



How to Put the Most into Worship

**Answering Issues of Worshiping God
in the 21st Century**

**Part One of Three: Disciplining
Myself to Worship God as He Wills**

What Issues of Worshiping God in the 21st Century?

- “I need to go to church somewhere else because I just don’t get much out of worship here.”
- “I can worship God just as well or better alone at home. I don’t need to go to a bricks and mortar church building to worship God.”
- While these represent common and growing spirits among professed disciples of the Lord, they do not reflect the teaching of the New Testament for Christians who worship in spirit and in truth.

What Is Wrong With These Attitudes Toward Worship?

- First, worship isn't about what I get out of it. Never has been. It is about God, and what I put into honoring Him and His directions for our lives.
- Cain and Nadab and Abihu tried to worship God according to what they wanted in worship, rather than by what God told them He wanted in worship.
- Worship isn't about me; it's about God. It's not what I get out of it; it's what I put into it.

What Is Wrong With These Attitudes Toward Worship?

- Second, worship is about what I put into fellowship, encouragement, and edification of my fellow worshipers; not what they do for me.
- I can't do that alone at home in perpetuity
 - Heb. 10:23-25 - “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”
- I am commanded to help others in their worship and growth; therefore, I must be with others to do so.

What Is Wrong With These Attitudes Toward Worship?

- The first consideration in worship is God, the second consideration in worship is the well-being of other worshipers, and then and only then are my needs in worship fulfilled.
- In fact, by attending to the first, worshiping God and the second, edifying others, I will find that I have had my own needs in worship fulfilled.

Three Lessons on Putting the Most Into Worship

- Disciplining myself to worship God as He wills
- Dedicating myself to encouraging and edifying others in worship
- Determining to content myself with what God wills for me to receive from worship

Disciplining Myself To Worship God As He Wills

- Self-discipline in worship is the ability to purposefully keep one's entire being centered on the matter of glorifying God, building up one another in fellowship, and growing in the faith while assembled in worship
- A study of self-discipline in worship naturally flows from a general understanding of self-discipline for all facets of our lives

Disciplining Myself To Worship God As He Wills

- 1Tim. 4:7 - “Exercise yourself toward godliness” (NKJV)
- Compare translations
 - “Train yourself for godliness” (ESV, NET)
 - “Train yourself to be godly” (NIV, NLT)
 - “Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness” (NASB)
- Consider commentators
 - “Cultivate piety, and seek to become more holy” (Barnes Notes)
 - “As an athlete trains his body, so the Christian must train his soul” (Barclay)
 - “Such exercise involves reading and studying the Bible, prayer, and meditation” (Burkitt)

What Is Spiritual Discipline?

- Discipline:
 - “Any training intended to develop moral character, or produce a pattern of behavior” (Wikipedia)
 - “Training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character” (Merriam-Webster)
- Spiritual discipline
 - “A spiritual discipline is, when practiced faithfully and regularly, a habit or regular pattern in your life that repeatedly brings you back to God...” (<http://www.spirithome.com/spirdisc.html>)
 - “Spiritual disciplines can be described as behaviors that facilitate spiritual growth” (www.wcg.org/lit/spiritual/group/discip1.htm)
- Spiritual disciplines are spiritual exercises one engages in habitually which bring him or her closer to God, resulting in becoming more godly in knowledge, understanding, character, and behavior

Forms Of Spiritual Discipline

- Prayer, in which one spends time talking to God
 - Dan. 6:10 - “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.”
 - Col. 4:2 - “Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving”

Discipline Development Questions

- How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his personal prayers?
 - An increase in the practice of a spiritual discipline results in a corresponding increase in the quality of the spiritual activity.
- How can habitual, quality prayer increase self-discipline and character?
 - An increase in the quality of the spiritual activity results in a corresponding increase in the quality of one's character.

Forms Of Spiritual Discipline

- Meditation, in which one contemplates God's Word or other worthy considerations
 - Psalm 1:1-2 - “Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.”
 - Phil. 4:8 - “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things”

Discipline Development Questions

- How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his meditation?
 - An increase in the practice of a spiritual discipline results in a corresponding increase in the quality of the spiritual activity.
- How can habitual, quality meditation increase self-discipline and character?
 - An increase in the quality of the spiritual activity results in a corresponding increase in the quality of one's character.

Forms Of Spiritual Discipline

- Fasting, usually accompanied with prayer, in which one abstains from food or other physical needs for a predetermined period of time
 - Neh. 1:4 - “So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.”
 - Acts 13:2-3 - “As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ 3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.”
 - Acts 14:23 - “So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”

Discipline Development Questions

- How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his fasting?
 - An increase in the practice of a spiritual discipline results in a corresponding increase in the quality of the spiritual activity.
- How can habitual, quality fasting increase self-discipline and character?
 - An increase in the quality of the spiritual activity results in a corresponding increase in the quality of one's character.

