

## 5 Commitments to Change Your Life Forever

### #1 The Commitment to Worship Hebrews 10

September 8, 2019 Bob Szoke

How many times have you wished you could change your life? Be realistic, and think for just a moment about how dissatisfied you are with things.

- Your job isn't what you want to be doing, or if it is, you aren't getting paid what you think you should be paid.
- Your house isn't where you dreamed it would be located, it's smaller than what you think you deserve, it needs work done on it by competent people, and it seems like it will never be paid off.
- Your friends bring you a sense of joy, but also a sense of dissatisfaction. While they seem to understand, sometimes they just don't. What you wish you could tell them you dare not mention for fear of what might come.
- Your education and the field in which you work don't match, and sometimes it seems so futile to have studied so hard only to be responsible for emptying the trash.

Most of us can probably say, *"If things were different, then my life would be different."* But there's a nagging frustration that there's little we can do to change the rest of our lives.

*What if I told you that I know a way to change your life so that you will find more satisfaction in who you are as a follower of Jesus?*

- You will be able to not only find but have peace in the midst of storms.
  - You will be able to have joy when all around you seems to be full of bitterness and pain.
  - You will be able to live, and even put up with some of the world's worst garbage and some of life's most difficult moments, and not quit.

**your  
life can  
change**

***Your life can change.** Over these next weeks, that's the theme and life's great question of "how to change the rest of your life" can and will be answered. **The way to change your life forever will be found in the commitments we make to the Lord. Today, the first of those commitments is the commitment to be a worshiper.***



Worship is one of those things that's always been attached with religious activity, and sometimes I think we use the word as if everyone knows what it means and it means the same to everyone. I don't think it does.

- For example, is worship coming on Sunday, singing a few songs, listening to a sermon, a few prayers and staying for maybe an hour or so? I don't think so.
- Or is worship something we are just supposed to do, and put in our time, and do our duty, and then that's what it's all about? I don't think so.
- What is worship? If we are going to make a commitment to be a people who worship, and if worshipping God will change our lives forever, then we need to know.

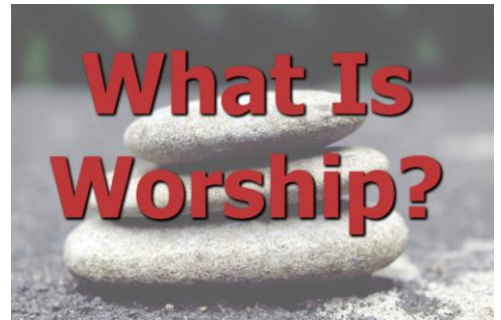
**What is worship? Here's what others have said that I think greatly answers the question:**

- *Worship is anything you do that declares the worth of the Lord, which deepens your relationship with Jesus, and urges others to follow after him.*
- *Worship can be very active, with singing, fellowship, and public church services, but there comes a point where our worship must include being still, and meditating on God's word.*
- *Ronald Allen declared that the essence of worship is the celebration of God.*
- *Worship should not be a painful ritual that takes place week after week. Genuine worship is alive, ever changing, and an always challenging experience where we discover more about the Lord of our lives. The more we know about him, the more we can celebrate about him. The more we celebrate, the more like him we become.*

[https://www.faithgateway.com/worship/#.XW\\_NyyhKhPZ](https://www.faithgateway.com/worship/#.XW_NyyhKhPZ)

- *William Barclay: The true, the genuine worship is when man, through his spirit, attains to friendship and intimacy with God. True and genuine worship is not to come to a certain place; it is not to go through a certain ritual or liturgy; it is not even to bring certain gifts. True worship is when the spirit, the immortal and invisible part of man, speaks to and meets with God, who is immortal and invisible.*
- *Louie Giglio: Worship is our response, both personal and corporate, to God for who He is, and what He has done; expressed in and by the things we say and the way we live.*
- *John Stott: Christians believe that true worship is the highest and noblest activity of which man, by the grace of God, is capable.*

<https://www.experiencingworship.com/articles/general/2012-6-what-is-worship.html>



What's I'd like to do is just reflect for a moment about worship. **Our problem is that we limit worship to a time, a place, a few actions, and that seems to be awkward.** Is that all that

worship is about? **Certainly not!** Let's look briefly at the worship life of a few people and draw some conclusions about worship.

