

Introduction to annual focus 1993



"Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy." (Deut. 19:2)

"The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father also seeketh such to be his worshippers." (John 4:23)

The BESJ Focus 02

Worship has become more important in our churches in recent years. At least as a buzzword, it is everywhere - there are "worship songs," "worship parts" in worship, and "worship leaders." Yet ideas of worship vary widely.

While some seek more quiet worship, to others it means joyful celebration and movement! So, although the word is on everyone's lips, there is a need for clarification. The two keynote addresses at the beginning of this issue outline the concept of "worship" from a biblical, holistic perspective. They shed a somewhat different light on it. Perhaps too often we confuse "praise" and "worship," as Arne Kopfermann repeatedly points out. While praise is an outward form and expression of our worship, worship happens in depth, with the whole life. That's why we deliberately speak of *"worship as a lifestyle."*

In children's and youth ministry, worship is largely uncharted territory from this perspective. Singing with kids, the band in teen worship - both have long been mandatory. And emotionally, everyone is in on it. But what is happening in depth? Are we really leading our youth into the worship of the holy God? Possibly we as leaders would need to lead the way: Why not live out worship as a team?

The practical applications are brief in the booklet. We believe that true worship has less to do with methods and forms than with personal devotion. Those who grasp that will have no trouble developing their own ways from the ideas given.

On this dossier The BESJ annual focus *"Worship"* follows the theme *"Vision"* (teamweekend 01). After the forward focus, now the upward focus. Devotion and discipleship have already emerged as two central themes in the vision context.

This dossier primarily reproduces papers and seminars from the Main Leadership Weekend 02. We would like to thank all the speakers who contributed or made their papers available.

We hope that the dossier will be of interest to all

We hope that these contributions will have their effect in Christian children's work - also beyond BESJ.

BESJ Youth Ministry Office Uster, June 26, 2002 Giancarlo Voellmy

1. Worship as a lifestyle

Matthias Spiess

DThe Backstreet Boys in their first seconds on stage - screaming of the crowd, raving, cheering, rapture.... Thousands of young girls see their lifelong dream unfold before them - World Cup 2002: a round leather is to hit the net - and millions of boys spend hours every day catching up on the latest results.

Both are very close to my definition of "worship as a lifestyle". I don't mean the shrieking and raving, of course.... Rather

- For these fans, there is nothing left beside, only their stars. Love is expressed, rapture. Only one desire remains - to be as close to the stars as possible. To catch a glimpse, maybe even a touch.
- The fans defend their group, team, no matter what anyone says, and seek out every snippet of their star and preserve it. They know all the songs by heart.
- They know the tour dates. They are always up to date on goal stats and scoring.
- They often start dressing like this (especially Elvis or Kelly Family fans).
- They are willing to pay almost any amount for a ticket. A few years ago, there was a big headline in Blick because a girl put up an ad saying, "Give sex for Michael Jackson ticket".

Extreme fans give everything - for a person. Actually unbelievable, but unfortunately far too often true.

Worship comes from within

Worship as a lifestyle is not about what songs we should sing with what instruments and how long the worship portion should be in a church. Sure, worship times are not wrong! But it's not the outward form that matters, it's the motivation, your heart and mine, the inward attitude that matters. The above fans practice "worship" in a much more genuine way than often happens in church.

It is easier to be a fan of - and worship - something you can see or even touch. In India, a special idol can be bought for every problem in life. It is not for nothing that the beloved is also called 'die Angebetete' in the German vernacular. When talking about a motorcycle, a computer, an instrument or a combination mixer-stirrer-kneading machine, you can quickly sense the enthusiasm of many people. Why?

Most important prerequisite: you know what you're talking about. No one worships something they don't know. - Do you know God? What's your image of God? Below you'll find various (questionable) images of God, drawn by Max Spring:

Each of us takes imprints from our past on how we see God. It's probably a mixture of our parents' upbringing, hearsay, devotions and sermons, and hopefully our own Bible reading and experiences.

WHAT I WANT TO Worship, I MUST KNOW.

Our view of God is always kind of one-sided, everyone has their favorite topics too. You can tell by the texts you use to do quiet time. Or by the content of your devotions, when the main message is ultimately the same in every text.

Lately, I've been mostly concerned with the holiness of God. This trait of God is often neglected. Today I believe that we only properly understand God's love and care when we are aware of how holy God is.

If we grasp a little bit of this holiness and greatness of God, it surpasses our excitement about all the combi-mix-stir-grind-knead appliances and motorcycles by leaps and bounds! Then we will have little choice but to worship God body and soul.

Different (questionable) images of God:



Worship because God is holy

In Isaiah 6 we read of Isaiah having a special vision. In it, he saw himself before the throne of God, and the angels were calling out to each other:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty! His glory fills the whole earth."

The angels repeat the word "holy" three times. Repetition was common in those days to emphasize important things. These angels (seraphim) had six wings. Two of them only to cover their faces because God's glory is so awesome that even angels cannot bear them.

Astonishingly, nowhere in the Bible is it emphasized three times, "Love, love, love is the Lord..." So I am sure that the holiness of God is something very special.

"Holy" translated means something like "set apart / separated." But not simply cut off and then left lying there like a piece of fat that is separated from the flesh. But rather set apart as something special. As something that stands taller, above the rest. It is an attempt to describe how God rises above this world. And in doing so, becomes a bit incomprehensible to us as well.

God is greater than the earth. He is holier. He has absolute power over it. No human being can create life. We can only prolong it or manipulate it. But we cannot create anything from nothing. God can. Just one word - and it happened. God has the power to create eternal life. Our shell will crumble to dust after death, but inside us is a soul that lives on.

I can't prove it. For many, it's just unbelievable because you can't see it. I like the image of philosopher Joostein Gaardner, who writes, "Many a brain has been dissected, but never a thought has been found." There are realities that are not visible!

