



The Basics of Life in Christ



Spiritual Disciplines
for Everyday Life

Week Two
Worship—Valuing the Right
Stuff

Introduction: Why Did God Make Us, Anyway?

That's the question a student asked me last week. "I mean, I know we were meant to serve God," she continued, "but, what's the point of it all?"

This is why I love working with youth. What a different world it would be if you and I asked that question more often! Many people, especially Christian people, live their whole lives believing that a lonely God created a universe to divert his attention. We assume we exist simply to serve God, as though he needed more servants.

But let's ask that question again: why did God make us, anyway? What's the point? *love*. Ruth Haley Barton once wrote that "your desire for God and your capacity to connect with God as a human soul is the essence of who you are." That essence is not just to serve God, but to *love God and be loved by God*. In other words, to *worship* God.

The disciplines of worship teach us to embrace that design. Rather than unwittingly making idols, the practices we'll talk about today focus on our desire to know and be known by our Creator, live a life of worship in, and through, and by all things.

Worship in All of life

Q: What images come to mind when we think about worship?

Worship is often thought of as an activity relegated to specific times and dates. But the Bible describes worship, not just as a specific activity, but as a *disposition for all of life*

“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).

Q: Why is it important to see that all our lives should be worship? What dangers are there in forgetting this?

Worship: A response to God’s invitation to join the love that exists between Father, Son, and Spirit—as the essence of our existence.

Question for Reflection: If someone were to look at your life, what would they say you worship? How does it feel to think about this question? What emotions does it stir up?

Thinking about our desires for God

As we've said before, the beginning of pursuing the spiritual life is simply taking the time to recognize what we desire, and following that desire to God's throne.

I want...

...to be more aware of God's presence in my life.

...to worship with fellow believers

...to take time to celebrate God and acknowledge my limits by setting a single day apart distinct as a sabbath.

...to be aware of when people, experiences, and work are more important to me than God.

...to be a joyful, thankful person who expresses gratitude to God and others easily and often.

Q: Do you resonate with these desires? Do they spark any memories, thoughts, or reminders for you?

Spiritual Disciplines For Worship

Celebration	A way of engaging in actions that orient the spirit toward worship, praise, and thanksgiving. Delighting in all the attentions and never changing presence of the Trinity fuels celebration.
Gratitude	A loving and thankful response toward God for his presence with us and within his world...Delight in God and his good will is the heartbeat of thankfulness.
Holy Communion	The Lord's Supper celebrates God's redemptive plan through the sacrificial death of Jesus. Through this meal of bread and wine (or grape juice) we join ourselves to Christ and feed on him in our hearts through faith.
Rule For Life	Offers unique and regular rhythms that free and open each person to the will and presence of Christ. The spiritual practices of a rule provide a way to partner with the Holy Spirit for personal transformation.
Sabbath	God's gift of repetitive and regular rest. It is given for our delight and communion with God. Time for <i>being</i> in the midst of a life of <i>doing</i> particularly characterizes sabbath.

<i>Visio Divina</i>	In the practice of <i>visio divina</i> we intentionally seek God by praying with images, icons, created media and creation itself.
Worship	Happens whenever we intentionally cherish God and value him above all else. Worship reveals what is important to us.

Question for reflection: *Which of these practices inspires you as you think of the desire above? Which could you try this week?*

An Example: A Rule For Life

Desire: To live a sane and holy rhythm that reflects a deep love for God and respect for how the Creator has made me.

Definition: A Rule For Life Offers unique and regular rhythms that free and open each person to the will and presence of Christ. The spiritual practices of a rule provide a way to partner with the Holy Spirit for personal transformation.

Q: What sorts of “rules” do people live by?

A rule for life is nothing less than a desire to turn our entire existence toward the easy yoke and light burden of Jesus and receive the rest he brings. It helps us determine what we will and won't do in submission to God's gracious will.

A Sample Rule from Psalm 16 (from Calhoun, *SDH*, 40).

v.2: “I said to the Lord, ‘you are my Lord, I have no good apart from you.’”

Rule: *Set my heart on God*

v.3: “as for the saints who are in the land, they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight”

Rules: *Journey with friends. Rejoice in the Body of Christ. Reach out.*

v.4: “The sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods.”

Rule: *Confess*

v. 5-6: “Lord, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance”

Rule: *Give Thanks*

v. 7: “I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me.”

Rules: *Worship and praise. Listen, pay attention, be teachable.*

v. 8: “I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.”

Rules: *Persevere and hope. Speak courageously.*

v. 9: “Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure.”

Rules: *Take myself less seriously. Receive my body as it ages.*

v.11: “You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

Rule: *Live in the presence of God.*

Questions for Reflection: *Looking at this rule for life based on psalm 16, how could you create a similar rule*

from a favorite passage of Scripture? What passages, rules, or thoughts come to mind?

If you were to create a rule for your life, what areas of your life would you want to focus on? Who could you go to for wisdom and insight?

Schedule (From Calhoun's *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*):

Week Three (1/24): “**O**penness” to a God You Can’t Control—practices that let the light in.

Week Four (1/31): “**R**elinquishment”: Letting Go in a World Dedicated to Accumulation—practices that lead to authenticity and surrender.

Week Five (2/14): “**S**haring” Your Life in a Culture Designed for Privacy—practices that lead us to inter dependence and community.

Week Six (2/21): “**H**earing” from God—practices that form the mind of Christ in us.

Week Seven (2/28): “**I**ncarnating” Jesus—practices that let us be Jesus to the world.

Week Eight (3/14): “**P**raying” my life—practices that lead me to pray without ceasing.