Why Everything in Your Life Comes Down to Who Sits on the Throne

THE ISSUE OF WORSHIP



COMPANION WORKBOOK

FOR INDIVIDUALS • SMALL GROUPS • LEADERSHIP TEAMS

SCRIPTURE STUDY

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

KINGDOM PRINCIPLES

LEADERSHIP INSIGHT

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

BISHOP ANTHONY COLLINS

All of our discipleship resources are available to the public at no charge through HOWICP.org. Our mission is to advance the Kingdom of Jesus Christ by equipping believers to obey the Great Commission through biblical discipleship, spiritual formation, and leadership development.

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THE ISSUE OF WORSHIP

Companion Workbook

This Companion Workbook aims not only at helping you to understand biblical truth but also at enabling you to go through a spiritual transformation as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit, because of the authority of God's Word, and through deliberate application. Each session has been thought out so that you will progress from a stage of learning to one of living, from belief to obedience, and from personal growth to aiding others in their growth in Christ.

Our purpose is not to produce better church members but to produce mature disciples who in turn make mature disciples, and every graduate is expected to become a disciple maker.

Designed to be used with the book "The Issue of Worship".

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"To help people know Christ deeply, walk with Him daily, and represent Him faithfully through lives transformed by the presence of God."

The CDI Learning Cycle

Learn

↓

Live

↓

Lead

↓

Launch

↓

Repeat

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

When I start this workbook, may I have my heart ready for more than just studying? May I be ready to surrender.

Make it clear in every instance when something has contested for the top position in my heart, and teach me how to identify what has caught my attention, altered my desires, affected my decisions, and directed my obedience.

Let Your Word search me. Let Your Spirit show me where I am wrong. Let true worship set me right again.

Let me not only acquire knowledge of worship but actually become the worshipper whom You desire—that is, one who worships You in spirit and in truth?

Take your rightful position on the throne in my heart and let every aspect of my life show off your Lordship.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

DEDICATION

To every believer who desires more than religious activity.

To those who hunger for a life fully aligned with God.

To those willing to examine what they love, what they pursue, what they obey, and what has become preeminent.

May these pages lead you beyond the language of worship into the life of worship.

May Jesus Christ become increasingly central in your thoughts, your decisions, your relationships, your priorities, and your obedience.

And may personal surrender become personal revival.

Jesus alone is worthy of the throne.

THE BISHOP'S NOTE

Some truths we can understand intellectually and still fail to live out practically. Worship is one of them.

Most believers understand that God deserves worship. We sing to Him. We pray to Him. We gather in His name. We speak of His goodness and acknowledge His greatness. But the deeper question is not simply whether we worship God with our words. The deeper question is: ***Does He hold the first place in our lives?***

The Issue of Worship Companion Workbook is based on this responsibility - to put Jesus Christ first in our lives. The purpose of this workbook was not just to assist you in remembering what you read in the book, but to enable you to examine your heart, face up to conflicting loyalties, respond in accordance with your convictions, and turn truth into obedience.

Each session is deliberately arranged so that you go from understanding to application. You will study Scripture. You will examine theology. You will reflect on your decisions. You will confront your priorities. You will practice spiritual disciplines. And repeatedly, you will return to the same question:

Who sits on the throne?

I encourage you not to rush through these sessions. Give the Holy Spirit room to work. When a question makes you uncomfortable, do not skip it. When Scripture exposes something, do not defend it. When conviction comes, do not mistake it for condemnation. Conviction is one of God's great mercies. It shows us where we have drifted so that we can return. When God shows that some change is needed in a particular area, respond with obedience.

I think one of the church's greatest needs at present is not more information, more activity, or even greater religious enthusiasm. We need *realignment.* We need people to believe and live a private life that agrees with the way they worship publicly. We need leaders who want God to be glorified more than they want personal recognition. What we need are churches in which worship results in obedience, holiness, surrender, and transformation.

And we need revival. But revival does not start somewhere else. It begins when one heart says: ***"Jesus, you'll have the first place."*** Then one more heart states it. Then another. Until personal obedience becomes corporate revival.

My prayer is that you will not merely complete this workbook. I pray that something will be different when you finish it. That your worship will be deeper. Your surrender more complete. Your obedience more immediate. Your priorities more eternal. Your heart more sensitive to the Holy Spirit. And Jesus Christ more preeminent than ever before. Remember: ***Worship is the issue behind every issue.***

Return to God. Restore His place. Realign your life. And when He speaks - *obey.*

Bishop Anthony Collins
Ad Gloriam Christi — For the Glory of Christ

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction……..11

Session 1: The War for Worship……16

Session 2: Created for the Throne.....28

Session 3: When Worship Turns Inward……40

Session 4: The Hidden Root of Sin 52

Session 5: The Garden Exchange……64

Session 6: Worship as The Purpose of Redemption ……75

Session 7: Living for the Throne Forever……..87

Session 8: When Worship Restores Revival ……98

Appendix A: Collins Principles for Daily Living ……..112

Collins Discipleship Institute ……123

INTRODUCTION

There is a difference between *knowing the truth and being transformed by the truth.* We can understand biblical principles, agree with sound theology, underline important passages, take notes during sermons, and even teach others what Scripture says and still fail to let that truth govern how we live. That is why this companion workbook exists.

The Issue of Worship establishes a central truth that runs from Genesis to Revelation: ***Worship is the issue behind every issue.***

We were created to worship.
The rebellion of Lucifer involved worship.
The entrance of sin distorted worship.
The fall of humanity was a failure of worship.
The Cross restores worship.
Eternity will be centered upon worship.
And revival is released when worship is restored.

If that is true, then worship cannot remain merely a subject we study. It must become a reality we live. This workbook is designed to help you make that transition.

Worship Is More Than What Happens in Church

For many believers, the word *worship* immediately brings to mind a church service. Music. Singing. Lifted hands. Prayer. Praise. Those can certainly be expressions of worship, but they do not define its fullness. True worship reaches much deeper. Worship is about *preeminence.* It answers the question:

Who or what is first?
Who governs my decisions?
What receives my greatest affection?
Whose voice has final authority?
What am I unwilling to surrender?

What receives my time, energy, attention, and resources?
What do I pursue when no one is watching?
What determines how I behave?

These questions move worship out of the sanctuary and into everyday life.

Worship is revealed in our calendars. It is revealed in our finances. It is revealed in our relationships. It is revealed in our ambitions. It is revealed in our private thoughts. It is revealed in what we fear losing. And perhaps most importantly, worship is revealed in what we obey. We do not merely worship with our mouths. We worship with our lives.

The Battle for the Throne

Every human heart has a throne. And something will occupy it. We may tell ourselves that we are independent, autonomous, and self-directed, but Scripture reveals something different. We were created as worshippers. We will organize our lives around something. For some, that something is money. For others, it is success. And for others it is, comfort, approval, relationships, security, achievement, recognition, or control.

Even good things can become idols when they become ultimate things. This is why the issue of worship requires serious personal examination. The greatest competitors for God are not always obviously evil things. Sometimes they are legitimate things given an illegitimate position. The question is not simply: "Do I love God?" The deeper question is: "Does anything rival God?" That question cannot be answered merely by what we say. It must be answered by how we live.

This Workbook Is Designed for Transformation

This workbook accompanying *The Issue of Worship* is not meant to repeat the content of that book; it sets out the truths, and it asks you to engage them personally. In the course of these eight sessions you will be required to study the Scripture carefully, to examine your heart honestly, to evaluate your priorities, to

face up to any areas of resistance, to practice the spiritual disciplines, and to respond to the Holy Spirit's conviction.

Some questions might make you feel uneasy. Don't skip over them - these are the most important of all. Certain exercises might bring to light things you would prefer not to investigate. Do not avoid them. Some Scriptures might challenge choices you have already made. Allow them to. The aim is not to condemn. The goal is *realignment*. God makes known what is out of place since He wishes to restore what has been misplaced.

Eight Sessions—One Journey

The workbook follows the book's progression.

Session One — The War for Worship confronts the invisible battle taking place for our hearts, minds, focus, and allegiance.

Session Two — Created for the Throne takes us back to creation and reminds us that worship is not merely something we do; it is part of what we were created to be.

Session Three — When Worship Turns Inward examines Lucifer's rebellion and warns us about the destructive power of self-exaltation.

Session Four — The Hidden Root of Sin moves beneath behavior to expose misplaced devotion as the deeper issue behind sin.

Session Five — The Garden Exchange examines humanity's decision to exchange God's authority for self-rule.

Session Six — Worship as the Purpose of Redemption brings us to the Cross, where Christ does not merely save us from judgment but brings us back to God.

Session Seven — Living for the Throne Forever lifts our eyes toward eternity and challenges us to live now according to what will matter forever.

Finally, **Session Eight — When Worship Restores Revival** brings everything together with the conviction that revival is fundamentally a worship issue.

The journey moves from the throne of the heart to the throne of eternity—and then back into the ordinary decisions of everyday life.

Revival Is New Obedience

One of the foundational convictions of *The Issue of Worship* is that we have sometimes made revival more complicated than Scripture requires. We pray for revival. We preach about revival. We organize revival meetings. We long for extraordinary manifestations of God's presence. But revival must eventually produce something deeper than an experience.

Revival is new obedience.

It happens when the Holy Spirit confronts us with truth so powerfully that we change direction. We stop defending what God has confronted. We stop delaying what God has commanded. We stop negotiating with what God has already made clear. We turn. We surrender. We obey.

That is why worship and revival cannot be separated. True worship restores God to His rightful place. When God is restored to His rightful place, His Word carries its rightful authority. When His Word carries its rightful authority, conviction becomes difficult to ignore. When conviction is answered with surrender, obedience follows.

And when obedience begins multiplying among the people of God, something powerful happens: When each person obeys, the whole group comes alive. Revival starts in an individual heart and then spreads to the church.

How to Use This Workbook

Do not treat these sessions as something you have to finish. Treat them as meetings with God. Bring your Bible. Bring a journal. Make sure to allow some time for thinking. Above all, have an honest heart. Begin each session by praying.

Each scriptural passage should be read in the context in which it appears. Take the spiritual formation exercises seriously. Practice the weekly declarations. Complete the Shepherd's Challenges. Check your journal throughout the week. Whenever God makes known something that calls for obedience, you should carry it out. This workbook's success won't be judged by the number of pages you manage to complete. The extent to which your life is given over to Christ will be the measure of it.

Come Prepared to Answer One Question

Throughout this workbook, many questions will be asked, but they ultimately lead back to one: *Who is seated on the throne?* Not about who should be seated there. It's not the person you claim is sitting there. The person who is present there on Sundays. But who really controls your life? Who determines your priorities? Who defines truth? Who directs your resources? Who governs your ambitions? Who do you feel most loyal to? Who gets the last say?

The question at issue is worship. And perhaps that is why Jesus' words to the woman at the well remain so important:

"But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship Him."
John 4:23

God is still looking for people who will worship Him in Spirit and Truth. Not just singers. Not simply church attenders. Not merely religious people. *But True Worshippers.* Men and women whose hearts are surrendered, whose lives are aligned, and whose obedience demonstrates that Jesus Christ truly has first place. So come to these pages prepared to learn. But come prepared for something more. Come prepared to surrender. Come prepared to realign. Come prepared to obey. Come prepared to worship. Because ultimately, the goal of this workbook is not simply that you understand *The Issue of Worship*. The goal is that you settle the issue. ***Jesus Christ will have the throne.***

THE ISSUE OF WORSHIP

Companion Workbook

The Disciples Journey

Session 1 — The War for Worship
Why Everything in Your Life Is Being Fought Over, and What Is Really at Stake

Preparing The Heart

Before beginning this session, become quiet before God. Chapter 1 confronts us with a sobering reality: there is a battle taking place for our minds, our hearts, our affections, and ultimately our worship. The most important question is not whether we worship. We were created to worship. The question is who or what receives our worship. This session requires more than intellectual agreement. It requires honest examination. Do not begin by looking at someone else's life. Do not think about what your spouse, your family, your church, or someone you lead needs to change. Allow the Holy Spirit to turn the searchlight toward you. Ask yourself:

What has my attention?
What has my affection?
What has my obedience?
What has become preeminent in my life?

Worship is not proven by declaration. ***It is proven by direction.*** Take several moments in silence and invite God to reveal the true direction of your life.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, open my eyes to the spiritual battle taking place around me and within me. Search my heart and reveal anything that competes with You for first place. Teach me to recognize what has captured my thoughts, desires, attention, and obedience. Give me courage to surrender every rival and grace to place You upon the throne of every area of my life. May I not merely say that I worship You. Teach me to worship You with the direction of my entire life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Opening Scripture

"But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship Him."
John 4:23

Read John 4:23–24 slowly several times. Notice something remarkable: The Father is seeking worshippers. Jesus does not merely describe an activity God desires. He describes a kind of person God seeks - true worshippers. Consider:

- What distinguishes a true worshipper from someone who merely participates in worship?
- Why do you think Jesus joined *spirit* and *truth* together?
- What would it mean for your entire life - not merely your church attendance - to become an act of worship?

Write your initial thoughts:

The Main Point

The central battle of the Christian life is a battle for worship. Whatever captures our hearts and minds will influence what we pursue, and what we pursue will ultimately shape how we behave. The enemy does not have to physically control us if he can influence what we believe, love, fear, and prioritize. This is why worship is far greater than singing.

Worship concerns preeminence. Who is first? Whose voice has final authority? What governs our decisions? What are we unwilling to surrender? Who sits on the throne? Every life eventually answers those questions.

Learning Objectives

By the completion of this session, you should be able to:

1. Recognize the biblical reality of spiritual warfare.
2. Explain why the mind and heart are critical battlegrounds.
3. Understand worship as more than music or religious expression.
4. Identify the relationship between focus, pursuit, worship, and behavior.
5. Recognize potential rivals competing with God for preeminence.
6. Evaluate what your use of time, attention, resources, and energy reveals about your worship.
7. Understand why spiritual neutrality is impossible.
8. Identify one specific area in which God is calling you to renewed obedience.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 1 establishes the foundation for the entire book: there is a war for worship. The conflict did not originate with humanity, but humanity has become a battleground within that conflict. Ephesians 6:12 reminds us that our ultimate struggle is not merely against visible human opposition but against spiritual powers.

Yet much of this battle takes place in remarkably ordinary places. A thought. A desire. A fear. A priority. A decision. A compromise. An act of obedience. The chapter then establishes a second foundational truth: Everyone worships. Our Creator wired humanity for worship. Consequently, the issue is never whether we will worship but what we will worship.

Our actual worship can often be discovered by examining the flow of our lives. Where does our time naturally go? What receives our money? What consumes our thoughts? What do we sacrifice to obtain or preserve? What do we fear losing? The answers can reveal what has become preeminent.

The chapter ultimately presents the image of a throne. There is only one rightful occupant. We cannot place God on the throne on Sunday and enthrone ourselves throughout the week. Every decision reveals something about who is ruling. Therefore, the war for worship becomes a daily battle to keep Jesus Christ preeminent in our thoughts, affections, priorities, decisions, and behavior.