God is bigger than the universe. He is holier. He has absolute power over it. Planets millions of light years away and there is no end to it yet. God created it. To make this a little clearer, it is once described as God being so big that He can just about use the earth as a footstool.

God is also above time. He is holier. He has absolute power over it. A thousand years to him is like a day and a day is like a thousand years. God always has been, always is, and always will be!

God is greater than man. He is holier. He has absolute power over us. The Bible says that every person will stand before God one day. Relatively speaking - we will fall down before him when we see his glory. Then he will stand as judge and divide people into two groups: Those who love Jesus and follow him - They will be able to be in God's fellowship forever.

There is also another side to this that I will not hide. Those who deliberately reject and despise Jesus will remain separated from God forever. God has power over man.

In touch with God

A proper response to the holiness of God is described by a psalm writer who says, "*Worship the Lord our God! Fall down before his throne, for he is the holy God!*" (Psalm 99:5)

Yes, what happens to people who come in contact with this holy God? There are many examples of this. I've picked out a few:

- Seeing God would be deadly. Moses saw Him from behind and got such a glimpse of the glory of God that the people could not bear it.
- Isaiah's reaction when he sees himself before God is just, "Woe is me, for I am lost. For a man of unclean lips am I, and in the midst of a people of unclean lips do I dwell." - When Isaiah sees the glory of God, he abruptly realizes, "I can't possibly stand before God like this! Alone, the things I have already said (not to mention thinking, I suppose)..."

- When Peter, despite his skepticism, had the boats full of fish, he said, "Go out from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord."
- The disciples later, "And they feared with great fear, saying one to another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" As the disciples became aware of the power and might of God, they gained an extreme reverence for God.
- Paul comes in contact with Jesus and is so blinded by His glory that it knocks him to the ground and he goes blind from it.

In a direct encounter with God, every human being realizes that there is no way he can stand before Him. Human distrust of God and faultiness are impossible to reconcile with God's holiness.

"Prostrate yourselves before him when he appears in his greatness and power! Let the whole world tremble before him!" (Psalm 96:9)

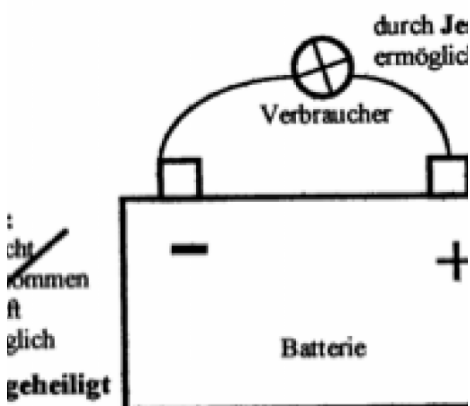
From ourselves, we are not able to respond duly to God's holiness. Because God is definitely so different and so far above us it is simply impossible to come to Him in our own strength. If it stayed that way, we would be hopeless!

God's response

Thank God, it is already described many times in the Old Testament that God is not just of the unapproachable kind. As holy as God is - so is he love, because no one loves as special as he does. God did not create man as a puppet for his boring minutes. Despite our flawedness, He loves us and wants a relationship with us. When we try to think ourselves into the situation of God, we realize that this is in no way self-evident. But it is absolutely necessary!

You could compare the relationship between God's holiness and human sin to the positive and negative terminals of a battery. A direct connection is impossible - the cable burns up.

Jesus: the connection



But Jesus steps into the gap. He takes on the flawedness of us. He suffers death for us, the punishment we deserve, making connection possible. I marvel that this holy, almighty God cares enough about me to send his Son into this world.

And I marvel at the fact that Jesus - who is, after all, consubstantial with God and thus also perfectly holy - that Jesus was willing to let his creatures mob him like that, to let them beat him up like that, to let them spit on him, to let them kill him, and, at the worst moment, to take on all the guilt of the world forever.

With every transgression, we are actually saying, "God, you are not good. I don't trust you. Your commandments are not good. I have the right to do what I want. I know better how to live in this world. I rule over my life and I don't need a ruler over my life."

At worst, I even use his grace as carte blanche to live even more selfishly. "Oh, it's not that bad - I'll ask for forgiveness again in the evening then," a slap in the face from Jesus, but I must confess that even after many years as a Christian, I am still capable of it.

In some stories in the Bible, God points out the power of sin and says, as it were, "Be careful! Don't take my grace for granted! - Take my holiness seriously!" I think of the story of Ananias and Sapphira, who had to give up their lives in a flash because of a lie. That would actually be what we all deserved. That would be righteous.

God owes me nothing - I owe him everything. I don't deserve the mercy. If I think I can earn it, then I am on the wrong track. When I talk about earning it, I am, as it were, putting together an account where there is a debit and a credit. No chance! With God we are in chalk.

One day I will come before God with nothing to show for it. Only by His love will He say, "I've forgiven you for all that. You're okay." That's incomprehensible. - He does it anyway.

Our first reaction to the holiness and greatness of God can only be this: Asking for forgiveness. Even if we have made God small as a buddy. Marveling at the greatness of God. Adoration, praise, and thanksgiving!

"Having been absolved of our guilt by faith, there is now nothing standing between us and God. We are at peace with him. To whom do we owe this? Jesus Christ alone. He has opened the door to this new life with God. Full of joy we thank God that we will one day share in His glory. (Romans 5:1)"

A new lifestyle

A second reaction to encountering God involves my whole lifestyle. Worship as a lifestyle for me means I want to please God with my life. I give Him first place, and I want to honor God with everything I have.

A picture: I got a beautiful tree from Erwin. Really with roots, trunk, branches and.... maybe some fruit. It's an ornamental apple tree. Someday it will bear beautiful fruit.

