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On Worship

What's the difference between prayer and worship?

The teachings of The Urantia Book on the subject of worship have depths that the human mind cannot fully comprehend. Worship itself--our most direct and intimate relating to God--is beyond our full comprehension. God and the dwelling of God within the mortal mind are a mystery. Nevertheless, each of us can truly say, "I *can!*" Our mind is a gift of God. One of our God-given capacities is the capacity to worship. There is even a special divine ministry to our mind, a "circuit" called the spirit of worship. Here is one of the key passages on worship:

Worship is the highest privilege and the first duty of all created intelligences. Worship is the conscious and joyous act of recognizing and acknowledging the truth and fact of the intimate and personal relationships of the Creators with their creatures. The quality of worship is determined by the depth of creature perception; and as the knowledge of the infinite character of the Gods progresses, the act of worship becomes increasingly all-encompassing until it eventually attains the glory of the highest experiential delight and the most exquisite pleasure known to created beings. (303)

People use terms with different meanings. The authors of The Urantia Book distinguish prayer and worship in many ways including the following.

Prayer	Worship
Seeks good for self or others	Has no element of creature request
Very important	Even more important
Sublime thinking	Superthinking

The book's first major discussion of worship is the section titled "True Worship" (pp. 65-66). This section includes the following thoughts.

Worship is for its own sake; prayer embodies a self- or creature-interest element; that is the great difference between worship and prayer. There is absolutely no self-request or other element of personal interest in true worship; we simply worship God for what we comprehend him to be. Worship asks nothing and expects nothing for the worshiper. We do not worship the Father because of anything we may derive from such veneration; we render such devotion and engage in such worship as a natural and spontaneous reaction to the recognition of the Father's matchless personality and because of his lovable nature and adorable attributes. (65)

Let's take a second look at that closing sequence. We worship the Father as a natural and spontaneous reaction to
<http://www.personal.kent.edu/~jwattles/index.htm/worship.htm>

the recognition of the Father's **matchless personality**

and because of his **lovable nature**

and **adorable attributes.**

Observe that this sequence matches the sequence of Papers 1-3. Recall the table of contents for these Papers. One reason that this is a good idea is that there is a tendency for discussions of worship to seem to neglect the fact that worship is all about God!

The Universal Father

The Father's Name

The Reality of God

God is a Universal Spirit

The Mystery of God

Personality of the Universal Father

Personality in the Universe

Spiritual Value of the Personality Concept

The Nature of God

The Infinity of God

The Father's Eternal Perfection

Justice and Righteousness

The Divine Mercy

The Love of God

The Goodness of God

Divine Truth and Beauty

The Attributes of God

God's Everywhereness

God's Infinite Power

God's Universal Knowledge

God's Limitlessness

The Father's Supreme Rule

The Father's Primacy

It is helpful to mediate on those aspects of the divine nature that are most relevant to the situation in which you find yourself. Philosophic thought and aesthetic experience can give rise to worship, but it is prayer, most of all, that is mentioned as the ideal preparation for worship. Why? Because the human heart is hungry. Prayer expresses the needs of the heart and facilitates the consciousness of the flow of divine response. When the heart is happy and full, then the gratitude arises which is just "one step away" from worship.

One of my favorite sequences of thoughts for worship derives from p. 196:

We worship You because

1. You are.
2. You are in us.
3. We are in you.

What Goes on in Worship?

"Sincere worship connotes the mobilization of all the powers of the human personality under the dominance of the evolving soul and subject to the divine directionization of the associated Thought Adjuster" (66).

The mortal mind consents to worship.

The immortal soul craves and initiates worship.

The divine Adjuster presence conducts such worship in behalf of the mortal mind and the evolving immortal soul.

True worship, in the last analysis, becomes an experience realized on four cosmic levels:

the intellectual,

the morontial,

the spiritual,

and the personal--the consciousness of mind, soul, and spirit, and their unification in personality. (66)

To get clearer about these distinctions, let's review the dimensions of the human personality. On page 8 we find a brief description of each key concept.

1. **Body.** The material or physical organism of man. The living electrochemical mechanism of animal nature and origin.
2. **Mind.** The thinking, perceiving, and feeling mechanism of the human organism. The total conscious and unconscious experience. The intelligence associated with the emotional life reaching upward through worship and wisdom to the spirit level.
3. **Spirit.** The divine spirit that indwells the mind of man--the Thought Adjuster. This immortal spirit is prepersonal--not a personality, though destined to become a part of the personality of the surviving mortal creature.
4. **Soul.** The soul of man is an experiential acquirement. As a mortal creature chooses to "do the will of the Father in heaven," so the indwelling spirit becomes the father of a new reality in human experience. The mortal and material mind is the mother of this same emerging reality. The substance of this new reality is neither material nor spiritual--it is morontial. This is the emerging and immortal soul which is destined to survive mortal death and begin the Paradise ascension.

