

FTBC

GROWTH TRACKS


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Welcome to Growth Tracks which is FBC's program designed to set the disciple on the firm foundation spiritual maturity.


In 2 Corinthians 4:6 (ESV) Paul writes "For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ".

The key to growth in our spiritual lives is encountering the glory of God through the person of His Son who is His perfect image. The more our hearts are filled with the knowledge of Him the more our characters are moulded, the more our hearts are filled with His love and more our lives will be directed towards the purpose for which we were created....to glorify Him. Each chapter is designed to provide a progressive track to show the face of Christ through selected but key passages in the Bible laying down the bed rock foundations of faith that will form the basis for a life -long learning and growing in to the likeness of Christ. Prayerfully follow these chapters and His Spirit will propel you into a trajectory of robust growth and spiritual transformation. Learn how to read the bible by tackling whole passages of Scripture rather than piece meal verses. See how principles from the passages will be translated to everyday life. For those disciples going into the Gamma program these presentations will help bridge the gap between the Alpha Beta programs and the more in- depth Gamma discipleship program.

For those who prefer to listen and see the contents of this book you can go to our website at [www.fbc.com .my](http://www.fbc.com.my) and each chapter will be presented in a series of slides at the resources section of our site under the title "Growth Tracks"



MODULE 13



LEARNING TO WORSHIP

In this module we will be exploring what true worship is like in the life of a believer. The lessons we will be looking at today will be

- a. What is worship
- b. How should we worship
- c. Why should we worship
- d. Examples on how we worship
- e. What happens to us when we worship

A. WHAT IS WORSHIP?

The New Testament Greek word for worship is 'Proskuneo' and this means "to do reverence or homage by prostration, giving respect to superiors, king and deities". The modern definition is, "worship is the active response to God whereby we declare His worth". So when we worship we are actively responding to God's revelation of who he is and we in our worship declare his worth.

B. HOW SHOULD WE WORSHIP?

For this section on how we should worship, we are going to look at the book of John where Jesus deals with individuals. In chapter 3 he deals with Nicodemus. In chapter 4 he deals with Samaritan woman and the gentile ruler and in chapter 5 he deals with the man at the pool. So in this particular case, we will take our lessons on worship from John chapter 4, the first part of it, where he deals with the Samaritan woman.

The background is that Jesus goes into Samaria and is thirsty, waits by the well where he actually meets a Samaritan woman who is despised by her community and he starts the conversation with her. While she gives him water and when the conversation shifts uncomfortably towards the fact that she actually has five husbands and the last one that she actually is with now is not even her husband. She shifts the conversation to a more religious tone.

John 4:19-24 (ESV) The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

So the woman has a question, she feels that Jesus with his answers is a prophet and she swings the topic towards worship. The Samaritans worship on Mount Gerizim which is where they are at. The Jews insist that worship was in Jerusalem where people ought to worship. That's the controversial topic which he throws out in front of her. It is where people ought to worship.

For years this controversy raged on between the Samaritans and the Jews. The Samaritans were descendants of the Northern Kingdom who had their heritage mixed because Assyrians came in to conquer them and intermarried with them, so therefore they were despised by the regular Jews who regarded them as "half breeds". The Jews were at the Southern Kingdom. They all worship in Jerusalem. The Samaritans refuse to worship in Jerusalem and naturally hated the Jews and started their own worship in their neighborhood mountain called Mount Gerizim. So the question before Jesus was, which is the right place to worship. Are the Jews correct or the Samaritans correct?

This is Jesus's answer to her,

John 4:21 (ESV) Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.

So Jesus is saying, it is not going to matter anymore because the hour is coming where worship will not be based on the location. He goes on however to set the record straight

John 4:22 (ESV) You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.

So the Jews actually had the correct location for worship. They are supposed to worship in Jerusalem as God had determined but the Samaritans are the ones who distorted worship and insisted that the worship in Mount Gerizim. So Jesus sets the record straight because sincerity is not everything, truth is.

Now there is coming a new worship,

John 4:23 (ESV) But the hour is coming, and is now here,

Here we have a new worship that starts now with the presence of Jesus and is also coming. When the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

Why should we worship in his manner?

We should worship in spirit and truth because God is spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. We have to worship God according to His own nature and character. Apostle Paul wrote letter to the Christians in Rome where he described how people worship wrongly, false worship.

Romans 1:21-23 (ESV) For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

So for pagans, the whole issue is that even though they knew God and sense that God created the world, easily see the pattern and his glory and majesty and refuse to honor him and that's why their worship became distorted.

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God.

Paul describes people as rebellious, refusing to worship the true God. As a result of their refusal to worship God, but they became futile in their thinking. Their rebellion left them disordered in their thinking and logic and unable to relate to God

23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

This therefore resulted in the worship of idols in the shape of humans or animals or any other created object.

We see this in history. Ancient people like the Egyptians sought for God and instead worshipped the sun as they saw the splendor of its power and believed God was in the sun. Egyptians worshipped the cat as a god because their minds became disordered in thinking, they thought God was like a cat.

Now, worship should always be according to the nature of the recipient. If we worship another person, we worship according to his nature. If he is a person and wears a yellow tee shirt we do the same.

But the human dilemma as Paul wrote in the book of Romans,

We are physically and spiritually dead and unable to worship God who is of nature spirit. Our minds and thinking are totally disordered and incapable of appreciating who and what God is. We create our own gods according to our limited minds

So how do we worship God in spirit and truth?

