

Worship: An Activity Under-the-Sun or In-the-Son - Ecclesiastes 5:1-7

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To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.

William Temple

1. Introduction

Worship is the most intense and most absorbing activity of man under the sun. Yet it is also a transforming and life-changing experience man can know. As such, worship is the holiest of human activities and engagements of mankind under the sun.

But life under the sun is marked by broken promises and empty words. We tell “white lies” to make sure our wives are not on our backs concerning the garbage and make “little promises” to our children in order that they would stop nagging. Whether we tell the truth or we keep the promise, is a different matter.

The reason why words are not taken seriously is because it is little known how serious God is about taking our words seriously. Often our picture of God is a happy old man that looks past our lying tongues as part of “surviving life”. God is often thought of as being one of us. At times too, God is taken as a punch-bag people can fling meaningless words at when life is tough under the sun. When we don’t have a picture of God’s awesome holiness, we will not have any concern for speaking truth, but would easily divorce our words from our actual hearts (James 1:26).

Under the circumstances of our lives here on earth, a careful consideration of how we engage in the holy act of worship is required: are we worshipping in-the-Son, Jesus Christ, or are we worshipping in the flesh, under-the-sun? What would characterize the kind of worship God accepts and approves? The answers to these questions lie in the character of God Himself. Jesus tells us that God is spirit and, therefore, worshipping God is a spiritual activity.

When man’s worship of God is a spiritual activity, he worships in-the-Son. When, on the other hand, worship is rendered on man’s own terms and abilities, it is an activity under-the-Sun: a mere act of self-gratification; a folly of unspeakable madness; a tiresome activity of utter emptiness and meaninglessness; a deep and muddy sea of words uttered thoughtlessly! This is worship in the flesh, so unpleasing to the Creator and utterly unfulfilling to the creature that it lacks purpose, object, substance or meaning.

In our text, it is as though the Preacher picks up a big ice-pick and use it to puncture our “under-the-sun” illusion about God, by pointing to the solid reality of who God really is (Keddie 2002:117). Keddie points out that the preacher’s

concern is for what the Old and New Testament have long yearned for from those who worship God: heartfelt worship (ibid).

But what is worship in the Son? Worship in-the-Son is an activity in and of the spirit; it is a spiritual engagement in which spirit touches Spirit and vice-versa. Worship stems from the very heart of God who passionately pursues a personal love relationship with us. As such, ‘worship is essentially spiritual, an attitude and habit of the heart’, says Andrew Hill (1993:11). Worship in the context of relationship implies intimacy with God in the spirit and a right disposition of the heart for, ‘Since the heart or inner person is the wellspring or fountainhead of the worship of God, it is necessary to have a right heart before God in order to offer right or true worship’ (ibid.). And to that very end, God has intentionally made man with God-like faculties and God-given abilities to conjoin man in this passionate pursuit of a heart-to-heart relationship with Him. Man was made in the *image and likeness* of God so as to enable man to engage his Maker in the sacred act of worship; for only spirit can touch Spirit.

Andrew Hill, citing Robert Rayburn, emphasizes on the nature of worship:

Worship is the activity of the new life of a believer in which, recognizing the fullness of the Godhead as it is revealed in the person of Jesus Christ and His mighty redemptive acts, he seeks by the power of the Holy Spirit to render to the living God the glory, honor, and submission which are his due. (Hill, 1993:xix).

Drawing from the quotation of William Temple by Richard Foster (1989), it becomes clear that worship encapsulates various realities of the believer’s faith experience, including:

- the quickening of the conscience by the holiness of God
- the feeding of the mind with the truth of God
- the purging of the imagination by the beauty of God
- the opening of the heart to the love of God
- the devotion of the will to the purpose of God

In essence, to worship is man’s response to God’s overtures of love. In this sense, the biblical imagery and analogy of love between the bride and groom shadow the intimacy man can and does enjoy with God ‘*in the spirit*’, observes Park, adding:

Intimacy with God is about being faithful – having no other gods. Without obedience, we won’t experience true intimacy... The imagery of intimacy is one way of describing a deep, interactive life with God. A benefit of intimacy with God is being filled with the tangible knowledge of his love. It’s having a hope of heaven that energizes us to keep pressing on. It’s also letting God into the deepest part of who we are and turning from those things that hinder our relationship with him. (Park 2002:34)

