

## Worship and Giving

### **John 1:12-13**

***But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.***

John Wimber observed that there are five basic phases that we move through in worship. Keep in mind that as we pass through these phases, we are headed toward one goal: intimacy with God. We define intimacy as belonging to or revealing one's deepest nature to another (in this case to God), and it is marked by close association, presence, and contact. (While we describe these phases as they apply to corporate worship, they may just as easily be applied to our private practice of worship.)

- The first phase is the **call to worship**, which is a message directed toward the people. It is an invitation to the people to turn their focus away from themselves and their circumstances and come worship and put their focus on God.

*Come now is the time to worship  
Come now is the time to give your heart  
Come just as you are to worship  
Come just as you are before your God  
Come*

- The second phase is **the engagement**, which is the electrifying dynamic of connection to God and to each other. Expressions of love, adoration, praise, jubilation, intercession, petition -- all of the dynamics of prayer are interlocked with worship -- come forth from one's heart. In the engagement phase we praise God for who he is through music as well as prayer. An individual may have moments like these in his or her private worship at home, but when the church comes together the manifest presence of God is magnified and multiplied.

As we move further in the engagement phase, we move more and more into loving and intimate language. Being in God's presence excites our hearts and minds and we want to praise him for the deeds he has done, for how he has moved in history, for his character and attributes. Jubilation is that heart swell within us in which we want to exalt him. The heart of worship is to be united with our Creator and with the church universal and historic. Remember, worship is going on all the time in heaven, and when we worship, we are joining that which is already happening, what has been called the communion of the saints. Thus, there is a powerful corporate dynamic.

- Often this intimacy causes us to meditate, even as we are singing, on our relationship with the Lord. Sometimes we recall vows we have made before

our God. God might call to our mind disharmony or failure in our life; thus confession of sin is involved. Tears may flow as we see our disharmony but his harmony, our limitations but his unlimited possibilities. This phase in which we have been awakened to his presence is called **expression**.

Physical and emotional expression in worship can result in dance and body movement. This is an appropriate response to God if the church is on that crest. It is inappropriate if it is whipped up or if the focal point is on the dance rather than on true jubilation in the Lord. The Holy Spirit works differently in each person. As a result, each person's expression of worship will be different.

Expression then moves to a zenith, a climatic point, not unlike physical lovemaking (doesn't Solomon use the same analogy in the Song of Songs?).

*Jesus I need to know true love  
Deeper than the love found on earth  
Take me into the King's chamber  
Cause my love to mature*

*Let me know the kisses of Your mouth  
Let me feel Your warm embrace  
Let me smell the fragrance of Your touch  
Let me see Your lovely face*

- We have expressed what is in our hearts and minds and bodies, and now it is time to wait for God to respond. Stop talking and wait for him to speak, to move. I call this, the fourth phase, visitation: The almighty God visits his people.

His **visitation** is a byproduct of worship. We don't worship in order to gain his presence. He is worthy to be worshiped whether or not he visits us. But God "dwells in the praises of his people." So we should come to worship prepared for an audience with the King. And we should expect the Spirit of God to work among us. He moves in different ways - sometimes for salvation, sometimes for deliverances, sometimes for sanctification or healings. God also visits us through the prophetic gifts.

- The fifth phase of worship is the **giving of substance**. The church knows so little about giving, yet the Bible exhorts us to give to God. It is pathetic to see people preparing for ministry who don't know how to give. That is like an athlete entering a race, yet he doesn't know how to run. If we haven't learned to give money, we haven't learned anything. Ministry is a life of giving. We give our whole life; God should have ownership of everything. Remember, whatever we give God control of he can multiply and bless, not so we can amass goods, but so we can be more involved in his enterprise.

People tend to think that tithing is an Old Testament concept that is tied to the Law and therefore does not apply under the New Covenant. They also think that it is not addressed in the New Testament so it is not meant for us.

Let's start with the idea that tithing is tied to the Law. This couldn't be further from the truth. So much so that the author of the book of Hebrew reminds them that the origin of tithing precedes the Law in referring to Melchizedek.

**Heb 7:4-8**

***See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils! 5 And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham. 6 But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. 7 It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior.***

Then the author goes on to say that the Law was insufficient and that a new covenant was needed. And that this new priest was Jesus and that He compared to Melchizedek.

**Heb 7:15-17**

***This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, 16 who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. 17 For it is witnessed of him, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."***

If Abraham paid homage to Melchizedek with a tenth of his best, doesn't Jesus also deserve our worship with a tenth of all He has given us?

Second, Jesus actually spoke about the tithe.

**Luke 11:42-43 (Matthew 23:23)**

***"But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.***

A lot of people think that He is saying that tithing is meaningless.

What he is actually saying is that tithing is expected, but that its' value as an act of worship is undermined if don't love others as ourselves. Jesus say that tithing is something "***you ought to have done***". So here is Jesus telling us that tithing is something we ought to do.

Not only should we tithe, but it should not be an afterthought with whatever is left after paying our bills. No, it should be our first fruit.

You pay your bills with the money that is left over after taxed. You plan your budget that way. You should do the same thing with your tithes. Plan your budget with the money that is left over AFTER you tithe.

So often people say that their budget is tight and that they would tithe if they had more money. If your tithe is not your first fruit, no matter how much money you make, you will never tithe.

Tithing is not a legalistic thing. V16 "not on the basis of a legal requirement". This is something between you and the Lord.

However, it is a command with a promise:

**Mal 3:10**

***Bring the full tithes into the storehouse , that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.***

If everyone tithed, we could do a lot more ministry and reach more people.

In closing, let me quote John Wimber again on worship:

**"Whatever I need to give, God inevitably first calls me to give it when I don't have any of it - whether it is money, love, hospitality, or information. Whatever God wants to give through us he first has to do to us. We are the first partakers of the fruit. But we are not to eat the seed; we are to sow it, to give it away. The underlying premise is that whatever we are is multiplied, for good or for bad. Whatever we have on our tree is what we are going to get in our orchard."**

If you want God to bless you, you need to start by blessing, worshipping and trusting Him with your finances.

We started out talking about the fact that worship always moves toward intimacy. Don't let a spirit of poverty prevent you from achieving that goal. Remember the rich young ruler from last week? He could have been one of Jesus' disciples, a part of His inner circle, but he walked away sad because he didn't trust Him with his money.

Even if you are currently tithing, take some time this week to ask God what He wants you to give to help further His kingdom. If you aren't tithing, then ask yourself why not?