

Leader's Guide: Chapter 5 –

Designed for Devotion: Cultivating a Lifestyle of Worship

Chapter Summary

This chapter explores the life-changing power of worship and its essential role in recovery and transformation. Worship isn't limited to music or Sunday services—it's about daily surrender, obedience, gratitude, service, and living in community. Worship aligns our hearts with God's will, dethrones idols, and anchors us in our identity as beloved children of God. Through biblical stories like Abraham and Isaac, the alabaster jar, and the Samaritan woman, and testimonies like Crystal's, we see that worship invites God into our brokenness and releases beauty from surrender.

In a worshipping community, believers uplift one another and experience the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit. Worship, both personal and communal, becomes a powerful tool for healing, identity restoration, and breaking the cycle of addiction. This chapter calls participants to live lives of worship in spirit and truth, stepping into the joy and freedom that only God can provide.

Key Principles

- 1. We Were Created for Worship** – Isaiah 43:7, Ephesians 2:10
- 2. True Worship Requires Surrender** – Genesis 22:1-18, Romans 12:1
- 3. Worship Transforms Brokenness into Beauty** – Mark 14:3-9
- 4. Worship Shapes Identity** – 1 Peter 2:9
- 5. Worship in Community Breaks Chains** – John 4:23-24, Acts 2:42
- 6. Praise Shifts Perspective and Releases Power** – Psalm 42:11, Psalm 103:2-4

Road Map for Journeying Through Chapter 5

Step 1: Define Worship

Explore what worship is and isn't. Use Genesis 22 and Romans 12:1 to frame the idea of worship as total surrender, not just music. Reflect on C.S. Lewis's and Corrie Ten Boom's quotes.

Step 2: Identify Barriers to Worship

Discuss idols, distractions, or family habits that hinder true worship. Encourage participants to identify their "alabaster jars" that need to be broken.

Step 3: Embrace Worship as a Lifestyle

Read Romans 12:1 and Galatians 5:22-23. Talk about daily habits of surrender, service, gratitude, and obedience. Share about Brother Lawrence and practicing the presence of God.

Step 4: Worship in Community

Use Psalm 133, Acts 2, and stories like Crystal's to highlight the power of community worship. Lead group prayer or worship time.

Step 5: Encounter God in Brokenness

Reflect on stories like the Samaritan woman and Horatio Spafford. Discuss how God meets us in grief and shame, and transforms it into beauty.

Step 6: Rediscover Identity Through Worship

Read 1 Peter 2:9. Help participants replace past labels with their true identity in Christ. Use worship to reinforce these truths.

Step 7: Practice Praise and Reflection

Guide the group through psalms of praise (Psalm 16, 42, 103). Encourage creative expressions of praise like journaling, art, or song.

Simple Teaching Moments

- **Worship Is a Lifestyle, Not a Location**
- **God Uses Broken Things to Release Beautiful Fragrance**
- **Worship Redefines Who We Are**
- **Praise is a Weapon in the Battle for Freedom**
- **Surrender Makes Room for the Spirit to Move**



Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions



- What does worship mean to you personally? How has your understanding of worship changed as you've progressed in your recovery journey?
- Reflect on the story of Abraham and Isaac. Have you ever felt God asking you to surrender something important to you? How did you respond?
- What resonated with you most about Crystal's story?
- The woman with the alabaster jar broke a valuable family heirloom to worship Jesus. What "family heirlooms" (traditions, habits, or beliefs) might you need to break to worship God fully?
- What "idols" or distractions might be hindering your worship? What steps can you take to dethrone them and allow Christ to reign supreme in your heart?
- How does the image of brokenness in the alabaster jar reflect God's ability to use our surrender to create beauty and impact others?
- How can you incorporate worship into your daily routines?
- How has focusing on God's attributes helped you in times of temptation or struggle?
- Reflect on 1 Peter 2:9. How might embracing your identity as "chosen" and part of a "royal priesthood" impact your recovery journey?
- In what areas of your life do you find it most challenging to surrender to God's will? How can worship help in these areas?
- How can we as a group encourage and support each other in cultivating lifestyles of worship?
- What's one specific way you plan to prioritize worship in your life this week?

