

CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS *(Student Copy)*

Part 3 – Christian Growth (The Bible, Prayer & Worship)

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1. THE BIBLE

Reflections

1. Before you came to know more about Christianity, what do you think the Bible is? How has your view of the Bible since changed?
2. Why do you think it's important for a believer to read and know the Bible?

Overview

1. The Bible is the single most influential book in the history of humanity that spans across 1,500 years and 40 different authors from different cultures, experiences and origins.
2. The Bible is the written Word of God that is authored by human authors all of whom are inspired by God Himself.
3. The Bible is the revelation of God about Himself, His love, His plans and His salvation for us through His Son Jesus Christ.
4. The reading, studying and living of the Word of God is essential for the growth and equipping of all believers.

The word Bible comes from the Greek word “*biblios*”, meaning “a book” which contains the Word of God. It is also referred to as “ ” which means the sacred writings, the “Word of God” and “the law” amongst other references.



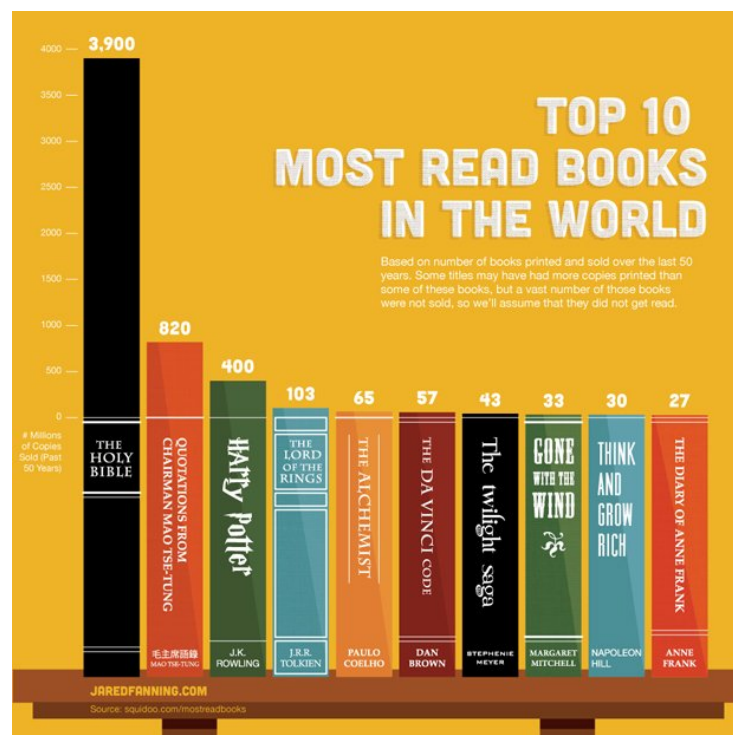
It is one of the most influential book in human history that explores the most pertinent question of life such as

- Where did we come from?
- Why are we here?
- Where are we going?
- How should we live our lives?

It is not a single book but rather a collection of 66 books (**Appendix 1**) written over a 1,500 year span by over 40 different authors from different cultures, origins, and experiences. The books include books of the law, history, poetries, prophecies, biographies, and letters. It is translated in 532 languages and partially translated in 2,883 languages.

66 books (39 OT and 27 NT)	More than 40 authors across 3 continents.	532 languages (2,883 partially translated)
1,500 year span	100 million sold annually	Over 3.9 billion sold worldwide past 50 years

It's by far the most read book in the world with over 3.9 billion copies sold globally over the past 50 years and an average 100 million copies sold annually.



The Bible's writings and teachings have also influenced poets, artists, scientists, musicians, movies, marriages, human rights, moral conducts, constitutions, and governments throughout the history of the world.

It is truly a book unlike no other.

The teachings of the Bible are so interwoven and intertwine with our whole civic and social life

Theodore Roosevelt

In regards to this great book (the Bible), I have but to say that it is the best gift God has given man

Abraham Lincoln

Gravity explains motions of the planets, but it cannot explain who sets the planet in motion. God designs along rationales and universal principles.

Isaac Newton

1.1 Who Wrote the Bible?

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16

²⁰ knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹ for prophecy never came by the will of man, but ¹⁹ holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:20 - 21

The Bible itself was written by about 40 authors over a 1,500 year span. The variety of authors that wrote the Bible included apostles, kings, prophets, physicians, fishermen and more. It claims to be the inspired Word of God and is without flaw and mistake.

How can a book with so many authors claim to be the Word of God?

This is because God Himself is the single ultimate author. He “_____” these men with His Holy Spirit to write according to His truth as shown through the scripture above in 2 Tim 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:20. Remember the Holy Spirit is also a person and unlike mortal men, the Holy Spirit is eternal and moves across decades and centuries to inspire men of different generations about the truth of God.

Only a single divine and eternal source of inspiration can harmonize 40 different authors, 66 books and 1,500 of history together in a unified truth. That single and ultimate author is God Himself.



Did God Affirm That The Bible is in Fact The Word of God?

