

# THE HEART OF WORSHIP

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**Focus** True worship comes from our hearts as an expression of affection for the Lord. True worship transforms our lives.

**Open** Have you set any New Year's Resolutions or goals for 2013?

**Read** In Genesis 18:1–14, we learn about worship from Abraham's example. True worship comes from the heart. We prepare our hearts for worship by understanding what Jesus has done for us. Like Abraham, we have been made righteous and acceptable to God because we believe and have yielded our hearts to Him. For this reason, we can boldly come into God's presence to worship Him (Hebrews 10:19–23).

Worship grows in our hearts as we pursue knowing the Lord. Abraham recognized the Lord and ran to worship Him (Genesis 18:2) because he had spent his life seeking the Lord. Abraham built altars of worship everywhere he traveled, and in those places, God revealed Himself to Abraham. In the same way, God reveals Himself to us as we spend time with Him in worship and reading the Bible. When we read the Word, the Holy Spirit brings it to life and helps us to understand it.

When we worship, we express affection for the Lord. Abraham ran and bowed down to worship (Genesis 18:2). It is natural for us to physically express our worship because our heart is connected to our bodies. Just as we get excited and cheer at a sports event or political rally, we can get excited in our worship because we are expressing value for the presence of God.

Worship transforms our lives. When we seek God, He speaks to us. The Holy Spirit leads us, delivers us, gives us life, joy, faith and hope. In the place of worship, God orders our steps. Like Abraham, who received a son in his old age (Genesis 18:14), God reveals to us that there is nothing too hard for Him.

### **Talk**

1. Before this message, what was your understanding of worship? Did you grow up in a religion where you practiced worship? Who or what did you worship, and how did you express it?
2. Sometimes we “go through the motions” of worship, but our heart is not in it. What are some of the causes of this? How do we re-engage our heart?
3. What do you think it means to “know” God?
4. Are you an expressive worshipper or are you more reserved? Do you like to dance and sing and clap or are you more comfortable with quiet expressions of worship?
5. Share with the group about a time the Lord has spoken to you as you worshipped. How did that experience impact your life?

### **Live**

In Genesis 18:14, the Lord said to Abraham, “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” This was regarding Abraham’s long-awaited promise of a son from the Lord. Do you have a promise from God that you are still waiting to see fulfilled? During your times of worship this week, ask the Lord about that promise. Ask Him to build your faith and sustain your hope. Worship Him because He is faithful, and He keeps His promises.

### **Pray**

Lord, we thank You that we can come confidently into Your presence because of salvation through Jesus Christ. We praise You, God, because You are worthy of all glory and honor. Help us to know You more, Lord. Please grow us in our expression of worship. Speak to us and order our steps.