

Personal Worship Guide



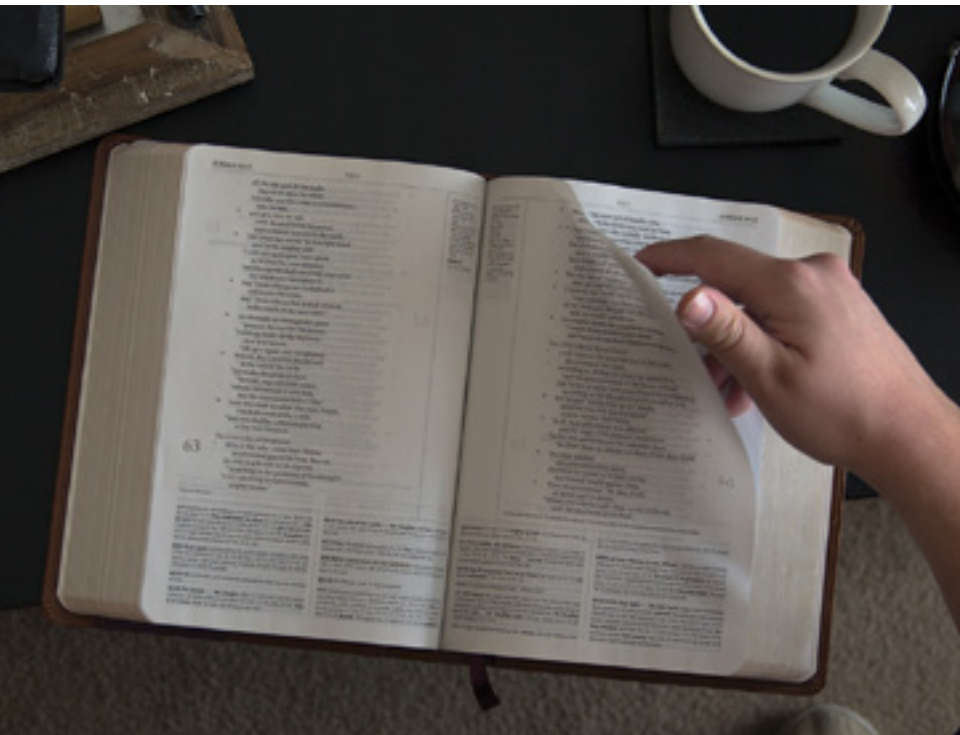
Every relationship is built on communication.

The same is true of our relationship with God; it requires regular communication to grow. One of the primary ways you can communicate with God is by practicing daily personal worship. In fact, there is no habit more important for your spiritual life than meeting with Jesus every day.

When we think about worship, many of us picture Sunday morning, not Monday morning. Often our time with Jesus looks more like a weekly corporate boost than it does daily bread. You're not alone if you've never fully committed to a daily time of worship, but now is a great time to start! This guide will help you create and sustain a daily rhythm so that you can spend time with Jesus, learn to do what Jesus does, and become like Jesus.

“And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, [Jesus] departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.”

Mark 1:35



GETTING STARTED

The best way to establish and maintain daily personal worship is to have a plan. We all make time for what's important to us. If we prioritize our relationship with Jesus, we will plan accordingly. Keep in mind the most effective plans are the ones that mesh with your personality.

Start by setting aside a specific time and place each day. The morning is typically the best time because it's less likely you will be interrupted or distracted. It also helps to set the emotional and spiritual tone for your day. Whenever you pick, set aside 15 minutes to an hour of uninterrupted time. Keep in mind, the quality of your time with God is more important than the amount of time you spend.

Next, identify a specific place: at home, in the office, or wherever, that will be free of distractions. Wherever you pick, quiet is always the priority! Make sure your phone is put away (it's the epitome of distraction), and avoid anything else that will keep you from focusing.

Sit down, take a few deep breaths, and start by asking God to give you focus, clarity, and to remove any distractions. Before you begin reading your Bible, pause, reflect, prepare your heart, and ask God to reveal himself to you. It's easy to quickly skim through a bible passage, pray for a few seconds, and move on with your day, but checking a religious box for the day is not the goal. The goal is to have a meaningful and impactful daily encounter with the God of the universe. Praying Psalm 119:18 is a great start: "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law."

