



“BIRTHDAY BASH: GIFTS”

One of the highlights at a birthday party is opening gifts. People show appreciation for you by buying you a gift. It is a way of honoring your life. This illustration is a meager comparison to the gift that we bring to God in order to honor Him. This gift is worship.

DAY 1

The Word

Today's Scripture:

Psalm 34:1-3, 29:1-2, 150:2, 71:14' 13:6, 32:11, 33:2,
2 Samuel 6:16

Worship is our gift to God. Even though worship should be a staple of a believer's life, often we overlook its importance in our spiritual life. Investigating worship helps us to understand the what, when, where, and how of it.

Worship is often associated with the music time in a church service. This is only a small part of worship for it far exceeds a few moments each week.

Psalm 34:1-2

¹ *I will extol the LORD at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.*

² *My soul will boast in the LORD;
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.*

Verse 1-2: Worship is an activity that goes beyond once a week. Instead, it is to be a part of our daily lives. If worship extends beyond music at a service, what is worship?

Worship is giving worth to God. The praise of Him involves recognizing His character and action.

Psalm 29:1-2

¹ *Ascribe to the LORD, O mighty ones,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.*

² *Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.*

Psalm 150:2

² *Praise him for his acts of power;
praise him for his surpassing greatness.*

Verse 1-2, 2: Every day we are to give praise to God. In order to worship Him, we must be intent on seeking reasons to praise the Lord. He is worthy to be honored and we need to constantly seek out why this is true. We have the opportunity to explore the mystery of God and praise Him for what we discover.

The more we seek ways to worship our Lord, the more we will find reasons to worship Him.

Psalm 71:14

*¹⁴ But as for me, I will always have hope;
I will praise you more and more.*

Verse 14: Our praise increases as we discover more about God. This worship is displayed in various ways.

Psalm 13:6

*⁶ I will sing to the LORD,
for he has been good to me.*

Psalm 32:11

*¹¹ Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous;
sing, all you who are upright in heart!*

Psalm 33:2

*² Praise the LORD with the harp;
make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.*

Psalm 34:3

*³ Glorify the LORD with me;
let us exalt his name together.*

2 Samuel 6:16

¹⁶ As the ark of the LORD was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, she despised him in her heart.

What is worship? Ascribing worth to God based on His character and actions.
When should we worship? Daily
Where can worship take place? Anywhere

How do we worship? Songs, Instruments, Dance, Words, Actions, Shouting, All Alone, In a crowd, and so much more!

Worship connects us to God. He is worthy of honor and we are allowed the honor of honoring Him!

Up Close and Personal

Spend time worshipping God.

How do you worship God throughout the day?

How could you learn how to worship God even more?

In what way do you usually worship God?

Why should we worship God?

How is worship beneficial to you?

DAY
2

Today's Scripture:
Revelation 1:9-18, 4

The Word

I want you to picture Jesus. Right now, get a picture of Him in your mind. Does that picture want you to fall down like you were dead? Then maybe you do not have the right picture.

Revelation 1:9-18

⁹I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, ¹¹which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."

¹²I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. ¹⁵His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. ¹⁶In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

¹⁷When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

Verse 9-18: Our worship of Jesus Christ our Lord is often weak because our idea of Him is weak as well. We have grown up with pictures of an anorexic blue-eyed man who is supposed to be our Savior. How do we experience powerful worship to someone who seems so fragile? We must have a right understanding of Jesus in order to praise Him as He deserves.

Revelation 4

¹After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." ²At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. ³And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.

⁴Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. ⁵From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. ⁶Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. ⁷The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an

ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. ⁸Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come." ⁹Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, ¹⁰the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

¹¹"You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being."

Verse 1-11: When we truly understand the Object of our worship, we will no longer feel compelled to worship. The living creatures could not be restrained in proclaiming the holiness of God. The twenty four elders continually fell before Jesus and worshipped Him. They threw their crowns at His feet, in reverence to Him. They were acknowledging the fact that they do not deserve honor but the Lord alone deserves to be crowned.

