



# ELEMENTS

Week 9: Worship

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## RECALL

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### **DISCUSS YOUR EXPERIENCE:**

Last week we discussed spiritual gifts. Subsequently, some of you took a survey to assist in determining your specific spiritual gift(s). Take a few moments and share with the group your primary spiritual gift and how you could see utilizing this gift at The Church on Rush Creek.

### **VIDEO:**

Show the first of the three sections of the “Worship” video to the group. Discuss your observations.

### **ICEBREAKER:**

Have everyone in your group look up the word “worship” in the concordance of their bibles. Take some time to look up the passages listed and discuss the various ways in which worship is personified. How many different acts of worship can you identify?

This week’s study is all about worship, which is the culmination of everything we’ve learned in the last several weeks. Worship embodies not simply what you believe about God, but what you actually do in response to your belief in God.

### **FOCUS:**

At first glance, “worship” seems fairly simple to define and understand. Its noun and verb tenses describe it as “worthiness, respect, or reverence paid to a divine being or supernatural power; idolization of someone or something.” Unfortunately, these definitions are somewhat insufficient. They fail to articulate or illustrate the nuances of spiritual worship. In order to completely grasp the profundity of worship we must seek to move beyond our standard definitional understanding.

Worship is best defined as the personal and corporate, life-changing response(s) to the realization that without God, life itself would have no true meaning or purpose. The individual or church that unconditionally accepts the Christology of Christ, believing that Jesus is who He and the Bible claim Him to be, will be open to developing the desire to “worship Him in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:24) This truth includes the realization that God is both author and instigator of worship; it’s from Him and all about Him.

Jesus Christ is both the object of, and the incarnate model for, Christian worship. His ultimate act of worship, sacrifice on the cross so that we might have a relationship with God, made it possible for others to experience authentic biblical worship. A relationship with God through Jesus Christ is the prerequisite to understanding and activating true worship. As a Christ-follower we should endeavor to worship the way Jesus did, with complete self-abandonment for the benefit of others. A person with Jesus at the center of his/her life will reactively respond to God through passionate biblical worship, which is manifested in biblical community, continuing spiritual growth, generosity, evangelism, and service.



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## REVEAL

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### PRAY FOR GUIDANCE:

Now take a few moments and ask God to help you understand, grasp and apply the spiritual truths of this week's selected Bible passage(s).

Romans 12:1-2 (HCSB)

<sup>1</sup> "Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God."

Hebrews 13:15-16 (HCSB)

<sup>15</sup> "Therefore, through Him let us continually offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of our lips that confess His name. <sup>16</sup> Don't neglect to do what is good and to share, for God is pleased with such sacrifices."

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## REFLECT

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### UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT:

As a group, utilize your study bibles or on-line resources to help you answer as many of the following questions about the selected passage as you can. Keep in mind, these questions are intended to be a guide and you may not be able to find all of the answers or have time to address each one in the group.

1. Who? Who wrote the book and/or passage? Who was the intended audience? Who are the main characters in the story?
2. What? What are some of the key words and their meanings in the passage?
3. When? When was the book or passage written? What was historically occurring at the time?
4. Where? In what geographic location did the story take place? What was the setting?
5. Why? Why was this book or passage written? What was the main purpose?

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## RECOGNIZE

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### KNOW THE TRUTH(S):

Keeping in mind the context of the selected passage (see **Reflect**), read the Scripture as a group and carefully take note of the truth(s) and/or promises God provides. Look for God's promises, plans, provisions, & purposes. What did it mean? What does it mean? What meaning is unclear?

Another way to think about the "**Recognize**" process is to consider it a type of "verse pulverization." This technique is much like the process of tenderizing a cut of meat by pounding it out prior to cooking. By intentionally expanding on selected words, segments, or phrases, you are able to get much more out of the passage than you thought possible.

Our two selected passages are almost parallels of each other. Use the "**Recognize**" or "verse pulverization" process to find the similarities and differences.

1. "Therefore"- The two authors were imploring us to sacrifice to God through worship based on what premises?



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2. "By the mercies of God" and "Through Him"- What mercies did God show us through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ? Why should these be the basis of our worship?
  3. "I urge you" and "Let us continually"- What do these phrases say about the importance of personal and corporate worship?
  4. "To present your bodies" and "Offer up to God" - What is the significance of the words "present" and "offer"? Does these words indicate that worship is two-sided? How so? What is the difference between authentic worship and idolatry?
  5. "A living sacrifice" and "A sacrifice of praise" - Spend some time discussing the correlation between sacrifice and worship. Why is it important to worship God through both words and actions?
  6. "Holy and pleasing to God" and "God is pleased"- In Genesis 4, God accepted Abel's offering and rejected Cain's. What made the difference to God?
  7. "Do not be conformed to this age" and "Don't neglect to do what is good" - What do these phrases tell us about how a Christian's life should look? How is this manifested in our worship?

**VIDEO:**

Show the second of the three sections of the "Worship" video to the group. Discuss your observations.

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## RESPOND

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**TAKE ACTION:**

You've now prayed asking God to **R**eveal Himself and help you understand the selected passage; you've **R**elected on the context in which the passage was written; you've **R**ecognized God's timeless truths; and now you must **R**espond. To help determine your response, take a look at and answer the following questions:

We are called to **R**espond to God through worship in several practical ways. Over the past few weeks we have studied some basic "**E**lements" of our Christian life that are directly related to our spiritual act of worship.

1. Quiet Time: We are commanded to, above all else, develop a personal relationship with Christ. Read Matthew 22:37-38. Over the last several weeks, have you grown in your relationship with the Lord? If not, what actions do you need to take today to make worshipping Him your top priority?
2. Scripture: The primary worship activity for growing your faith and coming closer to Christ is to reflect on scripture. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. What has this Elements study revealed to you about studying scripture? What tools can you take away that can help you study on your own in the future?
3. Prayer: Our principal pathway by which we communicate with God is through prayer. Read Philippians 4:6-7. In what ways has your prayer life been impacted over the past several weeks? As an act of worship, how should you view your prayer life differently in the future?
4. Telling Your Story: Jesus gave His disciples the "Great Commission" of our faith. Read Matthew 28:19-20. We are to use our stories to teach about His story. Equipped with the knowledge of the Elements study, how can you now go and make disciples to honor and worship Him?
5. Service: We are called to worship the Lord in service by not wasting the gifts we have been given. Read 1 Timothy 4:14-16. How are you using your spiritual gifts to serve the Lord?
6. Stewardship: Jesus taught on one final act of worship more than all of the previous five ways combined and that is stewardship. Obviously you can give or share many things God has provided you such as talents, time, or other resources. However, Jesus specifically taught on money more than both heaven and hell. The Bible mentions only sin more than financial matters. This is the priority God has placed on this topic.

