

WORSHIP

LESSON TWENTY-THREE

Follow-up *(As a family discuss the assignment for the lesson Pray.)*

1. What do we each think about prayer?
2. When we're praying, and after praying, how do we feel?

Concept

Worship is defined as the act or feeling of adoration or homage; the paying of religious reverence as in prayer, praise, etc. The word adoration is defined as an emotion of profound admiration, utmost love and devotion.

According to this definition, the thing we worship in life is what we adore, admire, love and show devotion to. Does that describe our feelings about God?

How do people worship?

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| • Prayer | Communication with God. |
| • Meditation | Connecting to (divine) energy within. |
| • Formal Worship Services | Attending meetings to learn about God. |
| • Music | Uplifting music can bring thoughts of divinity, gratitude, love. |
| • Thoughts | Thoughts directed toward God can be a form of worship. |

Think about the definition of worship as feelings of adoration, love and devotion. Does that describe how we feel about some of our possessions or activities in life? There are people who care so much about the accumulation of wealth or power that they neglect family relationships. Some people adore money, a large house or an expensive car. Is that what they worship? We may want to reflect on what it is that we worship. Spending time learning about God and building a strong, happy family is far more important than spending time accumulating more money than is necessary.

God is the same yesterday, today and forever. He loves us, and He wants us to love each other. God knows we can find true happiness by obeying His laws, and by loving and serving



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people unconditionally. Our actions show how sincerely we worship God.

Family Survey Review

Statement #23. **We worship God as a family.**

- How do we feel about worshipping together as a family?
- If worshipping together is something that will bring family unity and strength, should we consider attending a worship service as a family?

Story

This fictional story tells about three different men, one of whom worshiped in a way that helped him better understand God.

Once upon a time there were three men who were told they would have an interview in which they'd be asked to tell what they knew about God.

The first man entered the room and described to the interviewer in great detail all he had learned about God. He told about God's great wisdom and His omnipotent power. The man then described God's love and compassion. The interviewer listened with intense interest while the first man spoke. When the man was finished, the interviewer thanked him sincerely and excused him.

The second man entered the room. This gentleman was well-learned and regarded as an expert in religion. He began by explaining several different theories about God. This second man was well-prepared for the interview and presented a lengthy discourse on the Almighty. The interviewer listened attentively, then thanked the man for his time. The knowledgeable gentleman left the room.

The third man entered. As he looked into the face of the interviewer, he immediately fell to his knees and exclaimed, "My Lord, My God!"

The first two men knew many things about God. The third man knew God.

Discussion

1. When people worship, they can either give "lip service" (say the words and go through the motions without really meaning it) or they can worship God with their whole hearts and show by their actions what they believe. How do we worship?
2. What can we do to improve in this area of spirituality?

Activity

Our activity for this lesson is to attend a worship service as a family. Let's do this with open minds and hearts while trying to learn more about God and His plan for our lives. Let's talk about our experience afterward.

Assignment

Realizing that there are several ways to worship, choose one of the ways you haven't worshiped before and try it. For example, if you've never meditated, learn more about it, then try it.

ADDITIONAL SOLUTION FOR FAMILIES

WORSHIP THROUGH MUSIC

Well-known composer Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) proclaimed, “Music praises God. Music can praise Him as well or better than the building of the church and all its decorations. Music is the church’s greatest ornament.” Indeed, music can be a powerful form of worship. It has been called the universal language, the language of God.

Many believe that God has inspired composers through the ages as they’ve created beautiful music. Stravinsky asserted, “Only God can create. I make music from music.” He also admitted, “I regard my talents as God-given, and I have always prayed to Him for strength to use them.”

Composer Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770-1827) believed in God and His power to help him compose. He recorded his thoughts: “It was not a fortuitous meeting of chordal atoms that made the world; if order and beauty are reflected in the constitution of the universe, then there is a God. Therefore, I will submit myself to all inconsistency and will place all my confidence in Your eternal goodness, O God!” Near the end of Beethoven’s life he wrote: “I have no friend; I must live by myself. I know, however, that God is nearer to me than others. I go without fear to Him; I have constantly recognized and understood Him.”

