

Small Group Worship Leader's Guide – Psalm 111

Provided by the faculty of the School of Church Music and Worship

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

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Getting Started

As we gather to worship with other believers, it's vital to realize that *what we do* during our time together (whether in our churches or homes) is *formational*. Biblical worship clarifies our views of God, ourselves, and others. What we sing, pray, say, and do in worship shapes our devotional lives. Worship on Sunday forms how we worship and live the other days of the week, which is why it is so critical that our worship be guided by Scripture, for the Bible is what the Holy Spirit of God uses to sanctify us. In light of this reality, here are some important points to remember as you lead worship this week:

1. We become who or what we worship! The words in Psalm 115:8 are a powerful reminder giving a warning that those who trust idols “are just like them.” However, we also see in 2 Corinthians 3:18 that as we look to Christ and worship him, we are transformed into his image.” May it be that all of us realize more and more that *we resemble who or what we revere*.
2. Last week we looked briefly at a rhythm of worship that is simple but profound—the rhythm of Revelation and Response—God revealing and his redeemed responding. There is another rhythm in worship that we see throughout Scripture and it is the rhythm of Transcendence and Immanence. In other words, in our corporate gathering we should be reminded first of who God is! He is the one who initiates our worship. He is the one who makes it possible for us to worship. Worship begins with God, and He is all the things we are not ... omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent. But through Christ, he is also intimately near. His thoughts toward us “would outnumber the grains of sand” (Psalm 139:18). The God who said, “Let there be light” (Gen. 1:3), also said, “Let the children come to me” (Luke 18:15-17).

Opening Call to Worship – Psalm 111:1

Possible opening statement to facilitate the opening of worship:

Leader: As we gather again away from church, we know that no matter what happens, our God is always worthy of our praise. Let's begin our time of worship by reading out loud together Psalm 111:1.

All: Hallelujah! I will praise the Lord with all my heart in the assembly of the upright and in the congregation.

Possible transition statement to hymn: The Psalmist is clear, that he will praise the Lord with all his heart. May we do the same as we sing “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty.

Hymn Suggestion: “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty” (stanzas 1–3, 5)



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Scripture, Sharing, and Prayer (Psalm 111:2–5)

*Possible transition from Hymn (*Note: the Leader may want to ask 2 or 3 individuals to read the passages below prior to the worship time)*

Leader: As the Psalmist continues, let's consider how specifically he expresses his grateful praise:

Reader 1: The Lord's works are great, studied by all who delight in them.

Reader 2: All that he does is splendid and majestic; his righteousness endures forever.

Reader 3: He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered. The Lord is gracious and compassionate.

All: He has provided food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever.

Possible small group discussion concerning verses 2–5:

- How often do we pass by the Lord's great works of creation?
- Do we study and notice and delight in his great works?
- In what ways can we remember and rehearse God's goodness, grace, and compassion in our own lives?

Possible prayer using the verses and group discussion as a guide:

Heavenly Father, in these moments of remembering and reflecting on your greatness, majesty, goodness, and compassion, we bow our hearts in humble adoration. We thank you that even in your majestic glory, you are compassionate and gracious to each of us. We confess that we neglect to thank you and praise you for who you are and what you've done, not only for your mighty acts of creation, but for the ways you watch over each of us with a diligence we cannot begin to comprehend. We confess that we have not connected your complete faithfulness in the past with our uncertainty and fear of the future. Forgive us for the ways in which we look for blessings beyond those that you have provided and will continue to provide. And most of all, we praise you for Jesus Christ. We were lost in utter darkness, until you came and rescued us. Help us to be increasingly thankful for the most precious gift of all, our salvation. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Hymn Suggestion: "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

Scripture and Group Prayer Time

Possible transition from hymn: Although we might be "prone to wander" and to "leave the God I love," our God remains steadfast, sure, and trustworthy. The Psalmist continues in Psalm 111 with these words:

He has shown his people the power of his works by giving them the inheritance of the nations. The works of his hands are truth and justice; all his instructions are trustworthy. They are established forever and ever, enacted in truth and in uprightness. He has sent redemption to his people. He has ordained his covenant forever. His name is holy and awe-inspiring. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his instructions have good insight. His praise endures forever.

Group Prayer Time could focus on the following:

Thanksgiving:

- Our God has always proven himself faithful throughout the ages.
- We thank him for his completely trustworthy Word.
- We praise and thank him for our salvation.
- We thank him for being a covenant-keeping God.

Petition:

- For many to come to salvation through the difficult days of uncertainty with COVID-19
- For us to speak and act with boldness and grace we encounter people who are asking questions about life and death
- For our missionaries all over the world—that they will have open doors for conversations and ministry to eventually see the nations worship Jesus Christ
- That followers of Christ would gain wisdom from the Lord and his Word as we trust him, fear him, and worship him
- That we would be people who actively praise the only One worthy of praise, and that we would seek the Lord for his guidance

After group prayer time, possible transition to hymn: As the Lord through His Spirit has guided our time this morning, we can trust that he will continue to guide us individually, and that he will be our vision for today and the days ahead. Let's sing, "Be Thou My Vision."

Hymn Suggestion: "Be Thou My Vision" (stanzas 1–2, 4–5)

Closing Prayer