To worship, too, is to draw near to God. After all, intimacy implies closeness on the basis of friendship. Again, Andy Park presses the point home:

In a much bigger way, God is a friend who responds to honesty. Without transparency before God, worship is a farce; it’s only a ritual... God isn’t interested in shallow “lip service” worship. In fact he hates it. He is looking for people who will be brutally honest with him and not hide anything. That’s the pathway to intimacy with God. (2002:35-36)

To render heartfelt, purposeful worship in-the-Son, that pleases and gladdens the heart of God, the Preacher issues three *caveats* against merely engaging in the act of worshiping God under-the-son; within these warnings, though, there are three discernible *attributes* of heartfelt worship offered God in-the-Son by the children of God.

2. The Three Caveats Against Worship Under the Sun

A caveat is a warning, a caution or stipulation. A caveat stipulates a requirement, sets boundaries or establishes limits to which an activity is to conform; it sets a standard against which the activity is to be measured. As such, a caveat is a yardstick that attests the qualification of that which it stipulates and at the same time, forms the basis for admonition when the requirements thereof are not fulfilled. With this in mind, the Preacher lists three warnings that caution the children of dust when they engage in the sacred act of worship, lest they do so as only an empty activity under-the-Sun, and not a meaningful, God-glorifying offering of themselves unto God, in-the-Son, Jesus Christ:

2.1 'Guard Your Steps' – v1a

In the Old Testament, the manner of one's approach to God showed one's inward reverence for God. The Old Testament uses various words to describe the act and experience of worship. Two such examples are found in the use of the Hebrew words *nāgash*, 'to approach' and *qārab*, 'to draw near'. Andrew Hill (1993:8) points out that these words suggest both the act of worshipping God as well as that of approaching a high ranking person or a king. In both instances, the greatness of God or the exalted status of the person or king being approached requires a formal invitation or an appointment (cf. Lv 9:6-7; Nm 4:19; Jr 30:21); a careful observance of appropriate protocol (cf. Ex 19:10-15) and the performance of proper rites of purification in preparation for the appointment or visit (cf. Ex 19:22; 20:21)

Accordingly, Moses took off the sandals of his feet before the flaming bush as a sign of reverence for God's holy presence (Ex 3:5). The various rituals surrounding the Temple and Tabernacle served to enforce the notion that God is holy and should be regarded as holy (Keddie, 2002:120; Winter, 2005:68).

Whereas "*guarding your steps*" was the outward symbol of inward holiness in the Old Testament, the principle of regarding God as holy and being holy have not been abandoned in the New Testament. Paul calls each of us to examine our hearts before partaking of the communion, since a heart that is not upright in intention would only draw condemnation by engaging inappropriately in this act of worship (1 Cor 11:27-28). Moreover, Hebrews calls us to fear God, knowing that He 'is a consuming fire' (Heb 12:28-29). Holiness, being like God in perfect love (Lv 19:2), should be at the forefront of our heart's disposition in worship (Kidner, 2005:53; Winter, 2005:68).

God is not a kitten or a tame lion. He is a holy God; and His holiness blazes brighter than the brightest sun, causing hearts to stand in reverent fear and trembling before Him. Apart from Jesus Christ, His holiness would devour us all!

Whilst we have an open invitation to enter the holy of holies and engage our

heavenly Father in the most privileged of all human activities – worship – meaningful and purposeful worship requires careful and thorough preparation and examination of the heart, mind and soul (Heb 10:19f). Because heartfelt worship is what God desires and seeks from His people, He has made a way for men to approach Him and enter His presence properly. Man must come to Him through Jesus, His Son, in the manner He has prepared for us by His veil, through careful examination of the heart and confession of sin.

To enter God's presence (Heb 10:19f), is a very serious matter; a matter of life and death, at times, even literally. All care must be taken to ensure that our entrance is proper and is done in line with God's requirements. The preacher's intimation is that only fools rush in, and as surely as they do so, so too, they 'rush out', as empty and as fast as they went in! This is worship under-the-sun. We ought to worship in-the-Son.