In the Bible, faith and heart change is described as growth. And like our tree, there must be fruit in a healthy faith. These fruits are produced by the Holy Spirit in our lives, if we let Him:

"In contrast, the Holy Spirit produces only good things in our lives: love and joy, peace and patience, kindness, goodness and faithfulness, prudence and self-control." (Galatians 5:22)

If these qualities become more and more of my personality, then my thoughts, words, and deeds will become more and more pleasing to God.

We can now simply attach fruit to this tree that we bought at the store. However, they will soon rot. True fruits cannot simply be attached. They have to grow. Only a tree with a healthy root can grow. It takes the power and puts it into action so that the tree grows bigger and that fruit can come. - The branch can't do that on its own - it needs the power from the root.

You can't just "be good" out of yourself either. You must have something before you can give. So you need the power of the Holy Spirit to fill your heart. And only such a heart will be able to serve God "from the heart".

The nutrients to grow

Just as with a plant, certain "nutrients" can enhance our personal growth:

- *Be grateful, for gratitude gives tremendous strength.* You give God the glory in your life when you are grateful. Even if you're not always on the bright side of life, there are always plenty of reasons to thank God. Enough to eat, forgiveness, freedom, God's creation, friends, etc.

And then there are really situations where we feel totally wronged. Or there are other reasons that you don't feel like giving thanks at all. James gives us some good advice there, in a matter-of-fact way that almost makes you angry:

"Is anyone suffering among you? Then let him pray! But if anyone is well and has reason to rejoice, let him sing praises to God." (James 5:13)

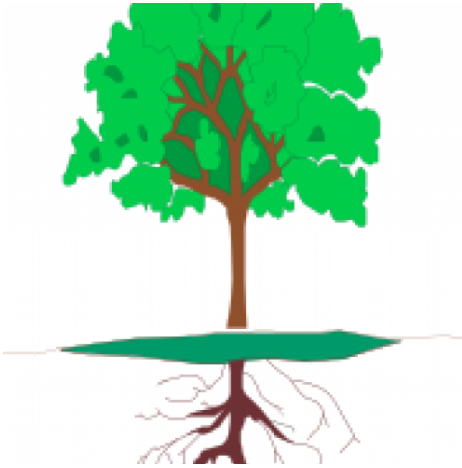
While suffering is obviously not quite enough to sing about, prayer is something you should get through to. Put it into practice and you will see how God will change your life.

Read the Psalms, for example, Psalm 43. First, the psalmist complains about all the injustice, about his worries and problems. He complains to God that he has let him fall. Then, apparently, the thought occurs to him that instead of complaining, he would be better off going to the temple, and he begins to worship God.

"At your altar I will worship you, I will rejoice over you and cheer you. Thankfully I will play to you on the zither, to you my God!" (Psalm 43:4)

As he prays-and apparently it's an act of will-he begins to rejoice. He becomes grateful. His perspective totally changes. No longer are his needs important, but God's greatness and possibilities. Then he asks himself

"Why is it that I am so sad? Why is my heart so heavy? In God I will hope, for I know: I will thank him again. He is my God, he will see me through!" (Psalm 43:5)



There is a praise and thanks cure I learned from Hanspeter Nüesch. It really works, I test it almost every morning. It goes like this:

When you wake up in the morning, don't think first about all that will come your way, but start with giving thanks and praising God. Give thanks for the new day. For being able to walk again into a new day that God has already prepared. Praise God for His strength and for His love that He has in store for you.

- **Be content with what God has provided for you.** So often we compare ourselves to the strengths of others and want to be like them. This goes for appearances as well. Different nose, longer legs, etc. . A well-known children's song sums it up: "Dä Hans im Schnäggeloch hät alles, was er will. And what he wants he doesn't have and what he has he doesn't want - Hans in the Schnäggeloch has everything he wants." But God wanted you exactly the way you are. You are "very good!" as God evaluates us at creation. You are a beloved child of God.
The right question is: Who do you believe?. Your desires, current trends - or God?
- **Use well the gifts God has provided for you.** No matter how many or what gifts you have: You have been commissioned by God to use your gifts for Him. For the glory of God. This is worship as a lifestyle.
"To Him (God) I serve with all that I am and have, proclaiming the message of salvation from His Son." (Romans 1:9)
- **God is to have a place in our thoughts and prayers all day long.** We are very often called by Jesus to share our concerns and requests with God. Most of us would agree that this is one of the most important things of all - for the success of our personal lives as well as for youth ministry.
Yet I have heard that the average prayer time of born-again Christians is around 3 minutes a day. - "You do not have because you do not ask," Jesus says.
It can be a help if you are looking for times that could be used more wisely in a simple way. This could be an arranged prayer time - everyone prays at a specific time right where they are. I myself use the drive to the office in the morning for prayer. I deliberately do not tune in the radio. In these fifteen minutes I pray for the day, for other people, for BESJ or other intentions. Instead of one prayer time, it can be many individual ones that make you aware that Jesus is really there.
- **Take times of silence.** We live in a very hectic time. Burn-out is no longer a foreign word to many. We are challenged at work, stressed in our free time. There is music everywhere. No

matter where we look - there is almost always something to read. And otherwise, there's bound to be a text message waiting on the cell phone.

"Go now to a solitary, quiet place!" said Jesus to them. "You need quiet!" For there were so many people with them that they could not even find time to eat." (Mark 6:31)

God speaks primarily in silence. Jesus went into silence before making important decisions. Elijah heard God in the silence. How can God speak to you and to me if we don't give Him the opportunity? Imagine you want to say something important to a friend, but he is always looking at his watch while you do it, running off again, talking incessantly, etc.

- **Joy in praise.** God delights in our songs. Many psalms call us to praise God with songs. Praise brings us closer to spiritual truths. We know many Bible verses by heart because they appear in songs. Songs "run after you" and accompany you through the day.

