

**WORSHIP**

**PATHWAY TO PERFECTION**

**"The Father desires all his creatures to be in personal communion with Him."**

## **WHAT IS WORSHIP**

The Urantia Book defines worship as "**the act of the son's personal communion with the divine Father...**" pg. 1616

In worship our focus is on our personal relationship with God, stilling the mind and humbly communing with God in pure love, listening quietly for the still small voice of love within our hearts.

We are told that worship is a "conscious and joyous act of recognizing and acknowledging the truth and fact of **the intimate and personal relationships** of the Creators with their creatures." pg. 303 This conscious recognition of our intimate relationship with God is the "**highest joy**" of our existence.

In the act of worship we are simply developing our relationship with our best friend, God.

The stability and maturity of all our other universe relationships vary depending upon the stability and maturity of our relationship with God, "the very source of reality."

If our quest in this lifetime is to serve others in accord with God's will, then we should anchor all of our service relationships in our personal communion with God. For worship provides the most direct gateway to an understanding appreciation of the divine will. If you would know God's will, you must get to know God.

The Urantia Book makes it very clear how close God has drawn to each of us, his children, in search of a loving relationship. In the presence of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, his ministering angels, the adjutant mind spirits, and the sublime majesty of his own personal indwelling, the divine Thought Adjuster, God has drawn close to each of us, giving us every opportunity to draw close to God in loving relationship.

The definition of worship is best clarified by the experience of worship, feeling the loving presence of God in pure relationship. This experience, we are told, is an "ever-present possibility".

Jesus promised to the inhabitants of our planet only two things, "**spiritual joy and divine communion**" to all who would in faith claim such an experience. pg. 1593

The importance of worship in our lives should not be underestimated; it is "**the highest privilege and the first duty of all created intelligences.**" pg. 303 Is there any doubt that the experience of worship is essential to a meaningful existence here on Urantia and throughout our universe career? To fully appreciate our lives and opportunities here on this planet, we must worship, we must be in intimate contact with our Divine Partner and Friend.

We know that as the universe views each of us, worship is defined as "**the yardstick** which measures the extent of the soul's detachment from the material universe and its simultaneous attachment to the spiritual realities of all creation." pg. 1616

## THE SUPREME MANDATE

The Urantia Book calls it the supreme mandate, the divine command, the injunction of the ages, **"Be you perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect."**

We are told that an effective way to understand this injunction is to learn to love others, even as Jesus manifested love to those he encountered, to love **"with a fatherly love...to love men as God loves them..."** pg. 1573

Jesus made it clear in his own life and in his teachings that this supreme mandate is best fulfilled by a person who is **"inwardly illuminated by worship and outwardly devoted to the wholehearted service** of the universal brotherhood of all personalities..." pg. 1175

"Spiritual development depends, first on the maintenance of a living spiritual **connection with true spiritual forces**, and second on the **continuous bearing of spiritual fruit...**" pg. 1095

"Worship, taught Jesus, **makes one increasingly like the being who is worshipped.** Worship is a **transforming experience** whereby the Finite gradually approaches and ultimately attains the presence of the Infinite." pg. 1641

Worship fills the soul with the love of God, which becomes real as it passes through that soul in loving service to others and hence to the Supreme. This principle of the transformative effect of love and how it works in human experience, as well as its effect upon the cosmos, is at the heart of Jesus' teaching and is the key to understanding the link between the message of Jesus and that of the Urantia Book.

If we would become perfect, even as our Father in heaven, we must step into the worshipful Presence of God, then carry the loving touch of that experience into all of our relationships.

"This worship practice of your Master brings that relaxation which renews the mind; that illumination which inspires the soul; that courage which enables one bravely to face one's problems; that self-understanding which obliterates debilitating fear; and that **consciousness of union with divinity** which equips man with the assurance that enables him **to dare to be Godlike.**" pg. 1774

Immanuel's instruction to Jesus prior to his bestowal is our instruction as well. "Throughout your Urantia bestowal you need be **concerned with but one thing**, the **unbroken communion** between you and your Paradise Father."

