

CHAPTER 2: THE CREATURE WORSHIPS

SUMMARY

All humans worship something, but we were made to worship only one thing: our Creator. This chapter considers the barriers that keep us from genuine, soul-satisfying, awe-inspiring, eternal worship of God. It aims to show us who we worship, why He calls us to worship and how we can achieve greater freedom as a church in expressing our worship.

AUDIT

Individual

1. **What comes to mind when you hear the word “worship”? Understanding worship as synonymous with rejoicing, what components of your life would you classify as worship? (p. 23)**
2. **“His demand and desire for worship were based on His character and the fact He had rescued these people from bondage. He was worthy, He said, of their rejoicing in Him.” God creates us as worshipers, reveals Himself as the truth to us, saves our souls which also redeems our worship, and as a result of that revelation and His salvific work, our new nature is to worship Him. So to assess the baseline of this response, we must first define: Who is God? What has He done? Take time to answer those questions. (p. 24)**
3. **“The contrast was simple: her well never quenched her thirst for long; His well, however, would satisfy forever.” God has designed us, as humans, with legitimate needs. At some point in your day you will experience thirst, hunger, tiredness, etc. These needs expose your inability while pointing to God’s provision, which means that simple things, like a meal or sleep, actually portray our complete dependence on God. In what areas do you rely on your own strength? In what ways has the repetition of provision in food, water and sleep caused you to be ungrateful? (p. 26)**

4. **Scripture teaches us that our faith is not alone. We were created in the image of the triune God, and numerous passages show us that we are to live in community with fellow believers. Yet our flesh and our enemy, Satan, prefer us to hide in darkness and run to shame. Are you involved in a small group of believers? Do you feel that you have the freedom to confess sin to this group? Do you think that if people knew your thoughts and actions and past you would be ostracized? How does the gospel speak to your fears?**

5. **God is creator. He knows us and loves us. He wants to talk with us. He is good, and He hears our prayers. We need to be reminded of these things. What does your prayer life look like? What is your attitude in coming to the Lord in prayer? Do you pray expecting the Lord to respond? Do you truly think that prayer is a weapon in spiritual warfare? Do you use this weapon?**

6. **“God is seeking people who will worship Him ‘in spirit and truth’—with both inflamed hearts and informed minds—two things that seem almost opposed to each other, as if they were mutually exclusive. And yet when they are infused by the gospel, God causes them to nourish one another, both within ourselves and within our churches. We need (and can have) both.” Where do you land on this spectrum of heart and mind? What do you do, practically, to encourage growth in the areas where you are not strong? (p. 34)**

7. **“... every time we gather to praise Him corporately, our gathering is a foretaste of this eternal gathering. Our worshiping together shadows eternity.” It seems that the common understanding of the word “church” has shifted from being a people called by God to an activity that we participate in on weekends. Men and women make statements such as “I can’t find a good church.” or “At my church, we have a great preacher.” How do you tend to characterize your church gatherings? What do you like most about your gatherings? What do you view as the purpose for meeting together? How would you respond to someone who has replaced weekly gatherings with listening to podcast sermons? (p. 35)**

8. Describe your pre-church routine. Consider your thoughts and attitude before showing up for service. In what ways do you prepare (or not prepare) yourself to “come hungry to respond, react, and receive from God for who He is and what He has done”? (p. 42)

9. **Worship leaders:** Review the songs from the past month. What songs remind people about the greatness of God and the beauty of the gospel? What songs declare what we can do for God or what we can offer Him? What songs do you need to get rid of? What songs might you add to better instruct your people on the character of God and the elements of the gospel? (p. 43)

10. **Pastors and teachers:** Review your sermons and lectures from the past month. How well did you connect the imperatives of Scripture (things to do) with the indicatives of Scripture (what Christ has done)? Did you just mention the gospel at the end, or was it woven throughout to show its impact on all of life? (p. 44)

Staff

1. How does the way you worship reveal your gospel-centeredness?

2. Does everything that you do in ministry lead you to a posture of worship?

3. Is worship in your DNA?

8. Consider corporate gatherings and interactions among people in your body. Is there freedom to be immature and struggling? Where do you see superficiality reigning and how do you need to encourage your people toward authenticity? How can your staff be more intentional about modeling authenticity? How can you further equip your leaders to respond to honesty (struggles, sin, immaturity, etc.) with both the gospel and biblical challenge in the sanctification process? (p. 38)

RENEWAL

Individual

1. Write out or take a look at your schedule for a regular week. What activities do you consider worship? When you look over how you spend your time, how does rejoicing characterize (or not characterize) your activities? Spend time talking with your spouse, roommate and friends about what it might look like to rejoice in God throughout your daily activities. Pray together asking the Lord for help and guidance. (p. 23)
2. Make a chart listing out the three worldly wells of money and comfort, relationships and sex, and respect and success. List out ways you try to drink from these wells. Do you believe God can fully satisfy and that these attempts never will? Ask the Spirit to expose sin in your heart. Confess, repent and search the Scriptures for truth that speaks to each of these temptations. Ask the Lord for belief in areas of unbelief. (p. 26-27)
3. Read Ecclesiastes 1-6. What does Solomon chase after only to come up empty? List out the various attempts. Ask the Lord to expose areas where you are making the same attempts. Read the rest of the book. What conclusions does Solomon reach? (p. 29)

Staff

In all of our preaching and teaching, we must emphasize the call that all we do here leads to our response of worship.

- 1. Preach annually on “worship.”**
- 2. Blog each year on worship in your blog rhythm.**
- 3. Host a worship conference.**
- 4. Provide a teaching resource for group leaders and Sunday School teachers to use in their gatherings.**

During your meeting, divide into groups of men and women. Spend time confessing your sins to one another, praying for one another and reminding one another that God has made provision for sin in Christ. Come back together for a time of worshipping the Lord through song. (p. 29-30)

God has given us spiritual disciplines as a means of knowing Him more. Commit as a group to a spiritual discipline over a specific time period and hold each other accountable, asking each other how this pursuit is drawing you closer to Him. (p. 32)

What do you understand about heaven and eternity? What is communicated from the stage? What do your people believe? Survey some members in your church. What changes need to be made in preaching and teaching to better educate your people? (p. 40)

PRAYER

Father, our prayer is simply that You continue Your work in our lives as we lead Your church. Continue to reveal to us areas of our lives that do not worship You. Teach us, Lord, that all we do, all we think and all we say are ways that we worship You. We pray for Your continued direction as we work through this assessment and as we discover areas of our church that need to change so that we can proclaim Your name better, stronger and louder. We pray for a right understanding of worship. Find us obedient, dear Lord. Amen.