

UNDERSTANDING WORSHIP

(Ministering 24/7 unto the Lord)

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The word “man” as used in this book is a reference to all people, both men and women, and is used for the purpose of brevity. It is not intended in any way to be sexist or discriminatory.

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Dedicated
to your perfection

CHAPTER 1 A New and Living Way of Worship

Ricky and Devandree Pillay

“Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” (John 4:20 AV)

A concerned Samaritan woman once made the above comments to Jesus because Samaritans worshipped God on Mount Gerizim and the Jews at Jerusalem.

*Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, **the hour cometh**, when ye shall **neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem**, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for **salvation** is of the Jews. (John 4:21-22 AV)*

“**The hour cometh**” is a reference to the period after His death when God will not be worshipped at any particular location because the worshipper and the place of worship will become one. When Christ yielded up His spirit on the Cross, the curtain of the temple tore in two from top to bottom (Matthew 27:50-51), signifying the execution of God’s relocation plan to live in anybody that accepts Christ’s salvation. Repentance and faith in Christ, the Author of eternal salvation, not only provides deliverance from the power and dominion of sin, but makes it possible for God through His Spirit to live in man. Every believer in Christ thus becoming God’s temple of worship:-

*Know ye not that **ye are** the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (1 Corinthians 3:16 AV)*

*What? know ye not that **your body** is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (1 Corinthians 6:19 AV)*

*And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for **ye are** the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (2 Corinthians 6:16 AV)*

Specific landmarks and buildings are no longer criteria for worship in the New Testament.

The Bible also states that in Christ all believers together become a temple in which God lives by His Spirit.

*For through him **we both have** access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but **fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household**, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being **built together to become a dwelling** in which God lives by his Spirit. (Ephesians 2:18-22 NIV)*

As citizens of the kingdom and members of God's family, two or more believers meeting together become a holy temple in the Lord for God to dwell among them by His Spirit. This positions us for corporate worship anytime, anywhere, starting in our homes.

Under the Old Covenant only the priests were allowed entry into the temple; the worshipper stood outside (see Luke 1:8-10). Hence the worshipper required the services of the priest

to perform acts of worship on his or her behalf in the temple. According to Hebrews chapters 9 and 10, this was God's temporary plan for worship until Christ offered Himself to God to cleanse our consciences from useless rituals, so that we may worship the living God by a new and living way. Since the death and resurrection of Christ, a new order of worship had been established because the believer, in becoming the temple, priest, worshipper and the worship itself, embodies all that worship is. Worship therefore has to be a lifestyle, not a ritual. So the believer as the temple of God is not only filled with the Spirit, but is also enabled to worship God in the beauty of holiness. Holiness was provided for by Christ's sacrificial death, but maintaining God's standard of holiness is very challenging because of human emotions and influences from external factors. Our relationship with Christ was therefore so designed by God that if the believer remains in living contact with Christ, he or she is enabled by the Spirit and Word to maintain holiness. This grace makes it possible to overcome anything that hinders us from living a holy life. If we fail, we have His forgiveness and mercy 24/7 and grace to continue.

Christ went on to say to the Samaritan woman:

*But the hour cometh, and now is, when the **true worshippers** shall worship the Father **in spirit and in truth**: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him **must worship him in spirit and in truth.**" (John 4:23-24 AV)*

The preposition "in" denoting a fixed position with Christ is a reference to the believer's enabled position with the Spirit and Word. Christ also used the preposition "in" to explain the concept of an enabled position in this parable.

*I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch **in** me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide **in** me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide **in** the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide **in** me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth **in** me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not **in** me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide **in** me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.” (John 15:1-8 AV)*

The preposition “in” tells us that the worship that God desires is only possible from those in Christ because of their enabled position with the Spirit and Word. It is through the Spirit and faith in the Word that we remain sanctified (2 Thessalonians 2:13). As a matter of fact, human effort without the influence and help of the Spirit and Word cannot please God (Romans 8:8).

The Spirit makes us holy (1Peter 1:2 and Romans 15:16) and enables us for true worship by teaching, guiding and making it possible for us to obey and live by the Word of God (John 14:26; John 16:13 and Ezekiel 36:27).

Psalms 19:7-13 describes how the Word produces holiness in us.

