Session Five: Worshipping Focuses Our Wavering Hearts

*CHBC General Qs on p2

Aim
To explore how true worship of God is fuelled by love and how worship also inspires a deeper love for God and others.

Materials
Bibles

Core Text
Revelation 2:1-7

Feedback (optional)

Think back to Sunday: did you notice anything that was said, seen or sung in the service that would be helpful in conditioning your heart, making you more likely to respond well to situations on your frontline?

Introduction 10 MIN

Imagine you have just moved to a new area and you have been looking online to find local churches. You come across a church called St. Perfecto, and they have a very impressive and up-to-date website. That Sunday you turn up and the building is both beautiful and functional and includes some very comfortable seating. A team of children's workers provide a fun time for the young ones while the adults listen to a doctrinally sound sermon, delivered by the impeccably dressed senior leader. At the end of the service, you enjoy an unusually high quality cup of tea/coffee before you leave. The experience seemed to tick so many boxes... except for one thing: you're left with a vague sense that a genuine love for God and people had somehow been lost along the way.

- If you were invited to preach at St. Perfecto what sorts of things would you want to say to them?

Video (optional) 5 MIN

Watch Video Five: Worshipping Focuses Our Wavering Hearts
Available at: licc.org.uk/wholelifeworship

- What struck you as you watched the video?

CHBC Questions to Ponder:
* Review your journey with Christ. How have you grown in your relationship with him over the last few years? Give thanks for the ways He's been forming you. If you can't 'see' any, ask others who know you well and pray about it.

*Are there areas of your life that take precedence of living for Christ? Take time to repent of these and ask the Holy Spirit to help you realign your priorities.

"Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small; Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all."

—

Isaac Watts

* If your heart's desire is to live a whole life of worship, are there areas that need to be reformed—at work, at home, in your family, friendships, community? Pray about what this looks like—be realistic about how much you want to change in one go. Seek the encouragement and accountability of others.

"If worship forms us to be a people who dwell in that reign, then we will carry God's kingdom wherever we go – and we will be equipped to reach out to the culture around us with words of gospel truth and deeds of gospel faithfulness. God grant our churches such worship – for his glory and for the love of the world."

—

Marva J. Dawn

* Whilst gathered worship can help shape us within God's big story, the fire and motivation in our hearts really overflows from our genuine love and gratitude for all God has done for us. Which aspects of God's character and/or his plan of salvation 'wow' you each time you consider them?

Bible Study 45 MIN

The church in Ephesus made a great start despite severe challenges from the off. We know from Acts chapters 19 and 20 that Paul spent a long time teaching there (2-3 years) and specifically warned the elders of the church about the dangers of false teachers (20:28-31). In this church's early years, we see not only a hunger for knowledge, but also a heart of love (Acts 20:36-38 and Ephesians 1:15-16). It is also widely believed that the Apostle John, who writes about love so much in his gospel and letters, was an overseer of the Ephesian church for some time. However, by the time John's letter to the church in Ephesus in Revelation 2 is read to them near the end of the first century, some things have changed.

Read Revelation 2:1-7

- In what areas has the Ephesian church excelled? What have they failed to hold on to?
- What will be their punishment if they fail to repent? Why do you think it's so severe?
- What will be their reward if they do repent? Why is this reward so special (it may help you to refer to Genesis 3:22-24 and Revelation 22:15)?
- Imagine that you were part of this church back then, how would you have felt hearing these words read to you?

We don't know exactly what was meant by losing their first love. The emphasis could be on their love for Jesus, their love for those within the church or even their love for those outside of the church. However, we know from the rest of the Bible and from our experience that love for God and others is inseparable (1 John 4:7-21).

- Why do you think Jesus was so exercised by this loss of their first love?
- How do you think it's possible that they could be doing so much good stuff but not notice such an important change had taken place?

Time and again God calls his people back to their love relationship with him.

- In what ways do you think our worship together can strengthen our love for God, focus our wavering hearts?
- Are there any ways in which you think you might be distracted by superficial things in your Sunday worship?
- In what ways does your Sunday worship guard the priority of love?
- What differences do you notice in worship when you are caught up in the joy of God's love for you?

Looking Ahead 10 MIN

- As we encounter Christ's love in gathered worship, how does this impact our capacity to love others in our day-to-day lives? Is there anything you can do to help this process happen more?

Prayer 15 MIN

At the end of this series, where you have been exploring how Sunday worship services connect with and shape us for everyday life, spend some time together praying about the following:

- Thank God for his interest in the whole of your lives and how you see God at work in your church and in your daily lives.
- Repent of ways in which you are failing to love God and the people he has made, whether inside or outside of church.
- Ask God to help you grow in worship together on Sundays in ways that will help you worship him more lovingly wherever you are, Monday to Saturday.

Takeaway

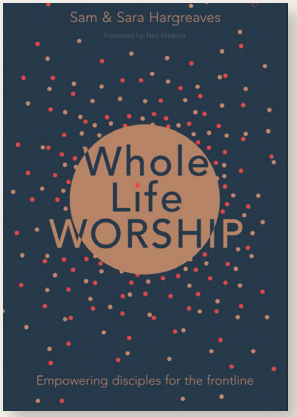
- Think about one thing that you want to remember from this series of studies or want to commit to doing differently. What things might help you to keep remembering/doing this?

Ideas:

- Something visual that you place in a spot you will see regularly.
- Develop a new habit, setting a reminder on your phone or putting a note in your diary to remind you to do it.
- Ask somebody that you trust to keep you accountable.
- Read a book or listen to talks online that will help you to explore your 'one thing' further.

