

## Session 8

# Pressing in to God

### This session covers:

- The principle of pressing in to God through worship
- The Tabernacle of Moses as model of how to press in to God
- The difference between praise and worship
- Ways to press in to God with our body, soul, and spirit

### An Essential Trait for the Serious Worshiper

#### 1. The woman with the issue of blood “pressed” in to Jesus (Mark 5:25-34).

- The gospels tell the story of a woman plagued with a hemorrhage (an issue of blood) for twelve years.
- In her desperation, she came to Jesus for healing. When she touched His garment, “The flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction.”
- This woman, so desperate and determined for a healing touch, *pressed* through the multitudes to Jesus.
- Her faith and persistence exceeded everyone else in the crowd. As a result, she was healed of her affliction.
- This story is a beautiful illustration of our need to press in to God. Those who hunger for God, and subsequently, press into Him, will experience His presence, glory, and favor at much deeper levels.

#### 2. Every serious worshiper must learn to press in to God in worship.

- Paul talked about pressing into God as an important life-style trait that every believer should possess (Phil. 3:12-14).

- Paul wanted to press through every obstacle in order to know God better.
- We need to press through every hindrance and distraction that keeps us from intimacy with God.

## **A Journey through the Tabernacle**

### **1. The tabernacle is no longer a literal place, but a place in the spirit.**

- In a literal sense, the Tabernacle of Moses no longer exists. On this side of the cross, every believer is a part of the spiritual temple that God is building in the earth. We worship in the spirit and have an open invitation to come boldly before God's throne of grace.
- Therefore, the throne room—that part of the tabernacle we call the holy of holies—is not a literal place; it is a place in the spirit where we encounter God spirit to Spirit.
- As worshipers, we must press in to this place in the spirit. The Greek word for "press in" or "press on" means to pursue as in a footrace or to run swiftly in order to catch some person or thing.
- This phrase suggests pushing through every hindrance of body, soul, and spirit so that we can worship God in the spiritual holy of holies. This is where we encounter His glory, His love, and His blessings. This is where we hear His voice, experience fullness of joy, and are transformed.
- To get to this wonderful place, we must press through every distraction, care, worry, and obstacle that would separate us from God. Pressing in to God is well worth the effort, but it does require focus, time, and energy.
- Therefore, the Tabernacle of Moses offers an excellent pattern of how we must press through the hindrances of life into God's glorious presence.

### **2. The tabernacle was divided into the outer court, the holy place, and the holy of holies.**

- As worshipers began their quest towards the holy of holies, they entered the outer court through the only gate of the tabernacle (Ex. 27:16).
- In the outer court, animals were sacrificed daily on the bronze altar (Ex. 38:30). Behind the altar was the bronze laver (Ex. 30:18). Here the priests washed themselves before entering the holy place. Think of the laver as a place of reflection and cleansing.
- Set apart from the outer court, the holy place contained the golden lampstand, the table of showbread, and the altar of incense (Ex. 25:30-31, 30:1). The golden lampstand, which required a constant supply of oil to emit light, is a picture of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The table of showbread symbolizes the Word of God, which is like our daily bread. The altar of incense illustrates the priestly ministry of prayer and intercession.
- The third compartment of the tabernacle was the holy of holies. The only furniture in the holy of holies was the ark of the covenant (Ex. 25:33, 26:33). Upon this ark was the mercy seat, which was composed of two golden angels facing one another. God's glorious presence rested on the mercy seat, and from the mercy seat, His presence hovered over the tabernacle like a cloud (Ex. 40:34, Lev. 16:2).

- Another name for the tabernacle was the Tent of Meeting. Here in the Tent of Meeting, worshipers would come to meet with God, to hear His voice, and to worship in His glorious presence.

