

BECOMING Wiser

Getting wisdom is the most important thing you can do! And whatever else you do get, good judgment.
Proverbs 4:7

LESSON 3 & 4 // THE WISDOM OF WORSHIP

Proverbs 9:10 (NIV) *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*

Psalms 111:10 (NIV) *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.*

2 Corinthians 7:1 (NLV) *Since we have these great promises, dear friends, let us turn away from every sin of the body or of the spirit. Let us honor God with love and fear by giving ourselves to Him in every way.*

The starting place for becoming a wise person is properly “fearing God.” We do this when we acknowledge, reverence and worship Him as the One and Only True God. If we truly fear Him, we live in awe, respect and obedience to Him.

Fearing God is all about properly worshiping Him, and there’s a clear link between our worship and our level of wisdom. Let’s look at five lessons about this connection between worship and wisdom.

1. There is right and wrong worship.

In the world today, there’s a tendency for people to believe that it doesn’t really matter who, what or how you worship—that everyone has a right to determine their own approach to “spiritual” things. In fact, the term “spiritual” gets attached to all kinds of things.

With all the different opinions about “God” and worship, how can we know if there is a right way to worship? At some point, for truth to be truth, there must be an authoritative source that defines what is true, what is right and wrong. That “source” might be yourself, the culture or something external to you and the culture. But for believers in Jesus, and for many others, that Source is the Bible.

In God’s Word we discover that worship is very important to the Lord, and that He has described and defined right and wrong ways to worship Him. The “Ten Commandments” (Exodus 20:1-17) clearly define proper worship. The first four of these commandments (verses 1-11) address our relationship with God and how we should, and shouldn’t, worship and talk to Him.

The wrong way to worship is to: put anyone or anything else in God’s place; create and worship images of our own; use words that dishonor God name, nature or character; and fail to give God our time and trust. Right worship is the opposite of these.

This warning about wrong ways to worship is also found in the New Testament (Matthew 2:2; Mark 12:29, 30; John 4:24; Romans 12:1, 2; Hebrews 12:28, 29). In contrast, the “fear of the Lord,” the right worship of God, is where wisdom begins.

2. Who and what you worship affects who and what you become.

What you focus on in worship will determine the focus and form of your life (see Psalm 115:4-8; Jeremiah 2:5). To become the right person, your worship must be right.

3. Right worship opens the way for increased wisdom.

Many times, God is waiting for us to set the stage in worship, which then opens the way for the gifts He wants to give us, including increased wisdom. This is what happened to Solomon when he first became king. His attitude and actions of worship prepared the way for an incredible encounter with God (2 Chronicles 1:2-13).

It's important to note that Solomon's worship came before he received great wisdom. Solomon gave, and then God said, "Solomon, what can I give you?" What could and would be increased in your life if you got really serious about your worship?

4. Right worship involves the alignment of your attitudes and actions with God.

The key attitude in worship that attracts God's attention is humility—a contrite heart (see Isaiah 57:15; Matthew 5:3; James 4:6-8).

***Psalm 51:17 (NIV)** My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.*

The actions of worship include praise, thanksgiving, prayer, giving, serving and obeying God.

5. Right worship only happens when our hearts are made right with God.

It's important to understand that we can't fear and worship God without His power and help. By nature, we are sinners. We go our own way, do our own thing and forget God (Isaiah 53:6). But God took the initiative to build a bridge to us so we could fear and worship Him (Romans 5:8; 6:23; 10:9, 10).

When we accept God's gift of salvation by putting our faith in Jesus Christ, we are given a new heart, a new nature, the power to become a true worshiper of God and the opportunity to receive the wisdom of God (Ezekiel 36:25-27).

Discussion questions

1. Read Exodus 20:1-11 and Psalm 111:10. According to these verses, what are right and wrong ways to worship?
2. How does worshipping the right way open the door for increased wisdom in your life?
3. How do your heart attitudes and actions affect your worship? In what practical ways can you align these better with God's Word?