

LESSON ONE

Introduction to Worship Lifestyle

LESSON OUTLINE:

1. Created for Fellowship
2. Worship is a Lifestyle
3. We Become What We Worship
4. Disclosure of the Heart
5. Worship God Anywhere, Any Time
6. Worship God Only
7. Conclusion

OBJECTIVE OF LESSON

To lay a foundation for the whole course and introduce the concept of the worship lifestyle and the principle that we are a 'product' of what we worship.

KEY POINT

Worship Transforms Me

1. CREATED FOR FELLOWSHIP

We are unique individuals created by God in His image (Genesis 1:27-28) for the purpose of fellowship with Him. This fellowship essentially operates in two ways - firstly to worship God and secondly to serve Him, but it has to be in that order. Our worship empowers us to serve and establish His kingdom. When Adam fell, he was put out of the Garden of Eden - the place where he had fellowship, worshiped and was given authority to rule.

The Garden of Eden

1. A place of worship (to God)
2. A place of fellowship (with God)
3. A place of authority (given by God)

They chose to believe the lie of the serpent rather than God (Genesis 2-3). God had warned them that they would die if they ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17). They did not die physically on that day but the result of their action severed the spiritual connection between themselves and God. The eternal life and harmony that they enjoyed was now broken by wilful disobedience. This affected man in the following ways:

When Adam Sinned

1. His spirit became 'dead' to God
2. His mind opposed God
3. His body physically deteriorated

Adam's spirit was 'dead' in the sense that it was separated from God and no longer in harmony with God's Spirit. His mind became subject to shame, fear of rejection and guilt that made him hide from God. His body began to deteriorate and become susceptible to disease (dis-ease is the opposite of harmony) and ageing resulting ultimately in death.

Only when man is spiritually joined in relationship with His Creator does he function as God intended. The breakdown in relationship with God through sin had to be repaired. God had a plan to redeem man (Romans 5:8-9). Through redemption, our sins are forgiven, but it would take worship to restore man back to intimacy with God. In His presence we are transformed and worship is the way God has chosen for this to happen.

2. WORSHIP IS A LIFESTYLE

Jesus had the keys to get us back to the 'Garden of Eden' - the place of worship and authority; the place where we belong. He came as the last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45) to redeem and restore us to intimacy with God and authority over the enemy. Worship is sometimes hard to define, but it is easy to measure. Worship is measured by the value (not necessarily monetary), regard or importance we put on something that we give our lives to. Worship demands the attention of one's life. You can not worship something without it taking something out of your life.

Genesis 1:27-28

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Note:

The Garden of Eden was a place of worship that had boundaries which protected Adam from whatever was outside the garden. This environment of worship and fellowship was the safest place in the world as long as he resisted the devil's lies. Worship is a safe environment but it does not offer us immunity from temptation. We still have to resist the devil.

Genesis 2:17

"but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Note:

There is a deep-rooted desire for worship and intimacy within mankind. Dr. Billy Graham once said, "Every man and woman has a 'God-shaped' vacuum in their life and nothing but God can fill it." Power, prestige, money, possessions, fame and popularity do not guarantee happiness.

Note

When you are intimate with someone, your two lives are so intertwined that neither can be fully understood without reference to the other. God's plan is for our lives to be intertwined with His so that we become inseparable.

Romans 5:8-9

But God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood we shall be saved from the wrath through Him

1 Corinthians 15:45

And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

Worship is a lifestyle irrespective of what it is that you worship.

While on his way to Galilee, Jesus had an amazing encounter with a Samaritan woman (John 4:4-42) who had become the victim of six failed relationships with men. What she needed was a man who would transform her life. Jesus told her that He was the Messiah. At last she had met the seventh and perfect man in her life, but He also introduced the idea that relationship with God was based on worshiping Him as a Father.

Jesus wanted to give her a new life based on a relationship with God. She was challenged to transfer her worship lifestyle from men to God. She was about to become a true worshiper, whose life would not only value God, but be valued by God.

Transformed in His Presence

The woman was transformed in His presence. She immediately left what she was doing and went into the city to tell the men (John 4:28-30). She would never be the same. Jesus did not choose to share this revolutionary truth (of worship) with a religious leader. He shared it with someone who was looking for their life to be radically transformed. Worship is for those who want transformation.

3. WE BECOME WHAT WE WORSHIP

Scripture clearly shows us that we become what we worship and we take on its personality (Psalm 115:4-8).

The object we worship transforms us. The profile of any person is a reflection of their worship.

Those who worship idols become like them and those who worship God become like God (2 Corinthians 3:17-18). This is a basic law in scripture.

Idol worship is not necessarily sitting in front of a wooden image chanting or praying. It is allowing whatever we worship to control and transform our lives. It may be the worship of money and material possessions, a career or business, a sport, hobby or a relationship.

Anything that occupies our thoughts, attention, time and energy more than God has the potential to make us more unlike God than like Him.

Transforming Power of Worship

Worship transforms churches, individuals and nations. There is nothing as powerful in existence that influences society more. Every nation has its religions and every religion has its worshipers who influence the character of their nation through their worship.

A nation ultimately becomes a reflection of who it worships (Psalm 33:12)

Note:

God has created us to be in love (intimate) with Him, so that our lives are a reflection of His love.

