

# Disciple: What It Means to Follow Jesus

## 360 Worship, Part 2 \* Colossians 3:16-17

### Introduction

Go ahead and take your Bibles and turn with me to Colossians 3. I want to begin by warning you that the message today is going to be a little bit different. That's because in large part it will be about how to apply last week's message. And so instead of looking at one primary text we will be all over the Old Testament and the New Testament, seeking to learn how to worship Christ in all of life.

You may remember from last Sunday that the primary purpose of this series is to equip us to be disciples and to make disciples, not just in theory, but in the day to day of life. That being the case, I'd strongly encourage you to take good notes this morning. We have put together an extensive outline for the message in the handout, and I believe it will be very helpful for you to have this information written down for yourself and those you will be discipling.

So, let's begin today by reviewing our definition of a disciple that we introduced last week. We said that:

*A disciple is someone who **worships** Christ in all of life, lives in **community** with other disciples, and lives on **mission** to make more disciples.*

Now, once again, there are three key words in this definition: worship, community, and mission. When we think of being a disciple and making disciples, we want to think about worship, community, and mission.

Last week we discussed the fact that a disciple is someone who worships Christ in all of life. I called this 360 worship, because to follow Christ means to worship him in everything we do. In the weeks ahead we will consider the other aspects of being a disciple, community and mission, but before we do I want to discuss the five essential elements of worship. By this I mean that while we can and should worship no matter what we are doing, there are certain things that we *must do* in order to worship. Think about it this way. Last week I gave an illustration of how to worship through hunting. However, I would never say that you have to hunt in order to worship. If you are a disciple and you are going to hunt, you can and should worship Christ. But if you don't hunt that doesn't mean you aren't worshipping. The elements of worship I am going to share with you today, however, are things that you must engage in if you are going to worship Christ in all of life. They are what we might call the non-negotiables of

worship. I hope you understand how significant this is. Worship is what we were created for, worship is what we were saved for, and worship is what we will do for all eternity. Since this is the case, it's absolutely crucial that we understand how to do it.

## **5 Essential Elements of Worship**

### **1. Scripture (Colossians 3:16-17)**

So, the first essential element of worship is Scripture. Take a look with me at Colossians 3:16-17:

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. [17] And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:16-17 ESV)*

Let's start at the end of this passage and work backwards. In verse 17 Paul is telling us the exact same thing that we saw last week in John 4, Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 10, and the first chapter of this letter. Whatever we do, whether we are saying it or doing it, we are to do for God's glory. That's what it means to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. Everything we do should be done in a way that will bring him honor and make him look good. Here in this passage we see that in order for this to be the case, God's Word has to dwell richly in us.

The word *dwell* means to take up residence. So, let me ask this morning, has God's Word taken up residence in your life? Does it live in you and you in it? Or is God's Word only an occasional visitor in your life? Perhaps just something that stays for a little while now and then?

Paul also says that the Word should not only take up residence in our lives, but it should do so richly, which means abundantly or extravagantly. So, let me ask another question, does the Word of God have prominence in your life? Is there an abundance of it in your heart and mind? Can you say that God's Word is living in you *extravagantly*?

Brothers and sisters, if we are going to worship Christ in all of life, we have to immerse ourselves in God's Word. That's because it is Scripture that reveals whom God is and what he has done. I tried to make this point clear last week, so I won't belabor it now, but we have to understand that our ability to worship is directly related to our understanding of who we are worshiping and why we are doing so. And the only way

that we come to this understanding is through His Word; because that is the only place it is found.

So, since dwelling richly in Scripture is so essential, let's talk a little bit about how to do it. How do we dwell richly in Scripture?

- **Personal study (Psalm 1:1-2)**

First, we need to study it personally. Psalm 1:1-2 tells us this:

*Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; [2] but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2 ESV)*

Plain and simple, we need to give ourselves to regular, personal study of God's Word. This could be in the morning before the day gets started, at our lunch break, before we go to bed at night, or even better yet, all three. Regardless, we all need to spend regular, personal time in God's Word. The point of Psalm 1 is that we need a regular intake of Scripture so that it is constantly on our mind. Hopefully you see how this works. When God's Word is constantly on our minds it will constantly point us to worship Him.

