

## What is Worship?

Worship means to declare worth; to attribute worth. This is the purpose for which we are called: "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, *that you may declare the praises of him* who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9). We were called for the purpose of praising God and worshiping Him. That is one of the job descriptions of a Christian. We should declare that God is worthy; worth more anything else in our lives.

In both Hebrew and Greek, there are two major kinds of words for worship. The first kind means to bow down, to kneel, or to put one's face down as an act of respect and submission. Our body language is saying, I will do whatever you want me to. I am ready to listen to your instructions and I am willing to obey. The other kind of biblical word means to serve. Roughly half of the time these words are translated as worship, and the other half as serve. It carries the idea of doing something for God — making a sacrifice or carrying out his instructions.

Word meanings don't prove what worship is, but they do illustrate three kinds of worship.

1. worship that involves speaking
2. worship that involves listening
3. worship that involves doing

There is a worship that expresses the heart, and worship that involves the mind, and worship that involves the body. There is a worship that is giving praise upward, a worship that is receiving instructions from above, and a worship that carries out instruction in the world around us.

*We need all three types of worship.* Some people focus primarily on speaking or singing praise to God. Praise is good, but if all we do is praise God, without ever *listening* to what God says, we have to ask whether we believe the words we are saying. If God is really all wise and all loving, then we need to be attentive to what He is telling us.

Similarly, all talk and no action does not show God the respect he deserves. Actions speak louder than words, and if our behavior isn't changed by God, then our actions are saying that God isn't important — he's a nice idea, but not relevant to our day-to-day lives. When we really believe that God is worthy of every praise, then we will be willing to listen and to change the way we live in response to such a worthy God. We will trust him and *seek* him and want to *please* him as much as we can. Worship should affect our behavior.