

# discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living  
Leader's Guide

## CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORLDVIEW

### LESSON 9: WHAT IS WORSHIP?

#### INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module entitled Christian Life and Worldview. This series of lessons examines the choices and practices that are essential for Christian living. To live as the Word of God teaches us means we understand that the choices we make each day affect our faith. It also means learning to pray, practising the commands of God and learning to serve others. These are important lessons for understanding the practice of Christianity. Include time to discuss these principles and how to effectively apply them to your life.

#### INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is new Christians, those who would like a refresher on the basics of Christianity, as well as those preparing to teach these Christian practices and beliefs. Also, those with an interest in Christian thought will find value in these lessons as they pertain to daily living and choices.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help you as a leader in your preparation. These lesson outlines may be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found online at [www.discipleshipessentials.org](http://www.discipleshipessentials.org).



# CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORLDVIEW

## LESSON 9: WHAT IS WORSHIP?

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to look at what Christians mean by the word “worship” and how we can be the type of worshippers that God desires.

### LEADER'S NOTE

Everyone worships something, even if they don't see themselves as religious. The things we spend our time, our money, or effort on is the thing we worship. People naturally worship something, but it is critical we do not end up worshipping the wrong things or worshipping selfishly. This lesson looks at the heart of what worship is. If your participants are accustomed to a particular method of corporate worship (such as worship songs or liturgical practice) help them to see that worship can extend to our everyday lives and a posture of our hearts. You may wish to include a time of bowing your hearts before God through song as part of this lesson, if it is appropriate to your context.

## INTRODUCTION

*Select two or three of the following questions to ask the group.*

- ❖ What are some things or people that are worshipped by the world? What does this worship look like? (Idols, false gods, popular media figures, political leaders, famous actors, etc.)
- ❖ When do you feel like you are worshipping God?
- ❖ What does a person have to do in order to worship God properly?
- ❖ What do you want to praise and thank God for right now?

## STUDY

*Instruct the group on the following points.*

- ❖ **What is Worship?** To worship means to acknowledge the quality of being worthy. When we worship God, we say that God is worthy of whatever sacrifice or honour we bring Him. To say this another way, Christians often talk about ‘praising God’, or listing the things that are admirable and praise worthy about Him. This is worship.
  - This is one reason why we were created, and why we were called to God – in order that we would worship Him ([1 Peter 2:9](#))



- God does not need our worship in the same way we need food and water, but because God is above all things and so infinitely praise worthy it is right that He should be worshipped, and in fact of benefit to us to worship He who is truly worthy. (Revelations 4:11)
  - The only thing that is worthy of worship is God alone. We worship one God, as revealed to us in the Bible. We are forbidden from worship of Idols, Angels, or elevating ourselves which is self-worship. God requires us to worship Him.
- ❖ **Worship in the Bible:** Throughout the history of God's people, worship has taken several forms. Jesus reveals to us the heart and desires of God, of which the practices and rituals of the Old Testament people were merely a picture.
- **Worship before Moses:** In the earliest days of people relating to God, there was no need for priests or buildings for people to worship in.
    - Each person worshipped God and set up their own alters to offer sacrifices.
    - People bowed, or fell before God as an act of worship.
    - Sacrifices could be animal, plants, oil, or other things that were costly. Value of the object sacrifice was necessary, otherwise it would not be a sacrifice.
    - These sacrifices were sometimes burned on stone alters. Alters were also set up as memorials.
    - Worship was not tied to a place or particular method – the only rule was that people worship the one true God alone.
    - Genesis 24:26, Genesis 12:7, Genesis 22:5
  - **Worship through the Law:** Later in the story of God's people, Moses was given the Law which contained the 10 Commandments, rules for holy living, daily practice and sacrifice.
    - The purpose of the Law was to show people their need for forgiveness, and to set the standard for holiness.
    - The Law also functioned to structure society, regulate worship and keep the people free from the worship of false gods.
    - Sacrifices were made with very strict guidelines and in specific places, in order to receive forgiveness for sin.
    - Particular sacrifices were needed for particular sins, animals were sacrificed
    - Only priests could approach the holy place of God, people were separated from the dwelling place of God. Only particular people could qualify to be priests.
    - Sacrifices were made continually, as an act of faith that God would one day provide the perfect sacrifice that would cleanse them from sin. (Hebrews 10:1-4)
  - **Worship After Jesus:** In the New Testament, we read about a very different way of worship. Jesus set out a new set of priorities for us – which had always been God's priorities.
    - Instead of physical sacrifices, God asks for our whole lives and calls us to be 'living sacrifices' (Romans 12:1-2)



