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The Correlation Between Theology and Worship

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Abstract

This thesis will address the correlation between theology and worship. Firstly, it will address the process of framing a worldview and how one's worldview influences his thinking. Secondly, it will contrast flawed views of worship with the biblically defined worship that Christ calls His followers to practice. Thirdly, it will address the impact of theology in the life of a believer and its necessity and practice in the lifestyle of a worship leader.

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Introduction

Since creation, mankind was designed to devote its heart, soul, and mind to the Sovereign God of all (Rom. 1:18-20). As an outward sign of this commitment and devotion, mankind would live in accordance with the established, inerrant, and absolute truths of God (Matt. 22:37, John 17:17). Unfortunately, as a consequence of man's disobedience, many beliefs have arisen which tempt mankind to replace God's absolute truth as the basis of their worldview (Rom. 1:18-32, 3:10, 5:12). Thus, mankind can either choose to adhere to one of two worldviews: One established upon the truth of God's word or one which follows the philosophies, ideologies, and beliefs of men (Matt. 12:30, Luke 11:23). Adherence with either worldview is revealed in a believer's habits, who they interact with, and who resides in their circle of influence. Consequently, if either of these two worldviews define a believer's lifestyle it will also define his worship. (Insert quote from author here) If a believer chooses to follow the ideas of men (Romans 1:18-32) in place of God (Gen. 1, Rev. 22), then he is prevented from worshipping God as He intends. Christ alludes to a time when God will once again be worshipped as He intended:

“But the hour is coming, and is here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship must worship in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:23-24).

Yet, what does it mean to worship the Lord “in truth”? It means to worship God while having a right understanding of Who He is and what He has done. With this right

understanding, the believer's heart is compelled to inquire what God would have him to do as each situation arises (Ps. 27:4). Equipped with this understanding of the Lord, what the bible refers to as "the fear of the Lord," the believer's heart, soul, and mind are transformed to a place where he is able to worship the Lord rightly (Prov. 1:7).

Consequently, when the believer allows this to permeate every aspect of his life, he is indeed worshipping in all aspects of His life. This contrasts with the worship of the Samaritans, whose worship was founded upon ignorance or a false understandings of God (John 4:22). For without biblical truth and prayer (a believer's consultation with God regarding all aspects of his life) an individual's worship is not based upon God's truth but upon a façade created in their mind (Prov. 4:7, John 4:24, Rom. 1:18-32).

Therefore, if we are to think of worship as encompassing the believer's entire lifestyle, then the believer must seek God's truth regarding how He calls them to "live" and what it means to "live." It was the apostle Paul who, through the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, concluded that "for me to live is Christ" (Philippians 1:21). Yet, what does this mean? In essence, it involves a relationship with Christ and a dedication to His teachings. David Wheeler, Professor of Theology at Liberty University, states that our relationship with the Lord is "the most important relationship, and the one we need to get right first."¹ For the Christian, Christ is not only his priority but the all encompassing definition of what it is "to live." Indeed, for the Christian, "to live is Christ." (Philippians 1:21).

¹. (Wheeler, 198).

How then does one practice a lifestyle of worship? Certainly not through reliance upon his own strength, for in his strength, devoid of the strength of God, one will always “fall short” in bringing God glory (Romans 3:10, 23). Rather, the Christian life is characterized by his relationship with Christ, the constancy of his consultation with Christ in prayer regarding all aspects of his life, and his reliance on the Holy Spirit’s power and prompting (John 14:16). Thus, for the Christian, this way of living is his worship (Ps. 139:23-24). Yet, how is a believer sure if he is traveling down the “path of righteousness”? (Pro. 2:20, 4:11). Firstly, by understanding that to live righteously is to live completely sold out to the commands of God and the teachings of Christ. Secondly, by realizing this lifestyle is not possible in one’s own strength, but is only possible through the power of the Holy Spirit. In the language of Christians, this is referred to as “abiding in Christ” and “abiding in the Holy Spirit.” This expression of worship also defines how one is to love the Lord (John 14:15). Fortunately, by relying on the power of the Holy Spirit, many believers do worship the Lord “in spirit and in truth” as their life is characterized by living for Christ and in so doing, loving Christ with all their heart, soul, and mind (Matt. 22:37, Luke 10:27, John 4:24; 14:16). To “love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind” requires a desire within the believer to give his heart, soul, and mind to Christ. This very desire is implanted by the Holy Spirit. Agreeing with, or “abiding with” the Holy Spirit in such a manner allows the Holy Spirit to work within the believer in such a way as to change them. In so doing, it is actually the work of the Holy Spirit that is doing the changing inside the person and the believer (2 Cor. 5:14). Agreeing with the Holy Spirit and acting upon that which He is compelling a believer to do is the believers act of worship. Alas, many believers choose to suppress this