This chapter is a call to live a lifestyle of worship—a life marked by daily surrender, heartfelt praise, and obedience to God in every area. Worship is not limited to a moment or a song; it's a posture of the heart that brings freedom, breaks idols, and restores our true identity as beloved children of God. As we live in worship—individually and in community—we encounter the transforming power of God's presence and step into the fullness of the life He created us for.

Chapter 5:

DESIGNED FOR DEVOTION:

CULTIVATING A LIFESTYLE OF WORSHIP



NEW LIFE
Community



A NEW LIFE COMMUNITY CURRICULUM SERIES

A MINISTRY OF TEEN CHALLENGE OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Chapter 5:

Designed for Devotion: Cultivating a Lifestyle of Worship

“It is in the process of being worshipped that God communicates His presence to men.”

—C.S. Lewis

Have you ever wondered why we were created? The Bible tells us that we were made for a profound purpose: to worship God (Isaiah 43:6-7, 21; Ephesians 2:10). This truth holds immense power for those of us on the journey of recovery and transformation. Let's explore how worship — far more than just singing songs in a Sunday service — can be a powerful force in breaking the chains of addiction and reshaping our lives.

Engaging in worship within the community of believers also reflects one of the intended functions of the body of Christ, where we not only uplift one another but also experience the manifestation of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. In this collective worship, we find strength, healing, and the transformative work of God in our lives.

True Worship

At its core, worship is about surrendering our whole selves to God and acknowledging His supremacy in our lives. It's an attitude of the heart that says, *"God, You are worthy of all my devotion."*

The story of Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 22:1-18 gives us a clear picture of true worship. This story itself may feel challenging, because it shows us the depths of faith and obedience that true worship may ask of us.

The story begins with God testing Abraham:

“Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, ‘Abraham!’ ‘Here I am,’ he replied. Then God said, ‘Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.’”

Genesis 22:1-2





Try to imagine the weight of this command. Isaac was not just Abraham's son; he was the long-awaited child of promise, the one through whom God had said He would establish His covenant. Abraham and Sarah had waited decades for this child, and now God was asking Abraham to give him up.

But Abraham's response is remarkable. The next verse simply states, "Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac" (Genesis 22:3). There's no record of argument, no pleading with God, just simple obedience. As they approach the place of sacrifice, Abraham tells his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you" (Genesis 22:5). In this moment, Abraham frames what he is about to do—an act of ultimate surrender and trust in God's plan—as worship. **True worship is found in obedience, even when the path ahead is unclear and the cost is great.**

As they neared the place of sacrifice, Isaac noticed they had fire and wood but no lamb, so he asked his father where the sacrifice was. Abraham's response is both heartbreaking and faith-filled:

*"God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son."
Genesis 22:8*

When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar, arranged the wood, bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar. Just as Abraham was about to sacrifice his son, the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven,

*"Do not lay a hand on the boy. Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."
Genesis 22:12*

God did indeed provide a sacrifice — a ram caught in a thicket — and Abraham named that place "The Lord Will Provide."

When we surrender our entire lives and everything we hold dear as a complete and unreserved act of worship to God, we can trust that he will faithfully provide us with exactly what we need.

This story teaches us several key aspects of worship:

Worship as Submission: True worship means aligning our will with God's, even when difficult.

Yielding and Offering: We must be willing to offer everything to God, holding nothing back.

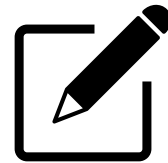
Eliminating Distractions: Worship requires clearing away anything that competes for our loyalty to God.

Surrendered Posture: Having "loose hands" spiritually, ready to release or receive as God directs.

Attentiveness to God's Voice: Being tuned in to God's guidance and correction.

In the context of recovery, these principles take on a whole new meaning. Addiction often involves holding tightly to substances and behaviors that have become idols in our lives. Corrie Ten Boom once said, "I have learned to hold all things loosely so God will not have to pry them out of my hands." Worship calls us to loosen our grip on these false comforts and fully trust God.

Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions



- The word worship is used for the first time in Scripture in Genesis 22:5, when Abraham described his obedience as worship. What does this teach us about the true meaning of worship? How is it different from how we usually think of worship (like music or church services)?
- Abraham was asked to give up what was most precious to him—his son Isaac. What might God be asking you to surrender as an act of worship? How does worship involve sacrifice in your own life?
- Abraham obeyed God early the next morning without recorded debate or delay. What does his response teach us about worship and obedience? What keeps us from responding to God this way?
- Abraham told Isaac, "God Himself will provide the lamb." What does this reveal about faith in the middle of sacrifice? How have you experienced God's provision when you trusted Him in a difficult situation?
- Corrie Ten Boom said, "I have learned to hold all things loosely so God will not have to pry them out of my hands." What are some things you've been holding onto tightly? What would it look like to open your hands in worship and let God have control?
- Addiction often involves clinging to false comforts. Worship is surrendering them to God. How does this story of Abraham challenge you to let go of the "idols" in your life and trust God to provide what you really need?

Crystal's Story

Crystal's life was marked by chaos and addiction from an early age. "I would be found on my neighbor's lawn, passed out. She would drag me home." Abandoned by her mother—a heroin addict who died before Crystal's 17th birthday—she turned to meth, lost in a cycle of self-destruction. Beneath the addiction was a deeper pain. "All of that—the drugs, the lifestyle—was just a cover for the emptiness I felt inside." She had endured deep wounds, including abuse from someone close to her family. At 18, she looked in the mirror and heard a voice whisper, *You're going to end up just like her.* It was a sobering realization, but she didn't yet see that God had a plan to rewrite her story.



When she walked through the doors of Teen Challenge, she was lost in every way. She nearly walked away, but the Holy Spirit stopped her. "I remember getting ready to walk off that campus, but I felt God say, *If you leave, you won't be able to come back.*" That moment of surrender changed everything. As she stayed, God's Word redefined her identity. "The Lord just began to tell me, *You need to know what my Word says about who I am and who you are in Me.*" Through worship, discipleship, and faith, the anger, pain, and emptiness that once consumed her life gave way to healing and hope.

Today, Crystal is a testimony of God's restoration. She graduated from Teen Challenge, went on to Bible training, and now lives a full life with her husband and three children. What once seemed like an inevitable path of destruction has become a testimony of redemption. "This whole journey hasn't been easy, but it's been so worth it. *So worth it.* I wouldn't change anything."

Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions



- What does worship mean to you personally? How has your understanding of worship changed as you've progressed in your recovery journey?
- Reflect on the story of Abraham and Isaac. Have you ever felt God asking you to surrender something important to you? How did you respond?
- What resonated with you most about Crystal's story?

Worship as a Lifestyle



Worship isn't confined to a church service or a particular time of day. It's meant to be a lifestyle, an ongoing posture of the heart. Romans 12:1 encourages us to offer our bodies as "living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God," describing this as our "true and proper worship."

Brother Lawrence, a 17th-century monk, shows us what it means to live a life of worship.

Whether cooking meals or washing pots in the monastery kitchen, he performed each task joyfully, seeing it as an opportunity to commune with God. He called this "practicing the presence of God," transforming even the most mundane chores into acts of worship.

In the framework of recovery, this means:

- 1. Daily Surrender:** Each day, we choose to submit our will to God's.
- 2. Obedience:** As 1 Samuel 15:22 reminds us, obedience is better than sacrifice. Our daily choices to follow God's way rather than our own impulses are acts of worship.
- 3. Gratitude:** Cultivating thankfulness, even in difficult circumstances, is a powerful form of worship.
- 4. Service:** When we serve others, we're serving Christ (Matthew 25:40). This can be a beautiful expression of worship.
- 5. Worship in Community:** Designed to be a worshipping community, the Body of Christ thrives when its members encourage, strengthen, correct, uplift, and comfort one another. This essential fellowship cannot occur if we do not come together.

When we cultivate a lifestyle of worship, we're learning to live by the Spirit, or "practice the presence of God." As we consciously invite the Holy Spirit's guidance in every situation, we align ourselves more closely with God's will. The Apostle Paul tells us in Galatians 5:16, 22-23 that when we live by the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit becomes evident in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

This fruit of the Spirit stands in stark contrast to the destructive patterns of addiction. As we practice living by the Spirit, we break old habits and cultivate new, life-giving ones.

