

12 Keys



to Authentic

WORSHIP

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12 KEYS TO AUTHENTIC WORSHIP

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INTRODUCTION:

The psalmist wrote, "as the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul thirsts for You, O God" (Ps. 42:1). What a great analogy for the worshiping Christian! There is no doubt that a cool drink of water after a long run through the woods is pleasurable. Water, though, is more than a desirable experience for the deer, it is a necessity of life. So, for the Christian, is the presence of God.

Have you ever yearned to draw closer to God? Have you ever wanted to be able to express your love for Christ, but didn't know the "right way" to do it? Have you ever wished that your worship experience could be more "real"? If your answer to any of these questions is "yes," then this study is for you!

LESSON 1



THE FIRST KEY:

Worship from the heart

As you begin your study of worship, understand that worship is a response; it is a reflection of what you think is important. It is the outworking of your devotion. If your greatest desire is to have a sporty and fast car, for example, and you pour your life into the business of acquiring such a car, then it would be correct to say that you "worship" that car. It is the most important thing in your life. Martin Luther made this remark, "Whatever your heart clings to and relies upon is your god." The plain fact is that all people worship--they just don't all worship the living and true God! So . . . what is the most important thing in your life? On what are you most willing to spend your time and energy? Comment. _____

Read Ps. 115:4-7. Compare these verses with vs. 3. (Consider also Jer. 10:5-6). What is the significant difference? _____

Read 1 Cor. 8:4-6. Paul is dealing with a situation which had immediate application in the Corinthian church of his day. What principle can we draw from this passage for today? _____

True biblical worship, of course, is not directed toward cars or houses or friends or family. We all know that such worship is idolatry. True biblical worship is directed toward the living and true God (See Ex. 20:4-6). It has as its foundational principle that our relationship with God is our life's priority. Our whole purpose of life is tied up in "glorifying God and enjoying Him forever." Worship is our way of saying, "there is nothing in my life more important than You, O Lord. I am Yours."

The Scripture uses several different words which have been translated "worship" in our modern English Bibles. Even though a single English word has been used for all, their meanings are quite different. One pair of words (Heb., *shachah* and Gk., *proskuneo*) means "to bow down," "to make oneself low," or "to give honor to another." The other pair of words (Heb., *Abad* and Gk., *latreuo*) means "to serve, to work, or to do," "to perform acts or service." The first group refers to how you see yourself in relation to your God; the second group refers to the means you use to demonstrate or act out that devotion. One, then, is an attitude and the other an action. When you hear the word "worship," which idea is dominant in your mind? _____
_____ Why do you think that this is so? _____

Our English word "worship" is derived from an Anglo-Saxon word *worthscipe*, which means "to attribute worth to an object," or "to acknowledge the worthiness of another." To worship God, in the original sense of the English word, is to acknowledge His worthiness. Read 1 Chron. 16:25-26 and Ps. 96:4-5. These verses identically call our attention to the worthiness of the LORD. How should we view Him in relation to false gods? _____
_____ Psalm 145:3 goes one step further in proclaiming the worthiness of the LORD. What does this verse say about God's greatness? _____

Which do you think must come first with regard to worship, attitude or action? _____ Is it possible to perform the actions of worship in such a way that they do not reflect a proper relationship with God? How might this be so? _____
_____ Can you give any biblical examples of such worship? _____

Read the following passages, Ps. 95:6, 138:2; Rev. 7:11, 11:16. What heart-attitudes are demonstrated in these verses? _____

Why is this important? _____

Psalm 100 gives us an outline for worship. Read through the Psalm and answer the following questions:

1) The people of God are commanded to do several things in this Psalm. List the "action words." _____

2) What is the relationship between the first two verses and the third verse? _____

3) What does vs. 4 teach us about coming into the presence of God? _____

4) What three things do we learn about God in vs. 5?

WORSHIP HAS TO BE REAL!
We must be careful not to worship an imitation.
We must be careful not to just imitate a worshipper.

KEY IDEAS:
Worship is personal
Attitude leads to action
Our God is worthy of our worship
Our worship is pleasing to the Lord
The goal of worship is the presence of God

LESSON 2



THE SECOND KEY:

Hear God's Call to Worship

Read 1 Chronicles 16:8-13, 23-26, 28-29, 34-36. After David became King over Israel he determined that the Ark of the Covenant should be brought to Jerusalem. His first attempt was unsuccessful because he did not follow the Lord's directions for carrying the ark. Later, when he did carefully follow God's instruction that the ark was to be carried by the Levites, it was successfully brought to the place that David had prepared for it. The return of God's Ark to the place of worship was cause for celebration and rejoicing. The procession was accompanied by the sound of trumpets and cymbals, lyres and harps, the sounding of the *shofar* and the shouts of the people. David, the musician king, gave this Psalm (1 Chr. 16:8-36) to his music director to be sung as part of the celebration.



David used the imperative (a verb form used for commands) when he composed this song. Because of this we know that the Psalm was meant to be instructive. Look at the things that the Psalm says God's people should do?

