



THE PRAYER CLOSET

*Transforming Lives Through Intercessory
Prayer And Fasting*

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DEVELOPING A LIFESTYLE OF WORSHIP

A.W. Tozer once wrote, "If you will not worship God seven days a week, you do not worship Him one day a week." The Christian is to develop a lifestyle of worship. It is not to be a once-a-week event. God is always God and He is always worthy of worship. Worship then is to be the daily pursuit of the child of God. You cannot expect worship to flow from your lips on Sunday if you keep it dammed up in your heart throughout the week.

The Lord Jesus Christ emphasized and obeyed the Old Testament command to "worship the Lord your God" (**Matthew 4:10**). It is therefore the duty and the privilege of all believers to worship the God who has created them, sustained them, and delivered them from sin, Satan, and eternal damnation. The Word of God declares clearly that God expects His people to worship Him. **Psalms 95:6-7** says, "Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. For He is our God and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand." Worshipping God is the purpose of our lives! This is to be the main pursuit of our lives!

The Basics of Worship

In order to develop a life of worship, you need to understand what the Bible reveals about worship. The Bible teaches four basic truths

concerning worship. *The first truth that the Bible teaches about worship is that it is focusing on and responding to God.* Worship is being preoccupied with God. It is the grateful and adoring response to who God is and to what God has done.

In **Revelation 4:8**, we are told that four creatures around the throne worship God day and night without ceasing. Their continual cry is "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come." In **verse 11**, the twenty-four elders around the throne of God in heaven are said to worship Him by casting down their crowns at His feet, falling down before Him, and saying, "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created." In the next chapter (**Revelation 5**), thousands and thousands of angels, elders, and living creatures around the heavenly throne of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, cry with a loud voice in worship, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing!" (**Revelation 5:12**). Immediately after this comes worship from every created thing saying, "Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever!" (**Revelation 5:13**).

As you observe these scenes of worship in heaven, you notice that God is the focus of the

worship. Everything revolves around who He is and what He has done. Worshipping God is focusing on God with praise and adoration. The word "worship" comes from the Saxon word "weorthscype" which later became "worthship" and evolved to "worship". To worship God then is to ascribe proper worth to God, to praise Him because of His worthiness.

As you focus on God, you respond to Him with praise, wonder, awe, surrender, faith, obedience, and repentance. True worship brings a response from the one who is worshipping. Your focus on God leads you to respond to God. It deepens your relationship to God. It changes you as you focus on God in praise.

Worship often includes words and actions. Yet, it goes beyond them to the focus of the mind and heart. It is the God-centered focus and response of the inner man to God. A person is not worshipping if he or she is not focusing on God and responding to Him. You can pray, sing, clap, or shout, yet if you are not thinking of God and responding to Him, you are not worshipping.

The Bible also teaches that worship is to be done in spirit and in truth. The most profound passage on worship in the New Testament is **John 4:23-24**. The Lord Jesus Christ declares, "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth." According to Jesus Christ, worship, if it is true and genuine, is to be done in spirit and truth.

Genuine worship is to be done in spirit. To worship God in spirit is to worship God from the inside out. It means to be sincere in your acts of worship. Jesus Christ wants you to realize that worship is an inner spiritual response, not just an outward form of expression. It must come from the spirit, the innermost essence of our personality. Worship is not dependent on the externals--a prescribed place, beautiful surroundings, familiar rituals, inspiring music, or specific body movements. Externals are not wrong. They can be powerful aids to worship. Yet, worship is an inward spiritual response to God. Now matter how spiritual the song you are singing, no matter how poetic the prayer you are praying, no matter how emotional the service is, if it is not a sincere and

deep response to God from the inner man, it is not worship. It is actually hypocrisy.

Genuine worship is not only to be done in spirit, but, it is also to be done in truth. We are to worship according to the truth of the Word of God. We are to worship God as He is revealed in the Word of God. Your worship of God is to be based on God's Word and is to be in response to the Word of God. Our worship is to focus on what God has revealed about Himself and His works.

You must worship in spirit and in truth. There must be a balance between these two principles. Your worship is to focus on God with both your heart and your mind. If you worship too much just by the spirit, you will be mushy and soft on the truth, worshipping according to feelings and sentimentality. This can lead anywhere from a sleepy tolerance of anything in worship at one extreme to uncontrollable spiritual wildfire on the other. But, if your worship by truth without the spirit, then your worship will be cold, ritualistic, and icily predictable. It will be lifeless, empty, and boring.

Another truth that the Bible reveals about worship is that the believer is expected to worship privately and publicly. Believers are expected to participate regularly in public worship. The Word of God states, "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling or ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching" (**Hebrews 10:24-25**). Believers are to be faithful to join other believers to be faithful to join other believers for the purpose of worshipping God.