compelling of the Holy Spirit. This is what many Christians refer to as “quenching the Holy Spirit.” If this be a believer’s common practice, he is called to examine himself (2 Cor. 13:5) and renew his mind constantly (Romans 12:2) so that he might live his life “as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God” which is his “true and proper worship” (Rom. 12:1 NIV). This constant inquiring of God, resulting in action on the part of the believer which reflects the change that God is doing in him, is evidence of and a testimony to his right relationship with God. True worship then results from a right relationship with God. This relationship, requiring constant interaction in order to flourish, is at the very core of what is required for one to worship. When this relationship is constant and regularly cultivated, its flame burns brightly and the smoke of this flame is a fragrant offering to God. What happens then when this relationship is not cultivated? Does this flame continue to burn brightly for all to see? Or is it all-together quenched? What role then does quenching of the Holy Spirit play in the neglect of “true and proper worship” in the church?

Quenching the Holy Spirit, the source of Negligent Worship

“The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost you all you have, get understanding” (Pro. 4:7).

How does that sit with you? What is one to do with this biblical mandate? Even as you read this and probe your mind for an answer, are you seeking wisdom that can only come from Him? (James 3:17). Could it be, that the manner in which we respond to this mandate is proportional to our willingness to seek after God and in so doing worship Him? Wait. Don’t Answer. Pray instead (Philippians 4:6). Now, recall our Lord and Savior’s direction on how we are to love Him: “If you love me, you will keep my

commandments” (John 14:15). Now, examine your life. How often and in what situation do you think the wisdom that comes from the Lord permeates all of your heart, soul, and mind? In 10 percent of the situations? In 50 percent of the situations? In 90 percent of the situations? Is not every situation “an opportunity” for one to apply his knowledge of God and in so doing apply the wisdom of God to every situation of his life? What then compels the believer to seek after the wisdom of God in every situation of his life? The Bible says that it is “the fear of the Lord” (Pro. 1:7). According to John Piper, the fear of the Lord, or reverence for the Lord, compels the believer to seek His wisdom in every situation.² It is a holy and righteous fear not of what God would do to the believer, but what it would be like to live apart from God.³ For wisdom is the application of knowledge. Could it be, that lack of worship stems from lack of knowledge and or understanding? Conversely, as the believer grows in the “grace and knowledge” of the Lord, does the depth of his worship increase (2 Pet. 3:18).

If we are honest, how often do we lead our lives based upon human philosophies and traditions not found in the biblical texts? Likewise, if worship has everything to do with how we live our life, who or what are we worshipping when we live our life in that manner? If the believer seeks after the Lord, the scriptures will remain as the guide for his lifestyle. The degree to which a Christian abides in the spirit is in direct proportion to the degree to which he adheres to a Christian worldview. That is to say, when a Christian fully embraces a biblical worldview, it is the result of abiding in the Holy Spirit (John 14:16).

². <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8Qby8TKLME>

³. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8Qby8TKLME>

Where do other paths of worship lead? If the individual is not to worship the Lord in truth, to what is their worship given? It is to the philosophies and teachings of men. Though containing aspects of truth, these possess flawed methods of thinking (Eph. 5:6, Col. 2:8). Examples of man's philosophies are evolution, subSome many believe in the subjectivity of truth. Other may believe individual value is external. Still more may believe evolution is absolute. Such individuals may also believe the material world exists as the result of random processes of chance and natural selection through which the weakest of creatures are eliminated. Consequently, those who hold to this mindset view mankind as one such creature, having evolved from a primitive stage to its current form and is therefore disposable if lacking societal value. However, when an individual finds their worldview upon the word of God, their perception of the world around them is quite different indeed. To an even greater extent, an increase in a believer's understanding of God's word transforms their thinking regarding biblical concepts. One such example is found in the understanding of the term "worship."

Misconceptions Regarding Worship

Within both the biblical and secular world, there have been, and continue to exist, common misconceptions held with regard to the term worship. Amongst members of the secular world, worship was commonly believed to be a primarily religious term. Consequently, those who do adhere to such a mindset may also view worship as inapplicable as they devote themselves not to a synagogue, temple, mosque, or church, but rather, to a business, career, or maybe even their family. Such individuals fail to

realize that worship is applicable to all members of the human race. Misconceptions regarding the term worship also exists within the church.

In time past, and to a certain extent today, there exists a mindset which perceives the term “worship” synonymously with church music. Yet, not all church music was viewed as worship. Rather, such an honor was bestowed upon congregational periods of singing. Essentially, an individual could only worship when singing in a church. During a time when this mindset remained prevalent in the church, many individuals viewed the times of offering, prayer, and even preaching as separate functions from worship. Though it is unsure whether such a mindset remains prominent, studies by biblical scholars have revealed that worship involves much more than the singing of songs. (A.W. Tozer, D.A. Carson). Yet, what does it mean to truly worship?

