

WHAT IS WORSHIP?

Since “worship” has such wide range of definitions I have included a list of definitions from some of the world’s top biblical scholars, pastors, and teachers; from all centuries. As one develops their definition of worship, I believe we must never have a dogmatic arrogance that proclaims “I have arrived”, yet learn from all that we can, including the body of Christ.

A.W. Tozer: Worship is to feel in your heart and express in some appropriate manner a humbling but delightful sense of admiring awe and astonished wonder and overpowering love in the presence of that most ancient mystery, that majesty which philosophers call the First Cause, but which we call our Father which art in heaven.

J. Oswald Sanders: Worship is the loving ascription of praise to God for what he is in himself and in his providential dealings. It is the bowing of our innermost spirit before him in deepest humility and reverence. Worship is the adoring contemplation of God as he has been pleased to reveal himself in his son and in the Scriptures.

Evelyn Underhill: Worship is the total adoring response of man to the one eternal God self revealed in time.

Donald Hustad: Worship is a full confrontation with the self-revealed God of the Scriptures with ample opportunity to respond. Worship is any and every worthy response to God.

Kenneth Gangel: Worship is the total response in which spiritual, emotional and physical factors tune together to draw attention to the heavenly Father.

Langdon Gilkey: Worship is a response to the presence of God, or reaction to the appearance of the Holy.

Paul Richardson: Worship is time spent in active awareness of the presence of God.

Graham Kendrick: Worship is God's enjoyment of us and our enjoyment of him. Worship is a response to the father/child relationship.

James White: Worship involves the Assembly of God's people deliberately seeking to approach reality at it deepest level by becoming aware of God in and through Jesus Christ and by responding to this awareness.

Jack Hayford: Worship is the pathway and the atmosphere for people to discover their royal calling in Christ, their high destiny in life, their fullest personal worth and their deepest human fulfillment. Worship is a means by which God's presence can be realised consistently. Worship is an opportunity for man to invite God's power and presence to move among those worshipping him.

Dr. Vernon Grounds: Worship involves awareness of god, awe in his presence, adoration of him because of his excellencies and acts, and affirmation in praise of all he is and does.

Leslie B. Flynn: Worship is giving to God the glory, praise, honor and thanks due him, both for who he is and for what he has done.

Warren Wiersbe: Worship is the believers response of all that he is – mind, emotion, will and body – to all that God is and says and does. This response has a mystical side in subjective experience, and it's practical side in objective obedience to God's revealed truth. It is a loving response that is balanced by the fear of the Lord, and it is a deepening response as the believer comes to know God better.

Judson Cornwall: Worship is an attitude of heart, a reaching towards God, a pouring out of our total self in thanksgiving, praise, adoration and love to the God who created us and to whom we owe everything we have and are. Worship is the interaction of man's spirit with God in a loving response.

A.P. Gibbs: Worship is the overflow of a grateful heart, under a sense of divine favour.

Jo King: Worship is a response to God. It is loving God in the presence of others and loving others in the presence of God.

Alasdair Verschoyle: Worship is the deep intimate adoration of God that includes celebration and declaration. Worship is the ascription of worth to the one who is worthy, it is an experience with God, and it is a spontaneous response to God's character. Worship is an individuals personal response to the revelation of God in the midst of his people.

Richard Foster: To worship is experience reality, to touch life. It is to know, to feel, to experience the resurrected Christ in the midst of the gathered community. It is breaking into the shekinah (glory) of God, or better yet, being invaded by the shekinah of God.

Robert Bailey: Worship is the acknowledgement of God's supreme worth. Worship is prayer to and praise of the almighty God that fills us with joy at who he is and transforms us into a living fellowship with him in the very essence of life.

William Temple: 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. All this is gathered up in that emotion which most cleanses us from selfishness because it is the most selfless of all emotions – adoration.

Franklin Segler: Christian worship is man's loving response in personal faith to God's personal revelation of himself in Jesus Christ. Worship is man's communion with God in Christ, this conscious relationship being effected by the Holy Spirit in the spirit of the worshipper.

Ralph Martin: Worship is the dramatic celebration of God in his supreme worth in such a manner that his 'worthiness becomes the norm and inspiration of human living.

Dr R.A. Torrey: Worship is adoring contemplation of God.

John MacArthur: Worship is giving honour and respect to God.

Bob Mumford: Worship is a personal encounter.

Don Nori: Worship is our joyous response to God's manifest presence. The goal is ruling and reigning with him, allowing Jesus the Lord to manifest himself in our flesh in this life.

Rob Frost: Worship is the opportunity for busy people to touch the eternal, for sinners to glimpse the holy, for broken people to be enfolded in his perfect love. Worship is moving beyond our self-centered lives to meet the one who created us for something better.

Lawrence Richards: Worship involves the response of God's people attributing worth to God for who he is by nature.

