

**Lesson Title:** ALL Making Disciples of ALL through **Worship**

Key Concept: Our local church has a unique calling within the worldwide body of Christ. We are striving to fulfill our mandate of *ALL making disciples of ALL*. This is **what** we do. In our local assembly we make and are made disciples through four primary actions: we worship, we learn, we serve, and we play. This lesson examines worship and how it contributes to our discipleship. Through worship we put God first in everything.

**Scriptures:**

Then he said to the crowd, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up [deny] your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me.
(Luke 9:23 *New Living Translation*)

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.
(Romans 12:1 *New Living Translation*)

For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.
(John 4:24 *New Living Translation*)

Context Scriptures: John 4; Matthew 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13; Luke 9:23–24

**Lesson Thoughts:**

In one of the most definitive statements in scripture about God, Jesus told the Samaritan woman that God is Spirit (John 4). The primary point of this passage, however, is not who God is but rather our response to God. When we recognize who God is, the only acceptable response is worship.

Through worship we put God first in everything. The word used for worship means to express in attitude or gesture one’s complete dependence on or

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submission to a high authority figure. In its original Ancient Near Eastern context, this word frequently referred to the custom of prostrating oneself.¹ But Jesus seems to shift the emphasis from the physical expression of prostration to a spiritual expression of worship in spirit and in truth. It would be inaccurate to conclude that worship does not include physical expressions, given Paul's statement that the way to truly worship God is by giving our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice (Romans 12:1). Instead, we should conclude that physical expressions alone are not sufficient worship of the God who is spirit.

God is not primarily a physical being. He does not see us using eyes or hear us using ears. His knowledge of us is much deeper and more expansive than the limitations of physical existence. Therefore, our worship—our acknowledgment of who he is—cannot be limited to physical expressions only but must include our whole being. We worship him not only with our actions but with our very being. Through our worship we put God first in everything, and our very being is transforming back to our original form—the image and likeness of our Creator.

Jesus defines discipleship as giving up (or denying) our way and following him (Luke 9:23–24). Jesus is the very image of God. Understanding this, the devil assaults him in the wilderness and offers him all the kingdoms of the world in exchange for Jesus' kneeling and worshiping him (Matthew 4:8–10; Luke 4:5–8). Even the devil understands that worship not only acknowledges the one being worshiped but transforms the one worshiping. Jesus' response is foundational: "Get out of here, Satan," Jesus told him. "For the Scriptures say, 'You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him'" (Matthew 4:10).

Worship is any activity—physical or spiritual, external or internal—by which we acknowledge who God is. In every act of worship, we are releasing the transforming power of the God we are acknowledging. Every act of worship contributes to the ongoing process of transformation that is restoring us to our original created form: a human being made in the image and likeness of God.

As we deny ourselves and follow Jesus—the visible image of an invisible God—we acknowledge who God is by putting him first. And with every act of worship, we are being transformed by the spirit of the very God we are worshiping. This is discipleship. ALL are making disciples of ALL when we worship. Every act of worship creates an atmosphere in which other disciples are also called into their own worship of the one true God. We worship!

¹ William Arndt et al., [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 882.



Discussion Questions:

- 1) What are some examples of physical (public) expressions of worship? Be exhaustive.
- 2) What are some examples of spiritual (private) expressions of worship? Be exhaustive.
- 3) How do these expressions of worship acknowledge God?
- 4) How do they transform you?

Next Lesson: ALL Making Disciples of ALL through **Learn**

Notes and Reflections

- 1) Choose your favorite Bible translation. Using a concordance (either book or online), look up all the passages where worship is mentioned. Read the passages slowly.
- 2) From your study above, what are the different examples given of worship?
- 3) Based upon this study, do you think worship is a narrow and specific set of actions (whether physical or spiritual) or is worship a broad and expansive set of actions (whether physical or spiritual)?
- 4) Finally, how does this affect your understanding and practice of worship?

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Notes and Reflections, cont.