**\*Moses.** Of all the things that can be said about Moses, perhaps that which helps us understand the worship life of Moses is **faithfulness**. In **Numbers 12:6-8** faithfulness is the distinguishing mark of Moses above other prophets.

- **“When there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, reveal myself to them in visions, I speak to them in dreams.  
7 But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house.  
8 With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. ...**
- **Faithfulness and humility characterize Moses**, and both of these traits have a lot to do with us making a commitment to being worshipers. Faithfulness and humility must be a part of our lives if we are to be worshipers.

**\*David**, the great King of Israel. David was a worshiper. It is known about David, that he was **a man after God's own heart**. It's important to connect the heart with worship.

- **Psalm 63:1-5 O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.  
2 I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.  
3 Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.  
4 I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.  
5 My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.**
- This is David's response toward God. It's about an authentic heart that comes before God, regardless of how good or bad the situation is. It's about praise, about loving the Lord, about being in a sense of great humility in the presence of God's power and glory.
- So here's something else we must know and practice in regards to worship. **The call is for our hearts to be greatly involved.**

**\*Jesus.** **“The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.” — John 4:23**

- Worship is not about an isolated act we might do, but about **what the heart is doing in response to who God is**.
- Worship is our response to who God is and it's not limited to a time slot on Sunday morning.

As we approach this very idea of worship, let me also add another this from an author: Our greatest rebellion against God is that we have chosen to not worship him. Underneath all of the corruption and brokenness of this world, there is a misplacement of worship. **Romans 1:23-25** describes man as **“exchanging the glory of the immortal God”** and **“worshipping the creature rather than the Creator”**. <http://www.thetravelingteam.org/articles/worship>

**We were created to be worshipers.** A commitment to being a worshiper will change the rest of our lives. **Let me encourage you to make a note of this: some ways our lives will change forever because of worship. How worship will change us!**

- We’ll have an answer to “how we can grow closer to Christ.”
- We’ll know how to develop the Christ like character we desire.
- We’ll know about the pathway of discipleship.
- We’ll know why we were created.
- We’ll become a more thankful people.
- We’ll know that what goes on in our hearts is what really matters in worship, not if the coffee is good, the sermon too long, the chairs uncomfortable, or the parking spot we got that day was miserable.
- We’ll know that worship here is preparation for worship in heaven.
- We’ll be able to discern what’s godly and what’s not.
- We’ll learn the valuable lessons of sacrifice and service.
- This, and so much more! This is what we can gain, and how our lives can change forever, if we become committed to being worshipers.



**Before I read the text for today,** I want to spend a moment and talk about why I’ll be using the Book of Hebrews as my text this morning. **The book of Hebrews is a book designed to teach us about the superiority of Christ in all things.** Hebrews shows Jesus as



**superior to angels, superior to Moses, superior to the Law, superior to the Sabbath, superior to Melchizedek who served as a priest, superior to Aaron and the high priestly system, superior to any High Priest that ever lived, superior in opening the way for people to come to God, superior to any sacrifice that had ever been offered, His blood superior to any blood that was offered with any sacrifice, etc. Christ is superior in all things.** The way to

the Father is through Him, the way to find forgiveness of sins is through Him. The way to worship is through Him. **Jesus is superior.**

Our text today begins with that **great summary in review** of the superiority of Jesus as seen in Hebrews. The one word **“therefore”** reflects on all the superiority of Christ that has been detailed, and begins with the fascinating words which I will now read.

**Hebrews 10:19-25 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.**

From this text, I want to see **4 ways to become more committed as worshipers, and change our lives forever.**

**#1: How to become more committed as a worshiper and change your life forever: Grasp the Privileges** (22) **let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water**



