

Solid Rock Christian Church Manassas, Virginia

Bible Study - August 4, 2022

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Ten Steps to Spiritual Renewal

Part IV - Step 4

Title: "Getting Caught Up In Worship"

Scripture Reference: Nehemiah 9:1-37

Opening Comments

In this lesson, we will examine the process and practice of biblical worship. The Bible gives us principles of process and practice that should be reflected in our worship. The form of biblical worship may vary, but the focus cannot.

Here is the Outline that we will work through for this lesson:

I. The Process of Worship

- A. Worship Is the Result of Concentrating on the Scriptures
- B. Worship Is the Response of the Confession of our Sins
- C. Worship Is the Reverence for the Majesty of God
- D. Worship Is the Reaction to the Works of God

II. The Practice of Worship

- A. It Is Not Just an Experience, It Is an Expression
- B. It Is Not Passive and Melancholy, It Is Powerful and Majestic
- C. It Is Not About Someone, It Is to Someone

Ok, let's get started!

I. Overview

A. Many people like instruction books that tell you to: do this, connect that; then do steps 1-3. The Bible gives us clear directives in areas of our spiritual life. But worship is not one of those areas.

B. There is no place in the New Testament that says, "In order to worship the Lord, you must ..." with the exception of this one very important directive that Jesus Himself stated: **"But the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. For the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."** (John 4:23-24)

C. With the exception of this vitally important mandate, we have in the Bible examples of people worshipping at various places throughout Scripture, and from them, we can draw principles that we can apply to our own worship.

D. Just because we are not given "five steps" to effective worship, doesn't mean it is not important. "Worship of our Creator-God is "man's chief and highest end." (The Westminster Larger Catechism)

E. Here is a question for you to consider: Are you a spectator or a participant during worship services? Some may response with - "I am both."

F. We are going to discover some principles in Nehemiah Chapter 9 that will inform and increase our understanding of what it means to participate in worship.

G. The Israelites spent a fourth of the daylight hours confessing to God and worshipping Him. That was followed by another fourth of the day spent listening to the Word of God.

H. Many Christians today would probably complain at the thought of spending that much time in Bible Study and worship on the same day!

The Process of Worship

There are four principles that deal with the process of worship.

II. Worship Is the Result of Concentrating on the Scriptures (9:3)

A. Verse 3 is clear about the order of events, They read the Word of God for a fourth of the day followed by worship. The latter (i.e., worship) was motivated by the former (reading the Word of God).

B. This was also the process in Ezra 9 and Daniel 9. In both cases worship followed an encounter with the Word.

C. Typically, in modern churches, we worship first and then hear a message from Scripture. This might be an area to consider based on the principle of worship flowing from interaction with the Word.

III. Worship Is the Response of the Confession of Our Sins

A. Two times (Nehemiah 9:2 and 3) we are told that the Israelites confessed their sins corporately before God. There is an expression used in the Old Testament of "lifting up holy hands," that is, hands unstained with blood.

B. When the Israelites came to worship God, they were to have "no blood on their hands" - that is, no unconfessed sin.

C. Perhaps worship has become less meaningful for many people because of a willingness to tolerate sin, to live with a defiled conscience.

Comment: We need to confess our sins and ask God for forgiveness before coming into His presence.

D. An excellent model for confession is found in Nehemiah 9:33: "... thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly."

Comment: Remember, confession is saying the same thing God says which for some may not be easy to do. Never-the-less, it is God's will for us.

Point: Worship springs from an appreciation that we have sinned, but God has forgiven us!

IV. Worship is Reverence For The Majesty of God (Neh. 9:5b-7a)

A. Verses 5b-7a reveal the perception of God's majesty held by the Levites: "... and blessed by thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. Thou even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee. Thou art the Lord the God, ..."

B. Worship is getting caught up in the nature and attributes of God - caught up in who God is.

For Your Consideration

If you read the confessional prayer in Nehemiah Chapter 9 and underline all the references to the character of God - His acts and being - you could create a mini - course for yourself in "Theology Proper," which is the category of Systematic Theology that deals with the attributes and existence of God. After

having done this, you will have more than enough reasons to worship God!

V. Worship Is The Reaction To The Works of God

A. Nehemiah 9:17 contains a statement that should make anyone who claims to be a loyal subject of God, stop and immediately ponder the goodness of God in their life. "... neither were ((they)) mindful of the wonders that thou didst among them," speaks of the Israelites of old.