Theology Corner

Worship and Spiritual Warfare: Biblical spiritual warfare must never become an unhealthy preoccupation with Satan. Scripture consistently keeps the believer's attention centered upon God. The devil is real, but he is created - not Creator. He is powerful, but he is not omnipotent. He is knowledgeable, but he is not omniscient. He operates within limitations established by the sovereign God. Therefore, biblical spiritual warfare does not teach us to become obsessed with darkness. It teaches us to become increasingly submitted to God.

James writes: “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” — James 4:7. Notice the order. Submission precedes resistance. The strength of the Christian's warfare is not found in fascination with the enemy but in allegiance to Christ. This brings spiritual warfare directly back to worship. Who has our allegiance? Whose truth governs our thinking? Whose authority governs our behavior?

Paul describes spiritual warfare in terms of bringing thoughts into obedience to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). The battle therefore involves truth, belief, allegiance,

and obedience. The safest place in spiritual warfare is not simply knowing more about the enemy. It is living more completely under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Digging Inside Scripture

1. Ephesians 6:10–18 — Recognizing the Battle
Read the entire passage rather than only verse 12.

What does Paul tell believers to do before describing their spiritual enemies?

_____

List the pieces of spiritual armor Paul identifies.

_____

Now examine those pieces carefully. How many relate directly to truth, faith, righteousness, salvation, God's Word, and our relationship with Him?

_____

What does this teach you about the nature of spiritual warfare?

_____

2. 2 Corinthians 10:3–5 — The Battle for Thought
Read the passage and pay particular attention to verse 5.
What are believers instructed to take captive?

_____

What does Paul say those thoughts should become obedient to?

_____

Complete this statement: A thought should not be allowed to become my master when it refuses to become obedient to _____.

3. Matthew 6:19–24 — The Battle for the Heart
Read the passage carefully.
Jesus connects treasure, heart, vision, and mastery. According to verse 21, where will your heart eventually follow?

_____

According to verse 24, why is divided mastery impossible?

_____

What connection do you see between this passage and the throne illustration in Chapter 1?

_____

4. Romans 6:16 — Worship and Obedience
What does Paul say happens when we continually yield ourselves to something?

How does obedience reveal mastery?

What does your present pattern of obedience reveal about your worship?

Word Study

Worship: One important New Testament word translated worship is the Greek word *proskyneō*. The word carries the idea of bowing down, prostrating oneself, or expressing reverence and submission before one who is superior. This helps us recover something modern Christianity can easily lose. Worship is not primarily about musical style. At its heart, worship involves reverence, surrender, allegiance, and rightful position. The physical picture of bowing reflects a spiritual reality: God is above. We bow beneath His authority. This raises an important question: If our mouths declare that God is Lord while our lives continually refuse His authority, what does that say about our worship? Write your response:

Leadership Insight

Leadership magnifies the issue of worship because leaders do not merely make personal choices - their priorities influence others. A leader who worships success may eventually sacrifice people to achieve it. A leader who worships approval may compromise truth to preserve popularity. A leader who worships control may suppress the gifts of others. A leader who worships position may become threatened when others succeed. But a leader who worships Christ can hold success, recognition, authority, and position with open hands. Christian leadership therefore begins before strategy. It begins at the throne. Ask yourself: What could the people I lead conclude about what matters most by watching the way I lead?

Collins Principle

Whatever we worship becomes preeminent. Whatever becomes preeminent determines what we pursue. Whatever we pursue shapes how we behave. Therefore, if we want transformed lives, we must begin with transformed worship. Write this principle in your own words:

_____

_____

Now identify the progression:
Worship → Preeminence → Pursuit → _____
Why is attempting to change behavior without addressing worship often unsuccessful?

_____

_____

Walking it out

For the next seven days, conduct a Worship Audit. Do not evaluate what you intended to prioritize. Record what actually happened. At the end of each day, consider four areas:

Area	What Received the Most?	What Does This Reveal?
Time	_____	_____
Attention	_____	_____
Resources	_____	_____
Emotional Energy	_____	_____

At the end of the week, identify recurring patterns. What consistently received the best of you?

_____

What did you repeatedly sacrifice for?

_____

What does the flow of your life suggest about your worship?

_____

Individual Reflection

Complete these statements honestly.

Something that receives too much of my attention is:

_____

Something I would find extremely difficult to surrender is:

_____

Something whose loss I fear deeply is:

_____

An opinion or approval I sometimes value too highly is:

_____

An area where convenience frequently wins over obedience is:

_____

One area where God's Word needs to become the unquestioned basis of my decisions is:

_____

Now ask the most important question:
What currently competes most seriously with God for the throne of my heart?

_____

Spiritual Formation Exercise

The Empty Throne: Set aside at least twenty uninterrupted minutes this week. Place an empty chair in front of you. Let that chair represent the throne of your heart. Become silent before God. Then consider, one at a time, the things that commonly compete for that throne:

Money.
Approval.
Comfort.
Control.
Success.
Relationships.
Fear.
Ambition.
Self.

As each comes to mind, ask: “Has this ever exercised greater practical authority over me than Jesus Christ?”

Do not rush. When the Holy Spirit reveals something, name it before God. Then consciously surrender it. Finish the exercise by declaring: “Jesus Christ alone has the right to occupy the throne of my life.” Record what God revealed:

_____

_____

_____

Living the Principle

This week's goal is not simply to remove something competing with God. It is to replace competing focus with intentional pursuit of God. Choose one concrete act of realignment. For example:

- Replace thirty minutes of habitual distraction with Scripture and prayer.
- Make a decision you have delayed because obedience is uncomfortable.
- Give something you have been clutching tightly back to God.
- Stop allowing another person's approval to determine an obedient decision.
- Bring a fear under the authority of God's Word.
- Reorder part of your schedule around a spiritual priority.

My act of realignment this week will be:

_____

I will begin by:

_____

I will do this by:

_____

Weekly Declaration

Read this aloud each morning: Jesus Christ is Lord of my life. He alone belongs upon the throne of my heart. My thoughts will bow to His truth. My desires will bow to His will. My priorities will bow to His purposes. My decisions will bow to

His Word. I will not surrender my worship to fear, comfort, approval, success, possessions, or self. By the grace of God, I will worship Jesus Christ with the direction of my entire life.

Guided Prayer

Father, You alone are worthy of my worship. Search my heart and expose every rival I have allowed to compete with You. Reveal the thoughts I have permitted to rule me, the desires I have allowed to direct me, and the fears I have allowed to influence my decisions. I surrender them to You. Teach me to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. Let Your Word become the foundation of my decisions and Your presence become the pursuit of my heart. I surrender the throne. Jesus Christ, be preeminent in me. Let my time, my resources, my relationships, my thoughts, my decisions, and my behavior declare that You are Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

For one week, refuse to measure your worship by what you feel during a worship service. Measure it by what you obey afterward. Each evening ask: What did I do today because Jesus is Lord that I might not have done otherwise? If you cannot identify anything, do not become discouraged. Become intentional. Tomorrow gives you another opportunity to worship through obedience. At the end of the week, write the most significant act of obedience:

_____

_____

From The Shepherd's Heart

There is something I want you to understand before we go any further in this workbook. The enemy would love for you to make worship merely a church word. Because if worship is only singing, we can sing on Sunday and remain masters of our own lives on Monday. But once we understand that worship is about who is preeminent, everything changes. Now our decisions matter. Our thoughts matter. Our priorities matter. Our obedience matters. Do not be

frightened by what God reveals during this study. Be grateful that He loves you enough to reveal it. When God shows you something occupying a place that belongs to Him, He is not merely taking something away from you. He is restoring divine order within you. Give Him the throne. You will never regret making Jesus Christ preeminent.

Worship Response

Spend time worshipping God without asking Him for anything. No requests. No list of needs. Simply acknowledge who He is. You might begin with: You are God. You are holy. You are sovereign. You are faithful. You are worthy. You are Lord. Then move into surrender. Name specific areas of your life and consciously place them under His authority: My family belongs to You. My future belongs to You. My finances belong to You. My reputation belongs to You. My ambitions belong to You. My body belongs to You. My time belongs to You. My life belongs to You. Finish simply: "Jesus, You have the throne."

Journal

Use this space to record what the Holy Spirit revealed throughout the week. Consider these prompts:

What did my Worship Audit reveal about the actual direction of my life?

_____

_____

What rival to God's preeminence became clearer to me?

_____

_____

Where did I experience the strongest resistance to surrender?

_____

_____

What did God teach me about my thought life?

_____

_____

What specific act of obedience resulted from this session?

_____

_____

What is changing in my understanding of worship?

My prayer going forward:

Jesus Christ alone belongs on the throne.

THE ISSUE OF WORSHIP
Companion Workbook
The Disciples Journey

Session 2 — Created for the Throne
Why Worship Is Not What You Do, but Who You Were Made to Be

**"Whatever we worship, whatever we put first,
we will ultimately become like that thing."**

Preparing The Heart

Before you begin this session, consider a truth that changes the way we understand worship: You were created for this (worship). Worship is not something the church invented. It did not begin with music, choirs, instruments, sanctuaries, or services. Worship existed before any of these because worship is woven into the purpose for which humanity was created. We were created to know God. We were created to reflect God. We were created to walk with God. We were created to respond to God. Sin distorted that design, but it did not erase it. Redemption in Christ is bringing us back into the alignment for which we were originally created. Before moving forward, become quiet before God and ask: Am I living according to the purpose for which God created me, or have I made my life about something Jesus never said life was about? Allow the Holy Spirit to prepare your heart for realignment.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, You created me for Yourself. Before I had plans, ambitions, accomplishments, or possessions, You had a purpose for my life. Help me see worship as more than something I do. Teach me to understand it as the life I was created to live. Restore divine order within me. Be my center, my authority, my provider, my identity, and my source. Remove every distraction that has caused

me to make life about something other than You. Jesus, You are the main thing. Help me keep the main thing the main thing. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Opening Scripture

"Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker." — Psalm 95:6

Notice how the psalmist connects two realities: Worship and creation. We bow before Him because He is our Maker. Our worship begins with recognizing that we did not create ourselves. We do not belong ultimately to ourselves. Our lives originate in God and find their proper purpose in Him. Read Psalm 95:1–7. Then consider: What changes when I begin viewing my life as belonging to my Creator rather than belonging primarily to me?

_____

_____

What does bowing before God communicate about His position and mine?

_____

_____

The Main Point

Worship is not primarily something we do; worship is the life we were created to live in right relationship with God. Humanity's original design was God-centered. God was not merely part of Adam and Eve's existence. He was the center of it. Their identity came from Him. Their provision came from Him. Their authority came from Him. Their purpose came from Him. Worship therefore concerns alignment and preeminence. When God occupies His rightful position, the rest of life can assume its proper position. This is why revival is ultimately restoration. It is a return to original design.

Learning Objectives

By the completion of this session, you should be able to:

1. Explain why worship begins with creation rather than church activity.
2. Understand humanity's unique creation in the image of God.
3. Distinguish between expressions of worship and the essence of worship.
4. Explain worship in terms of alignment, surrender, and preeminence.
5. Identify ways sin has distorted humanity's original God-centered design.
6. Understand redemption as restoration to relationship and rightful worship.
7. Explain the connection between worship, alignment, obedience, and revival.
8. Identify practical ways to make Jesus Christ the center of your life everyday.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 2 takes us back to Genesis because we cannot understand what worship should be until we understand what humanity was created to be. Creation was intentional. Humanity was fashioned in God's image with the capacity to know Him, reflect Him, walk with Him, and respond to Him. Before sin, Adam and Eve experienced an existence we might describe as perfect alignment. There was no competition for God's position. He was their natural center. This gives us a much richer definition of worship. Worship is not first about expression. *It is about position.*

Where does God stand in relation to everything else in our lives? Is He central or peripheral? Is He obeyed or merely acknowledged? Is He our source, or simply someone we call when our other sources fail? Sin disrupted this original alignment. Humanity moved from God-centeredness toward self-centeredness, from submission toward independence, and from trust toward skepticism. But redemption calls us back. Therefore: *Revival is not the invention of something new. Revival is the restoration of what God intended from the beginning.*

Theology Corner

Created in the Image of God: Genesis 1:26–27 distinguishes humanity from the rest of creation: "*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness*…"
The doctrine traditionally called the *imago Dei*—the image of God—teaches us something fundamental about human identity. Human beings possess unique dignity because we were created by God to bear His image within creation. This does **not** mean human beings are divine. There is always a distinction between Creator and creature. But humanity was created with a unique capacity for relationship with God and a calling to represent His character and purposes within creation. This makes worship inseparable from identity. We cannot properly understand who we are without first understanding whose we are. The tragedy of sin is therefore greater than broken rules. Sin distorts humanity's relationship with the One whose image we were created to bear. Redemption in Christ begins restoring what sin distorted. Paul describes believers as being transformed into Christ's image (2 Corinthians 3:18) and renewed according to the image of their Creator (Colossians 3:10). Here we discover a profound relationship between worship and transformation: We increasingly resemble what holds the controlling place in our hearts. True worship places us continually before God, where our thinking, desires, priorities, and character are progressively brought into conformity with Him.

Digging Inside Scripture

1. Genesis 1:26–28 — Created in His Image
Read the passage carefully. What makes humanity distinctive within the creation account?

_____

What responsibilities does God give humanity?

_____

What does being created by God tell you about the source of our identity?

_____

Complete this statement: My identity begins not with what I accomplish, possess, or achieve, but with _____.

2. Colossians 1:15–17 — Created Through Him and for Him
Read Colossians 1:15–17. According to verse 16, all things were created:
Through: _____
For: _____
According to verse 17, what holds all things together?

_____

Now personalize the truth.
If you were created through Christ and for Christ, how should that change the purpose around which you organize your life?

_____

_____

3. Psalm 29:1–2 — Giving God What Is Due
What does the psalmist tell us to give God?

_____

Why is glory "due" His name?

_____

What is the difference between giving God occasional recognition and giving Him the glory that is rightfully His?

_____

_____

4. John 4:23–24 — Spirit and Truth
What kind of worshippers does the Father seek?

_____

What two characteristics must define their worship?

1. _____
2. _____

Why is sincerity alone insufficient if our understanding of God is not grounded in truth?

_____

Why is correct theology alone insufficient if our hearts remain distant from God?

_____

5. Romans 12:1–2 — Worship as a Whole Life
Read Romans 12:1–2. What does Paul tell believers to present to God?

_____

How does this broaden worship beyond singing or church attendance?

What must happen to the mind for transformation to occur?

Word Study

Image: (*Eikōn)* - This Greek word means image, likeness, or representation. The New Testament uses this word when describing Christ as "*the image of the invisible God*" (Colossians 1:15), and it also appears in passages describing the believer's restoration and transformation. An image points beyond itself. Its purpose is to represent another. This gives us an important insight into worship: We were never created to make ourselves the ultimate point of our lives. We were created to point beyond ourselves toward our Creator. When self becomes the center, the image attempts to replace the Original. But when God is preeminent, our lives can fulfill their intended purpose - to reflect His character and bring Him glory. Consider: What does my present life communicate to others about the God I claim to represent?

Leadership Insight

Leadership becomes dangerous when leaders forget that they are image-bearers before they are leaders. Position can subtly tempt us to construct identity around: Titles. Influence. Accomplishment. Recognition. Authority. But none of these is our source. God is.

