



reflecting Jesus

BETA

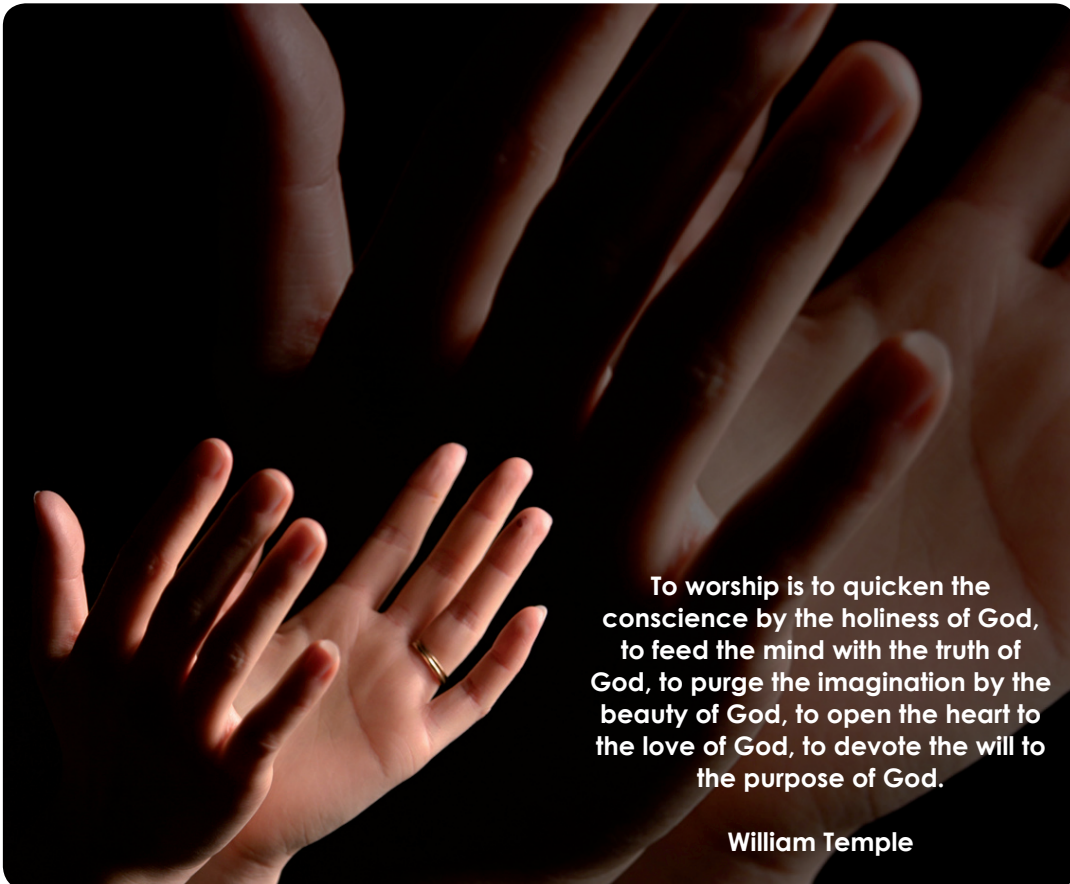
worship is an attitude
of my heart

15

?

did you know...

photo: sax.jschutt



To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.

William Temple



the facts of his story

1. What does Jesus say is the focus of our worship? (Matthew 4:10)

2. Who is it that causes us to worship God? (John 4:23)

3. What are the first two commandments in Exodus 20? Why do you think these are placed at the very beginning?

4. What does Psalm 95:6 call us to do? If worship is an act of the heart, why should it matter what position our bodies are in?

5. Read Revelation 13:11-12 and 4:6? What issue separates God's people from those who oppose God at the end of time?

the heart cannot not worship—it will worship something...

Why do you think this is?



thinking it through

1. What is the most important idea about worship that you have just read, and why?

2. How could it be possible to go to a church service and no-one be worshipping—even though they are singing and praying?



habits for reflecting the heart of Jesus ~ worshipping God alone

what is worship?

The dictionary defines worship as reverence and respect that is given to a divine being. But how do we do this towards God?