Lastly, grab your Bible, a pen or highlighter, and something to write on.



BIBLE READING

Reading Scripture is a vital element in personal worship. That said, many of us are guilty of flipping open our Bible, quickly looking for an encouraging word or an easy application point, and moving on with our day. This isn't the goal. The purpose of personal worship is not just to get something, but to get someone. It's been said, "you become what you behold." So, when we read Scripture, we do so primarily to meet with and become like Jesus.

Make sure you have a Bible translation that you can understand (we think the ESV is great). It's also generally helpful to follow a Bible reading plan. There are plenty of great reading plans out there. Here are two you could start today: [30-Day Bible Reading Plan](#)/[Read the Bible In a Year](#)

The Bible can be hard to understand; It's okay to admit this! It's an enormous book that includes tons of information, different subjects, and varying genres. For many people, the key to understanding the Bible is knowing the structure of the Bible. While you read, seek to understand the context of the passage. This involves answering as many who, what, when, where, and why questions as possible. Keep in mind that the Bible is written for you, but it's not written to you. Most importantly, remember that all of Scripture proclaims one message and points to one person: Jesus.

The H.E.A.R. Method

As you read, we recommend you Highlight your favorite verse(s), Explain what happened in the text, Apply it to your life, and Respond in prayer. This is known as the H.E.A.R. method.

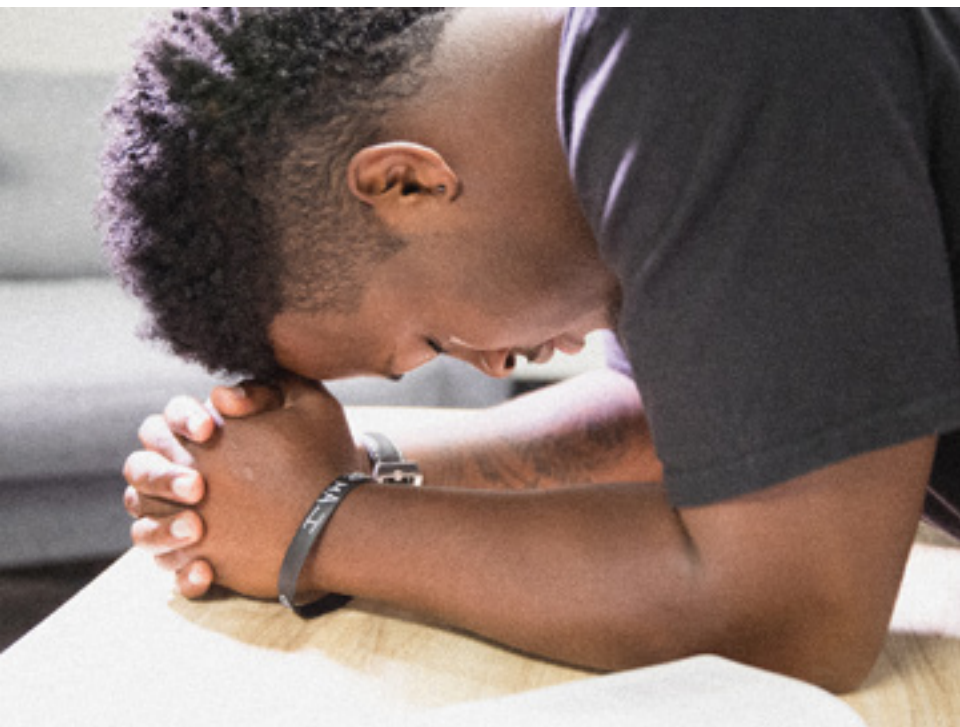
Highlight - What verses(s) or statement(s) from today's passage stood out to you?

Explain - Once you finish reading, take the time to revisit what you highlighted. Use your notebook and pen to both explain the passage and write down the main idea in your own words.

Apply - How can you apply this passage to your own life? Write down your ideas as they come.