### **3. The Tabernacle of Moses illustrates how we press in to God's presence.**

- Imagine yourself standing outside the tabernacle. Your goal is to press through the activities of the tabernacle gate, the outer court, and the holy place in order to meet with God in the holy of holies.
- The journey begins with thanksgiving and praise because that is how you enter through the gate into the outer court (Ps. 100:4).
- You come to the bronze altar, and instead of sacrificing an animal, you offer a sacrifice of praise. In so doing, your life becomes a living sacrifice to God.
- Progressing onward, you come to the bronze laver. Here you allow the water of the Word of God to cleanse away the cares of the world, worries, anxieties, and fears (Eph. 5:26). As you sing the Word of God, the Holy Spirit washes away the stains upon your soul.
- You are cleansed from the influence of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Your spirit begins to arise. You come alive to God's promises and His greatness.
- However, your journey is not yet complete. You must not stop in the outer court, but continue pressing towards God's presence. Now you must enter the holy place.
- In the holy place, you encounter God in a deeper way. God touches you here with His Spirit and His word.
- Entering the holy place, your praise begins shift into worship. You begin to recognize the Holy Spirit's voice, leading, and gifts. You receive words of knowledge that give insight, words of wisdom that offer direction, and prophecies that declare the purposes and intentions of God.
- You begin to flow with the Holy Spirit as your spiritual senses are awakened at the lampstand. Then, as you worship at the table of showbread, you begin to feast upon Jesus—the Bread of Life. His words, His love, His ministry, and His faithfulness come alive.
- Satisfied with Christ, your desires for the world fade away. Still in the holy place, you minister at golden altar of incense. Here you begin to pray and intercede for God's purposes to be fulfilled in the earth.
- You have pressed deeper into God's presence and are no longer praising—you are worshipping.
- Nevertheless, there is another place where you must go. Few go there and even fewer remain—this place is the holy of holies.
- In the holy of holies, there is no unnecessary activity. No distractions. No works of the flesh. No defilement. Here you look upon the ark of God's presence through the torn veil. Here His glory dwells, and His touch transforms.
- Here you minister to the Lord and touch the invisible throne of God. In the holy of holies, you meet with God face to face.
- In the holy of holies, we no longer ask for or desire anything except more of Him. We see who He truly is, and we declare His worth.
- Like the woman with the issue of blood, reaching this place in the spirit is worth every effort of pressing in to God.

## The Difference between Praise and Worship

**As we press into God, our spirit-man grows stronger than the natural drives of our body and the impulses of our soul. As a result, we move into real worship. This section will help us understand how to move from praise to worship.**

### 1. It is difficult to distinguish between praise and worship.

- Many people say that praise declares who God is whereas worship responds to who God is.
- This is a good starting point, but the Scriptures are not that cut and dry. Typically, what we think of as worship, the Bible calls praise, and what we think of as praise, the Bible often calls worship.

### 2. Praise takes on a different character from worship.

- Drawing heavily from Bob Sorge's explanation in his book, *Exploring Worship*, several differences are as follows.
- Praise can be distant, but worship is intimate. When we praise, we may not feel close to God. We declare God's greatness with emotion and energy, but still feel distant. In contrast, we normally feel the presence of God when we worship. We may even sing the same worship song, but something has changed; we have progressed from the outer court into the throne room of God.
- Praise is always seen or heard, but worship is not always evident to an observer. Typically, praise is loud and demonstrative. Vibrant praise may include clapping, shouting, dancing, or banners. Worship, on the other hand, is usually quiet, soft, and peaceful. Though worship can be loud and powerful, there is often little outward expression.
- Praise is often directed toward others, while worship is normally directed toward God. Although praise can be directed toward God, it often declares God's greatness to others, to our own flesh, and even to the demonic realm. Worship, however, is always directed to God. Whether loudly or softly, worship expresses *to God* how much we love and adore Him. In real times of worship, we do not concern ourselves with others. We focus on God, direct our attention to God, and express our adoration to Him alone.
- Praise is typically faster, accompanied by driving songs with a strong beat whereas worship is often a slower, softer sound. Shouts, clapping, and banners usually accompany praise whereas worship is more simple. In intimate times of worship, less is usually more—less sound, less instrumentation, and less of the externals add to a greater worship experience.

