

**True Worship**

Passages: As listed in the lesson.

*Memory Verse*

“You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.” (Revelation 4:11)

<b>Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]</b>	<b>Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]</b>	<b>Good Works [Behavior]</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. True worship means worshipping in spirit and truth.</li><li>2. The Bible has taught us the importance of worshipping together with our spiritual family.</li></ol>	God is glory, honor, and power.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Learn the characteristics of true worship.</li><li>2. Worship God during trials.</li><li>3. Learn to set aside time for true worship.</li></ol>

*Overview*

**Events and Spiritual Teachings**

- A. The Meaning and Purpose of Worship
- B. Worshipping God in Spirit and Truth
- C. Worshipping with Our Spiritual Family

**Life Application:** The Daily Habit of Worship

**Activity:** Tree of Worship

**Memory Verse**

**Conclusion:** When we keep a reverent and thankful heart, praise God with sincerity, and serve one another in love, we are worshipping God in spirit and truth. In exchange, we will draw closer to God every day, and our actions will become a sweet fragrance to the Lord.

## Events and Spiritual Teachings

*(Teachers: Note that the included activity is fairly involved, so please plan your time accordingly. If need be, you may want to prepare some materials ahead of time for the students.)*

### A. The Meaning and Purpose of Worship

The word “worship” can easily become meaningless to Christians, but we shouldn’t let this happen. It is important that we try to offer true worship to God not just on the Sabbath, but every day of our lives. This means understanding what it means to truly worship God. But first, why do we need to worship God in the first place?

- Because He created us (Rev 4:11)
- Because we are His people (1 Pet 2:9)
- Because He died for us (Rom 5:8)
- To declare God’s salvation plan (Rom 6:23)

All the things that we have are things that God has given us. He has even given us what we can’t see—love, joy, and a chance at salvation. When we fully understand all that He has done for us, it is easy to see why we should worship Him! But what is worship, and what does it mean to truly worship God? The first step is a heart of reverence and love. Let’s look at examples of true worship in the Bible.

#### 1. Mary and Martha

Let’s read Luke 10:38–42. In this scenario, Martha seemed to be the dedicated one at first—she was busy being a good hostess, ensuring that Jesus and His followers were comfortable and well fed. Her sister might have seemed to be the lazy one to us! But what was Jesus’ response to Martha’s complaint? He said that Mary had “chosen that good part.” Mary did what was good and right by devoting herself to Jesus’ teaching. And unless we learn to do the same, we will dry up spiritually.

Too often we are more like Martha than Mary. While Martha labored, Mary listened. She found a place of stillness at Jesus’ feet and calmly listened to His words. Do you know what this means? When we come into church, we have come to see Jesus. And when we focus our attention on Him, the material things around us recede into the background. We should learn to worship like Mary, by sitting right at Jesus’ feet and listening attentively to the word of God.

#### 2. The Canaanite Woman

Let’s now look at a second example of true worship in Matthew 15:21–28. This woman wasn’t just any woman, but a desperate mother, urgently calling for help. Jesus’ words might have discouraged anyone else, but she took the words for what they truly were—a chance to draw out her faith! So, she came and worshiped Jesus despite His seeming prejudice. What was His response to her action?

From that point, the Lord began to interact with her and draw faith from her. At the end of this dialogue, He said, “O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire” (v. 28). The title of “woman” is a title of affection, and is the same word that Jesus used to speak to His mother. It’s clear that Jesus wasn’t trying to destroy her faith or discourage her, but attempting to build up her faith and draw true worship from her.

Both of these examples show us three key characteristics of true worship:

#### 1. True worship is humble and simple

In the Old Testament, Naaman was disappointed when receiving the simple instruction of bathing in

the river to rid himself of leprosy. But in the examples that we just read, the Gentile woman simply said, “Lord, help me!”, and all Mary did was sit and listen. Sometimes, we might feel like worship has to be complicated, grandiose, or special. But these instances prove that it doesn’t have to be any of those!

## **2. True worship means being personally engaged**

The Gentile woman’s worship was straight from the heart, and she interacted directly with the Lord Jesus when He spoke to her. Meanwhile, Mary came right to Jesus to sit at His feet. When worship is a habit, our prayers don’t have any meaning, and the time we spend at church no longer adds to our faith. But true worship means actively engaging with God, seeking Him out, and learning about Him.

## **3. True worship is determined and sincere**

When Jesus said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs” (Mt 15:26), the woman simply accepted her status with humility, and begged for at least a tiny crumb of mercy. Her reaction showed that her worship may have been desperate, but it was born out of determination and her sincere faith that Jesus could save her child.