Worship and Community

Worship is more than just a song we sing; it's an act of surrender, an offering of our hearts, and a declaration that God is our ultimate treasure. As St. Augustine reminds us, "You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you." For those struggling with addiction and the idols that take God's place in our lives, true freedom begins when we bow before the Lord in genuine worship, finding rest in Him alone. But this journey isn't meant to be walked alone. In community, we are empowered to break free from these chains, replacing the false gods of addiction with the overwhelming love of Christ. It is in the fellowship of a Godly, worshipping community that we find the support and encouragement needed to live a life of purpose and freedom, where our hearts can finally rest in the One who made us.

- **The Power of Community Worship:** We were never meant to fight these battles alone. In a community of Godly worship, we find support, accountability, and encouragement as we pursue a life free from addiction and full of God's presence.
- **Surrender in Worship:** True worship invites us to surrender all—our desires, our pain, and even the addictions that enslave us. It is in laying everything at Jesus' feet that we begin to experience His transforming power. But we don't surrender alone. In a Godly community, we find strength, encouragement, and accountability to continually surrender as others support us in worship and walk with us on this journey of transformation.
- **Breaking Free from Idols:** Addictions, like idols, distort our priorities and steal our devotion. In worship, we dethrone these false gods and allow Christ to take His rightful place as the highest King in our hearts. Only when Christ reigns supreme can we receive the grace to break free and live in true freedom.



Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions

- Romans 12:1 calls us to present our bodies as “living sacrifices” as true worship. What does it mean for you to live as a “living sacrifice” day to day? What might that look like in your recovery journey?
- Brother Lawrence turned ordinary tasks into acts of worship by “practicing the presence of God.” How can you invite God into the small, everyday moments of your life? What ordinary task could you turn into worship this week?
- Worship means surrendering our will and obeying God in the daily choices we make. What area of your life requires fresh surrender today? How can obedience to God become an act of worship in that area?
- Living by the Spirit produces fruit like love, peace, and self-control—opposites of addiction's destruction. Which fruit of the Spirit do you most need God to cultivate in your life right now? How can prayer and worship help you grow in that?
- We weren't meant to fight battles alone; community strengthens and supports us. How has worshipping in community encouraged you? Who in your life could you invite into your journey of worship and recovery?
- Addiction and idols take God's rightful place in our hearts. Worship restores Him as King. What “idols” or false comforts have competed for your devotion? What would it look like to dethrone them and let Christ reign fully in your heart?



Alabaster Jar

As we cultivate a lifestyle of worship, God will begin to change us from the inside out. Psalm 16:11 tells us that there is fullness of joy in God's presence. As we focus on God's greatness and goodness, our perspective shifts. The things that once held us captive begin to lose their power.

Consider the woman with the alabaster jar in Mark 14:3–9. This woman, moved by love and gratitude, poured out expensive perfume on Jesus' feet. Some criticized her actions as wasteful, but Jesus saw it as beautiful worship:

“While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, ‘Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor.’ And they rebuked her harshly.

‘Leave her alone,’ said Jesus. ‘Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.’”

A biblical scholar, William Lane, explains why this is so significant:

“Early in the first century, Pliny the Elder remarked that ‘the best ointment is preserved in alabaster.’ The value of the perfume, and its identification as nard, suggests that it was a family heirloom that was passed on from one generation to another, from mother to daughter.”

This woman was offering a precious family heirloom, possibly her most valuable possession.

The image of the broken jar carries deep symbolism. It reminds us that even in our brokenness, God can bring about His glory. Just as the fragrance filled the room when the jar was shattered, our acts of surrender can release something beautiful that impacts others. By breaking the jar, the woman also broke with tradition, choosing her devotion to Jesus over societal norms and family expectations.





This moment reminds us of what Evangelist Vance Havner once said: *“God uses broken things. It takes broken soil to produce a crop, broken clouds to give rain, broken grain to give bread, broken bread to give strength. It is the broken alabaster box that gives forth perfume. It is Peter, weeping bitterly, who returns to greater power than ever.”*

Though the perfume had been passed down through generations, the woman decided to spend this valuable inheritance in an act of worship. **Worship and surrender have the power to break your long-standing cycles of addiction and create a new legacy for your family and the generations to come.** Just as Havner’s words reflect the transforming power of brokenness, it is in our moments of deepest surrender that God can use us to bring forth new life, greater strength, and a lasting legacy for those who follow.

