

Seeing the I AM | Exodus 34:8 Sermon Discussion Participant Guide

Purpose of Discussion: Compare and contrast the effects on our lives of secular worship with the effects of worshipping the I AM.

Sermon Refresher: Woven into the fabric of who we are as humans is a desire and a drive to worship and the reality is that our lives will be shaped and directed in large part by these things. As we go about our daily lives, we each have default settings that clamour for our worship but only the LORD is worthy of our deepest affection and can give meaning to our lives in the ways that we desire. We move from worshipping lesser things to worshipping the LORD as we truly see and experience Him.

Icebreaker: Think back to a time—maybe during high school or college—when you were really into something or someone that you are not into now (could be a relationship, a hobby, a sport, political cause, or other interest). How did that person or group or interest shape your daily life and habits and what happened to make you move on from it?

Transition: Without even realizing it, by default, we often look to things and people around us to satisfy us and bring meaning to our lives. But, we know—both from the Scriptures and from our experience—that these things change us; they “fade us” and “eat us alive.” On the contrary, worship of God infuses into us a vertical power and transforms us increasingly into the image of Christ.

Discussion:

1. Observing the culture around us, list off as many things that you can think of that people tend to worship.

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2. David Foster Wallace says, "The insidious thing about these forms of worship is... that they are unconscious. They are default settings." Looking at the list that your group came up with, which 2-3 of these do you find yourself drawn to as "worship default settings"? Why do you think you're personally drawn to these settings?
3. Read the following quote: "What people revere, they resemble, either for ruin or for restoration. Our worship and our affections right now are pointers to a future trajectory. Our worship is either aimed at our ruin, or our worship is aimed at our restoration, but it is aimed in either case. We are becoming what we worship. Thus the process of sanctification is the gracious redirecting of our worship and affections away from worldliness and toward God's image in Jesus as we are conformed to that image." (as seen in 2 Corinthians 3:18, Tony Reinke referring to Greg Beale's book *We Are What We Worship*)

Going back to the 2-3 worship default settings you mentioned above, describe how the worship of those things can result in your ruin (ie: fade you, fail you).

4. Dave said, "Most of us realize that ultimately there are only two likely options: Either there is no God and your life is about nothing more than what you can find to give you your own sense of meaning... OR there is a God. And Jesus' resurrection tells us that he is YHWH." What compels you to believe one way or the other?

5. Dave stated, "Being stuck seeing only the horizontal makes you a prisoner of a lifestyle of grumbling and discontentment and disappointment and anxiety because you'll never have enough of what it is you think you need to find meaning, love, worth, joy, etc."

Share a time in your life—either previously or currently—when you felt stuck or even imprisoned by this kind of grumbling, discontentment, anxiety or disappointment.

6. Read Dave's words: "But when you begin to see and experience the glory of God—His power, His judgment, His love, His mercy—it becomes weighty to you... And when you realize that you're speaking to Him and that He's present with you and hearing and that he's speaking to you through His Holy Spirit and His Word, through the Scripture... That Jesus is YHWH and what YHWH has done for you in Jesus, not only will God matter more to you than anything else in the world, but you'll also start to realize how much you matter to God."

How does it impact you to think about God as described in Exodus 34—the I AM, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness—being present with you, hearing you, speaking to you and that you matter to Him?

How does this perspective shift your worship from your default settings back toward the LORD?

7. Throughout this discussion, we've been talking about how our certain worship default settings have a certain aim and trajectory, how they have a certain power over us and can control and even imprison us. Share one practical way that you want to refocus your worship on God this week, trusting that through that worship, the Lord will infuse your life with a vertical perspective and power and freedom.

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Sharing and Prayer: A lot has probably already been shared during the discussion about the different things we worship other than God and the effects it has on us. During this time, sum up what you feel like the Lord has revealed to you about what you are worshipping and spend time praying for each other that God would help us see him and worship him throughout the week.