

WORSHIP

Stories - (I generally start with some "crazy", "frightening", or just "funny" worship experiences - times I've seen "very expressive" or even annoying people. You can start here, or skip it.)

What Is Worship?

Worship- - Our English word Worship comes from the word "worthship", and speaks of drawing our **attention away from ourselves and toward God.**

-Definition- - the created's joyful and loving response to the Creator's very person and to His acts of lovingkindness. (Our Response to Who God Is, and to What He Has Done.)

-Very simply put (Jr High def) - it is **paying attention to God.**

In XA, we have many backgrounds, denominations and traditions - therefore many worship styles. This can be a beautiful thing, but we need a biblical foundation to start from:

Why Do We Worship?

1.) God is Worthy!

Remember: 1-Who He Is (perfect, holy, all-knowing, etc...) *Read **Isa 6:1-3***

2- What He Has Done For Us (food, clothes, family, Jesus!) *Read **Rev 5:9-10***

2.) The Bible Tells us (Commands us) to Worship God *Read **1 Peter 2:9** **Psalm 100:4***

-This is NOT **vanity** on God's part

-He knows we'll worship something - -(ourselves, cars, a girl, etc...)

-God created us to be worshipers, God saved us to be worshipers

3.) God Promises to Inhabit the Praises of His People *Read **Psalms 22:3***

-There is a difference between:

1. The Omnipresence of God *Jer 23:24*

-God fills the universe

2. His Manifest Presence *2 Chron 5:13-14*

-When He comes in power as we worship

How Should We Worship?

1.) Important Distinction Between Inner/Outer Worship: *Read **John 4:23-24***

***John 4:23-24** "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. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."*

Questions -

1. What does it mean to worship in spirit?

-In "**spirit**" means - genuinely, from our hearts (and not just an outward form), with the help of the Holy Spirit.

2. What does it mean to worship in truth?

-In "**truth**" means worship from a pure heart on the basis of who God is as revealed in His Word.

3. Where does true worship begin?

-Jesus teaches **that true worship begins on the inside**- - in the Heart!

2.) But True Worship will find a way to express itself!

-**C.S. Lewis** - *"All enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise. Praise is not simply the expression of enjoyment, but rather it is the completion of enjoyment. Praise is enjoyment's appointed consummation. **The delight is incomplete until it is expressed!**"*

-examples-lovers - can't stop talking about the one they love

-readers - always sharing what they've read

Questions -

1. Do you agree with Lewis that we instinctively want to express what we enjoy?

2. Why do we want to show pictures from our vacations and trips?

3. So the Question becomes "What are some fitting expressions of Worship to God?"

-We need to look to the Bible, not just our culture, tradition, and history for appropriate models and expressions of worship.

Many examples in the Bible: (have them each look up one of the following scriptures)

A. Responding to God with our Mouths:

-**Silence** - *Ps 46:10 "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."*

-**Speaking** - *Ps 71:8 My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor all day long.*

-**Singing:**

1. something Familiar - *Ps 69:30 I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving.*

2. something Brand New- *Ps 98:1 Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things*

-**Shouting** - *Ps 66:1 "Shout with joy to God, all the earth!"*

B. Responding to God with Actions:

-**Bowing and Kneeling** - *Ps 95:6 Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker*

-**Lifting Hands** - *Ps 63:4 I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.*

-**Clapping Hands** - *Ps 47:1 Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy.*

-**Dancing and Leaping** - *Ps 149:3 Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp."*

C. Responding to God with Instruments -*Psalms 150* (**trumpet, harp, strings, tambourines, flute, cymbals**)

-This is done, not primarily to accompany the singing, but as a worship offering to the Lord, too!

-Instrument solos - not showing off- expressing worship.

Questions-

1. Can you think of any other biblical, or proper "expressions" of worship?
2. Which of these expressions are you most comfortable with? Why?
3. Are there any listed here that you are uncomfortable with? Why?

The Decision To Worship (Conclusion)

-We need to look at our own style and ask "Is this just based on tradition, or on the Bible?"

-Obviously the Bible gives a wide variance in appropriate expressions of worship, **the most important thing for us is that we do decide to express it!**

-The proper question to ask after a worship service is not, "What did I get out of it?", but "How did I do?"

(At this point, I would bridge the small group meeting in to a time of worship together. Conclude with the following scripture:)

Re-Read *John 4:23* - *"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 looking for worshipers!

*Ps 147:1 Praise the LORD. How good it is to sing praises to our God,
how pleasant and fitting to praise him!*