**Defining Worship** – By Thailer Jimerson

As we use this Sunday to extensively focus on the subject of worship, I want us to familiarize ourselves with some key biblical concepts regarding worship, particularly how they’re used within the context of the Bible itself.

So there seem to be three main words relating to worship in the Bible: *worship*, *praise* and *glorify*.

**Worship**. This word means *to bow down to, to fall down on one’s knees before the object of worship*. The root words of this Greek word means to ‘kiss towards’ - to kiss towards God. It’s servicing respect to God in heart and in action. If you’re just doing it in action - you’re just playing a part. It’s fake. For it to be real, it needs to be in heart. The test for genuine worship is that which derives naturally from a heart that has been convicted by the Holy Spirit of the truths in God’s word.

**Praise.** This word is translated from three separate Hebrew verbs: **1)** ‘to bless’ - i.e., to pronounce good things upon the recipient. For example, “God is good, awesome, lovely, etc.”; **2)** ‘to boast or exult in’ – i.e., to brag, to blow one’s horn about how awesome our God is, and to show or feel a lively or triumphant joy. For example, when we talk about the great, magnificent things God has done for us or when we get so excited about God that we can’t help but voice it - that’s exulting; **3)** ‘to give thanks or confess’ – i.e., to openly announce thanks to God and also to confess our sins that He can be magnified for how forgiving He is.

**Glorify**. This word means to ascribe the ***weight*** of His glory to Him. In other words, to value God for what He really is. Another way of defining how to ‘glorify God’ would be to cause the dignity, value and worth of God to become manifest and acknowledged. If you actually feel the worth of your dear firstborn son and that results in your praising him for every little success - you’re glorifying him. Same with God. But the question is, *“Do we actually feel that way about God to result in any genuine praise?”*

It’s clear in the Scriptures: God wants glory, desires praises and must be worshiped. *“Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified”* (**Lev10:3**).

A final word. You’ll hear in this morning’s devotional service that Jesus calls for a balance in worship: namely, to worship him in spirit and truth. With that in mind, I leave this word of admonishment with you: *“Truth without emotion produces dead orthodoxy and a church full (or half-full) of artificial admirers (like people who write generic anniversary cards for a living). On the other hand, emotion without truth produces empty frenzy and cultivates shallow people who refuse the discipline of rigorous thought. But true worship comes from people who are deeply emotional and who love deep and sound doctrine. Strong affections for God rooted in truth are the bone and marrow of biblical worship.”* (John Piper)