An expert in the law came to Jesus and asked him what the greatest commandment was. Jesus replied that it was to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.” (Mark 12:30).

Notice two things in this verse. First, that our love for God is with our heart, soul, mind, and strength. In other words, our love for God includes all our feelings, thoughts, and actions.

Secondly, notice the repetition of the word “all”. We are to love God not with a part of our heart, soul, mind and strength but with all of it. In other words, there is no room at all to love anything which isn't focused on God. That's why the ten commandments begin with God saying,

You shall have no other gods before a me.

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God... (Exodus 20:3-5a)

Therefore, we worship God when we reverence and respect him—which is to love him, and him supremely, with everything we are. Such worship is not something that we do just in a church service. Worship is a complete lifestyle.

worship is...

Let's unpack this idea of worship so we can see how it works in practice. The Bible says that worship includes a number of different ideas that help us to understand what it means to love and worship God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. They are:

1. **Acknowledging that God is our Creator.** “Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he

is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.” (Psalm 95:6-7)

2. **Acknowledging that there is only one true God.** “Worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.” (Psalm 96:9)
3. **Praise.** “Ezra praised the Lord, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, “Amen! Amen!” Then they bowed down and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.” (Nehemiah 8:6)
4. **Sacrifice.** “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.” (Romans 12:1)
5. **Obedience.** “Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.” (Daniel 7:27)
6. **Service.** “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’” (Luke 4:8)

While I may want to do this, my heart, soul, mind, and strength naturally wants to put other things in God's place. Yes, I certainly needed to be reminded that God wants “no other gods before me”!

the habit: dealing with other gods

Are there other gods that have made their way into our lives and are distracting the attention of our hearts, souls, minds, and strength away from the only true God? This is what we will spend some time to think about now.

A god is anything or anyone who takes our time and energy away from Jesus. What gods are preventing your heart, soul, mind and strength from giving Jesus 100% devotion?

Stop and ask the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts. Then ask the Holy Spirit, “what other gods do I...”:

- ☞ allow to direct my life?
- ☞ praise?
- ☞ sacrifice to?
- ☞ obey?
- ☞ serve?

God's method of dealing with other gods was clear. "Destroy completely all the places on the high mountains and on the hills and under every spreading tree where the nations you are dispossessing worship their gods. Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and burn their

Asherah poles in the fire; cut down the idols of their gods and wipe out their names from those places." (Deuteronomy 12:2-3) So how will you destroy your gods?

using your journal

Use your Journal to list the "gods" that have invaded your life. For each "god" that you list, what are you going to do about this? How will you "destroy completely" these things that are taking your heart's attention away from God?



putting the pieces together

In "the facts of his story" we saw that we are called to 1) worship God and him alone. Yet it is 2) God himself who is drawing us to worship him. This is because without God's influence in our minds and hearts, we would not naturally turn to worship him. 3) To remind us that God comes before everything else in our lives, the Ten Commandments begin with a call to put God first. 4) When we worship our physical position affects the way we think. So physically bowing before God powerfully reminds us that God is our creator, and we are his children. 5) Before Jesus comes, the world will be clearly divided into two groups of people: those who worship the true God in Heaven, and those who worship a man-made god.

In "thinking it through" you had a chance to begin thinking about who or what you really worship, because whether we think so or not, our hearts will worship—they cannot help themselves!

In "habits for reflecting the heart of Jesus" we took this further to really examine what it means to worship and to think deeply about the other gods that may have crept into our lives—and what we can do about it. Remember: worship is not something we do in a meeting, but an attitude towards God that we carry in our hearts at all times.



my time with God

This week we will focus on a different aspect of worship. Take one text each day and read it. Pretend that this text is addressed personally to you. Use the text to shape the way you pray back to God.

1. Acknowledging that God is our Creator. Psalm 95:6-7
2. Acknowledging that there is only one true God. Psalm 96:9
3. Praise. Nehemiah 8:6
4. Sacrifice. Romans 12:1
5. Obedience. Daniel 7:27
6. Service. Luke 4:8



pass it on!

Can you teach someone why worship is an attitude of the heart?



extra help

1. Celebration of Discipline, "Worship" (chapter 11), by Richard Foster.
2. Desire of Ages, (chapter 19) "At Jacob's Well", by E G White.