

ABIDE

in worship

Women's Ministries Day 2024

IPHC Women's Ministries has been celebrating Women's Ministries Day for decades. We set aside one Sunday per year, usually in the month of March, and encourage pastors and churches to honor and celebrate the women of their church. This teaching can serve as an option for what you share with the women of your church as we focus on living a life of worship.

Background

We are taking a four-year journey, focusing on how we are to Abide in Christ. Last year, we emphasized abiding in the Vine, Jesus, through His Word. So many of us are tired of doing things in our own strength. We are weary of feeling like we are constantly striving. We learn in John 15 that He, Christ, is our source. It says, "I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me, you can do nothing." Jesus could not have been more straightforward about our need to abide in Him. We cannot abide by trying harder or by force of will. We must learn to depend on the Holy Spirit to help us. Abiding in Jesus is not reserved for the most faithful, nor is it optional. Without abiding, we will not produce the fruit of Christ, nor will we create anything of lasting importance. Remember, our purpose is not to produce fruit. It is to be connected to the Vine and bring glory to God. The Vine, Jesus, will produce the fruit in us. We draw near to Jesus, and He takes care of the fruit. Abiding in Jesus is placing Him in the center. It means to remain, stay, dwell. When we construct our lives around Him, we bring God glory. Bible reading, prayer, worship, and many other daily disciplines and habits are essential to our spiritual health. This way of life creates the space for us to connect to the Life-giver, the Vine.

Introduction

This year, we are focusing on what it means to abide in Christ by living a life of worship. This idea of worship is what we are exploring.

So, we ask, what is worship? Here are a few quotes related to worship.

"True worship is a valuing or a treasuring of God above all things."

"Worship is when we give our deepest affection and highest praise to something. True worship of God is when we love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. It's when we prize God above everything else and put Him first in our hearts."

“True worship is constant, inner praise to the God of Scripture, expressed in prayer, song, service, giving, and living.”

By definition, worship means- the feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for a deity.

Hebrews 10:10-14 says, “And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Day after day, every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again, he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. Since that time, he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, because by one sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.”

And then, Hebrews 13:15-16 declares, “Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices, God is pleased.”

So, we see this distinction of worship in the Old Testament versus worship in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, worship was physical in nature- including sacrifices, ceremonies, and feasts. In the Old Testament, a worshiper who approached God needed an offering but also needed the service of a priest, who acted as a mediator between the person and God. But in the New Testament- the great High Priest, Jesus – offered one sacrifice, His life, on our behalf. He tore the veil that separated us, and we have direct access to Him. In the New Testament, we are called to worship in spirit and in truth; it’s more spiritual and relational in nature because, as believers, He lives in us!

So, why do we worship?

1.) We were created to worship!

Do you know the main reason you were created? It isn’t for your career, title, or 10-year plan. You were created to worship God.

Revelation 4:11 says, “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”

1 Peter 2:9 declares, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”

1 Corinthians 10:31 states, “Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

We are created in His image to reflect His glory!

And if we know why we worship, then how do we worship?

2.) We Worship in Spirit and Truth

John 4:23-24, our verse of the year, states, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

In this passage of Scripture, Jesus speaks to the woman at the well. He establishes that our worship is not bound to a location, ceremonial observance, or law.

The presence of Jesus changed everything.

We are no longer under an old covenant. God is Spirit and is omnipresent; He’s everywhere. We can worship Him anytime and anywhere. Christ's followers are built into a holy temple.

Our worship extends from the posture of our hearts. We worship the Father through Jesus the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. And He is seeking true worshipers, those sincere in their reverence and pursuit of Him. This must be our priority.

We find some incredible examples of worship in scripture.

In Genesis 22, we find Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice His son, Isaac.

Abraham pleased the Lord and went on to change the world because of his obedience. Obedience is something we usually only mention to our kids or when referencing our pet’s training. However, in God's eyes, obedience is far greater than any sacrifice or gift we could give Him. Our most significant act of worship may not happen on Sunday morning but on a random Tuesday afternoon when God whispers to us, “Ask your waitress how you can pray for her today.” Oh Lord, give us the grace to begin obeying the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 16, we find Paul and Silas worshipping in prison. These men were beaten, bruised, and in shackles; they could have cowered and given up hope, but their worship was pure, heartfelt, and honest. Their worship caught heaven’s attention and brought them freedom. When we are faced with trials and hardships, let’s remember that Satan may attack our bodies, but he can’t imprison our praise!

In Luke 7, we find the woman with the alabaster box. This woman was an outcast who had been used and abused. But something about the words and actions of Jesus caused her to bring her most valuable possession and pour it out in an expression of love and worship. In one moment, she pressed through fear, prejudices, and shame and created one of the Bible's most intimate moments of worship. When man’s opinion has declared us “guilty,” there is One who can be touched by our worship and forgive our sins!

In Mark 12, we find the story of the widow’s mite. This simple act of giving an offering in the temple caught the attention of our Lord. It wasn’t how much she gave but rather how much it cost her that moved Jesus to say, “She gave more than anyone else.” What moved this woman to give everything she had to God remains a mystery, but what is clear is that God

considers our giving an act of worship. If we can stop holding so tightly to our money and possessions and allow the Christ-like character trait of generosity to manifest in our lives, we may discover a deeper worship encounter than we've ever known.

And we find in Luke 22 the ultimate act of worship- Jesus surrendering to God's will. On the evening of his arrest, Jesus prayed for another option, if possible, than the cross. But then, he uttered the most amazing worship statement ever known when he said, "Not my will, but yours." This statement of complete and total surrender from the lips of our Savior should humble us and make us love Him even more.

Closing

We all will worship something. It's a good time to do inventory and evaluate your heart. Have you allowed your title, pride, accomplishments, success, or other things to receive your worship? Lord, we repent of placing so many other things before you. Purify our hearts. We long to worship you. Draw us near. We want to dwell with you. We want to abide in you. We want to worship you in Spirit and in Truth. So, Jesus, we will sing, play music, create art, serve others, and live to honor you in many ways, all for your glory- but perhaps our most significant act of worship comes from your example. Jesus, may our cry be not my will, but yours be done.