Respond - In light of today's passage, how are you going to respond to God in prayer? We'll talk more about prayer in the next section.

Keep in mind that H.E.A.R. is simply a tool you can use to help maintain a daily rhythm of hearing and responding to Jesus.



PRAYER

Most of us would consider prayer a weakness in our relationship with Jesus. Either we feel awkward about how we pray, or we are embarrassed when we think about how little we pray. The disciples were no different! In Matthew 6:9-13, we see them ask Jesus to teach them how to pray. Jesus' response was a model prayer, where we orient ourselves to God and simply spend time with Him - asking for participation, provision, and protection as we follow His way.

In our busy and distracted world, we must remain in constant communication with God. That's precisely what Jesus had in mind in John 15. Jesus says we must "abide" in Him like a vine and a branch. Later, Paul would call this praying "without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This type of "remaining" or "abiding" is the type of communication we can have with Him through prayer.

So, as you abide in Jesus through prayer, here is a helpful method, commonly called A.C.T.S. This tool allows you to employ a few of the different types of prayer. Consider keeping a short journal of your daily prayers.

Adoration - Start by praising God for who He is and what He has done. Pick a Psalm and pray it back to God. Recall his promises in Scripture and bring to mind how God has provided for you.

Example: "God, you are my refuge and strength. You help me when I am in trouble!" (Psalm 46:1)

Confession - Next, ask God to reveal if there is anything unworthy in your life (Psalm 119:36-37). Confess those things the Holy Spirit brings to light and acknowledge them as wrong. Decide to turn from your sin, and trust the way of Jesus.

Example: "God, yesterday I was rude to my family. I'm sorry. Please give me the strength and patience to love my family how you intended."

Thanksgiving - Now, we thank Him for His presence and grace in our lives. This aspect of prayer is the perfect antidote for worry and anxiety, as we dwell on the benefits of the gospel (Col. 3:15-17).

Example: "God, thank you for the grace you have given me in Christ. I'm grateful for your provision today."

Supplication - Lastly, bring your requests to God. It can be about anything; God simply wants to hear from you. Write down those requests where you need God to move. Write down the names of people you are praying for. Even when you don't see immediate results, Jesus encourages us to keep praying and not lose heart (Luke 18:1-8).

Example: "God, please reveal yourself to my coworker so that he would come into a relationship with you."



OTHER PRACTICES

Though Scripture and prayer are the two most essential elements of personal worship, there are some additional practices you can try as well! Here are a few ideas:

Silence & Solitude

This is one of the best practices from the life of Jesus to help you thrive amid the chaos of our busy, distracted, and noisy world. Put simply, silence and solitude is intentional time in the quiet to be alone with ourselves and God; to rest in God. In her book, *Invitation to Silence & Solitude*, Ruth Haley Barton affirms that “In silence, we create space for God’s activity, rather than filling every minute with our own.” Practice it for yourself: Try to settle into a comfortable position and take a few deep breaths. Take inventory of your thoughts and emotions. Meditate on the goodness of God. Rest in Jesus.

Listen to Worship Music

Worship music doesn't have to be reserved for Sundays! In fact, our worship team has created a [playlist of music](#) available on most streaming platforms to help you worship at home.

Memorize Scripture

There are plenty of positives to this practice! Most importantly, Jesus did it. For Jesus, Scripture was not just a tool or weapon; It was part of how he viewed and interacted with God and the world. If we want to live out the lifestyle of Jesus, we too must be people who know the Bible well; People who store up the word in our hearts (Psalm 119:11). There are all different ways to start memorizing Scripture! Here are a few options:

Pick a few verses that are important or familiar to you (John 3:16, Proverbs 4:5-6, 2 Corinthians 5:17, etc.)

Pick longer passages or chapters to memorize in full (Psalm 23, John 15, Romans 8, etc.)

Check out the [Bible Memory App](#) or the [Topical Memory System](#)

Read Additional Books

Though they should never replace Scripture, there are plenty of other great books written by pastors & leaders that can strengthen your faith. Check out amazon or your local bookstore.



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