What Is Worship?

According to biblical scholars, worship is a lifestyle practiced by both men and women, religious and carnal, young and old (Tozer, Piper, Carson). The idea of worship is the idea of devotion and the bestowing of reverence. Such reverence is not particular to any one thing, but can be directed toward any person, any place, or even any thing. Determining the focus of an individual’s worship, that which they hold most dear, can be determined by observing where they invest the most of their time, finances, and mental energies. For the believer, there exists a command to place such investment towards God:

“You shall have no other gods before^[a] me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the

(Ex. 20:3-4)

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind.” (Luke 10:27).

Since God exists as the Creator and sustainer of this universe and is the only One to have existed before the establishment of time itself, He alone is worthy all Glory, Honor, and Praise (Is. 42:12, Jer. 13:16, Ps. 115:1). Unfortunately, after the occurrence of the fall and the incursion of sin into mankind’s nature, aspects of creation began to receive the directed focus, the worship, which the Sovereign God alone justly deserves. The Lord’s feelings on such action is clear:

“You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me,” (Ex. 20:5).

God, not needing our worship, but knowing that He alone deserves such glory and Honor, justly and righteously punishes those who refuse to give Him the honor He is due (quotation please). Yet, even when focusing on perfectly harmless things, a believer can deny God the worship that He is due. As Oswald Chambers once stated "there are many things that are perfectly legitimate, but if you are going to concentrate on God you cannot do them."⁴ Yet, worship is much more than simple lip service. As is seen from the testimony of the prophet Isaiah, God desires the full and total devotion of an individual’s life:

⁴ -Oswald Chambers

“These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught.” (Is. 29:13).

By all accounts, according to the prophet Isaiah, the children of Israel were doing everything correctly, but their worship was nothing more than a simple ritual, a routine in which their hearts were not dedicated to the Lord. Yet, true worship of the Lord also requires humble submission to His authority and willing, non-begrudging obedience to His commands (Col. 3:23, Philippians 2:14). Indeed, if we knew better Who He is and what He has done, our begrudging and reluctant attitude would subside all together.

A pivotal point of worship is possessing an understanding of God’s sovereignty and Lordship. So what is sovereignty? Merriam-Webster defines it as “one that exercises supreme authority within a limited sphere.”⁵ However, since God is the creator of all, He is thus Sovereign of all as he possesses no limits to His sphere of influence. Nothing more clearly explains the sovereignty and Lordship of God than the Revelation account (Return to Worship). In this account, much of the worship which occurs in this book of prophecy surrounds the throne of God. Yet, in our culture, we are not accustomed to this idea of a throne, the closest equivalency we have is a president. The best way to understand the worship of heaven is to understand the significance of the throne and what it symbolizes. "A throne portrays sovereignty and authority."⁶ Therefore, when we acknowledge the throne, we are acknowledging that God alone is the ruler over ALL creation. Not some. Not most. ALL.⁷ He alone is worthy of our praise

⁵ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sovereign>

⁶ Ron Owens.

⁷ Ron Owens.

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and no man or woman, believer or unbeliever, is worthy to touch His Glory. Our worship
must be centered around the truth of Who He Is! Only then can we offer true, genuine
worship that is pleasing to Him, for "[t]here is no authentic worship without
acknowledgement of the authority of God."⁸

Submission to God Is Worship

“We must always yield our actions and attitudes under Christ’s authority.”⁹
One cannot fully understand worship without understanding the importance of
submission. For genuine worship of God to occur, there must exist complete brokenness
of self and absolute submission of all areas of life to the Lordship of God. Most of us are
quite accustomed to doing things our own way and making excuses for our behavior
when it doesn't exactly line up with what we see in scriptures. This was certainly true in
my life. Submission to God's authority and His commands clearly laid out in the
scriptures is never easy. For, as humans, we desire our way (Isaiah 53:6). Yet, if a
believer is to truly worship the Lord, they must realize that worship is "a matter of the
heart" and involves “be[ing] doers of the Word and not hearers only” (James 1:22).¹⁰
Such was the issue with the Israelites. Though they were more than willing to perform
works as a type of worship in order to receive God’s blessings, they did not desire to
surrender to God’s authority. They did not wish to submit to His Lordship over their
every waking moment. The prophet Samuel said it best to King Saul:

⁸ Ron Owens.

⁹. (Wheeler, 214)

¹⁰. (Ron Owens_Return to worship).

“Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,

As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.” (1 Samuel 15:22).

This truth was later reinforced by Christ during His earthly ministry:

“These people honor me with their lips but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.”

(Matt. 15:8-9).