Robert Webber: Worship is a personal meeting with God in which we honour, magnify and glorify him for his person and actions.

Anon: True worship is that exercise of the human spirit that confronts us with the mystery and marvel of God in whose presence the most appropriate and salutary response is adoring love.

Erik Routley: Worship is routine punctuated by festivity. Worship is an occasion when the heart is liberated to love and the mind to think.

Thomas Emswiler: Worship is the celebration and affirmation of God's love in the world.

Ronald Allen: Worship is an active response to God whereby we declare his worth. To worship God is to ascribe to him supreme worth for he alone is worthy.

J.N. Darby: Worship is the honour and adoration which are rendered to God by reason of what he is in himself, and what he is for those who render it.

Clement of Alexander: Worship is celebration. All of life is a festival: being persuaded that God is everywhere present on all sides, we praise him as we till the ground, we sing hymns as we sow the seed, we feel his inspiration in all we do.

Anon: Worship is a lifelong process of knowing and being known by God.

Ben Patterson: To worship is to ascribe worth to God, to bow down and serve God, to engage in ritual drama – the story of God's mighty acts of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Krister Stendahl: Worship is being confronted with a sense of wonder, a sense of our sin, a seeking of purging and purification and a summons to service.

Duane Arnold: Worship is to engage in Christ's praise, not our pleasure; his purposes, not our plans; his redeeming life, not our fallen experience; his eternal truth, not our temporal prosperity.

Anon: Worship is response to God resulting in service to people.

Lyla White: Worship is our active response to God and his goodness.

Roger Pittelko: Worship is a recognition of the majesty of God.

Ronn Huff: Worship is an active ascribing of worth to God in the body of Christ.

A.H. Strong: Worship is formal communion between God and his people – God speaks to man and man to God.

E.F. Harrison: Worship is pure adoration, the lifting up of the redeemed spirit towards God in contemplation of his holy perfection.

Gaines Dobbins: Worship is the interruption of our daily routine to recognise the supreme worth of God, to praise him for his goodness, to meditate on his holiness, to renew devotion to his service.

Carol Mundy: Worship is a response to God's presence – loving him for who he is.

Michael Cassidy: Worship involves allowing the sheer majesty, greatness and goodness of God our father to break in on our inner beings and draw them out in worshipful adoration.

Tom Inglis: Worship is a continuous consciousness of God's presence and continuous response to God. Worship is the outpouring or overflowing of the whole being, spirit, soul and body, under a sense of divine favour in the presence of God.

Geoffrey Wainwright: Christian worship involves an encounter in which God speaks to us and gives us the tokens of his love, and in which we offer to him our praise and thanks, seek his forgiveness and renew our commitment, ask for his help and entrust our future to him.

John Wimber: Worship is the love making expression between the bride (body of Christ) and the groom (Jesus Christ). Worship is love freely given to God it is the expression of awe and respect to God.

Carl Tuttle: Worship is a desire to know God, to stand in his presence, to meet with God, an expectation of God to dwell among his people. Worship is coming before God with expectancy to see his manifest presence. Worship is to revere and pay homage to God, the act of profound adoration, to give God the glory due his name, to bow down before him, to fall at his feet, to be as a puppy at his masters feet, to turn towards and kiss, lifting up our hands in absolute surrender, drawing near to God, blessing and ministering to him, to be in fearful awe, giving ourselves over to him in loving affection and to do so in spirit and honesty.

Bruce Leafblad: Worship is that process in which we make God first in our lives.

Barry Liesch: To worship God is to fall down before him and to serve him. Worship is the act of declaring to God his worth, affirming who he is and what he has done, and responding to him in praise, adoration, thanksgiving and awe.

Raymond Bailey: Worship is the ordered expression of love of God through the total person. Worship is human loving reaction to God's loving action - the Creator acts: the creature responds.

R.G. Rayburn: To worship God is to ascribe to him the worth for which he is worthy.

J. Thompson: Worship is a service offered to God not only in terms of temple worship but of service to one's fellows. In order to offer this 'worship' to God his servants must prostrate themselves and thus manifest reverential fear and adoring awe and wonder.

W.E. Vine: Worship is the direct acknowledgment to God, of his nature, attributes, ways and claims, whether by the outgoing of the heart in praise and thanksgiving or by deed done in such acknowledgment.

Frank Colquhoun: Worship is man's recognition of the 'worthship' of God. It is man's attempt to give to the Lord the glory due to him as creator and redeemer. Worship is an obligation, an activity and a response.

Sally Morgenthaler: Christian worship is not only offering all that we are to a Holy God. It is the intentional response of praise, thanksgiving, and adoration The God, the One revealed in the Word, made known and accessible to us in Jesus Christ and witnessed in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. In real worship, we carry on an exchange of love with the God who is present, the God who speaks to us in the now, who has done and is doing marvellous things.