

DARING TO DO THE DISCIPLINES
(Part Six)
"Worship"

Adapted from Richard Foster in *Celebration Of Discipline* New York: HarperCollins 1978 / 98, p.p. 158 to 174.

Text: John 4.13 - 24 (in pew Bible p. 1053 / in large print Bible p. 1638).

Intro:

-40 days of Lent offers opportunity to be liberated from our culture's *suffocating pressure*

- various disciplines practiced during Lent to help prepare us to observe the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- for centuries, Christians have practiced Spiritual Disciplines in order to encounter God and find spiritual enrichment.

-part 6 of series "Daring To Do The Disciplines" = Worship

- Spiritual Disciplines = transforming liberation of these helpful tools.
- Meditation (Psalm 119.97 – 104, 148) = transformational truth controls us.
- Prayer (Luke 11.1 - 4) = deepest & highest work in our human spirit.
- Study (Philippians 4.8, 9) = study is a sure way to receive God's blessing.
- Service (John 13.1 - 17) = service is also a sure way to receive God's blessing.

-today's text reveals the exalted call to worship.

- encounter of Christ with woman = *major stretch* (gender, race, character).
 - **True water of life** = never thirst + everlasting life (v. 14).
 - **True worshippers** = worship God in spirit & in truth (v.v. 23 - 24).
 - "spirit" = honestly & openly with God / *cf. Samaritan syncretism.*
 - "truth" = all the Scripture & not just Pentateuch.
- result = many believed in Jesus, the Saviour of the world (v.v. 39 - 42).

-today is "Palm Sunday."

- fickle & fallible worshippers.
- **illust.** William Temple

Take Home Point:

-God is seeking for his church to worship him in spirit & truth (v. 23).

- have you engaged God this morning with true and spiritual worship?
- if not – why not? / must connect the dots.
 - we need to respond to God's presence and love.

1. IMPORTANCE OF WORSHIP

-true object of worship must be the true and the living God.

- W. Tozer essence of idolatry = entertaining unworthy thoughts about God.
- Isaiah's response to God = "woe is me for I am undone ..." (ch. 6.5).
- worship God in spirit and in truth (v. 25).

-priority of worship = response of those who have Jesus as Lord.

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).

- minister to the Lord in your worship – *worship experience is not primarily about you.*
- leave your individuality behind in terms of the music style and service format you best appreciate.
 - **illust.** Great Worship

-preparedness for worship.

- holy expectancy to hear God's voice.
- Jesus' death has torn the veil in the Temple.
 - when several people come into public worship with a holy expectation, the atmosphere in our worship service changes.
 - **illust.** Christian Schwartz – passionate spirituality.
- invite God to be present:
 - pray for our leaders.
 - pray for those who are assembling (*note their body language*).
- **illust.** Jack Hayford – getting in touch.

-**illust.** On Your Knees

2. PATHWAYS TO WORSHIP

-**Stepping Stone Of Silence:**

- still yourself.
- physical and spiritual static & noise.
 - The LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him (Habakkuk 2.20).
 - Be still, and know that I am God, I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth (Psalm 46.10).
 - Father Ammonas

-**Stepping Stone Of Praise:**

- emotions as well as mind – *love God with all your heart* (Mark 12.30).
 - must not manipulate but must encourage praise.
 - singing, praying, praising, preaching are all tools to help us truly worship.
- God does not need our praise but we need to praise God in order to be fully human.
 - God is sovereign & not dependent.
 - praise glorifies God and when we glorify God we fulfill the purpose for which we were created.

Conclusion:

1. Know what God wants.

-there is a desperate need today, not for Christians to be more intelligent or gifted but for Christians to be deeper and more genuine.

- to do this is to practice the Spiritual Disciplines.
- say “yes” to God’s dare to the Spiritual Discipline of worship.
 - **illust.** William Temple

-today’s text reveals the exalted call to worship.

- **True worshippers** = worship God in spirit & in truth (v.v. 23 - 24).
 - “spirit” = honestly & openly with God.
 - “truth” = biblical teaching about God.

-God is seeking for his church to worship him in spirit & truth (v. 23).

