

<b>Book</b>	What Matters Most in Worship
<b>Study</b>	Omega Lite Study 1
<b>Topic</b>	
<b>Reference</b>	
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<b>Speaker</b>	Pastor Leon Lim

Omega track deals with worship and with this eight lessons that give you basic overview of worship hopefully you will get excited or hopefully you will say, “Oh! I really don’t know worship enough and I want to know more”. So we are going to start today. It is going to be exciting because you are all going to be tested today on your worships. Guess what, worship is so important because true worship brings you to heaven. False worship brings you to somewhere else.

Charles Spurgeon said,

*Discernment is not a matter of telling the difference between right and wrong; rather it is the telling the difference between right and almost right.*

Most of the things in the world is not about whether it is right or wrong. Wrong is quite clear to all of us. It is what is almost right, that is very difficult to discern and I think in Christian worship we have been having a lot of almost right worship happening and people can’t tell the difference.

I am going to give you few statements:

### **What is worship?**

**STATEMENT 1:** *Worship is aimed to bring hearts of the people towards a God who looks not on the outward appearance but looks at the heart.*

The issue is our hearts are not the measurement stick of whether worship is true or false. What is the measurement stick of whether worship is true or false. That is what we need to ask. There must be a biblical basis for worship. How we measure that. So I think worship although Jesus in your heart, how does someone tell if Jesus is in your heart. It is through the Holy Spirit, full of the spirit, fruit of the Holy Spirit and if so how many of us dare say that we are full of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The fruit of spirit is manifested in our lives now and we are truly worshipping that. I think all of us know that we have the ability to approach worship or approach God the Father because of Jesus Christ. That’s why I think the definition is almost true.

The statement is debatable because the statement is not absolute enough on what worship is. It is dangerous if we take the yardstick to be our heart then who judges the heart, it is only God. If only God, then who worship better who decides. God decides, then how do we know. So it doesn’t matter whether our worship is correct or not, how do we judge that. Do we have to?

**STATEMENT 2:** *It’s a call to the church to return to what church should be all about...GOD: His glory, His power at work in people’s lives, the WORSHIP of Jesus above all else...vertical...God-focused.*

It is vertical God focus. So this one is saying that worship should be all about God. So is this a true statement or worship or is this a false statement of worship. If it is almost truth, it is already false. So now you are trying to think harder. That is what I want you to do because in the end we have to answer these questions.

So how do we discern, because if you are saying we are not supposed to judge worship then we are not supposed to discern at all whether our worship is pleasing to God. I think there are many instances in the Bible where there were instances where the Holy Spirit of course led people to discern these things. So now how do we discern this. All I can say is in short, that this is false because it only focuses on a vertical relationship of worship. Worship is also horizontal. There is communion in worship. So if you just say, it is all about God, is my personal relationship with God but you are not loving to others, it doesn't work. This statement only talks about a vertical relationship and my personal relationship with God. That is what worship is and it is not quite true. Like I said, it is between truth and almost truth.

We can believe statements to be about worship, to be true and we can read it in a lot of worship books, but they may not be necessarily true. These are statements that are written in very-very popular worship books. I didn't take it out myself. These are books that people read and say, wow! It changed my life on worship. And when we are studying worship and when we read these books and when we have to analyze it, there are questions that we have to ask. This church basically focus on making sure there songs are always about God, it is always to God which is a good transition because you know we are always complaining about songs always talking about me, my and I. They did that and after a while the pastor realized that the songs in the church needed to also talk about corporate response that is horizontal and he changed it after that.

There is this worship conference that I went to and they were teaching about worship. Most of us come into our worship services, we come with our body only, not quite ready to worship, our minds are somewhere else and all those kind of things. So here is where we begin in worship. We need to worship not just with our body, we need to worship with our soul. So when you surrender more of your self to God, you worship not with just with your body but with your soul. That is what you want. The goal is not to just worship with your soul, because God asked us to worship in spirit and in truth. So we want to worship in spirit. So we want people to go to the next level. Sometimes, as a worship leader when I lead, I know most people only engaging me with the body only or their mind only and then you are like, no soul in their singing one.