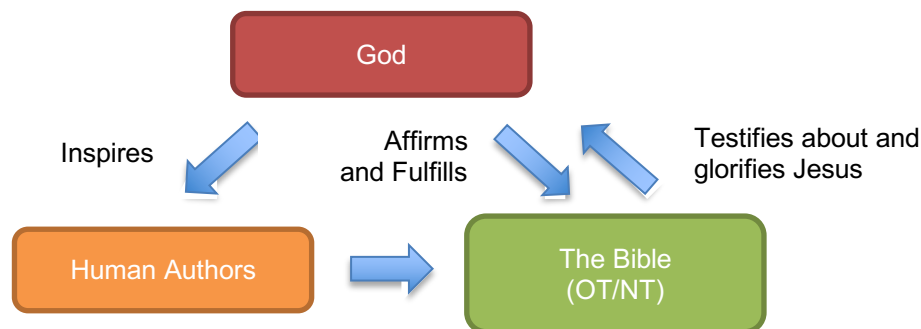
Yes He did.

We know for a fact throughout the Gospels, Jesus affirmed the authority of the Scriptures through these instances.

- Jesus _____ and memorized the Scriptures since young (John 7:15)
- He and His disciples quoted “It is written” more than 99 times throughout the New Testament during their speech and teaching, thus recognizing the authority of the Scriptures (Matthew 4:4)
- He _____ the Scriptures and warned against those who would tamper with the Scriptures (Matthew 5:17 – 18)
- He _____ to the Scriptures to explain the prophecies regarding Him and the things which He must fulfill (Luke 24:27, John 5:39).

⁴ But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’ ”

Matthew 4:4



¹⁷ “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil. ¹⁸ For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

Matthew 5:17-18

1.2 What is The Bible About?

Now that we’ve established that God is author of the Bible, what then is the message and purpose of the Bible?

1.2.1 What the Bible Is Not About

There have been misunderstandings among the general public and even the Christian community regarding the true intended message of the Bible.

- **It is not science**

The Bible does not reject science -- it has facts and truths that can be verified, but it is not a book that sets out to explain science or to demonstrate scientific knowledge and data. It is a book about God revealing Himself, His love and His plans for us.

- **It is not literature**

You can find various types of literature in the Bible, from poems and verse to stories and parables. It can even be said that some of that writing can be considered examples of beautifully-written literature. But it's not meant to be read as just a book of literature or good stories.

- **It is not philosophical**

Some people can read through the Bible and only understand it intellectually, like they're reading a thesis or study of knowledge. But the Bible wasn't written for the head -- it was written for the heart, and to bring real change, not just an increase in knowledge.

1.2.2 What the Bible Is About

The Bible is essentially divided into 2 parts. The Old Testament and the New Testament.

- The Old Testament is about the origin of man and the story of a nation.
- The New Testament is about a man, promised by God to deliver and save humanity. The nation was God's way of bringing the man - Jesus Christ into the world.

As a whole, the Bible is essentially about God creating and redeeming men through Jesus, His one and only begotten Son because of His great love for us.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

John 3:17

Jesus is the central figure in the Bible and this thread is consistent throughout, from Genesis to Revelation. The Old Testament predicts His coming and sets the stage for His entrance into the world. The New Testament describes His coming and His work to bring salvation to our sinful world. He is God's ultimate answer to the sin of mankind, and should be our focus every time we read and study the Bible.

1.3 Why should I Read and Study the Bible?



- Firstly and most importantly because it is **God's word** for us.

It is the creator's manual for His creation. It is the primary and most reliable source of information and guide for our life. Any other source whether it's from the world or from men is subsidiary to it. There is none that compares to it.

- It's totally _____ and without error (2 Peter 1:19 – 21)
- It's _____ and **true** till the end of time (1 Peter 1:23, Psalms 102:27)
- It helps us to _____ **God** and His heart (Ephesians 5:1)
- It provides _____ and light for our life and circumstances (Psalms 119:105)
- It _____ our mind to know God's perfect will for us (Romans 12:1-2)
- It gives us _____ and _____ to face the battles of our lives (Joshua 1:8-9)
- It _____ us and causes us to be _____ (Psalms 1:2-3)
- It _____ us and keeps us from sin and destruction (Psalms 119:11, Hebrews 4:11)
- It gives _____, _____ and _____ to us (Psalms 119:100)

1.4 How Should I Start Reading the Bible?

Q. Some people like reading, some not so much. Think about the last book that you read. Did you enjoy it? Why, or why not?



The Bible with its number of books and various authors may seem a bit daunting to many people attempting to dive in. Unlike a novel or a history, the Bible is not a book where it's easy to read from cover to cover. It's actually a library, or collection, of books written by different authors in several languages over several thousand years. But it's a readable library, and you can get through it. Its books are "shelved" by type and topic, just as in a public library: history, the Law, the Prophets, poems and wisdom literature, eyewitness accounts of Jesus (the Gospels), collections of letters, and mind-blowing apocalyptic descriptions of the past, present and future.

