

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your correspondence to the Al Denson Show and for tuning in every week to our program. My prayer for you is to be encouraged in your daily walk with Christ through the words of this booklet. Our hope is that in turn you will tell others of what God is doing through our ministry to youth and parents on TV. I am convinced you will not find another program on any network anywhere that deals with issues today's youth and their parents are facing, and provides answers from a Godly perspective.

In addition, we would love for you to help us by going to our web site at www.aldenson.com. Here you can write to us, order additional material like this booklet, check out all my music, have a daily bible study, and stay up to date on the ministry. You can also send us a prayer request and questions for the TV show. But more importantly, please continue to be in prayer with us as we work together to help those that are in need.

Thanks for watching and God Bless!

Sincerely,



An Outreach of Celebration Ministries

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What is Worship?



Most artists create for only a brief moment in time. That phenomenon was once known as “15 minutes of fame”. Yet even in a fickle world, there still emerge a talented few that transcends time and trends. With nearly 15 years as a major label recording artist and seven hit

albums to his credit, Al Denson is that kind of artist.

But the attention and acclaim his artistry has brought him over the years are anything but the routine rewards of worldly success. Rather, they are the fruits of a life of purpose and passion, and a mission that has always reached far beyond merely making music.

The millions of young people Al has performed for, befriended, counseled, consoled and clowned around with in his career already know that. And thousands more are finding out every day.

This past year has seen Al expand his efforts to a global audience through the reach of his daily syndicated television production, “The Al Denson Show.” “You’ve got to reach out to people where they are with the most powerful means and this form of media allows you to build trust and a rapport,” says Al. “This has all been so amazing. I can’t imagine what lies in store when the Lord finally calls me home, but I don’t have to wait for heaven to receive rewards. I get them every time a kid comes up to me and says, ‘I heard what you said, and I accepted Christ.’ You can’t ask for anything more or better than that.”

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C. S. Lewis once said, “Just as a car is made to run on gasoline and won’t run properly on anything else, God made us to run on Himself. He is the only fuel the human spirit was designed to burn and feed on. Apart from God there is no energy, no power, and no fulfillment for us in life.”

Worship is what releases God’s energy and power in our lives. God wants us to worship Him not because He needs it but because being a worshiper of God is what we need. We were created to “run” on worship, so worship is actually a gift to us from God to help us “run” more effectively. God never created

us to be fulfilled by anything or anyone but Himself, so the only way to live life to its fullest is to live a life characterized by worship.

Many Christians mistakenly believe that worship is a word which describes a type of church service or a certain style of music. But God isn’t looking for more church-goers or song-singers—He’s looking for worshipers, and there is a big difference. When we get to Heaven, “worshippers” will describe us, but this is also who we are to be here and now.

We were created by God to be worshipers and our lives are to be our worship. The measure of our worship is not that we go to church, sing songs, teach a class, or give money. All of these can be by-products of worship but they

are not worship. The measure of our worship is the degree to which we put our whole life on the altar and live totally and completely dependent on God for everything. If we make the mistake of believing that worship is only

what we do, we will miss the opportunity to give our whole lives to God.

In Romans 11:36 Paul is concluding an incredible doxology to God that he started in verse 33. He says, “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen.” Because of this, Paul goes on in Romans 12:1 to say, “Therefore (referring to

what he just said in the previous verses), I urge you brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.”

Paul is saying in this verse that in light of who God is, the only proper, reasonable response to Him is to give Him our all—all of who we are in response to all He is. He tells us in this verse that worship happens when our lives become “living sacrifices” to God. True worship will always involve sacrifice and will only happen when we are living our lives as an extension of His life, in total dependency on Him. The sacrifice we offer to God is our self-will, self-reliance, and self-sufficiency.

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Worship happens when we honor God by living holy lives.