- **Small Group Study (Colossians 3:16)**

Second, we need to study God's Word with others. I take this from a number of places in Scripture, most notably from Colossians 3:16. Hopefully you are still there:

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom.*

The context of the *in you* is in our relationships. In other words, let the word dwell richly within the personal relationships you have. And how does that happen? It happens as we teach and admonish one another in the Word. Let me take a moment here to deconstruct a misunderstanding that many of us have. Many of us think that there are only a select few people who can teach in the church. Not so. According to Paul in verse 16 we are all called to teach one another. We are all called to be in relationships with other believers where we are teaching and admonishing one another in God's Word. That is what disciple making is all about. It's about being in relationships where you help one another grow through the Word.

I'd like to point to a very helpful reference if you want to get started on either a personal and/or a small group Bible study. It's *One to One Bible Reading* by David Helm. It's a very simple little book that will teach you how to get started in personal or small group Bible study. We have a number of them available at the table in the foyer, and would be more than happy to purchase more if we run out this morning. I'd also like to tell you that if you need someone to help you get started with this, we have a number of Elders and staff members who would be very willing to sit down with you and help you get started. All you need to do is grab hold of one of our leaders after the service or contact us during the week and we would be happy to spend some time equipping you to do this.

- **Corporate Study (1 Timothy 4:2)**

Ok, the third way that we dwell richly in God's Word is by devoting ourselves to corporate study. Another word for corporate study is preaching. We need to devote ourselves to the preaching of God's Word.

The New Testament letters of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus are known as the pastoral epistles, because in them Paul gives two young men the job description of a pastor. And if you were to sit down and read these letters you would undoubtedly come away with the understanding that the number one thing a pastor is called to do is preach the Word of God. For instance, 1 Timothy 4:2:

*Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. (2 Timothy 4:2 ESV)*

So you got that? What is my primary responsibility as a pastor at Harmony? It is to preach the Word of God. But let me ask you, what does this mean a primary responsibility is for all of you? I would suggest that it is to give yourselves to listening, learning, and applying what is preached. I guess my point is that what we are doing right now is a big deal. And not just for me, but for all of us. When we come together and open God's Word, we should come expectantly looking for what we can learn about God and how we can respond to what we learn. A big part of dwelling richly in God's Word is actively participating in its corporate proclamation.

## **2. Prayer (Ephesians 6:18-20)**

Ok, lot's more I can say about this, but that will have to suffice for now. We need to move on to the second element of worship, and that is prayer. For this, let's turn to Ephesians 6, where we are going to jump right into Paul's instruction about putting on the whole armor of God. As part of this he says in verse 18:

*Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, [19] and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, [20] for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. (Ephesians 6:18-20 ESV)*

Now, I think that most of us would admit that there is nothing we need more but engage in less than prayer. I can raise my own hand and say *guilty as charged*. But I think one of the reasons for our struggle is that we make it much more complicated than it should be. Here in Ephesians 6, Paul gives us some simple instruction on how to pray.

- **Pray all the time.**

One, we should pray all the time. You can't read verse 18 and not get this because Paul uses the word *all* four times. By this however, he doesn't mean bowing our knees, closing our eyes, folding our hands and spending hours alone with God. It's not possible for us to pray in that manner all or even most of the time. What he means is that we need to always be God-conscious, that we need to look at everything that happens in our lives in relation to God. So, when we wake up in the morning, we intentionally turn our first thoughts to him and thank him for another day to be alive. And then when we deal with the stress of getting our kids ready for school we pray for patience and wisdom. And then as we drive to work and see a crude sign that someone has constructed because they are angry that a stop sign has been taken down, we pray for their salvation. And then when we go to work and things don't go well, we consciously ask the Lord for help. And when we get home at night after a rough day we ask the Lord to bless our family and give us the strength to minister to them. And I could go on and on here, but I think you get the picture. Praying all the time means that we have a constant God-focus and are continually consciously interacting with him. That's what it means to pray all the time.

