

3 Worship in Prayer

In Lesson 1 we learned that worship is fellowship with the Lord. This is why God made us. He wanted to share His love with people who could love Him in return. What beautiful evenings those were when God walked and talked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden!

When humanity sinned they shut the door to that close relationship, but the great heart of God still reached out to His creation. Deuteronomy 33:3 says of God: “It is you who love the people.” His ears are still open to hear us when we call, and we can still have communion with Him through prayer.

Prayer is not difficult. Don’t we want to talk with someone who loves us and whom we love in return? As with earthly conversations, the more we talk the easier it becomes. The more we pray, the easier it becomes to express our love in words and in worship.

The Plan

- A. Worship With Our Words
- B. Worship With the Spirit's Words
- C. Worship Without Words

The Goals

- 1. Identify different types of prayer.
- 2. State how worshipping in the Spirit helps believers.
- 3. Describe two purposes of silent prayer.

A. WORSHIP WITH OUR WORDS

Goal 1. Identify different types of prayer.

When you pray, do you sometimes say, “Dear God, please help me with this problem”? Such an appeal is called a prayer of petition. This prayer is pleasing to the Lord because He loves to help us in our need. You know what it is to thank the Lord for your food and the many other blessings He has showered on you. This is also an important way to pray, one that could be called the prayer of thanksgiving.

Perhaps you have prayed for others, for people or nations in need. This is the prayer of intercession. God has asked His children to spend special time in intercessory prayer. But there is one type of prayer that does not depend on circumstances surrounding us. It depends only on God and who He is. This is the prayer of worship.

When we worship, we take our eyes off ourselves and our need and even off the answers we have already received. We concentrate only on God, on His unchanging and eternal qualities—His power, faithfulness, love, and all the other attributes that are part of His character. Our attitude is not so much one of being open to receive, but one of being ready to give. We offer ourselves.

Many of the psalms written by David are prayers of worship. When he was worshipping, he praised God for who He is. “The Lord reigns, let the nations tremble; he sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake. Great is the Lord . . . ; he is exalted over all the nations. Let them praise your great and awesome name— he is holy” (Psalm 99:1–3).

It is good to start our times of prayer with worship. This is what our Lord Jesus did when He taught His disciples to pray. Before bringing petitions to His Father, Jesus first honored Him in praise. He said, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:9–10).

Three things happen when we worship God. First, we take our privileged place as His children. Second, we put our enemy, the devil, in his place. We declare that he has no authority over us because we belong to God’s kingdom. God has promised to protect and keep us. Then, most important of all, we please the Lord. Proverbs 15:8 says, “The Lord detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him.”

Take a few moments now to think about the Lord. If other thoughts keep pushing in, ask the Holy Spirit to help you in worship. He will make the things of God real to you. Never forget that the Lord is God. He made us, and we belong to him; we are His people. His love and faithfulness are eternal.

Application

- 1** Circle the letter in front of each true statement.
 - a)** There are several kinds of prayer, all beneficial.
 - b)** Worship is only a ritual at a certain part of the service.
 - c)** Jesus taught His disciples to worship.
 - d)** The main purpose of worship is to get answers we really want.

- 2** Choose the correct completions to this sentence. If you cannot think of words to say when worshipping, you could
- a)** just forget it; God understands your limitations.
 - b)** have your pastor write out words for you to memorize.
 - c)** find Psalms or other Bible passages of worship and read them to the Lord.
 - d)** ask the Holy Spirit to help you in your worship.
- 3** Circle the letter in front of each correct sentence completion. Worship differs from other forms of prayer in that it
- a)** does not mention our problems or needs.
 - b)** must be a prayer for others.
 - c)** depends on our circumstances.
 - d)** only glorifies God for who He is.
- 4** Read the prayers and write in front of each the type of prayer it represents.

PRAYERS**TYPES OF PRAYER**

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|---|-----------------------|
| ... a “Please heal my headache.” | P Petition |
| ... b “Help those living in atheistic cultures.” | T Thanksgiving |
| ... c “Thank You for friends.” | I Intercession |
| ... d “We praise You for You are merciful.” | W Worship |
| ... e “Save my family before it’s too late.” | |
| ... f “Hallelujah!” | |
| ... g “Thank You for protection as we traveled.” | |
| ... h “Bless this food.” | |



B. WORSHIP WITH THE SPIRIT'S WORDS

Goal 2. State how worshipping in the Spirit helps believers.

Before our Lord ascended into heaven He gave specific instructions to His disciples:

“Wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 1:4–5)

Ten days later they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. The sign of their baptism was that they all began to worship in languages they had never learned. There were people standing around who saw and heard what was taking place. Of course they asked questions about it. Then Peter answered, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” (Acts 2:38–39)

Thereafter, many more people were filled with the Holy Spirit—about three thousand in that one day! Because the promise was made to all whom the Lord calls to himself, believers are still being filled with the Holy Spirit. No one needs to be left out.

Have you ever wondered why anyone would want this experience? If you have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, then you already know some of the answers. In this lesson we will mention a few of the benefits that are ours when we worship in an unknown language—in the Spirit's words.

A friend who speaks three languages told me of his experience when he spoke in tongues or in the language of the Spirit.