However, there is probably not as much lying as there is in worship. We make promises and say things that we would hardly say otherwise. ("And if thou hand us the heavy cup, the bitter one, we will take it gratefully without trembling..." / "Here I am, send me..." / "The highest of my life is to serve thee...", etc.). What we sing must be consistent with life. Even in biblical times, people thought they were very pious and attended church services - but preyed on the poor. God comments,

"I hate your celebrations, downright disgusting to me, your sacrificial feasts I detest. Your burnt offerings and your grain offerings I do not accept, and if you fatten animals to offer them to me, I do not care at all. Your loud songs I can no longer hear, spare me your harp-strumming. Rather, stand up for justice!" (Amos 5:21)

clear words!

- **Seek fellowship with other Christians.** With each other you can discuss things, pray and sing together. Together, many things come easier. In a community there is complementation, sympathy and correction. Important conditions to grow.

In contrast to eastern religions, the Christian faith is completely based on community. Already the first church has cultivated this very intensively by providing materially and spiritually for each other.

- **Take time for Bible study.**

"God's Word is full of life and power. It is sharper than the blade of a two-edged sword; yet it penetrates to our innermost being, separates there the human from the divine, and strikes us deep in our marrow. This word is an incorruptible judge of the thoughts and most secret desires of our heart." (Hebrews 4:12)

Personal Bible reading time is extremely contested. Maybe that's because Satan knows how important it is to our growth. - If worship is to be your lifestyle, you must let God influence you. God Himself speaks to you primarily through the Bible!

Sometimes whether or not Bible reading is interesting is a matter of method. Ask other Christians how they make this time with God interesting and find your personal form. Often it's a matter of time: you can't take 10 minutes and think you'll pull in the big insights then. God should shape your life, not calm your "I-should-read-the-Bible-conscience"

Anbetung als Lebensstil



Living wholly with God

So there are plenty of treasures ready for us to take up. Their power must flow through the trunk into the branches and the fruit. A tree just allows that to happen -if it's not injured, it happens on its own. We humans are usually a little more complicated. Our will resists taking God all the way into us. We might gladly give two or three lines, but really our whole life?

Find the attached fruits again. God doesn't just want to make cosmetic changes in your life, to make you seem a little better and do a few more good works. It's much deeper than that. It's about your will, which by nature rebels against the influence of God. It is not in our nature to subordinate our will to the will of God. "Thy will be done" - means specifically, I put God first. And that should be visible in the way we deal with time, money, planning, etc. . That is simply difficult for us. We want to decide for ourselves.

Satan, the "father of lies", wants to whisper to you that God does not mean well with you. That he wants to take things away from you. That only wants to secure his power. But you can be God yourself... Eve fell for those lies. Truth is, God has good in store for you, something you can't get for yourself.

The educated and correct Nicodemus came to Jesus and wanted to know more about him. Jesus answered him, "I tell you this, Nicodemus: whoever is not born again cannot enter God's kingdom." Born again - not just a little positively changed!

- God wants you whole. I like the stark line from C.S.Lewis, "In this, He does not want to torture your will, desires, and needs - but to kill them!" God doesn't want to drill out the rotten tooth, put a crown on it, or seal it, but pull it. It's about a total surrender and submission, but one that sets you free for God.

Surrender means:

- Total trust in God. He cares for you. He means well for you. I lay my whole life at His feet, so to speak, and say: take it - make something of it!
- I don't have to recognize everything - but I do everything I recognize. When God shows you things that are not right, turn around, clean them up. If God shows you how to help others - do it.

That's the point of the nutrients I explained earlier. That's how you live more and more for the glory of God. You do it no longer because you have to, but because you love God more and more. So He will set you to be a blessing in this world. You will leave a mark that will be seen all the way to heaven. You'll gather treasures in heaven with eternal value.

"The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love him with all your heart, with all your devotion, with all your strength." (Deut. 6:4-5)

2. The Power of Worship

Peter Blaser

Let me take you to a barren island of about 36 square miles in the Aegean Sea. A man stands in a deserted cove. Over the roar of the surf, his gaze wanders into the depths of the horizon. Groups of waves flash here and there in the sunlight like diamonds. The rocks stand out warm and golden against the steel blue sky. Into this agitated calm, a new world opens up.

"It was on a Sunday that God's Spirit seized me. I heard behind me a mighty voice, piercing like a trumpet: I turned, because I wanted to see who was speaking to me. Then I saw seven golden candlesticks.

Amidst them stood one that looked like a man. He had a long coat on, and around his chest he wore a golden belt. The hair on his head was like white wool, indeed bright white like snow. His eyes glowed like flames of fire, his feet shone like liquid gold in a furnace, and his voice boomed like a thundering waterfall.

In his right hand he held seven stars, and the words from his mouth seemed like a sharp, double-edged sword. His face shone bright as the sun.

When I saw this, I fell down as if dead at his feet. But he laid his right hand upon me and said, "Fear not! I am the first and the last, and I am the living. I was dead, but now I live forever and ever, and I have power over death and the kingdom of death." (Revelation 1:12-18)

With these words John describes his encounter with Jesus on the island of Patmos. A powerful appearance - different from how we often imagine Jesus. No wonder John falls to the ground as if dead with fear and awe. An indelible incident in John's memory. It left a deep mark on him, as did the Jesus encounter as a disciple in his younger years.

Encounters with Jesus leave a lasting mark on my life. Where do you encounter Jesus formative?

Where do you encounter JESUS PRECISELY?

Who do I worship?

The Bible speaks of worshipping the living Creator God and His Son Jesus Christ.

