

IN SPIRIT & IN TRUTH

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF BIBLICAL WORSHIP

MIKE MAZZALONGO

TEACHER'S GUIDE

bibleTalk^{TV}



DOWNLOAD
OUR APP



Copyright 2023 BibleTalk.tv

All our material is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike License.

This means you can use it almost however you need.

The only thing you can't do is re-sell it.

In Spirit and In Truth

The Fundamentals of Biblical Worship

Mike Mazzalongo

This 4-part series examines the area of public worship. Each lesson looks not only at the practice of worship but also explores the purpose and personal experience that the Bible describes for those who worship in Spirit and Truth.



bibletalk.tv/in-spirit-and-in-truth

Teacher Guide created by

David Laton, D.Min.

2020

Table of Contents

Lesson #1 - The Nature of Biblical Worship: Communication.....	6
Lesson #2 - The Practice of Biblical Worship: Submission.....	12
Lesson #3 - The Result of Biblical Worship: Transcendence.....	16
Lesson #4 - The Glory of Singing in Worship	20

Overall Teaching Strategy

It is recommended that teachers use a combination of informal lecture and guided discussion to present these lessons. There are discussion questions associated with each lesson that teachers may use and/or supplement their own questions. A student note guide is also provided for each lesson.

It is recommended that teachers have students view the associated video or read the text for the lesson. This helps students come to the class ready to discuss the lesson and to formulate questions of their own. Teachers should begin the class with a review of key points from the video/text before starting the discussion.

Begin each lesson with appropriate introductory statements that help students focus on the lesson. Teachers should also provide a brief summary of the previous lesson and an overview of key points of the new lesson. This helps students see the ongoing narrative of scripture.

Conclude the lesson by summarizing, or having students summarize the information from their notes. It is also helpful to ask questions from the lesson to determine that students grasp the concepts. Asking questions in this manner serves as an assessment to ensure objectives are met.

Challenge students with a call to action to apply this information to their lives to help them grow spiritually and help others to do so as well. This can be accomplished by asking questions of students as to how this information relates to their spiritual development at this time and moving forward.

For more information on teaching adults, please visit:
<https://bibletalk.tv/101/teaching>

Lesson #1 - The Nature of Biblical Worship: Communication

Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is communication, the core activity of public worship. Of special note is how this activity can be enhanced by learning the language of communication with God.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand the role communication plays in our worship.
- **Feel:** Value the essential nature of communicating with God.
- **Do:** Seek to regularly communicate with God.

Support

- Series – Lesson Title; Mike Mazzalongo, In Spirit & In Truth
- Video/Text – Lesson 1 – The Nature of biblical Worship: Communication
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 1

Body of the Lesson

- 1.0 The essential nature of worship
 - 1.1 Communication
 - 1.2 Common mistakes in public worship
- 2.0 Communicating with God – What does it require
 - 2.1 Must exist personally before it can exist corporately
 - 2.2 Recognizing God’s presence in worship
 - 2.3 A sense of ourselves
 - 2.4 Knowing the language of communication
- 3.0 Application

Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

1. How do you understand worship?

This question is looking more at intent than process. Look for responses related to offering respect, love, adoration and honor to God. Also look for how we express our faith.

2. How is communication the essential nature of worship?

We are communicating with God. We see in the action and words we use while worshipping. We sing, pray, discuss scripture and physically present ourselves to God. All of these are forms of or involve communication of some sort. Therefore, whether involved in formal or informal worship, we are communicating with God.

3. How does Paul's statement in Colossians 1:9-13 relate to worshiping in spirit and truth?

Paul expresses how he offers prayers that they will have wisdom and understanding of God's will and that their lives will be pleasing to God. Furthermore, we give thanks to God for our salvation. All of this is contained in our worship activities.

