

## The Discipleship Project-Winter 2018–2019

### Series 2: The Heart of Worship

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**Series Big Idea:** Because God is always worthy of praise, our hearts must be set to worship Him in all things and at all times.

### Lesson 2.1: The Attitude of Worship

**Lesson Big Idea:** Because God is always worthy of praise, we must display the proper attitude of worship.

#### FOUNDATION

**Scripture Focus:** Psalm 95:6 (PPT)

As Jesus withdrew to the regions of Tyre and Sidon, a woman, whose daughter had been possessed with a devil, found Jesus and fell down to worship Him. Her worship was voiced as a desperate cry from a mother's broken heart for the deliverance of her daughter. But in that moment, worship was met with heavenly silence and divine postponement. In Matthew 15:23 Jesus' response to her worship was silence. It was as if He ignored her, pretending He didn't even hear her cry for help. Then in Mark 7:27, Jesus broke the silence but told her to wait:

But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs. (Mark 7:27, KJV)

Jesus told her He was sent to the lost sheep of Israel. She was not from Israel. She was not the right ethnicity. She didn't have the right heritage. But her faith pushed her to believe God could step beyond His own boundaries.

“Yes, Lord. But even the dogs are allowed to eat whatever crumbs and scraps fall from the table where the children are eating. If all You have are crumbs, I'll take the crumbs.”

At that moment something arrested the plan of God. It wasn't that God's ultimate plan did not include this woman; it was just that the time was not quite right. But in His deity, Jesus halted the time of God's purpose and reached into the future, finding the provision for this Canaanite woman and her daughter.

*“Ma'am, you are filled with great faith. Your daughter is going to be all right. Your prayer has been answered.”*

And at that moment, the woman's daughter was healed. It was her attitude of worship that grabbed Heaven's attention—an attitude of persistence, humility, and reverence. She came to Jesus, not demanding He act, but placing herself at His mercy. And that attitude moved Heaven.

- **When have you ever been desperate for something to happen? Explain.**

- **How can desperation affect our attitudes and actions?**

## FRAME

Imagine the scene of the previous story—a silent Heaven, waiting when the need is urgent, postponement when family issues are getting worse. What would we do in such a crisis? We must do what this woman did; worship through Heaven’s silence; worship while waiting. **As life worsens, worship must deepen. (PDG, PPT)**

Jesus prioritized His ministry and said the children (Jews) would be first. Can we continue worshiping when Jesus is working miracles for others and nothing is happening in our own world? Can we worship, if in fact, things may be getting worse?

The devil was in control of this woman’s daughter. Here was a distressed, perplexed woman who got crumbs while others were getting crowns. Here is where many worshipers quit, get angry, feel mistreated, complain, and criticize. Persistent worship turned the crumbs into a crown, a crown that Jesus called “great faith.” Twice in Scripture Jesus recognized someone as having great faith. One is the centurion soldier (Matthew 8:5–13), and the other is this woman. What exactly did Jesus say?

*O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. (Matthew 15:28, KJV) (PPT)*

Why this woman? What constituted great faith? She worshiped beyond a negative past. She worshiped in spite of silence. She worshiped in the face of family crisis. She worshiped through cultural prejudice and being compared to a dog. She worshiped when the devil mocked her and controlled her daughter. Her worship could not be ignored, and Heaven’s silence broke. Jesus’ response was, “Be it unto thee.” How did she and how do we go from earthly crumbs to a heavenly crown? **Live with the attitude of persistent worship. (PDG, PPT)**

- **What is persistence?**
- **Why is this a necessary trait in worship?**

There are always obstacles in the way of our worship. Persistent worship is determined to press through mocking obstacles that attempt to prevent one from getting to Jesus. Obstacles such as cultural rejection, ethnic background, negative labels, and unwanted stigmas did not stop the Syrophenician woman. She is better known as the worshiper who took crumbs from the master and ended with a miracle. When all you have is a handful of crumbs, are you persistent enough to not quit until your worship becomes your witness?