The more you surrender yourself, the deeper you surrender your self into God, you worship in spirit. So we want people to come in and surrender their will, surrender their problems, surrender their things and thoughts, their minds and focus on worshiping God. The more you surrender, the deeper you worship and the goal of worship is of course to worship in spirit and truth.

All of the above models show Buddhist worship, it is not Christian worship. It is about your meditating, it is how much you meditate and how much you do therefore the worship become acceptable to God. That is why I am saying it is false, but it is taught in a worship Christian conference amongst thousands of people attending. And we were shocked, thinking how did they came about it. That is what Buddhism teaches you. You want to go deeper, the more you meditate, you go into a deeper realm of worship. That is not true.

**Two videos were shown**

In most cases when I go everywhere when I put the video clip, people say that we should be like this or that. I am throwing all these kinds of things to you is to show you that we have a lot of world views of worship that are based on a lot of old moon's truths. When worship is based on the truth it has to be. I am going to propose over the next eight series how we are going to get through that. When we picture worship, we always picture worship like this.

I think we need to renew our understanding of worship and the question I ask today is what matters most in worship and I think we always get this answer wrong. Because what matters most in worship. The most important question to ask in worship is Who We Worship. That defines Christian. And the most of the time we get this wrong and I will show you why later, but the most important question to ask is who we worship. What differentiates us from worship. Why do we say the Muslim God and the Christian God is not the same. Because they have two Who's. Their characters are different. One is three, but one isn't.

Why do we say that Abrahamic or the Jewish worship is not Christian worship? Because it is not the same Who we are talking about. And I think if we don't define who we worship correctly, we defeat the whole purpose of doing worship. And one of the problems that we have is that, we will talk about it, is what we call christomonic worship. When I first came across the term, I thought it is a combination between Christ and demons. But Christomonic worship is a worship we never want to achieve but I will talk about it a bit more.

The second question that we need to ask is What is Worship. You know, if you and I know exactly what is worship we will win. The question is that, I have this collection of different scholars and different authors about when I see a great definition of worship then I put it in that book and I've realized all the definitions are correct but they are all what is worship. There is not one single statement of worship that can fulfil what is worship about. So I am not here to define what worship is, I am here to help you define what worship does. I think it is more important, because worship does something for us that we can't do for ourselves. That's the important part of worship.

Where is worship located?

That's the struggle. Just now we talked about the body, soul and all those kind of things or in the heart. Is worship located in one place or is it worship located everywhere, where is worship located. How do we locate worship, that's the important question to answer. So we will do that.

When worship happens?

Because a lot of times this happens when you like the worship leader nowadays. Is that true. No, I don't think so. So we need to ask this question. When does worship actually happen? When we raise our hands, when we kneel down, when we are all in agreement, when we do the right thing, we need to ask all these questions.

Why we worship?

Then only it comes here. See, if you see where I am trying to go. Who, What, Where and When, it is all God's work, all the revelation of God. Then only our response matters, why we worship and how we worship. Most of the time I teach worship or go anywhere, the first answer or first question people want or the answer to is, why do we worship, how do we worship, how do we do right worship and I am not interested in that. I am interested to tell you that worship is primarily the work of God and then he tells us the expected responses. Worship is on God's terms. Do we get it right, are we getting it right, are we getting it better, we need to know as a church. I think worship is, we can evaluate worship based on the

fact that we have been a word and the word does reveal things to us, the truth. So once we look at the Bible and we reflect, and we look at ourselves then we know if our worship does these things.

The most important question in worship is not why we worship, how we worship, it is who we worship. And I think most people get that wrong and I hope you change that paradigm from today onwards because who we worship matters the most.

So I will deal with it in Omega Lite breakdown with eight lessons.