Thus, the omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent God desires, and even requires, more than an individual’s words or even acts of worship, He requires complete and total surrender. No part of an individual’s life is to be held back from being placed under subjection to the will of God. Yet many refuse to subject themselves to the Lord. This same sin is committed in the church today (J.I. Packer). Many individuals have mastered the art of "worshiping" in word, going through all the motions. Others may even say that worship is an experience. However, "[t]rue worship is fundamentally objective, not subjective. The object of our worship is God. It begins with Him and it must end with Him."¹¹ As Warren Wiersbe stated “Our motive must be to please God and glorify Him alone.”¹² When a believer’s motives are any other than for the glorification of the Lord, then is He being worshipped in TRUTH? How this is practiced in a believer’s life is revealed in the Word of God. Thus, if a believer wishes to know

¹¹. -Robert E. Coleman
June 24th, 2016

¹² Warren Wiersbe_Real Worship

and practice a lifestyle of worship for God, then he must seek after and study His truth as found in His Word.

Biblical Attributes of Worship

In nearly every church within the United States of America, there are portions of Sunday morning and as well as possibly evening gatherings which include music into portions of the service. As previously mentioned, many individuals view this portion of a service as the time of worship for believers. Though worship does involve musical acknowledgement of God's works and attributes a complete and total it also involves an entire lifestyle built upon the teachings of Christ and devotion to His ways. Such a lifestyle contains many characteristics which a believer must continually pursue in obedience to Christ's commands as they live out His teachings. Yet, devotion of one's entire life is neither an easy nor a natural act. For to live for Christ requires denial of self and, consequently, denial of selfish desires. This was the challenge to the believers in the book of Hebrews:

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely” (Hebrews 12:1).

The idea of sin as a weight involves certain practices which hinder a believer's relationship with the Lord. Specifically, they prevent a believer from living their life, as the Lord desires it to be, to the fullest. In order to live a fulfilled life, believers must choose to “lay aside” such hindrances (Hebrews 12:1). Fortunately, certain aspects of a believer's life are relatively easy to devote to God. Such is not always the case, however, as all believer's typically possess one or more areas which are difficult to dedicate. For some, it may be money. Others, may have difficulty giving their time to the Lord. In my

own life, a weight which continually hinders my relationship with the Lord yet is difficult to lay aside is dedicating my time “as unto the Lord” (Eph. 6:7). Yet, in addition to laying aside weights which encumber a believer’s run, they also must take up several characteristics of righteousness. These characteristics cannot be found within the current, perverted state of mankind’s being. Rather, these characteristics are of a righteous and divine nature. Thus they can only be found by pursuing the Lord and studying His guide for the Christian life, the Word. First and foremost of these characteristics of righteousness is love.

What is Love?

¹² If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. ¹³ By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *as* Savior of the world. ¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶ And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

¹⁷ Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. ¹⁹ We love Him^[a] because He first loved us.

²⁰ If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can^[b] he love God whom he has not seen? ²¹ And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.

(1 John 4:12-21 NKJV)

The idea of love for the believer is unlike how many in the world would ascribe it. Worldly love is based upon passionate desire between two individuals, whether physical or sexual. At its core, worldly love takes from others in order to obtain selfish gain. Yet, biblical love is more than a single feeling based on easily swayed emotions. The focus of

biblical love is sacrifice of self for the sake of others. It is an intentional choice to invest time and pray for others. It is choosing to forgive those who may, whether wittingly or unwittingly, wrong us. It is choosing to not be bitter and hold a grudge or feelings of hate and anger towards another. It is choosing to pray for those who have hurt us as well as those we love. It involves seeking to encourage and be a testimony and witness in the life of others. Love does not involve retaliation for wrong doing. In essence, it involves action both "in word and in deed" (Col. 3:17). To love in this way is worship.

Such a choice, however, requires denial of self. So we can rightly say that denial of self is worship. Yet, it not only requires denial of self, but reliance on Jesus Christ to instill a believer with the fruit of the spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). (John 21:15-...) For God has shown us so much more love than we are capable of. His love is Agape, Unconditional, it knows no ends. That is why while we were still sinners, Christ chose to lived as a man and paid the ultimate price to atone for our sins. HE, the spotless and blameless, took our sins upon Himself, becoming an abomination to God the Father and suffered separation. Hanging on a tree, Christ died for our sins to fulfill law. Yet after three days, Christ rose again, conquering death and providing us a way to have our sins forgiven. This gift is offered to all, regardless of background, mistakes, or lifestyle. God desires for us to live with Him and all we must do is "confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord and believe in our heart that God has raised him from the dead,." (Romans 10:9-10). This is why we are saved by God's grace thru faith and we are cleansed of all unrighteousness giving us a right standing with God. This is the love He shows us with unmerited favor asking us to do the same within the church and toall the world. For it is by our love that the world will know that we are disciples and followers of Christ. So what do we *do* with this love?