On the other hand, no matter how faithfully or sufficient your regular public worship is, there are experiences with God that He gives only in private worship. The Lord Jesus Christ sets the example for the believer. He worshipped in both public and private. He participated faithfully in the public worship of God at the synagogue each Sabbath and at the stated assemblies of Israel at the Temple in Jerusalem. In addition to this, Jesus had times of private worship. Luke records this about the private worship of Jesus, "So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed" (**Luke 5:16**). Public worship does not excuse you from private worship. Public worship is not a substitute

for private worship. A lifestyle of worship consists of both public and private worship.

The Bible reveals that worship is a discipline to be cultivated. The Lord Jesus Christ declares in **Matthew 4:10**, “You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only you shall serve.” This is a command of Christ and it refers to a continual action. The believer is to consistently worship the Lord God. In order to worship God consistently, a believer must exercise discipline in this area. Without this discipline, your worship of God will be weak and inconsistent. This is not to say that worship should become an empty ritual in which you go through the motions simply because you are to worship. Worship is the response of the heart in love with God. Yet, your worship is something that is to be cultivated. In all relationships, you have to cultivate the relationship if you want it to remain healthy and to grow stronger. The same is true with your relationship to God.

Describing modern man, one has written, “He worships his work, works at his play, and plays at his worship.” You cannot grow and mature as you ought to as a Christian if you play at worship. You will not develop a powerful and effective prayer life if you are inconsistent in your worship. You must pursue a lifestyle of worship.

Why Should I Pursue A Lifestyle of Worship?

In order to develop a lifestyle of worship, you will need to practice both private and public worship. This will require a commitment on your part. Why should you make this commitment? *The first reason to make this commitment is because God is worthy to be worshipped.* He is the eternal God, holy, unchangeable, sovereign, and righteous. He has created you, sustained you, and saved you. All things are by Him, through Him, and for Him (**Romans 11:33-36**). You owe everything to Him. Because of who He is and what He has done, God is worthy to receive your worship both public and private. It is right and good for you to praise Him (**Psalms 147:1**). This great and mighty God is worthy of all the praise that you can offer. Since He is worthy to be praised, you need to make the commitment to pursue a lifestyle of worship.

You should make this commitment because it enables you to fulfill God's expectation for your life. It is the will of God that you worship Him (**Deuteronomy 6:13, 10:20; Matthew 4:4**). God desires that His people worship Him in spirit and in truth (**John 4:24**). He rightfully commands us to give Him worship. Because He is the true and living God, He can expect our worship. When you daily worship Him, you are fulfilling His will for your life.

Developing a lifestyle of worship will strengthen your faith in God. As you praise God, it shows you how great and mighty He is. You are daily fixing your focus on Him. As you do this, you become convinced more and more of His greatness and His majesty. This will enable you to grow in the ability to trust Him. The more that you get to know God, the more you are going to worship Him. The more that you worship Him, the stronger your faith will be.

When you consistently praise God, it sets the tone for your prayers. It reminds you that you are coming into the presence of a holy God. Praise causes the one praying to enter into God's presence with a sober and serious spirit. It is a reminder to slow down and focus your attention on God because you are on holy ground.

A lifestyle of worship reminds you of God's identity and greatness. As you praise God, you are reminded that He is the holy and the sovereign God. You come to realize that you are praying to the powerful and awesome God of heaven and earth. You come to recognize that He can do exceedingly above all that you can ask or think. This will enable you to have confidence when you pray. It will grant you the assurance that God can bless you and answer your prayers. As you focus on God's greatness and power through worship, it strengthens your prayer life. It shows you that God can powerfully move in a person's life and that He can grant your requests for others.

A lifestyle of worship will make you willing to listen to God. As you enter God's presence, you go with requests that you desire to give to God. These requests may not be in line with the will of God. Yet, as you praise God, it reveals how holy, wise, and good that God is. This shows you that God's will has to be the priority. This can make your agenda less important. After all, He is the all-powerful and all-wise God. He is infinite and

you are finite. As you worship God, you come to realize this and it enables you to release your plans in order to receive what God has willed to give and to do.

Developing a lifestyle of worship opens the door for the power of God to flow into your life. In **Psalm 22:3**, the Bible reveals that God “inhabits” the praises of His people. The Bible says, “But You are holy, who inhabits the praises of people.” The word “inhabits” can be translated “enthroned.” God is present in power when His people praise Him. **When the praise goes up from God’s people, the power comes down from heaven.** As you worship God, His power will be released into your life. This is especially true concerning your prayer life. Praise will empower your prayer life. The power that is released through praise sustains you and enables you to pray for others. It also releases the power of God into the circumstances of those for whom you are praying.

A lifestyle of worship will cause you to pursue holiness. When Isaiah was in the presence of God in **Isaiah 6**, he received a glimpse of the holiness of God. When this happened, he realized how sinful he was. This moved him to confess His sins. As you praise God, you behold Him through the eyes of faith. Through the eyes of faith, His holiness and greatness will become clearer. This will begin to humble you and cause you to see your sinfulness. When this happens, it will move you to confess your sins and pursue a life pleasing to God. It will cause you to be diligent to get rid of those things in your life that are not pleasing in His sight. These steps are crucial to the pursuit of holiness. Yet, one begins to pursue these things after he or she worships God consistently.