*7 The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul:
the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the
simple.*

- 8 *The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.*
- 9 *The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.*
- 10 *More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.*
- 11 *Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.*
- 12 *Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.*
- 13 *Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.*

The Psalmist refers to the enabling Word as the law of the Lord; the testimony of the Lord; the statutes of the Lord; the commandment of the Lord; the fear of the Lord; and the judgments of the Lord. It is described as being perfect; sure; right; pure; clean and true. Look at what it does. It converts the soul; makes wise the simple; rejoices the heart; enlightens the eyes; endures forever and is righteous. Then we are admonished to desire the Word more than gold and food because it warns us; rewards us; causes us to understand our errors; cleanses us from secret faults; keeps us from presumptuous sins and helps us be innocent of transgression. Christ therefore prayed that we would be sanctified by the truth (John 17:17). The Apostle Peter later affirmed that through the Word of God we participate in God's nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires (2Peter 1:4).

From the beginning of time people worshipped God, yet there is no formal definition of what worship means or entails in

scripture. However, we find that people freely expressed worship by demonstrating **reverence, respect and honour** for God through various ways and means.

The words of Christ “God is a Spirit” in John 4:24 describes God as being invisible and omnipresent. This means we are being watched by Him 24/7 and therefore our worship (reverence, respect and honour for Him) must be manifested through every area of our existence (our thoughts, ways, words and actions). Worship therefore is not limited to a particular spiritual activity. Here’s how the Bible describes the lifestyle of worship (reverence, respect and honour for God).

*And **whatsoever ye do in word or deed**, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him. (Colossians 3:17 AV)*

*And **whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men**; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: **for ye serve the Lord Christ**. (Colossians 3:23-24 AV)*

*In **all thy ways acknowledge him**, and he shall direct thy paths. (Proverbs 3:6 AV)*

*He that **regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord**; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that **eateth, eateth to the Lord**, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. **For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s**. (Romans 14:6-8 AV)*

*Whether therefore ye **eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do**, do all to the glory of God. (1Corinthians 10:31 AV)*

*Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, **as unto Christ**; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, **doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord**, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. (Ephesians 6:5-8 AV)*

*Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man **for the Lord's sake**: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. (1Peter 2:13-15 AV)*

Like worship, to “fear the Lord” is also to show reverence, respect and honour for God.

That thou mightest fear [reverence, respect and honour] the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. (Deuteronomy 6:2 AV)

In having our interests at heart, the Lord commanded that we respect, revere and honour Him for our longevity, prosperity and well being.

*And the Lord commanded us to **do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that***

*he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day.
(Deuteronomy 6:24 AV)*

It is by the fear of the Lord that men depart from evil (Proverbs 16:6) and holiness is perfected out of worship for God (2 Corinthians 7:1).

CHAPTER 2

Worshipping God with Your Praise

Ravi and Savy Naidoo

Revelation 19:

- 4 *And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and **worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.***
- 5 *And a voice came out of the throne, saying, **Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.***
- 6 *And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. (AV)*

The twenty four elders and the four beasts are the redeemed of the Lord from every nation to reign on the earth as kings and priests unto God (see Revelation 5:8-10). Notice in the above verses that they worshipped God by saying AMEN (an expression of absolute trust and confidence) and ALLELUIA (that is, praise the Lord). **From this we can deduce that praise is an expression of our worship** (reverence, respect and honour) **for Him**. The voice from the throne in the fifth verse stated that those who fear (respect, reverence and honour) Him must praise Him.

According to the Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical words, the Hebrew name for the Book of Psalms is simply the equivalent for the word "praises". You would find that writers of the Psalms expressed their praise to God by acknowledging, admiring, adoring, glorifying, magnifying, commending, extolling, exalting, appreciating and thanking Him. We praise Him firstly for Who He is (that is, for His excellence, attributes, perfection, etc) and then for what He does for us (His works, benefits, salvation, deliverance, etc).

In so doing, we give Him reverence, respect and honour **for all that He is**. Christ taught (Luke 11:2) that we must hallow (honour) God's name – because everything that God is, is revealed in His name.