We highly discourage the attempt to just randomly pick a book or passage from the Bible. Doing so would only strip away the value, context and richness that Bible has to offer.

Here we have compiled some tips and guides that can help you get started with the Bible.

1. Prepare your heart (Ezra 7:10)

For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.

Ezra 7:10

It is important not to be in a state of hurry or distraction with other issues, worries, or thoughts. Before you start, take a while to focus on this time that you are going to spend, and believe that it will be a fruitful and blessed time. If you are able to, try to set aside a time and place for reading, and switch off possible distractions such as your phone. This will help you to stay with what really matters!



Image source: tommynelson.com

2. Receive with readiness (Acts 17:10-11)

When Paul and Silas were teaching in Berea, the people there heard their teaching and received it willingly and with openness, and this was such a good thing that it was recorded in the Bible.

Likewise, as you read the Bible, let the Word speak to you. Allow God to speak to you through His Word -- you never know what He might be trying to say next.

3. Study diligently (2 Timothy 2:15)

Sometimes you may hear a message preached or read something in a devotional that strikes you. Make it a habit to look it up in the Bible for yourself too. Not only does this help you to review what you learned, but it helps you get more familiar with the Bible and what is in it.

4. Try starting with the Gospels

A good place to begin with would be the book of Mark or John. The book of Mark is quick and fast-paced, while John focuses on the things Jesus claimed about himself. Mark tells about what Jesus *did*, while John tells about what Jesus *said*. After that you can proceed with the rest of the Gospels in the book of Matthew and Luke, and then proceed to the book of Acts. This is Luke's sequel to his account of Jesus, picking up the story at the point of Christ's ascension. In this action-packed book we learn how the early church got started and how the gospel spread throughout the Roman Empire. From there, believers can proceed into the rest of the book in the New Testaments or start delving into the OT starting from the book of Genesis.

5. Study the verses with the context in mind.

It can be tempting to focus on just your favourite verses or the ones that are particularly special or meaningful to you. But the Bible wasn't written in bite-size pieces -- it's made up of letters and books, so try to read them as a whole.



6. Consider the time and culture it was written

Sometimes some phrases or imagery might not make sense immediately, or things that are said might sound strange to you. That's okay -- the Bible was written a long time ago in a culture quite different from our own. That means that it needs to be read having this in mind. If you feel that you're not really "getting" a part of a passage, maybe try reading up on the topic or the culture at the time to give you some insight on the meaning.

7. Try using a devotional, a study guide or a bible reading plan

Although the Bible stands alone as the Word of God, we can still use other materials to help us approach it. Things such as devotional guides give us suggested passages to read, and some thoughts for the day. You can use these to supplement your reading and gain new perspectives and understanding of the Word.

There are also reading plans available online that can help guide and pace your bible study. You can check out the various plans at <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans>

8. Ask for guidance

Sometimes you may not be able to make a decision on your own -- that's fine too! You can always ask an Acts church leader for help in choosing the right version for you, and they can also help you with any questions you might have about it.

1.5 Which Bible Version Should I Use?

For a new believer, the sheer number of versions and translations available can be overwhelming at first, but you can start with some guidelines here to help you choose the Bible that's right for you:

1. Read in your native language.

Not everyone's mother tongue is English, so it might be better to find one in your own preferred language. Some even have multiple languages in one to help people understand it better.

2. Read at a level you can understand.

You may have encountered some versions using old English with words such as *thee*, *thou*, *hast* and others. Some even have difficult grammar and use hard words. It's okay to use a Bible that's closer to what you are able to understand -- complicated words don't mean that you get a better message!

Some of the more commonly used and recommended Bible versions are the

- New King James Version (NKJV)
- English Standard Version (ESV)
- New Living Translation (NLT)
- New International Version (NIV)

For more information on the types of bible version that is more suited for you to check out this website at <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk>

Summary

1. The Bible is the single most influential book in the history of humanity that spans across 1,500 years and 40 different authors from different cultures, experiences, and origins.
2. The Bible is the written Word of God that is authored by human authors who are inspired by God Himself.
3. The Bible is the revelation of God about Himself, His love, His plans and His salvation for us through His Son Jesus Christ.
4. The reading, studying and living of the Word of God is essential for the growth and equipping of all believers.

2. PRAYER

Reflections

1. What do you prayer is and what purpose does it achieve?
2. What do you think God is looking for in our prayers to Him?

Overview

1. Prayer is the communication and conversing of the human soul with God who.
2. Prayer is meant to be relational and not ritualistic.
3. Prayer requires us to seek and ask in faith.
4. Effective prayer requires us to set aside time and space with God.

2.1 What is Prayer?

Q. Can you recall the last time you had a really exciting conversation? What made it engaging to you?

In the movie Cast Away, the character played by Tom Hanks gets stranded on an island alone and without any way to call for rescue. After time passes, he gets so lonely that he starts to treat a volleyball that he found as a person called Wilson, talking to it and interacting with it.