As followers of Jesus, we are invited to leave behind our old ways of living and embrace a new life centered on Him and His ways. Like breaking the alabaster jar, surrendering old habits or relationships may feel like a costly decision. These are often things we've held onto for a long time, passed down through family, or formed as coping mechanisms. But as we offer them to Jesus, we make room for His love.

Worship isn't about holding back or playing it safe. It's about pouring out our lives in love and devotion to God, trusting Him with even our most vulnerable places. As we discover this kind of worship, the old patterns of addiction and dysfunction start to lose their grip, replaced by the newness and freedom that comes with living for Christ.



Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions

- The woman with the alabaster jar broke a valuable family heirloom to worship Jesus. What “family heirlooms” (traditions, habits, or beliefs) might you need to break to worship God fully?
- What does the story of the alabaster jar teach us about the connection between surrender and worship? How can we apply this in areas of our lives that are hard to let go of?
- What “idols” or distractions might be hindering your worship? What steps can you take to dethrone them and allow Christ to reign supreme in your heart?
- How does the image of brokenness in the alabaster jar reflect God’s ability to use our surrender to create beauty and impact others?



Worship and Identity

One of the most life-changing parts of living a life of worship is how it shapes our identity. As we consistently turn our attention to God, acknowledging His worthiness and dependence on Him, we see ourselves differently.

1 Peter 2:9 describes believers as “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession.” Can you confidently say this about yourself? There may have been a time in your life when you were labeled an “addict” or a “failure,” but that is not who you are anymore! As we worship, we're continually reminded of who we truly are in Christ — what a gift!

If you've been waiting for a change that will last, this is where you have to start. When we see ourselves as God's beloved children, chosen and set apart for His purposes, it becomes easier to leave behind old patterns and embrace our new life in Christ.

The Power of Praise

While worship encompasses our whole lives, there's still a special place for verbal praise and adoration of God. The psalms are filled with exhortations to praise God, regardless of our circumstances.

Praise has several powerful effects:

Perspective Shift: When we praise God, we're reminded of His greatness, and our challenges are put into perspective.

“Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens. ... When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?”
Psalms 8:1, 3–4 (NIV)





Spiritual Warfare: Praise can be a weapon against darkness and oppression.

“May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands, to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples”.

Psalm 149:6–7 (NIV)

Joy: As we praise God, we often find our own spirits lifted.

“You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

Psalm 16:11 (NIV)

Community: Corporate praise unites us with other believers, reminding us we're not alone in our journey.

“How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! ... For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.”

Psalm 133:1, 3b (NIV)

Strength in Difficult Times: The Psalms often show praise as a response to hardship and remind us who holds our future in His hands.

“Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.”

Psalm 42:11 (NIV)

Remembrance of God's Faithfulness: Praise often involves recounting God's past faithfulness, which strengthens our faith for present challenges.

“Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits— who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion.”

Psalm 103:2-4 (NIV)

Incorporating regular praise into daily life — through music, prayer, or simply speaking out God's attributes — can be a powerful tool for maintaining our focus and finding the strength to keep going.



Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions

- Praise reminds us of God's greatness and puts our challenges in perspective (Psalm 8). When you intentionally praise God, how does it shift your perspective on the problems you face?
- When King Jehoshaphat's army faced a powerful enemy (2 Chronicles 20), they worshiped their way into battle, and God fought for them. What would it look like for you to face your own battles with worship instead of fear?
- In 2 Chronicles 20 God told His people, "The battle is not yours, but mine." What battles are you still trying to fight in your own strength? How can worship help you surrender them to God?
- Psalm 149 describes praise as a weapon. Have you ever experienced praise breaking heaviness, temptation, or oppression in your life? What does this teach you about its spiritual power?
- Psalm 16:11 says God fills us with joy in His presence. How has praising God brought you joy or lifted your spirit, even in difficult times?
- Psalm 133 highlights how unity in worship brings God's blessing. What is different about praising God in community compared to praising Him alone? How has it encouraged you in your walk?
- Psalm 42:11 shows praise as an act of hope in dark times. How can choosing to praise God when you feel downcast change the way you respond to hardship?