Picture the scene created in Revelation 4. Imagine the living creatures and the twenty four elders. Look at their worship of the One seated on the throne of heaven. He has "the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne."

After you have reflected on this scene I want you to now picture a typical Sunday morning at a church service. See that guy over there yawning. There is a lady looking intently at what others are wearing. Friends are talking to one another. One person is writing a to-do list for the week. Another is thinking about last night's game.

Do these two scenes look anything alike?

If Jesus Christ stepped down into our service and we saw Him in all His glory, we would fall down like dead people. If we truly understood Who we are worshipping, all the other petty things that preoccupy us would fade away. Our services would be alive with people, who like the twenty four elders, cannot contain their heart's desire to worship.

Up Close and Personal

Confess any lack of interest in worship. Ask the Lord to show you more about Himself so that you will have a greater desire to praise Him.

If someone watched your church service, how would he describe it?

How is knowledge of the Lord connected with the worship of Him?

What keeps people from fervent worship?

DAY 3

Today's Scripture:

Job 1, 2:1-10; Romans 8:28-30, 38-39

The Word

Worship is not a state of life but a state of mind. In other words, it does not depend upon our circumstances but on our will. We choose to worship. A classic example of this is found in the book of Job.

Job 1

¹In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. ²He had seven sons and three daughters, ³and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.

⁴His sons used to take turns holding feasts in their homes, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. ⁵When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would send and have them purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom.

⁶One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. ⁷The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?"

Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it."

⁸Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."

⁹"Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. ¹⁰"Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that

his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. ¹¹But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."

¹²The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger."

Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

¹³One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, ¹⁴a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, ¹⁵and the Sabeans attacked and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

¹⁶While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

¹⁷While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

¹⁸While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, "Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, ¹⁹when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

²⁰At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship ²¹and said:

*"Naked I came from my mother's womb,
and naked I will depart.
The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away;
may the name of the LORD be praised."*

²²In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

Everything you love, everything you have, everything you worked for is gone in one day. Imagine the loss. Yet, in the midst of heart break, Job responded with praise. His example has helped many through the centuries. God is worthy of worship despite the state of our children, the state of our possessions, or even the state of our health.

Job 2:1-10

¹On another day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him. ²And the LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?"

Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it."

³Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason."

⁴"Skin for skin!" Satan replied. "A man will give all he has for his own life. ⁵But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face."

⁶The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life."

⁷So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. ⁸Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.

⁹His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!"

¹⁰ He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?"

In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

Verse 1-10: With painful sores all over his body, Job continues to worship. His entire life is summed up in verse ten. Read it again. (By the way, I am referring to the latter half of the verse, not the part when he calls his wife foolish. I know some of you are ready to make that your life verse!) Job's life's statement would be "Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?"

This one sentence alone should be a part of every believer's life. We need to understand that God is God and we are not. Job was able to praise the Lord in the good or bad times because he accepted the fact that there was One Almighty God and it wasn't a guy named "Job".

Worship springs forth from true understanding of our relationship with God. When I realize who I am and then I think of who God is, I am drawn to worship. The Creator chose to create you and me. The Omniscient God chose to love me despite my failures in life. The King of the universe humbled Himself to die on a cross for us. I am a wretch (and so are you) yet the Lord of heaven and earth has made us His children. When I accept that God is God and I am not, then I am able to worship Him whatever may come my way.

Romans 8:28-30

²⁸And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those God foreknew he also predestined to be

*conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.
³⁰And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*

Verse 28-30: If we truly believe that God is in control of the universe, then we can rest assured that He is watching over our lives. Despite our circumstances, we can trust that He has allowed the situations to come into our lives. He will work the situation for good. What is the good? These circumstances are going to conform us into the likeness of Christ. We can accept whatever comes into our lives for we know that it is filtered through the hand of God. Like Job, nothing can come our way without the permission from the Lord. Job, confident of this truth, could worship in the middle of so much loss. For he knew what he could never lose: the love of God.