Love in Action is Worship

The details of love are found within 1 Corinthians 13.

“13 If I speak in the tongues^[a] of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast,^[b] but do not have love, I gain nothing. ⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸ Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.”

Love exists as the cornerstone of Christian conduct. As such, the scriptures state that to live without love, though possessing amazing powers of prophesy, elegance in speech, incredible faith, and even “deliver up [their] body to be burned”, is meaningless (1 Cor. 13: 1-3).

The Apostle Paul continues by listing the characteristics of Christ like love. First, a person who practices love practices patience towards others. This bears the idea of being “slow to wrath” with others, long-suffering during affliction, and enduring “everything for the sake of the elect” (James 1:19, 2 Tim. 2:10). Loving God and others in this way is worship. Second, a practitioner of love will also seek to be kind not acting in such a manner which causes harms to others, but seeking to encourage, edify, and

exhort all individuals. This kindness Unlike the common mentality among the world

which views kindness as being directed towards only those who are kind in turn, these

form of kindness is to be shown to all individuals. This also is love and is worship.

Third, love is not envious towards others. This teaching parallels with the commandment given to the Israelite people:

““You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.”

(Exodus 20:17)

Furthermore, love within a believer does not seek to practice boasting in self, for such is pride and is not worship. Also, love involves practicing humility:

“²When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.”

(Proverbs 11:2)

“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

(Prov. 16:18).

“⁴Humility is the fear of the LORD; its wages are riches and honor and life.”

(Proverbs 22:4)

“³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

(Philippians 2:3-4)

⁵"In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."

(1 Peter 5:5)

Even our Lord, Jesus Christ, emulated this practice of humbling oneself before other:

⁴so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵ After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him."

(John 13:4-5)

Believers must strive to reject the carnal views of this world which place self before others.

Finally, Because such love comes from the Father, Who in His very nature is without limit, this love is to be an endless love (1 Cor. 13:8). Yet, such limitless love is impossible for limited beings. Therefore for the believer, they must draw such love from the Father in order to pour such love into others. As Christ taught:

³⁴ "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35).

¹⁷ "If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?" (1 John 3:17).

Love requires that believers cares for the needs of others. As the Apostle John stated:

“²⁰ Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.” (1 John 4:20).

During His earthly ministry, Christ taught and displayed the lifestyle which He desired from those who followed after Him. Specifically, Christ commanded that Christians must seek to show love towards one another as was befitting of His love for them.

“³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

(John 13:34-35)

A second characteristic of a life of worship is joy. For many individuals, the idea of joy is often confused with the idea of happiness, a person is always smiling, has a positive outlook on life, etc. However, joy is so much more than simply a response to circumstances. Joy is considered the desire of the righteous man.

“The prospect of the righteous is joy, but the hopes of the wicked come to nothing” (Pro. 10:28).

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 15:13). Thus, Joy in and or in spite of our circumstances is worship. (Paul quote regarding being content.:-)

)

“Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls” (1 Pet. 1:8-9).

Joy is a believer’s righteous response to the truth’s of God’s word. Specifically, it is a response to the “hope that is within [believers].” Yet, from where does such joy arise? Firstly, it arises from the teachings of the scriptures.

The Source of Joy

Within the passages of God’s word exists a multitude of accounts regarding the redemptive story of Christ from the old to the New testament to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Additionally, it is found in possessing an understanding regarding God’s promises.

“How Lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! 2 My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.”

(Ps. 84:1-2).

Within the world today, peace is often viewed as a lack of conflict with other individuals. Though this is certainly a part of the meaning of peace, the scriptures also indicate that peace is a state of being. In his letter to the church in Rome, the apostle Paul portrays peace as a state of harmony between believers:

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.... So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual up building”

(Romans 12:18; 14:19)

In addition to the Apostle, this mindset was also practiced and taught by the anonymous author of Hebrews supports this view as well:

“Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

Yet, in addition to a state of harmony with other believers, the scriptures indicate that peace is also a state which exists between a believer and God:

“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1).

Additionally, true, ultimate peace is described as a characteristic of Godliness and thus is unattainable by the carnal world:

“For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace” (Romans 8:6). Yet, peace of mind is often disturbed when an individual possesses anxiety and worries about the future, of that which they themselves are unsure. It is with such situations that the Apostle Peter encourages disciples of Christ to “cast all [their] anxiety on him because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). Another aspect of the Christian lifestyle is patience.

Patience is Worship

Among today’s generation, the idea of patience has become an almost foreign concept. People are able to access movies, information, and even other individual’s almost instantly through use of texting, the internet, online streaming, etc. Unfortunately, for many individuals living in such cultures, this has spoiled many individuals who, having grown accustomed to instant gratification, struggle with waiting to satisfy their mental, emotional, or physical desires. Even within the church, patience is a fruit of the

spirit to practice. Yet, throughout the scriptures, believers are encouraged to practice

patience with diligence, placing their “hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience” (Romans 8:25).