Break in the Journey

Worship in Spirit and Truth

In the Gospel of John, chapter 4, there's a conversation between Jesus and a Samaritan woman, and it takes place at a well in the heat of the day. This wasn't a chance meeting; Jesus had intentionally traveled through Samaria and arrived at this well at precisely this time.

"Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Will you give me a drink?'"

John 4:4-7

The woman Jesus met was carrying more than just her water jar. She bore the weight of shame, rejection, and a tarnished reputation. She had done things in her past that made her an outcast in her community. This is why she came to draw water at noon, the hottest part of the day, when she was least likely to encounter others who might judge or shun her.

But Jesus was waiting for her. This simple fact reveals something beautiful about the heart of God: **He meets people right where they are.** Jesus, the Son of God, went out of His way to encounter this woman whom society had erased, who was hidden behind years of sin and shame. **He sees those who feel unseen, seeks those who are lost, and waits for those who are running away.**



When Jesus began to speak with her, He did something remarkable. He asked her for a drink of water. This simple request broke through multiple cultural barriers — Jews didn't associate with Samaritans, and men didn't typically speak to women in public. But Jesus wasn't concerned with societal norms; He was concerned with this woman's heart.

As their conversation unfolded, Jesus gently but directly confronted the woman with the truth about her life. He said to her:

“Go, call your husband and come back;” “I have no husband,” she replied. Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

John 4:16-18

Notice how He did this, not to shame her or condemn her, but to demonstrate that He knew her completely and still chose to speak with her. The same is true for all of us today: He knows everything about us, including the parts we try to hide, and He loves us anyway.

Jesus didn't dwell on the woman's past or shame her for her mistakes. Instead, He used this moment to teach her about true worship. He told her:

“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

John 4:23-24

This statement must have been revolutionary for the woman. In her culture, worship was about being in the right place (the temple) and performing the right rituals. But Jesus said true worship isn't about a location or a set of practices. It's about connecting with God in spirit (with our whole heart and soul) and in truth (based on a true understanding of who God is).

Jesus went on to reveal to her that He was the Messiah, the one who could offer her "living water" that would satisfy her deepest thirst forever. He said:

"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."
John 4:13-14

This is a powerful metaphor that echoes God's words in Jeremiah 2:13: "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water."

How often do we, like the woman at the well, look to other sources for life and fulfillment? We try to quench our thirst with relationships, achievements, substances, or experiences. But Jesus offers us something far better. He offers us a relationship with Him that satisfies our deepest longings.

The story doesn't end with the woman's personal encounter with Jesus. Amazingly, this outcast became a witness to the gospel! The Bible tells us:

"Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?' They came out of the town and made their way toward him."
John 4:28-30

This transformation is the power of an encounter with Jesus. When we truly meet Him and begin to worship in spirit and truth, we can't help but be changed. Our past no longer defines us, and our shame no longer controls us. We find a new identity as children of God and a new purpose as witnesses to His love and grace.

Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions



- How does the story of the Samaritan woman resonate with your own experience? In what ways has Jesus met you in your brokenness?
- Jesus offered the Samaritan woman "living water." What are you currently looking to for satisfaction in your life? How might turning to Jesus instead affect your recovery?

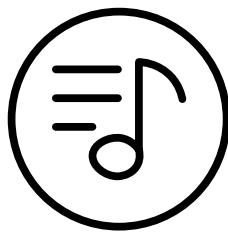
The Power of Worship and Surrender in Life's Darkest Moments

Horatio Spafford was no stranger to life's harsh realities. A successful attorney and real estate investor, he faced devastating blows, losing a fortune in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. As if that weren't enough, he suffered the heartbreak of burying his beloved four-year-old son, taken too soon by scarlet fever.

Seeking solace, Horatio planned a family vacation to England, believing it would lift their spirits. He sent his wife, Anna, and their four daughters ahead on a ship, intending to join them after wrapping up some urgent business. But tragedy struck: the ship collided and sank in the Atlantic, claiming the lives of over 200 souls, including all four of Spafford's precious daughters. Anna survived, sending a telegram that chilled Horatio to the bone: "Saved alone. What shall I do?"

Heartbroken and desperate, Horatio set sail for England, grappling with unimaginable grief. During the voyage, the captain summoned him to the deck, revealing they were passing over the very spot where the shipwreck occurred.

