

# You Are What Your Worship

To be human is to worship, and to worship is to be transformed. In this series we'll explore how being human is to be shaped into the image of the gods we worship in the world, and how our humanity and our worship are recaptured in Christ.

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**BIBLE  
SOCIETY**

Live light

Scripture taken from *New International Version (NIV)*.

Day	Readings	Reference	Reflection/Question	Prayer
1	<p>Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”</p> <p>So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.</p> <p>God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”</p>	Genesis 1:26-28	<p>God makes us in his ‘image’. He made us to be his representatives in his kingdom. This is what we were made for, and as we do this we’re to spread and reflect his presence throughout the world. Our life ends up representing whatever it is we treat as God—whatever we worship.</p> <p><b>How can this shape your approach to living today in God’s world?</b></p>	<p>Father,</p> <p>Thanks that you made me to represent you. Help me to not be so caught up in the goodness of the things you made that I worship and reflect them instead of you. Catch up my desires and imagination with who you are, and in this task you give me, so that I can’t help but live in a way that points people to you.</p> <p>In Jesus name, Amen.</p>
2	<p>Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.</p> <p>Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food.</p>	Genesis 2:7-9	<p>God makes humanity; we don’t make God. God breathes life into us so that we become alive. He inspires us for life in his world, bearing his image—Adam, then Eve, are given the task of spreading the garden—the good and ‘temple-like’ dwelling place of God throughout his world, inspired to expand the living God’s presence as they live.</p> <p><b>How does knowing you were made to be inspired by God change how we should think of each breath?</b></p>	<p>Father,</p> <p>Help me remember that every breath I breathe comes from you, that each breath is given to inspire me to serve you, enjoy you, and share your presence with others as your kingdom expands to the ends of the earth.</p> <p>In Jesus name, Amen.</p>

# You Are What Your Worship (continued)

Day	Readings	Reference	Reflection/Question	Prayer
3	<p>“For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”</p> <p>When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.</p>	Genesis 3:5-6	<p>One of the tragedies in this passage is that Eve, who is meant to be Adam’s ally in spreading God’s presence throughout the world, desires something she and Adam already have... they’re already like God. They get God wrong and so get life wrong. The serpent sells them a lemon. Adam and Eve’s picture of God is wrong. The key to being like God is worshipping him—directing our hearts and desires towards him so that we know what good and evil look like, because we know what God looks like, and that he is good. We can’t just decide what good is for ourselves. Forbidden fruit is not sweeter.</p> <p><b>Do you ever make Adam and Eve’s mistake of thinking that God isn’t really good? Do you ever think he’s holding out on you? Tell him.</b></p>	<p>Father,</p> <p>Keep me from imagining that you are stingy and holding good things back from me. I confess I often think and act this way, choosing my own way and so choosing death and destruction for myself and those around me. Keep my eyes fixed on the goodness of Jesus, who did not grasp hold of the promise of the serpent but kept his eyes on the joy set before him and endured, and so make me more like him.</p> <p>In his name, Amen.</p>
4	<p>“You shall have no other gods before me.</p> <p>“You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them.”</p>	Exodus 20:3-5	<p>The God who speaks has just brought his people out of Egypt, and now he gives them some instructions about who (and what) they’re to worship—they’re to do what humanity was created for, worshipping him and so carrying his name around the world without abusing it. They’re to rule the world; not be ruled by it. The living, breathing, speaking, saving God they worship can’t be captured and represented in the dead image of some created thing. Instead, he makes people to carry his image throughout the world as they worship him.</p> <p><b>What distracts you from God, and shapes the way you live in a way that robs God of you as his image bearer?</b></p>	<p>Father,</p> <p>We’re sorry for thinking that you are smaller than you are, that you can be represented not just in our finite minds but when we think finite created things are more worthy of worship than you. We’re sorry that left to our own devices, and in our hearts, we would often crucify Jesus again, given the chance, but we pray that in his life, death, and resurrection, we would see what you look like, and your love for us, and so worship you with all that you have made us to be, and so bear the image of Christ in the world.</p> <p>In his name, Amen.</p>