In verse two, Paul says, “Do not be conformed any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve of what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.” Paul explains that the way we become these living sacrifices is by not being like the world, but by allowing ourselves to be completely transformed by God so that we can reflect His glory in all that we do. This is what we were created to do and this is worship. Worship happens when we honor God by living holy lives. Psalm 29:2 says, “Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.” Nothing is more beautiful to God than a holy life.

Holiness is not a set of behaviors—a list of do’s and don’t’s. Holiness first must be an attitude of the heart that is expressed in our behavior. If we are saved, we are “in Christ” and were made holy in our position before God the moment we were saved. I Corinthians 1:30 says, “It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption.”

God wants who He has made us to be on the inside to be expressed on the outside through a holy lifestyle. This is only possible when we are totally dependent on Him for everything and there is no self-sufficiency left in us. We can’t live a consistently holy life by willpower. When we try to do this in our own strength, any measure of success we achieve will only make us prideful.

God never requires anything of us that He won’t first perform in us. When we let go of our self-reliance and acknowledge our total dependency on God, He will give us both the desire and the power to obey Him. Philippians 2:13 puts it like this: “For it is God at work within you, helping you want to obey Him, and then helping you want to do what He wants.” (Living)

Most believers are ignorant of this truth and as a result live defeated lives with a big gap

between who God says they are and the way they live. This is not a problem that is new to our generation. Paul addressed this issue centuries ago in II Corinthians 2:14 when he said, “Thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him.”

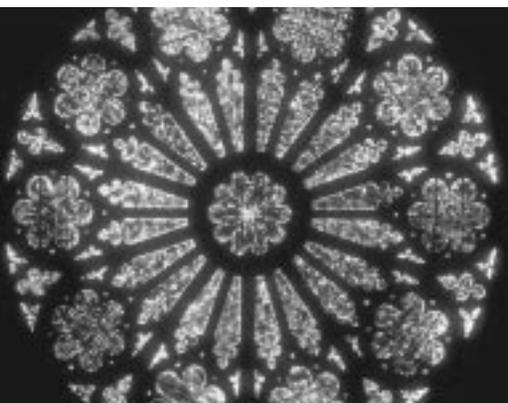
Paul is trying to teach a principle in this verse by using a very familiar custom of the day in which he lived as an illustration. Whenever the armies of Rome would win a battle with an opposing army, they would chain the fallen leaders to the chariot of the commander-in-chief of the Roman army. Then the victorious commander would parade through the streets dragging the defeated leaders in the dust behind his chariot.

Paul is saying that if we have been captured by Christ we are a part of His victory parade. He has already won the victory over sin, and, if we want to live in that victory, then all we must do is to stay chained to Christ’s chariot, living in total dependence on Him. Worship is surrender to our victorious Commander-in-chief. If we want to be conquerors in this life, we must first be conquered by Christ. Our victory over sin in this life will always be in direct proportion to Christ’s victory over us. If there is any area in our lives where we are being self-reliant and Christ is not in control, then we will know no victory.

There are three things about this victory parade we need to know:

1. It is God’s victory parade, not ours. God is the one responsible for any victories that come in our lives. God spoke through a man named Jahaziel to King Jehoshaphat in II Chronicles 20:15 and said, “Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army for the battle is not yours, but God’s.” The same is still true for us today. No matter what the size of our enemy, the battle is God’s, not ours, and He is responsible for the final outcome.
2. Our job is to stay chained to His chariot. As we submit ourselves to His Lordship in every area of our lives, we will be victorious because He is victorious. The way we acknowledge his Lordship in our lives is with a willingness to do things His way. We don’t get ahead of Him, we don’t go off to the left or to the right, and we don’t sit passively by. Our part is to make sure we stay chained to Christ and to depend on Him for direction and strength.
3. As long as we are chained to the chariot of Christ, the victory is ours in any situation.

Paul says, “Thanks be to God, who ALWAYS leads us...everywhere.” As long as we stay completely dependent on Christ there is no situation, no place in our lives, where God cannot give us victory. Victory doesn’t mean that we won’t have trouble, pain, or problems.



