



# THE WAY OF WORSHIP

PART III OF "THE GOD-CENTERED LIFE"<sup>1</sup>

THE WAY OF WORSHIP

Introduction	p 3
"For My Sake"	p 4
Seeing the "Up-liftedness" of God	p 5
Faith	p 8
The Attributes of God	p 12
An Essential Form of Worship	p 15
The God-Centered Calling	p 19



© 2009

W.D. Furioso  
Edited by Frances Furioso  
ACT PUBLICATIONS  
[www.AtChristsTable.org](http://www.AtChristsTable.org)



---

<sup>1</sup> "The God-Centered Life" is an essay which includes both this essay and another essay entitled, "God-Centeredness".

# INTRODUCTION

*“Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.” For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.”<sup>2</sup>*

I think the phrase, “for My sake” beautifully encapsulates the concept of “God-Centeredness”. The Fall of Humanity has been a fall into *self-centeredness*, and this self-centeredness is the greatest hindrance to *God-Centeredness*. Previously, we have seen that *The Way of the Cross* is God’s way of displacing our self-centeredness to move us back in the direction of God-Centeredness. Here, in *The Way of Worship*, I would like to share what the Holy Spirit has been instructing me regarding the phenomenon of our seeking to *save* our lives while the Lord encourages us to *lose our lives*. It is obvious that **it takes faith** to “Let go, and let God.” – that is, to *let go and lose our lives*. What may be a little less obvious is that we *seek to save our lives because of unbelief*. It is that *unbelief* which the Holy Spirit has

---

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 16:24-25

been speaking to me about in my own personal life and what I hope to communicate to you here.

## “FOR MY SAKE”

“It’s not about you; it’s all about God.” Unfortunately, this statement has almost become clichéd, but in its reality, it portrays *a truly God-Centered perspective for our Christian faith*. It’s a sad fact that we can travel very far along on our spiritual journey and still be trapped in “It’s all about me.” Typically, we’re not aware of this until the Spirit of Truth who, “desires truth in our innermost being”,<sup>3</sup> removes the veil from our hearts and minds. When we do embrace the reality that “It’s all about Him”, we come to the place where we see God for Who He is – **Creator** - and see ourselves for who we are – “**createes**”. Then, and only then, do we begin to understand and find our place in HISstory and how our lives can “serve the purpose of God in our generation”.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 51:6

<sup>4</sup> Acts 13:36

## SEEING THE “UP-LIFTEDNESS” OF GOD

We lived and ministered in South Africa for 13 years, and during this time I became very good friends with a Brazilian who was pastoring a Portuguese-speaking church in Johannesburg. He would regularly have me come to minister in his church there, and over the years, we became very close around the Person of Christ. He eventually returned to his homeland and planted a church in the Rio de Janeiro area. Five times, he arranged month-long ministry itineraries for me in Brazil. During one of these missions, after ministering to a church in Pau Grande, a town outside of Rio, the local pastor invited us to travel up the old road towards the city of Petrópolis<sup>5</sup> on a mountain overlooking the city of Rio de Janeiro. The purpose was to meet and pray with a man who had been living alone in a hut on the mountain for a number of years praying for Rio de Janeiro. After meeting the man, it was suggested that we separate on the mountain, pray individually, and then re-group and pray together.

---

<sup>5</sup> Petrópolis, also known as *The Imperial City* of Brazil, is a town in the state of Rio de Janeiro, about 65 km from the city of Rio de Janeiro in the forested hills of the Serra dos Órgãos mountain range. It is the “City of Pedro”, the former summer palace of the second Brazilian Emperor, Pedro II.

As I stood on a large boulder and looked out on the panorama of Rio de Janeiro below, the opening verse to Isaiah 6 emerged from my spirit into my mind:

*“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.”*

I immediately knew that this wasn't necessarily pertaining to Rio de Janeiro. What the Holy Spirit was speaking was being spoken *to me*. The simple message was this: “Isaiah has seen Me ‘high and lifted up’. You haven’t.” I did not feel disparaged by the Lord. It just seemed that He wanted me to see something I needed to see. Then these words came up from my heart: “You see clearly the fallenness of Humanity, and this is necessary and good. But you also need to see the ‘up-liftedness’ of God.” I knew what He meant: I had clear insight into the fallen human condition - sin and its pervasive and tragic consequences in the lives of people. It had repeatedly pierced my heart for 33 years on 4 continents. I understood theologically and experientially the “death (which is) the wages of sin”. But I hadn't sufficiently seen the “up-liftedness” of God – His redemptive power over sin and death. I hadn't received sufficient revelation or personal

experience of this in my life and ministry. Indeed, this had a limiting effect on my life and ministry. The effect had been specifically on **my faith**, without which it is impossible to please God.<sup>6</sup> It was not that I didn't have any faith, and was not at all pleasing to God. But, He wanted me to **grow in faith**. He wanted me to know more about Him. He wanted me to have more understanding of who He is. For, "the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding".<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Hebrew 11:6