In Christ we gain the ability, wisdom and knowledge to not only live in a way that pleases God, but also to worship (communicate) with Him. NOTE: Not "to" Him as in pagan worship, but "with" Him. The basic communication model includes feedback from our communication efforts. We see God's response to our communication with Him as we learn to communicate more and effectively. That is part of our inheritance, true communication with the true God.

4. Discuss the two common mistakes made concerning public worship.

Making the means the end – This is focusing on process. This leads to losing sight of communication with God being lost in our efforts to perfect the method of worship we use. We see this when the focus is skewed heavily towards external concerns such as place, equipment, order, process, etc. This does not guarantee we actually communicate with God. In truth, these things often interfere with our communication.

Make up one's own method – We are given specific instructions of why and how to worship. We cannot add or remove any part and still claim to worship as God wills. This is often done based on our feelings rather than God's will. Inventing our own worship method is as counterproductive as focusing too much effort on the method or process of worship. Both extremes lessen our ability to actually communicate with God in worship.

5. What does communicating with God really require?

Realization that communication with God must exist personally before it can exist corporately. We first must establish a relationship with God individually. If we do not communicate (worship) God privately then we will not be able to do so correctly or effectively in public. This also involves our leadership first having a relationship with God before they can effectively lead us in worship.

In Psalm 51:6, David said to God, “Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.” In verse 10 he pleads with God to, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” Of course, the context of this psalm was David’s repentance for his sin with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11).

Peter recognized this in Acts 6 when he would not relinquish his ministry of prayer to resolve food distribution issues. His focus was on his leadership role of worship and teaching God’s word.

Recognition of God’s presence in worship. A common reason for boredom in worship and the losing of focus is that we do not fully recognize that God’s presence is with us. This leads to a failure to actively as well as mentally participate in the church’s worship activities. To truly communicate with God, we must first acknowledge and respect that His presence is with us.

A sense of ourselves. Getting a true sense of ourselves and our need for God leads to helping us focus our minds on God. When we truly examine ourselves before God we recognize our desperate need for Him. This leads to intense communication (worship) and praise of God for His grace and forgiveness. The more we see of God in our lives, the more of His glory is revealed. This leads us to further communication with Him.

We need to know the language of communication. (See Nehemiah 1:4-11) Worship (communicating with God) has a language of its own. It is a spiritual language that includes, but is not limited to praise (vs 4-5), supplication (vs 6a), confession (vs. 6b-7), confirmation (vs. 8-10), protection and mercy (vs. 11). These elements of communication are effective in having God answer our prayers.

6. How can we apply this information to grow spiritually and help others do so?

Worship is communicating with God. When we do so by His will we are blessed through His acceptance. If we are not gaining spiritual satisfaction, we should examine our worship to ensure that we are truly communicating with God as He wishes. Always remember, “Thy will, not my will.”

Lesson #2 - The Practice of Biblical Worship: Submission

Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is on the activities that prepare Christians for worship. Of special note is how worship is a lifestyle rather than a regular activity at an appointed time.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand the importance of preparing for worship.
- **Feel:** Value the importance of preparing for worship.
- **Do:** Focus on living a lifestyle of worship.

Support

- Series – Lesson Title; Mike Mazzalongo, In Spirit & In Truth
- Video/Text – Lesson 2 – The Practice of Biblical Worship: Submission
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 2

Body of the Lesson

1.0 Review of the language of communication with God

2.0 Preparing for worship

2.1 Practice and training

2.2 Submitting to God

2.3 Focus in worship

3.0 Practical application

3.1 Common mistakes

3.2 Submission

Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson.

There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts.

These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

1. List key elements of the language of communication (worshipping) with God and explain how these are essential to successfully communicate with God?

From the previous lesson we stated that the language of communication with God included: Praise, mercy, confession, supplication, confirmation, remembrance, adoration and a new direction. These elements are required by God and shown through examples of what God accepts as worship. If these are not present in our worship then we are not truly worshipping as God wills but simply going through the motions.

