



Worshipology

a foundational theology of worship

Family

We've seen throughout the series "Worshipology," that worship is more than just a Sunday morning worship gathering filled with prayer, preaching, and music. Worship actually involves all aspects of life. One aspect of life that the Bible speaks much about is family. After creating the universe, God created humans, male and female, the first family. They then had children of their own.

The writer of Psalm 128 shares about the blessing of family. Describing the man who fears the Lord, he says "your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord" (Psalm 128:3-4). Clearly this person could praise God for and through his family. What happens when your family is a train wreck? How can you honestly worship God in the midst of a failing family? One Vintage member's story is the perfect example of this. When this believer was in 8th grade his dad became addicted to OxyContin and other hard drugs. For a decade his dad destroyed his body and mind. He stole from his own family, destroyed every relationship he had, and eventually spent three months in prison for theft. Thankfully today his dad is completely drug free. Nonetheless, it was a struggle. During that time, the believer constantly looked back to Romans 8:28 where Paul shares this promise: "we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called to his purpose." He wasn't sure how God's promise was going to work out, but he trusted in God, praising Him for His unending love. Regardless of your family's circumstances, can you and are you worshipping God through your family?

Interests

Do you worship God when you're eating, when you're watching the Saints, or even when you're just thinking? Have you ever thought of these activities as worship? Remember, worship occurs through all of life. The apostle Paul makes this incredibly clear in 1 Corinthians 10:31. There he says, "so, whether you eat or drink, or *whatever you do*, do all to the glory of God." We all have hobbies or things we enjoy to do. I love to read. I also love to watch movies. The question is how can I actually worship God through the things I love to do.

First, realize God created you with your passions. The desires you have, God gave you. So we are to use these desires to worship God. Unfortunately, rather than worship God, we often turn our passions into idols, worshipping them. So, we cannot worship what God has given us. Secondly, we need to enjoy and participate in our activities in a God-honoring way. When watching movies, do we actively think about we're watching? Do we think about the overall purpose of the movie and how the movie points to God? When we play a game or a sport, do we desire to become better because that will honor God? Ultimately our deepest joy is and will be found in God and not in the interests of life. We simply must remember we live for God; God does not live for us. (For more info on this topic see Mark Driscoll's article "Glorifying God in All You Do," <http://theresurgence.com/2011/05/23/glorifying-god-in-all-you-do>).

Loss

There is one thing in life that we must all face... death. We will die and those we love and cherish will die. One of the consequences of sin is physical death, so each and every one of us will encounter death. How then do we worship God through the loss of life? How can we worship God when our spouse, parent, or friend has died? How can we worship when these people we love are taken by disease, cancer, or even more tragic events like an accident or murder? These are all circumstances that are difficult to worship God through. In John 11 we read about Lazarus. Jesus and Lazarus were close. They were very good friends. So when Lazarus dies, Jesus does what everyone else does, he cries. The bible says, "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). Before Lazarus died Mary and Martha, Lazarus' sisters, came to Jesus letting him know their brother was about to die. Here is what Jesus says, "this illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it" (John 11:4).

Jesus raised Lazarus from death to life. Through Lazarus' death Jesus was worshipped. Not all deaths end in immediate resurrection, but they should all result in worship. God is the giver and taker of life (1 Samuel 2:6; Deuteronomy 32:39). When one Vintage Church member lost his great grandmother, it was difficult. In his mind it seemed she would never die, but when an aggressive cancer took her life, he worshipped God for her amazing, faithful life to Jesus. He worshipped God simply because God is the sustainer of all of life. Death is not something we celebrate, but God is still to be worshipped through it.

Health

Many realize fuel is an absolute necessity in order for a vehicle to run. One knows that when the gas gauge reads "Empty," or when they see that annoying light come on, it's time to pull on in to the gas station and fill it up. But honestly, how many of you have tried to see how far you could get on "Empty?" Isa. 40:28-31 declares "[God] will not grow tired or weary... He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak." Many feel "empty" spiritually, emotionally, or physically because of their lack of running to the One who does not "grow tired or weary."

