

Spiritual Health — Do I Live A Life Of Worship?

January 22, 2023

Good morning CrossWinds! Since January is when many of us are trying to get in shape, and there is a focus on physical fitness, Pastor Jordan and I thought this would be a good time to turn our attention to the topic of spiritual fitness. What does it mean to be in a healthy relationship with Jesus?

Last week, I introduced you to the 6 “W’s.” These are six words that begin with the letter “W” that give us a good description of what a healthy Christian life looks like. Since repetition is the mother of all learning, let's review them to help us remember them.

Word — A healthy Christian knows God through the applied word of God under the direction and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

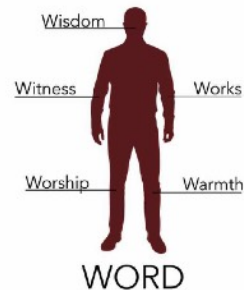
We looked at this last week. We learned the incredible power of the Bible. God uses the Bible to give us spiritual life. The Word of God is also how God sustains our spiritual life. A healthy Christian is consistently reading and obeying God's Word.

Worship — A healthy Christian manifests a lifestyle of worship and prayer based on close daily communion with God.

We will look more at this point today.

Warmth — A healthy Christian engages in meaningful life-on-life relationships that reflect the love of God and leave people impacted and changed.

What Does A Healthy Christian Look Like?



Witness — A healthy Christian lives under the commission of Christ to win and grow disciples, integrating outreach into all aspects of life.

Works — A healthy Christian builds up the body of Christ through their spiritual gifts and passions.

Wisdom — A healthy Christian manages their skills, money, and time putting them under the Lordship of Jesus.

This morning, we are looking at the topic of worship. God created us. He deserves honor as the creator. God gave that which was most precious to him, his only son, to die in our place for our sin because he loves us. The incredible love and graciousness of God

toward us mean he deserves even more of our worship. Worship is our response to God because of who he is and what he has done. A healthy Christian will have a life overflowing with worship and gratitude to God. An unhealthy Christian will ignore worship because God doesn't mean much to them.

As we look at the topic of worship in the Christian life, we will look at it under two headings. This will give us two mini messages. 1. How do we worship God in prayer? Prayer is one of the ways we worship God for who he is and express our dependence on him. After prayer, we will back out a bit and look at the topic of worship in a broader sense. 2. What does wrong worship look like? 3. What does right worship look like?

How do we worship God in prayer?

Ephesians chapters 1 to 3 talk about all we have in Jesus. Ephesians 1:4 tells us we were chosen by God to be the adopted brothers and sisters of Jesus

What Does A Healthy Christian Look Like?



before the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1:7 tells us we are completely forgiven of our sins. We cannot be any more forgiven than we are right now through Jesus. No matter what we have done or how evil we have been, all of that is taken away by Jesus when we trust in Jesus. Ephesians 1:14 tells us we will receive an inheritance through Jesus that is beyond what we can imagine. Think of that. There is no possible way for us to conceive how good God will be to us for all eternity. That is not because we deserve any of that. It is all because of what Jesus has done for us and because we have trusted in him. We are now identified with him and caught up in God the Father's delight in His Son. Ephesians 2:10 tells us we are God's masterpiece. There is no greater work that God will ever do in the entire universe than what he has already done for us through Jesus. We deserve the lake of fire that was prepared for the devil and his angels. Instead of an eternity of just torment, we are given an eternity as the most blessed and joy-filled beings in the entire universe because of Jesus. Think of the vast planets in our solar system. Think of the size of interstellar space. None of that is even close to being as great to what God has done for you and me through Jesus. We are God's masterpiece, his greatest work in the universe that will never be topped!

At this point, a potentially dangerous problem surfaces. It is called spiritual overconfidence. It is easy to develop a spiritual ego. This is especially true for more mature Christians who understand doctrines like I just shared with you. They have studied their Bible. They understand how good God has been to them through Jesus so they begin to take things for granted. They no longer call out to

God in heart-rending prayer desperate for Jesus and his grace in their life. As they matured in Jesus, their relationship with God became more cerebral, more knowledge-based, less relationship and prayer-based.