- **Pray specifically.**

However, not only should we pray all the time, but we should also have times where we pray specifically. By this I mean that we should set aside specific times to pray for specific things. That's what the word *supplication* refers to. In verse 19-20 Paul instructs us to specifically pray for other believers and for the spread of the gospel. In other words, we should pray for specific people, specific events, and specific outcomes. I think when you take these two things together it means that our prayer lives need to be both spontaneous and planned.

Now, as I said earlier, there is perhaps nothing that we struggle with more in the Christian life than prayer. And so let me give you a suggestion for how to grow in this area. I would suggest that you start small. I think one of the reasons we fail to pray, as we should is that we think that unless we pray for long periods of time we are failures. I would simply encourage you to start by committing to pray for just a few minutes at the beginning of the day and at the end of the day. For starters this could even be just 2-3 minutes. Once you have that down, start building from there. But even more importantly, the best thing you can do is to begin to turn your thoughts to God repeatedly throughout the day. Listen, prayer in its essence is simply talking to God. There is no magic formula or special words to say. Just simply talk to him about the situation you are currently in and ask for help. It can be as simple as 'Lord, help me right now.' Five words. Real simple. And while our prayer lives can and should include much more than this, I think you will find that once you start conversing with God spontaneously, you will see that it becomes much easier to have extended times of specific prayer, because prayer will become just a natural part of your life.

Ultimately, prayer is essential to worship because it shows that we are relying on God and not on ourselves. Our prayer lives are a great indicator of whom we are worshiping. When we pray we show we are worshiping God, and when we don't, well here we are again; we show that we are really worshiping ourselves.

### **3. Stewardship**

All right, the third essential element of prayer is stewardship. In a real sense, worshiping Christ is all about stewardship. It's about understanding that everything we are and everything we have are gifts from God to be used for his glory. Now, not too long ago I did a message on stewardship and therefore I am only going to hit the highlights this morning. If you want a more in depth look at this element of worship you can pick up a copy of that message at Harmony Central after the service, or you can view it online at our church website.

In summary, the Bible talks about stewardship mostly in relation to time, talent, and treasure.

- **Time (Ephesians 5:15-16)**

First, Ephesians 5:15-16 tells us this:

*Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, [16] making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. (Ephesians 5:15-16 ESV)*

Stewarding time means that we recognize it has been given to us to bring as much glory to Jesus Christ as we can. This means that we have to regularly evaluate our use of time and make sure that we are investing ourselves in things that bring glory to God. An easy way to do this is to look at your calendar. Does your schedule reflect that you are worshiping Christ with your time?

- **Talent (1 Peter 4:10-11)**

Second, 1 Peter 4:10-11 tells us that we need to steward the gifts God has given us for His glory:

*As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: [11] whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:10-11 ESV)*

One of the things that is amazing to me about Harmony Bible Church is the number of gifts that God has given to this church. And I'm not talking about material gifts but *people* gifts. We have an amazingly gifted group of people at Harmony.

And let me encourage you, we need you to use your gift. Your gift is unique and the church body needs you to use it. If you aren't there is a hole not only in your worship but also in the ministry of the church. So, I encourage you to start using your gift today.

- **Treasure (Matthew 6:19-21)**

Third, Jesus tells us in Matthew 6 that we are to steward our treasure:

*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, [20] but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. [21] For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21 ESV)*

Here's the plain fact of the matter. The number one enemy of all of life worship is materialism; the insatiable desire for more stuff. The problem is that if stuff has our heart, God doesn't. You may remember last week we talked about worship being a matter of the heart and that we can't truly be worshiping God if he doesn't have it. Well, the primary thing that battles God for our heart is stuff. And so if we are going to

worship God and not stuff, we are going to have to fight this tendency and make sure to focus on giving rather than getting.