Tyre belonged to ancient Phoenicia, and the most prominent woman from Phoenicia in the Old Testament was the wicked Jezebel. The label and stigma of being from Phoenicia had a long, dark, negative connotation. Was it unfair? Yes. Did this woman constantly live under the dark shadow of the place from which Jezebel came? Yes. Could she have been judged and discriminated against? Yes. Would this be enough to keep most

people isolated and confined in their house of insecurities? Yes. Was the cultural pressure enough to produce an inferiority complex? Yes. Did these obstacles stop her from worship? No! Persistent worship would rather die than quit. It is amazing what **persistent worship can do with a handful of crumbs.** (PPT)

Further, this woman was Greek. To educated Greeks, Jesus Christ was “foolishness” (I Corinthians 1:23). A Greek or Hellenist who worshiped Jesus was castigated and ostracized for doing so. This woman worshiped beyond the scope of a negative history. Her worship broke through all former cultural influence and education, be it formal or informal. When worship is focused on the revelation of Jesus Christ, who is the bodily manifestation of the wisdom and power of God (I Corinthians 1:24), all other forms and frames of influence and education bow and kneel.

Because God is always worthy of praise, **we must display the proper attitude of worship.** (PDG, PPT)

*O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.* (Psalm 95:6, KJV) (PPT)

- **Why do you think bowing is symbolic worldwide of reverence and humility?**
- **Why do you think bowing and kneeling are important postures of worship?**

Worship demands action. The psalmist used the word come in his invitation to worship. According to *Merriam-Webster.com*, the word come means “to move toward something, to move or journey to a vicinity with a specific purpose.”

Biblical worship is an intentional movement toward God with a specific purpose. It is impossible to enter God’s presence without God adjusting our attitude. Worship is not a platform to display one’s talent, oratory skill, or ability. True worship is about an altar, sacrifice, bowing, and kneeling. **True worship involves humility.** (PDG, PPT)

Worship is introduced to us in the lives of two men with two glaringly different worship attitudes.

*And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.* (Genesis 4:2–5, KJV) (PPT)

**Worship reveals the contents of the heart.** (PDG, PPT)

There is a foundational principle established in this narrative. It is best addressed with a question: “Do I offer God my best, or does He get my leftovers?”

- **What do you think of when you hear that question?**

Abel slowly walked through his field and made a mental note of the healthiest, the strongest, and the best of the flock. When he spotted the choicest lamb, he singled it out

and deep within his heart said, “I will sacrifice you—my best—to honor my Creator. You will not be going back to the field.”

The biblical attitude of worship is always being **willing to surrender the best of what we have and not leave anything in reserve. (PPT)** When we surrender our hearts to God, negative attitudes and works of the flesh must not “go back to the field” with us. Selfish ambition, jealousy, gossip, ulterior motives, the desire to be seen and heard, unholy anger, hatred, division, and many other carnal traps must be the kindling that ignites a holy fire of worship in the church and in our lives.

Cain, on the other hand, chose what was easy and did not bring his very best. His attitude toward sacrificial worship revealed the contents of his heart.

In Cain and Abel, the entire human race is forced to choose one of two worship attitudes: **sacrificial worship or selfish worship. (PPT)**

- **What is sacrificial worship?**
- **What is selfish worship?**

Sacrificial worship says, “I am here for the Kingdom and I commit to giving my best to the Kingdom.” Selfish worship says, “The Kingdom is here for me and must give its best to make me happy.” Cain brought a bloodless offering from the cursed ground. Cain’s public display of worship was secretly laced with self-righteousness.

It is the ground or origin of our worship that God inspects. From this inspection of worship, the Bible tells us God respected Abel’s worship, but He could not respect what Cain had offered.

Of these two men, which do you picture bowing down and kneeling in worship? Which one created his own ground and origin of worship? Which one followed the biblical pattern of worship? Origins matter.

**God specified a pattern for sacrificial worship (PPT)** when an offering was provided to cover man’s sin and nakedness. Blood was required to make atonement for man. The origin of worship was centered on a substitutionary offering that provided life out of death. There was atonement through the blood that produced an unbreakable unity. And there was restoration of broken relationships that stood as a witness of supernatural power.

Take a moment to ponder this: the power of worship can take something that looks dead and bring it to life. It can restore the most broken and dysfunctional relationships and create an undeniable unity. It can display a new identity as the worshiper offers to God thanksgiving that all past sins and failures have been covered.