A leader who needs a title to establish identity will eventually protect the title. A leader who needs recognition to establish worth will eventually pursue recognition. A leader whose identity rests securely in God can lead without making leadership an idol. This produces humility. Our responsibility is not to draw people toward ourselves but to help them see Christ more clearly. Ask yourself: Does my leadership make people increasingly dependent upon me, or increasingly devoted to Christ?

Collins Principle

Whatever we worship, whatever we put first, we will ultimately become like that thing. Worship forms us. What we continually behold shapes our desires. What shapes our desires influences our decisions. And repeated decisions gradually form character. Therefore, the question is not merely: "What am I worshipping?" We must also ask: "What is my worship causing me to become?" Consider the things receiving the greatest amount of your attention. What are they forming within you?

_____

_____

Walking it out

The Center-of-Life Inventory: Consider these major areas of life:

Area	What Currently Governs This Area?	What Would God-Centered Alignment Look Like?
Time	_____	_____
Finances	_____	_____
Family	_____	_____
Career/Ministry	_____	_____
Relationships	_____	_____
Health	_____	_____
Future Plans	_____	_____
Personal Ambition	_____	_____

Now identify the one area most in need of realignment:

_____

Why?

_____

Individual Reflection

Complete each statement honestly.

I most easily experience God as central when:

I am most tempted to become self-centered when:

One area where I rely upon myself rather than God is:

One source from which I sometimes seek identity other than God is:

One thing that regularly competes with God for my attention is:

If Jesus truly became more preeminent in my life, the first noticeable change would probably be:

Now reflect on the chapter's central question: Is God part of my life - or is God the center of my life?

Spiritual Formation Exercise

Returning to the Center: Choose one uninterrupted prayer period of at least twenty minutes. Do not begin with requests. Instead, sit quietly with these four truths: God is my authority. God is my provider. God is my identity. God is my source. Take them one at a time. Ask:

Authority: Where have I resisted what God has said?
Provider: Where has anxiety caused me to trust something other than God?
Identity: What have I allowed to determine my worth?
Source: What do I instinctively turn to before turning to God?

Record anything the Holy Spirit brings to your attention.

Then surrender each area to God in prayer.

Finish by saying: **"**Father, restore me to the simplicity of a life centered completely upon You."

Living the Principle

This week, practice the discipline of Christ-centered interruption. Before one important decision each day, stop before acting. Ask three questions:

1. What does God's Word say?
2. What response would place Christ first?
3. What would obedience look like right now?

Then act accordingly. At the end of the week, record what changed when you deliberately placed Christ at the center of your decisions.

_____

_____

_____

Weekly Declaration

Read this aloud each morning: I was created by God and for God. My life is not accidental, and my purpose is not self-defined. Jesus Christ is my center, my authority, my provider, my identity, and my source. I will not reduce worship to something I attend or something I sing. I will worship God with the direction of my entire life. I choose alignment over independence, submission over self-rule, and trust over skepticism. Jesus is the main thing, and by His grace I will keep the main thing the main thing.

Guided Prayer

Father, thank You for creating me intentionally and for Your glory. Forgive me for the times I have made myself the center of a life that belongs to You. Forgive me for seeking identity, security, purpose, or fulfillment apart from You. Restore divine alignment within me. You are my authority. You are my provider. You are my identity. You are my source. Teach me to worship You beyond expression. Let

my obedience become worship. Let my priorities become worship. Let my decisions become worship. Let my entire life become an appropriate response to who You are and to the grace You have shown me. Jesus, remain the main thing. In Your name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

For the next seven days, intentionally remove the phrase: "What do I want?" from one significant daily decision. Replace it with: "What would honor God?" There is nothing inherently wrong with having desires. But discipleship teaches our desires to submit to God's purposes. At the end of the week, answer: What changed when honoring God became the first question rather than satisfying myself?

_____

_____

What did I learn about surrender?

_____

_____

From The Shepherd's Heart

I want you to remember something very simple: You were made for God. The world will continually try to convince you that life is about finding yourself, promoting yourself, protecting yourself, satisfying yourself, and building something around yourself. Don't believe the lie. Your greatest life will never be discovered by making yourself the center. You were never designed to carry that weight. God belongs there. There is tremendous freedom when we stop trying to make life about ourselves and return it to the One who created it. God spoke. They responded. God led. They followed. We have made many things complicated that God intended to remain simple. Jesus is the main thing. Keep Him the main thing. And allow everything else to find its proper place around Him.

Worship Response

For this worship response, resist the temptation to begin by asking God for something. Remember the distinction emphasized in this chapter: Prayer often brings our requests before God. Worship can simply seek God Himself. Spend several minutes telling Him who He is to you. You are my Creator. You are my Father. You are my authority. You are my provider. You are my identity. You are my source. You are holy. You are worthy. You are enough. Then pray: "Lord, I do not seek Your hand before I seek Your face. I want You - not merely for what You can give me." Remain quietly in His presence. Do not rush away.

Journal

Use this space throughout the week.

What did God show me about His original purpose for my life?

Where has my life become unnecessarily complicated because something other than Christ became central?

What has been functioning as a source of identity for me?

Where am I moving from independence back toward dependence upon God?

What did the Christ-centered interruption exercise reveal about my normal decision-making?

What is God asking me to realign?

What act of obedience will demonstrate that realignment?

My prayer going forward:

You were created by God, for God, to live with God at the center. Jesus is the main thing. Keep the main thing the main thing.

THE ISSUE OF WORSHIP
Companion Workbook
The Disciples Journey

Session 3 — When Worship Turns Inward
The Fall of Lucifer and the Danger of Self-Exaltation

Preparing The Heart

Before beginning this session, become quiet before God and consider one difficult question: Where does self still compete with God for preeminence in my life? Self-exaltation does not always appear as arrogance. Sometimes it appears as control. Sometimes as the need to be recognized. Sometimes as resistance to correction. Sometimes as the insistence that our desires, opinions, preferences, or timing must prevail. Lucifer's fall reminds us that rebellion begins before it becomes visible. Worship can shift internally before behavior exposes the change. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal not simply outward pride, but the more subtle movements of the heart:

- Where do I need to be first?
- Where do I resist submitting to God?
- Where do I crave recognition?
- Where do I protect my own will?
- Where have I allowed a gift, position, success, or influence to become too important?

Do not begin this session defensively. Begin humbly.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, search my heart and reveal every place where self has tried to occupy what belongs to You. Expose pride, self-exaltation, hidden ambition, resistance, and every desire that competes with Your preeminence. Teach me to

decrease so that Christ may increase. Give me humility to submit, patience to trust Your timing, and grace to worship You without seeking glory for myself. Let my life declare that You alone are worthy. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Opening Scripture

"How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn!... You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high... I will make myself like the Most High.'" — Isaiah 14:12–14

Read Isaiah 14:12–15 slowly. Notice the repeated phrase: "I will…"
The problem began in the heart before it became visible in rebellion. What does this passage reveal about the relationship between desire, self-exaltation, and worship?

Which phrase in the passage stands out to you most strongly?

Why?

The Main Point

Self-exaltation is a worship problem because it attempts to place self where God alone belongs. Lucifer's fall was not merely the result of pride. It was a struggle over preeminence. Who would be first? Who would be exalted? Who would sit on the throne? The language of rebellion was: *"I will."* The language of worship must become: "I submit." True worship dethrones self and restores God to His rightful place.

Learning Objectives

When this session is over, you should be able to:

1. Explain why Lucifer's fall can be understood as a worship crisis.
2. Understand that outward rebellion is usually preceded by inward misalignment.
3. Define preeminence and explain why it only belongs to God.
4. Identify subtle forms of self-exaltation in Christian life and leadership.
5. Explain why proximity to spiritual activity does not guarantee surrender.
6. Recognize how gifts, beauty, success, and influence can become idols.
7. Understand humility as a necessary posture of true worship.
8. Identify one practical area in which self must decrease, and Christ must become more prominent.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 3 moves the discussion of worship from creation into rebellion. Isaiah 14:12–14 and Ezekiel 28:12–17 are passages with immediate historical reference to earthly rulers, yet Christian interpretation has often seen in their imagery a deeper pattern of satanic pride and rebellion. The chapter emphasizes that Lucifer did not begin in rebellion. He began in alignment. His fall involved a deviation of worship. The shift began internally. "I will ascend." "I will exalt." "I will sit." "I will make myself like the Most High." These statements expose the central issue: preeminence.

Lucifer did not reject worship. He redirected it toward himself. The same pattern appears within fallen humanity whenever we choose our will over God's will, our desires over His commands, or our perspective over His truth. The chapter also warns us that spiritual proximity is not the same as spiritual surrender. A person can be surrounded by ministry, worship services, Scripture, and spiritual activity while the heart quietly shifts toward self. The answer is humility. Where pride says, "I will ascend," worship says: "I will submit."

Theology Corner

Pride, Preeminence, and Creaturely Rebellion: One of Scripture's clearest distinctions is the distinction between Creator and creature. God alone is self-existent. God alone is eternal. God alone possesses glory inherently. Everything else that exists derives its life, gifting, beauty, authority, and purpose from Him. This means that self-exaltation is not merely poor character. At its deepest level, it is a denial of the proper position of the creature. Pride attempts to take what belongs to God:

- Final Authority
- Supreme Glory
- Ultimate Control
- Definitive Preeminence

This is why Scripture continually opposes pride and commends humility. James 4:6 declares: "*God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble*." Humility is not self-hatred. It is not pretending we have no gifts. It is not denying what God has done through us. Biblical humility is accurate positioning. God is God. We are not. Everything good in us comes from Him and exists for His glory. Therefore, true worship does not require us to deny our gifts. It requires us to refuse to worship them.

Digging Inside Scripture

1. Isaiah 14:12–15 — The Language of Self-Exaltation
Read the passage again. How often does the speaker say, "I will"?

_____

What does this level of repetition reveal about the posture of his heart?

_____

Which desire is the most obvious: service, submission, or self-exaltation?

_____

Complete this sentence:
Pride becomes a worship issue when _____

2. Ezekiel 28:12–17 — When Beauty Becomes Dangerous
Read Ezekiel 28:12–17. What qualities are attributed to the figure described?

What caused the heart to become lifted up?

What was corrupted?

How can a God-given strength become spiritually dangerous when it is separated from gratitude and surrender?

3. Exodus 20:3 — No Other Gods
"You shall have no other gods before Me."
What does this command establish about God's rightful place?

What are some modern ways something can function as a god without being called one?

4. John 3:30 — The Opposite Spirit
John the Baptist said: "He must increase, but I must decrease."
How is this statement the opposite of the "I will ascend" posture?

What would it mean practically for Christ to increase in your life?

What might need to decrease?

5. 1 Corinthians 10:14 — Flee Idolatry
Paul does not tell believers merely to be aware of idolatry. He says to flee it.
Why do you think Scripture uses such urgent language?

What idol is easiest to rationalize when it is connected to something good?

Word Study

Preeminence: means supremacy, first place, superiority in rank or importance. Colossians 1:18 says of Christ: "*that in all things he might have the preeminence*." This is more than saying Jesus is important. Many things are important. Preeminence means Jesus is first. His will is first. His glory is first. His truth is first. His kingdom is first. His authority is first. The worship question is therefore not: "Is Jesus important to me?" The deeper question is: "Does Jesus have preeminence?"

What is the difference between importance and preeminence?

_____

_____

Where is Christ important in your life but not yet fully preeminent?

_____

_____

Leadership Insight

Leadership provides unusual opportunities for self-exaltation because leadership often brings visibility, influence, authority, and recognition. None of these things is inherently wrong. But every one of them can become spiritually dangerous. A leader may begin serving God and gradually begin serving reputation. A leader may begin stewarding influence and gradually begin needing influence. A leader may begin grateful for a title and gradually begin deriving identity from the title. A leader may begin using a gift for God and gradually begin protecting the gift as though it belongs to him. This is why leaders must regularly ask: Would I still obey God if nobody applauded? Would I still serve if nobody knew my name? Would I still be faithful if another person received the recognition? Healthy Christian leadership is not built upon self-erasure. It is built upon Christ-exaltation. A mature leader can recognize his gifting without confusing the gift with the Giver.

Leadership Reflection

What part of leadership usually tempts you to exalt yourself?

What do you need the most? Recognition - Control - Influence - Titles - Success

---

What would humility look like in that area?

Collins Principle

Every outward fall is preceded by an inward shift in worship. Behavior usually reveals something that has already been happening within the heart. Before rebellion becomes public, devotion has often shifted privately. Before self becomes visible on the throne, self has already begun demanding attention. This principle calls us to examine the heart early. Do not wait until pride produces a public consequence. Deal with the inward movement before it becomes an outward fall.

Apply the Principle

What inward attitude are you most tempted to minimize?

How could that attitude eventually affect your behavior if left unchecked?

Walking it out

The "I Will" Audit: For the next seven days, pay attention to moments when your internal language sounds like: "I want…". "I deserve…" "I need…". "I will…" "My way…". "My timing…". "My recognition…". Do not assume every personal desire is sinful. Instead ask: Is this desire submitted to Christ?

At the end of each day, record one moment when your will competed with God's will.

Situation	What I Wanted	What Obedience Required
Day 1	_____	_____
Day 2	_____	_____
Day 3	_____	_____
Day 4	_____	_____
Day 5	_____	_____
Day 6	_____	_____
Day 7	_____	_____

At the end of the week, what pattern did you notice?

_____

_____

Individual Reflection

Complete these statements honestly.

I most want recognition when:

_____

I usually become defensive when:

_____

I mostly resist authority when:

_____

I have difficulty celebrating another person's success when:

_____

A gift or strength I am tempted to overvalue is:

_____

An area where I insist upon my own timing is:

_____

An area where I need to say "I submit" instead of "I will" is:

_____

Spiritual Formation Exercise

The Descent of Humility: Set aside twenty minutes with Philippians 2:5–11. Read the passage slowly. Notice the movement of Christ: He did not grasp. He emptied Himself. He humbled Himself. He obeyed. Now contrast that movement with Isaiah 14: Lucifer says: "I will ascend." Christ models: "I will humble Myself." Sit quietly before God and ask: Where am I trying to ascend? Where am I trying to prove myself? Where am I trying to secure recognition? Where am I trying to control an outcome? Where am I unwilling to become less visible?

Write what the Spirit brings to mind.

_____

_____

Then pray: "Jesus, form Your humility in me. Where I want to ascend, teach me to submit."

Living the Principle

Choose one deliberate act of humility this week. It should be concrete. Examples:

- Serve someone without announcing it.
- Give credit to another person.
- Receive correction without becoming defensive.
- Allow someone else to take the most important role.
- Apologize without explaining yourself.
- Celebrate another person's success sincerely.
- Refuse the need to have the last word.

This week my act of humility will be:

_____

The self-centered desire I'm dealing with is:

_____

What will obedience will look like:

_____

Weekly Declaration

Read this aloud each morning: Jesus Christ will have preeminence in my life. I reject pride, self-exaltation, and the need to occupy a place that belongs to God alone. I will not worship my gifts, my position, my success, my influence, or my own will. Where self says, "I will ascend," I will answer, "I will submit." Christ must increase, and I must decrease. By the grace of God, I will walk humbly, patiently, and obediently before Him.

