

Gifted to Worship

We are continuing the series on being "gifted," and today we're examining the act of worship. As a child of God, you were born pre-packed – ready to exhibit God and display God's glory – pre-programmed to worship Him. God has already orchestrated your entire life, and in so doing, He determined your assignment and gave you the tools to get the job done.

You've come pre-packaged, pre-assigned and pre-programmed. You are an original, one of a kind – totally unique! God in His infinite wisdom made just one version of you. He custom designed you for a one-of-a-kind assignment. The story of your life should be a celebration of your uniqueness! Why? Because you are a divine seed, and a bright-spark at that! You have an uncommon call to an uncommon life. In fact, you can do something no one else can do; in a fashion no one else can do it. You are the only you God has made.

I like what Max Lucado says, "*God packed you on purpose for a purpose.*" Now, if this is news to you then you're probably finding it a strain worshipping Him. Because, worshipping isn't merely about understanding God, but understanding what God has done for you! God empowers us with gifts so that we can make Him known, but also that we may worship Him with those gifts. I believe this is actually pleasing to God. After all, God is not in the cloning business. He never prefabs or mass-produces people. There's no haphazard creativity with God!

Remember this, "***You cannot be anything you want to be. But you can be everything God wants you to be.***" God is constantly at work in you to help you want to do, and be able to do, what is pleasing to Him (*Philippians 2:13*). God wants every believer to fulfil their destiny. Too many Christians want to be someone else, so they create a persona that they think is pleasing to God (or to others). But God never called you to be anyone other than you. When it comes to being you, on the stage of life, you were tailor-made for the part. So speak your lines with confidence, as you worship Him in every instance and in every circumstance.

Jesus said that God is looking for true worshipers - those who will worship Him *in Spirit and in truth*. Therefore we cannot look at what's happening in our services without first examining what's going on in our lives. Worship doesn't begin and end on a Sunday, it's to be expressed and demonstrated every moment of every day. Worship is a spiritual activity and requires spiritual equipping, for this reason, every believer has been given the ability (by God) to worship.

So what is true worship? Turn with me to **John 4** and let's read *verses 21 to 24*... Jerusalem was appointed by God as the city [the location] where worship should be offered to Him. The temple in Jerusalem was seen as the dwelling place of God. But come the gospel age and God ceases to have any particular place on earth where men must go to worship. What matters is not 'where' one worships, but the attitude of heart and mind. True worship is not merely ritual or ceremony, but a spiritual reality.

According to the Greek word translated "truth" – true worship should be *open, truthful, heartfelt, real, unpretentious* and *genuine*. And this word also implies "achieved with integrity," which tells us that first and foremost our worship should be *honest* as evidenced in character and actions. Your worship should be in perfect harmony with the nature of God Himself – for He is Spirit and He is Truth. But note God would not expect this from us unless He had equipped us with everything necessary to achieve it.

True worship means that you can enter into the presence of God (by faith) anywhere, and there you can praise and adore Him openly. Jesus announced to the woman that from now on worship of the Father would be unrestricted, honest, heartfelt, real, unpretentious and genuine. The Jewish people had reduced worship to outward forms, rituals and ceremonies. They thought that by religiously adhering to the letter of the Law, and going through certain rites and formalities, they were worshipping the Father. But their worship was outward and not inward. Their bodies might be bowed down but their hearts were not right before the Lord. When Jesus said worship must be in Spirit and in truth, He was informing them that it was now possible for men to draw near to God in true and sincere worship.

"The Father is seeking such to worship Him." What each of us needs to ask ourselves is this. If God is so interested in the adoration of His people. Does He receive this from me? Do I give God His rightful place? Do I applaud God loud and often?

The English word "worship" comes from the Old English word "worthship," a word that denotes the worthiness of the one receiving special honour or devotion. There is no doubt that God is worthy of honour and devotion, but does He get it from you? And if He does, does He get it all the time?

There is no place for "self" in true worship. You should not be self-secure or insecure, but 'God-secure.' This will cause you to be a true worshipper, and you will worship as naturally as you breathe. But remember, the main reason you should be applauding God is because He deserves it! And if you want another good reason, here it is – "*God would die for your sin before He would let you die in your sin.*"

Honest and sincere worship lifts your eyes of "self" and sets them directly on God. So stop making a big deal out of your self, your bad circumstances or even your big accomplishments. Start making a big deal out of God! For He, and only He, truly deserves it. Worship gives God honour. It offers Him standing ovations. You can make God really special on Sundays with your songs of praise, but on Mondays you can do the same with your strengths and abilities. Often people come to worship God and act as if they are the audience and God is the one doing the honouring. But your correct posture is highlighted in the Greek word translated "worship" (*proskineo*) which literally means "*to kiss towards.*" And it implies, in submission and reverence 'like bowing down'. Worship places God on centre stage and you in proper posture. Worship correctly positions the worshipper.

Let me say this, "*You must worship God because you need to!*" If singing did nothing but weary your voice, if worship did nothing for you, it would still be the right thing to do. Why? Because you need it! Do you know? God has never taken His eyes off you – not for a millisecond! Even while you were being formed in your mother's womb, He kept His eye on you. He is always near you. He loves to hear your heartbeat. He desires to hear your prayers, and He promises to inhabit your praises.

The question is this... What do you do when confronted with such great love? Don't you sing to Him? Don't you give Him His rightful place by confessing, declaring and proclaiming His name? Don't you bow your knee and lower your head in submission and reverence? Don't you lift up every gift in worship? Of course you do! So remember to applaud God load and often – for your sake – you need it. Give Him standing ovations all day long! This is what you've been gifted to perform.