



**“All that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need” (Acts 2:44, 45).**

## **The Effect of Worship**

**Central Truth:** Worship will issue in Christian service.

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Worship is never an end in itself. It is more than a warm, cozy, religious emotion which is to be enjoyed for a time and then passed by. Worship is practical in its effect. It issues in service to people in the name of God, or it is not true worship at all.

Sincere worship puts principle into practice. Worship “in spirit and in truth,” which the Father seeks, is always followed by service (John 4:23, 24). The worshiper's lifestyle must agree with the will of Him whom he worships. If one is disobedient, his worship is a farce and an act of hypocrisy. Worship and service are serious matters.

Isaiah 1:11-20 has a surprising message about worship. It pictures the people coming faithfully to God's temple. They brought their sacrifices and offered them in the prescribed manner. They said their prayers and went through other forms of worship. It was all just as God set out by Moses. But He rejected them and their acts of worship. Why? Because it was all a matter of form. Their lifestyle did not correspond with their acts of worship. A wrong heart makes void a right ritual. Worship and service are serious matters.

True worship will change the worshiper. Acts 2:37-47 indicates nine effects produced by a true experience of worship. Review them and seek to emulate them in your life.

### **I. WORSHIP PRODUCES CONVICTION**

The Holy Spirit fell upon the Christians on the day of Pentecost and filled them with divine power. They spoke in fifteen different languages to the people filling Jerusalem at that time of the year. The people met God on that occasion and were convicted of their sins. *“They were pricked in their heart, and said. . . , Men and brethren, what shall we do?”* (Acts 2:37). They had stood in a worship occasion and were convicted. It is ever so.

Isaiah saw the Lord in all His glory as He sat upon His throne. Angels flew about Him, ascribing glory to Him. Isaiah was overcome with his own sense of sinfulness, lamenting his “unclean lips” before the Lord. Worship produced conviction.

John was in exile on the island of Patmos when he saw the Lord Jesus. The Lord was glorious in His person and in His dress. John saw Him and fell at His feet as if he were dead. A vision of the glorified Lord overcame him with a sense of his own unworthiness. Worship produced conviction.

We may measure ourselves among ourselves and think we are approved. But not so. That is an unwise procedure (II Corinthians 10:12). We must measure ourselves by the Lord Jesus to see ourselves as we really are. We see ourselves clearly only when we see Him clearly. Therefore, to meet God in worship is to be convicted of our sins.

## II. WORSHIP LEADS TO CLEANSING

When the people cried out, *“Men and brethren, what shall we do?”* there was a ready answer. *“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost”* (Acts 2:37, 38). They had seen the evidence of God's power, were convicted of their sins, and were led to cleansing by the blood of Jesus. That is the effect of true worship.

Isaiah experienced it also. *“Woe is me,”* he cried, *“for I am undone. I am a foul-mouthed sinner who lives in a foul-mouthed race.”* (See Isaiah 6:5.) But God leaves no person in such a state. A seraph took a burning coal from the fire on the altar and touched Isaiah's lips, saying, *“Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt is gone and your sin is forgiven.”* And it was so!

Have you experienced the cleansing that comes with worship? There is a freedom, a freshness of spirit, which follows a true meeting with God. Old burdens are cast off, and new strength is received. Defilement is washed away, and purity is enjoyed. If you have not experienced it recently, seek His cleansing when next you worship.

### III. WORSHIP LEADS TO OBEDIENCE

Peter gave clear and detailed instruction to the convicted sinners at Pentecost. They heard and they responded. He commanded faith and they believed. He commanded repentance and they turned from their wicked ways. He commanded baptism and they submitted to the ordinance. Why? Because they had been before the Lord.

Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord calling him to serve as a prophet of God. The call came immediately after worship which led to conviction and cleansing. “*Here am I; send me,*” he volunteered (Isaiah 6:8). What other response was reasonable?

We cannot say no to Him who sits on the throne. We cannot say no to Him who is worthy to receive our worship. To worship in truth is to be available for every act of service. His wish becomes our command. Worship on Sunday makes a difference in work on Monday, and all the rest of the week. Notice the change in persons who meet God. Become that kind of person yourself. Discover by experience how worship leads to obedience to the will of God.

### IV. WORSHIP PRODUCES MATURITY

You receive something in worship which stays with you and improves you. Just as wholesome food strengthens the body and maintains its health, so true worship strengthens the spirit and produces growth toward spiritual maturity.

