

Worship

In our churches today we often think of worship as singing together before the sermon is delivered. Although this can be a form of worship it is a mistake to think that is all there is. Worship is the attitude of our hearts before a Holy God. It is the way we live every moment of our lives in response to Christ's love and sacrifice.

If singing the same chorus over and over out of tune in church does not always make your heart glad do not despair. You are not alone. I feel as if my best times of worship have not even taken place in church. Rather they have just been spending time with the Lord in the woods or doing something to help someone in need. I know I can find it hard sometimes being directed to worship at a certain time for 30 minutes before a sermon. Don't get me wrong, I have had times in church singing when my heart was really in tune with what I was singing, and it was worship. Honestly there have been times alone in the woods while I was singing my prayers and that is worship as well.

Worship can indeed include singing in church
(Psalm 95:2–3; Hebrews 13:15, Ephesians 5:19–20)

Yet worship is much more than this! Most of what we find as worship in the bible is not singing at all. Of course, every time you sing is not necessarily worship either. Just because you are singing along with a song on the radio does not mean you are worshipping. Likewise, just because you are singing along with a song in church does not mean you are worshipping either.

So, what exactly is worship in the bible?

There are several Greek and Hebrew words translated as the word "worship" in English. I looked up the word worship in several dictionaries and they usually include, feeling or reverence, adoration to a deity, to bow down to honor, respect, devotion, religious practice, sacrifice and things of that nature. In conclusion I felt the note at the bottom of Vines Dictionary had the clearest summary.

WORSHIP

(1) The worship of God is nowhere defined in Scripture. A consideration of the above verbs shows that it is not confined to praise; broadly it may be regarded as the direct acknowledgement to God, of His nature, attributes, ways and claims, whether by the outgoing of the heart in praise and thanksgiving or by deed done in such acknowledgment. (2) In Acts 17:25 therapeuo, "to serve, do service to" (so RV), is rendered "is worshiped."

(From Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

Worship is the of the heart whether it be in singing, praise or deeds. It is the way we handle ourselves in our daily life. We will look at some scripture that shows that serving others can be a form of worship. Worship can simply be acknowledging the Lord. Worship is in our daily actions. Worship is in obedience, spirit and truth. It is not just what we do, but the attitude of our heart or reason why we do it. Bowing down, prostrate, sacrifice, sing, praise and the many words used to describe worship all have one thing in common. It is an outward action or expression of what is in the heart.

I stated that not all singing in church is worship. I should stress that not all acts of service are worship either. It can be an evasive term kind of like trying to describe love. You can show love in certain actions and even in love songs. Yet those same actions can be done without genuine love. The same is true for worship. Service for the Lord is an outward action. Worship is the attitude of the heart while performing that action. Worship recognizes the Lord for who he is and in adoration and respect seeks to express it in an action or service.

I suppose first we should show who should be worshipped. We find in scripture that worship is for God alone. We see worship going to the Father and Jesus because both are God.

Luke 4:6-8

6 And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.

7 "Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours."

8 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'"

Jesus tells us worship belongs to God alone and he also connected worship and serving together in his answer.

We see that the Father instructed the angels to worship Jesus in:

Heb 1:6 And when He again brings the first-born into the world, He says, "And let all the angels of God worship Him."

After Jesus walked on the water and got into the boat, we see the disciples worshipped Jesus.

Matt 14:33 And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "You are certainly God's Son!"

This worship was not singing rather it was acknowledging who he was. I imagine in somewhat of a state of awe after watching him walk on the water.

Worship is for the Lord alone and should start with acknowledging all of who he is. When we consider who he is and all he has done for us, do we not owe him everything?

We already seen in one passage where Jesus connected serving with worship. Let's look at a couple of more passages that show this and see what else we can glean from them.

1 Peter 4:10-11

10 As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

11 Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Here we were told that serving one another glorified the Lord. Question: if you are glorifying God is this not an act of worship? At the very least worship and glorifying God are intertwined. This text not only mentions serving one another, but it also mentions what we say. It tells us to employ any gift that we have received in serving. What gift has the Lord given you? Are you using it to glorify the Lord? Since we all have different gifts, we can also serve in different ways. We can all glorify the Lord in different ways, which when the heart in the situation is right can be an act of worship.