2. What is the practice or training for worship?

We practice the virtue of submission as a preparation to worship God as He wills. In the original language the word for worship meant to bow down in reverence before God. Therefore, we must learn and practice greater submission to God in order to be able to worship Him effectively.

3. In what ways do we codify (make legal) worship practices to try to improve our worship?

We frequently do so by placing focus on process over substance. For example, focusing on how we sing rather than the words and their meaning. We build grand auditoriums and enhance our sound systems and technology, use worship teams, and other environmental elements. External or environmental elements often result in focusing on rituals rather than the spirit.

4. Defend the following statement:

“Change, worship and spiritual things must first take place on the inside before outside things are affected.”

By way of answer review Psalm 5:12; 34:18; Matthew 5:3, and Romans 12:1. Note the commonality is on developing and enhancing our relationship with God over the practice of rituals.

Two extremes are seen in this area. One is trying to enhance worship through focus on items such as buildings and personnel rather than the transformation brought about by interacting with the Spirit of God. Another is focus on processes to gain a greater feeling about God. This means greater attention on the actions rather than what the actions are for. Although feelings about God are critical, we must be careful to worship with God and before God as He wills.

5. What is the relationship between Romans 12:1 and worshipping in Spirit and Truth (John 4:24)?

In Romans 12:1, Paul is explaining that our personal, daily, spiritual worship is expressed in the way we submit all of our lives to God through purity, service and obedience. Our actions and words in this context become continual worship to God. The focus is internal development, not external.

6. Discuss the principle behind Paul's instructions concerning worship from 1 Corinthians 11-15.

Paul's focus in these passages is on corporate worship. The issue was that the Corinthian church had lost its understanding of the true spirit of worship. Paul reminded them of the importance and intent of worship according to God's will. Paul's main point was the need to submit to God's will. He used issues in the Corinthian church to illustrate his point. These included modest dress, proper attitude and actions in worship that focused on God rather than whether or not my spiritual gift was greater than someone else's, submitting in love to one another instead of considering one better than another. He presents a strong teaching on love in chapter 13. The key was a proper balance that enhanced communication with God in worship. This balance is seen as we submit to God's will in both our personal lives and our corporate assemblies.

7. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?

As we submit to God and to one another, our relationship with God grows and our example of love to others compels them to also develop and sustain a relationship with God.

Lesson #3 - The Result of Biblical Worship: Transcendence

Teaching Strategy

The focus of this lesson is finding fulfillment through our communication with God. Of special note is the transcendence we experience as we engage in worship as God intends for us.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand the result of worship as God intends.
- **Feel:** Value the growth and change we experience as we worship.
- **Do:** Apply the principles God provides for us to grow closer to Him.

Support

- Series – Lesson Title; Mike Mazzalongo, In Spirit & In Truth
- Video/Text – Lesson 3 – The Result of Biblical Worship: Transcendence
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 3

Body of the Lesson

- 1.0 The result of worldly influences on our worship
 - 1.1 What worship is not
 - 1.2 The goal and result of worship in spirit and in truth
- 2.0 Transcendence
 - 2.1 The nature of transcendence
 - 2.2 Transcendence now
 - 2.3 The problem with transcendence
- 3.0 Application

Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as “right or wrong” responses.

1. In the lesson, several perceptions of worship were listed as NOT being the result or goal of our worship. How should we view these and why?

We sometimes allow the world to influence our worship. We focus on external or environmental concerns such as: finishing on time, process over content by focusing on doing something well or right and focus on tangible items to measure (numbers of people, amount of contribution, etc.).

These are important and have a place, but these are not our goal. Our goal is to grow into who God wants us to be, faithful servants like Christ.

2. Explain the meaning of transcendence as it relates to spiritual growth and our relationship with God and our worship.

Transcendence means to go beyond what we consider normal or limiting. Note: Most limits are self-imposed due to a lack of understanding or misunderstanding. God provides us with the capacity for unlimited spiritual growth. We can and must continue to grow. See: Romans 12:1-2, 2 Peter 3:18, I Peter 2:2, I Corinthians 3:2

As we grow spiritually, we become more Christ like and willing to serve God. It creates a possible cycle of spiritual growth; the closer our relationship the greater our joy, the more we grow.