Has that happened to you? As you learned more about Jesus, has your life with God become more intellectual instead of relational? As you have grown in Christ have you learned more but prayed less?

Paul wrote to the Christians in the city of Thessalonica these words when instructing them about the place of prayer in a healthy Christian life.

...pray without ceasing, 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (ESV)

No matter how much we have in Christ, we are to pray. No matter how good God has been to us, we are to pray. Paul tells us that prayer in the Christian's life is like breathing to human life. Just as we cannot hold our breath and function effectively as human beings, we cannot live the Christian life without regular prayer.

Did you have COVID in the last year? I had it twice. The problem with COVID is you can't breathe. If you had COVID, how did you feel when you couldn't breathe? Terrible! When you can't breathe, you have no energy. You want to be in bed all the time. For me, trying to work out in the gym was terrible. I felt terrible.

COVID is a good picture of the Christian life without prayer. Choosing not to pray, is like holding our breath. We can't live without oxygen.

In the last two chapters of Ephesians, Paul gives us some brief instructions on prayer. Let's look at them.

...praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, Ephesians 6:18 (ESV)

Let's look at some of the points Paul makes about prayer.

We are to pray all kinds of prayers.

...with all prayer and supplication... Ephesians 6:18 (ESV)

The word prayer in this verse is a general word, pertaining to prayer in all its different forms and ways. We can pray privately when we are driving, or we can pray publicly in church. We can pray verbally out loud, or we can pray silently in our hearts. We can pray deliberate pre-written prayers in books like the book of Common Prayer, or we can pray spontaneous prayers from our hearts. We can request something from God in prayer, or tell him our needs in prayer. We can spend time thanking God for who he is and what he has done for us, or we can call out for help in our times of need. We can pray while driving. We can pray while walking. We can pray standing, kneeling, sitting, lying down on our face or even on our back. We can pray as a family before meals. We can pray as parents over our children at night. Paul tells us to pray in any way we can at all times. Remember that prayer is like breathing.

The second word Paul uses for prayer is supplication. That is another way of saying requests. This is not referring to general requests but specific requests. For example, when we walk by the missions TV in the foyer, we are reminded about the missionaries. It is easy to say, "God, I pray for the missionaries." That is a blanket prayer request that covers everyone. That is not wrong, but that is not what Paul directs us to do with this word. This word tells us to pray for specific requests and to look for specific answers. For example, it is good to

know the specific needs of our missionaries and to pray for their specific requests.

One way that came to mind to help us pray more specifically for our missionaries is this year I want to have every life group adopt a missionary that we support. That way, when the life group meets, they will pray for that missionary and the specific needs of that missionary. I would love to see the life group build a relationship with that missionary. That would help us pray with greater specificity, which is what Paul intends for us to do.

We are to pray all the time.

...pray at all times... Ephesians 6:18 (ESV)

We should pray in the morning, in the evening, and during the day. Look what Jesus said about prayer. Pray when you wake up. Pray when you go to sleep. Pray before you eat your meals. We are to be constant in prayer.

...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Philippians 4:6 (ESV)

When we are concerned about the future, and we see trouble brewing on the horizon, we are to pray to God about the things that have us concerned. When we pray, we are to pray with an attitude of thanksgiving, knowing that God loves us. He cares for us. He will respond with his wisdom, his way, and his timing to our needs.

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. Colossians 4:2 (ESV)

We are to be steadfast and unmovable in prayer. This means we are to keep praying even when we don't feel like praying. We are to keep praying, even when it doesn't seem like prayer changes anything.

We are to pray with perseverance.

...To that end, keep alert with all perseverance... Ephesians 6:18 (ESV)

We must persevere in prayer. Perseverance means endurance. Some things we need to pray about one time and leave it at the feet of Jesus.

...casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7 (ESV)

Sometimes when we are concerned about something, the best thing we can do is to pray, and give it to God. We can't worry about it anymore. We leave it in God's hands and go to sleep because before we left it in God's hands, we couldn't sleep. That is completely good and right. Have you had the experienced of giving your worries to God in prayer and then finally being able to rest?