# You Are What Your Worship (continued)

Day	Readings	Reference	Reflection/Question	Prayer
5	<p>But their idols are silver and gold, made by human hands. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see. They have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but cannot smell. They have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but cannot walk, nor can they utter a sound with their throats. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.</p>	Psalm 115:4-8	<p>We can't help but reflect something in our interactions with others. We talk about the things we love; we dress and speak in ways that reflect how we think life should be lived. We project an ideal image of ourselves not just on social media, but as we interact face to face with others. It's human. We're made to reflect <i>and</i> we're natural born worshippers. The relationship between what we worship and what we reflect is simple. We become what we worship. Worship the living God and you'll bear his image and share in the life he gives; worship dead idols and you'll bear their image in your life, and share their fate. You'll die.</p> <p><b>If someone looked at your life what would people see you reflecting?</b></p>	<p>Father,</p> <p>My life so often reflects things other than that I am made and sent into the world by you, and given life by your Spirit. Help me to trust in you; to rest in being made by you, loved by you in the death and resurrection of Jesus and in my recreation by the Spirit. Keep me from the idols I form with my imagination and trust in with my heart. Keep me from the deadly consequences of false worship.</p> <p>In his name, Amen.</p>
6	<p>Half of the wood he burns in the fire; over it he prepares his meal, he roasts his meat and eats his fill. He also warms himself and says, "Ah! I am warm; I see the fire." From the rest he makes a god, his idol; he bows down to it and worships. He prays to it and says, "Save me! You are my god!" They know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds closed so they cannot understand.</p>	Isaiah 44:16-18	<p>The author David Foster Wallace, in a famous speech called <i>This Is Water</i> famously said "everybody worships, the only choice we get is what to worship" and that a reason to consider worshipping not a god of our own making is that "pretty much anything else will eat us alive." He's right. You become what you worship, often with disastrous results. We no longer see or know the world or God the way we should. We are blinded to our own stupidity in worshipping a thing we made for ourselves, and totally unable to see and know the God who crafted us.</p> <p><b>What tugs at your heart as you make decisions about where you give your time, money, and energy?</b></p>	<p>Father,</p> <p>Keep my eyes open. Keep me from arrogance and blindness. Help me see the idols I create and bow down to in my heart, and in my life. Help me see the folly of a life lived in pursuit of the good things of this world and have me see these good things as reason to pursue their good creator. Help me use all that I have, and all that I am, to love and serve you, and so love and serve others.</p> <p>In Jesus name, Amen.</p>

# You Are What Your Worship (continued)

Day	Readings	Reference	Reflection/Question	Prayer
7	<p>“I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God.</p>	Ezekiel 36:25-28	<p>We become what we worship, but God, the great creator who desires images of himself in his world for the sake of his name and glory, promises not to leave his people in the consequences of their idol worship. He promises to change our hearts by his Spirit, to redirect our worship and our lives so that we follow his pattern for living, and to return us to a place—a kingdom—where we represent him again. This is the note of hope that people living in exile must rely on; the answer to their calamity is not to work their way out of exile, but to worship their way out of exile, and that worship is only made possible by God working first. We need God’s breath to inspire us again.</p> <p><b>Is there an area of your life that feels dead? A bit of you that you can’t quite commit to God’s way of life that keeps you from loving him with all your heart? What would happen if you worshipped your way out instead, if you focused more on who God is, and that he is re-creating you, than what you want to change?</b></p>	<p>Father,</p> <p>Help me order my loves with you at the centre of my life. Continue working in my heart and keep me from false loves that will lead me away from you and into exile and death. Work in my heart by your Spirit to restore me to life.</p> <p>In his name, Amen.</p>

# You Are What Your Worship (continued)

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8	<p>Show me the coin used for paying the tax.” They brought him a denarius, and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?”</p> <p>“Caesar’s,” they replied.</p> <p>Then he said to them, “So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”</p>	Matthew 22:19-21	<p>This little passage in Matthew isn’t just a guide to paying tax or setting the scope of the government’s power; it’s Jesus making a bold claim about how much of us belongs to God. God doesn’t want a few silver coins from you—give those to the would-be-gods who want their image carried around in every pocket in the empire. God wants all of you. And he wants you to give yourself to him; that’s the radical call of Jesus, for us to honour the image and inscription written and found at the core of our being; the image and signature of the author of life; the law that he now inscribes on our hearts by his Spirit if we worship him through Jesus and so give ourselves to him.</p> <p><b>Are you giving yourself to God in such a way that it reveals you belong to him?</b></p>	<p>Father,</p> <p>When I see myself in the mirror, please remind me that I am yours and I belong to you. When I see other people, remind me that they also belong to you and that, like the lost coin in that parable, they are dear to you and need to be found by their owner.</p> <p>In Jesus name, Amen.</p>
9	<p>Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”</p>	Matthew 28:18-20	<p>God’s image bearers are to go to the ends of the earth, to be fruitful and multiply by making disciples; those who will be baptised in, and so live for, God’s name. This is a call to fill the earth with God’s image bearers again. Taking up this commission is a sign that we have been re-created in Christ, by the Spirit, to do what we are made to do. The difference is profound; by his Spirit dwelling in us, he’s now ‘with us always until the end of the age.’</p> <p><b>How might knowing that God is with you change how you think about your to do list today?</b></p>	<p>Father,</p> <p>Help me to take up your call to make disciples. Help me to know that you are with me in this world and so be confident in attempting this mission.</p> <p>In Jesus name, Amen.</p>

