

FOLLOWING JESUS *A Disciple's Handbook*

Lesson 7: **“Following Jesus in Worshiping and Working”**

Worshiping and Working Introduction

Read Romans 12:1-2

Everything a disciple says and does is an offering of worship to God. No person modeled this better than Jesus Christ. The Lord's every word and deed was an offering of surrendered worship to the Father. Through Moses, God gave the Law, which was meant to show people what is righteous, to punish what is evil, to cover sins, and to provide a way for people to worship and commune with God. The books in the Bible known to us as the Law¹ (also referred to as The Pentateuch), the Psalms, and the Prophets² made it abundantly clear that worship isn't primarily about an outward sacrifice or a temporary event. (Read 1 Samuel 15:22; Psalm 40:6-7; Hosea 6:6.) Worship is about everything we do and say. Worship is about the heart – the attitude of a person's thinking toward God. Worship is about a desire to love God and love others in every situation.

Worship was the primary purpose for which the Savior rose each morning. Christ's worship was about a surrendered heart and life unto God. Jesus showed us a commitment to make every word spoken from His mouth and deed done with His hands an offering of excellence and righteousness unto God. A life of worship shows the world the God we serve. No one could mistake the One whom Jesus lived to worship. A disciple of Jesus follows His example of making every attitude of the heart, thought of the mind, word of the mouth, and deed with the hands an offering of worship to the Father.

Worshiping and Working Defined

The primary word for *worship* in the New Testament has to do with kneeling or lying face-down to show respect and honor for someone. It is making yourself low to make someone else high. It is the putting down of self for the lifting up of another. As is true today, people throughout history have often viewed worship as a specific action at a particular time in a distinct place. Throughout the Roman Empire, worship was something you did in a pagan temple, or before a Roman official, and especially before the emperor. For the Jews, worship was a set of specific rituals that took place at the tabernacle or the temple at particular times of the year. But, when Jesus came, He clarified the intent and extent of worship. He said in John 4:24, “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” This means that worship is no

¹ Genesis through Deuteronomy

² Isaiah through Malachi

longer primarily about a specific action at a particular time in a distinct place. Worship starts in one's spirit (attitudes and thoughts) and manifests in truth (godly words and deeds). The Father seeks true worshipers who worship Him with every attitude of the heart, thought of the mind, word of the mouth, and deed of the hands. In Christ, every attitude, thought, word, and deed can be a sweet-smelling aroma of worship to God.

Perhaps you've heard the concept of having a strong work-ethic – working hard and attempting to do all things with excellence because it seems like a good way to live. The New Testament teaches us to have a *worship-ethic*; to do all things as unto the Lord as an offering of worship. (Read Hebrews 13:15-16.) After the Apostle Paul explains how God has saved us through Christ, he offers his readers the only possible reasonable response: live a life of sacrificial worship. (Read Romans 12:1-2.) Paul explains that doing the will of God starts with a surrendered life and a transformed mind. Paul also tells the Colossians that every single thing they say and do should be a rendering of worship to the Lord. (Read Colossians 3:17.) As our hearts are offered in worship and our minds are transformed by truth, our works can show the world God's perfect will.

Worshipping and Working in the Life of Jesus

Jesus' life was a fulfillment of David's words in Psalm 40:6-8. (Read Hebrews 10:5-10.) Nothing Jesus said or did was merely an outward religious ritual. The words of His mouth and the meditation of His heart were well-pleasing to the Father. (Read Psalm 19:14.) When Jesus rose from the waters of John's baptism and was later transfigured on the mountain, the Father's voice thundered from heaven, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Read Matthew 3:17; 17:5.) Jesus lived a life of well-pleasing worship to the Father. As Paul calls on the Ephesians to be imitators of their Heavenly Father, he appeals to the ultimate example of worship in the life of the Son. (Read Ephesians 5:1-2.) From beginning to end, and everywhere in between, Jesus' life was worship.