Romans 8:38-39

³⁸For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Verse 38-39: Worship the Lord, in good or difficult times, for He is still in control of the universe. The One who is seated on the throne of heaven loves you and that will never change. Trust Him. Worship Him.

Up Close and Personal

Meditate on Romans 8:28-29. Spend time in prayer.

In what way do you usually respond to difficult circumstances?

What can you learn from the life of Job when facing hardships?

How will understanding that God allows hardships into our lives to conform us in the image of Christ help you in the future?

Give an example of someone who has praised God in the midst of difficult times.

DAY 4

Today's Scripture:
2 Samuel 24:4-25

The Word

If I was to give you a gift, it would cost me something. A gift costs us money to purchase and it also costs us time. It takes time to search for the right gift to give to someone. Since worship is our gift to God, it, too, costs us something to give it.

David was a man who understood the truth of the cost of worship. It was a lesson that he thankfully learned before he encountered a terrible trial. The trial was the result of his sin. He had decided to take a census of his fighting men. Thus, he was placing the victory of his battles in the hands of men instead of God. Even though he was advised not to take this census, he overruled the godly advice and demanded it to be taken.

2 Samuel 24:4-10

⁴The king's word, however, overruled Joab and the army commanders; so they left the presence of the king to enroll the fighting men of Israel.

⁵After crossing the Jordan, they camped near Aroer, south of the town in the gorge, and then went through Gad and on to Jazer. ⁶They went to Gilead and the region of Tahtim Hodshi, and on to Dan Jaan and around toward Sidon. ⁷Then they went toward the fortress of Tyre and all the towns of the Hivites and Canaanites. Finally, they went on to Beersheba in the Negev of Judah.

⁸After they had gone through the entire land, they came back to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

⁹Joab reported the number of the fighting men to the king: In Israel there were eight hundred thousand able-bodied men who could handle a sword, and in Judah five hundred thousand.

¹⁰David was conscience-stricken after he had counted the fighting men, and he said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now, O LORD, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing."

Verse 4-10: The sin that David committed was to be punished. He was to choose his own punishment. Sadly, his sin was to affect the entire nation.

2 Samuel 24:11-17

¹¹Before David got up the next morning, the word of the LORD had come to Gad the prophet, David's seer: ¹²"Go and tell David, 'This is what the LORD says: I am giving you three options. Choose one of them for me to carry out against you.' "

¹³So Gad went to David and said to him, "Shall there come upon you three years of famine in your land? Or three months of fleeing from your enemies while they pursue you? Or three days of plague in your land? Now then, think it over and decide how I should answer the one who sent me."

¹⁴David said to Gad, "I am in deep distress. Let us fall into the hands of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but do not let me fall into the hands of men."

¹⁵So the LORD sent a plague on Israel from that morning until the end of the time designated, and seventy thousand of the people from Dan to Beersheba died. ¹⁶When the angel stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem, the LORD was grieved because of the calamity and said to the angel who was afflicting the people, "Enough! Withdraw your hand." The angel of the LORD was then at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

¹⁷When David saw the angel who was striking down the people, he said to the LORD, "I am the one who has sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? Let your hand fall upon me and my family."

Verse 11-17: Many people died due to the sin of David. Sin devastates those around us. Worship, however, changes the people around us.

2 Samuel 24:18-24

¹⁸On that day Gad went to David and said to him, "Go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." ¹⁹So David went up, as the LORD had commanded through Gad. ²⁰When Araunah looked and saw the king and his men coming toward him, he went out and bowed down before the king with his face to the ground.

²¹Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?"

"To buy your threshing floor," David answered, "so I can build an altar to the LORD, that the plague on the people may be stopped."

²²Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take whatever pleases him and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and here are threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood. ²³O king, Araunah gives all this to the king." Araunah also said to him, "May the LORD your God accept you."

²⁴But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them.

Verse 18-25: David's worship stopped the plague. But the only worship that God would have accepted is one that cost David something. If he had accepted all of Araunah's things for the sacrifice, then worship would have never happened. It would have been a staged ritual. But this king had the wisdom to know what true worship is.