Mary and the Samaritan woman both offer vastly different, but equally important, examples of how to truly worship the Lord. One is in quiet and stillness, the other, determination and urgency. But both require faith in the Lord, a desire to seek after Him, and a heart full of reverence and love.

## **B. Worshiping God in Spirit and Truth**

In New Testament times, the Jews went to the temple at Jerusalem to worship, but Samaritans went to Mount Gerizim. When a Samaritan woman asked the Lord Jesus where they were supposed to worship, Jesus replied that “true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (Jn 4:23–24). Jesus was teaching us the true place and form of our worship. But what exactly did He mean?

The “truth” is something unchangeable and immutable. To worship God, we must learn His word and put His teachings into practice. This is the only way we can worship in truth, because truth comes only from God (Jn 1:17; Jn 14:6). What about the Spirit? When we are baptized, God gives us new life, and pours out the Holy Spirit to dwell in us (Acts 2:33; Rom 8:9). He gives us new life in the Spirit. Therefore, to worship God in Spirit and truth means worshiping God through communion with the Spirit and submission to the truth.

Let’s return to the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. She was concerned about *where* they should worship; Jesus was concerned about *how* we should worship. We may attend church each week, but unless your heart is truly focused on God, do you think you are truly worshiping Him? Do you commune with the Holy Spirit? Do you submit to God’s truth in your daily actions, and in your heart? Let’s review a few ways we can worship God in spirit and truth.

### **1. Prepare our hearts**

To worship God, we need to prepare our hearts. Let’s read Hebrews 10:22. “[Let] us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” This is the first step to preparing our hearts: we need to cleanse ourselves from within. This means repenting of any wrong against God.

## **2. Keep a reverent heart**

To have a reverent heart means to respect and honor God. How do you act in church? Do you sleep during service, or play in the chapel in between sessions? Do you get moody or temperamental because you can't do what you want on Saturday? It is very easy for us to forget the primary reason that we are at church. While there is nothing wrong with coming to church to see our friends, it is more important that when we worship God in church, we keep a reverent heart. Ultimately, we should strive for:

- a. Stillness and quiet (Ps 46:10)
- b. Order (1 Cor 14:40)
- c. Joy (Ps 100:2)

## **3. Keep a thankful heart**

Another attitude that we should maintain in our worship at church is a heart of thanksgiving. Because of all the blessings and grace that God has given us, we need to worship Him with a thankful and joyful heart! Paul understood the importance of thanksgiving, so he instructed us that "in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thess 5:18).

## **4. Praise the Lord with hymns**

Psalm 28:7 says, "Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him." But from this verse, and from the many other examples in the Bible, we can see that the time we spend praising God is also an important part of worshiping Him. Paul wrote that the members should "[speak] to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph 5:19). Let's encourage each other so that if we are singing during service, fellowship, or choir, we do not take it lightly, but participate with joy and praise God!

## **5. Serve one another**

Let's read Matthew 25:35–40. God wants us to worship Him by serving one another. We can do that by helping our brothers and sisters in small ways that express our care and concern. Jesus set an example for us: He never turned away those in need. However, His servitude was not just to set an example. It was also out of love (Mk 6:34). Therefore, when we worship God through our servitude, we should serve out of love for God and for each other (Mt 6:1–4).

Mary once poured a jar of very costly oil on Jesus' feet, causing "the house [to be] filled with the fragrance of the oil" (Jn 12:3). Our worship should leave a fragrance, meaning it should leave an impact! Psalm 141:2 says, "Let my prayer be set before You as incense," and Revelation 8:4 says that "the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God." Worshiping in spirit and truth means that our actions should be a sweet aroma to the Lord and fill God's house with the fragrance of oil. This means that whether through prayers, praise, or servitude, our worship should leave behind a positive and lasting impact both on our own spirituality and on those around us.

## **C. Worshiping with Our Spiritual Family**

Our spiritual family is much larger than our earthly family, as it includes all of the brothers and sisters who gather together to worship God. There is no distinction between race, gender, or culture. Once we are baptized, we all belong to this family, for we have become fellow citizens of God's household. As fellow citizens, the Bible teaches us to gather together to worship God.

1. Hebrews 10:25 – "[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."

2. Philemon 1:7 – “For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.”
3. 1 John 1:3–4 – “[That] which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.”

Why does God want us to gather and worship as a spiritual family? Because worshiping with our spiritual family enriches our faith. As a group, we can offer each other joy, encouragement, comfort, and fellowship with our brothers and sisters. Moreover, we can help each other increase in spiritual knowledge. All of these help us draw closer to God in ways that those who are not in our spiritual family cannot help us to do.