B. Are we not mindful of the mighty works God has done in our midst.

Point: God is a God whose works among us are effective (1 Thess. 2:13).

C. The question is, do we recognize and remember the works He has done?

The Practice of Worship

How do we carry out a New Testament Worship Service? I want to share three principles that I believe are biblical and should be reflected in every worship experience.

VI. Worship Is Not Just an Experience - It Is an Expression

A. We often hear people talk about the experience of worship. The word "experience" suggests something that is happening for me or to me.

B. We hear people say they attend a certain church because they love the worship - they love how it makes them feel.

C. There is nothing wrong with enjoying or feeling moved by

worship, but that is **not** the primary focus of biblical worship.

D. The focus of true biblical worship is on God, not on us. The purpose of biblical worship is to express our love to God, not to meet our expectations.

Point: Whatever good things happen to us during worship is a by-product of the love we express to God!

E. When we worship God, and say Praise Jesus, Praise the Lord, or Praise God, what are we praising Him for? Worship is centered on the content of His Character.

F. There is an abundance of reasons to praise God and we praise Him for who He is and for all the good things He has done, is doing, and will do in our lives.

G. When we do this, we will be "mindful of [His] wonders."
[Nehemiah 9:17]

VII. Worship Is Not Passive and Melancholy, It Is Powerful and Majestic

// Solid Rock - Do you remember our three-fold mantra?

Wonderful Worship - Powerful Praise and Purposeful Preaching!!//

A. If you review the setting of the great prayer in Nehemiah Chapter 9, you will find energy and activity, not passivity.

B. The people were standing and confessing their sins (v2); the Levites "cried out with a loud voice to the Lord their God (v4), then called on the people to "Stand up and bless the Lord your God forever and ever!" (v5).

C. This was not a sleep-inducing worship filled with people nodding in the pews. This was a loud, passionate, energetic service in which people were engaged in worship.

D. If Jesus Christ himself walked into our worship service, we would probably stand and then fall to our knees. Should we have any less of an attitude of engagement when the Lord Jesus Christ is present by The Spirit of Living God?

E. I submit to you that yes, there are moments of quiet reflection during worship. But even that is active engagement - not a time for mind-wandering.

F. The more majestic our view of God, the more majestic will be our worship of Him.

VIII. Worship Is Not About Someone - It Is To Someone

A. Notice how many times the second person singular pronoun "You" occurs in the ninth Chapter of Nehemiah - more than forty times, all but one being a reference to God.

B. Does that sound like worship that is general or specific? That is worship directed to God.

C. When you enter into worship, do you have God Himself in mind as you sing and pray? Is your worship directed toward Him specifically?

D. God wants to hear how you appreciate Him and He wants you to express it to Him directly. //Worship is not a performance for others!//

E. Regardless of the specific order of the aspects of our worship, if we make it a powerful expression of our love for God, directed to God, it will be biblical worship.

Did You Know?

Our modern English word "worship" has its origins in Old English (the twelfth Century). It is derived from the original combination of "worth" and "ship" - a suffix that indicated state or condition.

Worship originally was used to denote distinction, credit, or dignity, but soon evolved into a word for respect and reverence.

It began being used in a religious context in the thirteenth Century. So, when we worship God, we are declaring His "**worth**" or "**worthiness**." - "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (Revelation 4:11)

It is once again interactive time. Please complete the biblical passages that follow by filling in the blank spaces. All passages have been taken from the King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible.

"O come, let us _____ and _____ down: let us _____ before the _____ our _____."

[Psalm 95:6]

"O _____ the Lord in the _____ of _____: _____ before him, all the earth."

[Psalm 96:9]

"Make a _____ noise unto the Lord, all he earth: make a _____, and _____, and sing _____."

[Psalm 98:4]

"Make a _____ noise unto the _____, all ye lands. _____ the Lord with _____: come before his _____ with _____."

[Psalm 100:1]

"I will call on the Lord, who is _____ to be _____: so shall I be
_____ from mine _____."

[2 Samuel 22:4]

"O _____ the _____ with me, and let us _____ his name
_____."

[Psalm 34:3]

Please read Psalm 150 and then Praise and Rejoice in the God of our
Salvation and give Him thanks for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

I hope you have been inspired and encouraged from this study and you
will from this point forward - **Get Caught Up In Worship!!**

Jude 3
Pastor Austin