Forms Of Spiritual Discipline

- Singing, through which one can praise God and be personally edified and refreshed
 - Psalm 71:23 - “My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to You, And my soul, which You have redeemed.”
 - Acts 16:25 - “But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.”

Discipline Development Questions

- How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his praise in song?
 - An increase in the practice of a spiritual discipline results in a corresponding increase in the quality of the spiritual activity.
- How can habitual, quality praise in song increase self-discipline and character?
 - An increase in the quality of the spiritual activity results in a corresponding increase in the quality of one's character.

Forms Of Spiritual Discipline

- Giving, by which we please God and are blessed (It is when we help others, regardless of personal cost, that we find our greater sense of accomplishment and fulfillment; contrast with helping ourselves)
 - Heb. 13:16 - “But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”
 - Acts 20:35 - “I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

Discipline Development Questions

- How can one increase the regularity and generous quality of his gifts?
 - An increase in the practice of a spiritual discipline results in a corresponding increase in the quality of the spiritual activity.
- How can habitual, generous giving increase self-discipline and character?
 - An increase in the quality of the spiritual activity results in a corresponding increase in the quality of one's character.

Forms Of Spiritual Discipline

- Assembling, where we can exhort one another and be exhorted (Is exhortation unidirectional?)
 - Psalm 122:1 - “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go into the house of the LORD.’”
 - Heb. 10:24-25 - “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Discipline Development Questions

- How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his assembling for exhortation?
 - An increase in the practice of a spiritual discipline results in a corresponding increase in the quality of the spiritual activity.
- How can habitual, quality assembling for exhortation increase self-discipline and character?
 - An increase in the quality of the spiritual activity results in a corresponding increase in the quality of one's character.

Forms Of Spiritual Discipline

- Hospitality, showing kindness to strangers, without concern for a reciprocal blessing
 - Heb. 13:2 - “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.”

Discipline Development Questions

- How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his love and care for strangers?
 - An increase in the practice of a spiritual discipline results in a corresponding increase in the quality of the spiritual activity.
- How can habitual, quality hospitality increase self-discipline and character?
 - An increase in the quality of the spiritual activity results in a corresponding increase in the quality of one's character.

Forms Of Spiritual Discipline

- Teaching, benefiting the teacher, as well as the student
 - Heb. 5:12-14 - “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

Discipline Development Questions

- How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his teaching?
 - An increase in the practice of a spiritual discipline results in a corresponding increase in the quality of the spiritual activity.
- How can habitual, quality teaching increase self-discipline and character?
 - An increase in the quality of the spiritual activity results in a corresponding increase in the quality of one's character.

Forms Of Spiritual Discipline

- Confession, to ourselves, God, and if public, to others
 - James 5:16 - “Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

Discipline Development Questions

- How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his confession?
 - An increase in the practice of a spiritual discipline results in a corresponding increase in the quality of the spiritual activity.
- How can habitual, quality confession increase self-discipline and character?
 - An increase in the quality of the spiritual activity results in a corresponding increase in the quality of one's character.

Forms Of Spiritual Discipline

- Celebration, the discipline of rejoicing. It is especially needed by those who take life too seriously. Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Reverent joy empowers and keeps one sweet, sane, and strong
 - Phil. 4:4 - “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”

Discipline Development Questions

- How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his Christian joy?
 - An increase in the practice of a spiritual discipline results in a corresponding increase in the quality of the spiritual activity.
- How can habitual, quality focus on Christian joy increase self-discipline and character?
 - An increase in the quality of the spiritual activity results in a corresponding increase in the quality of one's character.

Forms Of Spiritual Discipline

- Blessing, the discipline of openly loving others
 - Rom. 12:14 - “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse”
 - Observe an individual person, visually or as a mental image.
 - Appreciate them as they are, rather than as you wish them to be.
 - Bless them with an open expression and action of good-will.

Discipline Development Questions

- How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his blessing others?
 - An increase in the practice of a spiritual discipline results in a corresponding increase in the quality of the spiritual activity.
- How can habitual, quality blessing others increase self-discipline and character?
 - An increase in the quality of the spiritual activity results in a corresponding increase in the quality of one's character.

Forms Of Spiritual Discipline

- Solitude, taking time to be alone is a prerequisite for most of the other disciplines and is essential to spiritual health
- Six times Jesus chose solitude over people
 - To prepare for a major task - Luke 4:1-2, 14-15. After His baptism and before His temptation
 - To refresh after hard work - Mark 6:30-32. The limited commission
 - To bear with grief - Matthew 14:1-13. Upon hearing news of the execution of His cousin, John the Baptist
 - Before making an important decision - Luke 6:12-13. A night alone in prayer
 - In a time of distress - Luke 22:39-44. Gethsemane
 - To focus on prayer to God - Luke 5:16. Rather than serving the people

Discipline Development Questions

- How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his solitary moments?
 - An increase in the practice of a spiritual discipline results in a corresponding increase in the quality of the spiritual activity.
- How can habitual, quality solitude increase self-discipline and character?
 - An increase in the quality of the spiritual activity results in a corresponding increase in the quality of one's character.