Let me tell you, if you want to do an evaluation of how you are doing with worshipping God in all of life, go home today and analyze your bank statement. Take a look at where your money is going. Your bank statement won't lie. It will tell you right where your heart is. Remember, a disciple is someone who worships Christ in all of life, and that includes worshipping with the resources he has given us, particularly with our time, talents, and perhaps most significantly, our treasure.

#### **4. Mission (Psalm 96:1-3)**

Ok, on to our fourth element of worship, and that is mission. By mission, I am referring to the mission Jesus has given us to make disciples. Now, since we have been talking a lot about this one and will continue to do so in the weeks ahead, I am just going to briefly touch on it. However, I do think it's tremendously important to recognize that mission is worship. Listen, one of the most important ways we worship Christ is by declaring how great he is to others. A few months ago when we sent the Martins back to PNG we looked at Psalm 96:

*Oh sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth! [2] Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. [3] Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples! (Psalm 96:1-3 ESV)*

In other words, if we truly are worshipping God in our hearts, it will naturally turn into witnessing about him with our lips. If we are passionate about him here (heart), it will result in us speaking to others about him here (mouth).

I hope you see where I am going with this and why it is such a big issue; if we never talk to others about why Jesus Christ is worthy of their worship, could it be because we aren't worshipping him ourselves? That is something very important to think about.

#### **5. Corporate worship**

Ok, one last one. The fifth essential element of worship is corporate worship. And we are going to spend a little more time on this one since it so core to our function as a church.

To be clear, by corporate worship I mean what we do when we gather as a church – what we are doing right now. In fact, here is a simple definition of corporate worship:



*Corporate worship is the gathering of the church to respond to who God is and what he has done through preaching, singing, giving, and serving.*

So, let's take a few minutes to break down this definition so that we have a good understanding of the purpose of what we normally call Sunday morning services.

First, corporate worship is the gathering of the church. As we saw a few weeks ago, by definition the church is the group of individuals that God has called out to be his people. This means that the primary emphasis of our services is believers worshipping God together. This doesn't mean that nonbelievers aren't welcome, because they certainly are. In fact, you will note that in almost every message we give a passionate gospel presentation. But it does mean that our focus is upon worshipping God together as a church.

Second, the purpose for our worship gatherings is to respond to who God is and what he has done. This means in a real sense that God is the audience. Did you catch that? The purpose of corporate worship isn't to entertain or to put on a show for those who have gathered, but rather for God's people to respond to who he is and what he has done. Worship is not something you observe, but something you do. The people here on the stage are not performers they are prompters. The purpose of our worship team is to prompt you in worshipping God.

Finally, the primary ways that we engage in corporate worship are preaching, singing, giving, and serving. All four of these are included in our services every week. Since we have already talked about preaching, giving, and serving, I won't hit those again. But I do want to talk a little bit about singing. Why do we sing in worship gatherings? Have you ever thought about that?

For one reason, we sing because we are commanded to. We have an entire book of the Bible, in fact the longest book of the Bible, devoted wholly to singing. The Psalms were Israel's songbook and many of them command us to sing praises to God. Not only that, but the NT repeatedly tells us to sing. For example, Ephesians 5:19:

*Addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart. (Ephesians 5:19 ESV)*

Another reason we sing is that it is the most natural way to express praise and thankfulness to God. By this I mean that when we are glad in our hearts towards God, it will most naturally flow out of our lips in praise to him. Once again, worship goes from head to heart to lips.

Now, I have to say that it seems to me that many of us think that singing is an optional form of worship. And I say this because I look out at the congregation during our singing time every week and see a frightening number of people, mostly men, who aren't moving their lips at all. Now, I recognize that a popular excuse is 'I don't have a good voice' but I have to wonder how many of you sing to the radio in your car or are more than willing to scream your lungs out while watching your favorite sports team play. The truth of the matter is we don't sing not because we can't but because we have a worship problem. When we worship here (head) and here (heart) it will come out here (lips). Listen, it might not be pretty, and the Lord knows mine isn't, but Scripture doesn't say to make a beautiful noise, it says to make a joyful noise.