Give thanks to the Lord
Declare what He has done
Tell of His wonderful acts
Look to the Lord
Sing to the Lord
Declare His glory
Bring an offering
Worship the Lord
Cry out for salvation

Call on His name
Sing to Him
Glory in his holy name
Seek His face
Proclaim His salvation
Ascribe to Him glory and strength
Come before Him
Give thanks to the Lord

The purpose of these directions is to focus the attention of the people toward God and to His works. It is natural, right and proper for the people of God to worship Him and to declare His praise.

A PEOPLE WITH A PURPOSE

Read 1 Peter 2:9. What are the words that Peter uses to describe the church?

a _____ people a royal _____
a _____ nation a _____ people

What does Peter say is this "peculiar" people's purpose? _____

Compare this verse with Isa. 43:21. According to Isaiah what purpose are God's chosen people to serve? _____

Who are called upon to praise the Lord in the following passages?

Ps. 30:4 _____
Ps. 32:11 _____
Ps. 33:1 _____
Ps. 97:12 _____
Rev. 19:5-6 _____

A GOD WORTH A WORLD OF PRAISE

God is worthy of praise and all of His creation ought to honor Him with praise and worship. Ps. 117:1 says that all _____ and all _____ should worship God. Ps. 150:6 teaches that everything that has _____ should praise the Lord. Read Ps. 148. List those who are commanded to "praise the LORD." (Also see Ps 19:1-3, 145:10-13)

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

You must not underestimate how much God values your worship. Read the first two commandments in Ex. 20. They teach us that:

- 1) You are to devote your life to the true and living God.
- 2) The living God is unwilling to share worship with anything false.

Jesus, in his confrontation with the devil, quoted, "Worship the Lord your God and serve him only" (Lk. 4:8). So you see, the honest worship of our God and Savior must not be taken lightly. Read and consider Isa. 45:22-24 and Php. 2:10-11.

Why is it important for the people of God to worship Him? _____

Pride prevents worship!

KEY IDEAS:

Praise is the Christian's calling.

The saints of God should rejoice and sing.

All of God's creation should honor its creator.

Every knee will bow and every tongue will acknowledge God.

LESSON 3



THE THIRD KEY:

Acknowledge God's Greatness

WORSHIP HIM FOR HIS *HOLINESS*

Compare Isa. 6:1-3 and Rev. 4:8-11. On those occasions when we are granted a glimpse of heavenly worship we find the angels extolling the holiness of God.

To say that God is “holy” can mean a couple of different things. First, God is holy because He transcends in every way the things that He has made. In the whole universe, God is unique. Read Deut. 4:34-35; Isa 45:5-6, 22; Isa. 46:8-10. What does God say about Himself? _____

Although we are called to be set apart as God's special people, we must recognize that perfect holiness is attributable to God alone (Rev. 15:4).

Second, God is holy because he is pure and righteous. God holy in His character and divine being; He is also holy in action. Read 1 Sam. 2:2-10; Ps. 77:13-15; Ps. 99:1-5. No one can do what the LORD does because He rules in sovereignty and in power!

WORSHIP HIM FOR HIS *MAJESTY*

God calls you to seek His presence and to come boldly before His throne, however you should never see your relationship with God as a casual one. Your God is holy and awesome and He must be worshiped for His majesty. He is your King and, when you come before Him, it should always be with respect and with honor. Read the following verses and write a short comment about each:

Ex. 15:11 _____
 1 Chron. 29:11 _____
 Ps. 8:1, 9 _____
 Ps. 93:1 _____
 Ps. 104:1 _____

WORSHIP HIM FOR HIS *GOODNESS*

Your God is majestic but at the same time your God is compassionate. Read Ps. 113:5-8. In these verses we see two pictures of God. The first shows Him far above everything He has made. The second shows Him reaching down to lift up the downtrodden. Isa. 57:15 presents a similar view of God. According to this passage, where does God dwell? _____

_____ and _____

Read Ps. 34:8 and Ps. 119:68. What do these verses tell us about God? _____

Read Ps. 145:1-9. In this Psalm David expresses several reasons why the Lord is worthy of praise. List the ones that stand out to you. _____

WORSHIP HIM FOR HIS *MERCY*

Read Ps. 103:8-12. What four aspects of God's character are found in vs. 8?

