How’s your worship going? We’ve not had much of it lately, have we, at least in the physical coming together sense (but thank God for the many forms of worship now made available to us through modern technology!). But remember we’ve learned that worship is so much more than that – the way we live our lives is (or should be!) a demonstration of our worship of God. So what characterizes a life of worship? How can we be sure that what we do brings glory to God, when there are plenty of ‘good’ people out there doing good things without any Christian motivation?

**The unbelievable truth**

I believe the key ingredient that sets Christians apart is holiness. Indeed, the basic meaning of the word ‘holiness’ is to be ‘set apart’ or ‘dedicated’ to God – to belong to God. We have been bought with a price (1 Cor 6:20); we are no longer our own, but God’s (as we affirm in our annual Covenant Prayer). So whatever we do – from the mundane to the magnificent – should be birthed in our love for God and his love for us, and offered in an attitude of reverence and thankfulness. That is a life of worship.

But can we really aspire to holiness? I’m just plain old me – not an apostle or a ‘saint’. Surely holiness is an unrealistic expectation for anyone living in the fast paced, modern world of today? Well, God doesn’t think that! He calls us to “be holy, because I am holy” (Heb 8:10). Holiness is not an option, an ‘add-on’ for the ‘best’ Christians: it is a command!

But doesn’t my Lord accept me just as I am? Well, yes – but he desires so much more of us than that! As parents we love our children absolutely, just as they are. But do we want them to stay just as they are? No! We want them to develop, to grow up in every sense, to reach a position of full maturity. That’s exactly what our God wants of us. He loves us absolutely, just as we are, and rejoices when we accept His offer of salvation (read Luke 15 to see just how much!). But does he want us to stop like that? No! He wants us to strive for perfection, as Jesus said: “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt 5:48). He wants us to grow in Him, to “become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:13), to consciously and daily “put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph 4: 24).

WOW! That’s what I call a Big Ask!! It seems like the impossible dream, the unattainable goal. If such a target was set for us in our working life we’d complain to our boss we’ve been set up to fail! What kind of a God is it that expects such heights from us? Doesn’t he understand that we’re only human?

You know the answer to that one! God came to Earth as Jesus to experience life as we know it. He knows what’s possible for us, and what holds us back. “We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin” (Heb 4:15). He knows that the only way he was able to triumph in life was because the Spirit of God was within him. So when Jesus returned to heaven in triumph He had authority to send us his own, his very own, Holy Spirit to empower us! As Graham reminded us last week, Jesus promised “If anyone loves me … my Father will love them and we will come to them and make our home with them” (John 14:23). If you have accepted Christ as Lord, God Himself is living within you!! Aren’t you just blown away by that?!

**I want some of that!**

If you (and I) can really grasp that incredible truth then surely life will never be the same again! If God really is within us then we have the power to do all things: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil 4:13). But this is not just an abstract power: it is the life force of God, the HOLY Spirit. He gives us the power to do His will and to walk in his holiness, to be truly set apart for Him. If we daily come to God in an attitude of worship, he will direct every ordinary area of our life to be an extraordinary act of worship to Him. What a life that will be!

So to your challenge this week (yes, I know you’ve got plenty of challenges already, but this one will put all the others in their right place!):

* **Understand that your whole life can be one of worship to God**
* **Accept that God wants nothing less from you than perfection and holiness (no excuses!)**
* **Rejoice that the Holy Spirit is your gift from God to live that exceptional life**
* **In that knowledge, begin each day by receiving His Spirit afresh and offering it all to him in worship**

Yes, this is total commitment to Christ – but how He deserves it and, oh what rewards you will receive! May God himself strengthen you as you offer up your life to Him in worship, day by day.

“I will offer up my life in spirit and truth
Pouring out the oil of love, as my worship to you
In surrender I must give my every part
Lord, receive this sacrifice of a broken heart” *Matt Redman ©1994 Thankyou Music*

*Produced by Martyn Read on behalf of the Bents Green Holy Habits Planning Group (Debs Barnett, Glenn Evans, Martyn Read, Graham Wassell, Daphne and John Wilkins).  Holy Habits is "an adventure in Christian discipleship", based on Luke's picture of the early church in Acts 2:42-47.  Find out more* [*here*](https://www.brfonline.org.uk/collections/holy-habits)*.*