Questions	Topic
Who we worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What matters in worship?</li> </ul>
What worship does	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worship basics: The heart of worship</li> </ul>
Where worship is located	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ultimate worship</li> </ul>
When worship happens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worship as a complete response</li> </ul>
Why we worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate and personal worship</li> </ul>
How we worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four-fold order of worship I &amp; II</li> <li>• Worship styles</li> </ul>

So who we worship is what is important. I have established that and we can all agree on that. Now we got to ask the question, who do we actually worship. So the first thing we must realize, it is who that make worship happen that matters. Most people think, if I sing the song, I sing it with all my heart and then I feel worship happens today. I don't know how many times I've heard people say, worship happen today because God showed up in my life when I felt I couldn't. That's why I think it make sense where I am going through something and I can't do it but worship happens because God came, changed my situation around, help me to see that while I am weak he is made strong. Now that is worship happening. Because it is not me that can produce worship. None of us can produce worship. If we could, we would have saved ourselves, but Jesus have to die because none of us could save ourselves. In fact to produce worship, the most advance worship we have in the world or the best worshipers we have in the world are the pharisees. Jesus said, you have to be better than the pharisees to inherit the kingdom of God. They know the law. They know what is right and wrong to do better than any of us can, but still God say that is not enough and the point is because they do not rely on God to make it happen, they say, Oh because I tithe to you so much, better than others. Guess what, God says that worship is not pleasing to me.

So there are reasons. Because once we shift the axis of worship from being God that makes it happen to we make it happen, it is kind of depressing. I remember when I started out as a worship leader and I led the worship and then after that people will come up to me and say thank you for making worship happen. I go back and cry and I get depressed. Because I am like, you saw me then I failed my job. You didn't see Christ, you didn't see the Father, the Holy Spirit was not what made you feel worship happen. It is me. I think sometimes we don't realize the language we use, the words that we use actually puts and locates worship in the wrong place. It locates it in us.

Worship only happen because God first revealed himself to us. It didn't happen because we initiated it.

*For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—**have been clearly seen**, being understood from what has been made, so that **people are without excuse.** (Rom 1:20)*

Why, What, When, Where and How worship is, finds its answer in Who we worship, not in how we worship. That's important to know.

Worship is to the Father through the Son and by the Spirit. This is the difference between Christian worship and anyone's else. So I will give you a Christian definition.

*Worship is the gift of participating through the Spirit in the Son's communion with the Father (James Torrance – Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace)*

This is what worship is. Worship is not about the adoration of your heart, it is not about the meditation, it is not about all those kind of things, it is about who He is and it is a gift. A gift that was given and this gift does come with a whole list of terms and conditions that we don't really understand because we think worship happens because of what we do.

*Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the **Father** in the **Spirit** and in **truth**, for they are the **kind of worshipers the Father seeks**. God is spirit, and his worshipers **must** worship in the Spirit and in truth. (John 4:23-24)*

We worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth, which is Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. So this verse is saying, the time has come where trinitarian worship is expressed in its fullest extent now because I have come and I will die for you and the Holy Spirit will be sent, then you will experience the full extent of the worship that I've always wanted my people to experience, a worship that is birth out of who I am. So John 4:23 is not talking about body, mind and spirit where we think the worship happens. It is talking about, if you want worship to happen you need the Father, you need the Son and you need the Holy Spirit. The content of worship is who He is. It has to be, otherwise it is not possible to worship.

I think worship today is like this. Worship the son through the music. Dr. Lester Ruth, he took the songs that we sang from 1989 and 2004 from the top 25 songs now, of course this is in America where they actually body about copyrights so you will know the actual usage of songs in the church but out of the 25 songs that were used for these 15 years, songs are analyzed theologically on their trinitarian ethos. None of the 72 songs talk about the trinity or refer to the triune nature of God.

