

Learning to Worship God by Dwayne Moore

SAMPLE

Chapter 4

Worship that Overflows

When Worship Moves Through Us

*“Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!”
— Psalm 96:3*

Formation Habit: Seek to Influence

Formation Result: Outward Impact

Practice companion: For daily reflection and guided practice, complete Week 4 in *The NLW Pathway Guide*.

As we move into this next step of our journey, we find ourselves at a vital transition.

Chapter 1 invited us to acknowledge God first. Chapter 2 invited us to commune with Him. Chapter 3 gave us the Worship Target, a practical way to aim our entire lives toward His glory. But we must be careful not to view these steps as a private self-improvement project.

Worship was never meant to be a cul-de-sac; it is a conduit.

When God awakens the heart inwardly, lifts our attention upwardly, and realigns our lives toward Him, something inevitable begins to happen: it moves *outwardly*.

Jesus told his disciples, “Your joy will overflow!” (John 15:11). We should have so much joy that we can’t contain it. C.S. Lewis wisely said, “Praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment.” This week, we get to complete our enjoyment as we let the worship burning inside us overflow through us.

True worship is not a secret kept in the quiet of our souls. It becomes visible love, faithful influence, and a living invitation to everyone around us. This is the nature of whole-life worship. It begins in us, but it doesn't end with us.

The Dead Sea Dilemma

There is a sobering lesson found in the geography of the Holy Land. The Dead Sea is a massive body of water, and it isn't "dead" because it lacks a source. On the contrary, the Jordan River flows into it day and night, pouring in fresh, life-giving water. The problem isn't the inflow; it's the lack of an outlet.

Water flows in, but nothing flows out. Because there is no release, minerals concentrate, salt levels skyrocket, and the environment becomes hostile to life. Inflow without outflow leads to stagnation.

The same is true in our spiritual lives. We can attend every service, participate in every worship moment, listen to every podcast, and read every book, including this one. We can have a massive amount of "spiritual inflow." But if what God pours into us never begins to flow through us, we risk becoming spiritually stagnant. Our growth becomes self-focused, and our worship becomes a closed circuit.

What does that stagnation look like in real life? It doesn't always look dramatic. Sometimes it looks very religious. We may know the right language, affirm the right doctrines, and keep a faithful schedule, yet still carry a heart that is quietly hardening. We can become people who receive truth but do not release grace. We can gather insight without growing in love. We can become, in a strange and sobering way, well-informed but spiritually heavy.

That is the "mineral buildup" of the soul. Constant intake without surrender, service, witness, or obedience leaves residue behind. Knowledge can calcify into pride. Discipline can harden into legalism. Familiarity with holy things can even drift into a dull spiritual boredom, where nothing feels fresh because we're no longer letting the life of God move outward through us. We aren't rejecting worship outright; we are simply containing it. And what we contain too tightly eventually begins to lose its vitality.

This helps explain why some believers can be around church activity all the time and still sound impatient, cynical, or self-protective. The issue isn't always a lack of exposure; sometimes it is a lack of outflow. They have been near the river, but they have stopped moving with it. Their souls have become more like reservoirs of information than channels of blessing.

But that is not the picture Scripture gives us of life in the Spirit. Jesus said, *"Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water'"* (John 7:38). John then tells us plainly, *"Now this He said about the Spirit"* (John 7:39). The Holy Spirit does not merely fill us so we can feel full. He fills us so the life of Christ might

move through us to others. His work is not stagnant, but dynamic; not merely stored, but shared.

God blesses us so we can be a blessing. He comforts us so we can comfort others. He awakens our hearts so that our lives can help wake up the world around us. A living river is continually renewed because it keeps moving.

When "Have To" Becomes "Want To"

This is where the various movements of our journey, Inward-Upward-Outward (IUO) and Lord-Leader-Laity (LLL), begin to weave together. At the center of this integration is a change in our motivation: the shift from "have-to" to "want-to."

When worship is merely an external duty, our leadership and influence feel like heavy obligations. We *have to* prepare the lesson; we *have to* engage the people; we *have to* show up. But as worship is formed inwardly, that duty is reshaped by delight.

Consider how these frameworks overlap:

- **Inward:** God warms and awakens the heart. (The shift to "want-to" begins here.)
- **Upward:** We lift our praise to the **Lord** because He is worthy.
- **Outward:** Worship overflows as the **Leader** lifts the **Lord** before the **Laity**.

When our IUO (Inward-Upward-Outward) is healthy, our LLL (Lord-Leader-Laity) becomes natural. We don't just execute religious tasks. We want to lift up the Lord because we've seen His beauty. We want to bring our best because love has changed our "why." We want to engage others because we long for them to taste the same goodness we've experienced.

It's important to slow down here and say this clearly: Lord-Leader-Laity is not a performer-and-audience arrangement. It is a partnership of worship. The Lord is always the focus. The leader is not the star of the room, but a servant helping people see the glory of God. And the laity are not passive consumers, but fellow worshipers with living hearts, real burdens, and a holy calling of their own.