Journeying Deeper into a Whole Life of Worship

Read *Whole Life Worship*



Creative, liberating, and inspiring, this book not only makes a passionate case for worship services that engage with people's Monday to Saturday lives but offers the biblical foundations, practical frameworks and a wealth of examples to fire the imagination of church and worship leaders whatever their stream or tradition. This book represents a significant contribution to establishing a sustainable culture of whole life discipleship in your church community.

'Packed with thoughtful provocation and practical innovation, this is a vital book for all those who lead in our churches.'

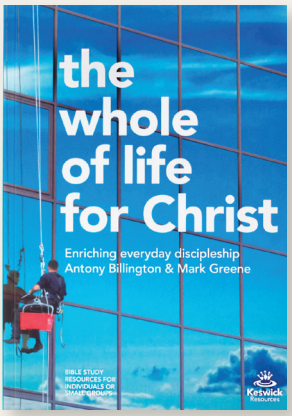
Krish Kandiah, Founder and Director, Home for Good

'Sam and Sara offer an important corrective to twenty-first-century church worship... the message is revolutionary if we will only take it on board.'

Mike Pilavachi, Soul Survivor

Visit: licc.org.uk/wholelifeworship

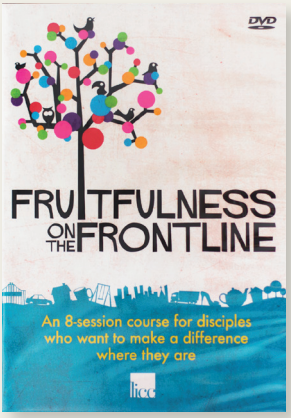
Study *The Whole of Life for Christ*



Suppose for a moment that Jesus really is interested in every aspect of your life. This isn't just a nice idea we've come up with on our own, a comforting thought to make our daily lives seem more meaningful. It's threaded right through the Bible. The deeper we dig into God's word the more we're affirmed in our calling to be disciples of Jesus in every area of our lives. Whole-life gospel, wisdom, purpose, fruitfulness, mission, hope and worship – these seven studies developed by Antony Billington and Mark Greene in partnership with Keswick Ministries, work for both individuals and groups. We've also included material for leaders at the back of the book to help inform and prompt group discussion.

Visit: licc.org.uk/shop

Study *Fruitfulness on the Frontline*

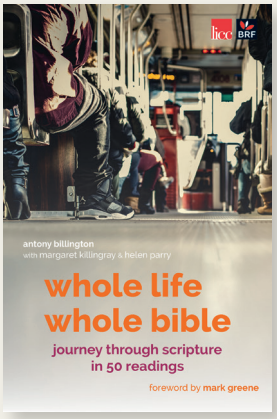


Whether you're a student or retired, at the gym or at work, at the school gate or in the supermarket, these eight DVD-based sessions will help you and your group see how you can make a difference on your frontlines and support one another along the way. Combining biblical teaching from Mark Greene and inspiring real-life stories, the sessions explore 6Ms – six expressions of fruitfulness, that will open up a host of possibilities for you among the people you naturally meet, in the places you find yourself day by day.

Visit: licc.org.uk/fruitfulness

Explore *Whole Life Whole Bible*

Far from restricting our faith to the 'personal' sphere, God's word calls us to take the Lord of life into the whole of life. Ideal to be used as a daily devotional guide, *Whole Life Whole Bible* takes you through the unfolding story of Scripture in 50 short readings, that demonstrate how our lives are to be shaped by God's plan to restore a broken universe. The journey is sure to develop your thinking and fuel your imagination as you seek to live worshipfully in the light of God's word, whoever and wherever you are.



Visit: licc.org.uk/shop

Host a Whole Life Worship Day

In partnership with LICC, engageworship are offering a training day for church, worship and lay leaders to explore further the implications of whole life worship. Filled with worship and practical examples, the day begins by exploring the themes covered in the book, before offering a choice of two workshops: one focussed on service leading, the other on songs. The day is led by Sam & Sara Hargreaves and their band of experienced musicians.

If your church would be interested in hosting a Whole Life Worship Day, please email: **stefan.mcnally@licc.org.uk** for further information.

Visit the LICC Website

Whether you're looking to grow in your understanding of the Bible and its implications for your daily life, understand how to respond to the pressures and opportunities in today's world or workplace, or looking for resources to help as you lead a whole life disciple-making community, LICC's website is packed full of articles, videos, stories and content to help you on your journey.

Check it out at licc.org.uk

“Christ has no body but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world.”

—

Teresa of Avila

"In the light of your mercy, we offer up our lives, all we are, for you. In the power of your Spirit a living sacrifice, all we are, for you".

—

Sam Hargreaves

We long to follow Christ in every area of our lives; to offer our whole lives as worship to God. Of course, we know that worship is more than music. It's a response to the love and grace of a faithful God and all that he has done for us. So how might this kind of worship become a reality in our Monday to Sunday lives? In our everyday places - offices and colleges, shops and banks, hospital wards and athletic clubs, cafés, nursing homes, and churches – the places where we 'do life', week by week?

This set of five Bible studies is designed to help you and your small group explore how worship transforms every area of our lives: our everyday work and activities, our speech, the way we see things and perhaps most importantly, our hearts. Created as part of a suite of resources, Whole Life Worship – the book and the Journey Pack – these studies can also be used independently.

Each session explores a Bible passage around the session's theme and then encourages the group to discover its implications for Monday to Sunday life and worship. There's a short animated video to watch and discuss each session – available with the Journey Pack, or free from our website - **licc.org.uk/wholelifeworship**. Plus ideas to take away and try, and prayer suggestions for the group.

"So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life – and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him".

—

Romans 12:1, *The Message*

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