Even for the most mature Christians, life is, and will always be, a struggle. Victory comes not in an absence of adversity, but in the peace, joy, and fulfillment which overflows in our hearts, regardless of our circumstances, when we are living lives dependent on Him.

True worship involves a passion for God, surrendering to His Lordship in our lives, and a willingness be a “living sacrifice,” giving all that we are and all that we have to Him. As we have already seen, self-sufficiency is our biggest hindrance to worship. God gives us two, very vivid illustrations in the Old Testament to show us the importance of learning this principle. The first has a happy ending, the second a tragic ending.

The first is the story of Jacob found in Genesis 32. If we were to look up the word “self-sufficient” in the dictionary we would probably find a picture of Jacob, for his life defined the word. Genesis 32:24 finds Jacob at a very difficult place in his life. He is all alone and everything he has ever depended on is gone. At that very point in his life, God pays him a visit in the form of a man and the Bible says Jacob wrestled with the man all night long. Verse 25 says Jacob would not quit fighting against the man, so the man (God) touched Jacob’s hip and put it out of socket. God took away the one thing left in

Jacob’s life which was keeping him from facing the truth about the self-sufficient way he had lived his life.

Jacob recognized this was a man from God and the Scripture says he would not let the man go. In verse 26 the man said, “Let me go, for it is daybreak.” But Jacob replied, “I will not let you go until you bless me!” Jacob was saying, “I’m tired of being this way, I want things to be different in my life, I want things to change in my life. I will not let you go until you do a work in my life!” God did just that for Jacob and Jacob named the place where they had struggled, Peniel (face of God) because that is where he met God face to face. The Bible tells us from that day until the day he died, Jacob walked with a limp as a constant reminder of his dependence on God.

God loved Jacob and He loves us so much He is willing to allow us to be broken in the flesh to heal us in our spirit. God will cripple us if He has to in order to get to our hearts because He is much more interested in our spiritual wholeness than in our health, wealth, or prosperity. God dislocated Jacob’s hip, but He will dislocate our plans, if need be, to help move us out of self-reliance. God knows that self-reliance for a Christian is deadly, and as long as we feel strong in ourselves, we will never depend on Him.

Jacob had to get to the place of being in such pain, and being so overwhelmed by his circumstances that he was finally willing to let go of his self-sufficiency and allow God to change him. Up until that point in his life, Jacob had known God from a distance—now through suffering, he knew God face to face. Total dependency on God is the only way we will ever develop real intimacy with God and learn what worship really means.

The second story actually begins with King David, whom God called, “a man after My own heart.” King David had a son named Solomon, and the Bible says King Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived. Solomon was the one God chose to build His Temple in Jerusalem and at the beginning of his reign, Solomon was a great king. But in I Kings

11:4 we read one of the saddest verses in all the Bible: “As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been.”

King Solomon had a son named Abijah who continued his father’s downward spiral spiritually, so by the time Abijah’s son, Asa, became King of Judah, the country, like the King, had a godly heritage but had fallen into idol worship and pagan practices. We aren’t sure what happened to King Asa, but somehow God got a hold of him and spiritually the lights came on in his life. In II Chronicles 14:2 we are told, “Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God.”

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In verses 3-5 it says, "He (King Asa) removed the foreign altars and the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. He commanded Judah to seek the lord, the God of their fathers, and to obey His laws and commands. He removed the high places and incense altars in every town in Judah, and the kingdom was at peace under him." As a result, things were great in Judah for ten years but then trouble shows up.

Verse 8 tells us that Asa had an army of five-hundred-eighty thousand brave fighting men, but verse 9 says that Zerah the Cushite came to do battle with Judah and he had what is believed to have been an army of one million men and three hundred chariots! King Asa responded not with panic but with worship. In verse 11 it says, "Then Asa called to the Lord his God and said,

'Lord, there is no one like You to help the powerless against the mighty. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rely on You, and in Your name we have come against this vast army. O Lord, You are our God; do not let man prevail against You.'"

