

The Church Unleashed

“The Essence of Worship”
Romans 12:1-2

OPEN WITH PRAYER

GETTING STARTED: What are some things that you have experienced during a worship service?

LEARNING & APPLYING GOD’S WORD

Read Romans 12:1-2 together

I have found Eugene Peterson’s paraphrase of these verses in *The Message* particularly helpful in understanding this text. Have someone in the group read it out loud:

So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you. Take your everyday, ordinary life---your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life---and place it before God as an offering. Don’t become so well adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings out the best in you, develops well-informed maturity in you.

1. Steve defined the essence of worship as “offering our lives to God.” What do you think about this definition of worship? Would you define the essence of worship in a different way?
2. G.K. Chesterton once wrote, “When we cease to worship God, we do not worship nothing, we worship anything.” What did Chesterton mean? Using Steve’s definition for worship, what are some common things that people worship, or offer their lives to, today?
3. Why is the “therefore” in verse 1 so important to understanding worship? What are some harmful, or unhealthy reasons that people offer their lives to God? What is the only healthy motivation for worship of God?
4. What does it mean to bring our whole selves to worship? What is God’s reaction when we bring our whole, true selves and offer them to him?

5. What is the difference between the sacrifices brought to God in the Old Testament and the “living sacrifice” of our lives?

6. How does worshiping God transform us?

LIVING OUT “REAL LIFE”

1. The New Testament words for worship, *latreia* and *leitourgia*, can be translated as either work or worship, depending on the context. Read this quote from Ben Patterson: *One word, two meanings. Or, is there really just one? The dual use of the word suggests that faithful service to God is rendered no more in a church service than it is in a “work service”---if the work is done for God. In the Bible there is an indissoluble unity between worship and work, since both forms are of service to God. There is the service we render to God in our worship, and there is the service we render to God in our work. The former is the liturgy of the sanctuary, the latter is the liturgy of the world.*

What does that tell us about worship? About work? What did Steve mean when he said that all of life can become worship?

2. What are some things we can do to help us see that all of life can become worship? How will life change if we begin to worship God with our entire lives?

SHARING AND PRAYER (Prayer Requests)

Take some time to share prayer requests, where you need to find God’s grace and peace. Be sure to give thanks for each other and pray for one another’s needs. When we pray together, we find the power of God.