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10	<p>“From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’</p> <p>“Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill.”</p>	Acts 17:26-29	<p>Paul is in a city where people know they’re worshippers, and rather than shouting and pouting and setting up a temple to his God, Paul engages with their worshipping nature, and invites them to redirect their worship to the God who deserves it, to the God who won’t disappoint, deceive, and destroy. He points them away from the gods they make with human skill, to the God who makes us and gives us life, and breath, and everything; the God who so wants us to seek him. Paul doesn’t knock down the idols; he uses them to highlight the longing of our hearts that only Jesus can fill.</p> <p><b>What are some of the gods that people in your neighbourhood, or your friends and family, worship instead of the true and living God? How can you speak to these people about their worship and show them how Jesus is more satisfying?</b></p>	<p>Father,</p> <p>Thank you that though by rights and design I should have sought you out and reached out so that I might love and glorify you; you sought me out, and reached out to me, to draw me near to you, so that I might share in your glory forever. Allow this awe at who you are, and this bewildering picture of your love for me, to claim my heart and shape my life. Help me to know of the goodness and satisfaction of this story, not to take it for granted, so that I might speak well of you to those I love. Help me to take opportunities to share the Gospel with others, and call them from false worship today.</p> <p>In Jesus name, Amen.</p>

# You Are What Your Worship (continued)

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11	The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.	Colossians 1:15-18	<p>The wonder of the Jesus-made-flesh is that the infinite God becomes knowable by finite us; he's able to be seen and touched and smelled and heard in a way we humans couldn't manage. By worshipping Jesus we're drawn into his body, the church. When we keep our hearts and imaginations fixed on Jesus—the image of God—we become better worshippers because we have a richer knowledge of who God is, and we're re-cast in his image so we become more like the people we were made to be in the beginning.</p> <p><b>When are you tempted to worship a God who does not look like Jesus?</b></p>	<p>Father,</p> <p>Thank you that you loved us so much that you sent your son into the world to lay down his life for me.</p> <p>Father, if your place is at the centre of the universe, and if you make Jesus supreme over everything in the cosmos, please help me live with Jesus at the centre of my life, being held together by him and ready to serve you according to your plans and purposes.</p> <p>In Jesus name, Amen.</p>
12	Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.	Colossians 3:9-14	<p>If you are a Christian, you are a whole new you. We toss out the old self, and take up the new. This involves a change of habits, which cultivate new virtues. The image created by this 'new self' looks a lot like Jesus. As you put on the new self, you will start to look and love like Jesus. These new virtues are what it looks like to be God's holy, chosen, people—the restored image bearers promised in the Old Testament. They're things we do together; not alone.</p> <p><b>Does your Christian community live life together in a way that reflects Jesus' image?</b></p>	<p>Father,</p> <p>Help me fix my imagination and desire on the things of heaven; on where Christ rules and on where my future is secure. Help me to put on the new self, to be compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, and patient; to bear with others and to forgive, and to love. Help me look to the life and death of Jesus to see what these virtues look like and so become more like him as I live.</p> <p>In Jesus name, Amen.</p>

# You Are What Your Worship (continued)

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13	<p>And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.</p>	Romans 8:28-30	<p>God's plan for us is to make us what we were made to be; though more gloriously. Where once we simply reflected the glory of God, now, as God's Spirit dwells in us, we are transformed to the image of Jesus. In Christ we become something more glorious than Adam and Eve before they sinned. We no longer depend on the tree of life to live forever, but on the tree of Calvary, and the resurrection, which secure our destiny. We might have all sorts of pictures of what good is—just like Adam and Eve—but God guarantees that goodness is caught up in us being his children, being conformed to the image of God, and being glorified so that we might reflect more of his glory, forever.</p> <p><b>What steps can you take to keep God's plans for you at the centre of your thinking and imagining?</b></p>	<p>Father,</p> <p>Re-create me by your Spirit. Restore my soul. Lead me to the tree that secures my life, the cross of Jesus, lead me to where I see your love and glory on display and so conform me to the image of your son. Help me to trust that your plan for me is for my good, and help me to love you in such a way that my life is lived according to your purposes.</p> <p>In his name, Amen.</p>



# You Are What Your Worship (continued)

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14	And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.	2 Corinthians 3:18	<p>Worship is the right response to seeing God or knowing something of his glory. This should have been easy for Adam and Eve as God walked with them in the garden, and it should've been possible for Israel who through the law, the temple, and their rituals were consistently reminded of God's presence. It should be evident to us because creation itself reflects God's divine nature and character. But it's not. We're broken worshippers. Our idolatry means humanity no longer sees God as we should. But God intervenes and re-introduces himself. We see God, in his glory, anew, in a way that captivates us, by his Spirit; and so can't help but be transformed into living images of Jesus. We're able to worship God again, and so we become what we worship.</p> <p><b>What are you giving your life to? Is it making you truly alive, or is it killing you?</b></p>	<p>Father,</p> <p>Unveil my face and my heart, by your Spirit, so that I know and see Jesus as Lord, and so that as I contemplate his glory and worship him, I am transformed into his image of Jesus. Help me to worship you by following the pattern of life I see in him; offering myself as a living sacrifice in all that I do and say.</p> <p>In Jesus name, Amen.</p>