It is reported of those early Christian converts that “*they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers*” (Acts 2:42). Conversion was not enough for them. Getting started in Christian living was not sufficient. They wanted to know all that God had made available for them as saints of God. They wanted to grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

In worship, I see three things. (1) I see the truth of what I have been taught reflected in the majestic person of God. (2) I see my present immaturity and desire to be more like Jesus. (3) I see the potential before me to grow up into Him who is the head of the spiritual body of which I am a member. I see it, and I want to realize it in personal experience.

God gives the vision that He might produce the reality. He gives the hunger that He might satisfy it. He shows us Jesus that He might make us more like Him with the consent of our wills (II Corinthians 3:18). Yes, worship contributes to our maturity in Christ.

## V. WORSHIP PRODUCES POWER

It really docs. *“Many wonders and signs were done by the apostles”* (Acts 2:43). *“With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all”* (Acts 4:33). But be careful to give credit where credit is due. The apostles were very careful to say that the power was not in themselves but in God who raised Jesus from the dead (Acts 3:12-16). So it ever is.

The power of God manifested through a worshiping Christian is but a reflection of His supreme power. It is like the fragrance of a divine perfume. When the Jewish court saw the power of God manifested in Peter and John, accompanied by a holy boldness in speaking of Jesus, they realized what being with Jesus had done for them.

Do not expect power in prayer unless you worship. Do not expect power in witness unless you worship. Do not expect power in temptations unless you worship. Worship is the key to all spiritual power. He who has been with God is ready to go out to meet the world.

## VI. WORSHIP PRODUCES UNITY

*“All that believe were together, and had all things common”* (Acts 2:44). That was the situation immediately after Pentecost, but did it last? Indeed it did! Some time later it is reported, *“The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul”* (Acts 4:32). They realized a great Bible truth: *“We are members one of another”* (Ephesians 4:25).

Do you remember the axiom, “Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other”? It applies in the spiritual realm as well. If you worship God and I worship God, we will be in harmony with one another. If we are out of fellowship, the unity of the Spirit being broken between us, it is proof that one or the other (or perhaps both) of us has ceased to meet God in true worship. Our petty differences are dissolved when we come before Him.

What sorrow we must bring to the heart of God, therefore, when we are not at peace with our fellow Christians. He is a father who is pained by His children's faults. We must practice regular worship to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3).

## VII. WORSHIP INCREASES GIVING

The early Christians were marked by the liberality of their financial

gifts to the Lord. They willingly counted their personal property to be only held in trust until such time as it was needed to minister to others. They willingly sold property that the price might help those in need (Acts 4:32, 36, 37).

Why are the offerings so miserly in some churches? It is because the people have lost the spirit of worship. Meet God as He is, and you will know that nothing is too good or too great for Him. Zacchaeus spent a little time with Jesus and was ready to give half of his estate to the work of the Lord. How much are you willing to give?

## VIII. WORSHIP PROMOTES WORSHIP

Those early Christians could not get enough of worship. Unlike church members who must be urged to attend even occasionally, they went to temple every day (Acts 2:46). Like the seraphim that cease not day and night to cry “Holy, holy, holy” before God (Revelation 4:8), the worshiping Christian never completes a worship service.

Why go to church if you do not meet God there? He is there with His people as He promised (Matthew 18:20). Go to church in a spirit of worship. Enjoy the services in a spirit of worship. Leave the church with a spirit of worship. It is our privilege to live in the realm of worship, being renewed in it each Lord's Day as we meet with His people to worship Him more.

## IX. WORSHIP PRODUCES CHURCH GROWTH

Look about you today. The growing churches are those that have a dynamic worship service. The Lord kept adding day by day to the church in Jerusalem because the church kept fresh her worship and obedience. It will be so in your church, by His grace. If you want your church to grow, work on your experience of true worship. Worship will glorify God, will mature us, and will make us witnesses. Worship gives God the opportunity to work through us. Learn the wonder of worship.

### Questions

1. What is the effect of true worship?
2. Why is worship of God not an end in itself?
3. How does worship produce conviction of sin?
4. How does worship lead to cleansing?
5. How does worship produce maturity?

6. How does worship promote unity?
7. How does worship increase giving?
8. How does worship promote more worship?
9. How does worship bring church growth?
10. How can you worship more perfectly?