When this partnership is healthy, something beautiful happens. The leader offers direction, clarity, and example. The people bring response, faith, and participation. Together, they move toward the Lord. That's why genuine worship leadership is never merely about platform skill. It is about helping a gathered people behold God together. The goal is not, "Watch me worship." The goal is, "Come, let us worship."

This matters beyond the sanctuary as well. Pastors, worship leaders, parents, small group leaders, and faithful believers in everyday settings all live inside this pattern. Anytime we lift the Lord in a way that helps others see Him more clearly, we are functioning inside this holy rhythm. The leader lifts the Lord before the people, and the people are invited to join the song, not watch it from a distance.

David Could Not Keep It Inside

In Psalm 34, we see this outward flow modeled perfectly by David. He doesn't start with a crowd; he starts with a personal commitment:

"I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Psalm 34:1).

This is the Upward movement, praise rising from a heart that has been awakened. But notice the resolve in David's words. *At all times* means this praise is not tied to ideal circumstances. It is not fragile. It is not dependent on whether life feels manageable that day. David is describing a heart that has found anchoring in the Lord Himself.

But look at what happens in the very next verse: *"My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear and be glad" (Psalm 34:2).*

Why do the humble hear and rejoice? Because humble people know they need rescue. Proud people tend to hear another person's testimony and compare. Humble people hear another person's testimony and hope. The humble are glad because David is not boasting in his own strength, wisdom, or endurance. He is boasting in the Lord. He is saying, in effect, "I was in distress, and God met me." That kind of praise lands gently on wounded hearts. It gives courage to people who need mercy more than they need a lecture.

That is one reason testimony is so powerful when it is truly God-centered. David is not using his story to draw attention to himself. He is using his story to put God's faithfulness on display. His relief becomes a gift to others. His personal deliverance becomes public encouragement. The one who has been helped by God now carries a responsibility to point others toward that same help.

David's personal praise is beginning to bless others. Others hear it, and it changes their countenance. By verse 3, he is moving into full worshipful leadership: *"Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together!"*

Do you see the progression? "I will bless the Lord" becomes "let the humble hear" and then becomes "magnify the Lord with me." Private praise turns outward. Solitary gratitude becomes shared invitation. This is often how overflow works. We meet God in a place of need, and then, almost before we realize it, He turns our comfort into ministry.

David has tasted something so good that he cannot keep it to himself. He isn't performing; he's overflowing. This is why he eventually cries out, *"Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!"* (Psalm 34:8). His worship has become an invitation. Even more than wanting people to engage in praise, David desires them to be changed by it. He is passionate for others to experience God's goodness in their own hearts and lives like he has.

That is the heartbeat of outward worship. We are not recruiting people into our personality, our preferences, or our style. We are inviting them into the goodness of God. And when that invitation rises from a heart that has actually tasted His goodness, it carries weight.

A Song the World Can See

We often think of worship as something heard—a melody, a lyric, a shout. But Psalm 40:3 gives us a striking perspective:

"He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord."

Notice that David doesn't say people will *hear* the song. He says they will see it.

Authentic worship eventually becomes visible. People see the "song" in the way we respond to a crisis at work. They see it in the way we forgive someone who doesn't deserve it. They see it in our generosity, our patience, and our peace when the world is in chaos.

They may see it in an office conflict, when everyone else is posturing, defending, and quietly keeping score, but a believer chooses honesty without hostility and humility without compromise. They may see it in a difficult parenting moment, when exhaustion is high and emotions are raw, yet a mother or father pauses, lowers their voice, and responds with both truth and tenderness. Others may see it in a season of loss, when grief is real and tears are not hidden, but beneath the sorrow there is still a quiet confidence that God remains good and near.

That is a "song people can see." It is worship translated into the language of daily life. It is reverence taking shape in a conversation, a decision, an apology, a restraint, or a simple act of faithfulness when no one is applauding. It is not polished stage worship, but embodied worship. And sometimes that is the kind of worship unbelieving neighbors, coworkers, friends, and family members can understand most clearly.

A worshiping life is a witnessing life. Like steam rising from a kettle, what God does inwardly eventually shows up outwardly. Our lives become windows through which others catch a glimpse of the God we love.

A window does not call attention to itself; it helps you see through it. In the same way, when worship is healthy, our lives don't merely make people notice us; they help people

notice *Him*. That's why ordinary obedience matters so much. Every quiet act of trust can become a pane of glass through which the character of Christ is seen more clearly.

The song is "to our God," but others see it. This is upward worship before others. David lifted the Lord, and his praise became witness.

The Shift from WE to THEY

This outward movement even reshapes the way we talk to God. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches us to pray for our own needs: "Give us this day our daily bread... Forgive us our debts" (Matthew 6:11–12). These are "WE" prayers, and they are essential. We must bring our burdens to the Father.

