



Week One - The Essential of Worship

INTRODUCTION: Welcome.... my name is.

Romans 8:28

²⁸ And we know that God causes everything to work together^[a] for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

When we love God and are called according to his purpose, that's you.

Maybe you're here today and you want to grow closer to God and His purposes but you're unsure where to start - Maybe you know you have a relationship with Him already but you feel stuck.

You're not here by accident today because we are kicking off the new year talking about how to grow in our relationship with God by learning about **four essentials of personal devotion**.

Jeremiah 29:13 "You will seek me and find me, when you search for me with all your heart." -

Here's the big idea of our new series: Honest to God:
The condition of our heart dictates the direction of our lives.

Did you know that everything in your life, starts in your heart. This is difficult because we always judge a book by it's cover but not God:

1 Samuel 16:7

⁷ But the Lord said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

Proverbs 4:23

Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

How do you guard your heart? Well guarding your heart starts with what you Worship? **What popped into your head when you heard me say that word, worship?** Probably music. Maybe the music we sang today as a spiritual family.

Whatever you think of when you think of worship, I'm going to challenge you today to expand your view of what worship

Context:

Psalm 50 starts with God showing up to make one of the grandest statements in history. GOD tells us that He is about to speak. And just in case there was any confusion about which god, this is God- the God of gods - GOD.

The one and only true creator of the entire universe. **The CAPS LOCK God.** No other gods in the Bible get the CAPS LOCK treatment. Some of your bible translations may have it written as LORD in all caps.

GOD Himself shows up, the one who started everything is about to open His mouth as a judge and speak - and **here's what He says midway through the Psalm.**

Psalm 50: 7-8 "Oh my people, listen as I speak. Here are my charges against you, O Israel: I am God, your God! I have no complaint about your sacrifices or the burnt offerings you constantly offer."

He starts the conversation off with good news! He doesn't find fault with their sacrifices.

Side note: If you're new to the whole church thing and have never heard this language of "sacrifices", don't worry - it's not as weird as it sounds.

The Israelites are sinful and messed up humans (like all of us) who are going to keep sinning. They're in desperate need of God to purify and clean them from that sin.

They needed a system of some kind that could do the following: **The Purpose of Sacrifices & Burnt Offerings**

1. Turn them away from their sin
2. Provide proper payment for the hard cost of the "debt".
3. Provide a way to clean and purify the community from the infectious nature of sin.
4. Ensure God maintains his presence with his people.

If sin messes up God's world with death and pain, God has every right to make people face the consequences. Thankfully, God loves His creation and doesn't want to kill them, so an animal's life would be symbolically offered as a ransom payment that would cover them.

The word "cover" is the literal meaning of the Hebrew words kipper/kopher, which was later translated as "**atonement.**"

These sacrifices were the way that God would deal with the Israelites' sin, and at the same time provide a system the Israelites could use to keep their right relationship with God when they did sin against Him. **Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of this system for us. So we no longer use this system to be right with God**

Now, back to this Psalm. God has just said that He doesn't find fault with the burnt offerings and sacrifices from the people. **But then He begins to question..**

Psalm 50: 9-13

"But I do not need the bulls from your barns or the goats from your pens. For all the animals of the forest are mine, and I own cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird on the mountains, and all the animals of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for all the world is mine and everything in it. Do I eat the meat of bulls? Do I drink the blood of goats?"

He asks why He should want them? Did He not create that bull and that goat? Do we think He is hungry or something? Yes, God asks rhetorical questions too. Then, suddenly, after this line of rhetorical questioning, He makes a defining statement for our understanding of praise.

Psalm 50:14-15

“Make thankfulness your sacrifice to God, and keep the vows you made to the Most High. Then call on me when you are in trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory.”

The God of the universe is looking for our “thankfulness.” He wants more than a ritual - He wants a thankful heart, a life of obedience, and a living trust in Him.

What if God had said this today? Maybe it would have gone something like, “I don’t find fault with your singing of songs on Sunday. But do you think I really need music? Do you think that that’s all I want? Do you think it’s too quiet where I’m at right now? Did I not create music itself in such a way that sounds pleasing to the ear? Do you think I need to hear these songs that are a result of my breathing everything into existence in the first place?”

Don’t misunderstand me, the good news is that GOD doesn’t find fault with our song offerings. Not only is there nothing wrong with them, they can be an incredible expression of our love toward God. But often, they can become nothing more than ritual.

Worship is more than songs.

A thankful heart means living out your whole life as praise to God. It’s as if God leans in and whispers, “Make me your center of attention!”, and all of our life shouts in agreement. God is at the center of everything we do.

- The difference between me wanting to be the center of attention and God’s statement is that He speaks the facts. And let’s not get it wrong - He isn’t begging to be the center - He is the center

Remember what we said earlier about the heart? Let's look at a couple verses together.

John 4: 23-27 But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. 24 For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."

Notice what God isn't looking for:

- The best looking, The most stylish, The most talented, Those with the most Instagram followers, And as much as I love my Nikes

And while he wants us to use our gifts and talents to serve others, without an attitude of worship, even these things become religious/meaningless

Matthew 15: 8-9 says, " These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship is a farce."

Remember our Big Idea...

It's the condition of our heart that dictates the direction of our lives.

So how can we guard our heart and remain in a posture of worship this year?

THREE FUNDAMENTALS OF WORSHIP

1. I will start with Jesus. He is the fulfillment of everything. No longer bulls and goats, one sacrifice once and for all.

(Mount of transfiguration, Moses and Elijah, listen to him)

Matthew 17:5

⁵ But even as he spoke, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy. **Listen to him.**"

2. I will surrender my will.

Matthew 16:24-25

Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Many of us are control freaks. [Taking control](#) doesn't often work because control was [never ours to take](#). Worshipping God through surrender means giving Him full control of the outcome

3. I will learn to think like God.

Romans 12: 2

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Many times we want God to orbit us but we need to orbit Him. His ways work but we have to move with Him. More about this next week!

As we close: The condition of your heart determines the direction of your life. **You don't have to be stuck.** You don't have to feel distant. You can decide today to worship God with so much more than just our words - and that decision changes everything.

Let's Pray