

## Using these Bible Studies

The studies are broken down into different sections that each focus on one of St James in the City's values. We think this is a helpful way to have time together that focuses on many different areas of our lives as Christians, and not simply in getting more 'head knowledge' about God.



### Live:

The foundation for spiritual growth is an intimate connection with God and His family. The questions in the section will help you get to know the members of your group and help grow that sense of family which we are called into.



### Grow:

In this section, the questions are designed to bring you to a deeper understanding of the Bible and to help you consider how the truths of the Bible can impact your life.



### Serve:

Nothing is more fulfilling than using your God-given gifts to serve and help meet the needs of others in God's family. This section will help make that desire a reality. You will be encouraged and challenged to take steps to serve those inside and outside of the group.



### Build:

The thought of sharing our faith can be scary and can feel awkward. Don't worry: this is a common feeling! However, God wants to use you to reach those around you for Christ. This section is designed to give you and your group practical, manageable steps for sharing Christ that can become a part of your everyday life.



### Love:

You were made for God's pleasure. Even when we gather as a smaller group, it is great to have the opportunity to worship and to surrender your heart to God. This could come in a variety of forms such as prayer, singing, or simply sharing what God is doing in your lives. Contribute as much or as little as you feel able to.

## Introduction

All of creation worships God – all trees and flowers, mountains and valleys, creatures in the sea and on the earth. Angels and all in heaven gathered around the throne worship the one who made them. We humans are the only part of creation who fail to join in with this endless song of praise, even though we were also made to worship the one who made us and are only complete when we do so.

**Love** is our value that is all about connecting with God: our love for him inspires us in all that we say and do. Our worship of God is what energises us to live for him and sets our eyes, ears, hearts, and minds back on what is central and important.

This series takes the book *The Unquenchable Worshipper* by Matt Redman as its inspiration. You don't need the book to follow the series, but you might find it useful as background reading. These sessions look at different occasions and aspects of worship in the Bible and what we can learn about worship from them.

### Study 1:

The Undignified Worshipper – different styles and expressions of worship. What can we learn from different ways of worshipping?

### Study 2:

The Unpredictable Worshipper – what does it mean to worship a God who we cannot put in a box?

### Study 3:

The Unnoticed Worshipper – worshipping an invisible God is not easy. How can worship be a whole week activity, and not just 'what we do on Sunday'.

### Study 4:

The Undivided Worshipper – what is the connection with worship and our behaviour?

### Study 5:

The Unending Worshipper – what does worshipping mean given that we will be with God forever?

## Study 1: The Undignified Worshipper

### Live

What has been the least stylish/most undignified/most embarrassing moment of your life? Work out which one was the worst in your group!

### Love

Start your time together in prayer and worship. Throughout this series you could try different ways of worshipping from usual (e.g. using silence, worship songs, short Bible passages, free worship etc.). See the notes below for some ideas.

### Grow

*Read Romans 14:1-15:6 together.*

In the passage in Romans, Paul tells Christians of different backgrounds to respect one another's consciences. Paul gives Jesus as the perfect example.

- 14:1-6 - What are the arguments in the church about?
- 14:13-23 – What does Paul urge the church to do and why?
- 15:1-6 – Why is unity so important?
- What is the attitude we should have to one another when we disagree?
- Discuss what these passages say about relationships within the community of believers.
- Do we still find this passage relevant today? What issues at St James and in the wider church might this refer to today?
- Do we treat all ways of worshipping equally or do we actually think some are better?
- We should not question the expression or style of worship - true worship comes from the heart. Man looks on the outward appearance but only God looks on the heart.

*Thinking about our own walks with Jesus...*

- How do you like to worship God? Does this vary with how you are feeling?
- Has it varied during your walk with God?

### Serve

What can you teach each other about different ways to worship? What can you share with the whole church at St James?

## Prayer

Close in prayer for each other: Pray for wisdom in how to deal with our fellow Christians when we disagree with each other. Ask that God would help us to show love to one another in these disagreements. Pray that God would unite us despite our diversity and that we would learn to embrace our differences.

