The Four
PT 1 WORSHIP
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Key Scripture:

Matthew 28:18–20 (NLT)
18 Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Romans 1:16 (NLT)
16 For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile.

John 8:32 (NLT)
32 And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

John 10:10 (NLT)
10 The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

TALK IT OVER

Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- What's the weirdest church experience you've ever had?

Start sharing. These questions are to help get your group thinking and to create openness.

- How long have you been attending GC and what led you to show up for the first time? What made you want to join a small group?
- **Read Matthew 28:18-20.** What stands out to you about Jesus words? Are you obeying His command?
- **Read Romans 1:16.** Have you ever been ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ? According to v.16, what happens when we face our fears and share the gospel with others?
- Have you been baptized since becoming a Christ follower? What's holding you back?
- **Read John 10:10 and John 8:32.** Is it possible for a church to be life giving and still preach the truth about sin?
- What reasons have you heard others say for not attending church? How would you address those reasons?
- What is God calling you to do, if anything, to help GC reach our county with the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Get baptized, as a profession of your faith, if you have not been baptized since accepting Jesus as your Savior.

Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- Pray for the courage and conviction to share your faith and invite someone to church.

Question: "What are the ingredients to a truly biblical worship service?"

Answer: Humans are instinctively worshiping creatures. The psalmist expressed this when he wrote, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God" (Psalm 42:1). Cicero in the first century BC observed that religion, regardless of its form, was a universal trait of man. Seeing that people are going to worship something or someone, we should ask what is worship? Whom and how shall we worship? What constitutes a biblical worship service, and, most importantly, will we be "true worshipers" (John 4:23) or false worshipers?

Christ commanded that true worshipers worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). The apostle Paul explained that we worship by the Spirit of God (Philippians 3:3), meaning that true worship comes only from those who have been saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and have the Holy Spirit living in their hearts. Worshiping in spirit also refers to having the proper heart attitude, not simply adhering to rites and rituals. To worship in truth means to worship according to what God has revealed about Himself in Scripture. In order for our worship to be biblical, it must abide within the doctrine of Christ (2 John 1:9; see also Deuteronomy 4:12; 12:32; Revelation 22:18–19). True worship relies on the instructions given in the Bible and can be offered with or without a Book of Confessions, Rules of Order, or other manmade book of instructions or guidance.

The first-century church engaged in several devotional acts in their worship services, from which we can determine what comprises a truly biblical worship service: the communion supper was observed (Acts 20:7), prayers were offered up (1 Corinthians 14:15–16), songs were sung to the glory of God (Ephesians 5:19), a collection was taken (1 Corinthians 16:2), the Scriptures were read (Colossians 4:16), and the Word of God was proclaimed (Acts 20:7).

Communion and prayer were also essential elements of the early church service. The communion supper commemorates Jesus' death until He returns (1 Corinthians 11:25–26). Prayer is directed to God (Nehemiah 4:9; Matthew 6:9) and in harmony with the will of God (1 John 5:14). Corporate prayer is important because it creates unity (John 17:22-23) and is a key aspect of believers' encouraging one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11) and spurring one another on to love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24).

In our worship, we should sing. The apostle Paul commands us to "speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:19–20). Singing to the Lord and to one another conveys truth set to music (Colossians 3:16).

Part of true biblical worship is giving an offering, as Paul instructed the Corinthian church: "Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made" (1 Corinthians 16:1–2). Our regular giving for the support of the Lord's work is a serious responsibility. The opportunity to give should be viewed as a thrilling blessing, not as a burdensome matter for grumbling (2 Corinthians 9:7). Additionally, freewill giving is the only explicitly biblical method for financing the work of the church.

Finally, preaching and teaching are major ingredients of true biblical worship. Our teaching must be the Scriptures alone, the only means of equipping believers for life and godliness (2 Timothy 3:16–17). The godly preacher or teacher will teach only from the word and rely on the Spirit of God to do His work in the minds and hearts of his listeners. As Paul reminded Timothy, "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Timothy 4:2). A church gathering that does not include the Word of God as a major component is not a biblical worship service.

As we follow the pattern of true worship in Scripture, let us worship God with great passion. We must not convey to the world the impression that the worship of our God is a boring, lifeless ritual. We have been redeemed from sin. Let us therefore praise our Creator as His children who are grateful for His bountiful blessings. "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe" (Hebrews 12:28–29).

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