_____ Is it God's purpose to give you what you deserve? (vs. 10) _____ Were it not for God's great mercy and His loving kindness we would all be lost and without hope. Everyone has sinned and fallen short. Read Rom. 5:8, 1 Jn. 4:9-10 and Eph 2:4-5. How did God deal with our lost condition? _____

WORSHIP HIM FOR HIS *FAITHFULNESS*

You can know for certain that your God is unchangeable in His character and that His Word stands firm. What He says He will do and what He purposes He will bring about. Comment on the following passages:

Deut. 7:9 _____
 Ps. 36:5-6 _____
 Ps. 89:1-2 _____

How does your knowledge of God's faithfulness affect your security as a believer? Consider 1 Cor. 1:8-9 and Php. 1:6. _____

WORSHIP HIM FOR HIS *MIGHTY WORKS*

Read Rev. 15:2-4. In another vision of heavenly worship we see the assembly by the glassy sea and hear them sing the song of Moses. How do they describe God's deeds? (vs. 3) _____ How do they describe God's ways? _____ What is the reasonable response? (vs. 4) _____

If we were to follow the instruction of Isa. 12:5-6, what would we do and why? _____

- KEY IDEAS:**
- God is Holy**
- God is mighty**
- God is faithful**
- God is a majestic King**
- God is good and what He does is good**
- God responds to us with loving-kindness**

LESSON 4



THE FOURTH KEY: *Express your faith*

You know from your study of God's Word and from your own experiences, that God doesn't always provide His people with a smooth road to travel as they walk with Him. Jesus promised his disciples that, "In this world you *will* have trouble" (Jn. 16:33). Read that verse. How did He say that they were to respond and why? _____

True worship is an expression of your *faith* in God. To some people, faith is an unfounded hope that something good is going to happen. This is not a good description of biblical faith. When the Scripture speaks of faith it is speaking of an individual's *trust* in God's *promise*, *power* and *faithfulness*. It is one's assurance that God is a keeper of promises and that He is both wise and good. Anything that comes to pass in the believer's life is seen in the context of God's good and perfect will. Read 1 Thess. 5:16-18. In what circumstances is it right to give thanks to God? _____ Read Rom. 8:28. What kinds of things does God work together for the good of those who love Him and who are called according to His purpose?

TWO BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

Read Job 1:13-22. Four messengers came to Job to bring him news. What did each of the messengers tell Job?

- vv. 14-15 _____
- vs. 16 _____
- vs. 17 _____
- vv. 18-19 _____

Job did two things in response to this news. What were his two actions?

How did Job explain his actions? (vv. 21-22) _____

Read 2 Sam. 12:15-20. Who was the child that had been struck ill? (vs. 15)

_____ What did David do about the child's illness? (vs. 16) _____

_____ What happened to the child? (vs. 18) _____

How did David respond when he was informed about the child's condition? (vv. 19-20) _____

Do you think these two men responded in a reasonable way? Why or why not? _____

WORSHIP GOD IN "TRUTH"

In both of the examples above (Job and David) we see individuals who have learned to trust God and to accept what they receive from His hand. They have learned to worship God as He really is; as a God who sovereignly rules over all that He has made. They both recognized that the Lord is worthy of worship even when we don't understand what He is doing. Whatever God does is "right!" Read Isa. 55:8-9. What does this passage teach us about God? _____

In John 4:24 Jesus says, "God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." To worship God "in truth," one must be willing to "let God be God." The worshiper does not presume to judge God. The worshiper honors God and acknowledges His worthiness.

THE REFINING FIRE

I am told that the average person wouldn't even recognize a precious metal if he saw it in its ore state. Gold or silver ore doesn't look special at all. It is only when heat is applied and the impurities are removed that the beauty of the pure metal begins to show. Then a luster and a richness becomes apparent that was hidden before. Then the metal becomes malleable; it can be shaped and molded into a thing of beauty. You are

much like that raw ore; full of both impurities and promise. God uses the circumstances of your life as a refining fire, to burn away the impurities in you and to make you pure, holy and pleasing in His sight.

Read the following passages and comment on each:

Ps. 66:8-10 _____
Mal. 3:1-4 _____
Isa. 48:10 _____
Acts 14:19-22 _____
2 Cor. 4:17-18 _____
1 Pet. 1:6-9 _____
Heb. 12:9-11 _____
James 1:2-4 _____

It is easy to acknowledge and to honor God when you are comfortable and when you feel secure. And you should praise the Lord at such times, because He is the source of your comfort and your security. Paul wrote, "rejoice in the Lord always . . ." "Always" includes the good times. It is not so easy, though, to offer praises to God when times are difficult. Of course, "always" includes difficult times as well. Perhaps this is why the writer of Hebrews speaks of a "sacrifice of praise" (Heb. 13:15). Our God is good "all the time," and is always worthy of worship and honor. Trust Him. He is faithful!

**Our worship must not depend upon our
circumstances matching our expectations!**

KEY IDEAS:

**God is in charge
God wants us pure and holy
Everything God does is good
Our worship expresses our trust**

LESSON 5



THE FIFTH KEY:

Connect Praise and Prayer

Prayer is very much a part of Christian worship; it is direct communication with God. Prayer can be a private matter, spoken or unspoken; or prayers can be corporate, usually offered by an individual in an assembly of believers. It is important that you see prayer as a more than coming to God with your requests and desires. While these things are certainly *part* of prayer, your prayer life must also include praise and thanksgiving.

