

Day One: Characteristics of a True Worshiper

Author: Brent Colley

As we continue our theme for this month, we need to remember the true definition of worship. Worship is our response to God for who He is and what He has done that results in a changed lifestyle. The first biblical passage to use the word worship is in Genesis 22. It is in this chapter that we find Abraham as he offers his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice. We all would agree that Abraham was a true worshiper. Let's look at this passage and find four characteristics that describe Abraham's life.

First of all, we find that Abraham **obeyed God**. In verse 2, God tells this great man of faith to take his only son, Isaac, whom he loved, and go to Moriah and offer him as a burnt offering. Can you imagine how Abraham must have felt - the thoughts, emotions, the questions that must have arisen within Abraham? Verse 3 tells us that Abraham rose early the next morning and took Isaac to Moriah to offer him as a burnt offering. If we are not eager to obey what God asks us to do, we are not ready to worship. Obedience is central to worship.

A burnt offering was a voluntary offering; an offering by fire that was a soothing aroma to the Lord. The entire sacrifice was to be placed on the altar. Nothing was to be held back. This descriptive scene shows a true worshiper who **withholds nothing from God**. Abraham was willing to give up someone who was more precious to him than life itself in order to obey and worship God.

Verse 12 tells us that Abraham **feared God**. To fear God means to have reverence toward God, to trust Him, to respect Him. Kay Arthur indicates in her book, [Living a Life of True Worship](#), that a believer's fear of God is seen when he or she walks in His ways and lives and serves Him in absolute obedience.

Finally, in verse 5 Abraham told the young men who accompanied him on the journey to wait while he and Isaac went and worshiped. This indicates explicitly that worship demands a **sacrifice**. There is a sacrifice one must make in order to be a true worship leader.

May we learn from this giant of the faith what it takes to be a worshiper in which God is pleased. Do you love God enough to obey His word? Jesus says that the one who loves Him is the one who obeys Him. Are you holding anything back from God? Romans 12:1-2 tells us to offer our lives to Him as a living sacrifice. Do you fear God? Solomon tells us in the book of Proverbs that to fear the Lord is to hate evil. Are you willing to sacrifice in order to lead the saints of Underwood Baptist in praise and worship each and every week?

Day Two: Construction Workers & Singers: Say What?

Author: Shelly Hollis

Genealogies - ugghh!! Let's be honest, when we hit a long list of unpronounceable names in the Bible, it is kind of a bummer! Consider how many times you have set out to read your Bible in a year and then you hit the book of Numbers and all those long names. I dare say that Numbers has been the graveyard of many who have attempted the "Read your Bible in a Year" program!

The book of Nehemiah is just fascinating to me even though it too contains a list of long names. It records how one simple man had a burden for the destroyed city of Jerusalem (destroyed by the Babylonians) and longed to rebuild it. Obviously, Nehemiah would need skilled people to help rebuild the city and its great walls: carpenters, masons, plumbers, metal workers, and *singers*. Say what?...Singers? This list makes me think of the song from Sesame Street, "One of these things is not like the others; one of these things does not belong..." Can you pick it out? Singers and musicians played a definite role in the rebuilding of the city!

Nehemiah 7 is one of those "graveyard" chapters, filled with names 10 feet long! But look at verse 44. It mentions that there were 148 singers from the family of Asaph that came out of the Babylonian captivity. Ok, a couple of questions: first, who is Asaph; and second, who cares that singers survived the captivity?

Asaph is mentioned in the book of 1 Chronicles 15. He was one of the appointed musicians that would provide "praise music" as David and his men recovered the Ark of the Covenant from Obed-Edom's house. If you recall, the Ark had been stolen by heathens and carted all over the place. Everywhere it went while in the wrong hands, the people broke out with tumors. David and his men were heading back to Jerusalem with the Ark as these musicians, including Asaph, provided the music. David was so ecstatic to have the Ark back, he danced a jig before the LORD (2 Samuel 6:14). Talk about an expression of whole-hearted praise! The descendents of these singers would set the stage for the dedication of the walls of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's day!

This month, as we explore whole-hearted praise, I want us choir members to always remember what a vital role singers/musicians play in preparing the congregation's heart for worship. When we walk into the sanctuary, be aware that we are preparing hearts for corporate praise and worship. Let's be intentional about expressing the joy of our salvation on our faces. Do we look like we are praising the King, or do we look like we are getting a root canal? Sing from the overflow of your heart and a freedom of worship will break out in our midst!