Guided Prayer

Father, You alone deserve glory. Forgive me for the times I have desired recognition that belongs to You, trusted my own wisdom above Yours, insisted upon my own way, or allowed Your gifts to become more important than Your presence. Deliver me from hidden pride. Teach me to recognize self-exaltation before it becomes outward rebellion. I surrender my gifts, my position, my influence, my plans, my reputation, and my future. Jesus, You must increase. I must decrease. Give me patience to trust Your timing, humility to submit to Your authority, and joy in seeing You receive all the glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

This week, watch carefully for the desire to be seen. When you do something good and nobody notices, pay attention to your reaction. When someone else receives credit, pay attention to your reaction. When your opinion is not selected, pay attention to your reaction. When your timing is interrupted, pay attention to your reaction. These moments can expose what polished religious behavior sometimes conceals. Your challenge is simple: Do one meaningful thing for God this week that nobody else knows about. No announcement. No recognition. No applause. Let it remain between you and God. Then write what you learned about your heart:

_____

_____

From The Shepherd's Heart

There is something dangerous about success if we forget where it came from. There is something dangerous about gifting if we begin to admire the gift more than the Giver. There is something dangerous about influence if we begin to enjoy being followed more than following Christ. Lucifer's tragedy was not that he had nothing. It was that what he had become was the thing that made him turn inward. Never be ashamed of what God has placed in you. But never worship it. Use the gift. Carry the responsibility. Walk in the authority God gives. But keep your heart bowed. You do not have to make yourself small in order for God to be great. God is already great. You simply have to remember your proper place before Him. Humility is freedom. You no longer have to prove yourself. You only have to obey.

Worship Response

Spend time worshipping God specifically for attributes that belong uniquely to Him. Declare: You alone are sovereign. You alone are worthy of glory. You alone are the source of every good gift. You alone deserve first place. You alone sit upon the throne. Then surrender these areas one at a time: My gifts. My reputation. My influence. My achievements. My plans. My position. My future. My will. Finish by praying: **"**Father, I refuse to take the glory that belongs to You. Be preeminent in me."

Journal

Where did I discover self-exaltation operating most subtly in my life?

_____

_____

What did the "I Will" Audit reveal?

_____

_____

Which gift, strength, position, or achievement am I most tempted to overvalue?

_____

_____

What does humility look like for me practically?

Where is God asking me to trust His timing rather than force an outcome?

What act of hidden service did I perform this week, and what did it reveal about my heart?

Where must I say, “I submit,” instead of, “I will”?

My prayer going forward:

Where self says, “I will ascend,” true worship answers, “I will submit.”

THE ISSUE OF WORSHIP
Companion Workbook
The Disciples Journey

Session 4 — The Hidden Root of Sin
Why Sin Is Not Just Bad Behavior, but Misplaced Devotion

Preparing The Heart

Before beginning this session, sit quietly before God and resist the temptation to think first about outward behavior. This chapter asks us to go deeper. Sin is often easiest to identify when it is visible. We recognize the action, the failure, the compromise, the habit. But Scripture repeatedly takes us beneath behavior and brings us to the heart. The deeper questions are:

What do I love?
What do I trust?
What do I prioritize?
What rules me when God's will and my desires collide?

Behavior is fruit. Devotion is root. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you not only what needs to change in your conduct, but what has been competing with God in your heart. Pray for honesty. Pray for clarity. Pray for the courage to let conviction lead you back into alignment.

Opening Prayer

Father, search me thoroughly. Don't let me content myself with external changes when my inner dedication is still divided. Make clear to me every affection, desire, fear, ambition, and attachment that has occupied the place which is Yours. Grant me clarity in the areas where I have been deceived, conviction in those places where I have wandered, and humility in the instances where I have resisted Your

way. Teach me so that I may not merely control my actions but actually surrender my heart. Restore my worship. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Opening Scripture

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way…" — Isaiah 53:6

Read Isaiah 53:6 slowly. Notice the emphasis: *"his own way."* Sin is not merely doing wrong things. It is choosing our own way over God's way.

What does this verse reveal about the relationship between sin and self-rule?

_____

_____

Why is "our own way" such a powerful description of misplaced worship?

_____

_____

The Main Point

Sin is not merely bad behavior. Sin is misplaced devotion. What we love, trust, prioritize, and obey reveals what has become preeminent. This is why behavior modification alone cannot produce lasting transformation. If the heart remains devoted to the wrong thing, behavior will eventually follow. The issue is not merely: "What did I do?" The deeper question is: "What did I want more than obedience to God?" That question leads us to the root.

Learning Objectives

By the completion of this session, you should be able to:

1. Explain why sin must be understood as more than outward behavior.
2. Distinguish between the fruit of sin and the root of misplaced devotion.
3. Recognize the role of disordered desires in sinful behavior.
4. Explain why idols can include good things elevated to ultimate things.

5. Realize that divided worship leads to an unstable Christian life.
6. Understand the limits of relying on willpower and managing behavior.
7. View conviction as a matter of clarity rather than as a matter of condemnation.
8. See repentance as involving a reordering of worship.
9. Pick out one behavior that occurs repeatedly and investigate its root desire.
10. Do one specific act of realigning your worship.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 4 moves beyond the visible expression of sin and examines its hidden root. The chapter begins with a crucial distinction: Behavior is fruit. Worship is root. Humanity's problem is not merely that we make bad choices. Those choices arise from deeper affections, desires, fears, and loyalties.

Romans 1 describes sin in terms of an exchange. Humanity exchanged the glory of God for created things. That exchange is central. Sin does not eliminate worship. It redirects it. We may worship ourselves, comfort, approval, control, success, security, relationships, achievement, or identity.

When these desires become dominant, they begin to rule. And whatever rules us begins to function as master. This explains why sincere believers can become frustrated when they attempt to change through willpower alone. They may suppress the behavior without confronting the devotion producing it.

The chapter therefore moves toward conviction and repentance. Conviction reveals the real issue. Repentance reorders worship. And restored worship produces renewed obedience.

Theology Corner

Sin as Disordered Worship: Christian theology traditionally describes sin as rebellion, lawlessness, unbelief, transgression, corruption, and falling short of God's glory. All of these are true. But Scripture also presents sin as a *worship disorder.*

Romans 1:21–25 is especially important because it connects sinful behavior to the exchange of worship. Humanity did not merely reject truth intellectually. Humanity redirected glory, devotion, and allegiance toward created things. This means idolatry is not a peripheral biblical theme. It is one of the central ways Scripture describes fallen humanity. An idol is not simply a carved object. An idol is anything that receives what belongs ultimately to God. Our trust. Our dependence. Our identity. Our obedience. Our deepest affection.

This also helps explain why sin is relational. Sin is not only a violation of God's command. It is a betrayal of rightful devotion. The gospel therefore does more than forgive acts of disobedience. It restores us to the God from whom our worship drifted.

Digging Inside Scripture

1. Romans 1:21–25 — The Exchange
Read the passage carefully. What did humanity exchange?

_____

What did they worship and serve instead of the Creator?

_____

Why is the word *exchange* so important for understanding sin?

_____

Complete this sentence: Sin is not merely rejection of God; it is often the replacement of God with

_____

2. James 4:1–4 — Desires at War
According to James, where do conflicts and quarrels come from?

_____

What does this reveal about the power of desire?

_____

Why does friendship with the world become enmity with God?

_____

What desire most often becomes spiritually dangerous in your life?

_____

3. Romans 6:16 — The Mastery of Yielding
What happens when we repeatedly present ourselves in obedience to something?

How can a desire become a master?

What is one thing you have been tempted to yield to repeatedly?

4. Mark 7:20–23 — What Comes from Within
Read the passage. Where does Jesus say sinful behavior comes from?

Does this matter for discipleship? If so, why?

What does this teach us about the inadequacy of outward reform alone?

5. Romans 7:15–25 — The Divided Life
What tension does Paul describe?

How does this passage reflect the instability of divided devotion?

What does Paul ultimately recognize about deliverance?

Word Study

Idolatry: The Greek word commonly translated idolatry is *eidōlolatreia*. It refers to the worship or service of idols. Biblically, idolatry goes far beyond physical statues. It includes anything that receives the devotion, trust, allegiance, fear, or love that belongs supremely to God. This makes idolatry both ancient and modern. A person may never bow before a carved image and still live before another throne. Consider these possibilities: Success can promise significance. Comfort can promise peace. Control can promise safety. Approval can promise identity. Money can promise security. Relationships can promise completeness. When any of these becomes ultimate, it begins to function as an idol.

Reflection
Which of the above promises are you most tempted to believe?

What has that promise cost you spiritually?

Leadership Insight

Leaders are especially vulnerable to hidden forms of idolatry because ministry can provide spiritually respectable substitutes for God. A leader may worship:

- Results
- Growth
- Recognition
- Influence
- Reputation
- Control
- Being needed

These can hide behind spiritual language. A ministry can become an idol. A church can become an idol. A platform can become an idol. Even the desire to be effective can become unhealthy if effectiveness becomes more important than obedience. The critical leadership question is: Would I still obey God if obedience reduced my visibility, influence, success, or approval? That question exposes devotion.

Leadership Reflection

What leadership outcome are you most tempted to value above simple obedience?

What would it look like to surrender that outcome to God?

Collins Principle

What we worship will always win. Willpower can suppress behavior temporarily. Discipline can create structure. Accountability can help. But if the heart continues to worship the same rival, that rival will continue exerting influence. Lasting transformation requires more than saying: "I need to stop." It requires asking: "What have I been loving more?"

Apply the Principle

Identify one recurring struggle:

_____

What desire is beneath it?

_____

What promise does that desire make?

_____

What truth about God confronts that promise?

_____

Walking it out

The Root-and-Fruit Exercise: Choose one recurring sinful behavior, unhealthy pattern, or area of spiritual inconsistency. Write it here: The fruit:

_____

Now trace it downward. What usually triggers it?

_____

What do I want in that moment?

_____

What am I afraid of losing?

_____

What am I trying to gain?

_____

What am I believing about God in that moment?

_____

Now identify the root: The misplaced devotion beneath the behavior is:

_____

Individual Reflection

Honestly complete these sentences.

What makes me compromise?

_____

What makes me anxious?

_____

I am most tempted to seek approval from:

_____

I feel most secure when I have control over:

_____

One good thing that can become too important to me is:

_____

One desire that repeatedly competes with obedience is:

_____

If God truly became more valuable to me than this desire, I would:

_____

Spiritual Formation Exercise

The Exchange Reversed: Set aside twenty minutes with Romans 1:21–25.
Read the passage slowly. Notice humanity's exchange: The Creator for creation. Glory for substitutes. Truth for a lie. Now reverse the movement in prayer.
Name something that has received too much of your attention. Say:
"Father, I have allowed _____ to become too important."
Then intentionally return what belongs to God:

My trust belongs to You. My identity belongs to You. My security belongs to You. My obedience belongs to You. My deepest love belongs to You.

Remain quiet and ask: "What would it look like for worship to be reordered here?" Record your answer:

_____

_____

Living the Principle

This week, ask yourself What is my desire at this moment? Do not focus first on the behavior. Pause and ask three questions:

1. What do I want right now?
2. What do I believe will either satisfy or protect me?
3. What would it look like to choose God over this desire?

Then reply with an act of worship, and that act could be:

- Choosing patience
- Forgiving
- Waiting
- Accepting discomfort
- Telling the truth
- Refusing compromise
- Surrendering control
- Saying no
- Obeying immediately

My recurring trigger is:

_____

My worship response is:

_____

Weekly Declaration

Each morning say to yourself that only God is deserving of my deepest love, my trust, my loyalty, and my obedience. I will not permit comfort, approval, success, control, security, relationships, ambition, or myself to take God's place. I will not just control sinful actions. Instead, I will give up the devotion that lies underneath them. Whenever the Holy Spirit convinces me, I will respond with repentance and once again obey. My act of worship is for God alone. And through His grace my life will be brought into harmony with Him.

Guided Prayer

Father, I confess that I have often focused on behavior while protecting the desires beneath it. Forgive me for every place where I have loved something more than obedience to You. Expose every idol. Reveal every false promise. Show me where I have looked to created things for what only You can provide. Reorder my heart. Let conviction produce clarity. Let repentance produce realignment. Let worship produce obedience. You are God. I am not. You are right. I choose to align. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

This week, stop saying: **"**I need to do better." That language can keep us focused on effort. Instead ask: "What am I worshipping in the moment I disobey?" Every time you notice a sinful or unhealthy pattern, write down the answer. At the end of the week, review your notes.

Do you see the same desire appearing repeatedly?

_____

What does this teach you about the root of the struggle?

_____

What would repentance look like at the level of worship?

_____

From The Shepherd's Heart

I want to encourage you not to be afraid of conviction. Conviction is not condemnation. Conviction is one of God's mercies. Condemnation says: "You are hopeless." Conviction says: "This is where you are out of alignment. Come back." God reveals our idols because He loves us too much to allow substitutes to rule us. Do not waste conviction by becoming defensive. Do not waste conviction by becoming ashamed. Do not waste conviction by promising vaguely that you will "try harder." Let conviction lead you home. Ask the deeper question. What did I want? What did I trust? What did I protect? What did I love more? Then surrender it. The goal is not merely better behavior. The goal is restored worship. And when worship is restored, behavior begins to follow.

Worship Response

Spend time worshipping God specifically as the One who is greater than every rival. Declare:

You are better than comfort.
You are greater than approval.
You are more secure than control.
You are more satisfying than success.
You are more dependable than money.
You are more faithful than human validation.
You are more precious than anything I fear losing.

Then name your strongest competing desire before God. Say: **"**Father, I choose You above this." Remain quietly in His presence. Let worship replace rivalry.

Journal

What did this session reveal about the difference between behavior and devotion?

_____

_____

What recurring behavior did I trace back to a deeper desire?

_____

_____

What was the root beneath it?

_____

_____

What false promise has that desire been making to me?

_____

_____

What truth about God confronts that promise?

_____

_____

What idol became clearer to me this week?

_____

_____

What does repentance look like in that area?

What act of new obedience will demonstrate restored worship?

My prayer going forward:

Revival is not behavior modification. Revival is worship restoration.

THE ISSUE OF WORSHIP
Companion Workbook
The Disciples Journey

Session 5 — The Garden Exchange
How Humanity Traded God's Authority for Self-Rule

Preparing The Heart

Before starting this session ask God for honesty; for Genesis 3 is not simply an ancient record of human failure. It is a mirror and the same movements of the heart are still seen in us today. We still question what God has said. We still weigh another voice against His. We still let our desire outrank His devotion. We still choose self-rule over surrender to God.

The decline didn't start with a bold act of rebellion. It started with a subtle change. A question arises. A desire grows. Trust shifts. Someone makes a choice. Before you read further, ask yourself:

- Where am I most tempted to trust my own judgment over God's Word?
- What voice carries too much weight in my life?
- What desire most often challenges my obedience?
- Where am I still trying to rule what should be surrendered?

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the subtle drift before it becomes visible disobedience.

Opening Prayer

Father, protect my heart and restore my trust in You. Make it clear to me every time I have doubted Your Word. Make it clear to me every time I gave greater weight to another person's voice than to Your truth, or preferred my own desires to Your authority. Teach me to notice the slight tendencies that lead me away

from You. Renew in me my confidence in Your nature, my obedience to Your Word, and my reliance on Your truth. Keep me from ruling myself and keep me close to Your heart. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Opening Scripture

"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made…" — Genesis 3:1

Read Genesis 3:1–7. Then read Proverbs 4:23: *"Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life."*

What connection do you see between the serpent's strategy and the need to guard the heart?

