

Session 1 – Drawing Near To God's Presence

I. Throne Room Worship

- a. Worship is always a response to adoring God (**Exodus 34:6-8; Psalm 27:4; Psalm 63:2-5**) As we behold His beauty, holiness, mercy, and majesty, authentic worship is drawn from us almost effortlessly. Throne room scenes in Scripture (**Isaiah 6; Revelation 4; Ezekiel 1**) reveal that worship isn't forced, it erupts because God reveals Himself. The creatures around His throne don't worship unceasingly because they're commanded to, but because they're captivated by who He is. Our songs, prayers, and affections rise through whatever expression when we encounter the revelation of God. Authentic worship begins when we simply adore and behold Him. When we see Him clearly, worship becomes inevitable.

(Revelation 4:8-11 NASB) *"And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come." 9 And when the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and they will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."*

- b. Worship has always been all about Him, not us (**Psalm 115:1; Isaiah 42:8**). True worship shifts our focus off ourselves and onto the only one who deserves all honor. It's not about how we feel, how we sound, or whether the moment fits our preferences, it's about Jesus receiving the glory that's rightfully due Him (**1 Chronicles 16:29**). Those around His throne never ask, "What did I get out of worship today?" because they're only concerned with God's beauty. When we worship, we join that heavenly perspective and lay down our self-centeredness (**Romans 12:1**). God is the center of the story, the center of the songs we sing, and the center of our affection.

(Psalm 115:1 NASB) *"Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to Your name give glory because of Your lovingkindness, because of Your truth."*

(Psalm 73:25-26 NASB) *"Whom do I have in heaven but You? And with You, I desire nothing on earth. 26 My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."*

- c. Our perspective of God determines how much we value Him. If our view of Him is small, distant, or vague, our worship will reflect that. But when we behold Him as Scripture reveals, everything changes. A shallow view produces shallow worship, but a true view leads to authentic affection. Getting a biblical revelation of God is essential; it brings our understanding of who He really is into right perspective. The more clearly we perceive His greatness, the more costly, joyful, and wholehearted our worship becomes. Worship rises to the level of our revelation of God.

(2 Peter 3:18 NASB) *"but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."*

(Isaiah 29:13 NASB) *"Then the Lord said, 'Because this people draw near with their words and honor Me with their lip service, but they remove their hearts far from Me, and their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote,'"*

(Psalm 73:28 NASB) *"But as for me, the nearness of God is good for me; I have made the Lord God my refuge, So that I may tell of all Your works."*

II. Proximity Not Performance

- a. In the Garden within Eden, worship was marked by proximity and partnership. Before sin, there were no songs, instruments, or temples, highlighted in scripture, humanity worshiped simply through nearness. Adam and Eve walked with God in the cool of the day (**Genesis 3:8**), and their worship wasn't a formal religious ritual but relational. They lived in constant awareness of God's nearness, partnering with Him to

tend the garden. There was no striving or proving themselves; everything flowed from fellowship. This reveals God's original design for worship: closeness, conversation, and co-laboring.

(Genesis 1:28 NASB) "God blessed them; and... said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'"

(John 15:15 NASB) "No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you."

b. The entire storyline of Scripture is the story of a God who wants to be with His people (**Exodus 25:8; Ezekiel 37:27; John 1:14; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Revelation 21:3**). The Bible isn't primarily about us, but about Him relentlessly pursuing relationship with His people. From Eden to the tabernacle, from the temple to the incarnation, from Pentecost to the New Jerusalem, the theme is the same: God dwelling with humanity. Redemption is God restoring the proximity lost in the fall (**Genesis 3:23-24; Ephesians 2:13; Hebrews 10:19-22**). The story begins in a garden and ends in a garden-city where God lives openly among His people again. Worship becomes the way we say "yes" to His desire for closeness.

(James 4:8 NASB) "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

c. We don't draw near to God on the basis of our feelings, performance, or spiritual track record; it's only by the blood of Jesus (**Hebrews 10:19-22; Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 5:1-2**). His sacrifice opened the way for intimacy with God and removed every barrier that sin created (**Ephesians 2:13; Colossians 1:21-22; Romans 5:10**). Because of His blood, we can approach Him boldly, confidently, and without shame. Worship is our ownership of the privilege of His blood, where we choose to step into the nearness Jesus paid for instead of the distance sin created. Drawing near to God is the outworking of our faith, not an act of personal merit.

(Ephesians 2:13 NASB) "But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."

(1 Peter 2:9 NASB) "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light"

III. Bringing Our Authentic Selves Before God

a. Scripture shows us that worship isn't limited to humans; creation itself responds to God's glory (**Psalm 19:1; Psalm 148:3-5; Isaiah 55:12**). The heavens declare His majesty, the stars sing (**Job 38:7**), the rivers and mountains echo His greatness (**Psalm 98:8**), and Jesus said that if His people were silent, even the rocks would cry out. Worship is woven into the fabric of creation because all creation was made to reflect its Creator (**Colossians 1:16; Romans 1:20; Revelation 4:11**). When we worship, we join a cosmic choir that has been singing since the beginning (**Job 38:4-7**). Creation reveals that worship is bigger than music; it's the natural response of creation to Creator.

(Luke 19:36-40 NASB) "Now as He was going, they were spreading their cloaks on the road. 37 And as soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, 38 shouting: "Blessed is the King, the One who comes in the name of the Lord; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" 39 And yet some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples!" 40 Jesus replied, "I tell you, if these stop speaking, the stones will cry out!"

b. Though all creation responds to His glory, unlike the rest of creation, humans were made in God's image (**Genesis 1:26-27**), carefully crafted with the capacity to know Him, enjoy Him, and be enjoyed by Him (**Psalm 8:4-6; Genesis 2:7**). Worship isn't just a duty; it's part of our design and ingrained deeply within our DNA. WE were made to receive His affection and return it freely. Worship fulfills something deep within us because it aligns us with our created purpose. When we give God our love, we step into the very reason we exist (**Matthew 22:37-38; Colossians 1:16; Romans 11:36**).

(John 4:23 NASB) “But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.”

(Isaiah 43:21 NASB) “The people whom I formed for Myself will declare My praise.”

- c. Authentic worship isn't about presenting our polished version; it's about bringing our true selves, body, soul, and spirit, into His presence. God isn't looking for our performance; He's moved by our honesty. Scripture shows worship expressed in tears, shouts, songs, silence, kneeling, dancing, and stillness (**Psalm 42:3-4; 110:1; 149:3; 65:6; Habakkuk 2:20**). He welcomes every genuine expression that flows from an authentic heart. When we bring our full selves, we worship in spirit and truth. Authentic worship gives God access to the real us, not the curated version we show others. And in that vulnerability, He meets us with transforming power.

(1 Samuel 16:7 NASB) “"But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'"

(Psalm 51:17 NASB) "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise."

(Psalm 139:1-4 NASB) “Lord, You have searched me and known me. 2 You know when I sit down and when I get up; You understand my thought from far away. 3 You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, Lord, You know it all.”