The best example of the rich prayer life is, of course, found in Jesus' life on earth. Throughout the gospel accounts we find Jesus praying in all situations. Prayer was an important part of Jewish worship in the first Century, and Jesus' disciples were certainly familiar with the priestly prayers offered at the Temple and the prayers of the synagogue services. Still it was to Jesus that they came with their request, "Teach us to pray" (Lk. 11:1).

You are no doubt very familiar with the formula for prayer that Jesus taught his disciples. Notice that it begins, not with a petition, but with praise-- "Our Father in heaven, holy is Your name . . ." We can hardly speak those words without thinking of Ps. 100:4, "enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise . . .," or Ps. 95:2, "Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song." The acknowledgment of God and the giving of thanks is the natural starting place for the believer's prayer.

PRAYER AND TRUST

Read Php. 4:6-7. What does vs. 6 teach you not to do? _____
_____ What does vs. 6 say that you should do? _____
_____ What, according to vs. 6, should your attitude be as
you approach the throne of God? _____ What is
the promise of vs. 7? _____

Notice the relationship between thankfulness and prayer in the following
verses: Jas. 5:13; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess 5:17-18. Why do you think that a
thankful attitude plays such an important role in the Christian's prayer life?

Trust feeds worship -- worry impedes worship

Read Matt. 6:25-33. Once again you are taught not to be anxious.
What is anxiety? _____ What
causes anxiety? _____
_____ Do you think anxiety is detrimental
to a person's relationship with God? If so, why? _____
_____ What is the "bottom line?"
What are Christians to do? (See vs. 33) _____

Read and comment on each of the following passages:

1 Pet. 5:7 _____
Ps. 55:22 _____
Ps. 62:8 _____
Prov. 3:5-6 _____

Read Eph. 5:19-20. What does Paul instruct his readers to do
"always" in vs. 20? _____
Read Col. 2:6-7. With what should the Christian "overflow?" _____

Read the following and write down what each teaches you to be thankful for:

1 Cor. 15:57 _____

2 Cor. 2:14 _____

2 Cor. 9:15 _____

Rom. 1:8 _____

Rom. 6:17 _____

Php. 1:3 _____

1 Tim. 1:12 _____

What are some specific things that God has done for you that you can thank Him for? _____

In what ways has His grace been manifested in your life? _____

KEY IDEAS:

Trust feeds worship

Anxiety impedes worship

God has given us much to thank Him for

Praise is the foundation of our prayer life

LESSON 6



THE SIXTH KEY: **Recognize the Benefits** **of Worship**

THE BENEFITS OF A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Read Ps. 103:2-5. What, according to this verse, are the benefits of knowing and serving God?

Read Eph. 1:3-14. Notice that the blessings of God are made available to those who are "in Christ." Even though God is good and He makes the "rain fall on the just and the unjust," it is clear that spiritual blessings come through Christ. Is there any way that you can know that you have received these "spiritual blessings?" (See vv. 13-14 and Rom. 8:16)

THE BENEFITS OF YIELDED HEARTS

Read Matt. 23:12; Lk 18:13-14; 1 Pet. 5:5-7. What is the common warning in all these verses? _____

_____ What is the common promise in all these verses? _____

In Isa. 66:1-2 we read:

"This is what the LORD says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the LORD. "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word."

Again you can see the importance of a humble and repentant heart and a respect for God and His Word. You can't expect that the works of your hands, no matter how well crafted, will be honored by God. God honors a pure heart. See Matt. 5:8.

Read 2 Chron. 7:14. What four things does God require of His people? That they: _____ and _____ and _____ his _____ and _____ from their _____
What is his three-fold promise? _____

Read Ps. 33:12-22. Hope is one of God's greatest gifts to a nation. A people that is humble before God (i.e., a worshiping nation) is a people with a glorious future, because God's love is unending.

THE BENEFITS OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Second Chron. 7:14 instructs God's people to "seek His face." You might recall that David's psalm, recorded for us in 1 Chron. 16:11, gives a similar instruction. In both the Hebrew and Greek languages (the original languages of the Old and New Testaments) the word which means "face" also means "presence." What do Ps. 95:2 and Ps. 100:2 teach us about how we should come into the presence of God? _____

_____ Read Isa. 12:2. It is interesting that God Himself provides us with the means to come into His presence. This passage tells us that the LORD is our *strength* and that the LORD is our *song*. The psalmist writes in Ps. 22:3 that God "inhabits the praises" of His people [". . . you are the praise of Israel," NIV]. It is clear that, when worship is true, the Lord is present. Or, to put it another way, there is no true worship apart from the presence of God.

Read Ps. 42:1-2, Ps. 84:1-2. Describe the psalmist's attitude, as it is expressed in these passages _____

GOD SEEKS TRUE WORSHIPERS

Read Jn. 4:23. Most of the time when I read this passage I am drawn to the fact that God's people are called to worship him in "spirit and in truth." That is such a profound truth that its significance makes it easy to miss the next phrase: "for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks." It is good for you to know that God is seeking people who honestly and fervently and biblically worship Him. God is calling you to be that kind of worshiper!

