



What does it mean to be a worshipper?

There are probably ten ways to answer that, but one of the best ways in a daily life situation is that you are always looking for the things that magnify and glorify God. You look at somebody's hair and you contemplate the fact that a strand of hair is a string of

proteins, and by some bizarre process, the hair on their head can grow a long way, but fortunately the hair on their arm doesn't. How does that work exactly? How does that dead protein string know that it's in your arm instead of in your head? How does it know how long it is, since it's dead? How does it know when to stop growing? If you pull that strand of hair out, it will grow back to about the same length. How does it know when to stop, when it is dead anyway?

So, the nature of looking at the simplest things is part of being a worshipper. Considering a strand of hair might seem like an exaggeration, but it's not something that escapes my notice—because I want to be a worshipper. I didn't just make that up right then. I have thought about that before, and I've marveled at God at that exact seemingly foolish point. *A worshipper is someone that notices how ingenious, creative, unbelievably loving, kind, and astoundingly brilliant God is and then continues on the process to tell Him so—to tell Him how we feel about Him. That's a worshipper.* You've got to notice, and you've got to get outside of yourself to tell Him so. If you don't notice, then the most you could ever be is religious. You would never be a worshipper. You've got to notice you've got to look around.

Worshippers Always Notice

Worshippers *always* notice. They notice the most minute detail of a clod of dirt or of a piece of technology or of a woven carpet. They notice all the analogies like Jesus did with the parables.

Jesus obviously was the ultimate worshipper. Jesus wasn't full of analogies and parables simply because He was a good storyteller, and that was His gift. Jesus was a worshipper because He could just see that a farmer was so much like His Father, and a seed was so much like the Word of God. He could see it in His heart. He just noticed stuff. He noticed the analogies and the pictures and the stories that were all around Him, and then He spoke freely of those things to His Father and to others around Him. He was discerning. He was very particular in noticing the details around Him. He was one, as the analogy goes, "that stopped to smell the flowers." He could distinguish between a tulip aroma and the aroma of a daffodil, not because He wanted to be an expert in flowers, but because He marveled at His Father's creativity. He noticed everything and could worship. And thus out of that overflow came parable after parable of everything that He saw around Him, everything that He marveled at. It was easy for Him to communicate Truth in pictures and analogies because He was a worshipper.

Have the Eyes of a Worshipper

"Who can ascend God's holy hill?" Without clean hands and a pure heart, we are not going to notice very much because we are too self-consumed to have any energy left to care about the details of life—the details of the things around us. If we're so consumed with work or our appearance or food—if our god is our belly instead of Yahweh—then we're always going to miss the important things. And we won't be worshippers—at least not of God.

The verse, “Offer your body as a living sacrifice, which is your spiritual worship,” is very related to being a worshipper. If you don’t deal with your sin, if you don’t have clean hands and a pure heart, if you don’t lay yourself out and expose yourself before God and man expecting nothing in return, you’re not in a position to have the eyesight to see anything else. You’ll be a worshipper if you empty yourself and make yourself nothing. There is nothing left but God when you make yourself nothing. But if you are busy catering to your own flesh rather than offering your body as a living sacrifice, you have blinded eyes. You have scales over your eyes. You won’t be a worshipper because you won’t notice anything that doesn’t revolve around you. Everything is about what has to do with me—my comfort, my opinions, and my desires. Everything is about me unless I offer myself as a living sacrifice—in which case I can begin to notice the small things. And then worship is a very natural process, if you have any eyesight at all.

Project Yourself Into Other Situations

Being aware, discerning, and attentive are not only necessities for being a worshipper, but they will also help you find answers to the question: “What things can help set me free to grow the fastest?” As you look around yourself and see what other people are doing to serve God, ask yourself, “How would I do with that?” Being aware and attentive is essential for your spiritual growth.

Although I don’t wash a lot of dishes at home, I do ask myself the question, “Why don’t I wash dishes a lot? Is it okay that I don’t wash a lot of dishes? Would I be intruding on something that someone else genuinely wants to serve God in?” If that were the case, it might be selfish of me to run around doing everything all the time. Or I could ask myself that question and realize, “This person seems to genuinely enjoy doing the dishes. If I’m being honest, I don’t think I’d really like it much at all. I would probably be a little impatient about it. Why? What about washing dishes would I not like? How am I going to deal with this? What are the roots of it all? And what does it mean?” If I see somebody that’s especially good at something or committed to something—I watch. I try to see what they find joy in, what things they find challenging, and how they face those challenges. By projecting myself into that situation, I try to learn something.

A Practical Illustration

I am sitting here doing a lot of the talking. If I were you all, I’d be saying, “What if I were in some other city and somehow I found myself in a situation where I needed to be responsible with people. What would I do? Would I sit there and ‘veg’ out, or would I be willing to be responsible? Maybe I would never have to, but would I be willing? What would I feel? What would I be tempted with? Would I be tempted with pride? Would I be tempted with fear? What things would be difficult or challenging for me if I were in this seat instead of that seat?”

So, not only does being a worshipper require that you be very attentive to the details around you, but spiritual growth also requires you to be aware to the pictures of life through people, situations, flowers on the road, and clouds in the sky. Spiritual growth—growing in grace, growing in the knowledge of Jesus, growing in Gifts, and growing in Life—requires being attentive to those situations and projecting yourself into

situations that you wouldn't necessarily feel comfortable in and maybe you would never picture yourself in in a million years. Well, put yourself in that situation anyway and ask yourself how you would do, because in some form or another, "You all ought to be teachers by now." That is what the scriptures say. If you are so ultra dependent that you can't even write a letter to your mother with any great depth, fullness, vision, sense of conviction, and passion unless someone cuts and pastes it all together for you, then there is something wrong. "You *all* ought to be teachers by now." I'm not saying that you shouldn't work together to serve God or that you shouldn't be involved in equipping for works of service—those are all biblical ideas. But on the other hand, what if you were in a concentration camp or the IRS singled you out and framed you, and you ended up in prison? What are you going to do? Who are you going to be? Are you going to be a couch potato in prison, or are you going to rise up and take responsibility?

