. T
2. F
3. T
4. T
5. F
6. F
7. T
8. F
9. T
10. seven
11. throne
12. enemies
13. victory
14. shout
15. faith
16. d
17. e
18. c
19. a
20. b

Session 8

1. T
2. F
3. T
4. T
5. F
6. T
7. F
8. T
9. body; soul; spirit
10. mind; will; emotions
11. pressing
12. Outer Court; Holy Place; Holy of Holies
13. body; soul; spirit
14. intimate; seen; heard
15. God
16. c
17. b
18. d
19. e
20. a

Session 9

1. T
2. F
3. F
4. F
5. T
6. F
7. T
8. F
9. T
10. Lord
11. breakthrough; now element; remain
12. breakthrough; attention
13. anointing
14. deep longings
15. unique
16. d
17. b
18. e
19. a
20. c

Session 10

1. T
2. F
3. F
4. T
5. F
6. T
7. T
8. T
9. Jericho
10. Jehoshaphat; praise and worship
11. expanded
12. ascend; descend
13. kingdom; intercessory; prior; warfare
14. declaration, proclamation, decree
15. worship as warfare
16. Apostle; Prophet
17. d
18. b
19. c
20. a

Session 11

1. F
2. T
3. F
4. T
5. T
6. F
7. F
8. T
9. F
10. river; life
11. interruptions
12. continuously
13. change
14. emphasizes
15. e
16. b
17. c
18. c
19. a
20. e

Session 12

1. T
2. F
3. T
4. T
5. T
6. F
7. Throne Room Company
8. Esthers
9. intimacy; authority
10. alabaster; worship; End-time; warriors

The Worshiping Church Final Exam

The following questions are true or false. Place a "T" for true or an "F" for false in the space provided (2 points per question).

- _____ 1. King David brought the Ark of the Covenant back to Zion and placed it in the Tabernacle of Moses so that all could worship before it freely.
- _____ 2. The story of the woman with the issue of blood demonstrates how pressing in to God brings us into the presence of God.
- _____ 3. People who feel unworthy are usually the most powerful worshipers because they know they need to get right with God.
- _____ 4. The place where there is perfect knowledge of God is described in Exodus 34:6-7.
- _____ 5. The reason for highlighting Judah in the session on praise is because Judah is a great example of one who praises God, much like David is a great example of a worshiper.
- _____ 6. Since the heart of a worshiper, as described in the first six sessions of this class, characterizes a person who ministers effectively to the Lord, the words of worship songs that most minister to the Lord are those that focus on our surrender to the Lordship of Jesus.
- _____ 7. The following four ways of combining worship and warfare are discussed in the session entitled the Worshiping Warrior: 1) worship with a kingdom perspective, 2) joining worship with intercessory prayer, 3) binding demonic principalities, and 4) worship as warfare.
- _____ 8. Unity on the worship team is much more important than musical skills.
- _____ 9. The Spirit of the Lord is drawing a nameless, faceless company of people into God's throne room.
- _____ 10. God's holiness not only describes His separation from sin, but it also describes His beauty and splendor.

Fill in the Blanks (2 points per question)

11. Three reasons David was called a man with a heart after God was that he was devoted to God's _____, he was a man of _____, and he had a heart that yearned for _____ with God.
12. Banners help express God's _____ over His enemies.

13. The one place where the knowledge of God is the most perfect is the heavenly _____ and this place is best pictured in the Book of Revelation, Chapters _____ and _____.
14. Ephesians 5:27 reads, "that He might present to Himself the _____ in all her _____, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be _____ and _____."
15. According to 1 Thessalonians 5:23, men and women are comprised of three parts: _____, _____, and _____.
16. Worshipers need a revelation of their _____ to become fervent worshipers.
17. Songs that minister directly to the Lord most often contain words that focus directly on the _____.
18. Three benefits to the prophetic song are: 1) prophetic songs bring _____, 2) prophetic songs bring a _____ to worship, 3) prophetic songs _____ with us.
19. The reason that the Tabernacle of David illustrates worship as a weapon in spiritual warfare is because when the Tabernacle of David was in operation, Israel _____ its borders to its promised covenant boundaries.
20. In John 4:23, Jesus said that God is spirit, and those who worship Him _____ worship Him in _____ and _____.
21. In Matthew 15:7, Jesus said that when we honor God with our lips but our heart is far from Him, we _____ Him in _____.
22. Five keys to effective worship discussed in Sessions 2 and 3 are: 1) God _____ worshipers, 2) people worship what they _____, 3) God is _____, 4) worship is in _____, and 5) worship is in _____.