Read Ps. 50:23 in several versions. How do you understand the first phrase of the verse? _____

We know that God has blessed us and we are thankful. It is an awesome thing, though, to think that somehow our worship blesses God and brings Him glory.

KEY IDEAS:

The Father seeks worshipers
We are to seek the presence of God
God is blessed by the praises of His people
God Himself will exalt the humble of heart

LESSON 7



THE SEVENTH KEY: **Let the Holy Spirit Lead**

THE NECESSITY OF A SPIRIT-LED LIFE

Read Ex. 33:15-16. In what way is a believer different from an unbeliever? Read Jn. 3:3, 5-6; Rom. 8:9 and 1 Cor. 12:3. What brings the added dimension to a Christian's life? _____

Do you think the Holy Spirit is at work in the lives of all or just some Christians? Explain your answer. _____

Rewrite the last sentence of Rom. 8:9 to make it a positive statement. _____

Read Ez. 36:26-28 and Rom. 8:5-8. What is necessary if a person is to please God? _____

Andrew Murray, in his book *The Spirit of Christ*, makes the following statement which is worthy of your consideration:

"It is only where the Spirit truly and unceasingly has the entire lead and will rule in the life of worship that He will have the power to lead and rule in the life of practical obedience. If I am to deny self in my relationships with fellowmen, to conquer selfishness and temper and lack of love, I must first learn to deny self in my relationship with God."

THE BENEFITS OF A SPIRIT-LED LIFE

Read each of the following and record your observations:

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND WORSHIP

Read John 4:23-24; Php. 3:3 (Rom. 2:29) _____

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND JOY

Read Lk. 10:21; Acts 13:52; 1 Thess. 1:6 _____

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND PEACE

Read Rom. 8:6, 14:17-18 _____

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND FELLOWSHIP

Read 2 Cor. 13:14; Php. 2:1-2 _____

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND POWER

Read Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 2:4-5; Eph. 3:16-19; 2 Tim. 1:7 _____

Evangelical Christians know the Holy Spirit (Holy Ghost) to be the third person of the divine Trinity. We should note that He is referred to in Scripture by other names as well. In Romans 8, Paul calls Him "The Spirit of life," "the Spirit of God," "the Spirit of Christ," "the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead," and "the Spirit of sonship/adoption." Other biblical names for the Holy Spirit include "the Spirit of holiness" (Rom. 1:4), "the Spirit of truth" (Jn. 15:26), "the eternal Spirit" (Heb. 9:14), "the Spirit of grace" (Zech. 2:10; Heb. 10:29), "the Spirit of glory" (1 Pet. 4:14), and "the Spirit of the Lord" (Lk. 4:18; 2 Cor. 3:17). Jesus called Him the "Comforter," the "*parakletos*," our helper.

Think about how each of these names aids us in our understanding of the person and activity of the Holy Spirit.

Consider the following ways that the Holy Spirit works in your life.

- 1) It is the Holy Spirit who convinces us of sin and who enables us to trust Christ for salvation. (Jn. 16:7-8)
- 2) The abiding presence of the Spirit in our lives is the guarantee of God's promise of our redemption. (1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 1:13-14; Rom 8:16)
- 3) The Holy Spirit is our teacher; He provides us with illumination and understanding of God's word. (Jn. 16:13-14)
- 4) The Holy Spirit provides both the power and the wisdom necessary to minister effectively to the needs of others. (Rom. 8:26; 2 Cor. 3:6)
- 5) The Holy Spirit communicates the will of God to our spirits and inspires obedience. (Ez. 36:27)

Remember Jesus' words in John 4:24 and consider Gal. 3:3. Why is it important to "let the Spirit lead" as we come to worship God? _____

KEY IDEAS:

The Holy Spirit is ever-present
We are to worship God in Spirit and in truth
The Holy Spirit is our comforter, enabler and guide

LESSON 8



THE EIGHTH KEY: *Celebrate Christ*

WORSHIP IS A CELEBRATION

Read Ps. 145:1-9. In these verses we get a picture for King David and the nation of Israel worshipping and praising and honoring the Lord. They celebrate God's goodness and joyfully sing of His righteousness (vs. 7). Of course there are times for quiet meditation and silence before the Lord our God, however, this is not the biblical norm. The presence of God is a place for celebration. The people of God are encouraged to rejoice, to shout, to sing, and even to dance before the Lord. Read Ps. 149:1-4 and 150:1-6. These psalms certainly seem to describe an attitude of celebration! What ways are given here by which the Lord might be praised? _____

Read each of the following passages. How do you see the people of God celebrating in each?

1 Sam. 4:4 _____

2 Sam. 6:14 _____

1 Chr. 15:29 _____

Ezr. 3:11 _____

Ps. 30:11 _____

Ps. 33:3 _____

Ps. 47:1 _____

Ps. 71:23 _____

Isa. 12:6 _____

Do you think that a "spirit of celebration" is an important part of the life of the church? Why or why not? _____

GODLY WORSHIP BALANCES LIBERTY AND DIGNITY

At the same time that we are directed to rejoice in the presence of God, we are also reminded to maintain an element of dignity. We are, after all, in the presence of the King of the Universe! Read 1 Cor. 14:40 and compare 1 Cor. 14:33. What is to be the manner of our corporate worship?