Rom 12:1-2

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of **worship**.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Our bodies are a living sacrifice, and we are not to be conformed to this world. We are to change by renewing our mind. We can renew our mind by studying scripture and taking what we learn and applying it. This sacrifice of our own will along with our body and our mind is a form of worship. Just plain willful obedience for service can be a form of worship. Let us consider a contrast we see in scripture with worship and disobedient living.

Ps 95:6-10 6 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. Today, if you would hear His voice,

8 Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, As in the day of Massah in the wilderness;

9 "When your fathers tested Me, They tried Me, though they had seen My work.

10 "For forty years I loathed that generation, And said they are a people who err in their heart, And they do not know My ways.

In this Psalm it starts with worship and bow down. It is recognizing the Lord our God. Then curiously it appears the opposite is to harden our heart and disregard the Lords ways.

Matt 15:8-11

8 'This people honors Me with their lips, But **their heart is far away from Me.**

9 'But **in vain do they worship Me,** Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.' "

10 And after He called the multitude to Him, He said to them, "Hear, and understand.

11 "Not what enters into the mouth defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man."

In this text we have seen that it is much more than what you say. They expressed their respect verbally, yet their true feelings were distant from genuine sincerity. True worship is not something you can fake. The Lord knows the thoughts and intentions of your heart. (Heb.4:12)

We all have different gifts and when we joyfully use our gifts to serve others to please the Lord our worship can be expressed in different ways. Some are gifted in music and at times we see it at church. If your gift is something else, it does not mean your worship is any less genuine. Still keep in mind it says, "make a joyful noise unto the Lord" Psalm 100:1. That would apply to me making a joyful noise in church not necessarily sounding good.

I know of many people that will say they do not know what their gift is. Just ask the Lord how you can serve him. As I say that it makes me think of this passage that I would like to share now.

Matt 25:34-41

34 "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

35 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in;

36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'

37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink?

38 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You?

39 'And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'

40 "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

The way in which we can serve the Lord is limitless. It is not just what you do rather it is the heart attitude of why you do everything you do.

Col 3:16-17

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father

“In the name of the Lord” is an important aspect of this verse. Similarly, we are told

John 14:13-15: "And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

This does not mean that we will get whatever we ask for just because we end our prayer “in Jesus' name, amen”. “In His name” includes in His person. Does your prayer line up with Jesus the person? Would He fully agree with your prayer? If not, the prayer is not really in Jesus' name. We might have intended for it to be in His name, but for this to be true the prayer must line up with Jesus' mind and interest. This applies to the word or deed done in his “Name” as well.

I have focused on the scripture that shows worship often takes place outside of the church. Since I did that perhaps I should share another scripture that touches on that.

John 4:19-24

19 The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.

20 "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father.

22 "You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews.

23 "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.

24 "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

The Samaritan woman at the well was focused on where one should worship.

Jesus redefines worship—not tied to Mount Gerizim or Jerusalem, but in spirit and truth. Jesus told her that how mattered more than where. And how to worship is in spirit and in truth.

Thought-Provoking Questions

Do I view worship as a Sunday event or a 24/7 lifestyle?

How might God be calling me to worship Him through service or sacrifice this week?

What barriers—pride, busyness, distraction—keep me from wholehearted worship?

Although this is the end of the article I decided to add to it here. A word study is not easy reading but is worth your consideration. It includes Strong's Definition of Greek and Hebrew words and different places those words are used.

Word Study

Exod 3:12 And He said, "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall **worship** God at this mountain."