In John 4, Jesus makes it clear to a woman who is tired, desperate, weary, and "empty" that there is only One who can bring ultimate healing and fullness. How does one worship when living on "empty?" We can't. Apart from Christ we can do nothing. (John 15:5) When we are living on empty the only thing we can do is run to the spring of living water (Jesus) for life-giving eternal fulfillment. Check out this website for a motivating story about the woman who was once living on empty, now full in Christ.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=5IKCFG97C-U

Finances

Read Proverbs 3:1-5

In Paul's first letter to Timothy, he said the "love of money is a root of all kinds of evils," and it is "through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith" (I Timothy 6:10). Interestingly, he calls the "love of money" a "craving", if this is the case, we need to be vigilant, lest we begin to go the way of greed.

Proverbs 21:1-5 assists us in this fight by beginning with a person sitting at the king's table. It then tells those of us who are often controlled by our appetite to put a knife to our throats. This is because gluttony leads to greed. We start eating and acquiring more: more money, more clothes, more cars, and gradually what we have is insufficient in satisfying our greed. We are called to lay up our treasure in heaven and not here on the Earth. There are always things in our lives we want just a little extra of because we want more comfort, entertainment, status, or even security. But examine those things according to Scripture and be certain you aren't traveling the path of greed. For if we do, we will find our possessions "gone, for suddenly it sprouts wings, flying like an eagle toward heaven."

So How do we worship God through our finances? Give. Giving is a matter of the heart. It will require a commitment to God's command and an observation of God's blessing as he returns to those who give from a glad heart.

Occupation

Probably one of the most prevalent and regularly occurring opportunities for us to worship in our daily lives is in our occupations. Pretty much everyone has a job of some sort, and odds are most of your coworkers do not know Christ. What better way to live out the Gospel and worship than to be a good example of Christ through genuine relationships with your coworkers as an honest, hard working employee? We see this in scripture when Jesus teaches that we are to be "salt and light" and says in Matthew 5:16, "let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Even when jobs become a burden and wear us out, we can worship by being thankful for the job and being faithful in it. One Vintage member has learned this, worshiping God in obedience in a tough job situation, being faithful to work hard and be a light there. Even though it is a strain on his family, and he has been offered other jobs, he stays obedient and learns from the difficulty as he grows in faith and perseverance, knowing that the Lord has "established his steps" (Prov. 16:9). Sometimes in life, our worship is just faithfulness to push through difficulty, obeying God where He has placed us. Whether a job is perfect for us, or just a way to pay the bills, God has given it to us for a higher purpose, and through hard work as a good employee and witnessing to coworkers, we honor God.

Worship through Media

Media is a huge part of our daily lives, and comes in various forms and quantities. Some examples of this are television, music, movies, and the all-distracting internet. As we have been studying and experiencing through the Worshipology series, all things in life are worship, and this includes all modern variations of media. We need to learn to actively distinguish what things in media we should not be taking in, and how to worship through what we do take in and enjoy.

A good example to start with is music. A lot of us grew up in a church culture that condemned listening to "secular" music as sinful. This is self-righteous legalism, but the fact remains that as Christ-followers we cannot just subject ourselves to music and media, in general, that stands against God and His holiness. What we find that fits practically and spiritually is a balance of "being holy for I am holy" (1 Pet 1:16), and being in the world but not of it, and this includes what we put in our minds (Matt 15:18-19). It's not a black and white issue that we can set a hard line on, but in our own life, find what fits our walk, personality and context that glorifies the Lord. For one Vintage member, he has wrestled with this issue, and doesn't feel convicted to avoid all "secular" music, but to judge the content and character against scripture as to whether it will harm his witness or walk by polluting his heart and mind (Phil 4:8; Rom 8:5-8). This judgment is a personal conviction for each person, but the obvious fact is, media that focuses on the flesh (Gal 5:19-21) is what all Christ-followers should avoid. Through this, even in "secular" music that has positive or fun lyrics and skillful instrumentation, he can enjoy listening to music to brighten his day and enjoy this audible aspect of creation.