In this we can see a fundamental part of us as human beings: we were made to connect. Even the most shy and reclusive people find ways to connect, verbally and non-verbally. Our need to connect is a God given design that lets us know that we are not alone and that we have of value in this universe.



Our God is a communal God, where we see God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all in communication with each other. This communion represent a perfect union and God wants us to be able to commune with Him and find our being in Him

³ 'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'
Jeremiah 33:3

2.1.1 But How do We Communicate with God?

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

John 14:15-18

God isn't physically present with us -- we don't see Him, hear Him, or touch Him. So then, how do we communicate with Him?

We do so with prayer.

Prayer is basically conversing with God. Prayer is not a religious meditation or passive reflection; it is direct communication to God, between the human soul and with the Lord who created the soul. Prayer is the primary way for the believer in Jesus Christ to communicate their emotions and desires with God and to fellowship with God.

Imagine having a phone hotline that connects you directly to the Prime Minister, that you could use at any time, any day. Wouldn't that be amazing? Prayer is just like that; it is our hotline to God. We can pray to God at any time, no matter where we are or what situations we are in. It is a great privilege that God has given us to be able to call on Him.

2.2 How did Jesus Pray?

To understand how to pray, we have no better example than Jesus Christ himself, when He was on earth. His disciples asked Him, "Lord, teach us to pray" and Jesus replied:

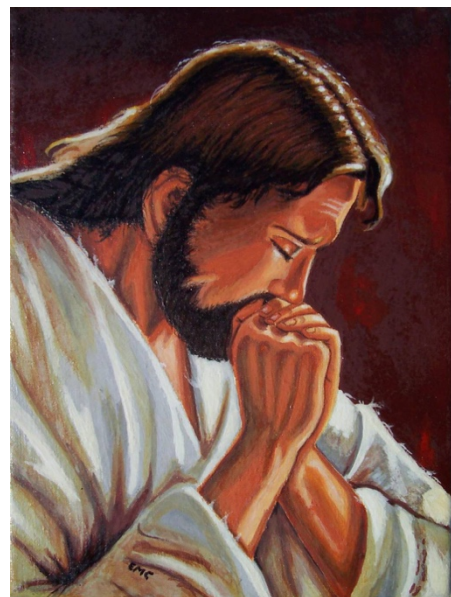
*So He said to them, "When you pray, say:
Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us day by day our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins,
For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one."*

Luke 11:2-4

In doing so, Jesus not only gave us a model prayer, but also showed us that we don't need to have long, tedious requests, or even many complicated, flowery words. It wasn't a long prayer, but it was a powerful one. Jesus also told His disciples what *not* to do when praying:

"And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him."

Matthew 6:5-8



The religious people thought that their prayers were better because they were done openly, to impress others and to show off their “holiness”. But Jesus wants us to have the right focus instead -- on God.

2.3 How Should I Pray?

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”
Matthew 7:7

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

The Bible uses the analogy of a child asking the father for bread. That is how we should approach God -- we bring our requests to God and just ask Him for our needs! Some people presume that asking God for material things is a “low” and selfish form of prayer, but Jesus Himself said in Matthew that we should ask, and keep on asking and believe in faith.



Here's a brief guide on how we can pray to God

- Thank and praise God (Philippians 4:4-7)
- Ask for and receive wisdom (James 1:5)
- Seek His forgiveness when we sin (1 John 1:9)
- Take your problems to God and claim His promises (1 Peter 5:7)

Believing in Prayer

- **Believe that God is there**
Faith is not a feeling, so don't try to "feel" God but just have faith that is there!
- **Believe that God is _____**
He's not a life force or an energy, but a person who we can talk to.
- **Believe that God can _____**
No matter where you are, or what situation you are in, God can hear you.
- **Have faith that He will _____**
Not only does He hear us, but He listens to what we have to say to Him, because we are His children. It's not because of anything we have done to deserve it, but because of who God is.
- **Believe that He will _____**
One-way conversation is a lonely thing. God does speak to us to, but we have to be careful not to dictate how we want Him to reply or we might miss it!
- **Believe that He can act and that prayer _____ things**
God didn't just stop and leave the world to run without interfering. He continues to act and move, and indeed does answer us when we pray to Him
- **Believe that God will give what we ask for**
God wants to give good things to those who ask Him (Matthew 7:11). If we ask according to His will, we can believe that God will grant us our requests.

Suggestions for your daily time with God

- Plan a daily time with God
- Find a quiet place
- Read a chapter of the Bible, then commit to prayer your plans for the day, asking God's peace and guidance.
- Record your prayer request and keep track of answered prayer.
- Remember that God is with you all the day, 24/7.

Summary

1. Prayer is the communication and conversing of the human soul with God who.
2. Prayer is meant to be relational and not ritualistic.
3. Prayer requires us to seek and ask in faith.
4. Effective prayer requires us to set aside time and space with God.