2.2 Mind Your Language – v2-3, 6b

'The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him'
(Hab. 2v20)

In today's world, words are held far too lightly. The Preacher cautions against this tendency in the act of worship. Those who fail to consider the seriousness of their utterances in the act of worship, worship under-the-Sun and quite at their own peril! We must be mindful that when we appear before the Lord, we come hush-hush to "listen", rather than to spew a sea of words. Here, the Preacher shows the common temptation of saying too much or being blasé about what we say to God. When we get invited to the pastor's house or that of elder so-and-so, or a church gathering, we often put on our "super-Christian" caps and suddenly our vocabulary becomes "sanctified" and we employ 'holy talk'. The last thing we want is to be out of the loop. Yet the Preacher warns that it is better to be still rather than to speak at all.

True worship then, involves sincerity of utterance. Knowing that the One who sits in heaven above knows you through and through, rather be mindful to say what you mean and mean what you say. Otherwise, hold your tongue! Only fools multiply empty and meaningless words that heap up lavish condemnation upon themselves!

2.3 Hold Your Tongue – v16, 4-6a, c

'When you make a vow to God... fulfil your vow. It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfil it.' – (Ec 5v4a, 5)

Closely linked to the previous caveat is the absolute necessity to not only know when to shut up but also to honour what comes out of one's mouth. Worship in-the-Son requires that worshipers are particularly careful to live up to their talk and talk out of their lives. And thus the exhortation: *'pay your dues to God promptly and quickly, lest you will perjure yourself and be held in contempt of God!'* (v6c)

A vow is a promise made in devotion unto God or someone. For example, in the Bible vows were taken concerning worship and sacrifice in the Temple as well as self-denying Nazarite vows. Another example would be Hannah's vow to give

Samuel to God's service (1 Sm. 1:11) (Keddie, 2002:129; Walton et. Al, 2000: 572).

3. The Importance of Keeping One's Word

Now why should we be so worked up about keeping our word? Well, we live in an age where breaking one's word has become a life habit. Somehow, a correct view of God and His character constrains men from such a habit, for two reasons:

3.1 Because God will keep you accountable (v. 4)

Whereas people "under-the-sun" might not take their promises seriously, the Preacher reminds us that God takes every promise seriously (Keddie, 2002:130). Whenever we have made a vow, the preacher exhorts us to make no "*delay paying it*". The reason for this is that, secondly:

3.2 God does not tolerate hypocrisy (v. 4-6)

Because God is a covenant-keeping God, who has never failed to fulfil His word (from Genesis to Revelation), He does not tolerate hypocrisy, especially in breaking promises. So great is God's displeasure in foolish promises, that the Preacher exhorts, similar to Jesus in Matthew 5:33-37, that it is better not to vow at all than to promise something and not perform what has been promised. As Proverbs 20:25 wisely states, "*It is a snare to say rashly, 'It is holy', and to reflect only after making vows.*" And Deuteronomy 23:22-23 clearly cautions further: "*But if you refrain from vowing you will not be guilty of sin. You shall be careful to do what has passed your lips, for you have voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God what you have promised with your mouth.*" We should not fool ourselves into thinking that God can be fooled with our words or get away with breaking promises, jovially saying "*cross my heart and hope to die*"; that might just happen, as it did with Ananias & Sapphira!

Often times we make rash vows or promises to God, not to be seen as being false in our religion, and sometimes to be considered very devotional. A typical example of this is Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 4. Where the rest of the church, from a true devoted heart of worship unto God, gave all they had; Ananias and Sapphira cleverly devised to give a portion of what they sold to the church, yet pretending that it was the full portion. However, their hypocrisy was unmasked by God and they were struck dead. Similarly, the Preacher cautions us, in v 6, that a simple "whoops" would be enough to perjure us before God. In making rash and false promises, God's anger is kindled and our life is placed in jeopardy (Kaiser, 1979: 75).

Now, this should cause each of us to take whatever vows or promises we make very seriously. Marriage vows, for instance, are not to be toyed with, since they were made in the presence of God. The marriage bond is not a business contract made in court between two beneficiaries; it is a vow of union through thick and thin made before God. God holds it as binding on both partners. Making vows to raising our children in the fear of Lord is not something we do to make Ouma and Oupa happy and keep the church off our backs; it is a commitment we vowed to do in the sight of God and we should have every intention of keeping true to it.

When we sing songs of devotion, let us not allow words of commitment unto God to pass our lips when in fact our heart is not in agreement with them. We might be pleasing the people around us, but God takes our words at face value and does not find them the least amusing.