3. Ask class members to share a time when they received new or additional insight when reading a passage of scripture. What was the new understanding and what was their reaction?

The intent of this question is to help us see these moments as transcendent experiences where we grow spiritually. Be willing to share an example of your experience in this area.

Look for responses where scripture hasn't changed but due to events or circumstances in life, we see a passage from a different viewpoint. Encourage participants to see these as opportunities to worship and search the Scriptures even more.

4. How does fear hold us back from transcendence?

There are many responses but a fear of going into something new or different commonly holds us back. Perhaps we're comfortable and reluctant to move beyond where we are. Intellectually, we know about God but must develop the emotional and spiritual elements of that relationship as well. Some are fearful to do this. There should never come a time in this life when we do not make an effort to grow spiritually.

5. Discuss how the following elements of submission that bring us to transcendence.

True obedience – This means obedience to what we know and are convinced of now. For example, God’s true church as revealed in scripture (not denominations), God’s plan for adding us to His Kingdom (belief, repentance, baptism by immersion for the forgiveness of our sins, faithful living).

True discipleship – This goes beyond faithful attendance to worship and other such activities. It means experiencing and helping others experience transcendence through seeing God living and acting in our lives. The purpose of discipleship is to bring others to Christ by seeing Him in us. This includes the initial teaching of the gospel and continued nurturing of their spiritual growth.

True living sacrifice – The cost of transcendence is to give oneself over completely to God. This especially includes separation from those things we hold precious and may be reluctant to give over to God. (See Matthew 22:37, Luke 14:25-33; Matthew 19:16-22).

6. How can you use this lesson to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?

We should eagerly desire transcendent moments in our spiritual growth. When we experience them they spur us on to seeking a deeper relationship with God. We should also eagerly desire to help others achieve these moments beginning with their initial understanding and acceptance of God’s will for them to become His disciples and then to continue to grow spiritually.

Lesson #4 - The Glory of Singing in Worship

Teaching Strategy

This lesson focuses on how singing is a part of our biblical worship. Of special note is the biblical foundation and historical record that establish vocal praise, as ordained by the Spirit, is the manner of musical praise in public worship.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** The importance of vocal music in our public worship.
- **Feel:** Value the opportunity to praise God through our musical worship.
- **Do:** Sing with spirit and understanding as we praise God.

Support

- Series – Lesson Title; Mike Mazzalongo, In Spirit & In Truth
- Video/Text – Lesson 4 – The Glory of Singing in Worship
- Student Note Guide for Lesson 4

Body of the Lesson

1.0 Why the Lord's church does not use musical instruments in worship

1.1 No command in the New Testament to do so

1.2 There is no example

1.3 The proof of history

1.4 The glory of singing

2.0 Application

Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson.

There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts.

These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as "right or wrong" responses.

1. Why is the act of singing during worship important?

Look for the following concepts in student's answers:

- It is commanded by God
- It allows all of us to express our devotion to God together simultaneously.
- It helps us grow in faith
- It helps us encourage one another
- It helps us grow in our understanding of God's will
- It teaches us
- It unites us

2. Discuss how the following Old Testament examples of music in worship teach us about obedience to God?

Note: From these verses we see that God is very specific about how He wants us to worship. In obeying our Lord, we show our faith and love. In worshipping as God directs, we recognize His authority and our role as obedient servants.

- **Numbers 10:1-2** – God gives specifics on the type of instruments and how to use them in worship. These were two silver trumpets.
- **Numbers 10:8** – God gave specifics on who would use these instruments. These were to be the sons of Aaron, the priests.
- **Numbers 10:10** – God gave specifics as to when and why the instruments were to be used. These were used to call the congregation together, for breaking camp, and as an alarm. They were not used during worship.