Let me say one more thing about singing; I listened to a portion of a message this week by Alistair Begg where he said that he knew that the men in his church had been converted when they started singing. That they would start out coming with their wives and not really paying attention, and then after a while they would start perking up and listening to his messages, but he knew a real work had started in their hearts when they started singing. And men, I am not saying that if you don't sing you aren't saved, but I am saying if you don't sing you probably have a head and/or heart problem. And I know that for some of you its about carrying on the tough guy persona, but you know what, one of the toughest men who ever lived, a man who fought battles his entire life, a man who killed a bear and a lion and thousands of men without a gun, also wrote a majority of those songs that we have in our Bibles. So, it appears from the Scripture that tough guys do sing.

Now, we are drawing to a close here, but I'd like to take a moment to address a few things related to our corporate worship. Let's call them suggestions for improving your corporate worship.

One, be on time. Listen, we worship corporately for about 90 minutes a week. 90 minutes, that's all. And think about what we are doing. We are worshiping the God of the universe. What could possibly be more important than that? So, make it a priority to be on time. And not only be on time, but be in the auditorium on time. Some of you like to hang out and talk in the foyer at the beginning of the service. Let me say we are all for you fellowshiping with one another. That's great. But you can do that after the service for as long as you want. You only get to worship the God of the universe with your church family for 90 minutes. Use all 90 minutes of that to the max.

Second, bring your worship with you. By this I am suggesting that you prepare your heart in advance for corporate worship. Spend time in prayer before you come. Read the passage for the message in the days leading up to Sunday. We put the passage out every week on Thursday, which gives you several days to do so. If you come with your

family, have spiritual conversations in the car on your way here. Perhaps the best thing to do is to attend a class during our Discipleship Hour. Whatever you do, be ready when you walk in those doors back there to let loose and give all you've got in worshiping the Lord during our time together.

Third, and perhaps the most important, forget yourself, including your preferences and problems and focus upon reflecting back to the Lord the majesty and splendor of who He is. Make corporate worship about him and not about yourself.

Once again, these are suggestions, not commands. But I think if you practice them you will find your personal experience of worship more fulfilling, more God honoring, and more helpful to your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Ok, one more thing. Today we have looked at the five essential elements of worship. Every single one of them is necessary to truly worship Christ in all of life. However, there is one more thing that is essential to each of these five elements. There is one thing that makes each of these elements effective. And it's actually not a thing, it's a person. That person is the Holy Spirit. He is the one who enables us to worship Christ through the five elements that we have studied today. Without Him working in and through us, we cannot worship. It's impossible. On the other hand, when he is present, we can be absolutely sure that worship will happen. You know why? Because that is the Spirit's job, that's what he does. He works in and through us to bring glory to Jesus Christ.

You know, I have heard comments in recent days that some of you feel like you can't do this disciple stuff. And you know what? You are right. You can't do it, not on your own anyway. None of us can. But guess what? The Spirit can. And he will if we seek His presence and rely on his strength. Let me finish today with an encouraging word from Jesus about the Spirit's presence in our lives. Jesus says this in Luke 11:

*And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. [10] For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. [11] What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; [12] or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? [13] If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"*  
(Luke 11:9-13 ESV)

The point is this. All of us, despite our sin, like to give our kids good gifts. I know that it is one of my favorite things to do. Nothing better than to see the delight on my child's face when they receive something they really want. And Jesus is telling us here that

God loves to give good gifts to his kids way more than we do. And so when we really desire the Spirit, and ask for God to have him work in our lives, he will readily answer yes.

Is being a disciple hard? Yes. Is worshiping Christ in all of life difficult? Absolutely. But is it possible? No doubt about it. If we will seek the Spirit's presence, God will give him to work in our lives, and when he does it will result in great honor to Christ and great blessings for us.

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