

## Spiritual Positioning 3

We have been looking at spiritual positions in the past number of weeks and have covered 3 positions thus far:

- thanksgiving
- praise
- forgiveness.

Today we will look at a 4<sup>th</sup> spiritual position.

### 4. Positioned in Worship

We will discover as we look at this spiritual position that God is seeking those who are positioned in true worship.

*Joh 4:23-24 (NKJV) But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for **the Father is seeking such to worship Him.** [24] God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*

Isn't it interesting who Jesus taught this to? And where He was?

Worship is not about a geographical place, it's not about culture or nationality or status, or even religious qualifications of the person. The worshippers God is looking for are those who worship in spirit and truth.

#### **Worship "in spirit":**

a. It can mean that worship is to be spiritual in nature.

It is not about the externals of worship such as buildings, styles of music and external forms. It is not about a specific holy place (the temple). It is a sincere action of the heart toward God.

b. It can mean that worship is to be done "in the Holy Spirit."

That is, our worship should come from a human spirit that is infused with the Holy Spirit.

**Worship “in truth”:**

- a. Worship “in truth” is worship that is without falsehood.
- b. Worship “in truth” is worship that is “according to truth,” that is, according to the Word of God which is truth (John 17:17).

I don't know about you, But I want to be sought out and found by Him. I would like to explore what worship is from God's perspective.

**Misconceptions about worship**

The first popular misconception is that ‘worship is singing’. We treat ‘worship’ and ‘singing praises’ as synonymous terms. We speak as if they are the same thing. To reduce worship to singing is to dilute the biblical concept of worship in a way that is grossly irresponsible. It reduces the richness of biblical worship to one of its components. Yet when many Christians today commonly speak about worship, they mean nothing more than ‘singing’.

There are probably many ways this misconception has crept into our language and our thought. One key factor is that we have tended to label Christian music as ‘worship’, and we often call the person who leads the singing in our churches ‘the worship leader’. Unfortunately, this has caused us to equate worship with singing. A second misconception is that ‘worship is something we do on special occasions’. Worship is what we *do* when we gather with God's people. The activities that make up our Sunday services, such as the preaching, singing, offering, and communion *are worship*. This too is a serious misconception. Although it adds a few extra activities to singing, it is an inadequate understanding of worship. The biblical view of worship cannot be reduced to a set of activities we do at certain times and places.

**Biblical terms**

The Bible uses *many* different terms to convey the idea of worship. The reason is that worship is such a multifaceted, all-encompassing part of life that no single term can convey all it entails. At this early stage, we need to consider just two groups of terms (each group has one Hebrew and one Greek term, which convey the same idea; that is, the Greek term is used in the same sense as the Hebrew term).

1. *Shachah* and *proskuneo*: these terms have the basic sense of ‘bowing down’ and prostrating oneself. To worship is to bow down. To worship is to lay yourself low before Someone mighty and awesome.

2. *Avad* and *latreuo*: these terms essentially mean ‘to serve’, such as a slave serving a master.

If we put these terms together, we would picture a servant who is bowed as his Master’s feet waiting for instructions.

### **Definition of worship**

From these terms, we can suggest a tentative definition of worship: **Worship is bowing all that we are before all that God is!**

**Worship is bowing all that we are before all that God is!**

I love how Archbishop William temple defined worship:

**“Worship is the submission of all of our nature to God. It is the quickening of the conscience by his holiness; the nourishment of mind with his truth; the purifying of imagination by his beauty; the opening of the heart to his love; the surrender of will to his purpose--all this gathered up in adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable”.**

We see this in this portion of scripture in Romans:

*Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies [dedicating all of yourselves, set apart] as a living sacrifice, holy and well-pleasing to God, which is your rational (logical, intelligent) act of worship. And do not be conformed to this world [any longer with its superficial values and customs], but be transformed and progressively changed [as you mature spiritually] by the renewing of your mind [focusing on godly values and ethical attitudes], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His plan and purpose for you]. Rom. 12:1-2 AMP*

*Beloved friends, what should be our proper response to God’s marvelous mercies? I encourage you to surrender yourselves to God to be his sacred, living sacrifices. And*

*live in holiness, experiencing all that delights his heart. For this becomes your genuine expression of worship. Rom. 12:1-2 TPT*

Worship is a lifestyle. It underpins and guides how I live and what I do and how I do it.

We will look at a few significant moments in the Bible where worship is explained or demonstrated to paint a more clear picture of the true nature of worship from God's perspective.

## **1. Abraham**

First time worship is mentioned in the Bible:

When Abram was 75 years old the Lord made him a promise:

*Gen 12:1-3 (NKJV) Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. [2] I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. [3] I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

The Lord fulfilled this promise in the form of his son Isaac when Abraham was 100 years old. It took long for this promise to be fulfilled. You can bet your bottom dollar that Isaac was pretty special to Abraham and Sarah!

That was what God tested Abraham's heart with.

### **Test:**

*Gen 22:2-13 (NKJV) Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."*

Abraham took his son and 2 servants and went to the place God was sending him to.

*... [4] Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. [5] And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you." [6] So Abraham took the*

*wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. [7] But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" [8] And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together. [9] Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. [10] And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. [11] But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." [12] And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; **for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.**" [13] Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.*

Often the heart of worship is evidenced in how we proceed in a test of obedience. A test often precedes a promotion or progress to the next season or level. If we want to progress in life, we need to position ourselves constantly in worship and obedience. If we want to experience acceleration in God's purposes for our lives, we need to constantly position ourselves in worship.