We must also acknowledge there are other times when we leave our worries at the feet of Jesus, but that peace doesn't last long. The pain keeps coming back again and again. If you are going through a relationship breakup or a marital breakup the grief of that loss doesn't seem like it will ever end. You give the pain to God in prayer but an hour later something brings the memories and pain back. You are overwhelmed again. In those times, don't give up on prayer. Keep turning to God in prayer. You may go through the cycle four or five times a day as you cycle from being overwhelmed in one moment then calling out in pain to God for peace and rescue in the next moment. That is ok. That is normal. Those are the stages of grief. In those times, don't give up on prayer. Persevere in prayer.

And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. Luke 18:1 (ESV)

Luke 18 is the parable of the persistent widow. It is the story of a judge in a city who didn't fear God. There was a widow who kept coming to him asking for justice against someone who wronged her. For a while, the judge ignored her, but eventually, he gave her justice because she wore him out with her persistence.

The parable ends with these words.

And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" Luke 18:6-8 (ESV)

If an unrighteous judge can be badged into giving justice, will not God give justice to those who are the children he loves who keep calling out to him day and night? God will give justice, and he won't delay. God is not an unjust judge who doesn't care about us. He is a loving and gracious God who passionately cares about us and about justice. God promises he will respond to our prayers for justice, but he may not answer our prayers in our time and in our way. He will answer our prayers in his time and in his wisdom, which is always better than our wisdom but in a crisis, we often forget that.

How many of you have called out to God asking for him to help you? You have told God the way you want him to answer your prayer, but he didn't answer. Now you look back and with the perspective of time you are thankful he didn't answer your prayer, you can see he had something much better he was working. If God answered your prayer in your timing and in your way, he would have been less good, not more God. This is why we must trust God's character when we call out to him in prayer and he doesn't seem to answer our prayers in our timing or in our way. God is not an unjust judge.

This is why the parable ends with the words, "...when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" When we are experiencing injustice and we call out to God for rescue in our time and our way, but God doesn't respond in the way we expect, that will cause many people to give up on God in prayer instead of trusting in God's character and goodness in their prayer.

What about you? Are you disappointed in God because he hasn't answered your prayers in your timing and your ways? Has it felt like he ignored you rather than heard you so now you have given up on prayer? Jesus says, "Always pray and don't lose heart." Trust God's character. He is not an unjust judge. If he sent his own son to die for us, we know he loves and cares about us.

We are to be alert and pray for others' needs.

...To that end, keep alert with all perseverance... Ephesians 6:18 (ESV)

This passage also reminds us to stay alert in prayer. That means we need to be sensitive to the needs of the people around us, not oblivious. Being alert means husbands need to take the time to understand their wives, their needs, and what is happening in their inner world. Then pray for your wife specifically, not just generally. Wives, this means taking the time to understand your husband. Ask about his day. Listen to the concerns of his heart, then take the time to pray with him specifically. This also means taking the time to know what is happening in the lives of your children and then praying specifically for the challenges they face. We must be alert to the needs of the people around us, not oblivious and uninterested.

We are to pray for other Christians.

...praying for all the saints... Ephesians 6:18 (ESV)

The saints talked about in this verse are not a football team. They are also not a group of super holy people. The saints in this verse are our brothers and sisters in Jesus. We tend to think of ourselves as separate entities. We think we exist independently from everyone else. We don't. We are all members of one body. We are all saved by Jesus individually?, but we are also knit together as a family by Jesus. This is why God doesn't want us living independently. We are brought together to be in the church. The individual members of the church are given different spiritual gifts to serve one another in the church.

One of the ways we are to serve one another is by prayer. As a church, we have the responsibility to pray for one another. This may be church-wide in the prayer chain. If our needs are more personal, we share in our life groups. If the prayer needs are even more personal, we share them in our iron man (or iron woman) groups.

As Christians, we have a responsibility to pray for one another.

We are to pray for spiritual, not just physical needs.

In Ephesians 6:18, Paul explained the comprehensiveness of prayer in a healthy Christian's life. When we move to the next two verses, Paul shares his prayer request with the Ephesians.

