

The Meaning of Worship and Service

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The Meaning of Worship

The urge to worship appears naturally with the activation of the sixth Adjutant Mind Spirit. In humans the urge to worship and the capacity for it are innate.

Although we all experience this urge as individuals, in our own way, in its most basic form, worship is the recognition and honoring of the mysterious and incomprehensible cause and motivator of everything. This has graduated through many phases—animal worship, nature worship, polytheism, pantheism and so on—until in monotheism we now recognize God, as revealed to us most recently by Jesus, as both the cause and source of everything, and as a benevolent personality who loves us and has a place for each of us.

So worship for us is the recognition and honoring of God as a father. Is it also the recognition of the non-personal aspect of deity? I think it is. On page 1616 Jesus defines worship as “the act of a part identifying itself with the Whole; the finite with the Infinite; the son with the Father; time in the act of striking step with eternity. Worship is the act of the son’s personal communion with the divine father, the assumption of refreshing, creative, fraternal and romantic attitudes by the human soul- spirit”.

For Jesus, worship consists of both personal communion with the Father, and recognition of the Infinite as the source of everything. It is worth bearing in mind that this second aspect of worship is suggested by Jesus, and that our attempts at personal communion with the Father are also bound up with our recognition of the source of reality and the divine plan of progression. In a sense, we worship God because we know something about Him—about who He is and what He is doing.

Worship, then, is our attempt at communion with the Father, attempting to express ourselves to the Father, and is thus a very **personal** thing. The Father interacts with each one of us as individual personalities, and the form our communion takes depends on who is doing it and on the character of his relationship with the Father

Worship and Prayer

Worship is often contrasted with prayer. Prayer is also an attempt by the son to communicate with the Father, but differs from worship because it is a request for help. Prayer is asking the Father for something, a request for the exercise of divine power to assist the son in solving some problem. There is self-interest involved. Worship, on the other hand, asks for nothing. It is purely an attempt to commune with the Father and express the devotion of the son to the Father and loyalty to His purposes. There may be overtones of gratitude, of devotion, of adoration, of admiration, of co-operation—of many possible attitudes, depending on the personal attitude of the worshipper—but the flavour of loving communion permeates the interaction between the son and the Father.

The Personal nature of worship.

The revelators emphasize the **personal** nature of worship. On page 22 the Divine Counselor points out that “The Universal Father never imposes any form of arbitrary recognition, formal worship or slavish service upon the intelligent will creatures of the universes.”
Worship is a personal matter. It is up to us how we go about it.

A Continuum.

As I see it, the revelators suggest that there is a sort of continuum in worship, from highly structured formal worship to relatively informal and spontaneous worship. On the one hand the Divine Counselor on page 66 tells us that: “Sincere worship connotes the mobilization of all the powers of the human personality under the dominance of the evolving soul and subject to the divine directionization of the associated Thought Adjuster.”

On the other hand, on page 22 he says: “ The affectionate dedication of the human will to the doing of the Father’s will is man’s choicest gift to God; in fact, such a consecration of creature will constitutes man’s only possible gift of true value to the Paradise Father. In God, man lives, moves, and has his being; there is nothing which man can give to God except this choosing to abide by the Father’s will, and such decisions, effected by the intelligent will creatures of the universes, constitute the reality of that true worship which is so satisfying to the love-dominated nature of the Creator Father.”

Here we have the two poles of the continuum of worship. On the one hand the **mobilization of all the powers of personality** and on the other **the doing of the Fathers will which constitutes the reality of true worship.**

Mobilization of all Powers of personality -----	Attempting to do the Fathers will
Intense, Emotional	Reflective, Philosophical
Special Occasion	Everyday Life
Planned	Spontaneous

The mobilization of all the powers of personality suggests an enormous concentration of effort, the kind of thing which is unlikely to occur spontaneously or without considerable premeditation. And indeed the revelators point out that in our future careers we need to learn the technique of worship—to learn how to do it. Mobilizing all the powers of personality does not come naturally.

At the other pole we have worship as a part of everyday life as we attempt to do the Father’s will.

I suggest that most of our worship efforts will fall along this continuum. There are times when we feel intense emotions of gratitude or adoration, and our worship experience tends towards the intense concentration of the entire personality. There are others when we find ourselves reflecting on our attempts to do the Father’s will and our worship experience tends towards a more philosophical interaction with the Father at the other extreme of the continuum.