### 3. Worship moves us from the flesh to the spirit.

- Since we commune with God at a spirit to spirit level, our spirit-man must grow stronger than the natural drives of our body and the inward impulses of our soul.

- Remember: Jesus said that true worshipers will worship Him in *spirit*.
- When we press into God, our spirit-man is strengthened and our flesh is subdued. We are then in the spirit, ready to worship God.
- With this background, in the next section we will discover practical ways to move from the flesh to the spirit.

## **Pressing In With Our Body, Soul, and Spirit**

### **1. Each of us have a body, a soul, and a spirit.**

- Every believer in Jesus Christ is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19).
- Our temple is made up of three basic parts—body, soul, and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23).
- We are spirit, we have a soul, and we live in a body.
- With our body, we interact with the world around us. We talk, walk, and experience life through our five senses.
- With our soul—which is our mind, will, and emotions—we think, choose, and feel. Our mind is our intellect, the place where we reason, calculate, and reach logical conclusions. Our will is our chooser. With it, we decide whether to obey God or do our own thing. Our emotions are our feelings.
- With our spirit we commune with God. “The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD, searching all the innermost parts of his being” (Prov. 20:27). Furthermore, Paul said, “The one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him” (1 Cor 6:17).
- Just as the journey through the tabernacle illustrates pressing in to God, we must learn to worship with the whole man—body, soul, and spirit. The scripture calls on us to praise and worship the Lord with our whole man (Ps. 103:1-5).
- As we do so, we press toward God’s throne, and our spirit-man arises above the cravings of our body and the dictates of our soul. As a result, we encounter God’s wonderful presence.

### **2. We must press in to God with our body.**

- Through our body, we interact with the world around us.
- Our bodies are made of flesh and bones along with cravings and desires.
- Our bodily desires drive us to nourish ourselves with food, get the sleep we need, and seek pleasure in life.
- At times, our cravings take control of us. We want things that are sinful or harmful. Or we desire good things at the wrong time.
- Praising with our body helps to silence our cravings.
- Clapping, singing loudly, standing, waving banners, dancing, or shouting redirect the desires of the body from the natural world to the Lord.

### **3. We must press in to God with our mind.**

- Often during times of worship, our minds drift towards other things. We think about everything but God.
- To press into God in worship, we have to keep our mind focused upon the Lord.

- We must intentionally direct our thoughts upon God, our love for Him, and our desire to meet with Him in worship.
- One night during a storm, Jesus was walking on the water towards His disciples. When Peter recognized the Lord, he asked if he could come to Jesus. Of course, Jesus said come. As Peter began walking on the water, he kept his eyes focused upon Jesus, and he stayed afloat. As soon as Peter was distracted by the wind, however, he sank (Matt. 14:22-33).
- In a similar manner, as we press in to God in worship, we must keep our mind focused upon God, His character, and His works.
- If we become distracted and lose our focus, our journey toward the throne room is hindered. To press in to God, we must resist every distraction and remain focused upon Him.

#### **4. We must also press in to God with our will.**

- Our will is our chooser. With it, we make choices. When thoughts race into our minds, we choose what we act upon.
- You might get to church and think, "I really don't like today's song list." Or, "I stayed up too late last night. I am just too tired to worship." Perhaps someone offended you right before church started. These, along with many more issues, create complacency during worship.
- With our will, we decide whether to be complacent or determined.
- To press in to God, we must be determined. We must choose to press in. We can choose to overcome every obstacle that comes our way.
- Those who decide not to press in because something wasn't just right will remain in the outer court.
- We must be determined to press in to God if we want to experience intimate times with God behind the veil.