...(Pray) and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. Ephesians 6:19–20 (ESV)

The first time I read this, nothing stuck out to me. Then I noticed what Paul was asking them to pray about. He wasn't asking for his physical problems to be solved. Remember Paul wrote this letter from jail. He didn't ask the Ephesians to

pray that he would be released from jail, that is what I would have asked for if I was in his shoes, instead he asked them to pray for God to give him the ability to speak the good news of Jesus with great clarity and boldness while he was in jail. Paul's prayer request was not an increase in his comfort, but for greater progress of the gospel while in chains. In his prayer request, spiritual things were more important than physical things. At the end of the day, it would be much better if people came to Christ while he was in jail then if Paul's comfort was increased because he was released from jail.

As I thought about this, I saw an appropriate challenge for us. So many times, we ask for prayer for our physical needs. We ask for prayer for better health and increased comfort. It is not wrong to pray for those things, but better prayer requests are that God would help us share the gospel with greater clarity and boldness while we are in those uncomfortable places and positions in life.

So this brings us to the end of the first part of our message. In summary, for a healthy Christian, prayer is like breathing. We are to pray about everything all the time. The more we grow in Christ, the more we are to grow in prayer. Spiritual maturity should not lead us away from dependent prayer but deepen us in dependent prayer.

Let's move to the second part of the message where we will talk about worship in the Christian life. I want to begin by looking at some of the wrong ways we worship God.

To make the transition to the second part of the message and to have a little fun, let's begin with a true story.

How can we worship God the wrong way?

In 1977, Maria Rubio of Lake Arthur New Mexico was assembling a burrito when she noticed the skillet let burn marks on her tortilla that resembled what she thought was the face of Jesus. Excited, she showed it to her husband and neighbors, who also through the burn mark on the tortilla resembled a Roman Catholic image of Jesus.¹

Excited about this tortilla, she went to the local priest to have her tortilla blessed. The priest, who was not accustomed to blessing tortillas, reluctantly agreed to bless this tortilla.



Mrs. Rubio took the tortilla home and put it in a box on a pile of cotton. Mr. Rubio built a special altar for it and put the altar and tortilla in a wooden utility shed in the backyard. This was the beginning of the shrine of Jesus of the tortilla. Within months more than 8,000 people came to visit the tortilla. In two years, 35,000 people visited the shrine of Jesus of the tortilla in the wooden tool shed in the Rubio's backyard. People kept coming for 28 years. Then in 2005, Mrs. Rubio's granddaughter took Jesus the tortilla to school for show-and-tell. You can guess what happened. Let's just say that by this time the tortilla was stale. Somebody dropped it, and it shattered. The shrine of Jesus of the tortilla came to an end.

The reason I share this with you is to make sure the next time you eat Mexican you check your tortilla! It is also to show you that many people are interested in worshipping God, but they worship him the wrong way.

¹ <https://youtu.be/IsKePQMnX9I>

Let me show you some of the wrong ways we can worship God and what can happen if we get worship wrong.

Don't worship a different God.

...My glory I will not give to another. Isaiah 48:11 (ESV)

(for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), Exodus 34:14 (ESV)

The Bible is clear that there is only one God in the universe. When we, or anyone else, worships another god, that is not worshipping the same God in a different way and by a different name. That is worshipping a completely different god. God doesn't find that acceptable worship. He finds that repulsive.

Today, in our postmodern culture, it is popular to say everyone worships the same God, but they worship him by different names and in different ways. Everyone is ok with how you worship and whom you worship as long as you believe in a higher power. Does that make sense? When ancient Israel began turning away from the God who saved them out of Egypt, and they were worshipping the gods of the nations around them, the Baals and the Ashtoreths, did God think that was ok? Did God say it was no big deal for his people to worship different gods by different names in different ways? Absolutely not! God told his people that by worshipping false gods, they were worshipping demons instead of God.

They sacrificed to demons that were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come recently, whom your fathers had never dreaded. Deuteronomy 32:17 (ESV)

Paul says the same thing in the New Testament.

No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. 1 Corinthians 10:20 (ESV)

When people worship different Gods, they are worshipping demons. This is why it is never acceptable to worship a different God.

Don't worship God by self-styled worship.

As I was studying, I found this interesting. Remember the golden calf incident in the Old Testament? Let's read about it.