"You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him alone" (Deut. 6:13)

Who is this God and his Son who deserves our worship? It is, on the one hand, the holy, worthy God and His Son who allowed Himself to be "debased" for us:

The Worthy God

Creator of all life, the Wisdom, the Mighty, the Unlimited Ruler, the All-inclusive, the All-pervading, the Truth, the Light, the Holy, the Communicator, the Just, the Merciful, the Gracious, the Revealing, the Living, the Glorious, the Eternal, the Sinless

The "debased" God - Jesus Christ

The Incarnate, the Humiliated, the Despised, the Unwanted, the Misunderstood, the Cast Out, the One Called a Liar, the One Spit On, the One Slapped, the One Abandoned, the One Tried, the One Mocked, the One Laughed At, the One Crucified, the One Condemned, the One Whipped, the One Rejected

My sin has made the worthy God the "debased" God in Jesus! But the glorious God, through his incarnation and through what all he endured for us in Jesus, becomes even more glorious, even greater, even more incomprehensible - and at the same time, precisely because of that, approachable to us.

Becoming aware of who or what I worship is very crucial. Because what I worship has power over me. Every person worships a god! Either the true, living God or a substitute god. That is why the question of the object of worship is so crucial!

Is it the living God, or is it substitute gods with you,

?

- occupation, career
- Possession
- Fun, adventure, leisure, mobility
- girlfriend, boyfriend, life partner, children
- the good feeling in worship
- the piously disguised self-actualization in church
- the Ameisli, Junschi, teen or sports ministry
- reputation, honor
- hobbies
- Computers, mobile phones with all their facets

IN THE OBJECT OF Worship LIES THE POWER OF Worship.

God in His riches has given us **everything and we may rejoice in His gifts**. But when we worship the gifts they become idols. Idols rob us of authority, of credibility, because they are more important to us than Jesus, because they are not according to God's will and rob Him of first place in our lives. For God says that He is a jealous God who will not allow His glory to be "stolen."

When it comes to the power of worship, the question of the God I worship must be settled in my life.

We are created to worship God

When I look at God and Jesus with my spiritual eyes, I cannot help but worship Him. It is in accordance with the purpose of life assigned to me by God. I was created to worship him. That is my *raison d'être*.

"According to His plan and will, God has already appointed us in advance as His heirs through Christ. Now we are to glorify God with our lives, who have long waited for our Savior." (Ephesians 1:11-12)

The second part literally reads, "...that we *might be* to the praise of his glory, who have before hoped for Christ." In numerous other places, the Bible also calls us to worship God - often in command form!

"You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him alone." (Deut. 6:13)

"Bring the glory of his name to the Lord." (1 Chronicles 16:29)

"Worship him in holy ornaments." (1 Chronicles 16:29)

"Give glory to God." (Revelation 14:7)

"Worship Him who made heaven and earth." (Revelation 15:4)

"Worship God." (Revelation 22:9)

"Praise the Lord." (Psalm 147:1)

"Let us not cease to praise and thank God in the name of Jesus. These are our sacrifices, by which we confess ourselves to God." (Heb 13:15)

How do we worship

When we consider the temple service instituted by God in the Old Testament, we are struck: God places great emphasis on worship through music, singing, clothing, certain cleansings, preaching, sacrifices, etc. Further, he "ordained" quite a few lengthy feasts for his people, with the following purposes:

- his worship
- rejoicing in him
- Rejoicing and giving thanks in his gifts
- remembrance of his deeds
- Proclaiming his name
- Joy in one another and encouragement

GOD SEEKS MY ADORATION WITH HEAD, HEART AND HAND.

God himself is very creative. So we too should and may be creative. We can worship God very differently, in different forms and different attitudes. It is often a matter of type. Some prefer to sing, to make music, to dance, while others rather seek silence and stillness. God ultimately wants more than creative forms and attitudes - he wants my heart! And he wants it whole.

God wants our worship to be sincere, honest, believable, that is, springing from love for him. Is that a special love feeling, a feel-good feeling? Is it a special spiritual state? Is our love for God measurable?

Yes! Jesus says:

"Whoever receives my commandments and lives by them loves me. And whoever loves me, my Father will love him. I also will love him, and will make myself known to him." (John 14:21)

The proof of love is obedience to God and His Word.

"Samuel replied, 'Which do you think the Lord delights in more: many burnt offerings and sacrifices, or obedience to his commands? I'll tell you this: obedience is more important than slaughtering sacrificial animals. It is better to listen to the Lord than to offer him the best sacrifice.'" (1 Samuel 15:22)

How often do I think I can get around obedience with sacrifices like time, finances, commitment, etc.? In the deepest dimension, we worship God through obedience!

We can talk about worship, organize creative worship or praise in church, camp, team. However, if obedience to Jesus and His Word is not evident in our lives, any form remains a hypocritical, pious ritual, perhaps even professional show. The feeling of it can blow us away - it has nothing to do with God! Jesus says:

"This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." (Matthew 15:8)

Today we are challenged to take a very personal look at ourselves and make sure Jesus doesn't have to say the same thing about us, about me, and about you.

The Power of Worship

What does real worship do in my life? If worship has power in it, then it has corresponding effects:

- aligns the heart with Jesus - I meet him, he shapes me
- strengthens trust, faith in Jesus - I trust him more
- makes me thankful - I learn, as Paul says, to be thankful in all things (1 Thessalonians 5:18), which results in great blessings
- makes me free from myself - look to my neighbor, not to my ego
- encourages social engagement - willingness to serve instead of pleasure stress
- makes credible - a potential of practical proclamation is released
- leads to humility - I see myself in the light of God
- gives situationally independent joy - life aligns with the will of God
- gives everything in life its proper value, priority - today a big problem In short, worship changes my life to the image Jesus has of me. The power of worship changes the mind, the spirit and thereby the quality of worship grows (2Co 3:18).

