

## *Chapter Eleven*

# WORSHIP IS INITIATED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

“ . . . even as by the spirit of the  
Lord ”

Worship. . . is God's Spirit in man responding  
to God's Spirit in God. It is the Holy Spirit  
worshipping through us.

*Judson Cornwall*



***E**ven as by the Spirit of the Lord—“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth” (Jn. 4:24).*

The Holy Spirit is a person and He dwells in the heart of every believer. It is the Holy Spirit that leads us to the Father and teaches us how to worship in spirit and in truth. Whenever spirit and truth are joined in worship there is blessing. He is the One who is active in our lives in bringing us into the likeness of Christ—layer by layer, from glory to glory.

When we worship, we are responding and interacting with the Holy Spirit to bring our love, adoration, and service directly to the Father, through the mediation of Jesus, the Son. The Holy Spirit is the source and inspiration for our communion with God and is the primary initiator of the intimacy between God and man. He has gone first and given us life. He laid down His life for us so that we might enjoy Him forever.

In every religion other than Christianity, man attempts to reach up to God. Our God, however, has initiated our relationship; He

has reached down to us. By the work of the Holy Spirit, every Christian is led to worship and the likeness of Christ. Judson Cornwall agrees with Scripture when he writes that it is impossible to worship without the help of the Holy Spirit:

. . . while praise can be the product of the human spirit, worship is impossible without the aid of the Holy Spirit of God.<sup>1</sup>

. . . no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 12:3)

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It is the Lord who begins our worship journey, and the Lord who completes us through the work of the Holy Spirit. He does not override our will, however. The Holy Spirit responds to our desires for His work in our hearts: as Tozer puts it, “He waits to be wanted.”<sup>2</sup>

Richard Foster comments on the wooing of the Holy Spirit in worship. He calls worship:

. . . our response to the overtures of love from the heart of the Father.<sup>3</sup>

His love is made known to us through the work of the Holy Spirit. Adam Clarke teaches of the influence of the Holy Spirit as He brings about God’s nature in every part of our lives:

By the energy of that Spirit of Christ which gives life and being to all the promises of the Gospel; and thus we are made partakers of the Divine nature and escape all the corruptions that are in the world.<sup>4</sup>

The Apostle John tells us that it is impossible to come to Christ unless we are drawn by the Father (Jn. 6:44). The means by which the Father allures us is the Holy Spirit. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work together to win our hearts in uncompromising devotion:

For through him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. (Eph. 2:18)

We must be wholly and humbly dependent upon the Holy Spirit to draw us in worship. He must be the source of every aspect of relationship with God. We were born again by the Spirit; we must continue in the Spirit.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT—OUR COMPANION IN WORSHIP

. . . *even as by the Spirit of the Lord*—The Holy Spirit is our Guide and our Friend as He leads us into the knowledge and love of the Father and the Son. There are times in worship that are absolutely delightful, as the Holy Spirit brings us to meet with the Lord in different ways. As described below, there are many places where the Holy Spirit desires to lead us so that we may encounter the Father. He brings us to:

- *The face of God*, where He speaks to us of Himself (Ex. 32:30; 33:11; Pss. 17:15; 27:8; 41:12); where He turns our hearts in repentance (2 Chron. 7:14); and where He kisses us in love (Song of Sol. 1:1).
- *The hand of God*, where we take our place alongside Him as His royal bride (Ps. 45:9; Is. 62:3); where we find His blessings and protection (Pss. 16:1; 18:35; 63:8; 138:7; 145:16; Is. 41:10); where He molds us into vessels of honor (Is. 64:8); and where He hides us (Is. 49:2).
- *The feet of God*, where we fall down in worship (Matt. 15:30; 28:9; Lk. 7:37–38; Jn. 12:3; Rev. 5:14; 7:11).
- *His banqueting hall*, where we sit down and feed from Him (Song of Sol. 2:4); and where He prepares a table for us in the presence of our enemies (Ps. 23:5).
- *His throne room*, where we come boldly and bow humbly before our King (Es. 5:1; Heb. 4:16; Rev. 19:4–5).
- *His inner chamber*, where we engage in intimate and secret communion with Him (Song of Sol. 1:4); and

where He spreads His wings over us (Ru. 3:9; Pss. 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7; 91:4; Eze. 16:8).