They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!' ” And the Lord said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Exodus 32:8–9 (ESV)

While Moses was on Mt. Sinai, the Israelites at the foot of the mountain made a golden calf. They worshipped and sacrificed to it. Notice what they did. They said, “these are your gods, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.” They were not trying to completely reject the God who saved them from Egypt. They were trying to worship God in a different way. They came from Egypt, where the gods were golden statues. The God who saved them from Egypt didn't appear to them as an image. Why didn't God appear to them as an image? One of the reasons God didn't appear to them in a physical form is because any form would contain God and limit God. When the Israelites decided to make a golden calf to worship God, they were not rejecting God, but they were limiting him by the way they worshipped him. They were misrepresenting him. How did it go for them when they worshipped the right God the wrong way? It didn't go well. God's first response was to wipe out the entire nation. Instead, he used the Levites to only kill 3,000. Worshipping the right God the wrong way doesn't end well. We

must worship God in the way he tells us to worship, not simply in any way we want to worship.

We see the same thing happening in Leviticus 10 with Nadab and Abihu.

Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, which he had not commanded them. And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. Leviticus 10:1–2 (ESV)

These young men were groomed to be priests. They were trained on how to serve as a priest since they were children. When it came time for them to serve as priests, the Bible tells us they didn't follow instructions. Instead, they offered strange fire. We don't know exactly what that means. Maybe one of the censers went out, and one of them had a Bic lighter in their pocket, and they used that to restart the flame. We don't know exactly what happened, but they chose to worship the right God the wrong way and it did not end well. The Bible tells us that fire shot out from the presence of the Lord in the tabernacle and burned them to a crisp. It looked like the movie backdraft. It is the same message. If we want to worship the right God, we better make sure we worship him the right way. We need to worship him in the way he wants to be worshipped, not just any way we want to worship.

We can apply this to how we worship at church today. When it comes to worship, we want to be sure to worship in ways we see in the Bible, not start making up ways of worship unknown to the Bible. If we go that direction, it probably won't end well.

What do we see in the Bible? The preaching and teaching of the Bible should be in worship. Today, many churches do not want the Bible taught. They

think people do not want the Bible. They want something instead of the Bible. If we neglect the Bible in church, it will not end well.

In the Bible we see the New Testament church sang Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. This is what we want to sing in church. In an attempt to be more relevant to our culture, some churches now sing secular music instead of Christian music. That is going too far. That is self-styled worship. It will not end well. In the church there should be prayer and the Lord's Supper as part of worship. This is what we see in the Bible. Some churches have rejected prayer and the Lord's Supper as part of weekend worship. As I was preparing for this message, I read about a church that featured a professional wrestling match between the pastors on Sunday to entice people to visit. The problem is, this is going too far. This is self-styled worship instead of worshipping God in the ways he has given. We must be careful as we try to reach the culture that we do not abandon clear biblical precedents.

Don't worship God with the leftovers of my life.

This one hits closer to home for most of us. For example, the Bible tells us that when we worship God in church, we should give our best because our God is the best so he deserves the best. Look at Malachi 1

When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the Lord of hosts. And now entreat the favor of God, that he may be gracious to us. With such a gift from your hand, will he show favor to any of you? says the Lord of hosts. Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand. Malachi 1:8–10 (ESV)

The people were attending church, but they were only going through the motions of worship. There was no genuine worship because they gave God the leftovers of their life. Instead of giving God the best animals for worship, they were offering blind animals and sick animals for worship. They were giving God the trashy animals that nobody else wanted. They were animals that were not even good enough to pay their taxes with, but they gave them to God. God said he had no pleasure in their worship because it was cheap. It cost them nothing. It was worth nothing.

Years ago, when I was studying this passage, God hit me between the eyes with these verses about my Saturday nights. On Saturday nights, I stayed up late, having fun with my friends. 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning was a normal bedtime before church. When I showed up at church the next day, the 11:00 service was too early for me. I was completely exhausted. I needed two cups of coffee to keep my eyes open and I was still falling asleep. I was a complete basket case on Sunday mornings. I was giving God the leftovers of my life. I have him the absolute worst time of my week, not my best. God was not pleased by my Sunday morning worship. Our God is the best. He deserves our best. Saturday night, I needed to go to bed early so I was on top of my game Sunday morning. That way I could come early and stay late. I could pay attention to the sermon. I could help and serve. That was acceptable worship, not what I was doing before.