Have His Vision for Your Life

If you don't project yourself *now* into situations that are beyond your comfort zone, stretching your heart and mind into situations that you maybe don't like and can't ever picture yourself in because you're demeaning of the Christ in you, the Hope of Glory, then you will underestimate what being "clothed with power from on high" might allow you to be and do. If you don't have vision for it all now, you're probably going to waste a lot of time when the opportunities do come. You'll miss them because you are viewing yourself wrong; you're viewing Him wrong.

So, be attentive to the flowers, clouds, wind, and trees, as well as to all the demonstrations of God's wisdom in technology and polymers and Bose-Einstein Condensate and all the millions of ways that God shows us His qualities, but also understand that who you are and who God wants you to grow up to be, as you grow from a child to a father to a young man, requires that you be attentive and project yourself into other situations and say, "If I were sitting in that seat instead of this one, what would I be tempted with? What would hold me back from being all that God wants me to be?" I'm not saying be ambitious, but I am saying to make sure you are prepared to be anybody God wants you to be. Don't view yourself in some miniscule, trivial sort of way. That isn't Jesus, and if He lives inside of you, He's anything but trivial.

If we're really going to be worshippers, it's not about a songbook or the latest chorus on a Maranatha tape. It's about letting our hearts and our minds be stretched. It's about noticing our Father and complimenting Him from the heart on all of His glorious, wondrous works, His character, His Love and everything around us that is in Him...the hard things, the fun things, the easy things, the beautiful things. Complimenting Him from the heart—that's worship!

Attentiveness is NOT Introspective

There is nothing about being attentive that is at all introspective. Being attentive is not about thinking about yourself, but rather taking the time to smell the flowers, watch the clouds, watch the trees sway, and watch how the leaves change color from white to green, white to green as the wind blows. *Watch. Care. Be plugged into the miracle of God.* Zoom in with your heart and mind to the nature of photosynthesis. Ask yourself, "Why

does that leaf turn upside down when it's about to rain? What is the purpose of that?" Marvel at God. There is nothing introspective about that. And when I'm projecting myself into my responsibilities of serving God rather than disappearing into my own little world of sitting in the pew of my mind and letting everybody else do things, I'm saying, "God, I am willing and open. Help me see what the price would have to be. Show me what sins there are in my life that keep me from being prepared for everything that you might want me to be." *That is a matter of vision, not a matter of introspection.* That's a matter of saying, "God, I can be anybody You want me to be, and I'm very willing to be who you want me to be. Show me the sins, fears, and ambitions that get in the way of that. Show me the stuff that has gotten in the way in the past and could get in the way in the future of me becoming all you want me to be. I want to get rid of that junk. Give me a vision. Let me project myself into these other situations and ask myself, 'Could I do that? Could I be that? And if not, why not?' Show me the path towards being free from my sins." That's a vision issue and doesn't have anything to do with introspection. That's being discerning and attentive to all that could be, instead of slumping into my own little world and letting the rest of the world happen around me and just expect that that's the way it's supposed to be. We become unprepared for the future by living that way. We stay children forever if we never *expect* to be a father.

The little five-year-old girls who are playing with their dollies show us there is some innate sense about learning how to be a mother. If they knock the baby out of the highchair we say, "You hurt the baby. Bad idea. You are never going to be a good mother if you are knocking your baby out of a highchair. When did I ever knock you out of your highchair?"☺ There is something about projecting ourselves on into the vision of the next level of who perhaps we could be in our service to God that inspires us and challenges us to get out of the pew of our brain. There are a lot of pews. Just because you are in a living room right now doesn't mean you're not also in a pew right now. Those are choices. Without vision the people perish.

Take the Time to Look Around and Speak to Father

So, I'm saying be attentive enough to have a vision of what could be, instead of being stuck in the pew of your mind of who you think you are and who you think you could be at best. *Go past that.* Project yourself into a world that is way beyond you. It is introspection that destroys what I'm talking about because you are so self-consumed that you can't get outside of yourself to be a worshipper or to be a visionary of what God could want you to be when you grow up. You can't see what a father is because you are too busy being a baby, thinking about yourself all day. It's introspection that is the *enemy* of what I am talking about. It is a state of introspection that keeps you from ever daring to have a vision of who God wants you to be.

So, get rid of the introspection, and you'll be much more able to be aware of what's around you. If you're thinking about yourself, you'll never be a worshipper. As Keith Green's song says, "There's a lot more I can see if my eyes aren't on me." I'm saying, "*Look around.*" You'll never be a father instead of a baby if you don't look around, if you're not discerning, if you're not aware, and if you're not attentive. You'll never be more than a baby. You'll never be a worshipper. You'll never be mature. And you'll

never be a father or a young man (as the apostle John said) if you don't take the time to look around. *Take the time to speak to the Father.*

The Father *seeks* worshippers. Offer your bodies as living sacrifices...this is your spiritual worship. Be attentive to the flowers, birds, and the clouds, as well as to the trees blowing and the leaves changing color, but also know that God wants your *LIFE*. Let your worship *change your LIFE*. THAT'S your spiritual worship.