#### **Trinity**

- None of the songs refer to the Trinity or the Triune Nature of God
- Only 3 songs refer to all three Persons of the Trinity

#### **Father**

- 4
- 11 refer to the first person of the Trinity

#### **Holy Spirit**

- 6

#### **Jesus Christ**

- 35
  - Most use generic titles for Divinity: Lord, God, King
  - 7 Uses You without any other explicit divine name or title

Robin Perry in his book, *worshiping Trinity* says, *if there is a problem with Christian worship songs, it is more a failure to bring out the trinitarian dimensions of God, then a problem with violating our trinitarian faith.*

We all believe in the Trinity but we fail to bring out this dimension in our worship. One of the problems when I came to FBC is I recorded all the services, there were services where we didn't mention the Holy Spirit once. It is the lost dimension of our trinity in our worship. That is scary because if this is true do we really worship Trinity because we have songs that say, it is all about Jesus, it is all about the way we change our lives, Jesus be the center of it all, it is all about you. You worship Jesus, Hindus also worship Jesus too. What's the difference then between Hindu worship who worship Jesus Christ and says, it is all about Jesus. In fact, I think they are more devoted to Jesus than we are. Some of them will roll on the road for Jesus. What then is the difference? Because we don't believe it is only about Jesus.

Jesus say if you see me you see the father and how do we see Jesus in the first place through the Holy Spirit. So I am not proposing that we are horrible, that we are not trinitarian, that we don't know, I think in talking about this, it is like in a family and then there is this favorite child that we all focus our energy and attention on and the other rest of the family members feel neglected.

We worship three but one that is the main identity of orthodox Christian worship. So what we call a worship that is hyper focus on Jesus Christ, a worship that is only what we call Christomonic worship. A worship that only talks about the saving works, grace of Christ but doesn't talk about the wrath of God. It doesn't talk about justice; it doesn't talk about the work of the Holy Spirit. I think that is not Christian worship, it is Christomonic worship. If the worship is focused on the hyper focused on the saving works of Christ and then it omits things like the love of Father or justice of God or the wrath of God or we don't talk about the work of the Holy Spirit then I think we are hyper focusing on Christ and that is called Christomonic worship. There is a term for it. The most important attribute of who we worship is he is three but one. That is what I am trying to make for the first point.

The second important thing

1. Without the work of the Trinity, we cannot worship
2. Worship is theocentric with the awareness of the worship of one God with three distinct personalities that have been at the center of every aspect of everything we do and are.
3. Worship is received by the Father
4. Worship's purpose is the we become the image of the Son
5. Worship is effectual through the work of the Spirit.
6. Worship is addressed to the First member of the Trinity, recalls the work of the Second, and invokes the Third. – (A Brief History of Christian Worship, James White)
7. Every aspect of Christian belief has the Trinity at the center: the creation of the world and everything in it; humanity in the image of (the triune) God; the providence of God; God's redemption of the world through Christ (incarnation, ministry, cross, resurrection, ascension); the future of the world; the mission of the Church; prayer; worship; the Kingdom of God. – (Making Our Worship More Trinitarian, Robin Parry)

So that's why I think trinitarian worship is nonnegotiable, but it has become negotiable because we think that if we worship Jesus, we've done it all. Guess what since that realization we have a whole movement of song writers coming out to do that.

To put Satan as the opposite of God is putting him on equal terms and that's the problem with our worship today. Worship happens when God through his story invited us up to his level. So worship is on God's level and this is the revelation and this is the paradigm that most worshippers don't see, because they think worship is, I believe in Jesus Christ therefore worship happens. When I say the sinner's prayer, I got baptized then worship happens. Actually worship starts with God calling us to come, to invite us onto his level. Everything else that is a part from God is on the other side which we actually call as idolatry.

We were given through Jesus Christ the option to step up to God's level and to this place where his domain is. That is how worship happens.