Let me give you another example. A few years ago, the worship team was struggling to find time to practice. One person on the team suggested that they

didn't need to practice. They had busy lives. They were good enough. They could show up on Sunday morning and wing it and it would be good enough for the people who are here.

First, let me be honest. No, our worship teams are not good enough to show up on Sunday mornings and wing it and still be good. Everyone can tell when you don't practice. Second, the reason you practice is not to be good enough for the people who are here. The reason you practice is that when you lead the congregation in singing, that is your worship of God. Our God is the best so he deserves our best. If we don't practice and do our best, he is not pleased with our worship. It is not acceptable worship when we give him nothing more than the leftovers of our life. True worship that pleases God involves a sacrifice of our time and effort. It involves hard work and sacrifice. That is ok. It is worship that pleases God.

Don't ignore financial worship.

Let's continue in Malachi and look at chapter 3.

Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the Lord of hosts. Malachi 3:8–11 (ESV)

They were worshipping the right God the right way, but they were not worshipping with their wallet. They were giving to the Lord, but it was more like they were tipping a waiter after a meal instead of giving a tithe. This is why God tells them they need to bring the full tithe into the storehouse. They were ripping

God off and only bringing God a portion of the tithe. What is a tithe? A tithe means ten percent of the income. The New Testament doesn't say Christians have to give a tithe to the church, but 2 Corinthians 8-9 does tell us that we should give generously, sacrificially, proportionately, regularly, and cheerfully. For most of us, a tithe of our income to the Lord fits those qualifications. I believe a tithe is a goal for us to start our giving, but it shouldn't be the place we must stop giving.

The simple point is that God's people were not tithing. They were not giving sacrificially, generously, and proportionately. God was not being worshipped with their wealth. God was not happy. He told them they were robbing Him. As a result, God refused to bless them because they were not faithful with what God put in their hand, so he wasn't going to give them any more. I love how God challenged them. He wanted to test him. If they would put God first in their finances, he promised to give them more than enough to meet all their needs.

What about you? When you look at your worship at church, how is worship with your wallet? When you come to church, are you just a taker or are you also a giver? You come to church, you get free coffee, free heat, a free sermon, free worship, Jesus even died to take away your sins and he makes you into a new creation all for free. Do you receive, receive, and receive but refuse to give? Someone who is just a taker and not a giver is not a healthy Christian.

I don't know the place of wallet worship in your life. Maybe you give God nothing in worship. Maybe you need to start by worshipping God with one, two,

or three percent of your income. Maybe you need to have as your goal a tithe of your income. I don't know. What I do know, is tithing is a good floor for our giving. Our giving to God should be generous, sacrificial, and proportionate. We must be mature givers in the church, not just takers in church, or God is not pleased with our worship.

Since COVID, we haven't passed a plate, but the best way to give is either on the church app or put a check in the offering box in the back of the room.

3. How can we worship God the right way?

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. 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. Romans 12:1–2 (ESV)

After Paul wrote a lengthy letter to the Christians in Rome, he speaks to them about the right way to worship. A Christian's worship is not about Sunday morning in church. After all that God has done for us through Jesus, the only appropriate response in worship is to give all of our life in worship to him. In the Old Testament, they sacrificed animals on the altar. The animal gave all of their life in worship. We are living sacrifices that give all of our life in worship to our savior.

In other words, we are to intentionally not be like the people in the world around us. Instead, we are to look at everything in life and ask, "What would Jesus do?" Would Jesus watch this program? If not, my act of worship is to change the channel. Two unmarried people living together. Would Jesus want me in this relationship? If not, my acceptable worship is to either get married or move out.

Do we still worship Jesus in church? Yes, we do. Worship that is pleasing to God is far more than what happens in church. It is about putting Jesus in charge of every area of our life, every day, and living with purity, holiness, and gratitude to him.



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the Evangelical Free Church of America. He enjoys reading, writing, and time with his family. Feel free to contact him at www.Christ2RCulture.com (www.c2rc.com)

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