#### **5. We must press in to God in spite of our emotions and with our emotions.**

- Our emotions express our feelings. We might feel happy, excited, discouraged, angry, or fearful.
- When we are excited or happy, it is easy to release our emotions in worship. When we are sad, depressed, angry, or fearful, however, it is not so easy.
- We cannot allow our feelings to dictate whether we press in to God.
- Paul and Silas were cast into prison. They were beaten with rods, and their feet were placed in stocks. The Bible says, "About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them" (Acts 16:25).
- Surely, they did not feel like praising.
- Nonetheless, they responded by praising God. To press in to God, we must learn to praise in our joy and in our discouragement.
- Not only do we praise in spite of our emotions, we also praise with our emotions.
- Jesus said that the first commandment was to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.
- Worship is one significant way to express our love. To love God with our entire being, therefore, we must worship Him with our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

- To press in to God, we must put all of our emotions into worship. For some, this will result in visible expressions of praise. For others, this will be more subdued. In either case, releasing our emotions in worship helps us move closer to the throne of God.

**6. As we press in with our body, mind, will, and emotions, our spirit awakens to worship.**

- Worship begins when our spirit rises above the cravings of the senses, the distractions of the mind, the complacency of the will, and the flightiness of the emotions.
- When our spirit is strong, our faith, expectancy, and love for God are strong.
- Our spirit is alert to God's presence. We hear God's voice and respond with words of love.
- We are now worshipping in spirit and in truth.
- In response, God fills our hearts with His presence, and we encounter His glory, beauty, and majesty.

**The Bible says, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (James 4:8). As we press in to God in worship, God will fulfill His promise and draw near to us. The Old Testament priests are a good example of those who draw near to God. They ministered to the Lord and to the people. They kept the fire burning in the lampstand and brought fire to the altar of incense. As the priests of old, let's draw near to God by pressing through everything that would hinder our ministry to Him. As those who earnestly desire His presence, let us press in to God.**





## Review Questions

### True or False

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Every serious worshiper must learn to press in to God in worship.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The Tabernacle of Moses still exists on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The Tabernacle of Moses can illustrate how to press in to God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The story of the woman with the issue of blood demonstrates how pressing in to God brings us into the presence of God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Pressing in to God refers more to moving through a crowd of people than pressing through the issues of our body, soul, and spirit.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Worship takes on a different character than praise.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. As we press in to God, our natural man grows stronger than our spirit man so that as our natural man rises above our spirit man, we move into real worship.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. True worship begins to take place when our spirit man begins to truly commune with God.

### Fill in the Blanks

- 9. According to 1 Thessalonians 5:23, men and women are comprised of three parts:  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 10. Most people would say that a man's soul is comprised of his \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 11. Mark 5:30-31, which is an important passage of scripture for this session. It reads,  
"Immediately Jesus, perceiving in Himself that the power proceeding from Him had gone forth, turned around in the crowd and said, 'Who touched My garments?' And His disciples said to Him, 'You see the crowd \_\_\_\_\_ in on You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'"
- 12. The Tabernacle of Moses is divided into three compartments: the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.

13. In comparing the Tabernacle of Moses to the composition of man, the outer court relates to our \_\_\_\_\_, the Holy Place relates to our \_\_\_\_\_, and the Holy of Holies relates to our \_\_\_\_\_.

14. In understanding the difference between praise and worship, praise can be distant, but worship is \_\_\_\_\_; praise is always \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ but worship is not always evident.

15. Praise can be directed toward others whereas worship is almost always directed toward \_\_\_\_\_.

*Match the appropriate part of our body, soul, and spirit to the way we press in with that aspect of our body, soul, and spirit.*

- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. To press in with this part of our being, we must overcome the cravings of our flesh through celebration and praise.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. To press in with this part of our being, we focus our thoughts upon God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. To press in with this part of our being, we must worship with this aspect of our nature and in spite of this aspect of our nature.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. To press in with this part of our being, we must make a choice or be determined to press in to God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. As we do the above actions, this part of our being awakens and arises to commune with God.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Spirit</li> <li>b. Mind</li> <li>c. Body</li> <li>d. Emotions</li> <li>e. Will</li> </ul> |
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