A lifestyle of worship can enable you to overcome worrying. As you praise God, you focus on Him, His greatness, His power, and His faithfulness. This should give you the confidence in Him. It should create within you the confidence that He can take care of you and your circumstances. It is a sin to worry (**Matthew 6:25-34**). The believer is not to worry, but to worship. Worshipping God consistently can help you overcome worry because it reminds you of how powerful, faithful, and great God is.

Will you make the commitment to worship God? Will you pursue Him in both public and

private worship? Won’t you cry out to God now and tell Him of your desire and commitment to worship Him? The following prayer is offered to help you do this. You can use this prayer or develop your own.

“ O God, my Life and my Refuge, You are the living God. You are the holy and sovereign God of heaven and earth. I love You and want to please You. I ask You to teach me how to worship You in spirit and in truth. Give me a heart to worship You. It is the longing of my heart to worship You. This is Your desire for me and Your will for me. Grant me the discipline to worship You in private and in public with other believers. I will praise You forever. Amen.”

Practical Helps For Developing A Lifestyle of Worship

The following are some suggestions to help you in developing a lifestyle of praise:

(1) *Determine to have a daily time where you worship God in private.* Your worship of God must be intentional. You need to set aside time in your day when you worship God. This could be a part of your quiet time. You could also set another time in the day when you focus specifically on praising God.

(2) *Discipline yourself to worship God throughout the day and night.* As you go through your day, use certain sights, events, or blessings to move you to praise God. Labor to be aware of God’s presence in your life. As you notice His blessing and working in your life, use these things to offer spontaneous praise to God. Strive to fill your day with spontaneous praise. You might want to consider spending a night praising God. There have been times when I could not sleep and other times when I determined to spend the night praising God. Simply tell God, “Father, I love You. I want to spend this night adoring You and giving You praise. I want to minister to You and glorify You.” Use the night to worship God.

(3) *Take every advantage to worship with God's people.* Do everything that you can to be in the place of worship with God's people. Before you attend worship services, prepare yourself. Ask God to prepare your mind and heart for worship. Go to worship services with your heart and mind focused on God. As you sing, sing to the Lord. As you give, give to the Lord. As you listen to the sermon, "What is God saying to me through this sermon?" Focus on God throughout the worship service.

(4) *Spend time memorizing the Word of God, particularly those passages that deal with praise.* The Holy Spirit can more readily orchestrate heavenly praises through you if your mind is filled with memorized biblical praises.

(5) *Study what the Bible teaches about praise.* Record what you learn in your journal or in a "worship" notebook. Work to implement what you learn into your private and public worship.

(6) *Use a hymnbook in your personal worship.* You could purchase hymnals or song books. During your personal worship, sing to the Lord. Use music on tapes and CD's to enable you to worship Him. Write out praises to God from these materials by adding pronouns. An example of this is taking "Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, just to take Him at His word; just to rest upon His promise, just to know 'Thus saith the Lord'" and change it to "Tis so sweet to trust in *You*, Jesus, just to take *You* at *Your* word; just to rest upon *Your* promise, just to know, 'Thus saith *You*, O Lord.'"

(7) *Use the name and attributes of God for your worship.* Take the names and attributes of God and praise Him on the basis of these things. You can gain information concerning the names and attributes of God from study Bibles, reference works, and books on these subjects. You might consider using past issues of *The Prayer Closet* that deals with the names and attributes of God (August, September, October, November, and December of 1998).

(8) *Worship God even during times of spiritual dryness.* Praise God even when you do not feel like it. God will always be God and He will always be

worthy of worship. This is true even when you have times of doubt and spiritual dryness. A believer often breaks out of these times during private and personal worship. Worship God through all the circumstances of life.

Praying For A Lifestyle of Worship

The Lord Jesus Christ teaches that the believer is to ask and seek God concerning the desires of his or her heart (**Matthew 7:7**). If you desire to develop a lifestyle of worship, ask God for this. The following prayer requests have been developed to help you seek God in this matter. These prayer requests are based on the Word of God. Since you know that it is God's will for you to worship Him and you are asking in accordance with His will, you can pray with confidence and expectancy (**1 John 5:14**). You can use these prayers for yourself or for other believers. You might also consider using these prayers to intercede for your church. You could use these prayers to plead with God to create a spirit of worship among the believers. These requests can be used to call on God to turn your church into a worshipping church.

I plead that _____ will praise You with uprightness of heart when I/he/she learns about You from Your Word (**Psalms 119:7**).

I pray that _____ will worship You, the living and the true God, in spirit and in truth (**John 4:24**).

O Lord my God, I ask that _____ will praise You with all my/his/her heart and that _____ will glorify Your name forevermore (**Psalms 86:12**).

Father, I pray that _____ will bless You. I plead that _____ will bless you with all that is in me/him/her. Do not let _____ forget Your benefits that You grant to me/him/her on a daily basis (**Psalms 103:1-2**).