_____

What was attacked first: behavior, trust, or authority?

_____

Why is that significant?

_____

The Main Point

The fall of humanity was a worship failure because humanity transferred trust, allegiance, and authority away from God and toward self. The exchange in Eden was not merely: obedience for disobedience. It was: God's authority for self-rule. Their perception became more important than God's truth. Their desire became more important than God's command. Their will became more important than God's authority. And once worship shifted, everything else became disordered.

Learning Objectives

By the completion of this session, you should be able to:

1. Explain why Genesis 3 is fundamentally a worship narrative.

2. Identify the enemy's strategy of introducing doubt concerning God's Word.
3. Explain how misplaced trust leads to misplaced worship.
4. Recognize the relationship between desire and disobedience.
5. Understand self-rule as a central expression of the fall.
6. Identify the consequences of broken worship: shame, fear, separation, and blame.
7. Recognize subtle areas of spiritual drift in your own life.
8. Explain why restoration must involve renewed trust, submission, and dependence.
9. Identify one area in which God is calling you from self-rule back to surrender.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 5 examines the moment humanity exchanged divine authority for self-rule. Before the fall, Adam and Eve lived in alignment with God. His voice was clear. His presence was near. His authority was unquestioned. The serpent did not begin by openly denying God. He began by questioning God. "Did God really say…?"

The attack was aimed at trust. Once trust weakened, desire became more persuasive. The fruit was reframed as desirable, beneficial, and personally advantageous. Then came the exchange:

- perception over revelation
- desire over obedience
- self-will over divine authority

The consequences were immediate. Shame. Fear. Hiding. Blame. Broken identity. Broken relationships.

This chapter also reveals hope. God came looking for fallen humanity and asked: *"Where are you?"* That question was not about location. It was a call to return. And that remains God's invitation today.

Theology Corner

The Fall as an Exchange of Authority: Genesis 3 is often discussed as the origin of human sin, and rightly so. But the nature of the fall becomes clearer when we see it as an authority crisis. God had spoken. His Word established the boundary. The serpent challenged that authority. Eve considered an alternative interpretation. Adam participated in the rebellion. The result was not merely a broken command. It was the assertion that humanity could determine good and evil independently of God. This is the heart of autonomy.

Autonomy literally carries the idea of self-law or self-governance. Biblically, human beings were never created to exist independently of God. We were created for responsive dependence. Therefore, self-rule is not freedom in the deepest sense. It is departure from design. The fall teaches us that the desire to live independently from God ultimately produces disorder, not freedom.

Digging Inside Scripture

1. Genesis 3:1–5 — The Attack on God's Word
What question does the serpent ask?

_____

What does this question subtly suggest about God's command?

_____

How does the serpent later contradict God directly?

_____

What can happen spiritually when we repeatedly entertain suspicion toward God's Word?

_____

2. Proverbs 3:5–6 — Trust Versus Self-Reliance
Read the passage carefully.
What are we told to do with all our heart?

_____

What are we warned not to lean upon?

_____

What is promised when we acknowledge God?

_____

Where are you most tempted to lean on your own understanding?

---

3. Genesis 3:6 — Desire and Decision
What three qualities made the fruit attractive?

1. ---
2. ---
3. ---

How did desire reshape Eve's perception of what God had forbidden?

Why is desire dangerous when it is allowed to interpret God's Word?

---

4. Psalm 118:8 — The Question of Trust
"It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man."
Why is trust such an important worship issue?

Who or what are you most tempted to trust before God?

---

5. Genesis 3:7–13 — Consequences of the Exchange
List what happens after Adam and Eve sin.

What emotions or behaviors appear?

In what way does attributing blame show self-protection?

What is the relationship between self-rule and a broken relationship?

Word Study

Subtle: The term rendered as subtle or crafty in Genesis 3:1 refers to shrewdness, cunning, or careful cleverness. The serpent's approach was not crude; it was persuasive. This is important since temptation usually functions by distorting the truth rather than by presenting an obvious contradiction. The enemy will not say: "Reject God." He could say, "Let us reinterpret God," but he wouldn't say,

"Disobey." He might propose, "This situation is obviously different." Subtlety functions by making a compromise seem reasonable.

Reflection
What form of reasoning most often makes disobedience sound acceptable to you?

Leadership Insight

Leaders face the temptation of self-rule in especially dangerous ways. Experience can become a substitute for dependence. Knowledge can become a substitute for prayer. Success can become a substitute for obedience. Position can become a substitute for accountability. A leader may begin by asking: "What is God saying?" and gradually begin asking only: "What do I think will work?"

That is a subtle but important shift. Wisdom matters. Strategy matters. Experience matters. But none of these outranks submission. A Christian leader must never become so experienced that he no longer needs to listen.

Leadership Reflection

Where are you most tempted to trust experience more than dependence upon God?

What would renewed submission look like there?

Collins Principle

When another voice is given equal or greater weight than God's voice, worship has already been compromised. Worship begins to drift before behavior changes.

The first question is not always: “What did I do?” Sometimes it is: “Whose voice did I trust?”

Apply the Principle

Identify one area in which another voice has recently competed with Scripture:

_____

Whose voice was it?

_____

Why was it persuasive?

_____

What did God’s Word say?

_____

Walking it out

The Voice Audit: For seven days, pay attention to what influences your decisions. Each day, identify one meaningful decision and record the dominant voice behind it.

	Decision	Dominant Voice
Day 1	_____	_____
Day 2	_____	_____
Day 3	_____	_____
Day 4	_____	_____
Day 5	_____	_____
Day 6	_____	_____
Day 7	_____	_____

At the end of the week, what voice appeared most often?

Fear? Culture? Comfort? Other people? Personal preference? God’s Word?

_____

Individual Reflection

Complete these statements honestly.

I most often question God when:

_____

A voice that carries too much influence in my life is:

_____

A desire that can cause me to reinterpret obedience is:

_____

I am most tempted toward self-rule in the area of:

_____

I protect myself most strongly when:

_____

I tend to blame others when:

_____

One place where I need to trust God's Word over my own understanding is:

_____

Spiritual Formation Exercise

Returning the Authority: Set aside twenty minutes with Genesis 3:1–13.
Read slowly. Then identify one area where you have been functioning as though final authority belongs to you. Write it here:

_____

Now answer: What has God already said about this area?

_____

What have I preferred instead?

_____

What fear or desire makes surrender difficult?

_____

Now pray: "Father, I return authority over this area to You."
Then write one sentence of surrender:
"Because You are Lord, I will _____."

Living the Principle

This week, practice submission before decision. Before one significant choice each day, stop and ask:

1. What has God said?
2. What do I want?
3. Where do those two differ?
4. Which one will rule?

If there is conflict, choose submission.

The area where I most need this practice is:

_____

The act of obedience I am committing to is:

_____

Weekly Declaration

Read this aloud each morning: God's Word is my authority. I will not allow fear, desire, culture, convenience, or human opinion to outrank His truth. I reject self-rule and choose submission. I will trust the Lord with all my heart and refuse to lean on my own understanding. My worship will remain aligned because my trust will remain anchored in God. Jesus Christ is Lord, and His voice will have final authority in my life.

Guided Prayer

I'm sorry, Father, for all the instances in which I have questioned what You have made clear. I ask Your pardon for having given more weight to my own perception than to Your Word. I ask Your pardon for having let desire take precedence over devotion and for having substituted self-rule for surrender. Please watch over my heart. Renew in me confidence in Your character. Teach me how to trust Your Word even when I do not understand. Teach me to submit even if obedience costs me. Teach me to rely on Your truth rather than on my feelings. Restore what I have lost in You. Bring my worship back into the proper alignment. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

For one week, listen carefully to your internal justifications. Notice phrases such as:

"I know what the Bible says, but…"
"This situation is different…"
"God will understand…"
"I just feel…"
"Everybody does it…"

When you hear that language, stop. Ask: Am I seeking truth, or am I seeking permission?

Write down one moment this week when that question changed your response:

_____

_____

From The Shepherd's Heart

The serpent's strategy has not changed much. He still works to weaken confidence in what God has said. He still invites us to consider another voice. He still makes disobedience look reasonable. And he still appeals to something we want. That is why guarding the heart is so important. We do not usually wake up one morning and decide to abandon God. Drift happens quietly. A question entertained. A compromise justified. A desire protected. A boundary adjusted. But do not underestimate God's grace either. When He asks: "Where are you?" He is not asking because He has lost you. He is calling you back. Return quickly. Trust again. Submit again. Worship again.

Worship Response

Spend time worshipping God specifically for His trustworthiness. Declare: Your Word is true. Your motives are good. Your wisdom is perfect. Your authority is righteous. Your commands are trustworthy. Your ways are higher than mine. Then surrender the area where self-rule has been strongest. Say: "Father, I do not need to understand everything in order to trust You. I return this area to Your authority." Remain quietly before Him. Let trust become worship.

Journal

What did this session reveal about the relationship between trust and worship?

What voice has competed most strongly with God's Word in my life?

Where have I been most tempted to lean on my own understanding?

What desire has most often made compromise look reasonable?

Where has self-rule produced instability, fear, blame, or brokenness?

What is God asking me to return to His authority?

What act of obedience will demonstrate restored trust?

My prayer going forward:

When trust moves, worship moves. Guard the heart. Guard the Word. Guard the throne.

THE ISSUE OF WORSHIP
Companion Workbook
The Disciples Journey

Session 6 — Worship as the Purpose of Redemption
How Redemption Reorders Our Lives and Restores True Worship

Preparing The Heart

Before beginning this session, consider this question: What did Jesus save me for? It is natural to think first about what salvation saves us from: Judgment - Condemnation - Sin (the power and the penalty) - Separation from God. All of that is true. But redemption is not only rescue from something. It is restoration to Someone. Peter writes that Christ suffered "*that He might bring us to God*." That means the goal of redemption is not merely forgiveness. It is restored relationship, restored allegiance, restored dependence, and restored worship. Before you continue, ask yourself: Have I understood salvation primarily as forgiveness, or have I embraced the life of surrender that redemption makes possible? Become quiet before God. Allow the Cross to confront you again. Not merely as the place where you were forgiven, but as the place where ownership changed.

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You for the Cross. Thank You that Jesus Christ suffered for my sins, the just for the unjust, to bring me back to You. Do not allow me to reduce salvation to forgiveness without surrender, pardon without transformation, or belief without obedience. Show me what it means to live as one who has been redeemed. Reorder my heart. Renew my allegiance. Restore my worship. Teach me to live no longer for myself, but for Jesus Christ who died and rose again for me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Opening Scripture

"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God…" — 1 Peter 3:18

Read the verse several times. Pay special attention to the phrase: *"that He might bring us to God."*

What does this phrase reveal about the purpose of Christ's suffering?

_____

_____

How is being brought to God greater than simply having a penalty removed?

_____

_____

What would a life lived consciously "brought to God" look like?

_____

_____

The Main Point

Redemption does more than forgive our sin. It restores us to God so that our worship, allegiance, identity, and obedience can once again be centered upon Him. Jesus did not die merely so that we could escape judgment and continue living for ourselves. The Cross changes ownership. The Cross changes allegiance. The Cross changes direction. The Cross brings us home. We are redeemed from sin. But we are also redeemed to God.

Learning Objectives

By the completion of this session, you should be able to:

1. Explain why redemption must be understood as more than escape from judgment.
2. Describe the relationship between redemption and reconciliation with God.
3. Explain why the Cross restores worship as well as forgiveness.
4. Understand salvation as a change of allegiance and ownership.

5. Recognize the connection between regeneration and a transformed capacity to worship.
6. Explain how God's love produces devotion rather than mere obligation.
7. Differentiate between justification and the ongoing work of sanctification.
8. Examine whether your life reflects forgiveness without full surrender.
9. Identify one area where redemption needs to become more visible through obedience.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 6 brings us to the Cross. Humanity's deepest problem was not merely bad behavior. Sin displaced worship, broke trust, rejected God's authority, and separated humanity from fellowship with Him. Therefore, redemption must address more than behavior. It must restore relationship.

First Peter 3:18 gives us the purpose: *"…that He might bring us to God."* The Cross accomplishes forgiveness, justification, and reconciliation, but the goal is not merely legal pardon. We are brought back to God Himself. At the Cross:

- Human pride is confronted
- God's holiness is revealed
- Sin's seriousness is exposed
- Divine love is demonstrated

The Cross also changes allegiance. Christ died so that we would no longer live for ourselves but for Him. Redemption therefore restores worship. It gives us a new heart. Resistance begins to give way to surrender. Duty begins to become devotion. And the redeemed life increasingly reflects what Christ has accomplished through renewed thinking, transformed desires, reordered priorities, and obedient actions.

Theology Corner

Redemption, Justification, Reconciliation, and Sanctification: Several biblical doctrines help us understand what Christ accomplished.

Redemption speaks of liberation by the payment of a price. We have been purchased out of bondage and now belong to Christ.

Justification speaks of our right standing before God. Through faith in Christ, the guilty are declared righteous because of Christ's finished work.

Reconciliation speaks of restored relationship. Hostility and separation are overcome so that we are brought near to God.

Regeneration speaks of new spiritual life. God does not merely improve the old person; He makes us alive in Christ.

Sanctification describes the continuing work by which believers are increasingly conformed to Christ in thought, desire, character, and behavior.

These doctrines belong together. We are not justified because we successfully sanctify ourselves. Christ's work saves us. But the salvation Christ accomplishes is never intended to leave us unchanged. Grace brings us into a restored relationship in which our worship can increasingly become rightly ordered. Salvation is therefore both a decisive work of God and the beginning of a transformed life.

Digging Inside Scripture

1. 1Peter 3:18 — Brought to God
Who suffered?

_____

For whom did He suffer?

_____

What purpose does Peter give for Christ's suffering?

_____

What does this tell us about the ultimate goal of redemption?

_____

2. 2Corinthians 5:14–15 — A Change of Allegiance
Read the passage carefully.

According to Paul, why did Christ die for those who now live?

Complete this sentence: Because Christ died for me, I am no longer called to live _____, but _____.
What area of your life still reflects "living for self"?

---

3. Romans 12:1–2 — The Redeemed Life as Worship
What does Paul urge believers to present to God?

How does Paul describe this presentation?

What must happen to our thinking?

How do these verses connect redemption with worship?

---

4. 1 Corinthians 6:19–20 — Purchased Ownership
What does Paul say about the believer's body?

What does it mean to be "bought with a price"?

How should redeemed ownership affect personal decisions?

---

5. 1 John 4:19 — Love Awakens Love
Why do we love God?

How is worship different when it grows from gratitude for God's love rather than fear or mere obligation?

Word Study

Redemption: A key New Testament word associated with redemption is *apolytrōsis*, carrying the idea of release or liberation through the payment of a ransom. Redemption therefore carries the language of both freedom and cost.

We have been set free. But our freedom was not cheap. Christ paid the price. This introduces another important truth: Redemption does not mean we now belong to ourselves. We have been delivered from one mastery and brought under the gracious Lordship of Christ. Freedom in Christ is not autonomy. It is freedom to become what we were created to be.