<sup>7</sup> Proverbs 9:10

## FAITH

I need to explain what I mean by “faith”. I believe my understanding is based on what is conveyed throughout the whole of scripture. The Greek word translated “faith” - in the verb form (for *faith* is an “action” word) - is *pisteuo*, which means *to believe, to trust, to depend upon, to lean upon*. Therefore *to “grow in faith” is to grow in dependency*. Biblically, the object of such reliance is God, not self. This is expressly why **The Way of Worship**, and also **The Way of the Cross**, *displace our self-centeredness and move us in the direction of God-Centeredness*. When we do not have sufficient faith (reliance) in God, we tend to become self-reliant, and also begin to place our reliance on people, places and things. Unconsciously, we begin to fall into the trap of “seeking to save our lives”.

I have to admit that even for many years after that experience on the mountain in Brazil, I could not say that my faith had grown significantly. In fact, it seemed that in the years I had been back in the States I saw more of my own fallenness and brokenness, more of the fallenness and brokenness in the lives of those I love, as well as, in the society around me. But the Holy Spirit had begun to make me acutely aware that I still needed to



see the Lord's "up-liftedness" by showing me even more clearly how my faith, life and ministry had been limited by this lack. The details are too deep and pervasive to try to communicate here. Suffice to say, I had come to a personal spiritual crisis point. I could identify with the father of the demonized son when he said: "I do believe; help my unbelief."<sup>8</sup> and the apostles when they asked the Lord: "Increase our faith."<sup>9</sup>

In 2008, I saw a film adaptation of the John Patrick Shanley stage play *Doubt: A Parable*, which starred Phillip Seymour Hoffman as Father Flynn and Meryl Streep as Sister Aloysius. I highly recommend the film. I attended a Catholic church school in the '60s, and I would say that Shanley set the story in a 1964 Catholic church school in New York in a very authentic way. Hoffman and Streep portrayed their characters excellently. Without giving away the story line, suffice to say that both characters had a crisis of faith – doubt – based both upon their own shortcomings, but also upon their ministry experience of the human condition. We might say, their faith had become "jaded". One of the descriptions the Thesaurus lists under the word "jaded" is the very apt phrase - "world-weary". In the character

---

<sup>8</sup> Mark 9:24

<sup>9</sup> Luke 17:5

portrayals, I think Shanley and the actors ingeniously brought out some deep truths regarding “doubt” or incomplete faith. In the case of the Catholic priest, the natural outlet for him was to give a sermon about “doubt”. As it turns out, his weakness of faith was the root of a serious sin. In the case of the Catholic nun, her “doubt” is finally admitted to in the powerful closing scene of the film. But near the end of the film, one begins to realize that it was because her faith was almost gasping for its final breath, that she was driven to single-handedly work and succeed at exposing the sin of the priest – *seemingly quite without the help of God*. And that’s the point! If we don’t believe God can or will do it, almost out of necessity, *we* are driven to do it! If we don’t have sufficient faith in God, we find ourselves *struggling on our own* against the sin and death in this world! That will make one “world-weary”!

I longed to be able to say like Isaiah: *“I saw the Lord, and He was high and lifted up.”* – and to be able to say like Job: *“I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You.”*<sup>10</sup> Think about all that Job went through – typifying the consequences of the brokenness of Humanity. But also think of the “the outcome of the Lord’s dealings” with Job.<sup>11</sup> The

---

<sup>10</sup> Job 42:5

<sup>11</sup> James 5:11

culmination of the Job story is that God had brought him to a particular spiritual place – Job came to the place of **seeing the Lord** – “**high and lifted up**”. It is there that we begin to have the “**faith that overcomes the world**”<sup>12</sup> – namely, **faith in God’s redemptive power over the sin and death that pervades human existence.**

---

<sup>12</sup> I John 5:4

## THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

So, what will “increase our faith”? What will help us see the “up-liftedness” of God? This is what the Holy Spirit showed me – it’s really nothing new – it is something very foundational:

**WORSHIP.** In this context, “worship” means **recognizing and responding to the worthiness of God.** It can be said that

*“Recognizing”* (or “seeing”) is the first part of worship – that which precedes and precipitates the second part, which is *“Response”*. Certainly, throughout scripture, when someone “sees” the Lord, **the immediate response is worship.**<sup>13</sup>

The names of God found in Scripture are like miniature portraits of His essence, nature, character – that is, **His attributes.** The various circumstances in the Scripture passages which bring forth each of the names of God are important.

