

Reading Plan

August

Communing with God

Week Fifteen

Monthly Description

Worship is a powerful and beautiful way that we, as children of God, can experience his presence and enter into relationship with him. YHWH not only desires that we would live with loyalty toward him, but that we would also commune with him as flourishing members of his household. This month we are walking together through what the whole story of Scripture has to say about communing with God.

Worship

Note: Daily descriptions in **bold**.

Weekly Description:

The greatness of God is beyond the ability of our minds to fully comprehend. His power and wonder are beyond our wildest dreams and imagination! But when we worship God, we draw our attention to his character and his faithfulness, deepening our understanding of him. Worship can be declarative—recognizing the reality of who God is. It can be devotional—expressing personal adoration to God. It can also be missional—inviting others to join in worship to the one true God.

Worship is a term that derives from the Greek words *latereia* and *leitourgia*, which can both be roughly translated as *worth-ship*. To worship is to, quite literally, ascribe worth to something. Thus, when we worship God, we ascribe worth to him. That is not to say that we *give God worth*. Rather, ascribing worth to God is an act of coming into alignment with the truth that all of creation recognizes and declares (Ps. 19): God is worthy of all glory.

As we will see throughout this week, God is worthy of worship because of his greatness and his goodness. He is the all-powerful creator and sovereign over the universe. And if that alone were true it would make him worthy of worship. But he is also wholly good, faithful, and generous. Who God is and what he has done should elicit a motivation toward worship from our hearts when we consider these truths.

Weekly Video:

Holiness

<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/holiness/>

Day One: God's Worthiness

If nothing else, God's supremacy and power make him worthy of worship. He is the creator, the author, and the sustainer of life. He is the most powerful over the cosmos. And because all life is given by and sustained through him, he is worthy of our devotion.

While it is true that God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and present in every time and place in history—and while it is true that just this would make him worthy of worship, that is not the *only* reason we worship God. In addition to the enormity of his power, he is entirely and wholly good.

He is faithful to his creation and, most of all, to his human family. He is the loving Father who is as close to us as the very mention of his name (Ps. 34:18; 145:18). How can such a God, both great *and* good, not receive our complete devotion?

Isaiah 25:1-12 (ESV)

O LORD, you are my God;

I will exalt you; I will praise your name,
for you have done wonderful things,
plans formed of old, faithful and sure.

² For you have made the city a heap,
the fortified city a ruin;
the foreigners' palace is a city no more;
it will never be rebuilt.

³ Therefore strong peoples will glorify you;
cities of ruthless nations will fear you.

⁴ For you have been a stronghold to the poor,
a stronghold to the needy in his distress,
a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat;
for the breath of the ruthless is like a storm against a wall,
⁵ like heat in a dry place.

You subdue the noise of the foreigners;
as heat by the shade of a cloud,
so the song of the ruthless is put down.

⁶ On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

To read more about God's worthiness, see 1 Chron., 16, Pss. 99-100, and Rev. 4.

Day Two: The Next Generation

Psalms

<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/psalms/>

Since God has called us to be the priests and priestesses of our homes, one of our responsibilities in worship is to train the next generation how to worship God and why he is worthy of worship. David echoes this foundational covenantal responsibility with which Israel was entrusted. This was not simply so arbitrary rules could be maintained, but so as each generation came of age they would be raised in habitats of wholeness, learning both why and how to worship the Lord their God (Deut. 6:7; 11:19).

We carry this same responsibility in the new covenant—to raise the next generation to love the Lord, to understand that he is both great and that he is good, and to know how to worship him. As the *ekklesia* (“church”), we enter into that responsibility collectively, not simply as individual families. This means that we are united to help one another raise our children to love the Lord.

Psalm 145:1-21 (ESV)

- 1 I will extol you, my God and King,
and bless your name forever and ever.
- 2 Every day I will bless you
and praise your name forever and ever.
- 3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised,
and his greatness is unsearchable.
- 4 One generation shall commend your works to another,
and shall declare your mighty acts.
- 5 On the glorious splendor of your majesty,
and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.
- 6 They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds,
and I will declare your greatness.
- 7 They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness
and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.
- 8 The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- 9 The LORD is good to all,
and his mercy is over all that he has made.
- 10 All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD,
and all your saints shall bless you!
- 11 They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom
and tell of your power,
12 to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds,
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.
- 13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

To read more about teaching the next generation to worship the Lord, see Gen. 22, Ps. 145, and Prov. 4.