Reflection
How is biblical freedom different from the idea, "I can do whatever I want"?

What does being redeemed tell you about who owns your life?

Leadership Insight

Christian leaders must remember that ministry does not belong to them. The church belongs to Christ. The people belong to Christ. The gifts belong to Christ. The calling belongs to Christ. The results belong to Christ. Redemption should therefore produce leaders who understand stewardship rather than ownership. When a leader forgets redemption, ministry can become personal property. We can begin saying: "My church." "My ministry." "My people." "My platform." "My success." But the redeemed leader remembers: I was bought with a price, and everything entrusted to me belongs to the One who bought me.

Leadership Reflection

Where are you most tempted to act like an owner rather than a steward?

How would your leadership change if Christ's ownership became more conscious in that area?

Collins Principle

We are not merely redeemed from sin; we are redeemed back to God. The purpose of salvation is not independent existence with a forgiven record. It is

restored relationship. Restored allegiance. Restored worship. Therefore, the evidence that we understand redemption is not merely that we rejoice over what Christ saved us from. It is that we increasingly live for the One to whom Christ brought us.

Apply the Principle

Finish this statement: Because I have been redeemed to God,

_____

_____

What area of your life most needs to reflect this principle?

_____

_____

Walking it out

The Redemption Inventory: Examine these areas of your life. Ask whether they reflect ownership by Christ or ownership by self.

Area	Mostly Christ-Centered or Self-Centered?	What Needs to Change?
Time	_____	_____
Finances	_____	_____
Relationships	_____	_____
Body/Health	_____	_____
Ambitions	_____	_____
Career/Ministry	_____	_____
Reputation	_____	_____
Future	_____	_____

Which area stands out most strongly?

_____

Why?

_____

Individual Reflection

Complete these statements honestly.

I am most grateful to Christ for redeeming me from:

I am beginning to understand that He redeemed me to:

An area where I am forgiven but still resisting surrender is:

An area where I still behave as though my life belongs completely to me is:

One evidence of God changing my heart is:

One way love for Christ has replaced mere obligation is:

One area where my allegiance needs to become clearer is:

Spiritual Formation Exercise

Return to the Cross: Set aside at least twenty minutes. Read:

- 1 Peter 3:18
- 2 Corinthians 5:14–15
- 1 Corinthians 6:19–20

Then sit quietly before God. Consider four truths the Cross continually reminds us of:

Who God is.

Who we are.

What Christ has done.

What redeemed life now requires of us.

Then identify one area of self-ownership. Name it specifically before God. Pray: "Jesus, You paid for me. This area belongs to You too." Remain quietly before the Cross until surrender becomes specific.

Living the Principle

For the next seven days, begin each morning with this question: "How would a redeemed person live today?" Then choose one area intentionally:

- Use your time as belonging to Christ
- Spend money as a steward
- Speak as one who belongs to Christ
- Treat your body as belonging to Christ
- Make a decision based upon Christ's ownership
- Surrender an ambition
- Obey where you have delayed

My primary area of redeemed living this week:

My concrete act of obedience:

What I am surrendering:

Weekly Declaration

Read this aloud each morning: I have been redeemed by Jesus Christ. I am not my own. I was bought with a price. Christ did not merely save me from judgment - He brought me back to God. My life, my body, my time, my resources, my relationships, my ambitions, and my future belong to Him. I will no longer live for myself, but for the One who died and rose again for me. I am forgiven, reconciled, restored, and called to worship. Jesus Christ has my allegiance.

Guided Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for the Cross. Thank You that You did not simply remove my guilt, but brought me back to the Father. Thank You for paying a price I could never pay. Forgive me for receiving the benefits of redemption while resisting the surrender redemption requires. I belong to You. My life belongs to You. My time belongs to You. My resources belong to You. My body belongs to You. My future belongs to You. Transform my thinking. Purify my desires. Realign my actions. Let the life I live demonstrate the redemption I have received. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

For one week, stop using the phrase: **"**It's my life." Replace it consciously with: "My life belongs to Christ." Whenever you face a meaningful decision, say it before choosing. My life belongs to Christ. Then ask: "What does Christ's ownership require here?" At the end of the week, record one decision that changed because you consciously remembered that you had been redeemed:

_____

_____

What did that decision reveal about ownership?

_____

_____

From The Shepherd's Heart

Never reduce the Cross to a ticket out of hell. The Cross is infinitely greater. Jesus did not simply die so that you could avoid where you deserved to go. He died to bring you somewhere you could never reach on your own: back to God. That changes everything. You were forgiven so relationship could be restored. You were reconciled so fellowship could be renewed. You were redeemed so allegiance could change. You were given new life so worship could become possible again. Do not stop at the doorway. Salvation is the beginning of a life with God. Return to the Cross often. Not because Christ needs to die again. His sacrifice is finished. Return because you need to remember: Who God is. Who you are. What Christ has done. And what a redeemed life now looks like.

You belong to Jesus. There is no safer ownership and no greater freedom.

Worship Response

Spend several minutes before God focusing only on the Cross. Do not begin with what you need. Begin with what Christ has done. Declare: You loved me first. You came for me. You suffered for me. You forgave me. You reconciled me. You brought me back to God. You purchased me with Your blood.

Then respond: I belong to You. My worship belongs to You. My obedience belongs to You. My allegiance belongs to You. My life belongs to You.

Finish quietly: "Jesus, because You gave Yourself for me, I give myself to You."

Journal

How has this session expanded my understanding of redemption?

Have I understood salvation more as escape or restoration? Why?

What does "*that He might bring us to God*" now mean to me personally?

Where have I been forgiven but not fully surrendered?

What area of my life still reflects self-ownership?

What did the Redemption Inventory reveal?

How is God renewing my thinking or transforming my desires?

What specific act of obedience will demonstrate that I belong to Christ?

My prayer going forward:

Redemption does not merely release us from sin. It brings us back to God - where worship is restored, allegiance is renewed, and life is reordered around Christ.

THE ISSUE OF WORSHIP
Companion Workbook
The Disciples Journey

Session 7 — Living for the Throne Forever
Why Worship Is Eternal, and How It Reshapes Our Lives Now

Preparing The Heart

Before beginning this session, lift your eyes beyond the temporary. Much of life presses us to think only about what is immediate. What must be done today. What needs to be solved. What we want next. What we are trying to build. What we are afraid of losing. But Scripture continually calls us to live with eternity in view. Revelation 7 gives us a glimpse of where everything is going. A throne. A multitude. A Lamb. A people from every nation. And worship.

Before moving forward, ask yourself: Does my present life reflect the eternal reality toward which I am moving? Is God central now, or merely important? Are my priorities being shaped by eternity or by urgency? Ask the Holy Spirit to recalibrate your perspective.

Opening Prayer

Father, lift my eyes beyond the temporary and help me see my life through the lens of eternity. Teach me to live now in a way that reflects where I am going. Reorder my priorities. Purify my desires. Strengthen my focus. Let the reality of Your throne make lesser things smaller and Your presence greater. Teach me to worship You now with the devotion that will define eternity. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Opening Scripture

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne… and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." — Revelation 7:9–10

Read Revelation 7:9–12 slowly. What is at the center of the scene?

Who is gathered before the throne?

What unites them?

What does this passage reveal about the eternal significance of worship?

The Main Point

Worship is not merely a practice for this life. It is an eternal reality, and the more clearly we see eternity, the more rightly we can order our lives now. The throne reveals what is ultimate. God is central. His glory is central. His salvation is central. His worship is central. When eternity becomes clear, present priorities begin to change. What is temporary becomes secondary. What is eternal becomes weightier. Worship becomes not merely something we do now, but preparation for what will define forever.

Learning Objectives

By the completion of this session, you should be able to:

1. Explain why worship is an eternal reality.
2. Describe the significance of the throne in Revelation.
3. Understand how worship creates unity across human differences.
4. Explain why an eternal viewpoint changes present priorities.
5. Recognize the difference between temporary urgency and eternal importance.

6. Explain why worship is preparation for eternity.
7. Evaluate whether your present life reflects God-centered eternal reality.
8. Identify one temporary pursuit that needs to be reordered.
9. Practice living with greater eternal intentionality.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 7 lifts the discussion of worship beyond time and into eternity. The book of Revelation shows us a multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language gathered before the throne of God. Despite their diversity, they share one focus: *God.* The throne represents authority, sovereignty, and centrality. In eternity, God is not one part of the scene. He is the center of it. Everything points toward Him. Everything responds to Him. Everything is ordered around Him. This future reality challenges the way we live now. Earth is not merely a place to accumulate experiences. It is a place of formation. Our desires are being trained. Our priorities are being shaped. Our focus is being established. We are either learning to live with God at the center or reinforcing a life centered somewhere else. The chapter therefore calls us to an eternal perspective. When eternity becomes real, distractions lose power, temporary things lose exaggerated importance, and God becomes increasingly preeminent.

Theology Corner

The Throne, the Lamb, and Eternal Worship: The book of Revelation presents worship in a deeply theological way. The throne represents the sovereign rule of God. The Lamb represents Jesus Christ, whose redemptive work secures the worshipping multitude. The worship in heaven is therefore not vague spirituality. It is worship grounded in:

- God's holiness
- God's sovereignty
- Christ's redemption
- God's victory
- God's eternal reign

This is important because eternal worship is not merely emotional admiration. It is the appropriate response to who God is and what He has done.
The book of Revelation also makes clear that salvation does not erase human diversity. People from every nation, tribe, and language remain identifiable. Yet their differences no longer compete with God's centrality. The church receives a foretaste of that reality now whenever believers gather around Christ rather than around preference, culture, personality, or status. Worship does not make us identical. It makes Christ ultimate.

Digging Inside Scripture

1. Revelation 4:1–11 — The Throne at the Center
Read Revelation 4. How often does the throne appear in the chapter?

_____

What does the repeated emphasis on the throne communicate?

_____

What response do the heavenly beings give to God?

_____

What attributes of God inspire their worship?

_____

2. Revelation 7:9–12 — Unity Around the Throne
What human distinctions are represented in the multitude?

_____

What do all of them have in common?

_____

How does God-centered worship create unity without erasing difference?

_____

How might this principle affect relationships within the church today?

_____

3. Colossians 3:1–4 — Setting the Mind Above
What are believers instructed to seek?

_____

Where are they instructed to set their minds?

_____

How does this relate to eternal perspective?

_____

What earthly concern currently receives more mental space than it deserves?

---

4. Matthew 6:19–21 — Eternal Investment
Where does Jesus tell us not to store treasure?

Where should treasure be stored?

What relationship does Jesus establish between treasure and heart?

What does your present use of time and resources reveal about where your treasure lies?

---

5. 2 Corinthians 4:16–18 — Seen and Unseen
What contrast does Paul make between visible and invisible things?

Which are temporary?

Which are eternal?

How could living by this perspective change the way you interpret present difficulties?

Word Study

Eternal: The New Testament frequently uses the Greek word *aiōnios* to describe what is eternal, age-enduring, or belonging to the age to come. Biblically, eternity is not simply "a very long time." It is a reality defined by God's enduring life and kingdom. This means eternal perspective is not merely thinking about duration. It is learning to value what belongs to God's kingdom above what belongs only to the present age.

Reflection
What present concern feels gigantic now but may look very different from the perspective of eternity?

What eternal reality needs to become larger in your thinking?

Leadership Insight

Leaders are especially vulnerable to temporal thinking. Numbers. Attendance. Influence. Budgets. Buildings. Recognition. Growth. These may all matter, but none is ultimate. A leader can become so occupied with what is measurable now that he forgets what will matter forever. Eternal leadership asks different questions:

Not merely: How many came? But: Were people formed into worshippers?
Not simply: Did the ministry grow? But: Did Christ become more central?
Not only: Was the event successful? But: Did obedience increase?

Leaders with an eternal view are not necessarily careless about present responsibilities. They simply choose not to confuse temporary measures with ultimate significance.

Leadership Reflection

What temporary measure most strongly influences your sense of success?

What eternal measure should matter more?

Collins Principle

When eternity becomes clear, priorities become clear. Many things feel urgent because they are close. But closeness does not make something ultimate. Eternal perspective creates spiritual proportion. It teaches us what deserves our deepest attention, our strongest devotion, and our greatest investment.

Apply the Principle

What is one temporary issue that has become too large in your mind?

_____

What eternal truth should be placed beside it?

_____

How does that comparison change your perspective?

_____

Walking it out

The Eternal Value Audit: Review the major ways you invest your life.

Area	Temporary Value	Eternal Value
Time	_____	_____
Money	_____	_____
Relationships	_____	_____
Career/Ministry	_____	_____
Entertainment	_____	_____
Personal Goals	_____	_____
Spiritual Formation	_____	_____
Service to Others	_____	_____

Now ask: Where am I overinvested in what will not last?

_____

Where am I underinvested in what will matter eternally?

_____

Individual Reflection

Complete these statements honestly.

The temporary thing that most easily consumes my attention is:

_____

I most often lose eternal perspective when:

_____

One thing I treat as urgent that probably is not is:

One eternal priority I have neglected is:

If I remembered eternity every day, how would my life look different?

One relationship I need to view through an eternal lens is:

One decision that needs eternal perspective is:

Spiritual Formation Exercise

Standing Before the Throne: Set aside twenty uninterrupted minutes. Read Revelation 4:8–11 and Revelation 7:9–12. Then close your eyes and imagine yourself standing among the multitude before the throne. Do not focus on yourself. Focus on God. His holiness. His authority. His glory. His salvation. His worthiness. Then ask:

What currently feels very important to me that should seem small in this moment?

What have I neglected that should seem important in this moment?

What would I wish I had surrendered sooner?

What would I wish I had invested in more deeply?

Finish by praying: "Father, teach me to live now in light of then."

Living the Principle

This week, practice eternal recalibration. Before one meaningful decision each day, ask:

1. Will this matter in eternity?
2. Does this strengthen or weaken my devotion to God?

3. Does this reflect the priorities of the throne?
4. What choice would I make if eternity felt very near?

The area where I most need eternal realignment is:

_____

One specific change I will make this week:

_____

Weekly Declaration

Read this aloud every morning: Life is temporary. God is eternal. Worship is ultimate. I will not allow temporary urgency to determine eternal priorities. I will set my mind on things above. I will invest in what lasts, and live with the throne in view. Jesus Christ will remain central in my decisions, desires, relationships, and pursuits. By the grace of God, I will live now in a way that prepares me for forever.

Guided Prayer

Father, give me eternal perspective. Forgive me for allowing temporary things to become too large and eternal things to become too small. Teach me to live with Your throne in view. Reorder my priorities. Train my desires. Strengthen my focus. Help me invest my time, resources, relationships, and energy in what carries eternal significance. Let eternity make sin less attractive, distractions less powerful, and Your presence more precious. Teach me to live now as a citizen of Your eternal kingdom. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

For one week, whenever you find yourself anxious, consumed, offended, hurried, or distracted, ask: "How large will this be in eternity?" Do not use the question to dismiss legitimate responsibilities. Use it to restore proportion. Then ask: "What response would honor God forever?"

At the end of the week, record one situation in which eternal perspective changed your reaction:

_____

_____

What did you learn?