David sang:

“I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart; before the gods  
*I sing your praise; I bow down* toward your holy temple and give  
thanks to **your name** for your steadfast love and your faithfulness,

---

<sup>13</sup> Genesis 35:7; Leviticus 9:24; II Chronicles 7:3; Matthew 14:33; Revelation 7:11, 11:16, 19:4

for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.”<sup>14</sup>

The names of God declare much about His person, and it is the Word of God that reveals God and His names. There are good books on the names and attributes of God.<sup>15</sup> Various lists of God’s names and attributes are also available on the Internet. But the following excerpt from the Westminster Confession of Faith gives a wonderful introduction to the concept of seeing and worshiping God for Who He is:

*“There is but one only, living, and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal, most just, and*

---

<sup>14</sup> Psalm 138:1-2 English Standard Version

<sup>15</sup> *The Names of God*, Andrew Jukes (Kregel); *Names of God*, Nathan Stone (Moody); *The Attributes of God*, Arthur W. Pink (Baker); *Knowing God*, J.I.Packer (IVP); *The Knowledge of the Holy*, A.W. Tozer (Harper & Row)

*terrible in his judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.*

*God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them. He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever himself pleaseth. In his sight all things are open and manifest, his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent, or uncertain. He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands. To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require of them.”<sup>16</sup>*

---

<sup>16</sup> From Chapter 2 of the Westminster Confession

# An Essential Form of Worship

An essential form of worship is to *reflect on God and His attributes*. We see this demonstrated in scripture, when Moses asked to *see the glory of God*. God put His glory on display *by rehearsing His attributes*, and thereby demonstrated how we can give God glory and worship Him:

<sup>18</sup> “Then Moses said, “I pray You, show me Your glory!” <sup>19</sup> And He said, “I Myself will make all My **goodness** pass before you, and will proclaim **the name of the Lord** before you; and I will be **gracious** to whom I will be **gracious**, and will show **compassion** on whom I will show **compassion**.... <sup>5</sup> The Lord descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon **the name of the Lord**. <sup>6</sup> Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, **compassionate** and **gracious**, **slow to anger**, and **abounding in lovingkindness** and **truth**.... <sup>8</sup> Moses made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship.”<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Exodus 33:18-19; 34:5-6, 8. It is significant to point out that the unquoted verses in this passage (Exodus 33:20-34:1-4), indicate that the attributes of God are revealed in His written word and are embodied in law of God.

## The Radiance of His Glory

“He (Jesus) is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature.”<sup>18</sup>

This verse tells us that Jesus is the exact and full revelation of God – the **ULTIMATE REFLECTION** of the attributes of the invisible God. And, like the Person of Christ Himself, the attributes of God are “the radiance” – the *shining forth*<sup>19</sup> of His “glory”,<sup>20</sup> which is the very nature of the invisible God. The attributes of God are a “representation of His nature”,<sup>21</sup> “the image of His person”<sup>22</sup>, “an engraved impression of His essence”.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Hebrews 1:3

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Hebrews 1:3. Greek: *apaugasma*, Strong’s # 541

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Hebrews 1:3. Greek: *doxa*, Strong’s # 1391. “i.e. What He essentially is and does, as exhibited in whatever way He reveals Himself in these respects, and particularly in the person of Christ.” (W.E. Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*)

<sup>21</sup> Hebrews 1:3 *New American Standard Version*

<sup>22</sup> Hebrews 1:3 *New King James Version*

<sup>23</sup> Hebrews 1:3 *Apostolic Bible Polyglot Version*. Greek: the *character*, Strong’s #5481 of His *ego*, Strong’s # 5287.



## Jacob's Ladder

In a manner of speaking, *worship – that is, reflecting on the attributes of God – can act as a bridge between the physical and spiritual realms. Worship can act as a type of "Jacob's Ladder" stretching between the physical and spiritual realms.*<sup>24</sup> A biblical image to communicate what I am referring to is found in Genesis 28:12:

"He (Jacob) had a dream, and behold, a ladder was *set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven*; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it."

Biblical angels function as "messengers". In this picture, they are *bringing divine messages to human beings*. This implies some sort of "translation process" taking place between the spiritual realm and the physical realm. I believe this mysterious function can take place in God-centered worship. Reflecting on the attributes of God establishes a **bridge, as it were into the spiritual realm. By reflecting on the various attributes of God, doors, or**

---

<sup>24</sup> A biblical image to communicate what I am referring to: Genesis 28:12 "He (Jacob) had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it." (Biblical angels function as "messengers".)

*windows, or portals* are opened between the physical and spiritual realms, through which God can reveal Himself.

# THE GOD-CENTERED CALLING

“Thus says the Lord:

‘Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,

Let not the mighty man glory in his might,

Nor let the rich man glory in his riches;

**But let him who glories glory in this,**

**That he understands and knows Me,**

That I am the Lord, exercising **lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness** in the earth. For in these I delight,’ says the

Lord.”<sup>25</sup>

Here, through the prophet Jeremiah, the Lord is calling His people to be **CENTERED ON HIM** – *to “glory” in Him* – **to “glory” in understanding and knowing Him**, the Lord who exercises the following **ATTRIBUTES: lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness** - just three of His many attributes.