Praise is first and foremost offered directly to Him with words or songs, either in a known tongue or in the language of the Spirit referred to as unknown tongues (1Corinthians 14:14-16):

*By him therefore let us **offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.** (Hebrews 13:15 AV)*

*Because thy loving kindness is better than life, **my lips shall praise thee.** (Psalms 63:3 AV)*

Praise can also be offered to Him indirectly by talking about Him to others:

*O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name: **make known his deeds among the people.** (Psalms 105:1 AV)*

*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and **be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.** (1Peter 3:15 AV)*

We can praise Him in our mind:

*And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; **Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in***

the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:18-20 AV)

*Let the words of my mouth, and **the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight**, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer. (Psalms 19:14)*

Praise to God can also be expressed non verbally by clapping (Psalms 47:1); dancing (Psalms 150:4); uplifted hands (Psalms 134:2); and with musical instruments (Psalms 150:3-5).

Praise, an important worship activity, strengthens us spiritually, puts the enemy and the avenger to flight, and produces extra-ordinary victories for us (see Psalms 8:2; Acts 16:25-34; 2Chronicles 20:1-30). As important as praise is for the benefit of the believer, God in His wisdom uses praise to bring us to the place of perfection by demanding restraint over our tongues (the main instrument of praise) so that from an upright heart (Psalms 119:7) we offer an acceptable praise to the One who is glorious in holiness (Exodus 15:11).

*If any man among you seem to be religious, and **bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart**, this man's religion is vain. (James 1:26 AV)*

And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. (James 3:6 AV)

Apart from exercising restraint over our tongues in order to offer an acceptable praise, the added benefits are that:

*He that keepeth his mouth **keepeth his life**: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction. (Proverbs 13:3 AV)*

*Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth **his soul from troubles**. (Proverbs 21:23 AV)*

*For he that will **love life, and see good days**, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. (1Peter 3:10 AV)*

Without God's influence and help, the flesh (a reference to the earthly nature of man) is prone to sin and constantly hinders us from doing what is right (Galatians 5:17). Thus God in His infinite wisdom provided sanctification for us through the Spirit and Word (2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1Peter 1:2; John 17:17). True worshippers must therefore worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth, for the Father seeks such to worship Him (John 4:23).

We also learn from Joshua 7:19 that even the confession of our sins is considered praise unto Him. The God of mercy is ever willing to forgive us of our sins (1John 1:9) so that the Spirit can give to us the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness (Isaiah 61:1-3). Garment, which is symbolic of salvation and righteousness (Isaiah 61:10) makes us acceptable to God, so that our guilt, symbolized by the spirit of heaviness, does not hinder us from praising Him.

The point to note is that God instituted praise as an essential component of worship, to bring us to the place of perfection, because to fear (respect, reverence and honour) the Lord is to hate evil, pride, arrogance, evil ways and perverse speech (Proverbs 8:13). Praise then develops in us not only a respect for God, but also a respect for others because according to

James 3:9-10, we cannot use our tongue to both praise God and curse men.

*With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, **who have been made in God's likeness**. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, **this should not be**. (NIV)*

True praise for God begins with respect and honour (Romans 13:7; 1Peter 2:17) for the ones created in His likeness. True gratitude for God finds reason for thanking and appreciating Him **in all things** because this is God's will in Christ Jesus for us (1Thessalonians 5:18).

CHAPTER 3 Worshipping God with Your Prayer

Ravi and Shirley Perumal

Until recently we were under the impression that prayer and worship were two separate and distinct spiritual activities. We approached God first with thanksgiving, then praise, then worship (by saying Father I worship You, Honour You, etc) and then prayer. Now we come to understand that prayer is worship. Let's look at scriptural evidence.

*And, behold, there came a leper and **worshipped him, saying**, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.
(Mathew 8:2 AV)*

Note that the leper worshipped Christ by saying a prayer to Him – he said, “*Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*”.

Matthew 9:18 is another scripture which also shows that prayer is worship.

*While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and **worshipped him, saying**, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. (AV)*

Here again we find that the ruler, like the leper, did the same: he worshipped Christ by saying a prayer to Him - “*My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live*”.

Thereafter we find that a Canaanite woman, whose daughter was grievously vexed with a devil, did the same thing, she came to Christ and worshipped Him saying this prayer “*Lord, help me*” (Matthew 15:25).

From the above scriptures we can conclude that prayer is an important component of worship. Therefore worship (respect, reverence and honour) offered in the form of prayer must be done through the enablement of the Spirit and Word (John 4:23).