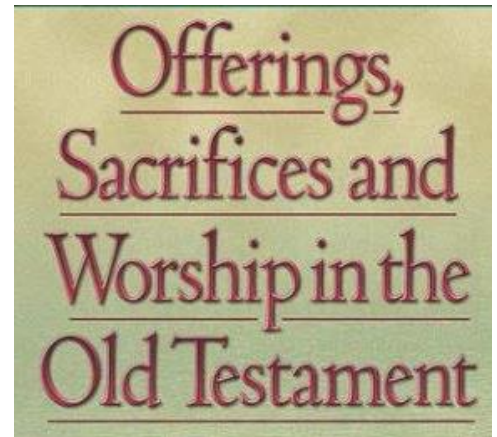
**Illustration:** We are a privileged people, and often times, we tend to forget that. Take for example the food that is available to us on a daily basis. While many in the world are starving, we can actually go to our refrigerators and choose what we want to eat, and if there isn't anything there that suits us, we will complain or get something from fast food. Yet, looking at the statistics about world hunger indicates that easily 11% of the world's population suffers from chronic malnutrition and in countries where there is war and strife, those numbers easily increase. While we are busy saying, **“What do I want to eat?”** millions are asking, **“What will I eat?”**

The reason I begin here with this idea of grasping the privilege is to emphasize the truth that **we have no idea how privileged we are that we not only get to worship, but that we have been given this privilege to be carried out with confidence.**

1. A quick review of the Old Testament worship would benefit us, because most of us are unaware of what worship was all about.

- a. For example, in the Old Testament, the main prohibition was to **“stay away” from the Holy of Holies**. The Old Testament Law said that only the High Priest could enter that place, and then only once a year. It was off limits to the ordinary people.
- b. Worship was not like how we do it, and might assume. Some references from the New Testament will help us grasp this concept of how different worship was as compared to the privileges that we have in Christ.

- i. Reading the Scripture carefully, we can see that as far as the Temple worship was concerned, **only men were allowed in certain places**. For women, there was an open area referred to as the Court of Women. It was this area where women could not go beyond in the Temple. As worshipers, they weren't allowed the freedom men were, and then the men were told to stay away from Holy of Holies. Only the priests, and then only the high priests could enter that place.



- ii. **When one offered a sacrifice, there was no forgiveness of sins. Hebrews 10:4** says, **because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins**. In Christ, though we have forgiveness.
- iii. As far as sacrifices were concerned, **Hebrews 9:28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. What no sacrifice could do, Christ did through his death on the cross.** Sacrifices were offered continually as acts of worship, but as **Hebrews 10:1-4 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. 2 If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. 3 But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, 4 because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Without Jesus, we wouldn't understand the privileges we have.**
- iv. **Hebrews 9:11-14 When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. 12 He did not enter**

*by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. 14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! We get to worship God without all the sacrifices, wondering if we are doing it right. We get to worship God and not worry about being ceremonially clean! What a privilege!*

c. All of this, and so much more just to remind us of the wonderful privilege we have to come into God's presence because of the blood of Christ. It's a privilege that was unknown before, but now is ours!

2. **Grasp the privilege**, as Scripture says, we move boldly into the presence of God. (vs 19)

**GRASP**

a. **We come boldly before God because of Jesus.** The word "**boldness**" here in the text does not really capture the entire meaning of the original word. Boldness puts the emphasis on how we feel. We feel bold. We do not fear. We do not have inhibitions. And that is certainly part of the meaning, but the emphasis in the original is on the authorization, the right that we have, the reality of our being welcomed into God's house. We can have confidence and boldness only because we have the authorization. It has been given to us. We have a ticket, as it were, to come into the presence of God. We did not sneak in some back way. We fit. We belong. We are not out of place in God's presence.

<http://www.prca.org/resources/sermons/reading/reformed-witness-hour/item/4004-our-greatest-privilege>

b. **We are invited to come into God's presence, not because we are worthy, but because of Jesus.** The eternal invitation is extended to us to come into the Most Holy of Holies, a place we would never be able to go.

i. *What was the Holiest? And what was in there? The Holiest was the place where God dwelt with His people in the tabernacle and later in the temple. In the Holiest was the ark of the covenant, which symbolized the presence of God with His people. And the Old Testament saints did not have access into the Holiest. There were consequences for those who dared to try to go behind the veil. You remember Uzzah, who touched the Ark as it shook on the ox cart, the Ark that belonged in the Most Holy Place. Or, you remember Uzziah, the king who usurped the work of the priests and tried to go in and offer incense in the*

Holy Place and he was smitten with leprosy.