The Hebrew word which is translated “glory” in this passage is *halal*, which literally means *to show forth*. The Lord intends that His people would “glory” in understanding and knowing Him and

---

<sup>25</sup> Jeremiah 9:23-24 *New King James Version*

*“show forth His praises”*<sup>26</sup>, that is, His ATTRIBUTES, to one another and to the world. **This is, in fact, the essential calling of the Church.**<sup>27</sup>

The Hebrew word translated “know” in this passage is *yada*, which literally means *to ascertain by seeing*. Our REVELATION of God will determine our RELATIONSHIP with God. Both are engaged in knowing God. This knowing God by REVELATION and RELATIONSHIP is of such significance that Jesus said: “This is eternal life, that they may KNOW You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom You have sent.”<sup>28</sup> The Greek word translated *know* here is *ginosko*, which more fully means *to know through perception and understanding*. So, we see that here in John’s gospel, Jesus is saying the same thing the Father said in Jeremiah’s prophecy. This **“understanding and knowing”** God takes place through REVELATION and experiential RELATIONSHIP. *Our goal is always to see God*, for as we grow in our REVELATION of God, we will grow in our RELATIONSHIP

---

<sup>26</sup> | Peter 2:9

<sup>27</sup> | Peter 2:9

<sup>28</sup> John 17:3

with God. Our lives will become more and more worshipful in the fullest sense of the word.<sup>29</sup> THIS IS GOD-CENTERED-NESS.

A fruit of SEEING THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD is *faith* – a faith which has as its foundation *the character of God*. It is written of our “father of faith”: “Abraham believed GOD.”<sup>30</sup> Abraham believed, not primarily the *promise* of God, but primarily *the Person* of God, because Abraham was “the friend of God”.<sup>31</sup> Through RELATIONSHIP, Abraham experientially KNEW the ATTRIBUTES OF GOD, and therefore was “fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform”.<sup>32</sup>

Another out-working of KNOWING GOD in this way is that we begin to SEE THINGS FROM GOD’S POINT OF VIEW. The apostle Paul prayed that the Church “*may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding*”<sup>33</sup>, that is, that the Church would “understand and know” God”.<sup>34</sup>

J.B. Phillips brilliantly paraphrased this verse to read:

---

<sup>29</sup> There are a number of Greek words translated *worship* in the New Testament Scriptures: *proskuneo*: to bow down and kiss (the feet of); *sebomai*: to reverence with awe and devotion; *latreuo*: to serve.

<sup>30</sup> Romans 4:3

<sup>31</sup> II Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8, James 2:23

<sup>32</sup> Romans 4:21

<sup>33</sup> Colossians 1:9

<sup>34</sup> Jeremiah 9:24

**“We are asking God that you may see things, as it were, FROM HIS POINT OF VIEW by being given spiritual insight and understanding.”<sup>35</sup> THIS IS GOD-CENTEREDNESS.**

Also: When, because of REVELATION, we *see* life from GOD’S POINT OF VIEW, it affects our RELATIONSHIP with the Lord, and we also begin to *live* life from GOD’S POINT OF VIEW. How else can we explain the apostle Paul’s strong conviction evidenced in his statement: “... may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”<sup>36</sup> Paul, who had been climbing the ladder of success within “corporate” Judaism,<sup>37</sup> began - and continued to his death – to *live* life from GOD’S POINT OF VIEW, dedicating his life to KNOWING GOD. He expressed this driving passion in this way:

“But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. I count all things to be loss in view of **the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord**, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ.”<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Colossians 1:9 *J.B. Phillips New Testament*

<sup>36</sup> Galatians 6:14

<sup>37</sup> Acts 22:3, Philippians 3:4-6

<sup>38</sup> Philippians 3:7-8

When we, as a people, come to this place of GOD-CENTEREDNESS, we begin to fulfill our calling as the Church: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may **PROCLAIM THE EXCELLENCIES OF HIM** who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”<sup>39</sup>

Yes, as the Church, our calling is to “**PROCLAIM HIS EXCELLENCIES.**” The Greek word translated “excellencies” in this passage is *arête*, that is, His *moral goodness and virtues* - HIS ATTRIBUTES. Let us, therefore, commit ourselves to the pursuit of REVELATION and RELATIONSHIP – the SEEING and the WORSHIP of our God.

“I *saw the Lord* sitting on a throne,  
*high and lifted up ...*

Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts ....”<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> 1 Peter 2:9

<sup>40</sup> Isaiah 6:1-3 *New King James Version*