A deep dependence on the Spirit and Word is absolutely essential for an effective prayer life because the flesh (human effort without divine influence) cannot please God (Romans 8:8). In fact the Spirit is referred to as the Spirit of grace and of supplication (Zechariah 12:10). Here's how the Spirit and Word enables us to pray accurately:-

*In the same way, the **Spirit helps us in our weakness**. We do not know **what** we ought to pray for, but the **Spirit himself intercedes for us** with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints **in accordance with God's will**. (Romans 8:26-27 NIV)*

*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing **according to his will [which is His Word]**, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” (1Jo 5:14-15 AV)*

Christ made it quite clear that the Father is seeking true worshippers (John 4:23). Our prayer priority should therefore be that the Father would help us into becoming true worshippers, because that's what He desires. Prioritizing His desires before ours is to give to Him true worship (reverence, respect and honour).

As previously discussed in Chapter 1, our worship to the invisible omnipresent God watching us 24/7 must be

manifested through every area of our existence (our thoughts, ways, words, actions and lifestyle). Within the structure of the Lord's prayer in Luke 11:2-4, there are six important areas of our existence through which we should express our worship to Him.

- ***“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name”***
Everything that God is, is revealed in His name.
Therefore we are to hallow (or honour) God **for all that He is.**
- ***“Thy kingdom come”***
This means that we pray for God's rulership (leadership) to become increasingly more visible and known to all mankind through the church (believers).
(See Genesis 1:26-28, Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15-20).
- ***“Thy will be done as in heaven, so in earth”***
Praying for the fulfilment of His will (Word) in the earth.
- ***“Give us day by day our daily bread”***
We pray for our needs to be met by faith.
- ***“And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us”***
This refers to us getting our relationship right with others.
- ***“And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil”***
Lastly we pray for His direction and guidance.

Prayer demonstrates our absolute trust and confidence in God, therefore we conclude with the word “Amen” which means “so let it be”. We are told in Hebrews 11:6 that without faith it is

impossible to please Him. It is our conviction that we must reverence, respect and honour Him with our faith. When praying believe that your **worship would be expressed:**

- First and foremost **for all that He is.**
- Secondly through your **leadership** of kingdom influence, glory, grace and power (Matthew 13:33, 44-50).
- Thirdly through your **commitment of doing the Word of God.**
- Fourthly through your **faith in Him.**
- Fifthly through your **relationship with others.**
- Sixthly through your obedience to the **guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit** in your life.

Like praise, prayer was also designed by God to bring us to the place of perfection.

For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. (1Peter 3:12 AV)

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. (James 5:16b AV)

I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. (1Timothy 2:8 AV)

*And **when ye stand praying, forgive**, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. (Mark 11:25 AV)*

CHAPTER 4

Worshipping God with Your Body

Louie and Ishara Pillay

*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 NIV)*

Paul urges believers to **offer their bodies** as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, as an **act of worship**, simply because God is the Creator, Sustainer, and Owner of everything that exists and thus all things are for His glory (Romans 11:36).

In Paul's other letter, he makes this comment:

*Do you not know that your **body is a temple of the Holy Spirit**, who is in you, whom you have received from God? **You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.** (1Corinthians 6:19-20 NIV)*

Worshipping God with your body demands sacrifice, holiness and pleasing God.

Presenting your body a **living sacrifice** does not require the shedding of blood, but rather subduing and destroying the passions of the flesh (Galatians 5:24) to prevent the manifestation of sins (sexual immorality; adultery and fornication; idolatry; strife; jealousy; temper tantrums; selfishness; envy; murder; drunkenness, revelling, etc mentioned in Galatians 5:19-21). God is not only pleased with the crucifixion (killing) of the flesh (ungodly passions) in your life, but also receives it as worship (reverence, respect and honour to Him).

Presenting your body **holy** demonstrates a commitment and determination to be separated, set apart and consecrated for divine service (Romans 6:12-13) so that God can be seen at work in the worshipper's life (Hebrews 12:14). The worshipper commits to pursuing and maintaining holiness by:

- **putting away** the old self which is corrupted by its deceitful desires and **putting on** the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:22 &24).
- Exercising restraint of the eyes so that the whole body is full of light (Matthew 6:22-23).
- Bringing the body under subjection (1Corinthians 9:27).
- Manifesting the life of Christ through his/her body (2Corinthians 4:10).