- *His seat of justice and judgment*, where we obtain forgiveness and justice (Pss. 35:22–24; 68:5; 82:1; 89:14).
- *His secret places*, where we grow nearer to Him and receive His treasures (Pss. 27:5–6; 31:20; 81:7; 91:1; Prov. 3:32; Song of Sol. 2:14; Is. 45:3).
- *The outer court of His presence*, where we celebrate and rejoice because of His greatness (Ps. 100:4).
- *The gates of His Holy place*, where we become attendants of His majesty and servants of His court (Ps. 24:3; Prov. 8:34).
- *The place of prayer and intercession*—the private closet and the right hand of God (Matt. 6:6; Rom. 8:26–27, 34; 1 Tim. 2:1).

The Holy Spirit draws, directs and leads us into every encounter with the Father. All we have to do is respond with all our hearts and run after Him. Prophetic worship opens the way for us to enter His presence again and again.

Draw me away! We will run after you. (Song of Sol. 1:4)

His attracting force is extremely powerful, and yet the soul follows freely and without force. Why? Because the attracting of your Lord is just as delightful as it is powerful! Although His attracting of you is powerful, it carries you away by its sweetness.<sup>5</sup> (Madame Guyon)

## AN EXTRAORDINARY COMMUNION WITH GOD

. . . *even as by the Spirit of the Lord*—Anything the Holy Spirit initiates is pure (Ps. 24:3–4) and perfect (Deut. 32:4; Pss. 18:30; 19:7). Some may be afraid of possible excesses when considering prophetic worship. All I would say to this is that if we compare the Lord to our personal, cultural or denominational preferences in worship, then we would have to agree that He is rather extraordi-

nary in all that He does. His love, judgment, mercy, presence, and joy—as described in the Bible—might all be characterized as being consummately extreme when compared to our standards of expression.

Even though we might find the Lord to be extreme in all of His ways, yet He requires that we commune with Him in a way that is pleasing to *Him*—not to us. We need to learn *His* definition of “normal” when it comes to worship.

It is imperative that we understand that the Holy Spirit is the one who is leading us to the glory and face of God. We have nothing to fear, and nothing to lose except ourselves. We must trust the Holy Spirit to bring both liberty and order to our worship. E. F. Harrison writes of this liberty:

The Spirit is the key to this process, [the process of 2 Cor. 3:18], affording liberty to the saints to keep Christ before them and grow up into Him in all things.<sup>6</sup>

*... even as by the Spirit of the Lord*—Worship flows from our lives when we are filled with the Holy Spirit: “. . . be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord . . . ” (Eph. 5:18b–19). Our worship is based upon our relationship with God, and our relationship is dependent upon the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

*... even as by the Spirit of the Lord*—The Holy Spirit reveals a definite purpose and intent in this verse. We are confronted with His desire in the matter of our relationship with the Lord. In the previous six points of 2 Corinthians 3:18, our focus has been on the things we need to be doing: unveiling our faces, looking into His glory, yielding to His transforming work in our lives, and so forth. Now we see the emphasis has shifted to the desire and determination of the Holy Spirit in this matter.

## SEVEN DESIRES OF THE LORD

I only know of the Lord expressing seven desires in the entire Bible. Each of His desires concerns the Church and her relationship with Him. Our worship must be profoundly affected by these seven things that God has specifically mentioned. The seven desires

of God are summed up in God's longing to have fellowship with us, His children.

He desires:

- **The beauty of His Bride, the Church**

“So the King will greatly desire your beauty. . . ” (Ps. 45:11)

This is the only time in the Word that there is mention of the Lord greatly desiring anything. The Lord greatly desires to see and partake of the beauty that is woven into our lives as we are transformed into His likeness in the light of His glory.

- **Zion to be His dwelling place forever**

For the LORD has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place: “This is my resting place forever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it.” (Ps.132:13–14) (See also Ps. 68:15–16)

Zion is a poetic and prophetic name for the worshiping Church. The Lord desires to dwell in the midst of His people forever.

- **Truth in our inner being**

“Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts. . . ” (Ps. 51:6)

The beauty of God's people begins on the inside. In this Psalm, David is asking the Lord to cleanse him completely after he had been caught in a sin. It is David's astounding repentance—from the core of his being—that restored his relationship with the Lord and caused him to be known forever as: a man of integrity and uprightness (1 Ki. 9:4); with a perfect heart (1 Ki. 11:4; 15:3), and a man after God's heart (Acts 13:22). Our on-going relationship with the Lord is only possible if we walk in transparency and holiness to the core of our being.