3. What specific guidance about worship through only vocal (singing) music is seen in the New Testament?

- I Corinthians 14:15 – Singing with the spirit and mind
- Ephesians 5:18-19 – Making melody with your heart
- Colossians 3:16 – Singing with thanksgiving in your heart.

4. What is the major difference concerning the use of instruments in worship in the Old Testament and New Testament and why is this important?

There are very specific instructions on the type and use of instruments in worship in the Old Testament and the New Testament. This is important in that God has always given specific instructions for worship. The lack of instruction for their use in the New Testament worship is not an oversight, nor is it an allowance for their use. God does not wish for us to use them, therefore, as obedient servants, we must not use them in our worship.

As in all parts of the practice of our faith, we use the teachings of Jesus, the apostles, and examples from the first century Church to guide us in what we are to do and this includes public worship. Nowhere in any of these are there examples of authorization for the use of instrumental music in public worship. It is forbidden by an absence of specific authorization or example. In other words, we do what the Bible tells us to do, not what it is silent about.

5. How does Matthew 16:19 relate to the prohibition of instrumental music in worship?

In the context of this passage, Jesus gave the apostles authority to decide issues they would face as the future teachers of His will. When the Church began, the Christians considered themselves as Jews but with a better understanding of Jesus as the promised Messiah and their role as His disciples. The apostles and other Christians continued with practices of synagogue worship which forbade the use of musical instruments. As the Church grew and non-Jews were added, these practices and prohibitions also continued. Since the apostles made this decision based on their authority, we have the responsibility to continue to obey.

6. How is Matthew 26:30 an example of the power of singing in worship?

In Matthew 26 we read how Jesus instituted the “Lord’s Supper” during His final Passover celebration. As part of the Passover celebration, the Jews would sing Psalms 113-118. Note in verse 30 that Matthew records, “And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.” This is a clear record of how Jesus participated in singing praises to God during worship.

This is a significant passage in that when you read Psalm 118, the final song of the celebration, Jesus sang these words with the understanding that He was going to His death to atone for our sins. Please read this psalm with that in mind. Note specifically these passages in the psalm: verse 17; 20; 22, and 24.

7. How is vocal music a part of our overall teaching ministry? (Colossians 3:16)

Our singing is based on concepts and commands from God's word. Singing enables us to actively participate in teaching and encouraging. Singing further supports the unity of our unique fellowship as disciples of Christ.

A point to note here. Because singing has a teaching element to it, we must be careful that the lyrics of the songs we sing in worship are teaching truth. Furthermore, some songs are not erroneous in themselves, but may not be appropriate for everyone to sing in a public worship setting. This is not intended to discourage singing, but to ensure we are singing in spirit and truth.

8. How is our singing in worship a foretaste of worship in heaven? (Revelation 15:3)

One can easily understand that the spiritual fruit produced by our faithfulness through the Holy Spirit (love, joy, peace, etc.) gives us a foretaste of our existence in eternity. Our praises to God, specifically singing in spirit and truth, is an action that God clearly tells us will continue in heaven.

9. How does singing as part of our worship support spiritual growth?

- What we do is ordained by God and pleases Him by our obedience.
- When we sing as God ordains, we participate in glorifying God
- We join in fellowship with each other through singing.

BibleTalk.tv is an Internet Mission Work.

We provide textual Bible teaching material on our website and mobile apps for free. We enable churches and individuals all over the world to have access to high quality Bible materials for personal growth, group study or for teaching in their classes.

The goal of this mission work is to spread the gospel to the greatest number of people using the latest technology available. For the first time in history it is becoming possible to preach the gospel to the entire world at once. BibleTalk.tv is an effort to preach the gospel to all nations every day until Jesus returns.

The Choctaw Church of Christ in Oklahoma City is the sponsoring congregation for this work and provides the oversight for the BibleTalk ministry team. If you would like information on how you can support this ministry, please go to the link provided below.

bibletalk.tv/support