

Christ-Centered Life of Worship - Summary of Colossians

Introduction and Outline

- **Scripture reading:** Psalm 96; 2 Peter 3: 11-14.
- **Introduction:** Looking back at the whole book of Colossians, Paul gives us a systematic discourse that explains our life of worship as Christians with much clarity. We can even call Colossians the Christian's worship manual. Although the word "worship" is not used directly, the whole epistle is teaching us how to worship.

- **Outline:**

Topic: Christ-Centered Life of Worship

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2. The hidden trap —— Everything that deviates from the Christ-centered attitude (2: 16-23)
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C. Spiritual insights

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2. Church life is important (1: 18, 28; 2: 2, 19; 3: 12-17)
3. The believer's transformation is thorough (2: 11; 3: 3-4, 9-10)
4. The renewal of knowledge is crucial (3: 10; 1: 9-10; 2: 3)
5. The life perspective is focused (3: 1-4, 18, 20, 22-4: 1)
6. The wrong worship is deceptive (2: 4, 8, 16-23)
7. The effort of sanctification is volitional (3: 1-2, 5, 8, 9, 12, etc., all imperative verbs)
8. The sphere of worship is broad (3: 5-4: 6)

About Worship

- **Definition:** The word worship is originally worth-ship, meaning to acknowledge the worth of someone or something. When we give God his deserved honor according to His worth, it is worshipping God. Worship reflects the fundamental worldview of a person.

"Worship is all that we are, reacting to all that God is." —— "All that we are" entails our whole body and soul, including all our thoughts and words and actions in any moment; "all that God is" includes all God's attributes revealed in the Scripture, holiness, justice, mercy, lovingkindness etc, and all His will to us.

- **Wrong ways of worship:** 1) The worship of false gods; 2) The worship of the true God, but in a wrong form, making image of God and worship the image (golden calf); 3) The worship of the true God in a self-styled manner, not God's way (Nadab, Abihu, and Uzzah); 4) The worship of the true God in the right way, but with a wrong attitude, no desire for God's glory. (Isaiah 29: 13)

The life of worship as taught in Colossians

1. *The crucial foundation —Understanding the person and work of Christ (1: 15-2: 15)*
 - **The person of Jesus:** Verse 15 says Christ “is the image of the invisible God”, which means that He is God manifesting Himself to us, the only true God incarnate. Therefore, in v16-17 says “by Him all things were created, all things have been created through Him and for Him, and in Him all things hold together,” therefore He is the creator of all things, the sustainer of all things and the ultimate purpose of all things.
 - **The work of Jesus:** vv 19-23 especially talks about the truth of salvation, and the core message is in v20 “having made peace through the blood of His cross”, v22 “He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death”. The redeeming work of Christ on the cross accomplished forgiveness of sins for the believers, reconciled them to God, so that they can come before God to worship Him.
 - **The work of Jesus carried on through His saints:** v1: 24-2: 5 talks about Paul’s attitude in serving the Lord, but Paul’s work is tightly bound to the Lord Jesus. (1: 24,1:22, 28). This can be viewed as Jesus’ work.
2. *The hidden trap—Everything that deviates from the Christ-centered attitude (2: 16-23)*
 - **Traps:** Legalism、Mysticism、Asceticism.....In summary, outward godliness may not be genuine. Do not be deceived by outward appearance. You must examine it according to the Biblical teaching. The common essential problem of these traps is that they all deviate from Christ-centeredness. (2: 19).
3. *The inner motive —The heavenly perspective that seeks Christ in all things (3: 1-4)*
 - **Heavenly perspective:** True worship springs from the heavenly perspective that seeks Christ in all things. “keep seeking the things above” is the starting point of a worship life, because “Christ is our life”, our aim is to please Christ alone, seeking only His glory and not our own glory or the praise of others. It shows in the following aspects:
4. *The general lifestyle —Mortifying sin and putting on the character of Christ (3: 5-17)*
 - **Mortifying sin:** The worship life is not only about what to do, but also what not to do. It is not to worship at church only to then go home and pursue various sinful pleasures. The genuine worship life must have a continuous determination to mortify sin, that is, to put off anything that does not glorify Christ or please God from our thoughts, words and actions. (vv. 5-11)
 - **Put on the characters of Christ:** The general lifestyle of a worshiper must include putting off and putting on. The things to put on in vv.12-14 are all Christ’s character and not merely human virtues. We must learn and practice them from Christ’s teaching and life example. Therefore the key to putting on these characters is to “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you”. (v16)
5. *The specific areas—Home, workplace, prayer life, before the unbelievers (3: 18-4: 6)*
 - **Worship life has no hidden closets:** Our worship life is not limited to church; it is honoring Christ as the Lord in all aspects of our lives anytime and anywhere. In this passage, Paul talks about how to worship the Lord at home (3: 18-21), at workplace (3: 22-4: 1), in our prayer life (4: 2-4), and before

the unbelievers (4: 5-6). These are not random practical teachings, but they teach us to live out an entire life of Christ-centered worship.