While, on the one hand, we are to worship God in a manner which freely expresses our joy, we must, on the other hand, be sure that it is an honest reflection of our relationship with Him. As we have already seen, if we are to please God, we must allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit of God and not by the desires of the flesh. There is much which might appeal to our fleshly nature that would be inappropriate for the worship of God! Read Eph. 4:30. How might one "grieve the Holy Spirit?" _____

_____ The way to freely worship God and, at the same time, avoid the excesses that often accompany a worldly celebration is to let God Himself direct. Read Jn. 8:36 and 2 Cor. 3:17. Where is true freedom found? _____

A godly celebration is an orderly celebration, a "regal" celebration; but, if it is directed by the Holy Spirit, it will also be joyful, inspiring, and beautiful.

TRUE WORSHIP FOCUSES ON CHRIST

Read Dan. 7:13-14 and compare Matt. 28:18; Col. 1:17-18 and Rev. 1:12-18. Who do you think the "one like a son of man" is? Explain your answer. _____

According to Daniel's vision, how will "all peoples, nations and men of every language" respond to Him? _____

Only Christian worship is true worship. Even though that sounds like a narrow-minded and politically incorrect statement, remember that Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father except through me" (Jn. 14:6). The truth is that it is in Christ and Christ alone that we find our means to come into the presence of God the Father. Read Eph. 5:20; Php. 2:9-11; and 1 Pet. 4:11. Notice how Christ serves as the mediator between the church and God the Father. God receives praise, honor and thanksgiving *through* Christ Jesus the Son. Read 1 Tim. 2:5 where Christ's role as mediator is explicitly expressed.

REASONS TO CELEBRATE!

CHRIST IS OUR REDEEMER

Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:18-19

CHRIST IS OUR KING

Lk. 23:3; Jn 18:37; Rev. 17:14

CHRIST HAS TRIUMPHED AND IN HIM WE HAVE VICTORY

Rom. 8:37; 1 Cor. 15:57; 1 Jn. 5:4-5

KEY IDEAS:

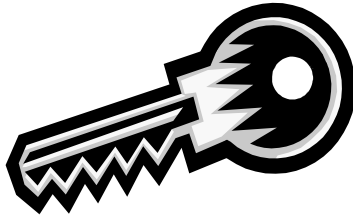
In the Spirit there is Freedom

God is not the Author of Confusion

Christ is the focus of all True Worship

When we worship, we express the joy of our salvation

LESSON 9



THE NINTH KEY:

Know Your Priestly Role

A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS

Read Ex. 19:5-6. It was God's plan that His people should be a kingdom of _____ and a _____ nation. We know that Israel did not "obey God fully" and that it was necessary for Him to establish a priestly class to fulfill the functions of the priesthood. Read 1 Pet. 2:4-5, 9. Under the new covenant, the ideal of the priesthood of all believers is restored to the people of God. What are the two responsibilities of this priesthood? (see vs. 5 and vs. 9) _____

Read 2 Cor. 5:17-18. What have we become since we have been reconciled to God? _____ What is "reconciliation?" _____

Notice that Paul calls believers "ambassadors" in vs. 20. What does an ambassador do? _____

It is interesting to note that the very first Christian believers took their role as ministers of the gospel seriously. They were under such intense persecution that they were forced to leave their homes. Wherever they went, however, they shared the gospel. As a result, the church grew on a daily basis. (See Acts 8:1, 4).

In the centuries that followed, this ideal was abandoned and the church re-established a priesthood. One of the great benefits of the Reformation is that it restored to the church the concept of the priesthood of all believers. We need to look to no other person as a mediator between God and ourselves. All believers have access to the presence of God; all Christians may participate fully in the worship of God and the witness for Christ!

Read Matt. 27:50-51 a. The rending of the temple veil was an actual historical event, but it is packed with symbolism. How do you understand its significance? _____

OFFERING SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES

You might wonder, what spiritual sacrifices am I, as a member of the "kingdom of priests," to offer to God? You may find your answer in Heb. 13:15-16. From this passage we can see that your ministry has two parts. First, you are to offer up to God the sacrifice of praise. Second, you are to offer to others a sacrifice of service.

THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE

Read each of the following passages and make one observation about the sacrifice of praise:

Ps. 22:23 _____

Ps. 34:2-3 _____

Ps. 40:3 _____

Ps. 50:23 _____

Ps. 69:30-31 _____

THE SACRIFICE OF SERVICE

Read each of the following passages and make one observation about the sacrifice of service:

1 Sam. 15:22 _____

Ps. 51:16-17 _____

Prov. 21:3 _____

Hos. 6:6 _____

Mic. 6:8 _____

REPRESENTING CHRIST TO THE WORLD

Read Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15. What has Christ commissioned His followers to do? _____

_____ Jesus issued these "marching orders" to the eleven remaining disciples. Do you think these words apply to them alone, or to the church as a whole? Explain your answer. _____

Read each of the following passages and notice how we are to represent Christ.