3. WORSHIP

Reflections

1. What does worship mean to you?
2. What do you think God is looking for in our worship?
3. What do you think will help us to worship God more intimately and powerfully?

Overview

1. Worship is a response and not a ritual.
2. Our response of worship is in relation with the glory of God displayed in and through our lives.
3. God is seeking for worshippers that will worship Him in spirit and in truth.
4. True worship will overflow out our lives in expressions and transformations.
5. Worship is experienced both personally and corporately as body through the church.

3.1 Introduction

If you have visited a church, you've probably seen a music team on stages performing, people dancing, jumping and shouting. On the other end, you've probably seen people clasping their hands and closing eyes in quiet and deep reflection. You've probably witnessed people kneeling and crying during the worship time. And then there's also a time of giving of offering where people place money into offering bags or envelopes. To some it is partaking in a sacred communion and some Christians might even share that worship to them is spending a quiet time at home and meditating on the Word of God.



If you're new to this whole new experience, all these may seem overwhelming to you and you might be wondering

- Is worship just about singing, dancing, and music?
- Is it supposed to be loud or quiet?
- Is there a specific time and place where worship should be?
- Is there a one and true way of worshipping or is it according to each and own's liberty and expression?
- How do I know that my worship is acceptable to God?

3.2 What is Worship?

To have a clearer picture of what true worship is, it's perhaps better to start with what worship isn't.

Worship is not a _____. A ritual is performed in order to satisfy a requirement to obtain or achieve something. That is not what worship is.

Worship is a _____. It is the natural response of praise and adoration from a heart that is filled with the glory of God.

Consider this, when was the last time you praised and adored someone or something? Was it a person, a team, a movie or an experience? Was it a ritual that you performed out of duty or was it a response that naturally overflowed out of your heart?



We are all created with a sense of **value/worth** and we naturally praise and adore something/someone dearly when we discover them to be of supreme **value/worth**. In fact, the word worship is made up of 2 key words, "worth" and "ship". It means to ascribe or declare the worth of something, or to place value in the thing being honored. Some find it in their loved ones, their pets, their favorite team, their favorite singer and some even their cars. The affection that people display range from constant thinking, hugging, singing, spending and praising it among their friends and families.

When the Bible exhorts us to come to worship God, the experience is the same, but the object of worship, instead of being a car, a pet or a human being, is actually the Lord God Himself, the one who is most worthy of all.

*Give unto the LORD, O you mighty ones,
Give unto the LORD glory and strength.
Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name;
Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.*

Psalms 29:1 - 2



In the Book of Matthew, Jesus tells his disciples the story of 2 parables about hidden treasures and the response of those who discovers it.

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

44 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price

45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls,⁴⁶ who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Matthew 13:44-46

There are many valuable treasures in our lives, but there is only one that is irreplaceable and of infinite worth.

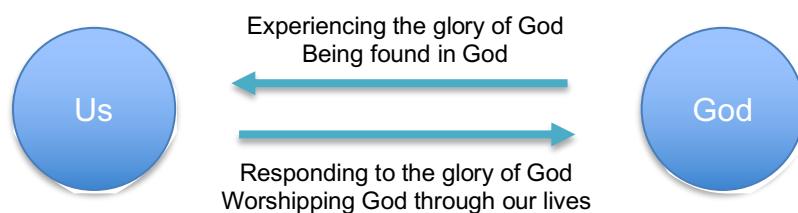
That treasure is Jesus.

When all things fade away and when all things fail, He will still remain. He is the one that paid for our sins with His blood, the one who suffered and died on the cross even while we were still sinners. He is only one who holds the key to eternal life, and He is the only one who promised to never leave us nor forsake us. There is none that compares to Him.

It is for such reasons that the only appropriate/acceptable response from us to God who is of infinite worth is **worship**.

12 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

Romans 12:1



*“You are worthy, O Lord,
To receive glory and honor and power;
For You created all things,
And by Your will they exist and were created.”*

Revelations 4:11

For more discussion on why God wants Us to Worship Him, please check out Appendix 3.

3.3 What is God Looking for In Our Worship?

Discussion:

What do you think God is looking for when we're in church or when we're worshipping Him?
Why do you think God is looking for those things that you've just mentioned?

God is not a being that is insecure and in need of human affections, gifts and services (1 Sam 15:22, Acts 17:24-25). Why should He be since He is the creator of all things, is all sufficient and is not indebted to any of His creations?



But the Bible does mention (John 4:23) that God is seeking for worshippers not for the reasons above, but because God Himself is a living and relational being who made and designed His creation to seek Him, know Him and love Him intimately. It's what we are created for and it is in fact our greatest calling unto God, to love Him with all our heart, soul and strength.

27 so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;

Romans 12:1

37 Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” 38 This is the first and great commandment.

Matthew 22: 37 - 38

Worship is a relational experience, not a ritual and hence it is more than just about songs, lights, gifts or the place of worship. We are first called to know God and in our knowledge we respond to Him through worship with our mind, body, soul and spirit.