Note:

Seven is the number of perfection. Jesus was the perfect man in her life.

John 4:28-30

The woman then left her water pot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

Note:

God is the ultimate relationship. Every relationship we have with others is based on the relationship we have with God. If we find it hard to love others, it's possibly because we find it hard to love God.

Psalm 115:4-8

Their idols are silver and gold, The work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see; They have ears, but they do not hear; Noses they have, but they do not smell; They have hands, but they do not handle; Feet they have, but they do not walk; Nor do they mutter through their throat. Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Note:

Everything we worship outside of God relegates us to being less than who we are created to be.

Psalm 33:12

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.

It's the same with a church. The character of any church is a reflection of its worship. Nothing transforms a church more than worship. Nothing stagnates a church more than a lack of it. A church can never rise above the level of its worship because worship is the primary purpose for which it exists. Transformation takes place in the presence and through the power of the Holy Spirit. When we worship the Lord, there is a freedom and liberty for the Holy Spirit to transform us (2 Corinthians 3:17-18).

4. DISCLOSURE OF THE HEART

Read John 4:4-15. In verse 16, Jesus gets to the real issues of the woman's life. He confronts her with the truth and exposes her deep-rooted need for lifestyle change. In this encounter there comes a moment of disclosure. The mask comes off as she admits who she is and what she is really like. Jesus got her to share her heart. The deepest needs and desires of the human heart are exposed in His presence. God longs to reveal Himself to us, but before He can He must show us who we are. Worship always opens our hearts to who we are in the light of who He is. It's a place of disclosure and great healing.

Jesus was preparing the woman to receive revelation on the subject of worship and did so by preparing her heart.

5. WORSHIP GOD ANYWHERE, ANY TIME

For centuries the centre of worship for the Jew had been the temple in Jerusalem and the religious festivals had required the Jewish males to travel to Jerusalem at least three times a year. To the Jewish and Samaritan mindset, worship was synonymous with the Temple, Law, tradition and religious ceremony. Jesus attempted to change this mindset by stating that worship could now take place anywhere and at any time, because worship was no longer restricted by geography but dependent on relationship (John 4:20-24).

God's people have access to God to worship Him anywhere, any time, and experience continual transformation in His presence.

Worshipers would not have to travel to the Temple to worship God like in the Old Testament. They now had instant access to God's abiding presence. God had come down to live in men's hearts and from there they could worship Him (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20).

6. WORSHIP GOD ONLY

Jesus also addressed the object of worship as the 'Father' God (John 4:23; This will be dealt with in a later lesson). Whenever there was a restoration of true worship in Israel, there was first a dismantling of all false worship. Hezekiah became king of Judah and dismantled false worship before he could restore the nation's worship to God (2 Kings 18:1-8).

Note:

God does bless nations who follow Him.

John 4:16

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

Note:

The presence of God is the environment for disclosure. When people worship, God will disclose things in the innermost parts of their lives that they did not even know were there. It's a place where we allow God to come and uproot things that are not of Him.

John 4:20-24

Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 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 in spirit and truth."

Note:

Jesus introduced the concept of worship as a lifestyle to the woman.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

There is much dismantling needed in our lives and churches today to restore true worship back to its rightful place. We need to dismantle religious traditions and man-made practices. We have to worship God as a Father. This is the message Jesus gave to the Samaritan woman. He introduced God the Father as the object of worship. This is the foundation upon which all New Testament worship is built.

According to Jesus, the object of our worship is God the Father.

Obviously we must worship Jesus also, but there is no Biblical evidence that we should worship anyone else or anything else. No earthly man, or any other biblical person should be worshiped. No church traditions, denominations or cultures should prevent us from worshiping God the Father.

When He is worshiped our praises will be accompanied with powerful manifestations of His presence, invading the natural realm we live in with His supernatural presence.

We can never prioritise anything over worship, if we do we give opportunity for idols to invade lives and churches.

The Supernatural

The un-churched are looking for the supernatural when they come to church, and we have to offer them a God who is in our midst with the power to heal, deliver, set free and comfort. They are also looking for evidence of God in Christians, that we are people whose lifestyle is different to theirs. They visit our churches because they want a better life and know in their hearts that God can help them. The last thing they are looking for is people who are no different to themselves and a church that is empty of God's presence and power. While many good church programs are successfully attracting un-churched people, the greatest testimony is that they came and stayed because they felt and experienced His presence (Acts 15:12).

7. CONCLUSION

The message of a worship lifestyle is one of extreme importance to the church if we are going to fulfil our calling as priests and kings. It's only when we know how to worship that we can operate as kings and move into the authority that God has called us to. The world will feel the effects of a generation who worship God in spirit and truth. Let it be this one.

John 4:23

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.

Note:

Hezekiah removed every trace of false worship from his people. He was ruthless in his pursuit of worship and service to God. He cleansed the house of God and put things in order. We put things in order in God's house when we prioritise worship above all else that results in a cleansing.

Note:

The un-churched know how the church should act, which is sometimes more of a reality to them than it is for many Christians. Things are changing however and God's people are living lives that are attractive to those who don't know God.

Note:

Just because we have a church doesn't mean we have God in it. It's not until we worship that He feels comfortable to come.

Acts 15:12

Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.