Matt. 5:16 _____

Jn. 15:8 _____

Rom. 15:5-6 _____

Rom. 12:9-21 _____

Php. 2:14-16a _____

1 Thess. 4:11-12 _____

Heb. 10:23-24 _____

1 Pet. 2:12 _____

1 Pet. 4:11 _____

KEY IDEAS:

The Church is a Priesthood of Believers
Christians serve as Christ's Representatives to the World
You are to offer Sacrifices of praise to God and service to Men

LESSON 10



THE TENTH KEY: Please God, not Man

If we are to honor God in our corporate worship, we need to determine what kind of worship pleases Him. We know from Jn. 4:23 that God wants to be worshiped in Spirit and in truth. We know, as well, that God wants to be worshiped with an undivided heart (See Ez 11:19; Ps. 86:11).

What, you might ask, could prevent the people of God from pleasing God in their worship? Certainly worship of idols and other forms of false worship are displeasing to God -- the first two commandments teach us this clearly enough. But is idolatry a problem in the 20th century church? Explain your answer? _____

_____ Putting idols aside for a moment, do you think it is possible to worship the living and true God in a way that displeases Him? Isn't God happy with whatever we might choose to offer Him! Many people think so; but let's search the Scripture together and see what God Himself says about it . . .

WORSHIP

Isa. 29:13 _____

Zeph. 3:16-17 _____

Isa. 12:2 _____

The main components of corporate worship are: songs of praise, prayer, giving of offerings, and the proclamation of God's Word. Read the following passages and record what pleases or displeases God in each.

SONGS OF PRAISE

Ps. 33:1-3 _____
Ps. 47:6-7 _____
Isa. 12:6 _____
Amos 5:23-24 _____

GIVING OF OFFERINGS

Deut. 15:10 _____
Prov. 15:8 _____
Prov. 21:27 _____
Mal. 3:8-10 _____
Matt. 6:1-2 _____
2 Cor. 9:7 _____

PRAYERS

Eccl. 5:1-2 _____
Matt. 6:5,7 _____
Lk. 11:9-10 _____
Jn. 14:12-14 _____

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

Ez. 33:30-32 _____
Jer. 6:17 _____
Lk. 11:27-28 _____
Jas. 1:22 _____

In Prov. 29:25 we are taught not to fear man, but to trust God. The fear of what "others might think" or "what others might say" is probably the greatest hindrance to Christian worship. How do you think that fear of man might affect your worship? _____

Read 1 Cor. 10:32-33. How, if at all, do you think that this passage applies to worship? State and explain your views. _____

Write a paraphrase of each of the following passages that deal with the fear of man.

Isa. 51:12-13

Lk. 12:4

Jn. 12:42-43

You must remember that the focus of all true worship is Christ. You must also remember that all true worship is personal. You may worship with others, but true worship is a reflection--an external expression --of your personal, private relationship with God.

KEY IDEAS:

God looks on the heart

We must be doers of the Word

Fear of man hinders the worship of God

Not everything called "Worship" is honoring to God

LESSON 11



THE ELEVENTH KEY:

Find the Historical Perspective

The worship of God in the church of the 21st Century is built upon a rich tradition and heritage. God has had a "people" from the very beginning who desired to serve and honor Him. See Rom. 11:1-5. Even during those times when it seemed that faith was not to be found anywhere, still there remained a faithful "remnant." Today we refer to God's faithful people as "the church." The church, by definition, is "the assembly of believers." The Greek word for "church," *ekklesia*, is a combination of two words; one meaning "from," or "out of," and the other meaning "to call." The church, then, is that body of people who have been "called out of" the world and, at the same time, called into the kingdom of God. Read each of the following passages and note what each tells us that believers have been called from or what we have been called to:

- 1 Cor. 1:9 _____
Eph. 1:18-20 _____
Php. 3:14 _____
1 Pet. 2:9 _____
1 Pet. 5:10 _____

The church may or may not be assembled; when the church does come together however, it is usually for the purpose of worship.

The earliest references to church gatherings in the New Testament present a picture quite different from the one in our minds when we think of "going to church." Consider the following verses: Acts 2:1, 4:31, 5:12, 12:12; Rom. 16:5; Phm. 1b-2 and list the places where believers met together. _____

It is interesting to read the words that Ignatius, one of the early church leaders, wrote to the believers in Ephesus:

"Take heed, then, often to come together to give thanks to God, and show forth His praise. For when you assemble frequently in the same place, the powers of Satan are destroyed and the destruction at which he aims is prevented by the unity of your faith."

While there does not seem to have been any consistent "liturgy" to be followed when the early believers met together, the Scripture and the writings of the early church do show us some common elements. These would be: giving thanks; the singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs; prayers; the reading and teaching of the Word; and the administration of the sacraments (i.e., baptism and the Lord's Supper).