<http://www.prca.org/resources/sermons/reading/reformed-witness-hour/item/4004-our-greatest-privilege>

- ii. Think about this for a moment. The High Priest, previously, was the only one who could go there, and he had to be of the family of Aaron, and he had to be a certain age, and he had to wear certain clothes, and he had to go on behalf of the entire Jewish nation.
- iii. **Not so with us. We are invited to “come on in” to the presence of God because of the blood of Jesus,** through the way which he opened for us through his body.

c. **We aren’t told to go away, but rather to come into His presence.**

- i. And, here’s where we grasp some of those things that will help change our lives forever!
- ii. It’s a privilege to know that **otherwise, we wouldn’t be welcome in God’s presence because of our sin.** Otherwise, because of our obnoxious, rude, arrogant, and often times disgusting lifestyles, we wouldn’t be welcome anywhere. But, through Christ, we understand that He receives us as we are, to make us as we should be.

d. **Grasping this privilege** is something we need to think about for a moment.

- i. Is it the more privileged we are, the more we will take advantage of it, or is it that we allow that which is privileged to become mundane and ignore its importance?

3. **Grasping the privilege begins with what I can best call movement in the right direction.**

**Verse 22 says, “let us draw near to God...”** and that requires **movement** on our part.

**GRASP**

a. I asked myself this question: **“What causes us to typically to move spiritually closer to God?”** Some of the answers I thought of include:

- i. Sickness which is debilitating. We don’t see an answer, a cure, of the suffering is terrible. Sickness will move us closer to God.
- ii. Death will move us closer to God. Again, when one’s world is shattered and torn apart by death, that will bring one closer to God.
- iii. Disaster will move people closer to God.
- iv. Heartache, loss, and feelings of dejection and scorn often times move people closer to God.

b. But what about if none of those were the reasons we moved closer to God but just a desire to know him more, a desire to become more committed in our worship? **What if we decided today that it’s not “what can God do for me,” that I**



want to address, but “a sense of gratitude for what God has already done for me in Christ” that will bring me as a worshiper?

- c. What if gratitude became our primary reason to become a worshiper? I believe it would change the rest of our lives.
  - i. **Let me encourage you to try something.** When you wake in the morning, ask God to make you a more thankful person for that day. Thank God for what is in front of us, regardless of what time it is in the morning.
4. Grasping the privilege of worship that is ours is a great way to become more committed and change your life forever. **It’s not “I have to worship,” but “I get to worship.” That attitude change will change the rest of your life.**

**#2: How to become more committed as a worshiper and change your life forever: Hold Onto the Hope (23) Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.**

**Illustration:** Good luck charms people hold onto. Isn’t it amazing the things people cling to and hope they bring good luck? (some sense of hope). I checked on the internet, and one can buy a good luck charm (buy something to give you hope), something to hold onto in order to give hope, and one can pay most any amount. It’s amazing the concepts of hope people hang onto, and if you doubt that, just watch when people buy their lottery tickets. Some people have some crazy ideas. Here’s a few:



- ... a student at Howard University in Washington, D.C., was temporarily working in her hometown of Houston. She was one of the eight lucky winners of the Win for Life instant game that pays \$1,000 a week for life. She says her mother had made her and her brothers put black-eyed peas in their pockets on New Year's Day. **Was it the black eyed peas that unknowingly gave her hope?**
- When you fill your car with gas, check out the numbers -- price and gallons -- on the pump. Use those digits on the ticket you buy at the gas station. **One’s hope is tied into the amount of gasoline one buys each week. Right??**
- If you take your temperature or take your blood pressure, play those numbers. Oh, this sounds great. **One’s hope is in his blood pressure and temperature. Wow!! Really?** <https://entertainment.howstuffworks.com/leisure/traditional-games/alternative-lottery-strategies-ga3.htm> It’s amazing what people hold onto or recognize as that which gives them hope.

1. The encouragement on how to change the rest of your life through worship isn't at all like buying a lottery ticket, but what those crazy things show is that we want to hold onto something in order to give us hope. **We are desperate people.** We want hope, and the ways we go about that seem bizarre if not senseless.
2. Hold onto the hope we profess, and the word used to tell how to hold onto that hope is to do it in an inflexible way.