Personality. The personality of mortal man is neither body, mind, nor spirit; neither is it the soul. Personality is the one changeless reality in an otherwise ever-changing creature experience; and it unifies all other associated factors of individuality. The personality is the unique bestowal which the Universal Father makes upon the living and associated energies of matter, mind, and spirit, and which survives with the survival of the morontial soul.

The soul craves and initiates worship

The soul *feels values*. Think of some experience of deeply satisfying truth, beauty, or goodness. Let yourself fill with gratitude to God.

Q. How do you know it's a soul response and not merely some emotional response?

A1. Our levels of experience are blended in human experience.

A2. As you grow, things will gradually and progressively clarify.

A3. The more you are oriented to supreme values of TBG, the more the response will come from your true, inner self: the soul!

The mind consents to worship

Q. What if thoughts come during worship?

A1. Let them easily go as you return your attention to God.

A2. Some thoughts may be a gift from the Thought Adjuster. It's OK to let your mind appreciate these thoughts.

A3. Some thoughts indicate a problem that needs philosophic reflection and turning to prayer. When you are out of the worship attitude, do not pretend to be worshiping God. Simply commune or pray until you are ready to move beyond the sense of creature need.

The Adjuster conducts the worship

This is the highest phase of worship. It is like shifting into another gear: "effortless attention."

It is not emotional. Wonderful feelings may often be the response of the entire personality to its communion with God. We do not let ourselves become self-absorbed with feelings. Worship is about God.

This phase emerges gradually as we grow (though with occasional sudden and wonderful surprises along the way).

The personality as a whole engages in worship

There is an overall sense: I worship You! The assent (or decision-commitment) of the entire personality is to worship our Father. To worship is an act of will in the highest sense. Sometimes when we may be getting confused or wandering into mystical states it is helpful to restore this sense.

To repeat:

We worship You because

You are;

You are in us;

We are in you.

[Up]

Principles of Prayer

1. You must qualify as a potent prayer by sincerely and courageously facing the problems of universe reality. You must possess cosmic stamina.
2. You must have honestly exhausted the human capacity for human adjustment. You must have been industrious.
3. You must surrender every wish of mind and every craving of soul to the transforming embrace of spiritual growth. You must have experienced an enhancement of meanings and an elevation of values.
4. You must make a wholehearted choice of the divine will. You must obliterate the dead center of indecision.
5. You not only recognize the Father's will and choose to do it, but you have effected an unqualified consecration, and a dynamic dedication, to the actual doing of the Father's will.
6. Your prayer will be directed exclusively for divine wisdom to solve the specific human problems encountered in the Paradise ascension--the attainment of divine perfection.
7. And you must have faith--living faith.

(from The Urantia Book, p. 1002)

Working with principles of prayer

P.1002 - §4 Words are irrelevant to prayer; they are merely the intellectual channel in which the river of spiritual supplication may chance to flow. The word value of a prayer is purely autosuggestive in private devotions and sociosuggestive in group devotions. God answers the soul's attitude, not the words.

Prayer can be a very simple expression.

Prayer can express many different things.

"Jesus never prayed as a religious duty. To him prayer was a sincere expression of spiritual attitude, a declaration of soul loyalty, a recital of personal devotion, an expression of thanksgiving, an avoidance of emotional tension, a prevention of conflict, an exaltation of intellection, an ennoblement of desire, a vindication of moral decision, an enrichment of thought, an invigoration of higher inclinations, a consecration of impulse, a clarification of viewpoint, a declaration of faith, a transcendental surrender of will, a sublime assertion of confidence, a revelation of courage, the proclamation of discovery, a confession of supreme devotion, the validation of consecration, a technique for the adjustment of difficulties, and the mighty mobilization of the combined soul powers to withstand all human tendencies toward selfishness, evil, and sin. He lived just such a life of prayerful consecration to the doing of his Father's will and ended his life triumphantly with just such a prayer. The secret of his

unparalleled religious life was this consciousness of the presence of God; and he attained it by intelligent prayer and sincere worship--unbroken communion with God--and not by leadings, voices, visions, or extraordinary religious practices." (2089)

In other words, *not all prayer has to work consciously with these principles*. There will be some times when you crave a more thorough prayer process. Working with these principles will be helpful also in those spontaneous, momentary, and simple prayers.

You must have faith--*living faith!*

Faith that God cares about you and your particular situation!