Read the following passages and note the elements of worship mentioned in each:

Acts 2:41-42

1 Tim. 4:13

1 Cor. 10:16-17

Eph. 5:19-20

Col. 3:15-17

1 Cor. 14:26

Many of the worship practices of the early believers seem to have been borrowed from those of the synagogue. This is natural, since the earliest believers were Jews. It is clear that it was not their desire to be anything other than Jews. They considered themselves to be the true Israel, so the Temple and the synagogues were theirs! It was only when opposition became insurmountable that they took the gospel to the streets. See Acts 2:46-47, 3:1, 9:17-22, 13:14-15, 17:16-17, 19:8-9. The main elements of synagogue worship--praise, prayer, and instruction based on reading of Scripture--are clearly evident in Christian worship through the ages.

Throughout the church's history styles of worship have changed and evolved. At certain times and places worship tended to be very formal while, at other times and places, it was more spontaneous and informal. The essential elements of Christian worship, however, have remained fairly constant. It is important not to equate style with substance.

Contrast formal and informal worship and what you consider to be the advantages and the disadvantages of each. _____

Do you think one is more pleasing to God than the other? Why? _____

Some see style as the point of difference between “true” worship and false worship. In reality though, it is not simplicity or complexity, robes as opposed to blue jeans, or hymnbooks rather than PowerPoint slides that determine the validity and vitality of worship. You can, after all, “go through the motions” in any style! On the other hand, you can worship sincerely and from the heart in any style!

The church through the ages has been called to honor God and to edify one another. Believers have endeavored to accomplish this by drawing upon all the means at their disposal. This should be our objective and our method as well. Find a way to express the joy of your salvation and to exalt the name of Jesus. Let the Spirit and Word build your faith and understanding. But above all, worship with your whole heart – this is pleasing to the Lord!

KEY IDEAS:

- The Church is a people, called of God**
- The Church can assemble anywhere, anytime**
- The content of worship is more important than style**

LESSON 12



THE TWELFTH KEY: Live Your Life as Worship

In 2 Chron. 2:4-6 we read that Solomon's purpose was to build a Temple where God could be worshiped through sacrifice and the burning of incense. He understood, however, that God would not be contained in any building; it was a "Temple for His Name," a place where the God of all creation would be honored (Deut. 12:10-11; 2 Chron. 2:1). It was also to be a place of gathering for God's people at the times of the appointed feasts and was to serve as a site for "services of worship."

That old temple, in all its forms, is gone. The sacrifices to atone for the sin of the people are now unnecessary; the Lamb of God, the true and perfect sacrifice, has been offered once and for all (See Col. 2:16-17). And yet there remains a place where God's name is honored and where He is praised and worshipped.

Read 1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:21-22. What do these verses say about God's temple? _____

You see, Christ is the true temple-builder, we are that holy temple, and the Spirit of Christ inhabits us! There is no need for believers to go to a particular place to worship God; God has come to us!

In Rom. 12:1 Paul refers to a particular kind of sacrifice. What does he say we should offer? _____ In what ways might you offer yourself to God as a sacrifice? _____

The KJV calls this our "reasonable service." Why is this reasonable?
(Consider 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 5:15; 1 Pet. 1:18-19). _____

Even as God was worshiped in the old temple, through sacrifice, He is worshiped in His new temple. Now, however, the sacrifice is one of will; sacrificing our fleshly desires--our purposes and agendas--for the sake of His. It is when we can honestly say, "not my will but Thine be done," that we have become living sacrifices unto God. Consider Luke 9:23.

Without in any way diminishing the importance of our assembling together (Heb. 10:25), it must be acknowledged that, for the Christian, the whole of life is continuous worship. True worship is free from the confines of Temple, synagogue, church building or meeting hall. Every action of a Christian's life; every word from his mouth should honor his Savior.



Read the following passages. What are we encouraged to do in each? When and where are we encouraged to do it?

- 1 Cor. 15:58 _____
- Php. 4:4 _____
- 1 Thess. 5:16-18 _____
- Gal. 6:9-10 _____
- Heb. 13:15-16 _____

YOUR LIFESTYLE AS WORSHIP

Worship is honoring God. As worshipers, then, we must be careful to live in such a way that our lives bring honor to Him. We are to encourage one another in the body of Christ, live in peace with our neighbors, and be blameless in our relationships with those outside the faith.

Read the following passages. Consider in each, how your lifestyle reflects your relationship to Christ.

Rom. 12:11-18 _____

Eph. 5:8-10 _____

Php. 1:27-28 _____

Php. 2:3-5 _____

1 Thess. 4:1 _____

1 Thess. 4:11-12 _____

Titus 3:8 _____

Jas. 3:13 _____

1 Pet. 2:12 _____

2 Pet. 3:10-11 _____

1 Jn. 2:3-6 _____

KEY IDEAS:

You are the temple of the living God
Everything in your life should honor God
You were bought with a price, you belong to Christ