## hold on

- a. **What's at stake is having a hope that is unmovable.** There are things in our lives that are immovable. Try as we might, we won't move them. A mountain, for example, is considered immovable. Take that same concept and link it to the kind of hope we are to have in Christ.
  - b. **A hope that is unshakable, unmovable, regardless of what life throws at us.**
  - c. **Illustration:** I remember when our son, Steve died. There were many who wondered why God would allow such a thing, a fine young man, serving Christ in a new church, potentially to reach a lot of people who were ready to give up on church. Why? And with that question, many, many, many left Impact. I really don't know how many people left, but if you are here and were from the beginning days of Impact, then you can testify that unless we hold onto hope, and hold it unswervingly, unflinchingly, and tightly, we'll give up. I remember being asked over and over by many, "why? Why did God allow that?" My answer is first of all, "I don't know." But secondly, "what good will it do in knowing? Will that change anything?" No, nothing changes. But hanging onto hope in Christ is all you got! But, that's enough!
3. Holding onto one's hope is that important.

## hold on

- a. **Holding onto hope enables us to worship, even when we have doubts, even when we don't have things figured out, even when we don't have all the answers to the situations around us.**
  - b. That's the story of the book of Job, and his example is that it's right and good to hold onto hope in God, regardless of what life throws at you. God is in control, always.
4. In essence, when we are holding onto the hope of Christ, we are holding onto His promises.
    - a. Let me ask the blunt question: **Have any of God's promises ever disappointed you?** Oh, you may have been disappointed because you wanted God to do something for you and he didn't do it, and you thought you understood His promises. But, it was your agenda that you were pursuing, not God's.

i. *Psalm 22:4,5 In you our fathers put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them. 5 They cried to you and were saved; in you they trusted and were not disappointed.*

b. *God has never disappointed us because of His promises.* And, let me take a moment to talk about those promises. One of my favorite illustrations at funerals of believers is the communion cup. At the funeral, I take a few moments and talk about the promises of Christ that we recall each time we take communion. Now that this loved one, a believer in Christ has died, all the promises of Christ are now fulfilled in this person's life, and I give that communion cup to the family as a token of the faith that was lived. No more is this cup needed to remind this person of the love, the redemption, the grace, the mercy, the boundlessness of God's greatness. All of those promises are now fulfilled.

5. *Holding onto hope enables us to be committed as worshipers.* Each time we gather, we focus on things like the love of God, His grace, His mercy, His great power for us. *As much as we might want to focus on our situations, worship draws us to focus on God's great love and care for us, and His Hope, which doesn't disappoint.*

**hold on**

a. *Our hearts need this.* The more we become committed to worshiping, the more we will keep His promises and the Hope He gives fresh in our hearts and minds. The more we come to understand the troubles of this world are nothing in comparison to the reward that God has for faithfulness now.

i. Even taking the *communion meal* ought to be a time of worship where we are clinging onto the hope, unswervingly. We may come from a situation where we feel defeated, run over, drained, empty and powerless. Yet, in the communion time is our opportunity to be refreshed by the power of God that is the greatest demonstration of power this world has ever seen, and it's a demonstration for us!

b. We might want to believe we are powerless, but texts in Scripture would remind us just the opposite:

i. *1 John 4:4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*

ii. *Romans 8:37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*

iii. *2 Timothy 1:7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.*

iv. Holding onto truth in unwavering ways is holding onto the hope we profess! Holding onto this hope, with faith in our hearts, *listening to God instead of*

**the world, enables us to approach worship, not as losers, but as rightful heirs, people with the special invitation to worship.**

- c. Holding onto hope, relentlessly, enables us to go through the storms of life, through the difficulties of situations, maybe even without the answers we think we need.
6. Hanging onto the hope can change your life forever! **We become more committed as worshipers when we hang onto hope, the hope which can and will change our lives forever.**

**#3: How to become more committed as a worshiper and change your life forever: Motivate Each Other to Serve Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.**

**Illustration:** Here's something to think about: What effect do you have on the people you hang out with? Do they want to be more and better, to live selfless and sacrificially, because they were with you? Do they desire to be more Christian or less by your presence? I'm not talking about your being preachy or "holier than thou" towards them. But by your humbly sharing of things you've done in service to Christ, or by urging your friends in ways that will help them grow ("Hey, how about if we do this or that thing?"), you can provoke them to love and good deeds. <https://www.adamhamilton.com/blog/provoking-one-another-to-love-and-good-deeds/#.XXAWIihKhPY> This is one way, as the author says, that we can provoke or stir one another to good works and love.



