

Walking in Wonderful Worship



We are the circumcision (God's special people) who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. -Philippians 3:3

Our working relationship with God is based on worship. When we worship Him, He's put in the place He deserves: first place before and above all else. And to the extent He's worshiped and given the place He deserves, to that extent everything else is made right.

To that extent we're put in the place we belong, too: poor and needy sinners dependent only and absolutely on the Lord and His undeserved grace for every good thing.

Wonderful Worship

We'll spend eternity worshiping and praising our great God. And until then, nothing else should be so important. Our chief life preoccupation should be to worship God!

In our prayer time, worshiping God alone for Himself alone should take precedence over everything else. Only after we've communed with Him in worship are we prepared to pursue our relationship with Him or seek His aid for our human needs or those of others.

From time to time throughout the day as it may be possible we will benefit from taking time out to get alone again with God and worship Him.

And all the day long we should be finding occasions to return again, however fleetingly to worship God in our spirit. At the beginning and end of each new task, when we're puzzled about anything or confused, when we've acted foolishly or sinfully, when we're being tempted to act foolishly or sinfully, when we meet someone or say goodbye, when we're hurting or lonely, when we're frightened or worried. These all provide occasions to worship the Lord, to look away to Jesus.

Learning to Worship

Oh, yes, we could simply go to Him and tell Him our need or ask for His help. But if we're all wrapped up in ourselves and our needs, we may find that our asking does nothing at all to free us and put us in genuine touch with the God we need so very badly at that moment. Worshiping Him does. Once we've worshiped Him and He has turned our hearts and spirits from ourselves to Himself, then we can genuinely share our needs with Him. And very often not until.

In the process, it may be necessary for us to sense our unwillingness to need Him, His Spirit, and His power to meet our needs and accomplish the good that only He can really accomplish

at that moment in that situation.

So in every circumstance, to the extent it's possible, we need to worship Him, turn confidently to Him, look expectantly to Him. In this worship, we need to sense His all-sufficiency, our total insufficiency, and our absolute need of Him. In our worship, we may often become aware of our native self-dependence and pride and of our need of His Spirit to deliver us from this awful defilement of the flesh.

Whenever possible, worship the Lord until your heart is turned from yourself to Himself. Worship until you're needy, your perspective is purified, and you're willing to do whatever He indicates and to do it as He enables in dependence on Him and for His glory.

"It Isn't That Simple"

"But," you ask, "What about the many times when I feel separated from the Lord by failure, sin, guilt, independence of spirit, self-centeredness or whatever else?" Seek to trust the Lord with both your false feelings and whatever might actually separate you from the Lord. Seek to be willing to be honest with the Lord about it all. Seek not to defend yourself in anything, but to be willing to submit yourself in everything to the Lord. Don't be concerned about how imperfectly you do all this. Just turn in worship to Him Who loves you and understands you better than ever you could and Who alone can straighten out your desires and motives and forgive, and cleanse, and make right, and make new. What a great God we worship. It is only to look to ourselves and depend on ourselves in anything that can bring real failure.

"What," you ask further, "about those times when I'm under stress from outward circumstances?" Just turn to the Lord in as near to worship as you can at that moment. Let your heart say, "Its o.k., Lord. I can trust you even in this. I can't rely on my reactions or on any attempt of mine to offset these reactions, but, as always, on you alone." There you will find that this too is truly worship. And in it you may frequently find a pervasive peace and rest that you had never thought possible.

Again you may ask, "What about the majority of my day when my mind is preoccupied with the affairs of this life. " Whenever you recognize that this is your state, if at all possible, still seek to lift your gaze trustingly and lovingly to your great God of love. Know that He understands, that He loves you and cares for you just as much as when your heart and spirit are turned to Him in the deepest and most devout worship, and that He is seeking just as fully as you permit to care for every part of every circumstance to bring eternal benefit to you.

Look to Jesus

You may simply look away to Jesus with or without words and find your heart and spirit in a true state of worship. When you look confidently to Him, you set Him free to be more nearly what He wants to be, always your all-sufficiency in all things.

The upcast eye of trust, or a simple expression like, "You," or the repetition of the name, "Jesus," or a cry of, "My God, My God," may serve as well as any expression of praise or worship to retune the heart to God and set your spirit to singing again.

No Burden But a Pleasure

This practice must not be a burden but a pleasure born of the Spirit in our daily time of worship.

It will take time and loving commitment to develop any consistency in the practice. It will take patience with yourself and your failure to be consistent in it. Your hope will need to be in the Lord and not in yourself. But that is what worship praying and worship walking is all about.

What if?

What if you simply can't get anywhere? What if worship praying and worship walking simply elude you? It is possible that you aren't a child of God by faith that you've never been born again into His family. If this is the case, read the Gospel of John in the New Testament asking God to show you how to become His child. Ask Him to make you willing to let go your natural pride and independence and look to Him alone for your hope, and life, and eternal salvation. Recognize that your sin separates you from God and leads you to an eternal hell. Turn from your sin to Jesus, asking Him to be your Lord and Savior, come to live in you, and make it possible for you to be God's child and to please Him.

If you know the Lord as your Savior, you may need to start spending prolonged times in private prayer communion with Him, letting Him teach you to trust Him and worship Him. You may need to learn to accept the difficulties of life, that he sends your way to draw you to Himself, as His good gifts of love. Without them you'll never learn to love Him intimately, and worship Him, and be more fully prepared to spend a wonderful eternity worshipping your glorious God of love. Wouldn't you love to be part of a fellowship of those praying and walking in worship? In nothing else is there so much hope, so much joy, and so much freedom.

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