Some examples of this:

- *Paul and Silas* (Acts 16:16-39) praise and extol God in prison. God intervenes through an earthquake, they are set free. In response to the praise, God acted completely unexpectedly - with noticeable consequences.
- *Shelter Now* (Georg Taubmann in an interview) - Aid workers are arrested in Afghanistan. "We prayed together several times a day, read the Bible, sang hymns, read psalms as if they were written just for us. That's when our hearts found peace. The fact that we got out of here alive is miracle after miracle of God."
- *Daniel* (Dan. 6:1-29) shows uncompromising loyalty to God. Despite the threat of being thrown to the lions, he opens his window three times a day as usual and prays. Daniel experiences God's preservation in the lions' den because he is obedient and confesses God.

We long to experience God and run from event to event. And yet, frustration often remains because we only experience Jesus superficially and the good feeling quickly fades. We want to experience Jesus without wanting to abide by His terms. Jesus has degenerated in many places into a vending machine, a good kunmpel who has lost his holiness, whom I can deal with as I see fit.

We WANT TO EXPERIENCE JESUS WITHOUT HIS CONDITIONS.

But God is holy. He hates sin. We owe Him submission and obedience - even where we don't understand!

- *Joshaphat* (2 Chronicles 20:18-24) The king of Judah was beset by enemies. Jehoshaphat turned to God and followed His instructions with all the people. Finally, it goes off without a fight - various hostile nations had finished each other off!
- *A personal experience*: The political community denied me a building permit for a small garden building. I seethed, thoughts of protest and defiance ran through my mind. But God helped to wrestle me through to gratitude. And indeed: All resentment, all rebellion disappeared. But the best was yet to come: Four days later the building secretary informed me that the application would be submitted to the local council for a positive decision. I could count on the approval.
It doesn't always work out that way, sometimes God leaves it in the situation. But I realized: without obedience on our part, we would also never have experienced God so.
- *Joseph* (Genesis 39:6-13) enjoys all the freedoms as a valet in Potiphar's house. One day Potiphar's wife makes him a tempting proposal. Joseph turns him down and flees - that's when she slanders him: he has molested her.
Joseph is sent to prison. Things do not look good for him. What good has faithfulness to his master done now? But his obedience is rewarded, though not immediately. He eventually becomes the second most senior man in Egypt.

These examples show worship of God pure and simple. Even if worship and music are not always the focus. Here people are obedient to God's word, they are willing to submit to his will and confess to him.

How does true worship grow?

It is clear that deep worship does not come overnight. Consistently living as a follower of Jesus takes time. You might call this growth process "spiritual breathing"

1. I recognize my sin - even as a child of God
2. I genuinely repent - letting go of the wrong
3. I fix what I am aware of - very practically
4. I submit myself to Jesus - a change of dominion
5. I cultivate nurturing community

Many Christians, have never made a Lordship change in their lives. As a result, they live in a perpetual self-deception. They think they his redeemed, but in reality God does not know them. Jesus says:

"It is not he who continually calls me 'Lord' who will enter God's kingdom, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven." (Matthew 7:21)

The change of lordship is not expressed in perfect sinlessness, but in consciously working toward living according to God's will, consciously avoiding sin, and obediently following Jesus. Without the knowledge and confession of sin, there will be no change of dominion!

If you are not sure, or if you are deliberately living a double life, confide in a person who can counsel you based on the Bible. God wants to help you change your life!

The power of worship is reality

What would happen on our teams, what would happen in our country if we pushed through to genuine worship of God through our lives? - Our relationships would be intact. Our society, our country would change for the better. Our mission would be fulfilled: Thousands of young people would be able to know Jesus! It's up to me and up to you.

"Lord, happy are the people who jubilantly celebrate you as King! You yourself are among them, bringing light into their lives. They rejoice over you every day and are glad because you keep your promises. You alone make them strong; through your love they attain to renown and power." (Psalm 89:16-18)

May Jesus Christ reveal himself to you and give it to you for his glory.

3rd Worship Circuit

Nadine Kuhn

A way for you to worship God quietly in a variety of ways - tried out 1:1 at the BESJ Main Leaders Weekend 2002.

Idea

On the worship trail, different forms of worship can be learned about and practiced. Each post describes a different form of worship.

Each participant is on his own. He decides for himself in which way he will take his time and for how long.

A worship course can only be carried out in the way described from teenage onwards. For children, it would need to be adapted so that it could be completed in small groups, each with one leader.

The number of stations depends on the space available. It is important that the environment is quiet and that the various stations do not interfere with each other.

Variations

The design can be changed and customized at any time, depending on the age group, location and possibilities.

Preparations/Materials

You can find out what materials you need from the individual post descriptions. Post descriptions Starting with the next column you will find the detailed description of the course. Instructions or given texts are printed in boxes.

0

0. Entrance Hall

In the entrance hall, a poem invites you to be still with God. This you can write large on posters. The ticking of clocks emphasizes the content.

Dates, dates, dates.... So it suddenly pounded in my mind. But they weren't there all at once, one after the other. No! They were brought to me one by one. Wooing, cajoling, creeping in, urging, demanding! All appointments - apparently appointments for YOU, my GOD. In the course of time they became a confusing colossus, driving me restlessly forward. That's when I got scared for the first time! In order to get order in the plethora of my appointments, I got myself a mini planner. That would be enough - I thought! I entered all my appointments. But the line per day was not enough! I got myself a bigger planner. It had - except the one line - still place for further entries. So I could enter more appointments: events, meetings, courses, lectures, evangelistic meetings, church services, bible studies, visits, seminars etc. Then I was shocked for the second time! With all these appointments for YOU, my GOD, with all being on the way for YOU, with all commitment for YOU, I did not notice that the appointments with YOU, the consultation hours with YOU, the times with YOU became less and less! They came too short! They were displaced by the so-called activities for YOU, my GOD! I found - today I know: took me! - no more "quiet time"! Yes even worse: I found no more quiet time to the "quiet time". There I was frightened for the third time! The appointment book was still not enough! I couldn't keep track of all my commitments. So I bought a new, bigger one. There are many of them. It had a daytime and a nighttime registration. I wrote everything down again. And lo and behold, I managed to fit

almost everything in! Even a few hours for sleeping were planned. At certain times, however, even these melted down to a minimum. But I was satisfied myself. I had a rich, full and eventful life, filled to the last - whether also fulfilled, I ask myself, however, today - in use for YOU, my GOD!