Forms Of Spiritual Discipline

- Study, the discipline of intentional learning
 - 2Tim. 2:15 - “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
 - Repetition - return to the same subject again and again
 - Concentration - focus attention
 - Comprehension - grasp the truth in what is studied
 - Reflection - look for the significance in what is studied

Discipline Development Questions

- How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his Bible study?
 - An increase in the practice of a spiritual discipline results in a corresponding increase in the quality of the spiritual activity.
- How can habitual, quality study of God's word increase self-discipline and character?
 - An increase in the quality of the spiritual activity results in a corresponding increase in the quality of one's character.

Forms Of Spiritual Discipline

- Simplicity, freedom from anxiety about things and fear of others' opinions
 - Matt. 6:33 - “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”
 - Phil. 4:6-7 - “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Discipline Development Questions

- How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his uncomplicated, simple approach to spiritual life?
 - An increase in the practice of a spiritual discipline results in a corresponding increase in the quality of the spiritual activity.
- How can habitual focus on freedom from anxiety increase self-discipline and character?
 - An increase in the quality of the spiritual activity results in a corresponding increase in the quality of one's character.

Forms Of Spiritual Discipline

- Service, the self-discipline of doing things for someone other than self
 - Mark 10:45 - “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many”

Discipline Development Questions

- How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his service to others?
 - An increase in the practice of a spiritual discipline results in a corresponding increase in the quality of the spiritual activity.
- How can habitual focus on service to others increase self-discipline and character?
 - An increase in the quality of the spiritual activity results in a corresponding increase in the quality of one's character.

Forms Of Spiritual Discipline

- Submission, the discipline of freeing the self from the obsession of getting its own way
 - Eph. 5:21 - “Submitting to one another in the fear of God”

Discipline Development Questions

- How can one increase the regularity, duration, and quality of his submission to others?
 - An increase in the practice of a spiritual discipline results in a corresponding increase in the quality of the spiritual activity.
- How can habitual focus on submitting to others increase self-discipline and character?
 - An increase in the quality of the spiritual activity results in a corresponding increase in the quality of one's character.

The Importance Of Spiritual Discipline

- An undisciplined life leads to:
 - A lack of restraint that produces indulgence in fleshly, carnal desires
 - A lack of respect for authority that produces departure from God's will
 - Overt defensiveness about sinful choices and lifestyles
 - Decline in spiritual and possibly physical health
 - Harm to financial future; rising debt
 - Poor performance at work, failure to advance, job loss

The Importance Of Spiritual Discipline

- An undisciplined life leads to:
 - Development of slothful habits and possibly unkempt appearance
 - Reckless manner of speech, declining social skills, loss of relationships
 - Habitual tardiness, procrastination, and undependability
 - Wastes time and resources, blames others or circumstances
 - Loss of influence and credibility
 - Inability to be a faithful and effective Christian. An undisciplined life compromises one's testimony for Christ
 - 1Cor. 9:27 - "But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."

What Is Required For Spiritual Self-discipline?

- Have a definite purpose. Goals clarify what disciplines are necessary.
- Detach from things that distract from goals.
- Pursue objectives with diligence. Reflecting on the worthiness of goals will increase focus on the course.
- Be consistent. The full benefits of a self-controlled life can be found only through regular practice.
- Practice self-control. Stumbling happens; get up and return to work on self-discipline.
- Say “no” both in the heart and with the mouth with conviction to all temptation to ease up or take a break.
- Remember accountability; not just accountability to God, but the impact an influence on others and to the self. Write it down and read it often.

What Are The Rewards Of Spiritual Self-Discipline?

- A more orderly and consequently less stressful life. Self-discipline can increase peace, joy, and confidence.
- Improved confidence and self-esteem. Setting and achieving goals will confer a sense of accomplishment.
- Increased productivity. A well-planned day is generally more fruitful.
- Better health. By eating right, exercising, avoiding drug and alcohol abuse, and getting proper rest, many illnesses can be avoided that hinder attendance, good works, and personal development.
- A sound, healthy impact and influence on others. A disciplined life often inspires others toward the same. It can lead to interest and questions about other, deeper spiritual matters.
- Eternal reward. The most significant benefit of discipline will come from God.

How Can Self-Discipline Be Applied In Worship?

- It should be fairly obvious at this point that if the principles of self-discipline are adopted and applied by the Christian, he or she will use them in worship as well as in all aspects of life. The things that enhance our focus when alone or in a secular setting will work equally well when assembled for worship. In fact, fellowship with others should facilitate self-control and awareness when gathered together in the presence of the Lord.
- Remember, worship is about God, not me. It is about me using the word and will of God to serve, praise, and glorify Him; it is not about me being served, moved, or motivated. I motivate and move myself to honor and adore God.