



January 17/18, 2009 • Pastor Matt Heard
Part 1: True Worship
John 4:23-24

Why are you? It may sound like a strange question, but it's not at all irrelevant. It's a short question, but not a small one. It's actually an enormous, bottom-line question for each of us, and our answer provides the cadence from which we live our lives.

While attempting to answer the question of the "why" behind our existence and the purpose behind our days, many words come to mind as possible ingredients to the answer's recipe: Happiness. Relationships. Career. Love. Family. Service. Influence. Power. Pleasure. Success. Freedom. Some people might even include the word "God" in their attempt at an answer. However, very few will bring up the word, "worship."

Worship. When you hear that word, what comes to mind? Religion? Church? Music? Ritual? Cathedrals? Singing? Liturgy? If the word "worship" is even in our vocabulary and on our radar, too many of us have cordoned off the concept to an out-of-the-way corner of our lives which is both small and ultimately irrelevant. Worship – we sadly reveal by our lifestyles and priorities – is not a big part of our lives. And worship – we tragically conclude – is certainly not related to that question of "why" regarding our existence.

However, a closer look at true worship will reveal something quite different. The book of Psalms (which is a book of worship) ends with this acknowledgment of our purpose: *Let everything that has breath praise the Lord* (Psalm 150:6). If I'm breathing, worshiping our great and gracious God must be central to my life. And it's not only something I do (or watch others do) in a church service. The worship of God is a whole-life pursuit, involving every page of my story. *Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.* (Colossians 3:17)

During these next few months, we will be taking an incredibly important journey together: we'll be traveling into the realm of worship. It's a journey that will prove crucial toward who we are becoming as individuals and as a community of Christ's followers. It will involve an exploration of both personal worship on a day-to-day basis as well as corporate worship, when we, as a community, gather to engage in worship together (and the two are intricately connected!).

Today we'll unpack an overview. Revolving around Christ's defining words that *true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth* (John 4:23), let's establish a definition of biblical worship... →