If the worship is to be **pleasing** or acceptable unto God, then it must be in Spirit and Truth (John 4:23), for the Father seeks such to worship Him. It is through the help of the Spirit that we do not fulfil the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16) and are able to mortify (kill) the deeds (works) of the flesh (Romans 8:13). The Word helps our senses discern between good and evil, and washes our bodies like pure water (Hebrews 5:14 and 10:22).

Besides presenting the body (temple of God) as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, the caring for it in itself is worship to God. For example, in the Old Testament, the Sabbath day of rest was a form of respect for God (Exodus 20:11; 31:15); God was worshipped with eating in His temple (Deuteronomy 12); and maintaining a hygienic lifestyle was also essential for not defiling the temple (Leviticus 15:31). Thus the care of the body (temple), by ensuring it gets the right

amount of rest (Psalms 127:2), healthy foods (1Timothy 4:4-5), exercise (1Timothy 4:8) and personal hygiene, is worship to God. Paul says it in this way: *whether you **eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do**, do all to the glory of God. (1Corinthians 10:31)*

Caring for the body is an important aspect of worship because our body which belongs to the Lord (1Corinthians 6:13), is going to be transformed to be like His glorious body (Philippians 3:20-21).

By asking us to worship Him with our bodies, God had our perfection in mind.

Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence [worship] for God. (2Corinthians 7:1 NIV)

The worshipper, in pursuit of becoming a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, essentially gives up something for something better, awakens to righteousness and demonstrates surrender to the Lord.

CHAPTER 5

Worshipping God with Your Resources

Ricky and Devandree Pillay

And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God: (Deuteronomy 26:10 AV)

People had to worship God with their firstfruits (the best part of their produce) in the Old Testament. God instituted such a commandment to prevent the people from becoming proud (Deuteronomy 8:11-14) in thinking that their own power and strength had produced their wealth (Deuteronomy 8:17). They had to acknowledge that everything came from Him including the ability to produce wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18). Their firstfruits were far more than just mere offerings. It represented the best part of their strength, time and labour, and demonstrated their respect, reverence and honour for God as Creator, Sustainer and Owner of all things.

Worshipping God with resources was thus entrenched in the law.

Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you. (Deuteronomy 16:17 NIV)

*A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs **to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.** (Leviticus 27:30 NIV)*

But prior to the law being introduced, people worshipped God with their possessions.

Abram gave him [Melchizedek, the priest of God] a tenth of everything. (Genesis 14:20b NIV)

Jacob made this promise to God:

*And this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and **of all that you [God] give me I will give you a tenth.** (Genesis 28:22 NIV)*

The wise King Solomon taught his son to honour the Lord with his wealth and with the firstfruits of all his earnings (Proverbs 3:9).

This practice did not stop in the Old Testament.

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practised the latter, without neglecting the former. (Matthew 23:23 NIV)

Christ did not condemn the Pharisees for honouring God with their substance but pointed out to them that they must do it without violating the more important commandment of justice, mercy and faithfulness.

Paul in his address to the Corinthian church, urged them to excel in their faith, speech, knowledge, love and in the **grace of giving** as well (2Corinthians 8:7). On the first day of every week, they were expected to set aside a sum of money in keeping with their income for the work of the ministry (1Corinthians 16:2). He reaffirmed this by stating that each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion because God loves a cheerful giver (2Corinthians 9:7).

Not only are we required to worship God with our material resources, but also with our natural and spiritual resources. Every person is accountable for the talents, gifts, skills and grace which God has deposited into each one of us according to ability or grace (see Psalms 139:13-18; Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:13-27; Ephesians 4:7; 1Corinthians 12:8-11). It is imperative that we worship Him with the talents, gifts, skills and grace because:

- Every good and perfect gift comes down from our Heavenly Father (James 1:17).
- We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing by the Father to attain the highest in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3).

As in the preceding chapters, it is important to note that God must be worshipped in Spirit and Truth (John 4:23), simply because the person who is established in the Word and is led by the Spirit, becomes empowered to overcome the sinful desires of:

- Greed, selfishness and deceit (see the story of Ananias and Sapphira of Acts 5:1-11).
- Pride (see 1Corinthians 1:26-31).
- Hypocrisy (see Matthew 6:1-4).
- Self righteous attitude (see Luke 18:9-14).
- Strife and offence (see Matthew 5:23-26).