On a daily basis, we are faced with the opportunity to worship. It costs us. Worship may cost our time, our resources, our energy, and even our dignity.

2 Samuel 24:25

²⁵David built an altar to the LORD there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the LORD answered prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped.

Verse 25: The king of all of Israel builds an altar. This was a humble act. Before all of his men and before Araunah, David was admitting his sin. Before people who usually served him, David was laboring to build the altar and offer sacrifices upon it.

David paid a price physically, emotionally, and spiritually to worship. Worship costs us. However, like anything of value, there is a benefit to worship. David saw the benefit derived from worship: a plague was stopped. Our worship, too, will prove itself valuable not only to our lives but also to the lives around us. The benefits much outweigh the cost, but we need to know that there is a cost.

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to help you to understand the cost of worship in your life. Plead that He help you make the necessary sacrifices to become more of a man or woman after God's own heart.

What has worshipped cost you?

How does the cost of worship make it more meaningful in our lives?

What benefits have you or your family experienced by your choice to worship God?

DAY 5

The Word

Today's Scripture:

Genesis 12:8-9, 4:4-5; Leviticus 17:11; 1 Peter 1:18-21; Revelation 5:11-14

Worship in itself does not have to be an elaborate event. Some people believe that the music has to be just right, room temperature needs to be correct, the lighting must be just so on the choir director, the outfits should look good, and then all of these elements combined can create worship. But the Scripture does not support these absurdities. Worship is just a person's heart toward God.

Genesis 12:8-9

⁸From there he went on toward the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. ⁹Then Abram set out and continued toward the Negev.

Verse 8-9: On his journey, Abram stopped to worship God. He set up an altar, probably built from wood and rocks in the area. Then, he just called upon the name of the Lord. Abraham was not a "trained minister". He just was a child of God. He did not have an elaborate ritual. He just built an altar and prayed.

An altar served a specific purpose. It was elevated above the ground so that an animal sacrifice could be easily made. In fact the word altar means, "a place of slaughter or sacrifice." (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary). Abraham would have made a sacrifice upon the altar and then worshipped God.

The history of an altar sacrifice stems back to Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve.

Genesis 4:4-5

⁴But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, ⁵but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

Verse 4-5: Abel's offering was accepted because it involved a blood sacrifice. Worship is based on a blood sacrifice. The blood represented atonement of sins. We need to be cleansed from our sin so that we can approach a holy God. The washing away of sin leads to worship. We praise the Lord who has taken away our guilt. He has saved us from our evil ways.

Leviticus 17:11

¹¹ For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.

But what about today? You do not see us building a stone altar and sacrificing an animal in the middle of the church service. Yet, we know from Scripture that our approach to God is based on a blood sacrifice. We can approach God based on the blood of Jesus. He is the Lamb. Abraham and Abel, along with others, sacrificed animals as a symbol of the Sacrifice to come. The animals' blood did not atone their sins, but it was an act of faith for the blood of Jesus that could wash them clean.

1 Peter 1:18-21

¹⁸For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ²⁰He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. ²¹Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

Verse 18-21: Jesus is the Lamb. He was sacrificed on an elevated place, the hill called Calvary. The wood for the altar was the cross to which He was nailed. The blood that flowed from His veins was of the Son of God. This is the altar that we come to in order to worship.

If you have believed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, then His blood has cleansed you from your sins. His sacrifice has given you the ability to have a relationship with a Holy God. We can approach the Lord in worship at any time, and at any place, because the altar is permanent. This altar changes our lives. This altar gives us everlasting life. This altar gives us eternal reasons to worship Him forever.

Revelation 5:11-14

¹¹Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. ¹²In a loud voice they sang:

*"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!"*

¹³Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

*"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,*

for ever and ever!" ¹⁴The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Up Close and Personal

Think about the Sacrificial Lamb. Let these thoughts lead you to worship.

How does worship change when we always approach it through the sacrifice of Christ?

Write down some of the reasons to worship based upon the fact that Jesus laid down His life for you.