

St Paul's Dorking Small Groups – Sunday 21st October

Why Worship? Psalm 8



INTRODUCTION

Standing in rows, declaring our love for an unseen, male, historical figure, singing repetitive songs with great gusto, and struggling with hymns containing words we have no idea what they mean, is probably considered nonsense by most people in our culture today. **However**, having a relationship with an unseen, celebrity person, hanging on to their every word, connecting to them on a daily basis, and ascribing greatness and worth to their every communication (even if we have no idea what they actually mean by it) is considered normal for millions of social media followers today!

So what is Christian worship? Why do we do it, and what does it mean to “follow” and “like” God?

1) WHY WORSHIP?

The Greek word that is translated into the Christian bible as “worship” is “proskyneō”. This means “to come towards to kiss” which is an expression of reverence and intimacy. **It may be helpful to think of worship as God’s love language.** Gary Chapman in his best-selling book the *5 Love Languages* identified that we as humans have 5 ways we express heartfelt commitment in a relationship. When we worship God, we are giving ourselves to God with these same 5 expressions: In worship we give quality time, express words of affirmation, dedicate ourselves to acts of service, offer up gifts and we sometimes even get physical with dancing, hands held high, or even falling on our knees!

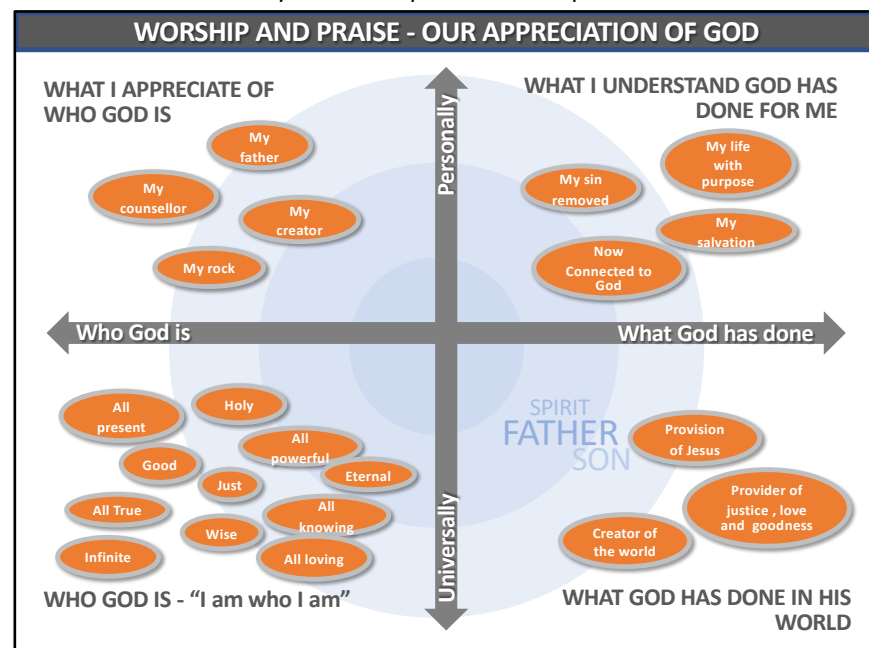


2) WORSHIP IS A TWO-WAY STREET

- Worship is a two-way street - in giving ourselves to God he gives back! Worship is simply our enjoyment of God and God’s enjoyment of us. *“Let Israel rejoice in their maker, let the people of Zion be glad in their King. Let them praise his name with dancing and music. For the Lord takes delight in his people.” Ps 149:2-4*
- Worship and praise opens a window into the presence of God. *“But you are Holy, you who inhabit the praises of Israel.” Ps 22: 3 (WEB)*
- Worship and praise transform us - It takes us out of ourselves. It gives us a focus on God who is bigger and beyond our day-to-day, transient issues and challenges. It lifts us to a new perspective and a new horizon. *“But we all, with unveiled face seeing the glory of the Lord as in a mirror, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, the Spirit.” 2 Cor 3:18*

3) A FRAMEWORK FOR EXPERIENCING MORE IN WORSHIP

There are 4 areas we may want to explore in worship:



- **Appreciating who God is universally.** Thinking big, thinking about God’s “omni” character. He is Who He is and much of that is beyond our understanding!
 - **Appreciating God for what I currently understand of Him.** Thinking through the lens of my experience, what is God to me?
 - **Appreciating God for what He has done in His world.** Thinking about God’s intervention in His world. His universal and global initiatives, actions, promises and undertakings.
 - **Appreciating God for what I currently understand he has done for me.** Thinking through the lens of my experience of what God has done in my life. What is real and has impacted me?
- We can overlay upon this model our appreciation and adoration of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

4) TO THINK ABOUT ...

- **Style over substance.** Too often we let a particular style dominate, diminish or destroy our experience of worship. We need to embrace and explore diversity and openness to allow us to more deeply and widely enjoy worship.
- **Think outside the box:** Often we put God in a box and sit only with the familiar and our own limited understanding of God. JB Phillips wrote a book called *“Your God is too small.”* It’s a great title and makes us think! Let’s open out the box!
- **Enjoy God!** The Westminster Catechism states **“The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him for ever.”** Sometimes we get so caught up with “churchy stuff” we forget to do that!

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

1. How would you describe your experience of worship? What works for you, what does not? Why do think that is the case?
2. Read Psalm 8. Share what inspires and touches you?
3. Discuss the idea that worship is our *“Love language with God.”* Does this help give our worship variety of expression?
4. Is your worship stuck in a groove? Does the model of worship (illustrated above) help you think about worship? If so, how?
5. How might we enjoy God more? Do we sometimes get too caught up with “churchy stuff” that we miss out on enjoying Him?