- o Instead of temples and alters, Jesus said true worship happens in the spiritual realm, and therefore our inner spirit worship's God. This can happen anywhere.
  - o God dwells in us through the Holy Spirit, so we no longer have to go a Temple to meet Him, He is already with us!
  - o Jesus taught it wasn't enough to speak the words of praise to God, our heart and mind had to worship Him
  - o Jesus criticized false worshippers who praised God in order to impress others.
  - o Jesus didn't do away with every ritual in worship, rather He initiated new rituals including baptism and communion which are part of our worship to Him.
  - o After Jesus death the Temple veil was torn in two, symbolizing that there was now no separation between God and men – we could come to God through our High Priest Jesus rather than human priests. This allows us to pray directly to God!
  - o Jesus established that real worship of God was sincere, from the heart, and involves our whole being.
- ❖ **How Can We Worship God Today?** Since God is deserving of all of our praise, it is important that we regularly worship Him. What does this mean? There are four areas of worship we will examine in this lesson.

- **Submission:** obedience is the sacrifice God desires. We must submit to His will, and His desires. It is a posture of the heart. God has always desired our obedience more than animal sacrifices. Those sacrifices were a tool to show the people how necessary it was that sins be paid for, and the weight of their sin. Submission to God as our authority and obedience to His laws are the foundation of true worship.
  - o [1 Samuel 15:22](#)
  - o [Amos 5:21-24](#)
  - o [Hebrews 12:28-29](#)
- **Service:** When we serve in Jesus name, that is our sacrifice. This can be giving of our time, our money, our abilities or talents. What we give in the name of God to do God's work is one act of worship. This may look like preparing food for others, teaching, exercising skill as an artist, loving our spouse or children, or working hard to earn a wage that can be used to serve God with our finances or other things.
  - o [James 1:27](#)
  - o [1 Peter 4:9-11](#)
  - o [Acts 20:35](#)
- **Song:** Music is a gift God gives us that was used throughout the Bible to worship God. There is a deep connection of our hearts, minds and bodies when we make music to God, and so it is a fitting vehicle for praise. It is common when Christians meet together to have a time of worship, which may include reading of Scripture, singing of hymns or spiritual songs. We can also use our speech or other forms of art such as paintings, stained glass or decorative fabric banners to express devotion to God.





- o [Colossians 3:16](#)
- o [Hebrews 13:15](#)
- o [Ephesians 5: 19](#)

❖ **What is the Result of True Worship?** Notice in scripture that worship is to be a continual act not an occasional one. It is a lifestyle rather than a weekly event. In modern churches there is often a time set aside for singing worship songs. This is valuable and honouring to God only if we sing and praise God from our heart and with sincerity. This is only one aspect of worship, but it is an important one.

- **God is Glorified:** When we worship in truth, and with our spirit God is glorified. When we speak truth about Him, and praise what He has done God is glorified. We also can demonstrate to those who do not know God who He is through our worship.
  - o [Psalm 150:1-6, Psalm 95:1-11, Psalm 24:8-10, Psalm 115:1](#)
- **We are filled with Joy:** Worship is a joyful experience! God wants us to delight in Him! We have a unique relationship with an amazing, loving, powerful God who invites us into His presence! We can also allow people who do not know God to see a glimpse of the goodness of a relationship with God through our worship.
  - o [Romans 15:13, Psalm 4:7, Psalm 16:11, Psalm 84:2, Luke 24:52](#)
- **God Draws Near to Us:** As we praise God through our lives, art, music, our speech, or acts of service we can experience God drawing near to us. Worship creates a closer relationship – and in real worship we can often experience the spiritual presence of God with us!
  - o [Psalm 22:3, James 4:8, 1 Corinthians 3:16, John 14:23, John 9:31](#)
- **We Are Changed:** When we set our sights on God and who He is, we change. Our hearts begin to love what God loves and we will not desire earthly things as we did before, and idols will not be as attractive. Putting God first orders our lives correctly and we are able to produce spiritual fruit.
  - o [Luke 4:8, John 9:38, Isaiah 40:18, Colossians 3:1-25](#)



## DISCUSSION

- ❖ When have you felt the presence of God in your worship? What were the circumstances?
- ❖ How does your local church conduct worship? Do you see the components of worship as outlined in this lesson taking place there?
- ❖ What can you do to prepare yourself for times of worship and ensure your head, heart and body are prepared for true worship?
- ❖ How can a person worship by serving others? How can serving a meal to others, for instance, be worship to God?
- ❖ How can we make sure God is the only thing we worship? How do our actions demonstrate the true object of our worship?

## PRAYER

Pray for your participants that they would be moved to worship God in spirit and in truth. Pray that they would examine their hearts and see more clearly who God is that they might praise Him. Pray that as they worship God through their whole life that God would draw near to them, give them joy, and that their hearts would be changed to be more like His. Pray that worship would become as natural as breathing, and that the hearts of the participants would ache to worship their Heavenly Father.