23. The goal of every pastor and worship leader should be to create a _____ of _____ in their services. To do this, during times of worship, it is good not to allow preplanned _____ in the flow of the service, but instead to learn how to worship _____.
24. Romans 12:1 reads as follows, "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy _____, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of _____."
25. God is releasing great authority upon His church in these days. One of the keys to positioning ourselves to experience this authority is _____ with _____.

Multiple choice: Circle the correct answer (2 points each)

26. Based on Session 2 of this class, which of the following best describes what it means to worship in spirit?
- a. Worshiping with a heart that truly desires God.
 - b. Singing in tongues.
 - c. Worshiping in a way in which our spirit man communes with God's Spirit.
 - d. Worshiping with other Spirit-filled believers.
27. Which of the following Hebrew words for praise means "striking with the fingers, touching the strings, or touching other parts of a musical instrument?"
- a. Zamar
 - b. Halal
 - c. Yadah
 - d. Towdah
28. Which of the following is not one of the six attributes of God identified in the session on how the knowledge of God deepens our worship and makes it real?
- a. God's desire for us
 - b. God's holiness
 - c. God's sovereignty
 - d. God's majesty
 - e. God's presence

29. Which of the following best defines the prophetic song?

- a. A spiritual song
- b. A bold declaration that declares the second coming of Jesus
- c. A Spirit-inspired utterance sung to the Lord or to believers
- d. A chorus rather than a hymn

30. Which of the following best defines the topics discussed in the session on "Going Deeper"?

- a. Pressing in deeply as the woman with the issue of blood to the holy of holies
- b. Creating a spiritual river in your services that allows the Spirit to flow more freely
- c. Worshiping based on a knowledge of God that only comes from deep within the throne room
- d. Singing new songs, spiritual songs, and other types of songs that minister to the Lord

31. Based on our discussion in Session 6, David was considered a great worshiper because

- a. He yearned for intimacy with God.
- b. He was a mighty warrior on behalf of God's purposes.
- c. He worshiped in spirit and truth.
- d. His name means "praise Yahweh."

32. The person who is the primary worship leader in a local church setting is _____.

- a. The person who leads the church in worship songs
- b. The pastor
- c. The best singer or musician
- d. The minister of music

33. Mary's breaking of the alabaster vial refers best to which of the following.

- a. Pouring out extravagant worship on Jesus
- b. The fact that Jesus will return for a glorious Church
- c. The rebuilding of the Tabernacle of David
- d. God filling the earth with His glory
- e. The Church fulfilling the first commandment

34. Which of the following Scripture passages does not refer to the concept of worship being connected with spiritual warfare?

- a. 2 Chronicles 20
- b. Joshua 5 and 6
- c. Ephesians 6:10-18
- d. 1 Sam. 5:1-6:21

35. Even though all of the following are important in developing a worship team, which of the following is identified in Session 11 as important to developing a church worship team?
- a. Select people who carry a known anointing for leading worship.
 - b. Selecting people with proven character who are committed to a strong work ethic.
 - c. Musical skills
 - d. Learning to flow with the Spirit during services

Discuss in your own words (10 points each)

36. Based on the information from Sessions 2 and 3, explain in your own words what it means to worship in spirit and truth.

37. Based on the information from Session 8, explain what it means to press in to God.

38. Based on the information from Session 11, list and briefly describe the five keys to building a worshipping church.