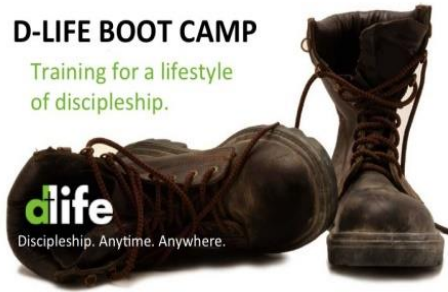


## D-LIFE BOOT CAMP

Training for a lifestyle  
of discipleship.



# Keeping it Real

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Pastor Dale L. Crawley Sr.

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20*

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Rev. Deborah Crawley, Teacher  
Sis. Tammi Crummy, Asst. Teacher

## EXPLORING WORSHIP

### WHAT IS WORSHIP?

Finding the perfect definition for worship can be a little elusive. Perhaps that's because worship is a matter of the heart, and every attempt to define the heart can feel inadequate. Praise seems rather straightforward to identify, but worship is another matter. Being a heart encounter, worship is as infinite in its depths as God's heart and those of His worshipers.

### Some Random definitions:

1. Worship is one's heart expression of love, adoration, and praise to God with an attitude and acknowledgment of His supremacy and Lordship.
2. Worship is an act by a redeemed man, the creature, toward God, his Creator, whereby his will, intellect, and emotions gratefully respond in reverence, honor, and devotion to the revelation of God's person expressed in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, as the Holy Spirit illuminates God's written word to his heart.
3. Worship means "to feel in the heart." Worship also means to express in some appropriate manner what we feel.
4. True worship and praise are "awesome wonder and overpowering love" in the presence of our God.

Morris Smith, said, ***"Real worship defies definition; it can only be experienced."*** I think that's right, for worship was never intended by God to be the discussion of textbooks but rather the communion with God experienced by His loved ones.

Worship is not a musical activity but an expression of the heart. Music can aid worship, but it isn't necessary for worship. Worship isn't an activity simply for those who love to sing. Thousands of folks who "can't carry a tune in a bucket" are adoring worshipers. Music can be used as a catalyst for worship, but even when no musical instruments are available, like the woman in Luke 7, we can anoint the feet of Jesus with the oil of our affections.

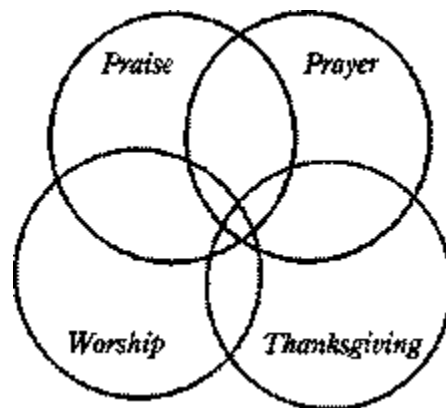
## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRAISE AND WORSHIP

Perhaps we can understand worship better if we can distinguish it from praise. Distinguishing the two is not so easy, and even possibly artificial. "**Praise and worship**" are sometimes spoken in the same breath, and it's possible to do both simultaneously. But often they operate differently.



**In a corporate gathering**, one person might be worshipping while another is praising. Looking at them both, it may appear to you that they're both involved in the same activity. Sometimes the differences are subtle. The outward forms that praise and worship employ are often identical.

Discerning between the two can be almost as difficult as dividing between soul and spirit. There's only one thing sharp enough to discern between soul and spirit, and that is the word of God (Heb 4:12). If I try to distinguish between my own soul and spirit, the lines become very blurry. Similarly, while praise and worship are different entities, they are often impossible to separate.



The differences between praise and worship as we study, therefore, are almost hypothetical. But perhaps we'll gain a better grasp of worship by considering these hypothetical differences.

**First**, God doesn't need our praises, but He does seek worshipers. Let me explain the difference. He commands our praise, not because He needs it, but because we need

to praise Him. It positions us rightly before Him and changes us. We humble ourselves so we can exalt Him. Thus, praise places us in proper relationship to God. God doesn't really need our praises, but it seems to be different when it comes to worship. There's something about worship that He desires and wants. Jesus said that the Father seeks worshipers (John 4:23). He seeks them because He longs for their hearts.

Notice that God seeks worshipers, not worship. He's not after the verbiage of worship, but rather the wholehearted affections of true worshipers. He seeks the heart.

A **second** distinctive between the two is that praise can sometimes be distant while worship is usually intimate. The heart of man need not be near to God for praise to occur. I have heard stories of people who have sung and praised God while in a drunken state. I have even heard of drunkards witnessing to one another and in their witness giving praise to God. On one occasion, Jesus said the rocks would cry out if His disciples didn't praise Him (Luke 19:37-40). Rocks obviously don't have an interactive relationship with the Lord, and yet it's possible for them to praise. The trees, the mountains, rivers, sun, moon, and stars—all can praise the Lord (Ps 148:3-12), and yet God has no reciprocal relationship with any of these. So praise can happen from a distance, and without relationship.



Worship is different. It happens in the nearness of heartfelt relationship. In worship, we "kiss the Son" (Ps 2:12). It requires relationship because it involves both giving and receiving. Praise can function like a one-way street, but worship is two-way communion and fellowship.

**Third**, praise is always seen or heard, but worship isn't always evident to an observer. Sometimes worship is visible and obvious, but at other times it's quiet and visually imperceptible. Only God knows when someone is worshiping.

**Fourth**, praise has a strong horizontal dynamic to it, while worship is primarily vertical. Let me explain. In praise, we often speak to one another of His goodness and greatness (Eph 5:19). Praise is very aware of other praisers in the room. In worship, however, we lose sight of others around us and become preoccupied with the wonder of who He is.

**Praise is often preparatory to worship.** We might come initially into His presence with thanksgiving and praise (Ps 100:4), but that often morphs naturally into worship. Praise often acts as a gateway to worship. But to say praise starts first and worship comes next is not a hard and fast rule. In some meetings, a depth of worship can explode in the end with exuberant praise. Praise and worship, therefore, are beyond any kind of a confining formula.

**Another distinction** between praise and worship is often found in the mood of the music. Worship is often accompanied by slower songs and praise by faster songs, BUT exceptions abound. But in the main, it seems the mood of slower music is more conducive to worship, while the mood of faster music more readily supports praise. Ultimately, the best way to determine whether a song is a “praise song” or a “worship song” is to examine the lyrics.

**A final variance** between praise and worship is seen in the way praise is often accompanied by effort while worship is usually effortless. A dynamic praise service can leave you sweating. But worship seems to operate differently, carried along by the power of the Holy Spirit.

I’m not implying that worship is superior to praise. Both are beautiful and valuable, and both play a vital role in the life of every believer and congregation. If we think worship is more desirable than praise, the push will be on in every praise service to progress into worship. But praise is a glorious end all in itself. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will lead us to remain in praise for a protracted period of time because that is what He is empowering in the moment.

I’ve actually heard people speak disparagingly of praise songs. I’ve heard comments like, “*I’m not interested in songs that speak about God, I only want songs that speak to God. Let’s go vertical!*” I agree that most of our worship **should be a vertical** encounter with God, but that doesn’t negate the wonderful and desirable role of praise.



Paul spoke of both dynamics when he wrote of, “**speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord**”

(Eph 5:19). In that verse, he has us speaking “to one another” and also “to the Lord.” Speaking to one another in song is biblical. I don’t think we should be overly analytical about whether a song is addressing God in the first, second, or third person. **Let’s get our eyes off** the mechanics and be childlike in engaging with Jesus. Whether the song is vertical or horizontal, let’s give our hearts fully to the Lord!