“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself” (Phil. 2:3).

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil, For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks” (Luke 6:45).

“Humility serves as a filter for all [believers] as [they] function together within the body of Christ. Walking humbly has everything to do with conditioning your heart to be sensitive to holiness as you perform selfless acts of kindness to others. If the heart is conditioned to be humble and dependent upon God, then the mouth (i.e. actions) will naturally follow (The Call).

“But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who believe in Him for eternal life” (1 Tim. 1:16).

“Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord” (Romans 12:19)

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21).

“Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive” (Col. 3:13).

¹ I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² With all humility and gentleness, with patience,

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bearing one another in love,³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of
peace” (Eph. 4:1-3).

“if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink;
for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head” (Romans 12:20).

Another characteristic of a life of worship is evangelism.

Evangelism is Worship

Before His departure from this earth, Christ commanded His disciples to “go
therefore and make disciples of all nations” to the ends of the earth. Unfortunately, for
many believers within the world today, including myself, evangelism has become an
almost optional practice rather than a required command. Yet, when a believer becomes
so in tune with the Holy Spirit and are continually placing the Lord first in their daily life,
the outcome will be evangelism. For their love of the Lord will be uncontainable and
thus make them unable to not discuss their relationship with the Lord. Thus, evangelism
is also worship. However, it is not through perfectly attaining these qualities that an
individual worships, but rather by continually pursuing these qualities and seeking to
apply them in their life. Yet, a believer is unable to practice such qualities unless they
possess a knowledge that they exist. Such knowledge is found within the special
revelation of God’s inerrant word and it is only attainable through reading.

Theology Influence in an individual’s personal worship

Regardless of an individual’s cultural background, gender, or education, that
which they hold most dear is the focus of their worship. For the believer, the Creator of
the Universe is the focus of their worship. Yet, how does theology impact this daily
practice? By revealing the truth regarding God’s acts, character, as well as His laws and

commands. One of the key ingredients to worship is that it "is a response to the nature of God and His Self-revelation through His Son." Our worship must be "Shaped by [our] understanding of Who God [is] and what He did in Christ." Therefore, if worship is a response to our understand of God, then naturally the best way to grow clown to Him in our Worship is to grow in our understanding of Him. A true worshiper of God, is also a student of His LOGOS (Word). A true worshiper must become a theologian!¹³

However, if we possess an incorrect view of God, then our worship is influenced by our interpretations rather than the truth. According to Greg Breazeale, "[e]verything must begin here. If you miss this, you will end up using the Gospel to make a name for yourself rather than using the Gospel to spread the fame of Jesus."¹⁴ Thus, a believer must continually be growing in their understanding of God as He is a limitless being.

"The proper study of God's elect is God; the proper study of a Christian is the Godhead. The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the name, the nature, the person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls his Father."-(J.I.Packer).

In addition to learning more about God through the scriptures, a believer also learns how they are to represent Christ. This is the truest sense of worship. Living as a testament to the Lord. This is the "privilege and responsibility" which believers are endowed with by the Lord. However, believers must ensure they are providing "a correct

¹³ June 20th, 2016

¹⁴ "What Does Gospel-Centered Leadership Look Like?" Trevin Wax. Accessed April 13, 2017. <https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/trevinwax/2012/07/23/what-does-gospel-centered-leadership-look-like/>.

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interpretation of [God]."¹⁵ In acquiring such understanding, an individual's worship is transformed to reflect this renewed mindset (Rom. 12:2). For example, through the study of God's word, an individual realizes that God is Jehovah-Jireh, the God Who Provides. During times of great difficulty, such truth can serve as a source of encouragement and edification. Knowing that the God Who provides for the animals will also provide for the needs of His children, a believer will place their trust in God to fulfill His promise to "meet all [their] needs," a believer will worship Him in faith (Gen. 8:17, Matt. 6:26, Phil. 4:19). As a result, they worship and praise Him as not only the God of Love who provided a way for their salvation, but as the God Who will satisfy their physical, spiritual, and emotional needs. It is such belief in the unceasing revelations of God's inerrant, absolute truth which causes an individual to respond with worship. However, not only is such knowledge influential in an individual's personal worship, it is of necessity in the life of a worship leader.

Worshipping God "in truth" requires having "a correct view of Who [God] is" as revealed in His word.^{16 17} Such a view can only be obtained by reading scripture as it reveals Who God is-His mercy, justice, love, wrath, etc.-and what He has done. It is in response to such revelations that a believer worships the Lord.¹⁸ However, if a believer worships God with an incorrect or self-created view, however, then they are worshipping a false god, a god of "[their] own making".¹⁹ As God's spoken word, the Scriptures serve

¹⁵. -Ron Owens (Return to Worship) (June 6, 2016)

¹⁶. Ibid.

