

Introduction

Christians frequently use the term “worship” when they talk about church and religious functions, but when pressed to explain or define what they mean, they end up with vague or incomplete answers—often reducing it to something one does. The lack of understanding the essence of true Christian worship has serious implication on the individual believer as well as the church as a whole.

Here is an attempt to define worship in a biblically faithful way with the purpose and prayer of helping the church grow as worshippers of God—both on Sunday and every other day of the week.

What is Christian Worship?

Christian worship is the response of God’s redeemed and covenant people to His self-revelation that exalts God’s glory in Christ in our minds, affections, and wills, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Each phrase is very intentional, so let’s look at each one carefully and with the words of Scripture.

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP...

Christian worship is different from every kind of worship because it has been made possible through Jesus Christ. We are not just worshipping God, we are worshipping Him in the name of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 5:9-10 And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, (10) and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

The work of Christ on the Cross is central to our worship. Jesus makes us all worshipping priests and kings if we have been born again by Him.

IS THE RESPONSE...

God has already done something outside of us and inside of us that enables us to worship Him. We are not the initiators of worship; God is.

Acts 17:24ff The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, (25) nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. (26) And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, (27) that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, (28) for “In him we live and move and have our being...”

OF GOD’S REDEEMED PEOPLE...

Just as God delivered the nation of Israel from Egypt to worship Him, so He has redeemed us as a holy nation to declare His praises.

1Peter 2:9-10 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (10) Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

OF GOD’S COVENANT PEOPLE...

The basis of our relationship with Him is His unchanging character, His unfailing love, and His unrepeatable sacrifice for our sins in the new covenant.

Jeremiah 31:33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

TO HIS SELF-REVELATION...

We can’t know God apart from Him revealing Himself to us. He has shown Himself to us in creation, His Word, and ultimately His Son.

Hebrews 1:1-3 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, (2) but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. (3) He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

John 4:24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Christian worship is the response of God’s redeemed and covenant people to His self-revelation that exalts God’s glory in Christ in our minds, affections, and wills, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

THAT EXULTS...

The essence of worship is exalting - raising up, lifting high, submitting to, magnifying, making much of, honoring, reverencing, celebrating—the triune God.

Psalms 71:19 Your righteousness, O God, reaches the high heavens. You who have done great things, O God, who is like you?

Psalms 64:10 Let the righteous one rejoice in the LORD and take refuge in him! Let all the upright in heart exult!

Psalms 34:2-3 My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad. (3) Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together!

GOD'S GLORY IN CHRIST ...

Moses asked God to show him his glory and God passed before him and proclaimed his nature.

Exo 34:6-7 The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, (7) keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty..."

God has enabled us to see His glory in the face of Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

IN OUR MINDS...

Worship involves thinking, meditating, reflecting, processing, evaluating, understanding what God has revealed to us of Himself.

Romans 12:1-2 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (2) Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Psalms 111:2 Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them.

IN OUR AFFECTIONS...

True worship involves the heart as well as the head. We worship what we love and value the most.

Matthew 22:37-38 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. (38) This is the great and first commandment.

Psalms 100:1-2 Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! (2) Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!

AND IN OUR WILLS...

If we are truly worshipping God, our lives will truly be transformed.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. (18) And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

See also Romans 12:1-2 (previous page).

IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

We are those who worship by the Spirit of God, and depend on His leading and enabling.

Philippians 3:3 For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh--

Romans 8:14-15 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (15) For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

Much of the definition and explanation of worship found in this brochure comes from pastor and musician Bob Kauflin of Sovereign Grace Ministries.

You can visit his blog/website at www.worshipmatters.com.



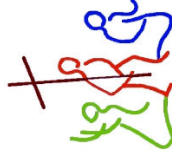
Regarding corporate worship at Grace Church. Each week (by Friday) we post the sermon text (s) and song lyrics for the coming Sunday and we invite you to read and prayerfully prepare your minds for Sunday worship. Sermons (both the manuscripts and audio) are posted early the next week.

www.gracewyoingmedia.com



Grace Church
An Evangelical Free Church

What is Christian Worship?



"But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

John 4:23-24