Jesus was a diligent worship-worker. Daily, Christ entered into the work of His Father. (Read John 5:17-19.) The Lord went so far as to say that His necessary food was to finish the work given Him by the Father. (Read John 4:34.) There was no mistaking the One for whom Jesus lived. The honor and true worship of the Father was Christ's highest priority. His steps of worship-working become the pathway all true disciples walk.

Worshipping and Working in the Lives of Jesus' Followers

The early disciples of Jesus would not tolerate any forms of idolatry. From Jewish legalism to Roman paganism, the worship of anything other than the Father and the Son was not permitted. Holding all things in common, prayer, doctrine, preaching the Gospel, signs and wonders, care for widows, and stewardship of resources were all forms of worship-working for the early church. (Read Acts 2:42-47; 3:19-20; 4:32-37; 6:1-7.)

The Apostle Paul taught the churches to lead lives of worshipping and working. (Read 2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1.) The writer of Hebrews helped his audience understand that worship was

no longer about the rituals of the Law but the lifestyle of Christ. (Read Hebrews 2:10-3:1; 7:20-28.) The Apostle Peter explained that believers are a holy priesthood - a spiritual temple of living stones - who offer up acceptable worship to the Father and the Son. (Read 1 Peter 2:4-5.)

Worshipping and Working in Our Lives

In our modern world, it can be tempting to believe that worship is simply about singing songs when the saints are gathered. Singing with the saints is certainly an act of worship. But singing is *an* act; not *the* act. Worship is about the attitudes of our hearts, the thoughts of our minds, the words of our mouths, and the deeds of our hands. Prayer is worship. Studying the Word of God is worship. Preaching the Gospel is worship. Serving our families is worship. Our occupational work is worship. Serving our local church is worship. Stewarding the resources God entrusts to us is worship. Worship is about our dedication to God the Father and Jesus the Son through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

As the temple of the Holy Spirit, we as disciples now become walking, talking, working worshipers. Even our work for teachers, leaders, and employers should be considered worship to the Lord. (Read Colossians 3:23-24.) Jesus lived a life of worshiping and working, and we follow His example.

MEMORIZE: *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.* (Romans 12:1)

KEY TRUTH: Worship is about the attitudes of our hearts, the thoughts of our minds, the words of our mouths, and the deeds of our hands.

YOUR RESPONSE:

This is how you can respond in loving obedience to Jesus as you apply the truths from this lesson to your life.

- Take time each day in the secret place to freshly present your life as an offering of worship to God.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to identify any attitudes, thoughts, words, or deeds that do not bring the Father and the Son pure worship. Repent and remove these things. Commit to a life of worshiping and working.
- Prayerfully commit every situation of your day to worshiping the Father and the Son.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to empower you to worship God with excellence in every area of life.

WRITTEN RESPONSE: Lesson Reinforcement

Review each section from the lesson on the previous pages to fill in each blank below. This will reinforce the truths from this lesson in your life.

1. The Father seeks true _____ who worship Him with every _____ of the heart, _____ of the mind, _____ of the mouth, and _____ of the hands.
2. As our _____ are offered in _____ and our _____ are transformed by _____, our _____ can show the world God's perfect _____.
3. The _____ and true _____ of the Father was Christ's highest _____. His steps of _____ - _____ become the pathway all true _____ walk.
4. The Apostle Peter explained that _____ are a holy _____ - a spiritual _____ of living _____ - who offer up acceptable _____ to the Father and the Son.
5. Worship is about the attitudes of our _____, the thoughts of our _____, the words of our _____, and the deeds of our _____.

WRITTEN RESPONSE: Life Reflection

Using the journaling section on the pages at the end of this lesson, write in your own words your responses to the following questions.

1. What have you learned and what has impacted you personally from this lesson?
2. In reading the scripture references in this lesson, what are you sensing and seeing the Holy Spirit highlighting and revealing to you that will enable you to better follow Jesus?
3. As a disciple and follower of Jesus, what steps of loving obedience do you need to take to see what you have learned in this lesson become ongoing practices and patterns in your life?