

ELEVATE: Worship – The Most Noble Thing

Session #1: What is Worship?

Session Objective:

One of the central opportunities and responsibilities that believers have is to worship God. However, the idea of worship has been narrowed in many contexts to simply singing songs, often without even being aware of the words which are being sung. The aim of this session is two-fold. First, assist students in bringing the sacred back into worship. Second, elevate their understanding of worship by experiencing worship as a lifestyle and not simply a service. Overall, students will move beyond worship being about them and what they get out of it, and see it as something for God and through which there is power, joy, and freedom!

Minimum Prep:

- Cue the Song “Heart of Worship” – Matt Redman
- Have a copy of “Heart of Worship” to handout or have on PowerPoint
- Have enough foolscap and markers for each group to create a drawing about what they learn about worship through the Scripture
- Cue the Brave Heart Clip

Extended Prep:

- Read through all of the Scripture passages and develop your own observations about worship which you can share with your small group.
- Have the small group create at the end a pictorial representation of words and images of how they understand worship in a larger sense

Session Outline

Leader Preamble:

What in the world is worship? By simple definition it is to give worth or give value. So when it comes to worshipping God what is that all about. One of the greatest worship song writers of this time is a young man by the name of Matt Redman. A few years ago, he had gathered together with a group of other worships leaders and bands for a worship gathering called Soul Survivor. As they were preparing for this major gathering that would see thousands come and sing to God, they realized they were missing something! They began to ask themselves the question “what is worship”? Is it about good song writing, tuned instruments, a solid band, and something that is just what we do on a Sunday morning, or is there more to it? This group of worship leaders came to a stark conclusion: “We had made the band the performers of worship and ourselves the audience. We had forgotten that we are ALL the performers of worship and that God is the audience”. The band took time away from music in pure silence and began to seek in a fresh way what worship was all about.

They came to a new understanding, a lot deeper, a lot broader. Out of this time Matt Redman wrote a song called, "Heart of Worship".

Play the song.

Small Group Questions:

1. As you have listened to that song, what do you believe worship is?

Leader Note: *Worship is a lifestyle. It is not something restricted to a certain place or time. It stretches well beyond a Sunday morning service or a mid-week gathering; it is to be an expression of who we are. We need to encourage students to not see worship as something limited to what they do in a church. As we look tonight at elevating our understanding of worship, let us first look at some stories in scripture to give us a foundation for answering the question, what is worship?*

2. Divide the group into four. Have each group read one passage, and then have them draw/write on a piece of paper what this passage teaches them about worship.

- John 4:1-26 (Worship can happen anywhere in any setting)
- Luke 10:38-42 (Worship is not just about what you do, but it is about just sitting at the feet of Jesus)
- Romans 12:1-2 (Worship is being a living sacrifice)
- Colossians 3:14-17 (Worship as expressing in our life)

Have each group share their finds with the larger group.

Extended prep: *as the leader, look into each of these passages and assist the students in going deeper with each section in understanding the heart of worship.)*

Leader Preamble: *When we use the word worship, there is often a minor problem that arises. The problem is that we use the English word 'worship' in two different ways. In looking at the Bible, both of the ways are legitimate, however, it is important that we distinguish the two. The first is 'worship' which refers to the specific activities we engage when focusing on God (i.e. singing, praying, raising hands, reading scripture etc.) The second use of 'worship' is to express everything a Christian does. We are called in scripture to live in such a way that our lives that bring glory to God. So as we seek to elevate our understanding of scripture, we need to broaden our view of worship and realize that our whole life is to be lived as a response to God.*

3. **What do you see is the difference between the two ways that we use the word “worship”? Where do you need to broaden your understanding of worship?**

4. **Read Romans 12:1**

What is a living sacrifice? How is our lifestyle worship to God?

A sacrifice is the offering of something highly valued for the sake of one considered having a greater value or claiming through honour or respect is brought. In most cases throughout the Old Testament, the sacrifice was killed. However, if we are called to be a living sacrifice, that means that we have the choice to climb onto the altar to give our lives to Christ – but that also gives us the freedom to climbing off the altar. Worship then is not about a one time act of singing, praying, or listening to scripture, but the choosing to give our life over to God to bring honour and glory to Him. By this it means, that worship is not about what we get out of it, but it is about how God can be living through us.

Play: Brave Heart Clip

Leader Note: In this clip, William Wallace (Mel Gibson) was given the opportunity to be set free if he would give homage to the King of England. As the leader of the Scots, he would lose everything he fought for and lived for if he chose to honour the King of England. As a result he was killed for staying strong to his beliefs and for the reason he lived. It is in his last word, “Freedom”, that even in his death he experienced the freedom he was fighting for on behalf of Scotland.

Allow the students to try to draw the parallels between William Wallace standing strong for what he believed in and what it is to being a living sacrifice where you live your life in a way that consistently brings honour to God.

5. **How was William Wallace in the midst of losing his life, being a living sacrifice for Scotland? How does this challenge believers in Christ to elevate their understanding of what is worship?**

This can challenge us not to see what we can get out of worship, but that we see worship as how we live out our lives and that through everything we do, we do it to point others to the glory of God.

Worship is not just about what song we sing, how to interact in the service, or what we get out of it, but that the essence of worship is bringing glory and honour to God through allowing God to work through our lives.

Leader Note: Contact Rob McAlpine at compass@baptist.ca or author Matt Wilkinson – missionbeyond@yahoo.com with any thoughts, questions or suggestions.

Comments and Feedback:

Leader Note: This is your place each week to record significant sharing or growth in the lives of your students for subsequent follow up. You can also use this space to provide feedback on the material. All suggestions are welcome.
