

Strengthened in Worship

Reading Guide

When the Lord gave Israel the Ten Commandments as he met with Moses on Sinai, he began with this, “You shall have no other gods before me” (Ex 20:3). The implication that flowed from the primacy of that commandment was clear: God alone is worthy of worship. Likewise, when Jesus was asked which was the great commandment of the Law, he responded with this, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment” (Matt 22:37-38).

Worship is our response to God based on our knowledge and experience of him. As we see in places like Romans 12:1, our whole lives are to be an expression of worship as we understand that God alone is worthy and experience his goodness and faithfulness. This series is designed to grow our understanding of, and participation in, corporate worship, specifically. We hope to increase our awareness of why corporate worship is vital for our growth as Christ-followers, as well as our understanding of why corporate worship is structured as it is at Summit. But preparation for corporate worship does not begin when we wake up on Sunday morning, when we’re driving to the church building, or when we sit down in our seat just before the music begins. Rather, just as worship is an all-of-life response to God, so too is preparation for corporate worship an all-week practice.

In his Larger Catechism, the reformer Martin Luther said, in explaining the First Commandment, “Whatever your heart clings to and confides in, that is really your god.” That means that throughout the week we are either preparing our hearts and minds for corporate worship or we are sabotaging our ability to do so faithfully. How is that so? Because where we set our minds, place our affections, and spend our time reveal what our heart clings to and confides in.

This Reading Guide is designed to promote your intimacy with the Lord. Our hope is that as you spend time in the Psalms below each week, and consider the questions we ask, that these will help serve to prepare you for corporate worship and foster a life of worship as you see and savor the goodness of God. Unlike previous Reading Guides, this one is specifically designed to prepare you for what we will be engaging each Sunday, rather than inviting you to consider what was discussed the previous Sunday. Each week, we would encourage you to meditate on the Psalms designated below, which will ultimately be the basis for the sermon the following Sunday. There are also four questions that we would invite you to answer each week, and these correspond to the four topics that we will be discussing throughout the series.

We pray that this Reading Guide fosters greater intimacy with the Lord in you. We also pray that this series strengthens our bonds as a church family as we worship the Lord together.

Reading Schedule

Week 1 (July 4-10)	Psalms 1 & 27
Week 2 (July 11-17)	Psalms 100
Week 3 (July 11-24)	Psalms 146

Questions to Consider

1) Remain rooted in the Word.

What does this passage say about the nature and character of God?

2) Rehearse truth about God.

As I recount what is true about God in this passage, how does it encourage my faith, challenge me to grow, or shape my decisions?

3) Respond to God with thanks.

How does my understanding of God in this Psalm and my experience of God in my life produce gratitude in me? Has my heart been grateful or presumptuous this week?

4) Resolve to live in worshipful service to God.

How has the truth about God in this Psalm and the goodness of God in my life compelled me to live in sacrificial service to God this week? How have I loved others for the sake of God's Kingdom?