When vows or promises become “people-pleasing” words, as we so often find, the weight of those words become “*vanity*” (v 7). It is a horrific thing that people should say of someone, “*don’t take his words seriously; nothing he says is true!*”. Yet, when we begin to understand who God is in His holiness, authority and integrity; when we begin to realize that God’s very nature will never contradict His words, then we should be moved in reverence and fear not to displease Him.

The three caveats serve to hammer home the point that approaching God is a very serious matter. We have to do it with the right attitude of the heart and mind. Worshipping God requires candid honesty. Andy Park cites a prayer in the Episcopal liturgical worship which reveals the “attitude of heart of the one who approaches God in this candid honesty and openness:

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen”. He continues saying “ that Worship isn’t a place to hide from God; it’s a place to be found by God. It’s not a place to numb us to reality; it’s a place to look honestly at ourselves in the light of God. In drawing near to God, we have nothing to be afraid of except our own denial and resistance to his holy love”; [and concludes stating that] “God isn’t interested in shallow “lip service” worship. In fact he hates it. He is looking for people who will be brutally honest with him and not hide anything” (Park 2002:33, 36).

4. The Three Attributes of Worship in the Son

How then do children of earth worship God in the Son? The Preacher does not just limit himself to issuing cautions. His cautions, in fact, are meant to create a clear contrast between those who worship merely under-the-Sun, in the flesh, and those who do so in-the-Son, that is, in spirit and in truth, through Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant. What, then, characterizes true worship, entered into in-the-Son? The Preacher lists three attitudes that true worshipers are expected to display in their act of worship:

4.1 Fear God – v1, 7b

“Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore, stand in awe of God” (Eccl. 5v7).

The Biblical concept of “*fear*” carries the idea of love, a desire not to disappoint or grieve the Father’s heart (Keddie, 2002:133). It is love-out-of-reverence. When we begin to understand who God is in His holiness, authority and integrity, when we begin to realize that God’s very nature will never contradict His words, we are moved out of *reverence* and *fear* to seek not to displease Him or to show ourselves mindless of His majestic power and authority or of His great holiness.

The idea of *fear* suggests an attitude of reverence and veneration with a sense of awe and respect. In the Old Testament the Hebrew word *yare’* is used to denote this sense of fear and awe for the Almighty (cf. Ex 14:31; Dt 31:12-13). Yahweh

deserves the fear and reverence of the righteous because of who he is: unique, holy, just, loving and merciful (Ps 86:11; 103:11; 112:1); and for what he does as Creator, Covenant Keeper and Redeemer (Lv 19:32; Ps 27:1; Hab 3:2). Andrew Hill correctly observes that ‘this fear of the Lord is tinged with a reverence bordering on terror and dread’, and that ‘this fearful reverence for God Almighty motivated both worship and service on the part of the righteous’ (1993:3).

True worshipers are mindful of the fact all too often and almost completely forgotten: that God is a zealous God, an all-consuming fire; an awesome and holy God, who utterly abhors sin. The lack of fear of God precipitates men and women to enter God’s presence haphazardly, unprepared and, as the Psalmist said, with an unclean heart and unclean hands. True worshipers on the other hand, value the need to thoroughly cleanse themselves before they enter God’s holy presence in worship. They realise, too, that this has to be done God’s way, by God’s means. Jesus Christ is God’s way and confessional prayer, God’s appointed means. Worshipers who recognise the holiness of God spend time preparing to worship. They search their hearts through the Word of God; they repent of revealed sin and seek God’s forgiveness, cleansing and grace with great humility. Only when such an attitude characterises the worshiper is he or she likely to have a true encounter with God in the act of worship.

4.2 Listen to God

“Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools” (Eccl. 5v1b).