Faith that you can discern the divine response to prayer!

Faith that you can carry out--live--our Father's will!

Faith in the supreme human desire to do the will of God, to be like God!

Your prayer will be directed exclusively for divine wisdom to solve the specific human problems encountered in the the Paradise ascension--the attainment of divine perfection.

This teaching establishes an orientation, a framework for the prayer. Often we pray in a sense of near panic as we look anxiously at the immediate situation about us. Our focus is more on the situation than on God. This teaching redirects us. We turn first and foremost to God. We say: I'm coming. I have chosen the Paradise adventure. I have heard the divine call, "Be you perfect as I am perfect," and I am embarked on the path to perfection. But I'm having some human difficulties along this path. Please help.

You must sincerely and courageously face the problems of universe reality. You must possess cosmic stamina.

See the study on mobilizing progressive attitudes to unfold the meaning of this teaching.

You must have been industrious

Do what you can now to solve the problem. Try to summarize all these inputs into a decision. You may want to state what you regard as the main reason in support of your human solution.

My human solution is

The main reason supporting this solution is

You must surrender every wish of mind and every craving of soul to the transforming embrace of spiritual growth. You must have experienced an enhancement of meanings and an elevation of values.

Surrender . . .

Not a surrender of will, not a surrender of personality,

but a surrender of every

wish of mind

craving of soul

What does my mind wish?

What does my soul crave? What are the highest values that I hope to have realized in the outworking of this situation?

It is my will that Your will be done.

The transforming embrace of spiritual growth--

an enhancement of meanings and an elevation of values

"God answers man's prayer by giving him an increased revelation of truth, an enhanced appreciation of beauty, and an augmented concept of goodness." (1002)

Q. Does any new input that comes when I surrender necessarily a revelation of the will of God?

A. No.

Q. What if I get nothing?

A1. Persist

A2. Return to do a more complete job on one or more previous steps.

A3. Consider that God might be wanting to answer on a different level than the question you are posing.

Q. How shall I interpret what comes to mind when I am in surrender mode?

"It is hazardous to attempt the differentiation of the Adjusters' concept registry from the more or less continuous and conscious reception of the dictations of mortal conscience. These are problems which will have to be solved through individual discrimination and personal decision. But a human being would do better to err in rejecting an Adjuster's expression through believing it to be a purely human experience than to blunder into exalting a reaction of the mortal mind to the sphere of divine dignity. Remember, the influence of a Thought Adjuster is for the most part, though not wholly, a superconscious experience.

"In varying degrees and increasingly as you ascend the psychic circles, sometimes directly, but more often indirectly, you do communicate with your Adjusters. But it is dangerous to entertain the idea that every new concept originating in the human mind is the dictation of the Adjuster. More often, in beings of your order, that which you accept as the Adjuster's voice is in reality the emanation of your own intellect. This is dangerous ground, and every human being must settle these problems for himself in accordance with his natural human wisdom and superhuman insight." (1208)

You must make a wholehearted choice of the divine will. You must obliterate the dead center of indecision.

The Thought Adjusters are "interested in making the mortal career easy; rather are they concerned in making your life reasonably difficult and rugged, so that decisions will be stimulated and multiplied." (1192)

"There exists a vast gulf between the human and the divine, between man and God. The Urantia races are so largely electrically and chemically controlled, so highly animallike in their common behavior, so emotional in their ordinary reactions, that it becomes exceedingly difficult for the Monitors to guide and direct them. You are so devoid of courageous decisions and consecrated co-operation that your indwelling Adjusters find it next to impossible to communicate directly with the human mind." (1207)

You not only recognize the Father's will and choose to do it, but you have effected an unqualified consecration, and a dynamic dedication, to the actual doing of the Father's will.

A tennis stroke is impotent without follow through. Getting the job *done, finished*, is essential.

"You as a personal creature have mind and will. The Adjuster as a prepersonal creature has premind and prewill. If you so fully conform to the Adjuster's mind that you see eye to eye, then your minds become one, and you receive the reinforcement of the Adjuster's mind. Subsequently, if your will orders and enforces the execution of the decisions of this new or combined mind, the Adjuster's prepersonal will attains to personality expression through your decision, and as far as that particular project is concerned, you and the Adjuster are one. Your mind has attained to divinity attunement, and the Adjuster's will has achieved personality expression." (1205)

"When man decides, and when he consummates this decision in action, man experiences, and the meanings and the values of this experience are forever a part of his eternal character on all levels, from the finite to the final. Cosmically moral and divinely spiritual character represents the creature's capital accumulation of personal decisions which have been illuminated by sincere worship, glorified by intelligent love, and consummated in brotherly service." (1287)