## **2. Saul**

Saul had reigned around 2 years. The Philistines were gathered and getting ready to attack Israel. Saul was waiting for Samuel to arrive so that the Israelites could present an offering to the Lord before going to war. Samuel had instructed Saul to wait 7 days for him to come.

*1Sa 10:8 (NKJV) You shall go down before me to Gilgal; and surely I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and make sacrifices of peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, till I come to you and show you what you should do."*

...but Saul was growing impatient and anxious. The Israelites were fleeing. They were afraid. Saul wanted to do something. Samuel and the Lord were taking too long. Saul took matters into his own hands and made a plan.

1Sa 13:5-14 (NKJV) Then the **Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel**, thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude. And they came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth Aven. [6] **When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger** (for the people were distressed), then **the people hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits.** [7] **And some of the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.** [8] **Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.** [9] So Saul said, "**Bring a burnt offering and peace offerings here to me.**" And he offered the burnt offering. [10] Now it happened, as soon as he had finished presenting the burnt offering, that **Samuel came**; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might greet him. [11] And Samuel said, "**What have you done?**" Saul said, "**When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered together at Michmash,** [12] then I said, '**The Philistines will now come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the LORD.**' Therefore, I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering." [13] And Samuel said to Saul, "**You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you. For now, the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. [14] But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart,** and the LORD has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."

David was only anointed king by Samuel in 1 Samuel 16. Not even Samuel knew who this man was at this point. I wonder if David heard whisperings of this command of the Lord in His heart.

God often takes us through tests to reveal the nature of our own hearts. Remember what the Lord said to the Israelites before they entered the promised land?

Deu 8:2 (NKJV) And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

The test of obedience often reveals whether our hearts are positioned in a place of worship or not. When we pre-determine to live lives positioned in worship, the obedience test is passed. The attitude is more like if I perish, I perish, but I will obey and worship.

Like the attitude displayed by Daniel and his friends in the fire:

*Dan 3:8-25 (NKJV) Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews. [9] They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! [10] You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image; [11] and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. [12] There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. **They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up.**" [13] Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king. [14] Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, **"Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? [15] Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?"** [16] Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, **"O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. [17] If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. [18] But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."** [19] Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. [20] And he commanded certain mighty men of valour who were in his army to bind Shadrach,*

*Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace. [21] Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. [22] Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. [23] And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. [24] **Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." [25] "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."***

The test of obedience never comes with any guarantee. That's why it is a test. We have to choose beforehand who we will worship. We have to choose at the start of each day, to position ourselves in worship.

- Obedience and true worship impact our trajectory in God and our destiny.
- It also impacts our descendants and the generations to come.

In 1 Samuel 15 we find an account of Saul going through a test once again, which he failed. And this cost him and his descendants the throne.

*1Sa 15:1-3 (NKJV) Samuel also said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the LORD. [2] Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt. [3] Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel, and donkey.' "*

*1Sa 15:7-11 (NKJV) And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt. [8] He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. [9] But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and*

*all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed. [10] Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, [11] "I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments." And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD all night.*

*1Sa 15:13-28 (NKJV) Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD." [14] But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" [15] And Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed." [16] Then Samuel said to Saul, "Be quiet! And I will tell you what the LORD said to me last night." And he said to him, "Speak on." [17] So Samuel said, "When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the LORD anoint you king over Israel? [18] Now the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.' [19] Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the LORD?" [20] And Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. [21] But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal." [22] So Samuel said: "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. [23] For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king." [24] Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. [25] Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD." [26] But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel." [27] And as Samuel turned around to go away, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and*

*it tore. [28] So Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbour of yours, who is better than you.*

### 3. David

*And afterward they asked for a king; so, God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, **I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.**' Acts 13:21-22*

I think sometimes we read that David was a man after God's own heart and jump to conclusions assuming it is because he was a worshipper who played his instrument and established a Davidic form of worship. But here God reveals once again that man looks at the outwards appearance, but God looks at the heart.

The Lord sought "**a man after His own heart, who would do all His will**".

He found David. He found David in the wilderness, hidden. Obscure. Overlooked by his father and family.

*2Sa 7:8 (NKJV) ... 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel."*

It was God who knew where David was and the nature of his heart. It was God who sought and found David.

You want to be found by God for His purposes? Position yourself in this. Worship. Be a true worshipper. Be someone who determine to walk in obedience regardless of the cost.

We talk about seeking God, well, the Lord seeks true worshippers. He is seeking these types of people and will find you.

The Lord can use those whose hearts are positioned toward him in this manner. The prophet Nathan said of David:

Act 13:22 (NKJV) And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, '**I HAVE FOUND DAVID THE SON OF JESSE, A MAN AFTER MY OWN HEART, WHO WILL DO ALL MY WILL.**'

What does doing all His will look like?

Doing all His will. Not doing 90%, most especially the things that are seen by other people. Not doing 95% and the other 5% everyone else is doing and getting away with so God understands. No. Total surrender to His Word, His principles and commandments, His way, His timing, no matter the cost. 100%. Have that heart and he will seek you out.

*2Ch 16:9 (NKJV) For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him...."*

## **Conclusion**

Today we have explored what it means to be a true worshipper from biblical standards. We have seen that worship cannot be separated from complete obedience to God. We have also seen that God is seeking worshippers and those whose hearts are fully committed to Him. Tests of obedience are inherent to worship and these tests often precede promotion or progress in God. Or at least they precede qualification for promotion. We looked at Abraham and saw how the first mention of worship in the Bible was around obedience in sacrifice of something very precious to the Lord. We saw from Saul how lack of obedience can disqualify from destiny and impact generations, even when worship is performed on an external level. We also saw from David that God seeks those who will do all His will and these are those who can be called men and women after God's own heart.