

The Life of Worship

By Scott Aniol

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Read 1 Corinthians 10:31. Prepare to explain how this verse connects even the mundane aspects of our lives to worship.

Assignment Two

Read 1 John 2:15–17; Ephesians 2:1–3; James 3:13–18; and Galatians 5:19–21. Prepare to list and share what these passages describe as the values of the world.

Assignment Three

Read 2 Corinthians 3:14–18. Prepare to explain the importance of the Bible in transforming us into the image of Jesus Christ.

Scripture to Memorize

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Romans 12:1

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will recognize the importance of every aspect of their lives being an act of worship before God.

Scott Aniol is assistant professor of Worship and Music Ministry at Southwestern Seminary. He is the author of several books, including *Worship in Song: A Biblical Approach to Music and Worship*, *Sound Worship: A Guide to Making Musical Choices in a Noisy World*, and *By the Waters of Babylon: Worship in a Post-Christian Culture*. He speaks around the country on the subjects of culture and worship and blogs at www.religiousaffections.org.

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Imagine someone who leads worship in your church. This person is dynamic. In every church service he sings with all his might, his prayers always seem heartfelt and profound, and he always seems to know just the right thing to say. Now imagine that this same person's life Monday through Saturday is characterized by lying, cheating and stealing. Would you say this person is a worshiper of Jesus Christ? What relationship is there between a person's life during the week and worship on Sunday?

Read John 4:19–24 aloud.

Studying the Passage

Verse 19. woman. A Samaritan woman.

Verse 20. this mountain. The Samaritans had developed their own way to worship on Mount Gerizim as opposed to worshipping in Jerusalem. The woman asked Jesus about the proper, external way to worship God.

Verse 21. an hour is coming. With Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension, a shift occurs in the focus of worship from the external location of worship to its internal essence.

Verse 23. spirit and truth. God no longer is concerned with the location of worship. He is concerned with the inner essence of worship—the response of our spirits to God's truth. In this sense, worship should encompass all of life.

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** may now report on the way 1 Corinthians 10:31 connects even the mundane aspects of our lives to worship.

Discussion Question

Have you ever thought of your life as worship, or have you always limited your understanding of worship to church services? How could your life exhibit worship during the rest of the week?

Read Romans 12:1–2 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Verse 1. therefore. What Paul is commanding in this passage is rooted in the first eleven chapters of Romans, which detail our salvation by God through Christ and our sanctification by the Holy Spirit. **I appeal to you.** Paul is not just suggesting. His commands are essential to Christian living. **the mercies of God.** God's mercy in the gospel is the basis for what Paul says next. This is important because obedience to Paul's admonitions in the passage do not earn us favor with God. We are accepted by God because of Christ alone and what He commands is a result of our life in Christ. **present your bodies.** This is the primary command of the passage. **sacrifice.** This metaphor brings to mind Old Testament worship practice and connects it to Christian living. It emphasizes that our lives are to be characterized by worship to the Lord. **living.** Typically, something that was sacrificed no longer remained alive, but in the case of a Christian, we offer ourselves as a *living* sacrifice. This implies that this sacrificing of ourselves is a continual, progressive, day-by-day sacrificing. The entirety of our lives is worship. **holy.** To be

set apart unto God. Every part of our lives should be set apart for God's glory. This is the essence of life as worship. **acceptable**. This does not refer to eternal acceptance by God, for that has already been accomplished by Christ. This refers to that which pleases the God who has already accepted us through Christ. The fact that God has accepted us should motivate us to live in a way that pleases Him. **spiritual worship**. This is the most commonly translated term for worship in the New Testament. God created us to worship in this way by a life that pleases Him.

On Your Own

In the space below, list some specific areas in your life where you should offer your body to the Lord in worship. When everyone is finished, the group can share their responses.

Discussion Question

What are some areas in our lives where we rarely consider ourselves worshipping? How could we change to manifest a heart of worship even in those areas?

Studying the Passage

Verse 2. Paul's commands in verse 2 are not unrelated to those in verse 1. What Paul commands in verse 2 describes what a life of worship will look like. **conformed**. This term is a picture of wearing a mask that does not really reflect who you are internally. Those who are continually sacrificing themselves to God will not place their desires and values in what the world desires and values. **world**. This refers to the sinful value system of this present age that is ruled by Satan and hostile to God.

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** may now report on the kinds of values that characterize the world.

Discussion Question

What kinds of worldly activities might you need to avoid if you are going to worship the Lord with your life?

Studying the Passage

Verse 2. transformed. Instead of conforming our desires to match the sinful desires of the present age, those who continually sacrifice themselves will have their desires completely changed. **renewal of your mind**. The only way transformation will take place is through immersing our minds in the Bible.

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** may now report on the importance of the Bible in transforming us into the image of Christ.

Discussion Question

What are some practical ways you can combat the influence of worldly values in your life?

Studying the Passage

Verse 2. that by testing. Everything Paul has commanded previously leads to this primary

goal. **you may discern.** This means to test something to see if it has value and approve of the value when you see it. **the will of God.** This is God's moral will, what is good and right. **good and acceptable and perfect.** We offer ourselves completely to God as a sacrifice. By rejecting the world's values and renewing our minds in the Scriptures, we will be able to test and discern what is truly good in God's sight.

On Your Own

Choose one aspect of your daily life that you will commit to making an act of worship to God's glorious Son. In the space below, list a few deliberate ways you will seek to worship God in this way. When everyone is finished, the group can share their responses.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the Gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: “In our last session I made a commitment to. . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . .”

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

Worship is not limited to Sunday or to a church service. Rather, for a Christian, worship should encompass all of life. Every action, thought, affection and attitude should exhibit proper internal responses to God's truth (see John 4:24). This means that even the most mundane activities in life, such as eating or drinking, should be acts of worship before God (see 1 Corinthians 10:31).

The Bible commands that Christians should offer every aspect of their lives to God as sacrifices of worship (see Romans 12:1). They should be holy and blameless before God, not to earn favor with Him but as a response to the favor Christ earned on their behalf. Because God has accepted us in Christ, we should deliberately offer ourselves to Him in worship.

This kind of worship will require that we separate ourselves from the values that characterize this present evil age (see Romans 12:2). Rather, we should immerse ourselves in the Word of God, for only when our lives are filled with Scripture will our minds and hearts be transformed into the image of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 3:14–18). Then we will be able to discern what is good and pleasing to God in every aspect of our lives.

Follow up Question

In what specific aspect of your life have you committed to worshipping the Lord this week?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.