In John 4, a story was told where Jesus met a Samaritan woman beside a well and they started having a conversation about Jews and Samaritans (2 groups of people that don't get along well with each other). Later on, the Samaritan women asked Jesus as to whereabouts is the proper place of worship, whether it'd be in Samaria or in Jerusalem.



19 The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.”

21 Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

John 4:19 - 22

The Scripture above and the response of Jesus gives us a strong foundation into understanding what the Father is seeking for in worshippers. God is seeking worshippers who will worship Him in spirit and in truth.

3.3.1 True Worship is Based on _____

Discussion:

Is it dangerous to worship God without knowing the truth about His person and His character? What can we do to equip ourselves with truth and knowledge that we may worship God as who He truly is?



Imagine a couple that enters into a relationship and built it on false impressions, misunderstandings and unreasonable expectations of one another. Each one only expects what they selfishly want the other person to be, and not as who they truly are. It's fairly certain that their relationship will filled with disappointments, frustrations and hurt because the foundation of their relationship is built on a lie.

It is dangerous and foolish to worship God based on “half-truths”, presumptions, and emotions. We may end up worshipping an “idol” of our creation and building a false impression of God which is what the Bible warns us about in Romans 1:18 – 23.

Worship needs to more than just songs and emotions. It has to be founded on the truth of God. It's not songs and lights that gives us freedom, but it His truth that gives us real freedom.

³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

John 8:32



God has not left us to speculate as to who He is, but He has chosen to reveal Himself that we may know Him truly as who He is, as we have covered in Part 1. And the most reliable source of knowing Him, is according to His Word, the Bible.

Hence true worship must be build up and grown together with the understanding of the Word of God.

As we understand more about the Word of God, the power of our worship increases because it's built on truth. And as we worship the truth of His word becomes more alive, as it transitions over from our heads to the depths of our hearts.

3.3.2 True Worship is Filled with the _____

Worshipping in Spirit means engaging our whole heart. There is no mistaking and escaping when it comes to discerning whether a person's heart is truly there whether it'd be at work, home or in relationship. When a person is dispirited and their heart is not present, they seem sluggish, distracted, complaining and discouraged.

Have you ever conversed or engaged with someone close that sees disinterested and distracted. That is not what God desires from us. Not even when we bring him all sorts of riches or sacrifices (Psalms 51:16). What He desires is our undivided attention for Him regardless of the circumstances and feelings because He is truly above all circumstances.



*Bless the LORD, O my soul;
And all that is within me, bless His holy name!*

*² Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits:*

*³ Who forgives all your iniquities,
Who heals all your diseases,*

*⁴ Who redeems your life from destruction,
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,*

*⁵ Who satisfies your mouth with good things,
So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

Psalms 103:1-5

In fact, the Bible encourages us to bring our burdens and cares before Him (and not hide it away from Him) because He cares for us.

⁶ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, ⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

1 Peter 5:6-7

Worshipping in spirit is not just mere positive thinking. It is stirring up the core of our hearts and being to approach God. An example of how our hearts responds in the worship to God is as per below

1. Authenticity and Humility
 - a. "Lord I come before you as I am."
2. Surrender
 - a. I commit all my cares, my feelings and my burdens and lay them at your feet.
3. Acknowledgement and thanksgiving
 - a. I can't do this on my own, and I need You and Your Grace.
 - b. I believe by faith that now You are here with me.
 - c. I thank you for all that You've done and provided for in my life.
4. Invitation
 - a. Come into my heart and fill me once again, with your love, with your truth, and with your Holy Spirit.
 - b. As I draw closer to You Lord, would You draw nearer to me.

3.4 Why and How Should I Express My Worship to God?

Have you ever been so excited about something (a restaurant, a movie, a sports team, a new baby or a romantic encounter) that we can't wait to share it with someone? Some of these experiences are so profound and that we go all out to share with anyone and everyone we know. We express these joys and delights because there is an coming out of our hearts and emotions. Without sharing the experience is incomplete.

The joy and power of authentic worship cannot be contained but will **overflow** out of the worshipper in praise and transformation. Jesus in His Words says that those who believe in Him shall experience a river flowing out of their hearts with living water

³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

John 7: 38



Jesus is talking about believers experiencing the Holy Spirit, who comes and fills our hearts with God's power, truth, love and grace. David in the book of Psalms refers to this experience as his "**cup overflowing**" (Psalms 23:5). Another example is the Samaritan woman that met with Jesus, whom after Jesus ministered to and having revealed Himself

as the Messiah, could not contain her joy and started witnessing and proclaiming Jesus to her entire village (John 4:28).

One of the most profound quotes about praising and worship comes from the late C.S Lewis who writes

“I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed. It is frustrating to have discovered a new author and not to be able to tell anyone how good he is; to come suddenly, at the turn of the road, upon some mountain valley of unexpected grandeur and then to have to keep silent because the people with you care for it no more than for a tin can in the ditch; to hear a good joke and find no one to share it with. . . . The Scotch catechism says that man’s chief end is ‘to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.’ But we shall then know that these are the same thing. Fully to enjoy is to glorify. In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him.”

