

THE WAY
of a
WORSHIPER

*Discover the Secret to
Friendship with God*



VIDEO-BASED SMALL GROUP STUDY

Taught by Buddy Owens

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LOOKING AHEAD

- If your group is new or you have new members, give everyone a chance to introduce themselves and share how they came to be a part of the group.
- What are you hoping to get out of this study?
- How do you define “worship”?

Key Verse

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us,
that we should be called children of God!

And that is what we are!

1 John 3:1 (NIV)



Watch the Session One video now and fill in the blanks in the outline. Refer back to the outline during your discussion time.

IN VIEW OF GOD'S MERCY

The way of a worshiper is a way of life. It's about discovering the secret to friendship with God. It's not so much about *doing* something as it is about *being* someone—not just doing worship, but being a worshiper.

¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.
(Romans 12:1-2 NIV)

Everybody worships something. Worship is God's idea. He wired it into our DNA—we're all worshipers.

- You can tell what a person worships by the way he _____.
- Worship: to _____ or _____ worth

The discovery of God's worth is both endless and endlessly rewarding. And the God-shaped void in our hearts can never be completely filled, because God always makes more room for himself. Every God-encounter leaves us wanting more.

- The discovery of God's worth to us starts with a discovery of _____ to God.

We love him, because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19 NKJV)

God is always previous. He initiates everything—including our relationship with him. Adam didn't look for God. God came looking for Adam, calling him out of his hiding place and into relationship. If God had not come looking for Adam—and if God had not come looking for us—our worship would be hopeless.

³When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and stars, which you have set in place, ⁴what is man that you are mindful of him . . . ?
(Psalm 8:3-4a NIV)

The Parable of the Prodigal

¹¹“There was a man who had two sons. ¹²The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’

So he divided his property between them.

¹³“Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.

¹⁴After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs.

¹⁶He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.’

²⁰So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

²²“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’

So they began to celebrate.” (Luke 15:11-24 NIV)

- Prodigal: extravagantly _____, lavishly _____

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (1 John 3:1 NIV)



A Living Parable of the Father's Love

“The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.” (Zephaniah 3:17 NIV)

Our heavenly Father loves us, not because of what we can do for him, but because of who we are—his sons and daughters, in whom he takes great delight. And he rejoices over us with singing.

Closing Thought: So what do you do with a love like that? How do you respond to that kind of extravagant love and grace and mercy? You can either respond in disbelief, or in gratitude. You can reject it and walk away, or you can surrender your life to the Father's embrace, reach your arm around his neck, and let him sing over you. Then add your voice to the song, and live your life as an act of worship—not out of obligation, or fear, or trying to pay God back in some way, but as a response of love and gratitude to a Father who loves you so much.

We know what we are worth to God. We are worth the life of his Son. God sent Jesus to die for us. Jesus didn't die to save animals or even to save the fallen angels. He died to save humanity—us—and to restore us to relationship with the Father. Human beings are the only creatures who worship God from redeemed hearts. We are the only ones Jesus died for. We are worth more to God than anything else in all of creation.

We know what we are worth to our prodigal Father. The question is: What is our Father worth to you?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Buddy started this session by saying: “The pursuit of God is the chase of a lifetime. In fact, it’s been going on since the day you were born. The question is: Have you been the hunter or the prey?” Looking back on your life experience, can you pinpoint a time when God has taken initiative in your relationship with him? Share your memory of that moment.
2. Reflect on the Parable of the Prodigal. Was Buddy’s perspective on it new to you? How? Discuss the ways you’ve seen God lavish his love on you.
3. Read the Closing Thought in the lesson outline. How would you answer that final question: “What is our Father worth to you?” In what ways have you discovered God’s value?
4. What would you say has been the primary motivating factor in your desire to please God? Has it been obligation or fear, or has it been love and gratitude?

LIVING ON PURPOSE

Worship

1. Buddy said, "You can tell what a person worships by the way he lives his life." If someone were to look at your life, what would they think you worship? What would lead them to that conclusion?

2. What are some practical ways you can worship God by the way you live your life?

PRAYER DIRECTION

Sung Prayer . . .

Listen to, or sing along with, “Just a Glimpse,” and “He Knows My Name” on the *Songs for the Way of a Worshiper* CD. You will find the lyrics in the back of this study guide.

Silent Prayer . . .

If, like the boy in the Parable of the Prodigal, you are far from God in a “distant country,” your journey home begins with a single decision. It starts by coming to your senses, turning your heart toward home, and surrendering your life to Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*” (John 14:6 NIV). If you want to come home to the Father today, simply pray: “Lord Jesus, please forgive me of my sins. I believe you died for me and that you rose from the dead. Please come into my life and be my Savior. Amen.” If you are giving your life to Jesus Christ today, please share that decision with a member of your group. He or she will be happy to pray with you.

If you’re already at home with the Father but feel a little overwhelmed with life’s daily activities, consider Jesus’ words: “*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest*” (Matthew 11:28 NIV). Take your burdens and give them to him now. Experience his rest.

Group Prayer . . .

God loves us in spite of our brokenness and regardless of our failures. Offer brief prayers of thanksgiving to God for his love and mercy. Then pray for each other’s requests.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

1. Read chapters one through five in *The Way of a Worshiper* this week. Be ready to talk about your thoughts and insights in your next meeting.

2. Do you have a friend or family member who needs to hear the truths you learned today? Write their name in the space below. Then make a plan to share this message with them—if possible, before your next group session.

Name

Now give that person and your plan to God.