However, before the WE prayers, there is this: "Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

That line is a pivot point. It gently but firmly pulls us out of the small orbit of self-interest. Before Jesus teaches us to ask for bread, He teaches us to desire the reign of God. Before we focus on our needs, He trains our hearts to long for His will. In other words, prayer is not only a place where we unload our concerns; it is a place where our concerns get reordered.

As we commune with God, He begins to expand our hearts to care about what He cares about. Our "WE" prayers begin to transition into "THEY" prayers. We move from "Lord, meet us" to "Lord, reach them." We move from receiving mercy to extending it.

This is one of prayer's most important formational works. Prayer prepares us for outward mission by aligning us with the purposes of God. It loosens our grip on comfort, convenience, and self-protection. It teaches us to see the people around us not as interruptions, but as souls loved by God. The person at work who seems difficult, the neighbor who appears closed off, the family member who keeps resisting truth—prayer trains us to see them under the banner of "Your kingdom come."

According to a well-loved Salvation Army tradition, near the end of William Booth's life, he wanted to send a brief word of encouragement to his officers and soldiers. Because telegrams were costly, the message was reduced to one unforgettable word: "Others."

Whether told as history or remembered as legend, the point still captures the heart of Booth's mission: a life turned outward toward the needs of others.

That is what worship does. It does not shrink the heart into private spirituality. It enlarges the heart until we begin to see people differently. We notice their burdens. We care about their eternity. We carry compassion into the places God has assigned us. Worship that begins with God eventually turns us toward others.

The worshiper who truly spends time in the presence of God cannot help but carry His heart for the broken, the lost, and the hurting. Real communion eventually creates real compassion.

Influence in Ordinary Places

When we talk about "influence," it's easy to think of platforms and microphones. But the most profound spiritual influence usually happens in the most ordinary places, around dinner tables, in breakrooms, or in the car with our kids.

I'm reminded of a friend named John Voelker. John wasn't a man who used flashy religious language or tried to "perform" his faith. But John carried an atmosphere of delight. When you were in a room with him, you just knew his relationship with Jesus was the real deal.

John faithfully expressed his praise on the fifth row of our church every Sunday morning. He would close his eyes and lift his hands during songs he didn't even know. And where he was during the week? Out knocking on doors telling people about Jesus. His worship was truly inward, upward, and outward.

Being around John didn't make you think, "Wow, John's impressive." It made you think, "I want to know the God that John knows."

That kind of influence can be easy to overlook because it doesn't arrive with spotlight language. It shows up in consistency. It's the steady kindness, the unforced gratitude, the settled peace, and the instinct to speak hope instead of cynicism. People like John often shape a room before they ever say much. Their tone lowers the temperature. Their presence makes faith seem sturdy and believable.

And that influence is not reserved for people with titles. Some of the most formative worshipers in a church are not on the platform at all. They are the ones who greet others with warmth, pray quietly with faith, serve without needing recognition, and carry the fragrance of Christ into hallways, homes, hospital rooms, classrooms, and coffee shops. They may never hold a microphone, but they still lead by the atmosphere they bring.

Fact is, you don't need a microphone, title, platform, or ministry position to influence others. Every follower of Jesus carries influence somewhere — in a family, friendship, workplace, classroom, small group, neighborhood, or church.

Paul describes this perfectly in 2 Corinthians 2:15: *"For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing."*

A life saturated with the presence of Jesus carries a spiritual fragrance. You can't always see an aroma, but you certainly know when it's there. That is the ultimate goal of Lord-

Leader-Laity. The *leaders* lift up the *Lord* so clearly that the *people* are drawn, not to the leader but to the *Savior*.

What Are You Overflowing With?

Jesus told us that "*out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks*" (Matthew 12:34). Eventually, whatever is filling you is what will spill out of you.

If our hearts are filled with anxiety, that's what will overflow onto our families. If we are filled with criticism, that's what will spill into our churches. But if we are being filled with the holiness, mercy, and love of God, then worship becomes our natural overflow.

This week, I invite you to pause and ask yourself a few honest questions:

- What kind of atmosphere do I create for the people around me?
- Do people encounter peace or pressure when they are near me?
- Am I receiving from God without allowing His life to flow *through* me to others?
- Am I lifting up the Lord clearly, or am I accidentally lifting up myself?

These questions aren't meant to produce shame. They are invitations to return to the river. True worship doesn't stop with us. It becomes living water. It becomes a song that can be seen. It becomes a love that changes the world.

Let's be people who do not merely receive the river, but let the river flow. Let's be people who don't merely sing the song, but live it in ways others can see. As we lift up the Lord with sincerity and love, may those around us be invited to taste and see that He is good.

Gathering the Threads

Worship overflows. When God forms the heart, worship begins to move outward in witness, influence, service, and compassion.

Key threads:

- Worship that is real does not stay private.
- Upward worship before others becomes witness.
- Prayer moves us from WE to THEY.
- Influence begins in ordinary places.

CHAPTER 4

TRUE WORSHIP