C.S Lewis

As we seek and worship God, God pours out His love and presence unto His children that overflows into

_____, such as

- Joy and delight
- Singing, praise, new songs...
- Dancing
- Kneeling and praying
- Giving
- Service

_____, such as

- Obedience and surrender
- Commitment and devotion
- Repentance and change
- Holiness

That is the reason why we sing, clap, dance and give in church. It is not because of duty, but rather because worship overflows in our response to the God who loves and saved us.

We worship Him because He first loves us.

We can’t stay silent because praising Him completes our joy.

You have turned for me my mourning into dancing;

You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness,

¹² To the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent.

O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever.

Psalms 30:11-12

3.5 How can We Worship God as a Church?

It is important that every believer experience worship individually and also corporately as a church.

Individually because we are called to experience Jesus as our “**personal**” Lord and Saviour.

Corporately (as a church) because we are called us to belong in the same _____ and _____ of Christ (1 Cor 12, Ephesians 4:4, Colossians 1:18, Ephesians 2:19-22). Coming together as a family to the House of the Lord is one of the best highlights of the week for every believer. Our Heavenly Father rejoices to see His children coming together to seek Him and find joy in the fellowship among the family members as well.

*Praise the Lord!
I will praise the Lord with my whole heart,
In the assembly of the upright and in the congregation.*

Psalm 111:1

*I was glad when they said to me,
“Let us go into the house of the Lord.”*

Psalm 122:1

When we pray on our own in private, our focus is naturally inwards, because Christ is in us (Matthew 6:5-6).

But when we come together as a group or as a church, Christ is also there amongst us, and so our focus will shift to be on the whole rather than each individual themselves (Acts 4:31)

That’s why it’s important to experience praise and worship both in our own quiet time and also together with others.

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Colossians 3:16

¹⁸ And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Ephesians 5: 18 - 20

Goals

- Commit yourself to attend a weekly church service and participate in the corporate worship, in order that every believer might be blessed and be a blessing to God and one another.
- Set aside a special time daily to worship and focus on God alone.
- Ask around and discover Christian worship songs that you like and can sing to on your convenience. There are many worship songs available on YouTube, Spotify and even in church.
- Try and read the book of Psalms - to help enrich your understanding and appreciation of how the authors expressed their love and adoration to God

Summary

1. Worship is a response and not a ritual.
2. Our response of worship is in relation with the glory of God displayed in and through our lives.
3. God is seeking for worshippers that will worship Him in spirit and in truth.
4. True worship will overflow out our lives in expressions and transformations.
5. Worship is experienced both personally and corporately as body through the church.

APPENDIX 1

The Different Books of the Bible

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE					
OLD TESTAMENT - 39 Books			NEW TESTAMENT - 27 Books		
LAW - 5	POETRY - 5	MAJOR PROPHETS - 5	GOSPELS - 4	PAUL'S LETTERS TO FRIENDS - 4	
GENESIS	JOB	ISAIAH	MATTHEW	1 TIMOTHY	
EXODUS	PSALMS	JEREMIAH	MARK	2 TIMOTHY	
LEVITICUS	PROVERBS	LAMENTATIONS	LUKE	TITUS	
NUMBERS	ECCLESIASTES	EZEKIEL	JOHN	PHILEMON	
DEUTERONOMY	SONG OF SOLOMON	DANIEL			
HISTORY - 12		MINOR PROPHETS - 12	HISTORY - 1	PAUL'S LETTERS TO CHURCHES - 9	
JOSHUA		HOSEA	ACTS	ROMANS	GENERAL LETTERS - 9
JUDGES		JOEL		1 CORINTHIANS	HEBREWS
RUTH		AMOS		2 CORINTHIANS	JAMES
1 SAMUEL		OBADIAH		GALATIANS	1 PETER
2 SAMUEL		JONAH		EPHESIANS	2 PETER
1 KINGS		MICAH		PHILIPPIANS	1 JOHN
2 KINGS		NAHUM		COLOSSIANS	2 JOHN
1 CHRONICLES		HABAKKUK		1 THESSALONIANS	3 JOHN
2 CHRONICLES		ZEPHANIAH		2 THESSALONIANS	JUDE
EZRA		HAGGAI			REVELATION
NEHEMIAH		ZECHARIAH			
ESTHER		MALACHI			

APPENDIX 2

CAN I TRUST THE BIBLE?