We actually worship Him through Jesus Christ. This is how Jesus comes in the worship. We worship Him in spirit, which is basically based on the agency of the Holy Spirit because if the Holy Spirit doesn't come in and makes us born again, we cannot worship. So John says

John 3:3 (ESV) Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Jesus gives us spiritual rebirth and because we are spiritually enabled we are then able to truly see him and truly worship Him. The second thing is Jesus reveals God. He is the truth about who God is and what he is like. If you look at Jesus and you can actually see what God is like. So therefore New Testament worship has to be focused on Jesus.

So worship in spirit and truth is worship empowered by Holy Spirit and focused on the truth of our God as shown to us in his son, Jesus Christ. So worship in the spirit is worship with the agency and help and guidance of the Holy Spirit of God and we worship God according to what God has revealed Himself through the person of Jesus Christ. So it is Christ centered worship enabled by the Holy Spirit.

So let's look at the mechanics of how we worship. Worship follows a certain pattern. The Holy Spirit enables it in our hearts, that's revelation. It starts with the Truth...something about Jesus which we read from the Bible about Jesus. This is revelation. Then we respond to it. Then there is the response on our side which will include singing, prayer, reflection, confession, praising and thanksgiving.

Here is an example of the worship paradigm. It is scene from the Book of Revelations where there is a vision of Jesus who comes to John

Revelation 1:16-17 (ESV) In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

That's the revelation of Jesus Christ in a vision to John and this is how John responds

Rev 1: 17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead

Hence, worship is revelation and response. John receives a vision...Jesus the exalted resurrected Jesus and his response in awe and adoration is to fall at His feet..

Worship is like a fire fueled by logs. God's word is revelation so truth through His word, is basically the raw material, the logs. The fire is basically God's spirit working in our hearts where we will respond to the preaching or reading of God's word. It arouses in us tears, confession, joy and prayer. So it is always God's word being revealed and assimilated and God's spirit within our hearts respond with tears and confession and joy and prayer involves our hearts, our minds and our will.

Worshipping Jesus Christ is like looking through the Hubble telescope. The Hubble telescope is basically the greatest scientific instrument ever designed. It escapes the haziness of the atmosphere, it is stationed right in the heavens and space and it gazes directly into the beauty of the entire universe. Through the Hubble we can see the magnitude and beauty and majesty of the universe, unobstructed. Same thing with Jesus Christ, Jesus shows the magnitude and the majesty of God. That's why we worship, we worship focused on him.

So what happens at the true worship

- True worship has Jesus at the center of it
- Having Jesus at the center means the worship is based on the bible-revelation
 - The bible is read
 - The bible is preached
 - The worship songs are based on the bible

Why should we worship?

John 4:23 (ESV) But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

So here we have it, father is seeking such people. God is seeking people to worship him because this is how we were created. God desires that we worship Him. As a Creator God He deserves our worship and our praise. The epistle of Peter tells us why we should worship. We should worship because it is our identity and purpose,

1 Peter 2:9 (ESV) But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

So there is a description of Christians. They are specially chosen race, just like Israel was specially chosen, a royal priesthood - royal because they belong to God, priests minister directly to God, a holy nation, people set aside especially for God. People of His own possessions and because of who we are Christians as chosen by Him so that we may tell the world of how wonderful God is, how He has saved us from judgment and hell. Our supreme calling is to proclaim the excellencies of Him. This is not only sharing and evangelism but actually worship.

D. EXAMPLES ON HOW SHOULD WE WORSHIP

There are three ways in which we will worship

1. Personally. We do this as part of our personal devotion at home in a quiet place. We call this quiet time.
2. We do this corporately as a body of Christ, the church at the Sunday worship or at the Life groups where we meet. In doing so we encourage each other in corporate worship. We express the fact that we are a body of Christ. We exist in the community, so worship doesn't only occur at the personal level, it must occur as a

corporate body because we are body of Christ.

3. Obedience. We worship God in the manner in which we live and dedicate the purpose of our lives to His will as our worship

Here is an example of a personal worship.

1. We quieten our hearts to focus on God
2. We read a portion of scripture for the worship
3. Sing a hymn or a song with or without music or listen to a worship song
4. Meditate on the words and pray to Him, praising Him, thanking Him
5. Pray a prayer of confession to prepare in the end.

When we come together as a church on a Sunday. This is an example of a corporate worship

- Call to worship where the worship leaders exalt and encourages people to worship, puts them in proper frame of mind.
- Scripture reading
- Worship in song
- Worship by giving an offering
- Sermon, which is basically a revelation based on His Word
- Lords Supper
- Benediction

Worship in obedience. The ultimate sacrifice for our sin is paid by Jesus. In the light of his sacrifice for us, we sacrifice our lives as a reciprocation of his sacrifice

Romans 12:1-2 (ESV) I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Since Jesus has sacrificed for us to save us from sin. We respond appropriately by dedicating our whole lives to the worship of God by living for Him in obedience. So in order to live for him in obedience, we must reflect who God is by being holy and blameless. So this involves a transformation of our minds to understand what God wants for our lives and having His will direct the way we live. So in this way we offer our lives to Him

E. HOW DOES WORSHIP AFFECT US?

Well the first thing is, worship brings joy.

Psalms 95:1-3 (ESV) Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! 2 Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! 3 For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

This is the truth about God which we remember and sing about and read scripture about and it brings much joy, our response to who he is. There is joy, there is noise and there is song. Lastly, worship brings transformation

2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV) And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

In this letter Paul tells us that as we worship we are confronted with the beauty and glory of Jesus. We are transformed to more like Him in glory. The term used is 'beholding'. Hence the more and more we encounter the truth about Jesus, the more and more we respond to this truth. This process changes us gradually from inside by the power of Holy Spirit. So worship brings transformation, we become more and more like Jesus. Worship brings joy and transformation.

Questions

1. What is worship
2. How should we worship
3. Why should we worship
4. Examples on how we worship
5. What happens to us when we worship