Be faithful to your spot in the choir and sing with whole-hearted praise to the King of Kings. Dance a little jig in your heart to God like David did, and let it show up on your face!

Day Three: He Knows Your Name

Author: Myra Carter

"He has sent redemption to His people; He has ordained His covenant forever; Holy and awesome is His name." (Psalm 111:9)

When we were expecting our second child, Steve said that he wanted to pick the name. Since I had gotten to choose the name *Mallory*, it was his turn. He choose the name *Jana Marie Carter*. I liked that name, but I didn't love it!

Much to our surprise, the pregnancy turned out to be very eventful. I was eight and half months along when I had a really bad car accident. Long story short, there I was about to have a baby and Steve was in another town playing a spring football game. They were able to stop the labor and get me stable. Finally, two days later our precious second daughter was born. Hanging on the hospital room door was a big pink bow with the name *Jana Marie Carter* in glitter letters. The next morning Steve looked over at me and said, "I don't think she looks like a *Jana*, I want you to name her because you have been through so much." So guess what...*Jana Marie Carter* got changed to *McKenzie Brooke Carter*. My husband is so sweet!

I share this funny story with you to remind each of us that God knows His precious children by name. I so rejoice that my name is in the Lamb's Book of Life. As we focus on worshiping our heavenly Father, please take a moment and thank Him for your salvation.

Day Four: Only One Way to Worship

Author: Jason Moore

"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." (John 4:23)

Did you know that there is only one acceptable way to worship our Lord? It's true! There are many religions and denominations that believe they have cornered the market on worship. Some believe that it is only through specific liturgy and ritual that we can truly worship. Others believe it is in the music or bodily expressions that God accepts our worship. However, Jesus reveals that only one type of worship is accepted by the Father.

That worship is based solely in Him. True worship begins and ends with a real, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Only through Him can we have a relationship with our heavenly Father. We are indwelt with the Holy Spirit of God which makes our worship real and acceptable. Anything else is vain and meaningless.

This verse tells us that the Father is seeking such people to worship Him because they are the only ones who can. We must know the One whom we are worshipping. We must be filled with His Spirit and His Truth in order to worship in spirit and truth. Once we have grasped this concept, we can begin to understand what acceptable worship is. Only then can it become whole-hearted worship that is acceptable! Do you know Him? Real worship all comes down to this.

Day Five: I Will Sing the Wondrous Story

Author: Pamela Storz

"Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving, and extol him with music and song." (Psalms 95:1)

I love to sing. I've done a lot of damage to my voice over the years, and I shouldn't be able to carry a tune in a bucket; but God has protected and is restoring my voice. At least I can read music and know beforehand which notes are simply not attainable in my limited range - and, pride aside, I can always drop down an octave. One day, when God is finished restoring my voice, I'll sound just like Olivia Newton-John, or Julie Andrews. It could happen! There are no limits to God's power!

Singing is my soul's expression for deeply-felt emotions that mere spoken word cannot even begin to convey. Simply saying words doesn't articulate or extract my feelings. Singing the words brings me to an essential, palpable intensity: I *feel* God.

Let me show you what I mean. Say these words: *"That every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. At the name of Jesus, at the name of Jesus!"*

Now, close your eyes and **sing** it. See! You *felt* the words more when you sang, right?

As choir members, we are responsible for generating congregational praise. When the congregation experiences our joy, they are encouraged to praise, creating an emotionally coordinated environment of open hearts and joyful worship to our Father. Together, we are uplifted to a level outside of ourselves. For a few glorious moments, our attention is directed away from the helplessness of our human predicaments to wholehearted praise of the One who is Lord over every circumstance.

Our thirsty souls are restored by worship. We leave our sanctuary with enriched lives, wholesome attitudes, and dynamic ministry tools, knowing that with God, we can remain in a constant state of worship and praise.

It's not about which notes we can hit, or how our voices sound...it's all about Jesus and His unrelenting mercy and grace that brings out the song in our souls.

*I will sing the wondrous story, of the Christ who died for me
How He left His home in glory, for the cross of Calvary.*

*Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story of the Christ who died for me
Sing it with the saints in glory, gathered by the crystal sea.*