- **How has worship affected your relationship with God?**
- **What is a normal worship response for you when you think of God’s grace and forgiveness in your life?**

Worship and relationships are inseparable. Our worship is not right because of how

demonstrative we are, how much we give, or how long we engage in practices of praise such as singing, praying, or involvement in ministry. **Our worship is biblically right when God is honored and the body of Christ is unified.** (PDG, PPT) Spanning millennia is the example of the horrific death that occurred between the two brothers that were supposed to love one another. Worshiping one minute and killing his brother the next minute landed Cain in the New Testament as a warning to the churches that such behavior is inexcusable and Satanic.

*For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.* (I John 3:11–12, KJV) (PPT)

Worshiping God is not random or aimless. Worship takes a direction and results in change. It is not a style of music or a certain social status, and it is not rubbing shoulders with someone who can advance personal kingdoms. In fact, true worship will destroy personal kingdoms. When worship is directed toward Jesus Christ and we worship Him in spirit and in truth, a change in attitude will occur that affects relationships.

John equated a lack of love to murder. We see that exemplified in Cain who “slew” his brother. The word slew according to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* translates as “slaughtered, butchered, killed, or wounded.” It is used in the slaying of the Passover Lamb (Exodus 12:6), as well as the Lamb slain in Revelation 5:6.

How can Cain engage in worship, be in the presence of God, and then slaughter, butcher, kill, or wound his brother? Cain's attitudes and actions are tied to the devil. When we fail to love one another as Christ has loved us, the works of the devil will unravel every thread of unity in the church.

One final example of non-biblical worship in the life of Cain is seen in the Book of Jude. **Jude used Cain to describe apostasy in the New Testament:** (PPT)

*Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.* (Jude 11, KJV) (PPT)

**When worship fails to remove hatred in the heart, apostasy subtly lurks around the corner.** (PPT)

It is not that Cain did not worship. He attended worship service. The problem is that his worship was a self-created worship. When the devil took Jesus up into a high mountain and showed Him the vast kingdoms of the world, he offered Jesus power and glory if Jesus would worship him. Obtaining kingdoms, sitting on top of mountains looking down on others, and wielding power and glory have taken down many mighty men. Jesus was not one of them.

His answer to the devil gives us insight to the end result of worship:

*And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* (Luke

4:8, KJV) (PPT)

**Who we worship is who we will ultimately serve.** (PDG, PPT) When our worship is to the Lord, we will gladly serve Him and His kingdom. Sacrificial worship unashamedly turns us into servants of God. Being selfless and sacrificial are proper attitudes of worship.

- **How do you see worship differently because of this lesson?**

## FINISH

The birth of Jesus was not only a miracle, but His arrival caught the attention of shepherds and peasants, wise men and kings. A bright star caught the attention of some Magi from the East, and they were compelled to follow it in search of the prophesied King of the Jews.

Upon arrival in Jerusalem, these wise men asked around for anyone who knew the location of this newborn King. As they searched for information, they explained to all who would listen their intent for traveling so far. Their explanation revealed a lot, not only about the wisdom they possessed, but the spiritual desire inside their hearts.

We have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. (Matthew 2:2, KJV)

Hearing of their arrival, King Herod called for these men and questioned them, hoping to find information to reveal the Child's whereabouts. Of course, Herod's intentions were not pure. His desire was to remove anyone who might threaten his reign as king. But the Magi were warned in a dream not to speak again to Herod. So they chose to disobey the king's orders and refused to reveal any information about the Child's location.

The Magi came searching for Jesus, not to mark off their checklist another successful journey and investigation, but to offer heartfelt worship to the promised Child. Worshipping Jesus Christ caused the wise men to fall down in His presence:

*And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. (Matthew 2:11, NKJV)*

Brokenness, humility, and awe were all attitudes the wise men displayed. Their worship was evident on their faces, in their voices, and through their posture. Their attitudes of worship revealed the contents of their hearts.

Their attitudes were also revealed in the gifts they brought; treasures that symbolized the extravagant nature of their worship.

*And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. (Matthew 2:11, NKJV)*

Wise men are not afraid to break. Wise men understand the power of humility. Wise men seek to decrease, while Jesus increases. Wise men understand the importance of a proper attitude in worship. Biblical worship does this to men and women. In that broken, conformable place of worship, thoughts change, hearts transform, and new behaviors

arise.