The benefit to us

Although we undertake worship without any thought of gain or reward, the revelators make plain to us that we derive enormous benefit from worship. The spiritual growth resulting from worship is immeasurable. Our indwelling adjuster is constantly urging us to help improve its communication with our mind and personality by sharing our inner life with God, and it is worship which gives our adjuster its best opportunities.

Whatever the case, we work out our own way of worship. And we are warned on page 66 that we can never be highly **conscious** of the significance of true worship. Our material minds are not capable of making it conscious to us. However, Jesus points out that: “The spirit of the Father speaks best to man when the human mind is in the attitude of true worship” and also: “Worship....makes one increasingly like the being who is worshipped”.

The Meaning of Service

We can think of service as applied love. The Urantia book defines love as the desire to do good to others; service is the attempt to actually do that good. When Jesus says to Ganid that a good way to make friends is to watch for the opportunity to do something for others which you are sure they want done (p1439) he was pointing to a practical approach to service.

The Circuit of Love

The great circuit of love is described as being from the Father, through sons to brothers, and hence to the Supreme. Service is the practical acting out of this circuit. We express our love for our fellows by doing things for them that they want done, and this action of brotherly love repercusses in the Supreme. And at this point we can remind ourselves that Jesus called his apostles to love men—not just the souls of men (p2043). Service is not just to be aimed at the religious improvement of our fellows—it is to assist them in whatever way may be required, not just in their proposed salvation.

Service is Voluntary

The Divine Counselor on page 22 points out that the Father imposes no service upon His creatures. Freewill personalities serve voluntarily, and they must choose their forms of service themselves. We are not slaves, and we decide how to serve.

The revelators point out that whereas seraphim and other spiritual personalities naturally take delight in service, animal origin creatures don't. We have to learn that it is better to give than to receive from personal experience. We have to discover by trial and error how satisfying it can be to lend someone a helping hand. The life of service which Jesus lived is a great inspiration to us to give it a go, to find out for ourselves what satisfaction we derive from serving our fellows.

Service takes many forms

The situation is sometimes a bit more abstract than simply helping someone out. Sometimes we serve men by doing things not for particular individuals, but because we

believe that some actions are good for our community. This form of service may influence professions we choose to follow, or causes we adopt, or some such action which we see as service. Some of us proceed through life with a gentle pressure on our motivation produced by our desire to co-operate with our indwelling adjuster and Michael's plan for his universe which urges us towards service of mankind, or Urantia perhaps, and which does much to determine how we react to the events of everyday life. There is something exhilarating about realizing that we are in Michael's team, trying to co-operate with one another and our celestial administrators in advancing our people and our planet towards light and life. Even menial boring tasks and drudgery become easier if we remember what a wonderful operation we are all part of. If we hold this perspective in our minds as we go about our daily lives we are motivated to try to serve as the opportunity arises. It really does seem to inspire us if we keep in mind just what we are involved in and whom we are associated with. Then we remember that everything we do can help or hinder Michael's plan for our planet and the entire universe, and also that everybody has a part to play. The fact that others may not know this is of no consequence to our ability to serve them.

There seem to be as many ways of service as there are personalities to offer that service. It is entirely personal. Opportunities for service abound, and the more of those opportunities we seize, the more likely are we to do good and experience the satisfaction of having done it. To some extent, service is not so much what we do as how we do it, the attitude we take towards doing what we do.

Sometimes we get it wrong

Of course, even when the motive is to serve, there are times when we get it wrong, and what we do does harm rather than good. We try to help where we can, and fail when we must. Experience is the teacher here, and all we can do is learn, dust ourselves off and try again. This may be one aspect of "fattening on disappointment" which the revelators tell us is such a large part of our future careers. As we often say, it is character building! And maybe we should remind ourselves that wise service can sometimes require us to resist giving in to silly demands for help. Sometimes this requires more determination than giving in.

Jesus and the innkeeper

Service ultimately, is the attempt to do good. I really like what Jesus said to the mistress of the Greek inn: "Minister your hospitality as one who entertains the children of the Most High. Elevate the drudgery of your daily toil to the high levels of a fine art through the increasing realization that you minister to God in the persons whom he indwells by his spirit which has descended to live within the hearts of men, thereby seeking to transform their minds and lead their souls to the knowledge of the Paradise Father of all these bestowed gifts of the divine spirit."

Finally, to put Worship and Service into relationship with one another, remember what Rodan had to say (p 1777) about how Jesus used meditative worship and spiritual communion to derive the spiritual power to perform great acts of service. This is how we can all go about our lives—communing with the Father through our indwelling adjusters, and applying the fruits of such communion to the service of our fellow men.