- have you engaged God this morning with true and spiritual worship?
- if not – why not? / must connect the dots / respond to God’s presence & love.

2. Know how to do what God wants.

-discipline of worship produces important fruit:

- **OBEDIENCE.**
 - if your worship time this morning does not propel you to greater obedience, it has not been worship.
 - Matthew 5.23, 24 – leave your gift at the altar and make matters right.
- **SERVICE.**
 - this is a discipline that we have looked at in our study.
 - sign in front of God’s throne DANGER EXPECTATIONS!
 - Isaiah 6.8 – Here am I send me!

-begin each day by praying – “Lord Jesus, as it would please you, help my life to be lived in uninterrupted worship and adoration.”

- all true worshippers will one day be glorified and join a company of believers and angels in perfect, uninterrupted worship (Revelation 19.1 – 10).
- **illust.** Wonder @ Launch Time

3. Know that you will do it.

-**Closing Hymn:** #392 Nearer, Still Nearer (all verses).

William Temple

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 (17th century English statesman / p. 158).

Great Worship

Authenticity over excellence. We strive for enough skill to avoid embarrassment.

Participation over spectatorship. Service revolves around the people we have instead of the people we wish we had.

(Bill Giovannetti “Great Worship With Modest Means” *Leadership* Spring ’94, pp. 52 – 57).

Christian Schwartz

Our goal is to live out our faith with commitment, fire and enthusiasm. Touch stones for this goal are to see a growth in the prayer life and personal use of the Bible in the lives of our congregation. Once this quality takes hold, our church family will come to gatherings (1.) curious to learn something new from God, (2.) have a strong expectancy that God will “show up,” and (3.) experience a personal increase in faith and joy (*Natural Church Development* ChurchSmart Resources, 1998, p. 64).

Jack Hayford

Getting in touch by:

- Become open to God’s power.
- Allow the Spirit to lead me.
- Impart a blessing on the leaders and people.
- Check my attitude – gratitude & humility.

(Jack Hayford “How I Prepare Myself For Worship” *Leadership* Summer ’90, pp. 80 – 85).

On Your Knees

A young stranger to the Alps was making his first climb, accompanied by two stalwart guides. It was a steep, hazardous ascent. But he felt secure with one guide ahead and one following. For hours they climbed. And now, breathless, they reached for the rocks sticking through the snow at the summit.

The guide ahead wished to let the stranger have the first glorious view of heaven and earth, and moved aside to let him go first. Forgetting the gales that would blow across those summit rocks, the young man leaped to his feet. But the chief guide dragged him down. "On your knees, sir!" he shouted. "You are never safe here except on your knees" (Craig Brian Larson *750 Engaging Illustrations*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993, p. 614).

Father Ammonas

The desert Father Ammonas writes" Behold my beloved. I have shown you the power of silence, how thoroughly it heals and fully pleasing it is to God ... It is by silence that the saints grew... it was because of silence that the power of God dwelt in them, because of silence that the mysteries of God were known to them" (p. 168).

Wonder @ Launch Time

In *A World of Ideas*, Bill Moyers quotes writer Jacob Needleman: I was an observer at the launch of Apollo 17 in 1975. It was a night launch, and there were hundreds of reporters all over the lawn, drinking beer, wisecracking and waiting for this 35-story-high rocket.

The countdown came and then the launch. The first thing you see is this extraordinary orange light, which is just at the limit of what you can bear to look at. Everything is illuminated with this light. Then the rocket rises slowly up in total silence because it takes a few seconds for the sound to come across to you. You hear a "'WHOOOOOOSH! HHHMMMMM!" It enters right into you.

You can practically hear jaws dropping. The sense of wonder fills everyone in the whole place as the rocket goes up and up. The first stage ignites a beautiful blue flame. It becomes a star, but you realize there are humans in it. And then there's total silence.

People just get up quietly, helping each other up. They're kind. They open doors. They look at one another, speaking quietly and sensitively. These people became suddenly moral because of the sense of wonder.

Those who have worshipped our wondrous God in spirit and in truth know the feeling. Worship is life changing " (Craig Brian Larson *750 Engaging Illustrations*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993, p. 613).