In that moment of deep sorrow, something miraculous happened. As Horatio reflected on his daughters, words of hope and comfort surged within him. He wrote them down, and those words transformed into a powerful hymn:



*When peace like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll—
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to know,
It is well, it is well with my soul.*





Although life is often marked by turmoil and grief, we have the ability to worship even in our despair. Through deep faith in a loving God and unwavering trust in His grace, we can boldly state, “It is well, it is well with my soul,” embracing the peace that accompanies our worship in times of trial. Robert Webber underscores the meaning of this when he says, “Worship is an it-is-well-with-my-soul experience.”

- **Embracing Grief in Worship:** Spafford’s journey teaches us that worship can be a powerful response to grief, allowing us to express our sorrow while seeking comfort in God’s presence.
- **Finding Strength in Surrender:** His story emphasizes that surrendering our pain to God enables us to experience His grace, showing us that we can find hope amid despair.
- **Proclaiming Hope in Adversity:** “It Is Well with My Soul” serves as a reminder that, despite life’s hardships, our faith in God’s love allows us to declare peace and wholeness, even when our circumstances seem overwhelming.

Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions



- Horatio Spafford wrote It Is Well with My Soul in the midst of devastating loss. How does his story challenge the way you think about worship during seasons of grief or hardship? What would it look like to bring your sorrow to God in worship?
- Spafford’s hymn shows how surrendering deep pain to God can bring peace. What pain are you holding onto right now that God may be inviting you to surrender in worship?
- Robert Webber said, “Worship is an it-is-well-with-my-soul experience.” Do you see worship more as an expression of joy, or as a place to bring both grief and hope? How might embracing both make your worship more authentic?
- Spafford turned his darkest moment into one of the most enduring hymns of faith. If you were to write your own “It Is Well” song today, what words of trust, surrender, or hope would you want to declare to God?

A Call to Worship

We were created for worship. This isn't a burden. It's an invitation — an invitation to experience the fullness of life that comes from being in right relationship with our Creator.

A lifestyle of worship redirects our focus from our struggles to our Savior. It reminds us of our true identity. It provides a positive outlet for our emotions and energies. And most importantly, it connects us deeply with the One who has the power to bring true healing and freedom.

As you move forward, consider how you can incorporate more worship into your daily life and more fully invest your time in being a vital part of a Godly community. This might involve setting aside specific times for prayer and praise, being more mindful of God's presence throughout your day, or finding ways to serve others as an expression of love for God.

Every step toward God in worship is a step away from the strongholds of addiction. As you cultivate a lifestyle of worship, you're fulfilling your deepest purpose and experiencing the abundant life God has for you.

Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions



- Brother Lawrence practiced the presence of God in everyday tasks. How can you incorporate worship into your daily routines? How can being around others who live out worship daily help you grow in this practice?
- Discuss a time when praise helped shift your perspective on a difficult situation. What did you learn from this experience?
- How has focusing on God's attributes (His love, power, faithfulness, etc.) helped you in times of temptation or struggle?
- Reflect on 1 Peter 2:9. How does seeing yourself as “chosen” and part of a “royal priesthood” contrast with how you've seen yourself in the past? How might embracing this identity impact your recovery journey?
- In what areas of your life do you find it most challenging to surrender to God's will? How can worship help in these areas?
- How can we as a group encourage and support each other in cultivating lifestyles of worship?
- What's one specific way you plan to prioritize worship in your life this week?



Verses to Reflect On This Week

- “Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.” John 4:23 (NIV)
- “Then God said, ‘Take your son, your only son, whom you love Isaac and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.’” Genesis 22:2 (NIV)
- “Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me.” Mark 14:6 (NIV)
- “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” John 4:13-14 (NIV)
- “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.” Romans 12:1 (NIV)
- “So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.” Galatians 5:16 (NIV)
- “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)
- “Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.” Psalm 42:11 (NIV)
- “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” 1 Peter 2:9 (NIV)
- “You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.” Psalm 16:11 (NIV)
- “My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.” Jeremiah 2:13 (NIV)
- “And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” 2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV)
- “With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:6-8 (NIV)
- “But the king replied to Araunah, “No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing.” So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them. David built an altar to the Lord there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the Lord answered his prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped.” 2 Samuel 24:24-25 (NIV)