On March 27, 1808, Franz Joseph Haydn attended his last musical performance. The program featured his oratorio *The Creation*. He had finished the massive work at age sixty-six, saying it had been composed to inspire “the adoration and worship of the Creator” and to put the listener “in a frame of mind where he is most susceptible to the kindness and omnipotence of the Creator.” Haydn recalled, “Never was I so devout as when I composed *The Creation*. I knelt down each day to pray to God to give me strength for my work.” He told a friend, “When I was working on *The Creation*, I felt so impregnated with the Divine certainty that, before sitting down to the piano, I would quietly and confidently pray to God to grant me the talent that was needed to praise Him worthily.” At the March, 1808, performance of his triumphant oratorio, the composer was determined that God would get all the glory for His work. As the music faded and the audience applauded enthusiastically, Haydn lifted his hands and said, “Not from me--from there, above, comes everything!”

Another great composer, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791), also professed his belief in, and reliance upon, God. Mozart once wrote, “Let us put our trust in God and console ourselves with the thought that all is well, if it is in accordance with the will of the Almighty, as He knows best

what is profitable and beneficial to our temporal happiness and our eternal salvation.” With such a trusting attitude, his talent was unhindered by the doubts and uncertainty that have plagued many artists. Mozart’s faith left him free to use the talent given him, and it flowed from him in a seemingly never-ending stream of inspiration.

Felix Mendelssohn’s (1809-1847) composing career was based on a firm belief in divine inspiration: “I know perfectly well that no musician can make his thoughts or his talents different to what Heaven has made them.”

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) also believed God and good music to be inseparable. Bach was a career church musician in Germany. He proclaimed, “Music’s only purpose should be for the glory of God and the recreation of the human spirit.”

George Frederick Handel (1685-1759) was a contemporary of Bach. Handel agreed that God will intervene and assist in the creation of music. In 1741, Handel was genuinely discouraged. His health was failing, audiences had deserted him, and he was deeply in debt. Seeing no hope for the future, his music, or his life, he was ready to retire in disgrace. It seems that God had other plans for Handel. Two challenges were almost simultaneously set before him to change his life and the map of the musical world. From a Dublin charity, Handel received a commission to compose a piece of music for a benefit concert. From Charles Jennings, a wealthy friend, he received a libretto based exclusively on biblical texts.

With that libretto in hand, Handel went into a feverish work mode. For three weeks, beginning on August 22, he confined himself to his small house on Brook Street in London. From early morning into the night, he rarely left his music paper, ink, and pens. A friend who visited at that time reported having seen Handel weeping with intense emotion. Later, as Handel related the compositional experience, he quoted St. Paul’s words: “Whether I was in the body or out of my body when I wrote it, I know not.”

At one point a servant came into Handel’s room to deliver a tray of food. He reported having seen a wild expression in his employer’s eyes; a weeping Handel refused the food and exclaimed, “I think I did see all Heaven before me, and the great God himself.” George Frederick Handel had just completed what became the most-performed choral music in history, the Hallelujah Chorus.

After six days of incredibly concentrated work, Handel had completed the first part of the *Messiah*. The second part took him nine days, and the third part took another six. In two more days, to complete the orchestration, the masterpiece called the *Messiah* was finished. In the unbelievably brief span of twenty-four days, Handel had filled two hundred sixty pages of manuscript. Musicologist Robert Myers stated that the music and its powerful message “has probably done more to convince thousands of mankind that there is a God about us than all the theological works ever written.”

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Yes, music can be a powerful form of worship. In the words of J. S. Bach, “Where there is devotional music, God is always at hand with His gracious presence.” If this is true, then our families will benefit spiritually by enjoying devotional music in our homes. We can enjoy uplifting music as we sing songs which turn our thoughts to God and to life’s goodness, when we play musical instruments with the intent to create beautiful music, and when we listen to fine, uplifting music. Bringing good music into our homes will help instill in family members an appreciation for fine music, it will help us create the loving atmosphere that we desire, and good music will invite and promote positive, uplifting thoughts.