Asa's act of worship wasn't the words he spoke but the attitude of his heart and his complete dependence on God. When Asa sought God and acknowledged his total helplessness before Him, the Bible says in verse 12, "The Lord struck down the Cushites before Asa and Judah. The Cushites fled." What a great victory—what a mountaintop experience! When King Asa and his army returned to Jerusalem, God sent a prophet out to meet them with a warning. In chapter 15 verse 2 it says, "He went out to meet Asa and said to him, 'Listen to me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin. The Lord is with you when you are with Him. If you seek Him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.'"

The Bible says Asa became even more committed to holiness both personally and nationally. As a result the nation prospered for twenty-five more years. Then unfortunately chapter 16 begins to tell a different story. Somewhere along the way, Asa started taking his blessings for granted, began to be self-sufficient, stopped seeking God, and eventually lost his

passion for God. In verse 1 we read that an enemy, not nearly the size of the one King Asa faced twenty-five years earlier, came against him and Judah. This time instead of depending on God, Asa bribed the king of Aram and concocted a deal that would put them in partnership against the enemy who was coming against Judah.

God then sends a man by the name of Hanani to confront Asa. He says in verses 7-9: "Because you relied on the king of Aram and not on the Lord your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped from your hand. Were not the Cushites and Libyans a mighty army with great numbers of chariots and horsemen? Yet when you relied on the Lord, He delivered them into your hands. For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the whole earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war."

Once again, we see that the biggest hindrance to worship and holiness is self-sufficiency. God wants to use problems and suffering to put us in situations over which we have no control. When we find ourselves there, we can either respond in repentance and return to complete dependency on God, or we can continue in our self-confidence, self-reliance, and self-sufficiency and become bitter and hard.

Asa could have responded to Hanani and to God with brokenness and repentance but instead he made the decision to continue doing things his own way. As a result verse 10 says, "Asa was angry with the seer because of this; he was so enraged that he put him in prison. At the same time, Asa brutally oppressed some of the people." The story gets even more tragic because in verses 12-13 it says, "In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was afflicted with a disease in his feet. Though his disease was severe, even in his illness he did not seek help from the Lord, but only from the physicians. Then in the forty-first year of his reign Asa died and rested with his fathers."

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Here is the tragic story of a man who was once a worshiper of God, whose life was lived as a surrendered, living sacrifice to God until he allowed his blessings to make Him self-sufficient. He forgot that God is worthy of our worship not because of what He does, but because of who He is. Whenever we make our focus “what God does” for us, and not who God is, we will begin to take those blessings for granted and stop seeking God. Whenever we stop seeking God, we will lose our passion for God. If all we know of God is what He does, then we don’t know God because what He does is just a small fraction of who He is. Our worship must be a response to who He is and not what He does. True worship is about seeking the heart of God, not the hand of God.

Worship is a directive all throughout the Word of God. From the very beginning we

were all created to have a personal relationship with God and to be worshipers of God. From the moment Adam and Eve decided to live independently of God until now, we have all chosen to be self-sufficient and to be our own god. As a result, we lost the ability to be worshipers of the one, true God.

The Bible calls that sin and we are all guilty. God’s holiness demands that sin be paid for, so Jesus willingly chose to come to earth and die on a cross in our place, not just so our sins could be paid for, but also so we could be restored to the positions of worshipers. God recreated us in the salvation experience, not that we might serve Him, but that we might glorify and enjoy Him forever.

Through worship we can fulfill that for which we were created and recreated, and in doing so, have the privilege to minister to our great and awesome God. When we present our lives

to God as living, holy, and acceptable sacrifices, we are giving Him something nothing else in creation can give—worship. God made us for Himself and He wants to have an intimate relationship with us both now, and throughout all eternity.

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