_____

_____

From The Shepherd's Heart

There are things that feel enormous because we are standing so close to them. But eternity changes the scale. One day, the things that competed for our attention will be gone. Titles will be gone. Possessions will be gone. Applause will be gone. Arguments will be gone. Temporary disappointments will be gone. But God will still be God. Christ will still be worthy. The throne will still stand. And worship will remain. Do not wait until eternity to discover what was always most important. Let eternity reach backward into your life now. Let it change what you chase. Let it change what you fear. Let it change what you value. Let it change how you worship. You are not merely moving through time. You are being prepared for forever.

Worship Response

Spend time worshipping God as the eternal King. Declare:

You were God before I arrived.
You will be God after this age has passed.
Your throne is eternal.
Your kingdom cannot be shaken.
Your glory does not fade.
Your worth does not change.
You are the center of eternity.

Then pray: **"**Father, become increasingly central in me now." Release temporary concerns into His hands. Name them one by one. Then say: "This is temporary. You are eternal." Remain quietly in His presence.

Journal

What did this session reveal about my present priorities?

What temporary issue has become too large in my thinking?

What eternal priority needs greater attention?

What did the Eternal Value Audit reveal?

How does the image of the throne change the way I understand worship?

Where do I need to live more intentionally in preparation for eternity?

What changed when I asked, “How large will this be in eternity?”

What is one specific eternal investment I will make going forward?

My prayer going forward:

This life is temporary. God is eternal. Worship is the ultimate thing.

THE ISSUE OF WORSHIP
Companion Workbook
The Disciples Journey

Session 8 — When Worship Restores Revival
How Realignment with God Releases Transformation and Awakening

Preparing The Heart

We have reached the destination toward which every previous session has been moving. We began with the war for worship. We discovered that humanity was created for worship, that rebellion corrupted worship, that sin is rooted in misplaced worship, that the Garden represented an exchange of worship, that redemption restores worship, and that eternity will be centered upon worship. Now the question becomes unavoidable: What happens when worship is restored? Revival.

But before thinking about churches, cities, nations, or great movements of God, begin with yourself. Revival must become personal before it becomes corporate. Ask yourself: Is there anything in my life that God has revealed but I have not surrendered? Is there an area where I know what God requires but have delayed obedience? Is God truly preeminent, or have I simply made Him important?

Do not ask God first to revive someone else. Begin here: "Lord, revive me."

Opening Prayer

Father, I do not want merely to talk about revival. I want to become the kind of worshipper through whom revival can begin. Search me. Soften every hardened place. Expose every compromise. Remove every distraction. Confront every area of control. Give me courage to respond immediately when You convict me.

Restore worship within me until obedience becomes the natural response of a heart completely surrendered to You. Begin revival in me. Then let what You do in me spread through me to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Opening Scripture

"But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship Him."
— John 4:23

Go back to the Bible which was the starting point of this journey. What kind of worshippers is the Father looking for?

What does this indicate regarding what God considers important?

What is the difference between going to worship and becoming a worshipper?

What has changed in your understanding of John 4:23 since the last seven sessions have been completed?

The Main Point

Revival is not produced. Revival is released. Revival is released when God's people return to Him through authentic worship, genuine surrender, and new obedience. The sequence is important:

Conviction calls for alignment.
Alignment produces surrender.
Surrender produces obedience.
Obedience produces worship.
Personal worship multiplies into corporate revival.

Therefore, revival is not primarily an event to organize. It is a people returning to God.

Learning Objectives

By the completion of this session, you should be able to:

1. Explain why revival is fundamentally connected to worship.
2. Define revival as new obedience rather than merely emotional or extraordinary spiritual activity.
3. Explain the relationship between worship, alignment, conviction, surrender, and obedience.
4. Identify the role of the Holy Spirit in conviction and transformation.
5. Understand why personal revival precedes corporate revival.
6. Identify distraction, familiarity, control, and unwillingness as barriers to authentic worship.
7. Explain why consistency is necessary for sustained revival.
8. Evaluate the worship culture of your own life, family, ministry, or church.
9. Identify one area requiring immediate new obedience.
10. Establish a practical pattern for sustained worship and alignment.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 8 brings the entire message of *The Issue of Worship* together. The central conclusion is simple: *Revival is a worship issue.*

The church has sometimes treated revival as something that can be scheduled, promoted, organized, or produced. But genuine revival cannot be manufactured. Revival begins when worship restores God to His rightful place. When God becomes central, His Word becomes weightier. When His Word becomes weightier, conviction deepens. When conviction deepens, surrender becomes necessary. When surrender occurs, obedience follows. And when individual acts of obedience multiply throughout the body of Christ, personal revival becomes corporate awakening.

This chapter therefore reframes revival. Revival is not primarily about excitement. It is about alignment. It is not primarily about crowds. It is about hearts. It is not primarily about what happens during a service. It is about what changes after we leave. ***Revival is new obedience.***

Theology Corner

Revival, Conviction, and the Holy Spirit: Biblical revival cannot be separated from the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said concerning the Spirit:

"*And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."* — John 16:8

Conviction is one of God's gracious means of bringing us into truth. The Holy Spirit exposes what has become inconsistent with God's character and Word. But conviction is not revival by itself. Conviction creates a decision point. We can resist. Or we can yield. When conviction produces repentance and repentance produces new obedience, revival has begun to take visible form. This protects us from defining revival primarily by manifestations, crowds, emotional intensity, or extraordinary experiences. Those things may accompany seasons of spiritual awakening, but they are not the final measure. The deeper evidence is transformation. Are people repenting? Are relationships being restored? Is holiness increasing? Is obedience becoming visible? Is Christ becoming more central? Are believers becoming more sensitive to the Holy Spirit? *The fruit of revival is a changed people.*

Digging Inside Scripture

1. John 4:23–24 — The Worshippers God Seeks
What does Jesus say that the Father is looking for?

What are the two characteristics of true worship?

What is the reason why both must be there?

How would worship carried out *'in spirit and in truth'* appear outside of a church service?

---

2. Ezekiel 36:25–27 — The Softened Heart
What has God promised to take away?

What does He promise to give?

What role does the Spirit have?

What does verse 27 tell us that happens as a result of this inner transformation?

What can be learned from this passage regarding the connection between inward renewal and outward obedience?

3. 2 Chronicles 7:14 — Returning to God
Identify the responses God requires from His people:

1.
2.
3.
4.

Which of these most challenges you personally?

Why?

4. Acts 2:37–42 — Conviction Becomes Response
After Peter preached, what did the hearers do?

How did Peter tell them to respond?

What practices became distinctive to the new believers?

What does this teach about the difference between being moved and being transformed?

5. James 1:22–25 — Hearing Must Turn Into Doing
What caution does James give to hearers?

Is hearing truth without responding dangerous? Why?

Complete the following statement: Conviction becomes transformational when I

_____

Word Study

Revive: The biblical concept of revival carries the idea of being made alive, restored, renewed, or caused to flourish again. Revival assumes that something once alive has become weak, neglected, diminished, or unresponsive. This helps us understand why revival belongs first to the people of God. Revival is God restoring spiritual vitality where devotion has weakened. But vitality is not measured merely by enthusiasm. A revived heart becomes responsive to God. Therefore, one of the simplest ways to recognize revival is: A revived heart responds when God speaks. It does not merely hear. It obeys.

Reflection
Where have you become spiritually unresponsive?

_____

Where is God calling you to become responsive again?

_____

Leadership Insight

Leaders must be particularly careful not to substitute activity for revival. A full calendar is not revival. A crowded sanctuary is not necessarily revival. Excellent music is not revival. Powerful preaching by itself is not revival. Emotional response is not necessarily revival. These things may serve God's purposes, but none can substitute for transformed lives.

The leadership question must therefore become: "What evidence of new obedience is appearing among the people we lead?" A healthy worship culture should produce: Greater hunger for God. Deeper submission to Scripture. Increasing holiness. Stronger relationships. Greater humility. More consistent prayer. Greater sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. Visible obedience. Leaders must also model what they desire to cultivate.

A pastor cannot lead people into surrender while protecting his own areas of resistance. A worship leader cannot lead people toward God while privately worshipping recognition. ***A ministry cannot sustain revival through platform excellence without heart alignment.***

Leadership Reflection

If you measured your ministry by transformation rather than activity, what would you examine?

What might need to change?

Collins Principle

Personal obedience becomes corporate revival. Revival begins with one surrendered heart. One person hears God and obeys. Another does the same. Then another. Soon obedience is no longer isolated. It becomes culture. The atmosphere changes because the people have changed. Therefore, never underestimate one act of obedience. Your obedience may be the beginning of something larger than you can see.

Apply the Principle

What is one act of obedience God is requiring from you now?

What might happen if you obey?

What might happen if others followed your example?

Walking it out

The Revival Realignment Audit: Examine the four barriers identified in this chapter.

Barrier	How It Appears in My Life	What Realignment Requires
Distraction	_____	_____
Familiarity	_____	_____
Control	_____	_____
Unwillingness	_____	_____

Now identify the strongest barrier:

My primary barrier is:

_____

It has affected my worship by:

_____

God is asking me to:

_____

My act of new obedience will be:

_____

Individual Reflection

Complete these statements honestly.

My definition of revival before this study was:

_____

My definition of revival has changed - now it is:

_____

The greatest change in my understanding of worship has been:

_____

The area where God has convicted me most strongly is:

_____

The area I have found most difficult to surrender is:

_____

The greatest competitor for God's preeminence in my life has been:

One evidence that God is softening my heart is:

The new obedience God is requiring from me is:

Spiritual Formation Exercise

The Personal Revival Altar: Set aside at least thirty uninterrupted minutes. Do not begin with music. Do not begin by asking God to change anyone else. Begin with Psalm 139:23–24: *"Search me, O God, and know my heart… and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."*

After sitting quietly, move through these four areas.

1. Distraction: What has divided my attention?

2. Familiarity: In what area have I begun to treat the holy as common?

3. Control: Have I refused to give something to God? What?

4. Unwillingness: What do I already know God wants me to do?

Now ask: "Holy Spirit, what must change?" Write the answer.

Then respond. Do not merely record it. Do not postpone it. If possible, take the first step of obedience before this exercise ends.

Living the Principle

For the next seven days, practice immediate obedience. Each morning pray: "Father, whatever You reveal today, give me grace to obey." Throughout the day, when Scripture, conviction, or the Holy Spirit makes an area of obedience clear, respond promptly. At the end of each day record:

What did God reveal to you?

Did you respond appropriately?

What changed after you obeyed?

At the end of seven days ask: Has obedience become more natural because worship has become more central?

Weekly Declaration

Read this aloud each morning: Jesus, You will have first place in my life. I will worship You in spirit and in truth. I will not substitute activity for alignment. I will not substitute emotion for obedience, or expression for surrender. When the Holy Spirit convicts me, I will respond. When God speaks, I will obey. I will reject distraction, familiarity, control, and unwillingness. My heart will remain soft before God. Revival will begin in me through new obedience, and I will live as a true worshipper of Jesus Christ.

Guided Prayer

Father, I have asked You for revival. Now I ask You to begin with me. Search my heart. Reveal every divided affection. Expose every hidden compromise. Break every place of resistance. Forgive me where worship has become casual, distracted, controlled, or incomplete. Soften my heart. Increase my sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. Give me courage to respond when You convict me. Let my worship become surrender. Let surrender become obedience. Let obedience become transformation. And let the transformation You begin in me spread into my family, my church, my community, and wherever You send me. I do not merely ask to see revival. Make me part of it. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Shepherd's Challenge

Here is the final challenge of this workbook: Stop asking God for revival without asking what new obedience He requires from you. For the next seven days, pray one dangerous prayer: "Lord, show me where I am out of alignment." Then listen. When He shows you, do not defend. Do not justify. Do not negotiate. Do not delay. Obey. At the end of the week, answer:

What did God reveal to you?

What did you surrender?

What new obedience did you start?

What changed within me?

That change is where revival begins.

From The Shepherd's Heart

We have reached the end of this workbook, but I pray you have reached the beginning of something much greater in your life. I have spent this entire journey trying to bring us back to one simple truth: ***Worship is the issue behind every issue.***

The war is about worship. Creation was designed around worship. Rebellion corrupted worship. Sin redirects worship. The Garden exposed the consequences of misplaced worship. The Cross restores worship. Eternity centers upon worship. And revival is released when worship is restored.

So do not make this complicated. Return to God. Give Him His rightful place. Listen when He speaks. Obey what He says. And when you fail, return quickly. *Do not settle for worship that makes you emotional but leaves you unchanged.* Do not settle for church activity without spiritual alignment. Do not settle for singing about surrender while protecting what God has asked you to release.

God is seeking true worshippers. Be one. And remember this:
Revival does not begin when everybody changes. Revival begins when I do.

Worship Response

For the last worship response, go through the whole course of the book.

The War for Worship: *Jesus, You are the one who will take Your place on the throne of my heart.*

Created for the Throne: *I have been made by You and for You.*

When Worship Turns Inward: *I reject any form of self-exaltation. You should grow while I shrink.*

The Hidden Root of Sin: *Bring to light every incorrect devotion and reorganize my heart.*

The Garden Exchange: *I refuse to govern myself and return to Your authority.*

Worship as the Purpose of Redemption*: I am not my own. I have been purchased at a price.*

Living for the Throne Forever: *This life is temporary, You are eternal, and worship is ultimate.*

When Worship Restores Revival: *Start revival in me by showing me new obedience.*

Stay quietly in front of God. Don't put on a show. Don't strain. Don't pretend. Simply give in and state, “Jesus, You are first; You are Lord; my life is Yours.”

Journal

What has God taught me about worship through this entire journey?

What was my strongest conviction?

What has God asked me to surrender?

Where has my worship been restored?

What new obedience has begun?

Which of the four barriers—distraction, familiarity, control, or unwillingness—has been strongest in my life?

How will I maintain consistent worship beyond this workbook?

What would personal revival look like in my life thirty days from now?

What could corporate revival look like if others began responding to God with the same obedience?

My covenant of worship going forward:
Because Jesus Christ is Lord, I commit to:

My final prayer:

Revival is not produced - it is released. Worship restores alignment. Alignment produces surrender. Surrender produces obedience. And when personal obedience multiplies throughout the people of God, revival emerges. Return to God. Restore His place. Realign your life. Revival begins with new obedience.

Appendix A: Collins Principles for Daily Living

Worship is not merely something we do in the presence of God. *Worship is the life we live because God is present.*

The purpose of this appendix is to take the central truths of *The Issue of Worship* and reduce them to clear, memorable principles that can govern everyday life. These principles are not intended merely to be read. They are intended to become a personal rule of life - a practical framework for keeping God preeminent in our thoughts, decisions, relationships, priorities, and behavior.

The goal is simple: *Keep God first. Keep the heart surrendered. Keep worship aligned. Keep walking in obedience.*

Collins Principle 1: Worship Is the Issue Behind Every Issue
All lives have a throne and someone or something will hold it. Since we were made to worship, the basic question about life is not whether or not we will worship, but rather whom or what we will worship, and our choices in the end show the answer.

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me." — Exodus 20:3

Collins Principle 2: Worship Is Proven by Direction, Not Declaration
What we say matters, but the direction of our lives reveals what we truly worship. Follow your time. Follow your attention. Follow your money. Follow your sacrifices. Follow your thoughts. Follow your pursuits. Eventually, they will lead you to the functional throne of your heart.