- a. Are there discrepancies in the bible?
 - i. Yes there are
 - ii. There are 400 – 500k discrepancies
 - a. Because there were so many manuscripts
- b. Does discrepancies means the bible is inaccurate and not the Word of God?
 - i. The answer is No
 - ii. In the OT, the Jews had the privilege of professional scribes that wrote down everything word for word
 - iii. Whereas in the NT, the church were constantly on the run because the persecution was so strong.
 - iv. And when they received a letter from the apostles, they would ask how many would like to have copies to be quickly made.
 - v. People would hear listen and make copies for their churches very quickly
 - vi. That is why we have so many copies of the manuscripts to this day
 - vii. Hence the reason for the errors were not because the writers were malicious, but because they were running for their lives.
 - viii. These scriptures were preserved not out of convenience but out fear of persecution and many paid it with blood.
 - ix. As a result we have many copying errors,
- b. But the question is can we reliably and accurately reconstruct the original source and scriptures from these versions that were made?
- c. Textual Criticism
 - a. Is the attempt of ascertaining the original and accurate wording of the original text.
 - a. Example, if someone made many copies of your will, you would try to ascertain whether these copies truly reflect the original will of yours.
 - b. The key test is by
 - a. Looks at the number of copies of early text
 - b. And also the time gap between the original document and the copies
 - c. Hence the more copies we have and the earlier they are, the less doubt we have about their authenticity
 - d. Let's compare the bible to other ancient text in history taught in schools and universities
 - i. Greek historian Herodotus and Thucydides
 - 1. 500 BC – AD900 = a gap of 1,300 years and only 8 copies
 - ii. Roman historian Tacitus
 - 2. 1,000 years time gap = 20 copies
 - iii. Caesar's Gallic War
 - 3. 950 years time gap = 9 – 10 copies
 - iv. Livy's Roman History
 - 4. 900 years = 20 copies
 - v. New testament
 - 5. (40-150AD) – (130 – 350 AD) = 70 – 450 year time gap
 - 6. 5,800 Greek manuscripts, 10,000 Latin translations and 9,300 others = over 25,100 copies!!
 - e. Hence the bible is way more earlier (half as early), and has way more copies (2,000 – 3,000 times more) than any other historical books that is ever taught in school and universities.

AUTHOR	BOOK	DATE WRITTEN	EARLIEST COPIES	TIME GAP	NO. OF COPIES
Homer	<i>Iliad</i>	800 B.C.	c. 400 B.C.	c. 400 yrs.	643
Herodotus	<i>History</i>	480–425 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,350 yrs.	8
Thucydides	<i>History</i>	460–400 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,300 yrs.	8
Plato		400 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,300 yrs.	7
Demosthenes		300 B.C.	c. A.D. 1100	c. 1,400 yrs.	200
Caesar	<i>Gallic Wars</i>	100–44 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,000 yrs.	10
Livy	<i>History of Rome</i>	59 B.C.–A.D. 17	4th cent. (partial) mostly 10th cent.	c. 400 yrs. c. 1,000 yrs.	1 partial 19 copies
Tacitus	<i>Annals</i>	A.D. 100	c. A.D. 1100	c. 1,000 yrs.	20
Pliny Secundus	<i>Natural History</i>	A.D. 61–113	c. A.D. 850	c. 750 yrs.	7
New Testament		A.D. 50–100	c. 114 (fragment) c. 200 (books) c. 250 (most of N.T.) c. 325 (complete N.T.)	+ 50 yrs. 100 yrs. 150 yrs. 225 yrs.	5366

The above table gives a glimpse of the standing of the Bible among other historical texts. The New Testament with the highest number of copies, and the shortest time gap gives it the highest standing in terms of accuracy and reliability even among other texts used in universities and relied by scholars.

Appendix 3

Why does God Want Us to Worship Him?

Then I will go to the altar of God,
To God my exceeding joy;
And on the harp I will praise You,
O God, my God.

Psalms 43:4

God desires for us to worship Him not because He is needy, for God is all powerful and all sufficient. Worship is required by God from us because

- He is truly worthy of all praise.

He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. He is the Holy one, the Everlasting One, the Almighty, the Ageless one and there is none that compares to Him.

“You are worthy, O Lord,
To receive glory and honor and power;
For You created all things,
And by Your will they exist and were created.”

Revelation 4:11

- All glory belongs to Him for He created all things. All the wonderful creations of the universe, our existence and all our joy comes from Him.

I am the Lord, that is My name;
And My glory I will not give to another,
Nor My praise to carved images.

Isaiah 42:8

- We are created to worship Him and to give Him glory (Isaiah 43:7).

He is our source of all life, joy and glory. We cannot exist without Him and apart from Him who created us. We are all eternally indebted to our Creator. When we worship Him and give unto Him all that is due, we experience true and eternal fulfillment, pleasure and purpose that the world can never give.

26 And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27 so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 for in Him we live and move and have our being,

Acts 17:28

Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands!
2 Serve the Lord with gladness;
Come before His presence with singing.
3 Know that the Lord, He is God;
It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;
We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

Psalms 100:1-3

When we choose to worship other things it invariably means that He is not the supreme worth among all others.

When we choose to ignore and not worship Him it invariably means we are blind or are

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

John 4:23-24

As our Creator, God is looking for people who will know His Spirit and His heart, and will give Him glory for all He has done. It is He who gave us life, and it is with this life we give him all the honour and all the glory.