

GROWING DEEP IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Returning to Our Roots

STUDY TWENTY-TWO

Worship: Let It Shine! Let It Shine!

Psalm 95:1–7

In worship, we connect with the living Lord. In that moment, we are lost in the wonder and praise of God.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

WHEN jewelers craft a ring, they mold a band from a precious metal such as gold or silver. They attach prongs that are just the right size and strength to secure the gemstone. The final touch is to mount the jewel, and the ring is complete. The ring's wearer can now flash the beautiful gem for all to admire. What is the purpose of a ring if not to show off the jewel?

Our purpose is worship. God designed our souls to connect to Him and to respond in praise. Worship is the sparkling focal point of our lives, and when worship is missing, we feel incomplete.

In their book, *Worship: Rediscovering the Missing Jewel*, Ron Allen and Gordon Borrer shine a light on what worship really is.

Worship is an active response to God whereby we declare His worth. Worship is not passive, but is participative. Worship is not simply a mood; it is a response. Worship is not just a feeling; it is a declaration. . . .

The English word worship is wonderfully expressive of the act that it describes. This term comes from the Anglo-Saxon *weorthscipe*, which then was modified to *worthship*, and finally to *worship*. Worship means “to attribute worth” to something or someone.¹



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Worship is declaring the worth of God. It is “showing off” God by talking about Him, singing His praises, reflecting His character, and modeling His values. Worship is the dazzling jewel mounted in the setting of our lives. Let it shine! **Let it shine!**



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Open your study of the Scriptures with prayer.

Father, I long to worship You in a meaningful way. Show me how to honor You with my whole life—not just at church on Sunday but every day and in everything I do. Help me see You more clearly and fill me with love, wonder, and praise. In Jesus’ name, amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Worship can be an elusive concept because it doesn’t come with a set of rules. There aren’t “Five Steps to Worship” or a list of dos and don’ts. Worship is relational in nature, so it includes experiential and emotional components that may be difficult to corral with precise parameters.

Worship is also personal. Some Christians relate to God mostly with their minds and are uncomfortable expressing feelings. Others swing to the opposite extreme and relate to God only by feelings. The book of Psalms keeps us balanced and helps us connect to the living Lord with our whole being—mind, emotions, and will. Let’s examine a sampling of psalms to find biblical guidance for our worship.



Observation: The Meaning and Significance of Worship

Psalms falls in the category of biblical poetry. As poets, the psalmists used symbolic language and figures of speech to stir their readers’ emotions while communicating truth about God. They flooded the page with expressions of deep devotion and loving adoration. As you read the poetic lines, sense the emotions flowing through the psalmist’s pen. Read with your mind and your heart.



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The Meaning of Worship—Psalm 95:1–7; 139:9–10

Psalm 95 begins with an open-door welcome. What did the psalmist invite us to do, according to *Psalm 95:1–2*?

Can you feel the psalmist's enthusiasm? "*Let loose your joy!*" the psalmist excitedly encouraged. What was the reason for his exuberance, according to *95:3–5*?

What personal perspective does *Psalm 139:9–10* add to our worship of God?



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For the Hebrew poets, nothing in nature matches the vastness of the sea or the majesty of the mountains. And yet, God is greater by far. In His hand, God holds the sea and mountains, and by His hand, He formed them. With that same hand, God guides us wherever we may wander in this wide, untamed world.

Does this revelation of God's *powerful* yet *personal* nature inspire a response of awe, gratitude, and love? If so, you're worshipping!

What physical response of worship did the psalmist encourage in *Psalm 95:6–7*? Have you ever worshiped that way? How do you prefer to worship?

The amazing thing about worship is you don't care what anybody else thinks. You couldn't care less what someone else thinks about your lifting of hands or looking up or silent awe. It seems like everything else is blocked out because you have been touched by God.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

The Significance of Worship—Psalm 91:1–2; 92:1–3

What symbolism did the psalmist use in *Psalm 91:1–2*? What feeling did the psalmist express? How does he call us as his readers to respond?



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What did the psalmist say about music in worship, according to *Psalm 92:1–3*? Why do you think he said, “It is good” (92:1–2)?

How drab life would be without songs of worship that lift our spirits and lighten our hearts!

