

Worship Essentials – Lecture #3

Principles (Part 2)

Principle #2: Worship is something that we do both individually and in community.

We can also speak of worship both as a habitual part of our lives and as a specific, intentional action.

“When we speak about worship, we need to speak both in terms of worship as individuals and of worship as a community. Similarly, we can speak about worship both as something that is habitual and ongoing in our lives and something that is a specific and intentional action.”

1. Intentional gathering, and the ongoing life of the worshipping individual
2. Individual and community

Hypocrisy comes from: *Where there is a radical disconnect, our worship is hypocrisy.*

“Where there is a radical disconnect between our lifestyle, commitment to worship God 24/7 (twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week) and our gatherings of worship, then we have a problem of hypocrisy.”

Example of prayer as being both intentional and habitual.

- **1 Thessalonians 5:17** “Pray without ceasing...”
- **Ephesians 6:18**

“So, too, with worship. We can think of worship both as a commitment to live for God, offering our bodies as living sacrifices to Him, but also of the intentional action of setting aside time for worship, both as an individual and as a community.”

Confusions from word use

“We put the bulk of our energy and time when we speak about worship into those particular times when we gather together to do worship acts such as singing praises, or celebrating the sacraments, receiving the sacraments, or preaching the Word of God, or taking up offerings. Critical and beautiful as they are, these are not as important, biblically speaking, as habitual worship.”

Summary:

“So it is a convergence of a couple of things here. Worship can be spoken of habitually and intentionally; worship can be spoken of as corporate action and as individual action. We can put these thoughts together by saying that **worship is to be the 24-hour a day, 7-day a week vocation or calling of every Christian** that is fundamental to worship. **But**, with that as a background, **we still rejoice at the opportunity to intentionally set aside times** individually and corporately **to worship God.**”

Principle #3: Habitual lifestyle worship is more important than our intentional actions of worship in religious settings.

1. Passages

- a. Isaiah 1:10-18
- b. Amos 5:21-24
- c. Micah 6:6-8 (Jesus' teaching)

“Jesus appeals to Deuteronomy 6:5 when he says, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength,” and says this is the greatest commandment. And then He adds to that Leviticus 19:18, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus brings these together, as many of His contemporaries agreed and assented to, and said these are the basic requirements of God—love of God and love of neighbor. This is exactly what we find in Micah 6: do justly in all your dealings with your neighbor, do right by your neighbor. Show mercy to your neighbor and do right before God by walking in humble ways before Him—humble relationship with your God. Love of God, love of neighbor, that is the sum of substance

of God's requirements. Another way to say it: this is the requirement of God in worship; this is the worship God requires."

2. Same is true of the church today
3. Intentional actions of worship are to be tokens of the inner reality.
"In a sense, I think we could say that those actions of worship, those intentional actions of worship, like singing praises and praying and making offerings, are to be tokens of a deeper reality. They are the outward tokens, to use the language of a sacrament, of a deeper inner spiritual reality. So, when I raise my hands as I sing a song of praise or pray to God, that song itself is to be the expression of a lifestyle of praise toward God. When I put my tithe in the offering basket, that tithe is an expression, a token reminding myself and demonstrating that I have offered my whole body as a living sacrifice to God."
4. When is our worship hypocritical?
"When we have merely the form but not the substance, or the show or the symbol or the token, but not the reality behind the token, that is hypocrisy. That is unacceptable worship."

Principle #4: Individual worship and congregational worship inform and strengthen one another.

1. Explanation
"We could explain our meaning this way: when we gather together for intentional actions of worship it is not that suddenly we become worshipers at the point of gathering. We have been worshipers throughout the week. We have worshiped on our job; we have worshiped at school. We have worshiped in homes; we have worshiped in our community. We have worshiped as citizens by doing justice and loving mercy and walking humbly with God. Then, we gather together on the Lord's Day for a celebration and intentional actions of worship. ... The church is scattered to work in the world, being salt in the earth throughout the week, and now we have gathered and we are doing this intentionally and corporately with our specific actions of worship."
2. Because we have worshiped God as individuals, the gathering of worshipers is richer.
"As the Lord says in the Scriptures, He inhabits the praises of His people, and where two or three gather in His name, He is there in a special way. So, because we have been worshiping individually, our worship experience is rich. We come together; we share what God has been doing in our own lives; we bring something to the table. Because I bring my worship experience and you bring yours, worship in the big picture (justice, mercy, humility before God) the celebration is rich and powerful."
3. Because we have worshiped with the body of Christ, we become better worshipers as individuals.
4. Emphasis of corporate worship is on the clarity of the revelation.
"Perhaps we can say there is a special emphasis that, when we come together, the gathering is primarily about revelation. Not to say that there is not revelation we are experiencing in our daily lives on our own, we should be. We should be spending time in the Word of God and learning much from the Lord. The biblical data suggests that the church gathered together and one of their key emphases was the teaching of the Word of God, Gospel proclaimed again, Lord's Supper celebrated pictorially retelling the Gospel story and seeing the Lord's presence in our midst through community. So we gather together and the revelation of God is clarified by our gathering. That is the focus of our gathering. Then, when we go out from there, we can do that most God-pleasing response, offer our bodies as living sacrifices to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly in our daily experience. But again, both should feed off of and, in form, feed into the other. That would be the fourth principle."