### *Check for Understanding*

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1. **What are four reasons we should worship God?** Because He created us; we are His people; He died for us; and to declare God’s salvation plan.
2. **What was the difference between Mary and Martha?** Martha labored, but Mary listened. She found a place of stillness at Jesus’ feet, and calmly listened to His words.
3. **What are three key characteristics of true worship that we can learn from Mary and the Canaanite woman?** It is humble and simple; it means being personally engaged; it is determined and sincere.
4. **What are five ways we can worship God in spirit and truth?** Prepare our hearts by repenting of any wrong; keep a reverent heart by finding stillness and quiet, order, and joy; keep a thankful heart; praise the Lord with hymns and spiritual songs; and serve one another with love for God and for each other.
5. **Why is it important that we worship God together with our spiritual family?** Our spiritual family enriches our hearts. As a group, we can offer each other joy, encouragement, comfort, fellowship, and spiritual knowledge.

### *Life Application*

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#### **The Daily Habit of Worship**

When we go home after church, many of us immediately forget about God and focus on our daily lives. It is easy to ignore God when we are at home playing games, at school, or out to play with our friends. But worshiping God shouldn’t be limited to church. It should be a daily, frequent occurrence.

Let’s read Genesis 22:5, and Job 1:20–21. Abraham was likely feeling great sorrow even as he faithfully obeyed God. Job was also undergoing great pain, sorrow, and agony, yet his response was to worship God. They prove to us that no matter what we are going through in life, it is still possible to worship God, even when we are afflicted with pain, troubles, and tribulation. In fact, it is during these times that we must focus even more on our worship.

Worship is significant because it crushes our fears, renews our spirits, and adds to our joys. Focusing on God lets our troubles begin to recede into the background, and makes us more thankful for everything He has given us. Of course, it is also very easy to forget to worship God when we are anxious, busy, or involved with our hobbies or academics. So, we must make an effort to set aside time to worship God from our heart every day, both in times of joy and in times of tribulation! Let’s review what we learned about worshiping God, and discuss more specific actions that we can take.

**1. Prepare our hearts**

It is important that we focus our hearts and minds on God in order to worship Him. This sometimes requires physical steps, such as sleeping early on Friday night so that we are awake and on time for morning service! We can also prepare our hearts in prayer. When was the last time you truly and deeply repented of a sin? When was the last time you took even a few moments to prepare yourself before approaching the Lord or serving Him?

**2. Keep a reverent heart**

Keeping a reverent heart also requires both internal and external action. What actions do you think reflect a reverent heart in church? What about an irreverent heart? *(Allow students to brainstorm. Ideas for reverence might be: taking notes in sermon; paying extra attention to our prayers; or speaking quietly in the chapel. Examples of an irreverent heart might be: sleeping during service; chatting during hymn singing; or always being late to church or to class.)*

**3. Keep a thankful heart**

A thankful heart may not seem like a form of worship, but a heart of thanksgiving is a way to show our love for God, because it means that we understand that everything we have comes from God. What can you give thanks to God for? *(Allow students to brainstorm. Examples may be: His creation; His promised Holy Spirit; giving us a church where we can worship Him; His death on the cross; salvation; etc.)*

**4. Praise the Lord with hymns**

Praising God shows our joy in His presence, and our recognition of His love for us. Of course, praising God doesn't just have to take place at church! Do you sing in the car or the shower? Maybe while you do chores around the house? Singing praises at any time or place is a simple form of worship that shows our affection for God! Take a moment to think of your favorite hymn. It might be from the hymn book, choir, or from SSC. Share with the class the reason you like the hymn.

**5. Serve one another**

Take a moment and think of how you can serve others at home, at church, and elsewhere. As a class, brainstorm as many actions as you can, and put a list together. *(Teachers: This list can be used to supplement step one of the following activity.)*

**Activity: Tree of Worship**

*(Teachers: An optional template has been added to this lesson for your use. This activity can be done as a class with a large tree on the wall, or individually. If individually, it is recommended that you keep the students' "trees" in the classroom, so that they don't forget to continue adding leaves. Prepare a banner that says "Tree of Worship" or "True Worship." Lead by example by adding your own leaves throughout the term and remind them to add their own each week before or after class.)*

**Step 1: Brainstorm!**

Brainstorm examples of true worship. To help keep things organized, try categorizing them under the different ways of worshiping God in spirit and truth. Try to phrase each suggestion so that they are short and simple. *(Teachers: Examples have been provided to help get the students started. Once they have a list, you may want to type or write the list on a piece of paper and post it next to their trees to help them choose one or two things to focus on each week.)*

Heart	Reverence	Thankfulness
<i>Sincerely repented today. Spent extra time in prayer. Prayed before leading hymns. Slept early on Friday night. Good prayer today. Felt closer to God!</i>	<i>Remembered to walk in chapel. Didn't think of games all day. Paid attention during sermon. Took extra notes during class. Happy to come to church today! Memorized another verse.</i>	<i>Thanked God in my prayer for something that happened. Felt joy during a trial. Prayed before a hard test and experienced God's help. Gave extra tithe to thank God.</i>