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." — Matthew 6:21

Collins Principle 3: What Captures Your Focus Will Eventually Shape Your Life
Focus is never spiritually neutral. What continually captures our attention begins to influence our desires. Our desires influence our decisions, and our decisions establish the direction of our lives. This is why the battle for worship is often a battle for attention.

"…bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."
2Corinthians 10:5

Collins Principle 4: Whatever Sits on the Throne Determines Everything Else
There is only one throne in the human heart. God will not share His rightful place with ambition, money, relationships, approval, comfort, fear, success, or self. If God is not first, something else is.

"And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." — Colossians 1:17

Collins Principle 5: Whatever We Worship, We Are Becoming Like
Worship is formative. Whatever we consistently admire, pursue, exalt, and center our lives upon begins to shape us. The great purpose of worship is therefore not merely that we recognize God, but that through communion with Him we increasingly reflect His character.

"But we all… beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image…" — 2 Corinthians 3:18

Collins Principle 6: Every External Fall Begins with an Internal Shift in Worship
Lucifer's rebellion began before his outward fall. The words were: "I will…" Self moved toward the center. The same pattern remains dangerous today. Spiritual decline often begins quietly when our will becomes more important than God's will.

"God resists the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." — James 4:6

Collins Principle 7: Proximity to God Does Not Guarantee Submission to God
It is possible to attend church, serve in ministry, preach, teach, lead, sing, pray publicly, and participate in spiritual activity while privately resisting God's authority. Spiritual activity must never be mistaken for spiritual surrender.

Collins Principle 8: Sin Is Ultimately Misplaced Worship
Sin is deeper than behavior. Behavior is often the fruit. Worship is the root. Behind sinful patterns we frequently discover something we love, fear, desire, trust, or protect more than our obedience to God.

"They… worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator…" Romans 1:25

Collins Principle 9: What We Worship Will Eventually Rule Us
Whenever anything is raised above God it will end up asking us for something. Approval asks for compromise, and comfort asks for avoidance. Ambition asks for sacrifice, and fear asks for control. Money asks for pursuit. Self asks for independence. What starts as desire can later become mastery.

Collins Principle 10: When Another Voice Equals or Exceeds God's Voice, Worship Has Already Been Compromised
The serpent's strategy in Eden began with a question: "Did God really say?" The enemy understands that if confidence in God's Word can be weakened, obedience can eventually be disrupted. Worship therefore includes deciding whose voice has final authority.

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." — Proverbs 3:5

Collins Principle 11: Desire Must Never Be Allowed to Interpret Truth
Eve saw that the fruit was desirable. Once desire became dominant, God's command began to appear restrictive rather than protective. We are especially vulnerable to deception when we desperately want something.

Collins Principle 12: Self-Rule Is the Ancient Alternative to Worship
The temptation of Eden was autonomy: I will decide. I will determine. I will define. I will rule. But humanity was never designed for independence from God. True freedom is not freedom from God's authority. It is freedom to live completely aligned beneath it.

Collins Principle 13: Redemption Does Not Merely Save Us from Something; It Restores Us to Someone
Jesus suffered: *"…that he might bring us to God."* - 1 Peter 3:18. The ultimate destination of redemption is not merely heaven. It is God Himself. We were reconciled so relationship could be restored. We were redeemed so worship could be restored.

Collins Principle 14: The Redeemed Life Is No Longer Self-Owned
Redemption changes ownership. Christ did not purchase us so that we could continue living as though we belonged to ourselves. Our time belongs to Him. Our resources belong to Him. Our gifts belong to Him. Our bodies belong to Him. Our ambitions belong to Him. Our future belongs to Him.

"For ye are bought with a price…" — 1 Corinthians 6:20

Collins Principle 15: Worship Turns Obligation into Devotion
God's love changes the nature of obedience. We do not worship merely because we are commanded. We worship because we have seen something of His holiness, mercy, grace, sacrifice, and love. We love Him because He first loved us.

Collins Principle 16: The Cross Must Continually Dethrone Self
We never graduate from the Cross. The Cross reminds us: Who God is. Who we are. What Christ has done. Who now owns our lives. At the Cross, pride loses its argument and surrender becomes reasonable.

Collins Principle 17: When Eternity Becomes Clear, Priorities Become Clear
The throne of the book of Revelation exposes the temporary nature of many things that consume us. Money passes. Titles pass. Possessions pass. Applause passes. Problems pass. God remains.

"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen…" — 2 Corinthians 4:18

Collins Principle 18: Live Now in Light of Then
We will not begin worshipping when we arrive in eternity. We are learning now to live the God-centered life that eternity will reveal in fullness. Our priorities are being trained. Our desires are being formed. Our focus is being established.

Collins Principle 19: Revival Is New Obedience
Revival must never be reduced to excitement, crowds, emotional experiences, or extraordinary manifestations. The deepest evidence of revival is transformation. When the Holy Spirit convicts us and we change direction in obedience to God, revival has begun.

Collins Principle 20: Personal Obedience Becomes Corporate Revival
We often pray: "Lord, revive the church." But revival begins when individual believers begin obeying God. One surrendered life. Then another. Then another. Eventually individual obedience becomes corporate culture.

Collins Principle 21: A Soft Heart Is Fertile Soil for Revival
Hard hearts defend. Soft hearts surrender. Hard hearts justify. Soft hearts repent. Hard hearts resist correction. Soft hearts respond to conviction. Revival requires hearts that can still be moved by God.

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you…"
Ezekiel 36:26

Collins Principle 22: Never Confuse Spiritual Activity with Spiritual Alignment
A church can be busy and spiritually cold. A ministry can be successful and spiritually misaligned. A believer can be active and inwardly distant from God. Activity measures what we are doing. Alignment reveals who is governing what we are doing.

Collins Principle 23: God Must Be Preeminent, Not Merely Important
Many believers consider God important. But worship demands something greater. Preeminence. Important things receive attention. Preeminent things govern everything else. Jesus is not seeking a place somewhere within our priorities. He is Lord.

Collins Principle 24: Consistency Protects Worship
Worship cannot remain an occasional encounter. Daily decisions either strengthen alignment or weaken it. Every day we are training our hearts toward something. Revival therefore requires sustained alignment - not isolated moments of surrender followed by prolonged seasons of self-rule.

Collins Principle 25: Guard Against the Four Enemies of Worship
Four barriers repeatedly threaten authentic worship:
Distraction - some other thing takes our attention.
Familiarity - causes holy things to become common.
Control - We desire God's presence without making God the supreme authority.
Unwillingness - To be unwilling - we listen to God yet refuse to yield.

The Collins Daily Worship Pattern

The principles of this workbook can be remembered through five daily movements:

RECOGNIZE: God is God. I am not.
Begin by acknowledging His holiness, authority, goodness, sovereignty, and lordship.

RETURN: Jesus, You belong on the throne.
Identify anything that has competed with His preeminence and consciously return it to Him.

REALIGN: Your Word will govern my life.
Bring thoughts, desires, priorities, relationships, and decisions beneath Scripture.

RESPOND: Whatever You say, I will obey.
Do not stop at conviction. Act.

REMAIN: I will walk with You throughout this day.
Carry worship beyond the devotional moment and into ordinary life.

Recognize. Return. Realign. Respond. Remain. That is the rhythm of daily worship.

A Thirty-Day Worship Covenant

For the next thirty days, make this covenant before God:

I will seek to keep Jesus Christ preeminent in every area of my life. I will guard my attention because my focus shapes my worship. I will submit my desires to God's Word rather than interpret God's Word through my desires. I will remember that I have been bought with a price and that my life belongs to Christ. I will live with eternity in view.

I will remain sensitive to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. When God reveals an area of misalignment, I will return quickly. When God speaks, I will obey. I will not wait for revival to begin around me. I will allow God to begin revival within me. Jesus Christ will have the throne.

The Final Collins Principle

Worship is the issue behind every issue.

When worship is wrong, everything else eventually becomes disordered. When worship is restored, alignment begins. When alignment is restored, conviction becomes clearer. When conviction is answered with surrender, obedience follows. When obedience becomes consistent, transformation occurs. And when transformed, obedient worshippers begin multiplying throughout the body of Christ— *revival emerges.*

So, keep the issue clear. Return to God. Restore His place. Realign your life. Respond in obedience. Remain in His presence. And every morning, settle the most important question before every other question arrives:
Who sits on the throne today?

The Bishop's Blessing

When you finish using this workbook, I hope that you won't end your experience with just closing the booklet.

You have studied worship. You have examined worship. You have dealt with the objects of worship. You have thought about the throne in your heart. You are now required to carry out *worship*.

I pray that whatever God has shown you in this book will not remain just a memory but will instead guide your manner of living. May the Lord cause your heart to remain tender and your spirit to be sensitive to the Lord's voice. Let him grant you the ability to identify every subtle competitor that tries to take the place which belongs to Christ alone.

May His protection be upon your heart and keep it from distraction, upon your mind and keep it from deception, upon your spirit to keep it from familiarity, and upon your life to keep it from being devoted to many things. Let the Holy Spirit always show you anything that has become more important to you than obedience to God. And when He makes it known, may you have the courage to give it up.

May you always avoid being content with a form of worship that affects your emotions without altering your actions. May your worship be seen in your obedience. May your worship be seen in your character. May your worship be seen in your relationships. May your worship be evident in the way you manage things. May your worship be seen in the choices you make when no one is watching.

Let more than your songs be given to Jesus Christ. *May He have your life.*

May you live with your heart fully committed. May you go about considering eternity. May you be able to quickly see when something is trying to compete with Christ for the throne. May you listen to the Word of God and give an immediate response. May you grow more and more sensitive to the conviction and guidance of the Holy Spirit. May you find the freedom that comes about when the self is dethroned and Jesus Christ is made preeminent.

May you be made into the kind of worshipper whom the Father is looking for, a person who worships Him *in spirit and in truth.*

I wish your home would be a place of worship. That your relationships may be a form of worship. Let your leadership show worship. May your service come from worship. May the privacy of your life match the devotion you show in public. And may those who encounter you see the evidence of a life that has settled the issue: Jesus Christ is Lord.

As you proceed, don't forget all that you have learned. The stronger the struggle over your attention becomes, the more you should defend your worship. If someone else questions the authority of God's Word - then protect your worship. Whenever success leads you to boast about yourself - be careful about showing off. If desire urges you to make a compromise - then keep your worship. If the situation leads you to doubt God, then stay firm in your worship. When the temporary takes over the eternal, be sure to protect your worship. When the Holy Spirit brings conviction - obey.

Because it is not simply a matter of praying for revival to take place around us. Revival begins when God confronts something within us, and we respond with new obedience.

Let the revival start with you. Let your act of obedience have an effect on someone else. Let their act of obedience have an effect on someone else. Let hearts that have given in grow and increase until they result in homes being transformed, churches being awakened, communities being touched, and Jesus Christ receiving the glory which is truly His alone.

May the Lord keep you near to Him. Let his Word be your first and final authority. May His Spirit guide your steps. Let His Cross always serve to remind you that you are not your own. Let His throne always serve as a reminder to you that this life is temporary.

Let His glory be the final aim of all that you do. I leave you with the question that has followed us throughout this path: Who is seated on the throne? May the response you give never be just one that you utter with your lips. Let it be shown by the course of your life.

Jesus Christ has the throne. My worship is for Jesus Christ. I am obedient to Jesus Christ. My life belongs to Jesus Christ. And may you live every day -
Ad Gloriam Christi. For the glory of Christ.

With my prayers and blessing,
Bishop Dr. Anthony Collins
Collins Discipleship Institute

Author's Note

Thank you for reading the *The Issue of Worship - Companion Workbook*. If this book encouraged, challenged, or strengthened your walk with Christ, would you consider leaving a brief review on our website TonyCollinsMinistries.com?

Your review:

- Helps other believers discover these resources
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Even a handful of sentences make an important difference. Visit TonyCollinsMinistries.com and go to the "Contact" page at the top. Leave your review referencing the *The Issue of Worship - Companion Workbook*. Thank you for partnering in ministry through your support.

Blessings,
Bishop Anthony Collins

All of our discipleship resources are available to the public at no charge through HOWICP.org. Our mission is to advance the Kingdom of Jesus Christ by equipping believers to obey the Great Commission through biblical discipleship, spiritual formation, and leadership development.

If these resources have encouraged your walk with Christ or strengthened your ministry, we invite you to partner with us. Your tax-deductible donation enables us to continue developing and distributing these materials free of charge to individuals, churches, and ministries worldwide.

Thank you for helping us make disciples who make disciples - for the glory of God.



In Matthew 28, our Lord Jesus Christ gave His Church its mission, its vision, and its process for reaching the world. We know it as the Great Commission.

Jesus commanded His followers to *go and make disciples of all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and *teaching them to obey everything He had commanded*. This is not one ministry among many; it is the mission of the Church. It is the one assignment that every believer, every local church, and the Church universal has received directly from our risen King.

Sadly, much of the modern Church has neglected this divine responsibility.

Many who stand behind the sacred desk have never themselves experienced intentional biblical discipleship. Consequently, they have little vision or passion for discipling others. This stands in direct opposition to both the command and the example of Jesus Christ.

Disciple-making is rarely easy. It is often inconvenient, time-consuming, and personally demanding. It requires patience, commitment, and sacrifice. But the Kingdom of God has never been advanced through convenience. It has always been advanced through faithful men and women who were willing to invest their lives in others.

We cannot fully accomplish biblical discipleship from the pulpit alone. Preaching is essential, but it is only one part of the process. Neither can we effectively disciple someone through occasional meetings or brief conversations. Jesus did not simply teach crowds; He invested deeply in twelve men. He walked with them, answered their questions, corrected their misunderstandings, modeled obedience, and allowed them to observe His life day after day.

That remains the biblical pattern.

Discipleship is life shared together. It is walking alongside another believer, allowing them to see how we respond to life's victories, disappointments, temptations, and trials. It is opening God's Word together, praying together, encouraging one another, and holding each other accountable to grow in Christ.

For us, intentional discipleship means meeting regularly - ideally at least once each week - for meaningful conversation centered on Scripture, spiritual growth, and the practical challenges of living faithfully in a fallen world. It is helping believers develop the spiritual disciplines that deepen their intimacy with Jesus Christ and strengthen their walk with Him.

The goal is not simply to produce knowledgeable Christians. The goal is to develop mature disciples who, in turn, become disciple-makers themselves.

This is the multiplication strategy of the Kingdom.

At **Collins Discipleship Institute**, our passion is to equip individuals, churches, and Christian organizations with practical, biblically sound resources that cultivate mature, vibrant, and Spirit-empowered followers of Jesus Christ. Our desire is to strengthen believers in the essential areas of Christian life and ministry, so they can faithfully fulfill the Great Commission. We do not exist to produce better church members. We exist to produce mature disciples who make mature disciples.

We believe that the future strength of the Church will not be determined merely by the size of our congregations, but by the depth of our disciples. When disciples make disciples, churches become healthier, families become stronger, communities are transformed, and the Kingdom of Jesus Christ advances.

The Great Commission has never been rescinded. It remains the calling of every believer. May we not merely admire it, but may we obey it.

Contact us at info@HOWICP.org for more information. All discipleship resources are free.