¹⁷. Ron Owens and Jan McMurray. *Return to Worship: A God-centered Approach*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1999). 7.

¹⁸. Psalms 150:2.

¹⁹. Ron Owens and Jan McMurray. *Return to Worship: A God-centered Approach*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1999). 7.

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as the compass for the Christian lifestyle, one which believers should seek to internalize this compass of the Christian faith.^{20 21} Sadly, many believers, even pastors, have fallen prey to man's philosophy that all truth, even God's truth, is determined by individual interpretation. Yet, such a mindset is simply a recipe for chaos and disorder. For without truth, there is no standard. And if there is no standard, then anything is permissible. Furthermore, if everything is permissible, then no one could be held accountable for their lifestyle. Fortunately, there exists a God Who not only is the standard of truth but provides the truth in the scriptures (John 17:17). When a the church, as a whole, strives to throw off such chains, it not only deepens the individual's worship, but also draws the church closer together:

“Has it ever occurred to you that one hundred pianos all tuned to the same fork are automatically tuned to each other? They are of one accord by being tuned, not to each other, but to another standard to which each one must individually bow. So one hundred worshipers met together, each one looking away to Christ, are in heart nearer to each other than they could possibly be, were they to become 'unity' conscious and turn their eyes away from God to strive for closer fellowship.”²²

It is this truth from which a believer is to build the foundation of their lifestyle. This is especially true for a worship leader.

The Necessity of Theology in a Worship Leader's Lifestyle.

²⁰. Psalm 119:11.

²¹. Col. 3:16a.

²². A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God* (June 13, 2016)

Within the vast majority of churches throughout the world, the leadership employs the talents of one individual to lead the congregation in worshipping the Lord through “songs, hymns, and spiritual songs” (Eph. 5:19). Unfortunately, rather than allowing the truths of God’s word to convict, many believers have grown accustomed to responding to the emotional stirring of the music and develop a love of worship than the Creator of worship. In certain locations, efforts are made to create such a response. These efforts do not always arise from malicious hearts, however, but can arise from a worship leader’s struggle in their lifestyle of worship outside of Sunday morning gatherings.

“Ignorance of God-ignorance both of his ways and of the practice of communion with him-lies at the root of much of the church’s weakness today.” (J.I. Packer)

“The modern way with God is to set him at a distance, if not to deny him altogether; and the irony is that modern Christians, preoccupied with maintaining religious practices in an irreligious world, have themselves allowed God to become remote...churchmen who look at God...through the wrong end of the telescope” have minimized God.²³

Regardless of the situation, however, the role that such leaders are called to fulfill is the role of a shepherd, one who guides the congregation in worshipping the Lord “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Yet, in order for a worship leader to lead the congregation “in truth,” he must “know the [God’s] truth” (John 4:24, 8:32). This is especially crucial to battle the mentality which allows human emotions to determine that

²³ (J.I. Packer).

which is right and wrong. Yet, because of the depravity and corruption of sin, mankind's

It is essential that a worship leader, and even all believers, know the truth and use it to counter the emotional stirrings of the human heart. For they, having "been affected by the sin nature," are prone to errors in judgment.²⁴ Thus, believers, including worship leaders, must actively seek to "never blindly "follow" [their] heart[s]" but must seek "to check [their] heart[s] daily for pride and hypocrisy."²⁵ The standard for such evaluations is God's word. Therefore, rather than pursuing emotional experiences, these numerous individuals in the world present the truth of God's word and allow its revelation to instill worship in the hearts of believers in the congregation, teach booth, and on the stage. For they understand that in order to worship God "in truth" an individual must possess the truth, otherwise, their worship is not based upon the truth but upon facade created within their mind (John 4:24). Yet, they study of God's word and its application into an individual's life requires dedication and disciple of a believer's, and crucial in a worship leader's, life. For "no man born either naturally or spiritually with character, he has to make character. Nor are we born with habits; we have to form habits on the basis of the new life God has put into us."²⁶ Therefore, living a lifestyle of worship requires that an individual is authentic about their weaknesses and failures, "secrets, skeletons in the closet" allowing them to see the light.²⁷

²⁴ Cliff Lambert, June 19, 2016.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10157173996275457&set=pb.513640456.-2207520000.1520254781.&type=3&theater>

²⁵ Cliff Lambert, June 19, 2016.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10157173996275457&set=pb.513640456.-2207520000.1520254781.&type=3&theater>

²⁶ Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost For His Highest* (June 15, 2016)

²⁷ Charles Billingsley. "Character and Integrity." Lecture, Leadership, Philosophy, Music & Organization, (Liberty University, Lynchburg), October 25, 2016.

"See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil."