Our ability to shift planetary consciousness towards an era of light and life depends directly upon the growth of that "unbroken communion" in our lives. Said Immanuel, "it will be **by the perfection of such a relationship** that the world of your bestowal, even all the universe of your creation will behold a new and more understandable revelation of your Father and my Father, the Universal Father of all." pg. 1326

## THE NEGLECTED PRACTICE

"It is not so important that you should know about the fact of God as that you should increasingly grow in **the ability to feel the presence of God...**

"But **what chance does the Father have** to appear as a God of supreme loyalties and divine ideals in the souls of **men who give little or no time** to the thoughtful contemplation of such eternal realities?" pg. 1733

The Urantia Book makes it very clear that worship is a practice which involves practice and the commitment of time.

"Man attains divine union by **progressive reciprocal spiritual communion**, by personal intercourse with the personal God, by increasingly attaining the divine nature through wholehearted and intelligent conformity to the divine will." pg. 31

It is clear from our human associations that if we would know someone truly, we must share our time with that person, and over a period of time, we will increasingly grow in the relationship.

The same is true of God. We cannot by a mere act of will, a pledge of allegiance, a sincere reading of The Urantia Book, or even by self-centered prayer grow close in loving relationship to God. To draw close to God, we must engage in the practice of worship; "**divine things must be loved in order to be known**". pg. 1118

But, for whatever reason, for whatever excuse, we neglect God in worship.

"Prayer is indeed a part of religious experience, but it has been wrongly emphasized by modern religions, much to the **neglect of the more essential communion of worship** - prayer may enrich life, but worship illuminates destiny." pg. 1123

If we are committed to our relationship with God, then, very naturally, we should be drawn to the daily practice of spending time with God both in prayer and in worship.

We are often tempted to think with all of our other commitments and obligations that there is not enough time for worship. If we place our relationship with God in proper perspective with regard to our other obligations, we will surely find the time. We are called to bring an age of light and life to our planet; "and,...in the career of light and life", we are told, "**there is always time for worship...**" pg. 282

What is the depth of your commitment? Are you willing to make a divine appointment with God every day of your life, to "**increasingly grow in the ability to feel the presence of God**", to engage in "**progressive reciprocal spiritual communion**"? What is the depth of your commitment to this most real and most important of all universe relationships?

## AN APPROACH TO WORSHIP

All of us have a mischievous monkey within our minds that takes our thoughts and jumps from one corner of the mind to the other incessantly, allowing our minds little time or energy to be still. This monkey seems oftentimes to be out of control. To calm or tame this monkey we must cultivate stillness within.

Stillness is the true home for our worship experience.

**"Be still and know that I am God." - Psalm 46**

The contemplative traditions embedded within the world's religious traditions provide much insight into an approach to God's Presence.

Basil Pennington, a Trappist monk, has from his study of Christianity's contemplative tradition provided an approach in what he calls Centering Prayer. This popular approach is very simple and easily learned by anyone.

This approach to worship involves three simple rules:

First: At the beginning of worship we take a minute or two to quiet down and then move in simple faith to God dwelling in our center; and at the end of the worship period we take several minutes to come out, with prayer.

Psalm 4 - "Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and **be still.**"

Second: After resting for a bit in your center in faith-full love, we take up a single, simple word that expresses our feelings of love for God and let it be gently present.

Psalm 25 - "My eyes are ever towards the Lord for He will release my feet from the net."

Third - Whenever in the course of the worship experience we become aware of anything else, we simply return to the God's Loving Presence by the use of the simple word that we have chosen.

Psalm 9 - "I will praise Thee, O Lord, with **my whole heart.**"

This approach to worship I have experienced as simple and very direct; the result for me has been a much larger measure of depth in my relationship with God.

God has given us in so many ways the invitation. What is your response?

"Although the approach to the Paradise Presence of the Father must await your attainment of the highest finite levels of spirit progression, you should rejoice in the recognition of the ever-present possibility of immediate communion with the bestowal spirit of the Father so intimately associated with your inner soul and your spiritualizing self." pg.63

"Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Matthew 7.7

## ***SUGGESTED READING***

**CENTERING PRAYER, M. BASIL PENNINGTON. DOUBLEDAY**

**THE WAY OF THE HEART, HENRI NOUWEN. BALLANTINE**

*"The great challenge to modern man is to achieve better communication with the divine Monitor that dwells within the human mind. Man's greatest adventure in the flesh consists in the well-balanced and sane effort to advance the borders of self-consciousness out through the dim realms of embryonic soul-consciousness in a wholehearted effort to reach the borderland of spirit consciousness--contact with the divine presence." pg. 2097*