The first ‘avenue into worship’ that the Quaker, Richard Foster (1989:207) lists is, in his own words, ‘to still all humanly initiated activity’, or in classic language, the stilling of ‘creaturely activity’. This is a lifestyle feature that should permeate our entire lives, Foster argues. It is in this sense, an attitude and a disposition of being. ‘We are to live in a perpetual, inward, listening silence so that God is the source of our words and actions.’ If only we could learn this way of life! When the activity of the flesh ceases that of the Holy Spirit takes control over the way we live and worship. Foster admonishes: ‘Certainly it is more fitting to come in reverential silence and awe before the Holy One of eternity than to rush into his Presence with hearts and minds askew and tongues full of words.’, and he adds, citing the desert Father Ammonas: ‘Behold, my beloved. I have shown you the power of silence, how thoroughly it heals and how fully pleasing it is to God... It is by silence that the saints grew ... it was because of silence that the mysteries of God were known to them.’ (Foster, 1989:209)

Revering God as holy goes hand in hand with respecting His authority and that means obeying His commands. We should come hush-hush to “listen”, rather than multiply our words. Listening here implies *hearing* and *obeying* God’s Word (Kidner, 2005:53). Many people can talk religion and repeat all the Christian jargon, but when it comes to sitting before God’s Word, taking it in and applying it to their day-to-day lives, the numbers drop to a handful. Talking and acting Christian does not give one any assurance, “but the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing” (Ja 1:25). Heartfelt worship is characterized

by attentive *obedience* to God's Word. This has nothing to do with the many 'hal-lalujah' and 'Amen' shouts, or the lofty prayers men like to make to God. The one who so proceeds might just be the fool in v 3, whose mouth is filled with many words, but whose heart is so empty and far away from what he professes! Such a person is genuine only in being a fake!

Contrary to those who enter God's presence to utter rushed words, true worshi-pers go in to listen. They are attentive to God's promptings and are particularly quick to respond in humility and obedience to His instructions and commands. Worship is not just singing songs and uttering words of prayer, praise, adoration, etc to God. It is paying heed to His Word; it is paying reverence to His revealed will; it is responding in obedience to His commandments and instructions; it is submitting one's will to His will. This is what true listening is all about. This is true worship, in-the-Son worship.

4.3 Be Humble (v2b, 6c)

"... thou art man; God is on high and thou art on earth below..." (v6c)

The reason men tend to mock God with candy floss words and empty sayings is because we have lost our sense of the distance between God's being and our being. Seeing God as our buddy that loves to watch Rugby with the boys and drink beer with real men causes the heart to lose reverence for God's holiness and, with it, the empty and flippant words flow out of our unbridled mouths and untamed tongues. Yet, in Ecclesiastes 5:2 God is described as otherworldly, *in heaven*, and man, *down below*. He's the Creator and we the creation (Eaton, 1998:614). What a sobering contrast: God in His heaven alone, far above; and we, earthlings, children of dust, on this lowly earth below! He is robed in immortality, majesty, glory and splendour; we, in mortality, finality and frailty.

The God of the Bible is not a playful candy-man that sells ice-cream on a Sun-day afternoon. He is described as a consuming fire. Jesus breached the gap so that we can worship God in spirit and in truth, but Jesus' work on the cross did not diminish or water down the Old Testament picture of the supremacy of God. As Hebrews 12:28-29 would say, *"Therefore, let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that can not be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire."*

"Under-the-sun" worship brings meaninglessness into religion, because our religion only boils down to formalities, religious jargon and specific times where the closest thing to holiness is stain-glassed windows, candle lights, organs, secret rooms, confessional booths and recitals. When religion becomes a hollow can, empty with not even a drop of reverence and awe for a holy and sovereign God who controls all things (Ec 3), such religion is totally meaningless. *"This people draw near with their mouth and honour me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men"* (Is 29:13).

This meaningless worship of many words and empty mutterings is the worship of fools who have not come to realize who God is and what He has done in Jesus Christ to bring us to Himself. God is a holy God who has subjected His own son to death, and death on the cross, for the sin of mankind! The Cross of Christ