Praise	Servitude
<i>Paid attention in choir. Sang hymns with family. Spent extra time practicing hymns on piano. Memorized favorite hymn. Added playlist of hymns to phone.</i>	<i>Helped a bro/sis with a task. Did extra cleaning at church. Put away misplaced garbage. Visited a truth-seeker with my parents. Helped parents wash dishes. Took care of sick sibling.</i>

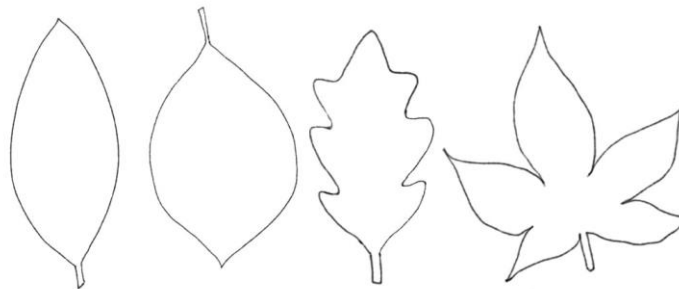
**Step 2: Make a tree**

*(Teachers: If sharing one large tree for the class, the students may copy a larger version of the template. Alternatively, draw the outline on large poster paper ahead of time and let the students fill it with colored construction paper. If using individual trees, you may photocopy the template for them. If you would like more space for their leaves, simply cut out the tree and paste it on larger paper.)*

Using colored construction paper, cut out a “tree” shape. Make sure to include various branches that stick out. The tree will look quite bare; that’s okay! We’ll be adding some leaves in a moment.

**Step 3: Add leaves**

*(Teachers: If some of the students’ suggestions during step one are particularly long phrases, try making leaves that “open” – simply fold the paper in two and cut the same leaf shape, ensuring a portion of the fold remains uncut. This will create extra space for them to write, on the inside of the open leaf. Below are some examples of simple shapes that your students can use.)*



Draw a few different leaf shapes, large enough to write on but small enough to match your tree’s size. Using these as templates, cut out several “leaves,” and write on them how you have offered true worship to God this week. Refer to our list in step one for ideas. Try to be specific; if you helped someone with a task, what task was it? If you only have one or two leaves, that’s okay! We’ll keep adding to our tree every week. By the end of the term, we’ll have a tree that has fully blossomed with our worship for God!

### *Memory Verse*

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“You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.” (Revelation 4:11)

### **Meaning**

It is difficult to truly worship God unless we understand the reason we worship Him. One of the key reasons we attribute so much honor to Him is because of His status as Creator of all things. We are constantly discovering new things about the earth, how it works, and the intricate workings of all of creation. They are so complex that it is impossible for us to understand everything! All of this was made by God, and even we ourselves wouldn't exist if not for Him. Therefore, He deserves all of our praise and our worship.

### *Conclusion*

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We learned today that true worship is an important facet of our relationship with God, and also one that we must learn. True worship means that we are not simply going through the motions of worship, but interacting with God in a meaningful way. When we keep a reverent and thankful heart, praise God with sincerity, and serve one another in love, we are worshiping God in spirit and truth. In exchange, we will draw closer to God every day, and our actions will become a sweet fragrance to the Lord.



Lesson 7 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What is a key reason we attribute so much honor to God?  
*Because of His status as Creator of all things. The intricate world around us was made by God, and even we ourselves wouldn't exist if not for Him. Therefore, He deserves all of our praise and worship.*
2. "But the \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_, and now is, when the true \_\_\_\_\_ will \_\_\_\_\_ the Father in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_; for the Father is \_\_\_\_\_ such to \_\_\_\_\_ Him." (John 4:23)  
*hour, coming, worshipers, worship, spirit, truth, seeking, worship*
3. Explain the difference between Martha and Mary. What can we learn from Mary's actions?  
*While Martha labored, Mary listened. When we focus our attention on God, material things recede into the background. We should learn to worship like Mary, by sitting right at Jesus' feet and listening attentively to the word of God.*
4. What can we learn from Mary's use of fragrant oil to worship the Lord Jesus?  
*Whether through prayers, praise, or servitude, our worship should leave behind a positive and lasting impact both on our own spirituality and on those around us.*
5. What are three characteristics of worship that we learned from examples in the Bible?  
*True worship is humble and simple, means being personally engaged with God, and is determined and sincere.*
6. Of the five ways to worship God in spirit and truth, which two do you need to work on the most, and how can you improve upon them both this week?  
*Personal answers.*