From Dates, Dates, Dates by Kurt Scherer, Johannis, 1999

Through a curtain of paper strips, you are now immersed in the prayer time.

Now take time with God, all by yourself. Eleven different prayer stations are available to you. The opinion is not that you must visit all of them. Rather, take enough time for each station. On the map you can find out where the stations are. The order does not matter. Take a notebook and pencil for notes, thoughts, ideas, prayers.... and enjoy the time!

Worship Course

Image Meditation Nature

Psalm 104:1-24 as an audio slide show with matching images

Last slide:

1. Take time to thank God for His wonderful creation!

Materials: slides, slide projector, Psalm 104 on CD or cassette, CD player.

2. Song

Listen to a meaningful worship song and read the words to it.

Listen to the song, consciously focus on the lyrics, if you want, you may sing along.

Material: song on CD, CD player, lyrics of the song on foil, overhead projector

3. Image meditation cross

A picture of Jesus crucified hangs on the wall.

Ponder the image. Thank Jesus for what he has done for you.

Material: image, enlarged on poster.

4. Laundry

Clotheslines are strung around the room, with notes attached to them with clothespins.

What can you thank God for?

Write a keyword on a piece of paper and pin it to the wall. You may write more than one note. Also read those slips of paper that are already ah on the wall.

Thank God for this now.

Materials: slips of paper, scribes, clothesline, clothespins

5. CH

Large map of Switzerland on the wall.

Think back to your Ameisli, Jungschi, or Teenie work. For what can you be grateful to God?

Write your thoughts on a post-it and stick it in whichever region of Switzerland your group is in.

Thank God also for another note already stuck on the card.

Material: large CH card, Post-it, writer

6. People

Picture meditation with pictures of people hung on the walls.

Ponder the images

Thank God for five people you know and their characteristics.

Material: pictures of people

7. Letter

Writing and praying a letter or poem to God

1. **You have two ways to write a letter:**
2. **Write the continuation of a poem of praise you have started on the wall.**
3. **Write a praise poem or letter yourself in your notebook.**
4. **Now pray your praise poem.**

Materials: colored wrapping paper on wall, scribes, poem starters

8. Painting

A picture is to be painted to Jonah 2.

1. **Set up a painting space. (Don't forget newspapers!!)**
2. **Now listen to Jonah's prayer. Paint a picture that fits the text for you**
3. **Don't forget to clean up your place.**

Material: neocolor, newspapers, text Jonah 2 on CD or cassette, CD player

9. Tracks

Using the poem Traces in the Sand, reflect on God's gifts in life and give thanks for them. The floor of the room is covered with sand so you can leave your own marks.

1. **Read the poem.**
2. **Walk your own life's trail now. As you take your first step, imagine your birth. Where did God carry you? Whenever you think of something, stop and thank God for it.**

Material: poem written down large, sand on the floor, plastic for under the sand.

10. March

Walk with candle and psalm outdoors.

Take a psalm, a candle and a windbreak. Light the candle. Take time to pray the psalm aloud or silently over and over again on a walk in the neighborhood.

Material: Psalm 111 copied on slips of paper, Kerzli, windbreak

This post works well as a closing. It could also be designed as a processing time.

11. Throne

Worship Before God's Throne. - A large throne stands in the room illuminated by spotlights. In front of it are prayer chairs.

Imagine coming before God's throne. Worship God and thank him for his greatness.

Material: throne (chairs wrapped with cloths and foam), spotlights, prayer chairs

You can order the prayer chairs from:

Schreinerei Arche, Dammweg 60, 3400 Burgdorf - A piece costs about Fr. 30.- plus shipping costs.

Meditation post 3



4. Worship as a Team

Giancarlo Voellmy

No group is better than its leadership team! If worship with the kids and teens is important - all the more important it is for the team!

Worship belongs in every Christian community. On the team, it's true that the focus is on preparation. But the spiritual dimension is an inseparable part of it. A team that prepares spiritual programs but does not have a spiritual life of its own cannot do justice to its task!

It is an experiential value: worship accomplishes much with little additional effort. It helps relieve tense situations. It helps get over obstacles and problems. Worship and thanksgiving provide an important counterbalance to asking in prayer. It focuses the team's eyes on God for what God is doing.

Idea

Prayer should become a regular part of the team meeting. By integrating God into our team as much as possible, we also give Him the glory for what is happening

Variants

There are several ways in which this can happen:

- Prayer Time: Set aside a time to pray for the session, for the planned occasion, for the children.
- Singing: Schedule time to sing a few songs, preferably at the beginning of the session. Singing also does a lot emotionally - good form for stressed leaders.
- Sharing: talk about personal concerns, but especially positive experiences. Highlight the strengths in each other. Give thanks for them.
- Prayer journal: remember what you prayed for two weeks ago? If you want to praise God with good reason, write down prayer requests and next to them their fulfillment. A motivating experience!

Another basic form of team worship: do your best. Be reliable, put yourself out there for others. In doing so, you honor God!

Material

Dependent: Songbooks, guitar, prayer journal, wrapping paper, scribes...

Special

An effective measure that can be introduced with little effort. In time, you'll find your own style.

5. Worship in nature

Hans Bieri, 44, Brgbauer in Batenberg, active in the BESJ region Thun

Worship with wind in your hair - is nature also a place of worship? And not only for off-road games, campfires and adventure life?

Nature invites formative encounters with God. Overwhelmed, I stand as I immerse myself in God's creation. Amazed, I let His wonders work upon me. My heart fills with awe and gratitude, opens and bubbles over. Worship of our magnificent God becomes a desire for me.

