

These Things We Believe Study
Mt. Zion Church Bible Study

Taken from
A Remedy for Itching Ears written by
Dr. Jesse T. Williams, Jr.

Lesson 8: Worship, Prayer, and Discipleship
Chapter 10



Lesson written by
Dr. Ken Patterson, Pastor

We Have a Vision to Be Intentionally Learning!

Introduction: The following lesson will help students to understand the need and the purpose for worship, prayer, and discipleship. Often, a misunderstanding occurs regarding how these are displayed or enacted in the life of a Christian. Questions of style of worship and prayer have at times created great levels of concern for church members. One can be certain that different congregations have a variety of worship styles, however, if worship is done correctly, it will always have a God/Christ-centered focus with the Word as the vital component of the service. How that is done is varied as one can imagine.

The third component of the lesson, Discipleship, relates to one being an intent learner. As Christian Disciples, we are to be intentional about understanding, practicing, thinking, and living as imitators of Jesus (Ephesians 5: 1-2). This process is a lifelong process. Those who grow in Christ understand the discipline of following Christ requires a daily practice so that the people we are becoming is always at the forefront of our actions and thoughts.



- Ephesians 5: 1-2
- Genesis 4: 2-7
- Psalms 95
- Luke 11: 1 and Matthew 11: 9-13
- 2 Timothy 2: 15
- Hebrews 5: 1-14

I. Worship

The term worship may immediately bring to mind a church service you attended or attend each week. We say, “I went to worship.” in the sense that we often associate the word with a location. Worship however is not a noun (person, place, or thing). Worship is a verb (action word, something you and I do). To understand the idea of worship best, it is expressing the “worth” of God. The worship of God always involves action. For example, in Genesis 4:2-7 we read that Cain and Abel came offering God gifts. They are giving to God as a way to show God’s pre-eminence (priority) in their lives. In Psalms 95, the writer gives ways to worship such as singing, shouting, and giving of thanks. In Romans 12: 1, Paul admonishes us to bring ourselves and give ourselves to the Lord as an act of worship. These and many other verses outline types of worship, but the underlying idea is that we actively “do” something.

- Since worship is the act of doing something which shows the value of God let's take a minute and consider God.
- Fill out the chart below so that you can think of how worship can show itself in our lives.

Why God is worthy?	How can I express worship?	When will I do it?

*Remember, when we talk about God in the context of this lesson we mean God the Father, Jesus (God the son), and God, The Holy Spirit.

- Why should we worship God? How many reasons can you produce?
- In terms of how you have participated in worship services, what have you seen differences or similarities between churches?
- Is there a right or wrong way to worship God? What could potentially be a wrong way to worship?
- What could get in the way of you and I worshipping God correctly?

II. Prayer

Chapter 10 describes prayer in a perfect manner. “Prayer is an act of worship and a spiritual discipline in which we communicate and commune with God” (Williams, 2011). Notice, one does not pray without an attitude of worship. Why? Because to pray is an indication of submission to God who is greater than us. He is greater in power. He is greater in understanding of our situations. He is greater in resources. God is greater and to reach out to Him in prayer we must have a sense of His greatness. Without this we have no reason to pray. We would be self-reliant.

*Prayer is a conversation,
not a monologue!*

Prayer is also a spiritual discipline. In Luke 11: 1, the disciples request to know how to pray in the Jesus manner. Jesus models prayer specifically for them in verse 2-4 (also see Matthew 11: 9-13). Additionally, prayer is a regular occurrence in Jesus’ life. For example, Matthew 14: 23, Jesus goes up to the hills to pray alone. Luke 6: 12 Jesus goes to pray alone all night. Luke 9: 18 the disciples walk up to Jesus as he prays and he asks them what people were saying about Him. Matthew 26: 36, Jesus is headed to the cross and in the Garden of Gethsemane he prays. **JESUS WAS A PRAYER!**

1. Why do you think Jesus spent so much time in prayer?
2. How do the answers to # 1 inform us about what we should do?

➤ Prayer is the time where you speak AND listen. Prayer is a conversation not a monologue.

The purpose of prayer is for us to communicate with God which means we have to be open to His response to our thoughts and requests. Any communication which is only one way (from you to God) misses the point of prayer.



This will change your prayer life! When you pray, approach God as a child approaches a father.

Wait

A note about prayer. God has the right to answer prayer requests in three possible ways. God can say No! God can say Yes! God can say Wait! This understanding will provide us with an assurance that we are not forgotten, while also reminding us that God's answers to our request are always the best answers for us.

- Have you ever asked God for something for which He said no and then later on you realized it was the best no you ever received! Use the chart below to describe an example of those times and how God's answer was the right answer!

Times When God has answered...Yes, No, Wait	What was the benefit?
Yes	
No	
Wait	

III. Discipleship

The term disciple means LEARNER. As a disciple of Jesus, you and I are to be in a constant state of learning more about the written (Bible) and living (relationship with Jesus) Word so that we can influence the world for Christ (thy kingdom come, they will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven)

➤ Before we move forward, let's test our understanding with a big question.



○ Can you be a disciple of you are not learning? Why or why not?

The importance of discipleship is that we are in the position of learner so that we can be in a position of teacher and learner. We never stop learning but we take on an additional role of being a mentor for a follower who knows less than we do. The implication of that relationship is far reaching.

First, you and I have responsibility for our own growth. 2 Timothy 2: 15 admonishes each of us to study so that we will not be ashamed that we cannot explain God's word correctly, in context, and with clarity!

Next, you and I have responsibility to share God's word with others so they can come to understand who Jesus is, the relationship he wants with us, and how that relationship reconnects us to God. We are to know God's word so clearly that we

can become teachers of His word. In Hebrews 5: 11-14, Paul rebukes the followers because they had not grown in their abilities. What is Paul's criticism?

- Why would Satan never want you to be an actual disciple?
- What can your church do to help you be a better disciple?

Final Questions: What is stopping you from being a better disciple? How can you pray for God to relieve you of that obstacle? How will you worship Him when He answers your prayer?

Conclusion: Worship, prayer, and discipleship are disciplines each Christian has to decide to embody. While a person can be a believer, their maturity as a believer is impacted in relationship to how they engage in worship, prayer, and discipleship. If one desires to grow you have to just do them as a beginning step and then you will find that you will grow to need them and then you will find that you will grow to love them. It is a process and by committing to each we grow!

Prayer: Dear Lord, help me to commit to growth and understand of the impact of this lesson. Thank you for my new understandings! Amen.

Reference

Williams, Jesse T. (2011). *A Remedy for itching ears*. Newbookpublishing.com. Apopka, FL. p. 165.