"The power of godliness is the main thing God looks at and requires, and without it the form of godliness is of no avail."<sup>7</sup> (Matthew Henry)

- **Mercy above sacrifice**

"For I desire mercy and not sacrifice. . . ." (Hos. 6:6)

God desires our righteousness and inner virtue over the external sacrifices that He instituted. The Hebrew word for *mercy* in this passage is *checed* (Strong's #2617)—meaning *kindness, piety, beauty, favor, lovingkindness, mercy*. These qualities are more desirable in us than any form of outward religion.

- **For us to know and worship Him**

"For I desire. . . the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." (Hos. 6:6)

God desires the reality of our faith and relationship with Him over the forms and rituals of religion. He wants our sincere and genuine participation in worship rather than a theoretical understanding of the Bible and His presence. Not only does God want to know us, but He desires that we know Him as well. What a glorious thought! Even if we were to study Him and know Him for millions of years, we would never be able to exhaust the vast depths and riches of His character. We may think that we know Him now, but great wonders and delights await the true seeker of God.

"The great need in every generation is for a true knowledge of God. Without this knowledge the world loses its sense of meaning and the church falls into a state of apathy."<sup>8</sup> (Sammy Tippit)

If we are to know God, then we must become students and stewards of His divine mysteries (1 Cor. 4:1). Paul's constant prayer was that believers would grow in the knowledge of God:

[For I always pray] the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, that He may grant you a spirit of

wisdom and revelation—of insight into mysteries and secrets—in the [deep and intimate] knowledge of Him.  
 . . . (Eph. 1:17, Amp.)

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- **He wants all of our heart**

“I am my beloved’s, and his desire is toward me.” (Song of Sol. 7:10)

The Shulamite recognized that her lover was totally devoted to her. She was the center of all His desires. This is the same way that the Lord feels about us—the Church. His greatest love and most profound desire is for intimacy and relationship with us—His bride. We need to respond to Him by yielding every area of our lives fully to Him. He desires all of us, not just a part of us.

- **For us to see His glory**

“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me . . . ” (Jn. 17:24)

The final desire the Lord expresses in the Word is that we would see Him as He truly is. Not only does He require that we be unveiled, but He desires to unveil Himself before us in worship and show us His glory.

God is deeply involved in 2 Corinthians 3:18 by the work of the Holy Spirit. He has expressed His desire throughout the Word that we grow in intimacy and relationship with Him. It is His desire that we turn our hearts and lives completely over to Him and partake of His glory forever. The Holy Spirit is earnestly and passionately working to bring about God’s will in our lives. 2 Corinthians 3:18 is not an option for the Christian. God will have His way. We will be changed into the likeness of His glory.

But He is unique, and who can make Him change? And whatever His soul desires, that He does. (Job 23:13)

## OUR HEART'S CRY

Perhaps this song, written by Paul Baloche, sums up the desire that arises in our hearts in the midst of worship to behold His glory and participate in the eternal song of heaven—"Holy, holy, holy":

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord.  
Open the eyes of my heart;  
I want to see You, I want to see You.  
Open the eyes of my heart, Lord.  
Open the eyes of my heart;  
I want to see You, I want to see You.

To see You high and lifted up,  
shining in the light of Your glory.  
Pour out Your power and love;  
as we sing holy, holy, holy.

Holy, holy, holy;  
holy, holy, holy,  
I want to see You.<sup>9</sup>

We all must realize that every church and individual worshiper must undergo some changes in order for prophetic worship to become the norm. I would like to suggest that those who refuse change and personal growth in worship will not go far with God. He has been developing, renewing and changing the worship formats of His people since the beginning of time.

The sacrificial system of worship that Cain and Abel were used to was later changed to an elaborate tabernacle worship spectacle. The Lord told David that He desired him to offer "spiritual sacrifices" rather than animal sacrifices. Later, David's son, Solomon, built the Temple, which combined worship forms taken from the tabernacles of both Moses and David.

In the New Testament, Jesus told an inquiring woman that the hour was coming when worship would no longer take place in a

particular geographic location, but in the hearts of men (Jn. 4:19–24). The pace of change has accelerated into the Church Age. As we are all aware, the architecture of churches, styles of music and types of instruments used in worship have changed vastly over the centuries. All we can be sure of with the Lord is that changes are bound to take place.

True worship renewal does not come about through superficial measures, but through recognizing that worship studies are an essential discipline of Christian theology. Renewal grows out of attention to the biblical and historical sources of Christian worship and the provision of the Holy Spirit.<sup>10</sup> (Robert Webber)

Let us yield to the work of the Holy Spirit as He forms Christ in us. 