1. **To become more committed as a worshiper means we need to be involved in each other's lives**, helping one another change their lives forever too. In order to change your life forever, one needs to be a worshiper who is involved in the lives of others, helping them to change their lives forever too.
  - a. **Illustration (from a former youth minister)** I can still see one of the great provokers in my life. I met her on a work trip to Kentucky. Our youth group was working on a woman's house, but it wasn't very much fun. We hated where we were. Porches and front yards littered with old cars, sofas and garbage. We hated it and we began to make fun of the way those people lived and we began to act like a group who would rather be doing something else. We picked on each other. We argued, we made sarcastic jabs every chance we got. In other words we acted just like the older people in our church when they lost sight of who they were. Eventually the woman who owned the house we were working on came out with tears streaming down her face. She sat us down in the grass in front the house and she stood there, shaking her

stubby finger at us and speaking through the few teeth she had left. I mean to tell you she laid into us like I've never seen before or since. She railed at us, "What's wrong with you kids? Don't you know? Don't you know I've been praying for a long time for someone to show up and help me? Don't you know how badly my kids need to have bedrooms and a bathroom that works? I've been praying for a long time. Don't you know you are the answer to my prayers? Why don't you treat each other like the answer to prayer? From that moment on, everything changed. Instead of obligation, the work became true mission. Instead of tearing each other down, we built each other up. It was amazing. When someone tells you that you are the answer to a prayer, everything changes. It provokes you.

<https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/provoke-one-another-dave-clark-sermon-on-christian-love-171920>

2. Motivating each other to serve is another of the ways in which we become committed to being worshipers. **Motivating each other to serve is how we keep worship from being an isolated thing we only do on Sunday.** It's much, much, much more than just that. Motivating each other for service is how we become committed as worshipers and that we don't live our life of Christ in isolation, but in close proximity to one another.

#### **#4: How to become more committed as a worshiper and change your life forever:**

**Prioritize Worship With One Another, Not Alone.** *Hebrews 10:25* **Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.**

**Illustration:** Why your children need to be in family pictures. I'm sure you all remember loading the kids up in a car and taking them for family pictures. What a joy!



(Well, probably not at the time.) What can happen when on such a wonderful expedition with younger children includes maybe that one child has already gotten dirty the shirt he was to wear, another child has spilled food on a good pair of pants, and somehow you lost a shoe. Family pictures are important though, and at the time, the kids may not see how important it is, but they will. As children grow, they need to see

that they are part of a family, part of a group of people who live together, grow old together, struggle with decisions and priorities. In fact, let me say this: God prefers to see us in families, in community, and not just as individuals.



1. Paul will talk at length about the important roles of each part of the body, and how the eye can't say to the hand, "I don't need you." We do need each other and the roles we have as we see we need each other are critical.
2. The role here is to help others see that they too need to be with others who gather in the name of Christ for worship. In fact, **the encouragement is to constantly be encouraging one another to assemble together.**

a. Let me tell you about **a theory I've long had.** The theory is this: I believe that when

**WE NEED YOU, YOU NEED US**

many people come to church, and not just with older people, they come to church and need to "check in" with a circle of friends. If for some reason someone isn't present that day, there's just something that was missing.

b. Church is also a social world for most of us, and that's not a bad thing. It's about our friendships, our woes, our needs and our victories. Who better should understand the difficulties of life other than those who are also living those struggles?