(1 Thessalonians 5:15-22 NKJV)

"He [God] wants to love your world through you and to draw it to Him."²⁸

"We are surrounded by people we can influence with the message of Christ" (Wheeler, 197).

"If our relationship with the Lord is genuine then we will want to share the good news of Christ with those closest to us"²⁹

"We reach people through relationships" (Wheeler, 197).

"a person can never lead another closer to the Lord than he or she already is. Evangelism must flow from a life that is deeply in love with the Lord."³⁰

Relationship is more important than love as it is the catalyst by which believers are able to share the gospel with another individual.³¹

A believer is ill-equipped as an evangelist and is hindering their relationship with the Lord if they lack a consistent, daily prayer life.

"building relational bridges is the most effective way of leading others to Christ (Wheeler, 199).

Regardless of an unsaved individual's religious upbringing, one common pull will draw them to surrender their life, the Love of Christ as evident in a believer's lifestyle.³²

"Genuine Christian love" which can only be produced by genuine believers, "is the most attractive component in effective evangelism" (Wheeler, 200).

"regardless of the preparation, the most important factor to assure success is intentional relationship" (Wheeler 201).

²⁸ W.O. Thompson Jr. *Concentric Circles of Concern: Seven Stages for Making Disciples* (Nashville: B&H, 1999), 20.

²⁹ W.O. Thompson Jr. *Concentric Circles of Concern: Seven Stages for Making Disciples* (Nashville: B&H, 1999), 9.

³⁰ W.O. Thompson Jr., C. King, and C.T. Ritzmann, *Witness to the World* (Nashville, TN: LifeWay, 2008), 5.

³¹ W.O. Thompson Jr., C. King, and C.T. Ritzmann, *Witness to the World* (Nashville, TN: LifeWay, 2008), 5.

³² T. rainer, *the unexpected Journey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005).

“Evangelism is a living example of biblical community” (Wheeler, 201).

When we evangelize to a particular religious group, it is important to “know what they believe” and, in addition, be able to know and communicate clearly what you believe (Wheeler, 209).

For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place...Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this (Esth 4:14).

“Christianity...is seeing value in, and loving and caring for, and reaching out to, and spending time with “the least of these.”³³

“Nothing will instill doctrine, life-lesson, principle, or skill into a person’s mind more than having to teach it to someone else” (Gutierrez ,106).

“The fear of the Lord is the fear of straying from him.”-

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-goodness-of-god-and-the-fear-of-god>

Fear of God means “To reverence Him, to HONo,r Him, to Exalt Him, to lift Him up, to hold Him in High regards, to Worship Him, and to hold Him in highest esteem. to obey Him, to acknowledge Him, His worthiness, to honor his position as creator and judge of all mankind.” Dr. Charles Stanley-<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1mjc3qYAU>

« If you do not fear God you are ignorant about the most important thing in life and that is your relationship to Holy God and Who He Is.” Dr. Charles Stanley-
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1mjc3qYAU>

“Life is about learning who God is” - Dr. Charles Stanley

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1mjc3qYAU>

“by the fear of the Lord one turns away from evil” (Prov. 16:6).

“fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.

⁸ It will be healing to your flesh^[a]

and refreshment^[b] to your bones.” (Proverbs 3:7b-8)

“The Fear of the Lord Leads to life”-Proverbs 19:23

We are not living if we live a life without God- Dr. Charles Stanley

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1mjc3qYAU>

Singing “is a form of worship” Worship is surrender to God-Francis Chan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7KeeM9lcgE>

“true worship is based on a right understanding of God’s nature and it is a right valuing of God’s worth... true worship is a valuing or a treasuring of God above all things... ***True worship is a valuing or a treasuring of God above all things.*** So the inner essence of worship is the response of the heart to the knowledge of the mind when the mind is rightly understanding God and the

³³ C. Swindoll, *Compassion* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1984), 60.

heart is rightly valuing God.... worship was designed to do: put the supreme worth of God on display...worship is showing, displaying the worth of God.”-John Piper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-worship>

“If we worship an idol of our own creation, we are not really worshiping God.”-John Piper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-worship>

“.” So all of our bodily life done in love for other and in reliance upon God display the worth of God above all things and make us worshipers in our daily life.” -John Piper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-worship>

“So, here is my summary: The inner essence of worship is to know God truly and then respond from the heart to that knowledge by valuing God, treasuring God, prizing God, enjoying God, being satisfied with God above all earthly things. And then that deep, restful, joyful satisfaction in God overflows in demonstrable acts of praise from the lips and demonstrable acts of love in serving others for the sake of Christ.” -John Piper

<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-worship>

“If you can’t worship Him on Monday you didn’t worship Him on Sunday. If you don’t worship Him on Saturday you are not in very good shape to worship Him on Sunday.”

(Tozer on Worship and Entertainment, 9, 24)

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