Thus the Spirit and Word help us to willingly worship Him with a perfect heart. Both the Old and New Testaments expresses God's desire for us to be perfect (Deuteronomy 18:13 and Matthew 5:48). As we begin to understand His way of doing things, it becomes obvious that when we willingly worship Him in Spirit and Truth with our resources, the result is perfection, for it is written:

*Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, **make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen (Hebrews 13:20-21 AV)***

CHAPTER 6

Worshipping God with Your Relationship with Others

John and Vijie Pillay

With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:6-8 NIV).

Coming before the Lord and bowing in the Old Testament was an act of worship. Micah concludes that the real evidence of true worship is not expressed in sacrificial offerings, but rather, in justice and mercy towards men. A right relationship with others, complemented by walking humbly with God, is what's required of us.

Understanding that you must love God with all your being and others as yourself is wise, according to Christ (see Mark 12:33-34). Loving others as yourself is so important to God that He introduced commandments forbidding adultery, murder, stealing, covetousness and such like (Romans 13:9), to ensure that mutual respect and love exists for one another. Another writer said this:

If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. (1John 4:20 NIV)

From Christ's conversation with the Samaritan woman, it's apparent that the Jews knew more about worship than the Samaritans did (see John 4:21-22), yet the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37 was more justified than the priest and Levite because he cared about a fellow human being. As a matter of fact, Christ ascribed social responsibility as service unto Him.

*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: **For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.** (Matthew 25:31-40 AV)*

It is yet to dawn on many of us that our worship to Him depends on a right relationship with others. For example, a

prerequisite before offering our gift to God is the seeking of reconciliation if offences exist with others (Matthew 5:23-24). When praying, we are required to forgive others or else we will not be forgiven and our prayers not answered (Mark 11:25-26).

Paul's revelation that serving others is serving Christ can be paraphrased as follows:

- Whatever you do for your spouses, children, parents, employers or employees, whether in word or deed, do it as working for the Lord, not for men, since you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward because it is the Lord Christ that you are serving. (Colossians 3:17-24; Ephesians 6:1-9)
- Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Eph 5:21); and do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased (Hebrews 13:16).

Peter added that our submission to the government and law enforcement officials must be done **for the Lord's sake** (1Peter 2:13-15).

Christ, from an early age, so understood the importance of having a right relationship with others that the Bible states that He increased in favour with God and man (Luke 2:52). One of the reasons for successful evangelism and church growth in the book of Acts was because they enjoyed the favour of all people (Acts 2:47).

Character flaws in us and others make relationship building and maintaining very difficult. God therefore does not expect us to build or maintain a perfect relationship with others through human effort. From our enabled position with the Spirit and Word we are required to walk in maturity, wisdom,

mercy, grace and love to maintain a perfect relationship with others.

... not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. (Zechariah 4:6b AV)

Great peace have they which love thy law [word]: and nothing shall offend them. (Psalms 119:165 AV)

CHAPTER 7

Worshipping God with Every Area of Your Existence

Chris and Nancy Moonian

*For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. **So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.***
(Romans 14:7-8 NIV)

The Bible teaches that we came from God and at death we return to God. As eternal beings, we are not only created and sustained by Him, but also belong to Him. Thus we live, function and have our existence in Him (Acts 17:28). Our worship therefore has to be expressed through every area of our existence.

- In our walk according to His ways (of holiness), doing what is right in His eyes and keeping His Word (1Kings 11:33).
- In our thinking (Malachi 3:16).
- In our wisdom, knowledge and understanding so that we live a life worthy of the Lord, pleasing Him in everything and being successful in every good work (Colossians 1:9-10).
- In being filled with the fruits of righteousness (that is, boldness; blessings, victory; honour; success, etc). (Philippians 1:11; Psalms 5:12; Proverbs 28:1; Psalms 34:19; Proverbs 21:21; Proverbs 11:28).
- In demonstrating His praise (of excellence and virtue) (1Peter 2:9).

- In bearing much fruit (of good works) (see John 15:1-11).

