

A WAKENED

TO WORSHIP

LESSON 2 // THE CONFRONTATIONS OF WORSHIP

The Bible exhorts us to be alert in our spiritual journey. We are warned of the tendency we all have to fall asleep at our spiritual post. Many things can lull us into spiritual distraction or disinterest.

One of the areas we may fall prey to spiritual slumber is in our worship. It's important for us to be freshly challenged and renewed in our worship of God. Without a regular wake-up call to worship ringing in our ears, we have a tendency to become stale and dry.

As part of this challenge to worship God, we must be willing to confront certain obstacles to worship in our lives. Notice what we learn about this from Jesus' "Great Commandment":

Matthew 22:35-37 (NIV) *One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law." ³⁷ Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."*

To worship God, we must be willing to confront anything in our heart, soul and mind that doesn't completely love Him. This includes the following three confrontations:

1. Confrontations with the heart

In the Bible, "heart" frequently refers to the inner most being of a person. It could be rendered "spirit" in some verses. Just as the physical heart is the muscle that keeps life-giving blood circulating throughout the body, the spiritual heart fulfills a vital role. If our heart is out of sorts with God, our whole being will be affected.

Proverbs 4:23 (NIV) *Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.*

To effectively worship God, we must confront portions of our heart that don't completely love Him. We all have heart obstacles that hinder our worship—attitudes that contaminate our hearts and must be confronted. These include a heart that is hardened, sinful, unbelieving, proud, bitter, deceitful, rebellious, envious, selfish, troubled or condemning.

2. Confrontations with the soul

Scripture teaches us about the vital importance of our soul in worshipping the Lord. Notice how the psalmist calls us to worship: "Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits" (Psalm 103:1, 2).

Our "soul" has to do with our will and emotions—our affections. In reference to the worship of God, it speaks of our priorities and passions. "Love the Lord with all your soul" means that you should make sure you live each day with the right priorities and passions!

Jesus taught us about setting the right priorities (Matthew 16:24-27) and passions (Matthew 13:44-46). We get an indication of these when we look at the quality of our relationships and how we use our time, energy and material resources. To truly worship God, we must confront the priorities and passions in these areas of our lives that are not aligned with His purposes.

3. Confrontations with the mind

What does Jesus mean when He says you should “love the Lord your God with all your mind”?

The Greek word for “mind” used here “corresponds to what is usually translated ‘might’ in Deuteronomy 6:5. The Hebrew term had a broad connotation and carried the general idea of moving ahead with energy and strength. Mind is used here in the sense of ... willful vigor and determination” (John MacArthur).

Jesus was reminding us of the importance of worshipping God with our actions—with all our might and strength. Note the sequence:

- Love the Lord your God with all your heart (attitudes).
- Love the Lord your God with all your soul (affections).
- Love the Lord your God with all your mind (actions).

We see this connection between mind and action in 1 Peter 1:13: “Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

Worshipful actions include:

- What we do with our mind and body in worshipful *service* to God.
- What we do with our mind and body in worshipful *expressions* to God.

We must be willing to confront everything that stands in the way of our involvement in worshipful service and expression to God.

We will never be true worshipers of God without some major confrontations with ourselves. Growing in worship requires a willingness to confront the things that keep us from loving the Lord with all our heart, soul and mind!

Discussion questions

1. What kind of heart attitudes might hinder your worship of God? How can you overcome these so that you are loving God with “all your heart”?
2. Why are the right priorities and passions so vital in your worship of God? How can you make sure these are lining up with God’s purpose for your life?
3. In what ways is serving God an expression of your worship?