3. We need to become accountable to each other so that we don't give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing.
  - a. Why do people stop meeting together? There are a variety of reasons, and there's no need to rehash those.
  - b. What's important though is how to encourage one another.
4. **Here's some way to encourage one another so that they too can become worshipers,** not missing when believers assemble:

a. *If an encouraging thought comes to mind, share it! It may not have the same effect if you wait. Don't let shyness hold you back. Instead, form a new habit: "Encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today..." **Hebrews 3:13***

b. *When you introduce someone, add a few words of praise for the person's abilities, accomplishments, about how they've helped you or about the nature of your relationship. It's encouraging to be praised in front of others.\**

c. *When someone is discouraged or hurting, offer specific, practical help. If you ask, "How can I help?" the person might be at a loss to answer. It's better to ask, "Would it help if I..." or say, "I would like to..."*

d. *Update your address book. In a digital world, there's nothing like receiving a hand-written note in the mail. (By the way, since I've been at Impact now for over 11*

**WAYS TO ENCOURAGE**

years, I have every encouraging note a donor has sent me. And, yes, I've read them many times.) *The suggestion has merit.*

- i. One thing I see some churches doing is that the kids get a postcard or something in the mail that says, "we missed you, hurry back." Kids love getting mail, and it does encourage them.
- e. Remind fellow Christians of the specific promises of God and characteristics of God. We may know something with our mind, but need to be reminded in our heart. The Apostle Peter wrote, **"I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have." 2 Peter 1:12**
- f. Write someone a note to tell them that you're praying for them. Tell them what you're praying. You can pray specific Scriptures for individuals such as **Romans 15:13, "[I pray that] the God of hope [will] fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."**
- g. Make celebration a more regular part of your relationships. Celebrate others' victories, large and small with a note, coffee together, a special meal, a congratulatory phone call, or just a high-five!
- h. Be specific when you offer words of praise; it makes your encouragement more credible and concrete: "You did a great job at...", "I really appreciate that you...", "I was really impressed that you..."
- i. Encourage other believers with a reminder of Christ's coming. It redirects our thinking to an eternal perspective and ultimate deliverance from the sin and death. **"We who are still alive and are left will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words." 1 Thessalonians 5:17b-18**
- j. Realize the power of presence. Just being there can be encouraging! When you're with others, you're telling them that they're important. The Apostle Paul closed his letter to the church at Colossae promising to send his friend Tychius **"that he may encourage your hearts." Colossians 4:8b**
- k. If you're part of a church, Bible study or fellowship, be committed to showing up. Your presence encourages others that they are part of a community of faith and that they are not alone. That's why the writer of Hebrews says, **"Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as we see the Day approaching." Hebrews 10:25**
- l. Use encouragement as an outreach. If anyone should be known for being an encourager, it should be the Christian. Write a letter of appreciation to people at work, your apartment manager, your child's teacher, or your doctor. Often when we

*interact with these people, we are asking for their services. Take time just to say thank you!\**

- m. *We could learn something from the way team athletes freely pat, touch and high-five each other in competition. Touch is a powerful encouragement. Be sure to be sensitive in this area, though. Ask someone if you can hug her first.*
- n. *When you see someone making positive changes in their lives, affirm them. "You seem to have a really great attitude about..." , "It may be that I'm just starting to take notice, but I see that you're..." , "Do you think that you are becoming more...?"*
- o. *Tell people how they've encouraged you! Choose one or two items on this list to encourage someone in your life today! <https://thelife.com/19-ways-to-encourage-others>*

**Conclusion:** It's been over 100 years since electricity was first introduced into the lifestyles of the American public. With the introduction of electricity, lives were changed forever.

"IT CHANGED MY LIFE"

Same can be said for the introduction of the telegraph, which gave way to the introduction of the telephone, which gave way to introduction of texting, and who knows what comes next. With rapid communication, our lives have been changed forever. We've come to expect that change to be normal, and when the electric is down, or our cell phones don't work, we get upset, and want to know why.

Our spiritual lives are far more important than the phone or electricity, or even texting. What's at stake is the rest of our lives we live on this earth and eternity. We can't just go bumbling through life dissatisfied with our spiritual lives, but need to listen to our hearts and do something which Scripture says will help. The call to worship is one of those answers. Being committed as a worshiper will change the rest of your life.

IF YOU WANT TO  
**CHANGE YOUR LIFE**

**Questions to answer if you want to change your life forever.**

1. Will you grasp the privilege of worship that is ours because of Christ?
2. Even in the face of doubts and difficulties, will you hang onto the hope of Christ?
3. Will you become one who motivates others in the faith?
4. Will you prioritize worship with one another as among the most important things you do?
5. What do you need to do because Jesus is Lord and it's time to change your life forever?