1. Worship only happens on God's level. There is no way you can say you are on another level and then worship happens. This is a dimension that is very hard for people to understand, because all this time they will think that I step in and out of worship. You are either worshipping on God's terms through the spirit and through Jesus Christ or you are not. All of us are Christian worshippers because you have been brought into what we call God's level of worship.
2. Worship begins with God and ends with God - Rev 22:13  
*I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.*
3. Worship depends entirely on what God did for us
4. We are invited to respond to God on His level because He initiated worship
5. It is either God's level or the other side is idolatry

I have been to many different worship conferences. I have also conducted a lot. Most of the time the pastors will say this, can you please help our worship team bring our worship to the next level. I am like what other level do you have. You mean your church has not been worshipping all these 20 years. No, I think they want to talk about teach our church to respond better. Actually the problem is, opposite reaction and the problem is if we don't worship on God level who level do we worship on, our own and that is called narcissistic worship. I think most of the time in a lot of churches the language we use, I know may be it unintentional but I hear it a lot, but the worship becomes narcissistic because we become consumeristic, I want the worship to be this way, I want these songs, I want this worship leader, I want this preacher, I only come for this preaching session because the singers are horrible, I can go on, what is God's level for us in FBC.

Did he not die for us to have the privilege to come on Sunday to worship him. I think our response would be so different, but I think we need to change that paradigm because worship is either on God's level or is just narcissistic. Why did lucifer fall? Due to narcissism. Why do we fall? Due to narcissism. We decided we don't want to worship on God's level, we decide our level. I think this is one of the biggest paradigm shift that needs to happen because if we do not worship on God's level, we don't worship because of who He is then we are worshipping because of what we do or what we can do in worship and I think that is dangerous. How we worship is important.

Worship is God-initiated

God is always the initiator. He reveals himself always like that. In the story of Hosea, in the story of everything he is the one that pursue us and then are all like the prodigal son, run away, prostitute ourselves. So the revelation is consistent in the bible, is worship is God initiated. We didn't first love God, we love because he first loved us. Who he is consistent. He is our pursuer. He is the one that come after us. So worship began not because we made a choice to believe him first, but was birth out of a response to God's initial revelation of his truth to the Holy Spirit. Through the spirit we can respond to the work of Christ, which invited us into communion with God. God must be the originator, initiator, operator, motivator and the source of our worship, otherwise everything is in vain.

We are getting to know him and we are getting to be known by Him. That's the purpose of discipleship. It is not for you to get head knowledge, it is for to have a communion with the father. On a level that is not just by the heart, but as the level that is body, soul, mind, spirit, everything, that is called communion.

The opposite of worship on God's level is narcissistic worship. The opposite of worship that is not God's initiated is gnostic worship. Gnostic worship tells you, you have to work the worship out from within you, everybody has a spark in them they can discover what worship is for themselves. Sounds actually like Hindu or Buddhist worship. The more you meditate, the more you find who you are, you find what worship is. That is the opposite. Christian worship is God found us, showed us that we need him to be the center of our lives, so that worship can happen. So that's the paradigm shift that I think is very important.

Worship is not defined by the way we define it. We need to go back to the Bible to look as how God define it to be and here is the most important thing. He defines worship to be, it is dependent entirely on who I am. I am worship incarnate, that is what he is saying. See the trinity they say is three persons and then they dance together and the love that abounds among them and then the community that they have. That is worship happening and worship was always happening.

So when we go into all these technicalities, the temptation is to go into formulate things, to make sure that we know whether we are doing the worship correctly or not and that's what the Catholics do very well. Then after that we reacted against it because it became ritualistic. So I am going to try to help renew the understanding in time, to say that it is not about formulas and rituals but a renewed understanding of paradigm, when I am praying who am I communing with, I am community with the father. How do I know that, because I remember that the son did this all for me. How did I even come to know that, because the spirit has prompted me. These experiences are so intertwined that they are so confusing in the language sometimes. So every time I do this already, the first question they ask me, what does trinitarian worship look like then. Guess what, in this 10 years or so that is what we have been asking. We have been trying to renew that. Getting our worship more and more trinitarian, it is only 10 years we are very young in that. The catholic church has always maintained their trinitarian doctrine.