

DAY 8

WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD
LUKE 4:8

Everyone worships someone or something.

I grew up near Memphis, Tennessee. During those years, there was a basketball player known as “Penny” who was lighting up the NCAA with his talent at Memphis State University. In fact, Anfernee “Penny” Hardaway was so good he would later get drafted by the Orlando Magic and team up with Shaquille O’Neal.

I couldn’t get enough of “Penny.” I went to the basketball camp that he held in Memphis. He once signed a blank sheet of paper for me and I cherished this paper so much. It had a special place in my room that no one was allowed to see or touch. I collected his basketball cards, hung posters of him on my wall, and even bought his basketball shoes which were called the “Air Pennies.” (By the way, they are still the coolest pair of basketball shoes ever made.)

I didn’t realize it at the time, but I was essentially worshipping Penny. In fact, I thought a lot more about him than I did of the One who created him. Don’t get me wrong: “Penny” had a great basketball career that only ended because of injury, and even today, he is known for his charity work. He has a great reputation in Memphis and across basketball. But as great as he was, Anfernee Hardaway is just a man, and one day he will die.

As a child, we can understand this sort of adoration and devotion to a hero or sports star. But there are many of us as adults who still struggle with worshipping the wrong things or people. We worship things that will not last.

- ➔ Some of us worship a person.
- ➔ Some of us worship money.
- ➔ Some of us worship stuff.
- ➔ Some of us worship sex.
- ➔ Some of us worship a political party.
- ➔ Some of us worship our careers.

The definition of worship is: *“The reverent love and devotion accorded to a deity, an idol, or a sacred object.”*¹⁵ Many people, even Christians, equate worship with a 60 or 75-minute service on Sunday morning. (Please nothing more than 90 minutes!) And that service certainly is worship. But worship is much more than that. **God is not confined to a building or a time frame, and neither is our worship.** Worship describes who we are 24/7. If to be worshipful means having expressions of reverence and adoration for a deity, doesn’t that mean we are, or at least can be, worshipping at all times? Harold Best says, *“We do not go to church to worship, but, already at worship, we join our brothers and sisters in continuing those actions that should have been going on—privately, family, or even corporately – all week long.”*¹⁶

Paul expresses this idea in Romans 12:1. He writes, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to **offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.**" He's saying that our whole lives are worship. Whenever we reflect the love of God, we are worshipping Him! Martin Luther once said, "*The worship of God... should be free at table, in private rooms, downstairs, upstairs, at home, abroad, in all places, by all peoples, at all times.*"¹⁷

What they are all saying is that worship happens when I'm around others and when I'm alone. In public and in private. Worship happens when I'm out with friends and when I'm at work. It happens when I'm watching TV, when I'm watching sports, and when I'm online. Worship ought to happen at church with others and at home on my own. No matter where you are or what you are doing you have the potential to be ascribing worth, praise, and glory to God. Everything you do could be an act of worship. Look at your life this way and it will start affecting the everyday decisions that you make! Pretty soon you'll be asking yourself, "If I'm worshipping God right now, would I do this? Would I go here? Would I buy this? What would I do here?" And if you find yourself asking those questions more often, you are on the right track!

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#REDLETTERCHALLENGE

The Psalms are a great place to see the heart of worship. Psalm 96 is a favorite of mine.

PSALM 96

1 Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.

2 Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day.

3 Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

4 For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods.

5 For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens.

6 Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and glory are in his sanctuary.

7 Ascribe to the Lord, all you families of nations, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

8 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts.

9 Worship the Lord in the splendor of

his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.

10 Say among the nations, "The Lord reigns." The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.

11 Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it.

12 Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.

13 Let all creation rejoice before the Lord, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness.



OUR THIRD DISCIPLINE... IS TO WORSHIP GOD. PEOPLE WORSHIP DIFFERENTLY, BUT MOST PEOPLE THINK OF MUSIC WHEN THEY THINK OF WORSHIP.

Music can help usher us into God's presence and feel things in ways that otherwise we would not. Your Challenge for today is to listen to worship music. Here are a few ways you could do this:

- 1 Go for a walk and listen to praise/worship music
- 2 Turn off your phone and computer and read through some Psalms with background music playing
- 3 Listen to praise/worship music free from distraction
- 4 Rather than listening to politics, sports, or the top 40, tune into your local Christian radio station on your drives around town

If you need help finding great Christian worship music, I would recommend any of the following: Elevation Worship, Hillsong Worship, Bethel Music, Jesus Culture, and Passion.

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