Spiritual Insights

1. *Christ's salvation is complete (1: 21-23; 2: 3, 9-10, 11-15)*
 - These verses show that Christ has supplied you with complete salvation as soon as you are saved, including all spiritual need in sanctification. You will grow to be more and more like Christ as you abide in God's Words and will be completely sanctified in the end.
2. *Church life is important (1: 18, 28; 2: 2, 19; 3: 12-17)*
 - **Head and body:** vv1:18, 2:19, 3: 15 all refer to this important metaphor: The church is Christ's body and Christ is the head of His church. The entire body can only grow when each part holds fast to the head to be supplied and held together. A Christian disconnected from the church body is like a limb that is cut off and thrown on the roadside.
 - 1: 18 also shows that the church is extremely important to Christ's glory, even more than the creation of all things in the universe. Church is the pinnacle of exalting Christ's preeminence. He was raised from the dead, as the head of the body, His church, "so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything."
 - 2: 2 says only when Christians are knit together in love, they can "attain to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself". 1: 28 says only a biblical church life can make believers progressively sanctified.
3. *The believer's transformation is thorough (2: 11; 3: 3-4, 9-10)*
 - **"in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ"** (2: 11): The Greek means the circumcision which removes the entire body of flesh, not partly removed and partly kept. The entirety of sin nature is removed and there remains no desire for the pleasure of sin.
 - **"laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self"** (3: 9-10): The moment God opened our eyes to have faith in Christ, our nature has been completely changed, the new replacing the old. Although Christians still sin, it is no longer from the old nature that seeks the pleasure of sin, but going against the new nature when one walks by the flesh and not by the Spirit.
4. *The renewal of knowledge is crucial (3: 10; 1: 9-10; 2: 3)*
 - **"being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him"** (3: 10): This is the new self's characteristic feature and necessary expression. Without true knowledge of Christ and God's Word, all behavior changes are superficial. Only the changes brought by true knowledge are God-pleasing worship from the heart. Therefore——
 - **"filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding"** (1: 9): It is the core of Paul's prayer, only this kind of knowledge can bring the results in v10 ——walk in a manner worthy

of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

5. *The life perspective is focused (3: 1-4, 18, 20, 22-4: 1)*

- **“keep seeking/Set your mind on the things above”** (3: 1-2): It is seeking Lord Christ in everything, fixing your eyes on the hope of Christ’s return and the eternal rewards for Christians. This perspective will completely transform your entire attitude to life. This Christ-centered perspective is seen everywhere in the practical teaching of later passages.

6. *The wrong worship is deceptive (2: 4, 8, 16-23)*

- These passages should keep us alert, for there will always be false teachers spreading deceptive wrong teachings in Christ’s name. We need to renew our mind by biblical truths daily and improve our spiritual discernment, so we may not be deceived by various traps.

7. *The effort of sanctification is volitional (3: 1-2, 5, 8, 9, 12, etc., all imperative verbs)*

- **Imperative commands:** It demonstrates that the life of sanctification is a volitional, determined and active pursuit, and not a passive state of waiting for something to happen on its own. You won’t be able to stay still on a steep slope, if you don’t climb up, you’ll slide down. If you don’t strive to obey biblical teaching for spiritual growth, you will be dragged down by your remaining flesh. Ephesians 4: 22 says that our old self “is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit” .

8. *The sphere of worship is broad (3: 5-4: 6)*

- Worship life has no hidden closets. For some people, this may be a warning—God requires you to worship Him anytime and anywhere! For others, this is a great encouragement—we can worship God anytime and anywhere! What a blessed life!

Summary

- Worshiping God is the ultimate pursuit of man. Is this your ultimate pursuit? Man was made for worship, only true worship can fulfill the purpose of your life.

Psalm 14: 2 “The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men. To see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.”

John 4: 23 “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.”

Psalm 27: 8 “*When You said, “Seek My face,” my heart said to You, “Your face, O Lord, I shall seek.”*”