I was so full of love for God that I worshipped Him with all the loving words that I know in Spanish. Then I used all the words that I knew in English, and then in German. But these were not enough. Suddenly I began to speak in a strange language and I knew I was still telling God how much I loved Him even though I did not understand the words. It was wonderful to know that finally the words were adequate because they were in a heavenly language. I had never before felt joy like the joy that comes with being able to worship God in tongues.

We cannot over-emphasize the beauty and blessing of worshipping the Lord in the Spirit. During the writing of this course He made this truth very real to me. I faced a particularly hard trial, but when the pressure seemed too much I found strength by worshipping in my prayer language. The long sleepless hours at night became filled with the Spirit's words as were spare moments during the day. Often the words flowed easily, but other times I worshipped because I decided to and not because I felt like doing so.

One day I cried to the Lord, "Why should I have to face this trial now? Why me, Lord?" Immediately I seemed to hear His very gentle words: "You are writing about the benefits of worship. I want you to personally know and feel that what you write is true."

Let me assure you from God's Word and from personal experience of the great blessing found in worshipping with the Spirit's words. As I continued to worship my tension and self-pity left, the pain left my heart, and my smile became genuine.

It is the Holy Spirit who brings us the presence of God the Father (Ephesians 2:18). The Holy Spirit helps us pray with results (Romans 8:26). He brings us liberty from fear and gives us power, love, and self-control (1 Timothy 2:7). He reminds us of the hope we have of sharing God's glory. "Hope does not

disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us” (Romans 5:5).

Worshipping in the Spirit lifts us beyond life’s temporary problems. We find release as we concentrate on the eternal God who has all things under control. How beautiful to glorify Him as He truly deserves. When we worship in tongues we magnify God and praise His goodness (Acts 10:46).

If you have not received the marvelous experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, you can ask the Lord for it right now. He has promised it to every believer.

Application

- 5 Worshipping with the Spirit’s words means
 - a) using the gift of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
 - b) praying in an unknown tongue.
 - c) magnifying God as He truly deserves.
- 6 List three of the many benefits a believer receives when he or she worships in the Spirit.

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C. WORSHIP WITHOUT WORDS

Goal 3. Describe two purposes of silent prayer.

How can we worship the Lord in prayer and speak? It is not only possible, but also necessary to pray sometimes without speaking aloud. Two things can happen when we pray silently. One, we can bring our innermost thoughts to the Lord. The psalmist wrote, “Lord, you have searched me and you know me. . . . You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. . . . Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely” (Psalm 139:1, 2, 4).

The second thing that happens when we are silent is equally important. During this time we are able to wait on Him. To wait on the Lord means to keep still outwardly and inwardly while waiting for Him to speak to us. The Holy Spirit can bring thoughts to our minds that will help us, or bring verses to our remembrance to guide us. Here is where the fellowship and communion of worship take on full meaning.

Fellowship is never a one-way activity. There is no real conversation taking place if only one person is speaking. Two people must speak and listen to each other if they are to share together. God wants to talk with us. He said, “‘Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know’” (Jeremiah 33:3).

The Lord wants to give us understanding about ourselves and our circumstances. When we allow Him time to share His secrets with us, we in turn know better how to work and how to pray.

“Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.” (Daniel 2:20–22)

Perhaps in your quiet moments you have already waited on the Lord and you want to learn how to do it more. Find a place alone, free from interruptions, and ask the Lord to fill your mind with thoughts of Him. Ask Him to help you block out your own thoughts and to refuse whatever Satan might try to impose on you.

Then, worship Him silently. Be patient and wait for Him to speak. When He does speak it will always be in accordance with His written Word, so listen with a Bible in your hand. Psalm 91 encourages us, “‘Because he loves me,’ says the Lord, ‘I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him’” (vv. 14–15).

Application

7 What are two important reasons for praying silently?

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8 Which of the following statements are true?

- a)** God hears only the spoken word.
- b)** Silent worship helps us listen to God.
- c)** We worship without words only if we are alone.
- d)** God would never say anything contrary to His Word, the Bible.

9 Circle the letter in front of each correct completion of the sentence. When we wait on the Lord we may be

- a)** sharing secrets with our heavenly Father.
- b)** waiting for an answer or for divine guidance.
- c)** just keeping still so our minds can wander.
- d)** quietly or silently worshipping.



Check Your Answers

- 5** All of the completions are correct.
- 1** **a)** and **c)** are true.
- 6** Your answers. You could include close communion with God, enjoying His presence, being filled with love, joy, peace, and power, and knowing you are praising Him as He is worthy of being praised.
- 2** **c)** find Psalms or other Bible passages of worship and read them to the Lord.
d) ask the Holy Spirit to help you in your worship.
- 7** To bring our innermost thoughts to God and to wait on Him to speak to us
- 3** **a)** does not mention our problems or needs.
d) only glorifies God for who He is.
- 8** **b)** and **d)** are true.
- 4** **a** Petition
b Intercession
c Thanksgiving
d Worship
e Intercession
f Worship
g Thanksgiving
h Petition
- 9** **a)** sharing secrets with our heavenly Father.
b) waiting for an answer or for divine guidance.
d) quietly or silently worshipping.