Try it in your group! You have many opportunities.

Idea

Learn to marvel at creation by experiencing it intensely, and thereby worship God with delight and wholeheartedly.

This worship is found frequently, especially in the Old Testament, e.g. Psalm 95; parts of Psalm 104; but also in Acts 17:24. Marvel at creation, worship the Creator! Romans 1:23, 25.

Watching impressive natural events (sunset, waterfall, mountains, etc.) makes us aware of God's greatness. From there you can lead to worship. It is possible to design an entire event around this - going to a chosen location, engaging with the natural wonder in small groups, reading appropriate scriptures, input to deepen...

Actually, though, any outdoor occasion offers opportunity. It is worthwhile to look at the "small" witnesses of God's great imagination of creation spontaneously with each other.

Worship with "wind in your hair" is suitable for all ages!

Variants

There are (almost) no limits to your imagination and variations are conceivable depending on local conditions.

Preparation

The starting point for this form of worship can be an overnight stay in the open air, a camp, a summit climb (you don't need a four-thousand-metre peak for this). A possible occasion would also be the theme "Creation - Evolution", but also just a Bible text or a new song with appropriate content.

A scientific fact about creation can also be used as a starting point for this form of worship

Scientific facts about animals and plants can also cause amazement!

Material

Our creator provides the material for free. Ingenious, right?

Special

Especially important as a leader is your own enthusiasm for nature. Don't do the preparation in the "quiet room." Go to the place of the event, let yourself be filled with the impressions, feel the "wind in your hair", learn to marvel anew. And you will be able to lead your group credibly into worship. Respect given boundaries. Your movement in nature should be marked by respect. Respect for people, too: Entering the nesting grounds of waterfowl or a pre-harvest hayfield will make conservation officers or farmers highly unpleasant contemporaries.

Working aids

On the Internet or in libraries, there is information on virtually every topic in nature.

6. Rapping Bible verses

Michael Kilchenmann, 29, King's Kids staff

Speaking God's word is a high form of worship. We show Him that we take Him seriously. What better way to do that than to see young people fall in love with the Bible

It is our responsibility to impress the Word of God on children and youth (Deut. 6:6,7)! God gives us the creativity to try different things to see as much fruit as possible in the lives of children. The Word of God works through itself (Isaiah 55:11), especially in the mouths of children (Psalm 8:3). Worshiping God with the Bible - a powerful thing!

Idea

There are a great many creative ways to learn Bible verses. One of them is rap. We use rhythm to add some variety to the tone. It helps to clap or snap our fingers to it.

The content of the Bible verses chosen should not be changed. However, the words can be exchanged to make them rhyme better. There are no limits to creativity.

This form of learning is suitable for all ages.

Variants

The rap can be based on an existing song or a specific beat.

Older kids make their own raps!

Preparation

Learning by doing!

Material

Without a lot of materials, it is possible to create a varied and exciting time. The Bible and some good ideas are already enough to bring young people closer to God's Word.

Working aids

You'll find some great examples of Bible verse raps on the CD "Ig u mini Fründe" by King's Kids!

(Order from www.kingskids.ch)

Special

Good raps become earworms! Kids also speak them at school, on the playground, etc. - mobile Word of God....

7. Creative Prayer with Children

Mirjam Stoll, 25, has led Kidstreff and now works at King's Kids.

Did you know: prayer is not boring! Especially not when you pray with kids. It is possible to get kids excited about prayer! Try it creatively...

When we browse the Bible, we come across many a story where God deals with His people in unusual and creative ways. A very good example is the story of Joshua, where God gives the people of Israel very specific instructions for a "prayer march." In the New Testament, Jesus regularly speaks to the people in parables and visualizes situations through objects.

The idea

Prayer doesn't necessarily mean sitting in a chair with your eyes closed and your hands folded. That idea doesn't excite us at all. Rather, we emphasize that the children be active and somehow identify with the request. Very often we need symbols or parables from our everyday life for this.

The goal is a prayer time that is also fun - in the context of the Jungschi or as a prayer meeting.

Even kids between the ages of 8 - 12 find it hard to sit still for long periods of time. At this stage of development they need to be active and do something. That's why we pray creatively. But these ideas can also be real help for teens and even adults. You need a lot of space. A large room or a lawn is ideal.

Variants

Here are a few examples: You pray that it will rain again in a place where it has not rained for a very long time. To do this, you fill a watering can with water. In turn, each child may take it, water the meadow and pray that God will give rain. (This is what we did; God answered our prayer in 2 days)

Or you pray for spiritual walls to come down between people/nations. In doing so, you all brace yourselves against a wall as if to knock it down. All together you may cry out loud to God.

Another time you want to pray for Thailand. Write prayer requests on pieces of paper and put them in balloons. Then blow them up. Now each child gets to prick a balloon and then pray for the intention. You can also distribute the slips of paper around the room and then let the kids look for them.

Preparation

Varies depending on prayer time and type.

Time commitment for a prayer group: one hour of time to prepare and one hour for the occasion.

Special

What I think is very very important: If you are going to pray with children, make sure your attitude towards prayer is right beforehand. I can tell you from experience that children are very sensitive personalities and will quickly notice if you are playing to them.

Further, it is also important that you examine your view of children. Do you see them as more troublesome kids who are more of a pain than a blessing, or do you see in them their spiritual potential?

Additionally, pray for "your" kids. Just through that, God is giving you a mega heart for your work!

Working aids

For training on the topic or advice on setting up a prayer group, you can contact Mirjam Stoll.

(Info and order of the mentioned material at www.kingskids.ch)

8. Worship with Kids

Not every request concert deserves the name "worship." Singing doesn't automatically lead to a worshipful attitude. How can you intentionally encourage that?

Source reference:

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