

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE – AUGUST 2018

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Worship:

The Need to Worship:

- *“Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.”* Matt. 4:10
- *“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is Spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”* John 4:23-24

How Would You Define Worship as a Spiritual Discipline?

- It begins with a proper knowledge of God and a dependent relational experience with Him. It is impossible to have such a knowledge and experience and NOT worship God.
- Worship is not merely signing songs and enjoying ecstatic emotional feelings; it is proclaiming in our spirit in agreement with the Spirit the loving greatness of God and holding Him in awe and wonder.
- The essence of idolatry is holding thoughts about God that are unworthy of His Greatness. Awe and wonder expressed in worship is an appropriate deterrent against holding unworthy thoughts about God for they demonstrate an exalted view of God.

Why Would You Incorporate Worship as a Discipline into Your Life?

- We need a clear view of the *object* of our worship for the *reason* for worship to make sense. The better question might be “how can you not worship God?” Every person Scripture describes that saw God was fundamentally changed by the experience. Moses face ‘glowed’ it radiated the light and life of God. Isaiah proclaimed in self judgment

“woe is me.” Ezekiel and the Apostle John fell down as though dead. This is not mere hyperbole... something real happened to them and their response took them outside the realm of the normal into the supernatural. Such are all encounters with God. And our response is awe and wonder, which leads us to worship and praise.

- I would hazard a guess that if we were not moved to worship and praise, that something was fundamentally wrong with us. When we really encounter God for who He is, it unhinges what we are... and that is actually a good thing. We are after all, created beings and God is our Creator.
- Worship is the proper response of the created to their Creator.

- Luke 19:36-40 reads - *As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."* Such is our need to worship.

How Would You Incorporate Worship as a Discipline into Your Life?

- The discipline of worship begins with prayer and contemplation, but encompasses all of the disciplines – inward, outward and corporate. All are involved in worship.
- The 1st half of the Great Commandment [Shema] forms the basis of worship Mk 12:30: *The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.* True love is always demonstrated in tangible ways. Every time I pause during my day to ponder God I demonstrate a heart that loves Him – and that is worship. Every time I deliberately obey His prompting in my heart – I worship Him.
- Worship is based on *koinonia* – deep inward fellowship in the power of the Spirit. This is manifest individually and corporately and is transformational where I become more like Jesus. The discipline of worship seeks God because we love Him, and expresses that love in countless tangible ways throughout each day.
- Richard Foster observes, “worship should be considered a Spiritual Discipline because it is an ordered way of acting and living that sets us before God so He can transform us.”
- It seeks to still all overtly human initiated activity in preference of a “perpetual, inward, listening silence so that God is the source of our words and actions.”
- Discipleship recognizes that Jesus is our present teacher and leader... and we deliberately submit to His tutelage seeking that every aspect of our mind, heart and body come into conformance with Him.