should never cause the heart of man to play the fool with God; it should serve to highlight the immensity of God's holiness, since only, Jesus Christ, could embrace the holy wrath of God; it should serve to heighten our sense of awe and reverent fear for a God would not spare even His own Son, laying on Him the guilt of us all. The Cross of Christ has not defanged a holy and zealous God; it made Him approachable and accessible through faith in Jesus Christ. Being casual with God is an evil (v. 1) and a sin (v. 6) that God does not leave unpunished (v 6b) (Kidner, 2005:53). True worshipers are always mindful of the fact that although God reaches out to us with a Fatherly love and passionately pursues and desires our fellowship, He is not our pal or our equal. He is still God Most High, awesome in power, fearsome in righteousness and wondrous in deeds. And so, the Preacher cautions: remember that "*thou art man; God is on high and thou art on earth below*". True worship, then, always seeks to hold up on high the honour and the glory and the power and the majesty of the Most Holy and Most High God. He is God alone; the God of glory, who declares by His holiness – "I am the Lord; that is my name. *I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.*" (Is 42:8). This ought to sober us up and keep us down in sack clothes before the Great King. A. W. Tozer, quoted by Park (2002:34) observes that worship involves, "a humbling but delightful sense of admiring awe and astonished wonder. It is delightful to worship God, but it is also a humbling thing; and the man who has not been humbled in the presence of God will never be a worshipper of God at all. He may be a church member who keeps the rules and obeys the discipline, and who tithes and goes to conference, but he'll never be a worshipper unless he is deeply humbled".

5. Conclusion.

*"Who may go up to the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart" – Psalm 24:3-4a*

What does God see when he looks into our hearts? The caveats against word-worship reveal that we need to approach God with the right heart attitude. But it is not sufficient to have the right heart attitude alone. We also need to have the right heart condition.

"Under-the-sun" worship is meaningless; it consists of empty words and empty promises uttered from a heart lacking in sincerity and transparency. "In-the-Son" worship is meaningful: it is words coming from a new and true heart empowered by the Gospel in the Holy Ghost. Therefore, as children of God, "*Let no corrupt talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*" (Eph 4:29-30). And as those who have a new heart in the Spirit of God, Jesus commands, "*Let what you say be simply 'yes' or 'no'; anything more than this comes from evil.*" (Mt 5:37).

But a heart that's right with God, a heart that desires not to grieve God in words, a heart that desires to be authentic in worship and desires integrity in actions, is not something that comes naturally to us human beings. What our hearts need is

not “turning over a new leaf” because the other side is just as rotten. What we need is a heart transplant; we need a heart that worships in “*spirit and truth*” (Jn 4:23). This heart transplant can only be found in Christ. Eph. 2:5 shows us that when we were dead to God and our hearts enemies of God, in Jesus Christ we were made alive. Jesus took our sin, died the death we deserved, but in return gave us new life in Him. It is in Jesus that God’s Spirit dwells in us, “*the Spirit of truth*” (Jn 14:17). It is only in Jesus Christ that we escape God’s holy anger and it is also only in Jesus Christ that we receive the power of the Holy Spirit and changed hearts to live a life that is characterized by integrity and authentic worship. It is in Jesus that we have the boldness to approach God in worship, for He is the doorway to the throne room of our heavenly Father.

To adequately engage God in the act of worship requires careful heart-searching, repentance and thorough preparation. Hebrews 10v19f indicates to us the kind of preparation involved. It involves, besides our personal relationship with God, careful confession of any and all known sin, thorough cleansing of the mind and soul, purity of heart and a life consistent with the confession of faith we make with our lips. Richard Foster (1989:212-13) believes that worship is practical – ‘something that we do’ and lists seven steps that prepare and lead us ‘into worship’. He says we must:

1. learn to *practise the presence of God* daily by punctuating every moment with inward whisperings of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving;
2. have *many experiences of worship* by worshipping God individually, in small and home fellowship groups and corporately;
3. *prepare* on Saturday night by going to bed early, by having an inward experience of examination and confession, by going over some hymns and Scripture passages; and then *arriving early* in church on Sunday and *fill the room with the presence of God* and by letting go of inner distractions;
4. have a *willingness to be gathered in the power of the Lord*, by letting go of my agenda, of my concern, of my being blessed, of my hearing the word of God: ‘*the language of the gathered fellowship is not ‘I’, but ‘we’* – he points;
5. *cultivate holy dependency* for anything to happen and not rely on your efforts;
6. *absorb distractions with gratitude*, rather than fuming and fussing about them;
7. learn to *offer a sacrifice of worship*, even when we do not ‘feel’ it.

Beloved, as we seek to worship in-the-Son, let us be mindful of the fact that God is God alone, that He expects of us total obedience and therefore we ought to enter His presence in reverent fear, with a clear conscience, a sincere and pure heart. Otherwise, ours will be a worship offered merely under-the-Sun, which condemns us by our unguarded words, unbridled tongues and careless covenanting that only leads to our own ruin.

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