In essence, worship has to be expressed through our thinking, wisdom, knowledge, understanding, vocation, fun, sports, driving, character, conduct, learning, reading, listening, meditating, leadership, speaking, writing, witnessing, marriage or singleness, prosperity, health, purpose, potential and skills. In fact in all our ways (Proverbs 3:6). We exist to the praise of His glory (Ephesians 1:12) and should be committed to shine our light (lifestyle) before men that they, seeing our good works, would glorify our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

In death, the worshipper temporarily relocates from the physical to the spiritual realm leaving his body behind. For the worshipper it is being at home with the Lord. Life without a body means **no** labour, sickness, fatigue, stress, sorrow, hunger, thirst, pain, death, and all that the physical body is subject to. The worshipper joins the host of heaven to worship God before His throne for His salvation, faithfulness, truth, blessings, glory, wisdom, power, might and for all that He is (Revelation 7:9-12).

Paul therefore maintained that Christ will always be exalted in his body, whether by life or by death (Philippians 1:20). To live is Christ, to die is gain (Philippians 1:21), therefore the funeral of the deceased in itself becomes a corporate worship meeting. There's so much to worship Him for, for example:-

- The comfort that we have in Him (Acts 9:31; Romans 15:4; Psalms 30:5).
- The hope that we have in Him concerning the dead and the resurrection of the dead as was demonstrated through the death of Christ (Acts 24:15; Romans 6:8-9).

- The comfort enjoyed by those in heaven (Luke 16:25).

The whole duty of man is to fear (reverence, respect and honour) God and keep His Word (Ecclesiastes 12:13) because God wants to show Himself holy to the people through us so that they would know that He is God (Ezekiel 36:23). Christ therefore died to present us holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation (Colossians 1:21-22). The Spirit and Word, also referred to as the fear of the Lord (see Isaiah 11:2-3; Psalms 19:7-9), abide in us to make us holy for worship. Our worship through every area of our existence must therefore be in Spirit and Truth (John 4:23-24), for the Father seeks such to worship Him in the beauty of holiness. In fact God Himself wants to teach us how to reverence, respect and honour Him (Psalms 34:11).

Worship, designed to bring us to the place of perfection, makes it possible for God to show Himself strong on behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him (2Chronicles 16:9).

CHAPTER 8

The Rewards of True Worship

Chris and Nancy Moonian

*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that **cometh** to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently **seek** him. (Hebrew 11:6 AV)*

According to Strong's Greek Lexicon the words "cometh" and "seek" implies an act of worship. The above scripture tells us that God rewards those who earnestly **worship** Him.

As discussed previously, worship and the fear of the Lord are synonymous as they both refer to reverence, respect and honour for the Lord. Psalms 128 describes the blessedness of those who fear the Lord.

- 1 Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways.*
- 2 You will eat the fruit of your labour; blessings and prosperity will be yours.*
- 3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots round your table.*
- 4 Thus is the man blessed who fears the Lord.*
- 5 May the Lord bless you from Zion all the days of your life; may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem,*
- 6 and may you live to see your children's children.
Peace be upon Israel. (NIV)*

In verse 2 the worshipper is blessed in his/her personal life. Eating the fruit of your labour symbolizes a blessed career or vocation. Verse 3 tells us that the worshipper is blessed with a successful marriage and family life. Then verse 5 speaks about a successful social life and lastly the worshipper is blessed with longevity (verse 6). Because of the worshipper's

reverence, respect and honour, verses 5 and 6 further imply that God would also bless the church and the nation (symbolised by Jerusalem and Israel, respectively).

The other rewards of a true worshipper are:

- Wisdom, knowledge and understanding (Job 28:28; Proverbs 1:7).
- God entrusts you with His secrets and reveals His covenant to you (Psalms 25:14).
- You come under the watchful eyes of the Lord (Psalms 33:18).
- The angel of the Lord encamps around you and delivers you from all your troubles (Psalms 34:7).
- You will not suffer want or lack (Psalms 34:9).
- You will be pitied by the Lord as a father pities his children (Psalms 103:13).
- The Lord would be merciful to you (Psalms 103:17).
- You become a confident person (Proverbs 14:26).
- You become a fountain of life (Proverbs 14:27).
- You will be satisfied with life and not be visited with evil (Proverbs 19:23; Isaiah 59:19).
- You shall have riches, honour and life (Proverbs 22:4).

In an age of uncertainty, God is our sure foundation, salvation, wisdom and knowledge. **Reverence, respect and honour for God** is the key to this treasure (Isaiah 33:6). Psalms 145:19

further promises us that God will fulfil the desire of them that reverence, respect and honour Him, hear their cry and save them.

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