Summing up our observations, worship is an invitation to praise the Lord in response to His greatness (Psalm 95:1–5). It is a bodily experience that may include singing, declaring, bowing, and kneeling (95:6–7). In worship, our souls draw close to the Lord where we feel safe in His care, and we trust Him (91:1–2). Finally, worship is a morning-to-evening, all-day, whole-life experience, and it is good for us to sing and make music to the Lord (92:1–3).



Interpretation: The Definition of Worship

Piece these observations together and write down your own definition of *worship*.



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What facet of the worship “jewel” in these psalms caught your eye for the first time?

In his book, *Growing Deep in the Christian Life*, Pastor Chuck Swindoll offers this simple and concise definition of worship: “Worship is a human response to a divine revelation.”²

Humans are hard-wired to glory in the glorious. We naturally respond with delight at the beauty we see in the brilliant colors of a sunset. Or with awe at the grandeur of a snow-capped mountain. Or with rapture at the creativity of a musical masterpiece. Likewise, when we see God for who He truly is in all His glorious wonder, our souls can’t help but respond with awe, adoration, and songs of praise.

Add singing to your time with God. Get up in the morning with a song before anything in the day has a chance to squeeze the song out of you. Read the psalms, and sing His songs back to Him. That’s the kind of worship the Lord seeks. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: The Worship God Seeks

Our journey of worship leads us from the Psalms into the gospels. Jesus taught a key principle about worship in His conversation with a woman in *John 4:19–24*. The woman asked Jesus *where* God wants His people to worship—Jerusalem or Mount Gerizim (4:19–20). How did Jesus answer her question in *4:21–22*?



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According to Jesus, the Father isn't interested in the externals, such as where we worship. What is the Father looking for in those who worship Him, according to *John 4:23–24*? What did Jesus mean?

Next, we go to the epistles. Paul elaborated Jesus' concepts on worship in *Romans 12:1–2*. How did Paul explain the kind of worship that pleases the Lord most?

Worship must align with the revealed Word of God. That's truth. Worship must also be in spirit. It is in the unseen realm of the "felt." It is in our inner connection with the Spirit. You don't need a choir or a pipe organ. Worship must be part of one's personal life. It must be in spirit and in truth. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Sparkling Beauty of the Rediscovered Jewel

Reflecting on his own journey of worship, Pastor Chuck Swindoll writes candidly,

I have found that it is impossible to lead a group of people in something that is not a part of me personally. So I had to cultivate a *private* worship without talking about it, without spelling it out, without even confessing to the struggles of it. And I had to add to my discipline of prayer such things as meaningful times of singing, and to my walk with God quiet moments of silence. And even in the pressured times I had to work out a way for worship to fit. It was so delicate . . . even elusive.³



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How do you describe your journey of worship?

Pastor Chuck lists the soul-health benefits that he experiences when he worships:

- 1) *Worship magnifies my God. . . .*
- 2) *Worship enlarges my horizons. . . .*
- 3) *Worship eclipses my fears. . . .*
- 4) *Worship changes my perspective. . . .*
- 5) *Worship refreshes my spirit. . . .*
- 6) *Worship enhances my work.⁴*

How does worship benefit your soul?



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Worship is participatory, not passive; active, not aloof. It enhances every aspect of our lives. What area of your life can the jewel of worship enhance today?

Let the jewel of worship shine as you “show off” God. As you talk about His goodness and display His character in your conversations. Rise in the morning with songs of worship, sing them throughout your day, and go to sleep humming them in your heart. Find joy in the jewel as you delight in God, rest in His care, and sing the wonders of His praise.

Come, let us sing to the LORD!

Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. (Psalm 95:1)



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I have seen the roots of my faith deepening through this series of studies. I have grown in my knowledge of You and love for You, and my worship is flourishing as a result. As my roots sink deeper into You, my soul rises higher in praise. May I continue to worship You in spirit and truth for the rest of my days, and when I see You face-to-face, may I glory in Your glory for all eternity. In Jesus' name, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Ronald Allen and Gordon Borrer, *Worship: Rediscovering the Missing Jewel* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1982), 16.
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Growing Deep in the Christian Life: Returning to Our Roots* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1986), 395.
3. Swindoll, *Growing Deep in the Christian Life*, 393.
4. Swindoll, *Growing Deep in the Christian Life*, 397.

