

Discussion Starter: What comes to mind when you think of worshipping God?

Key Text: *“Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”* (Acts 2:47)

In our series called “Forward,” we’ve been learning various qualities of the early church in Acts 2 that led to their impacting the world with the Gospel. In this final lesson in the series, we see the importance and impact of worship in the church. In today’s text (Acts 2:47), we find the early Christians praising God with heartfelt worship.

1. God is seeking people who will genuinely worship Him.

“But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.” (John 4:23)

It is surprising to think that the God of creation would be seeking among His creation people who would worship Him! Yet, that is what Jesus said the Father is doing (Jn.4:23)—in some mysterious way, God is satisfied when we respond to His great love in worship. God makes Himself at home in our praise (Ps.22:3).

Jesus Himself takes note of people who truly appreciate Him, but also of those who take His blessings for granted. After Jesus had cleansed ten lepers of their leprosy, only one, a Samaritan, returned to thank Jesus. Jesus asked him, *“Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? 18 Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?”* (Lk.17:17-18)

In the home of Simon the Pharisee, Jesus acknowledged the woman who washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair, anointing them with the expensive perfume in her alabaster box. Jesus also noted that self-righteous, critical Simon did not provide any service at all. Jesus said: *“I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little”* (Luke 7:47).

Discuss: Why do you think worship and gratitude are so important to the Lord?

Discuss: What can we do to increase our worship and gratitude toward God?

2. Genuine worship of God is both emotive and intelligent.

Look again at John 4:23 and note that Jesus says worship of God must be both passionate (*“in spirit”*) and properly informed (*“in truth”*). Worship of God is to be both emotive and intelligent—not one or the other. God is not interested in mindless or passionless worship; rather, He wants worshippers whose hearts and minds are engaged and actively responding to all He is and does.

Discuss: How can we ensure that our worship of God is in spirit and in truth?

3. Genuine worship comes from spending time with Jesus.

After the disciples watched Jesus walk on water and calm the stormy sea, they worshipped Him without hesitation saying, *“Truly you are the Son of God”* (Mt.14:33). Their spontaneous, genuine worship resulted from simply spending time with Him. When we diligently seek the Lord and abide with Him, we will echo the words of the Psalmist: *“Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! ⁷ For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand”* (Psalm 95:6-7).

Discuss: Why does spending time with Jesus cause our hearts to praise Him?

Discuss: What key words and phrases about worship do you see in Psalm 95:6-7?

4. There are two kinds of worship: Personal and Corporate.

- **Personal Worship** – This is when a believer worships God in private.

Jesus refers to this in Matthew 6:6 when He speaks of closing the door and praying in secret. Jesus Himself spent private time in prayer and worship of His Father (Mk.1:35). Personal worship of God—also called a “Quiet Time”—is essential to a Christian’s spiritual health and growth.

Discuss: What should a “Quiet Time” include to get maximum spiritual benefit?

Discuss: Read Isaiah 6:1-8. How did Isaiah’s personal worship experience impact his life?

- **Corporate Worship** – This is when believers gather together to worship God.

In the Text for today’s lesson, we find an example of corporate worship: “[The early church was] praising God...” Paul emphasizes in I Corinthians 14 that there must be order in corporate worship—no chaos or confusion. Worshipping the Lord with other believers has a unique, supernatural way of renewing our joy and rekindling our fire for God: *“Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another...”* (Heb.10:24-25)

Discuss: Read Psalm 73:1-28. What impact did corporate worship have upon Asaph, the author of Psalm 73? Note especially vv.16-17, 23-26, 28.

Discuss: What key words and phrases do you see in the description of the corporate worship that will occur in Heaven per Revelation 7:9-12?

For Further Study:

Free online commentary of the Book of Acts at www.enduringword.com

Real Worship by Warren Wiersbe

“What is a Biblical Theology of Worship?” article at www.gotquestions.org