Worship here is Strong's # 5647

5647 `abad (aw-bad');

a primitive root; to work (in any sense); by implication, to serve, till, (causatively) enslave, etc.: KJV-- X be, keep in bondage, be bondmen, bond-service, compel, do, dress, ear, execute, + husbandman, keep, labour (-ing man, bring to pass, (cause to, make to) serve (-ingself,)), (be, become) servant (-s), do (use) service, till (-er), transgress [from margin], (set a) work, be wrought, worshipper,

Rom 12:1-2

1 I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, {which is} your spiritual service of **worship**.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Heb 9:1 Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine **worship** and the earthly sanctuary.

Heb 9:6 Now when these things have been thus prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle, performing the divine **worship**,

The word "worship" in Romans 12:1, Heb, 9:1, 9:6 is from Strongs # 2999

2999 latreia (lat-ri'-ah);

from 3000; ministration or God, i.e. **worship**:

KJV-- (divine) service.

Matt 4:10

10 Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall **worship** the Lord your God, and **serve** Him only.'" (NAS)

Worship here is Strongs #4352, **Serve** here is Strongs # 3000

4352 proskuneo (pros-koo-neh'-o);

from 4314 and a probable derivative of 2965 (meaning to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand); to fawn or crouch to, i.e. (literally or figuratively) prostrate oneself in homage (**do reverence to, adore**):

KJV-- worship.

4352 also used in Mt.14:33 where the disciples worshiped him

3000 latreuo (lat-ryoo'-o);

from latris (a hired menial); to minister (to God), i.e. render, religious homage:

KJV-- serve, do the service, worship (-per).

Job 1:8 And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My **servant** Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright

The word "servant" here is from Strongs # 5650

5650 `ebed (eh'-bed);

from 5647; a servant:

KJV-- X bondage, bondman, [**bond-**] **servant**, (man-) servant.

I find it interesting that bond servant is part of the definition of worship in the Strong's word #5647 translated "worship" in Ex. 3:12 used earlier.

Job 1:20-22

20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and **worshiped**.

21 And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."

22 Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

The word "worshiped" here is the Strong's word # 7812

7812 shachah (shaw-khaw');

a primitive root; to depress, i.e. prostrate (especially reflexive, in homage to royalty or God):

KJV-- bow (self) down, crouch, fall down (flat), humbly beseech, do (make) obeisance, do reverence, make to stoop, worship.

Phil 3:3-4

for we are the true circumcision, who **worship** in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

3000 latreuo (lat-ryoo'-o);

from latris (a hired menial); to minister (to God), i.e. render, religious homage:

KJV-- **serve, do the service, worship** (-per).

Each of the following scriptures with the **bold underlined** translated as serve, worship, worshiped, worshiper, worshipers are from the same Greek Word Strong's # 3000

Strong's Definition

3000 latreuo (lat-ryoo'-o);

from latris (a hired menial); to minister (to God), i.e. render, religious homage:

KJV-- **serve, do the service, worship** (-per).

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

WORSHIP (VERB AND NOUN), WORSHIPING

latreuo ^{^3000^}, "**to serve**, to render religious service or homage," is translated "to worship" in <Phil. 3:3>, "(who) **worship** (by the Spirit of God)," RV, KJV, "(which) worship (God in the spirit)"; the RV renders it "**to serve**" (for KJV, "to worship") in <Acts 7:42; 24:14>; KJV and RV, "(the) worshipers" in <Heb. 10:2>, present participle, lit., "(the ones) worshipping." See SERVE.

Rom 1:9 For God, whom I **serve** in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you,

Rom 1:25

For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and **worshiped** and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Phil 3:3

for we are the true circumcision, who **worship** in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

2 Tim 1:3

I thank God, whom I **serve** with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day,

Heb 9:9

which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the **worshiper** perfect in conscience,

Heb 9:14

how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to **serve** the living God?

Heb 10:2

Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?

Some related scripture for your consideration.

Ps 69:30-31

30 I will praise the name of God with song, and shall magnify Him with thanksgiving.

31 And it will please the LORD better than an ox {or} a young bull with horns and hoofs.

John 14:15-17

15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

16 "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;

17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.

Heb 13:15-16

15 Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

16 And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

1 Pet 2:5

you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

James 1:27

This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and} to keep oneself unstained by the world.