Day Three: Remembering the Lord

Throughout the Old Testament (and in parts of the New Testament, cf. Heb. 11) we see a recurring theme that is important for us to embrace as his covenant family. At various points in Israel's history, its leaders or its prophets would call the people to reflect and remember, most notably through the implementation and demonstrations of the annual feasts.

Today's reading comes from Moses' farewell speech to the Israelites before they entered the land of Canaan. Moses recounted the Law that YHWH had given to them at Sinai and prophesies to them. In his prophetic word, he called to mind YHWH's faithfulness to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and through the wilderness. He warns the people to observe this pattern of remembrance so that they don't wrongly assume their good fortune was their own doing. Their recollection of his mighty power and lovingkindness toward them was a form of worship that strengthened their loyalty to YHWH.

Deuteronomy 8:1-20 (ESV)

“The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers. ² And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.

³ And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. ⁴ Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. ⁵ Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you.

⁶ So you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him. ⁷ For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills, ⁸ a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, ⁹ a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. ¹⁰ And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.

¹¹ “Take care lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, ¹² lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, ¹³ and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, ¹⁴ then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, ¹⁵ who

led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, ¹⁶ who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end.

¹⁷ Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’ ¹⁸ You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day. ¹⁹ And if you forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish. ²⁰ Like the nations that the LORD makes to perish before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God.

To read more about remembering the Lord, see Gen. 19, Deut. 6, and Ps. 105.

Day Four: Worship as Witness

Acts 13-20

<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/gospel-series/>

At the beginning of this week, we briefly mentioned how worship can be *missional*, meaning that an aspect of our worship to God can be to invite others to participate in that worship. Worship and witness are indeed the two fundamental reasons for the church’s existence.^[1] Witnessing is in effect an act of worship for it points a person to ascribe worth to God and his work in humanity in Jesus Christ.

Worship-as-witness is powerfully demonstrated in today’s reading where we find Paul and Silas worshipping in prison. While locked away, both men decide to set their cares aside and focus their energy on Jesus as they began to worship and praise him. As you will read, their worship acts as a witness to God and opens an opportunity for an entire household to pledge their loyalty to Christ. (And for the two missionaries to be released from prison!)

[1] Sunquist, Scott. *Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and Glory* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Pub., 2013), 281.

Acts 16:25-40 (ESV)

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, ²⁶ and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone’s bonds were unfastened. ²⁷ When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸ But Paul cried with a loud voice, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.”

²⁹ And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ Then he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹ And they

said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” ³² And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

³³ And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. ³⁴ Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

³⁵ But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, “Let those men go.” ³⁶ And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, “The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore come out now and go in peace.” ³⁷ But Paul said to them, “They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out.”

³⁸ The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. ³⁹ So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. ⁴⁰ So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.

To read more about witnessing through worship, see Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 14.

Day Five: Eternal Worship

This week we have studied many ways we can engage in worship as a way to be in relationship with God. Today, we will look at how important worship is in the role of a new creation. Revelation 5 paints a beautiful picture of what worship looks like in eternity with God’s entire cosmic family, both human and supernatural, worshipping before the throne of God.

The scene here is something of a holy family reunion, where the kingdom of God has been brought to its highest expression as heaven and earth are united. God’s devoted household gathers around and declares the worthiness of the Author of Life for both his greatness and his goodness. New creation includes communion with God, enjoying the reign of his kingdom, ascribing to him the worship he is due.

Revelation 5:1-14 (ESV)

Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. ² And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” ³ And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, ⁴ and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. ⁵ And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”

⁶ And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of

God sent out into all the earth. ⁷ And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. ⁸ And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation,
¹⁰ and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth.”

¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might
and honor and glory and blessing!”

¹³ And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying,

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”

¹⁴ And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

To read more about eternal worship, see Romans 1 and Hebrews 13.