## Notes: Different ways to worship

### Kneeling

*Phil. 2:9-11; Psalm 95:6; Ephesians 3:12-15.*

Our posture really affects how we relate to others and especially to God. Kneeling might be out of fashion now, but it is still a very powerful way of relating to God. By kneeling we adopt a posture of humility, a position which the Bible encourages us to take before the Lord.

### Lifting Hands

*Psalm 28:2; 134:2; 1 Timothy 2:8.*

The Jewish people of Jesus' day usually lifted their hands to heaven as they prayed and this tradition continued into the New Testament church. In our contemporary church culture many have labelled this as a charismatic trait, but it is a Biblical tradition and can also be seen in more liturgical traditions too, especially in Holy Communion.

### Being Still

*Psalm 4:4; Luke 10:39; 1 Thessalonians 4:11.*

Being still is rare in today's fast paced world; we need it more than ever before. We have to take time to shut off all the noise, be alone at Jesus' feet, and hear what he has to say to us. There is always something waiting to be done and if you wait until all is done, you will never be still. 'The quieter day never comes'. The more you have to do, the more you need to take that time to be still – you might hear the best way to go about your busy day. God will correct your priorities in the stillness.

### Clapping

*Psalm 47:1; 98:9; Isaiah 55:12.*

Clapping is also an expression of worship – we usually think of it as praise or adulation for a job well done. God always does a good job so we can praise and give him adulation at any time through clapping. Some traditions call it a 'clap offering' – we can applaud God. We can clap with a song to express praise with our hands as well as with our voices. Has God been wonderful in your life? Let's give God a standing ovation – he deserves it more than any performer or team!

### Shouting

*1 Samuel 4:5; Psalm 66:1; 81:1.*

Psalm 47:1 brings us into the next expression, a shout! When we hear people shouting "Hallelujah" do we think they are crazy or overflowing with the joy of the Lord? The Bible tells us to shout to the Lord. If you have a reason to be joyful, let's give a shout of Hallelujah! Quiet is no more reverent than a shout of praise – it is just a different expression.

### Singing

*Psalm 9:11; 13:6; 66:2.*

One of the most common expressions of worship in Scripture is song. Over and over the Bible encourages us to sing to the Lord and to sing for joy. It is a sad fact that worshippers can be divided by the type of songs they like to sing. Traditional, modern, old and new all have one purpose – to glorify God alone.

## Study 2: The Unpredictable Worshipper

### Live

If you could suddenly have an expert knowledge on any topic, what would it be and why?

### Love

Start your time together in prayer and worship; try something different from what you might usually do in your group.

### Grow

*Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 together.*

- How is God's wisdom different to human wisdom?
- How is God's wisdom described in 2:7? Do you think this is an accurate description? Why or why not?
- How do those without the Spirit and those with the Spirit differ in their understanding of God's wisdom? Why?
- What does worship look like when it is guided by God's Spirit?
  - How can we make sure we are guided by God's Spirit in worship?
  - What does this mean we do and don't do?

James 4:8 says: *Draw near to God and God will draw near to you.*

- What does this verse say to you?
- Where can we find God's wisdom? How can we draw near to Him?

### Serve

Who is God guiding you to serve this week? (See **Prayer** below.)

### Build

Who is God guiding you to reach out to about Jesus this week? (See **Prayer** below.)

## Prayer

In pairs, ask God to lead you to one person to serve and one person to reach out to Jesus about. Then pray for each other to know God's wisdom as you do this.

## Study 3: The Unnoticed Worshipper

### Live

If you were invisible for a day, what would you do and why?

### Love

Start your time together in prayer and worship; try something different from what you might usually do in your group.

### Grow

*Read Genesis 18:1-9 together. In this passage Abraham hosts three guests, thought to be either the Lord and two angels or simply the Trinity. In his hosting and service to these guests, he is worshipping the Lord.*

- How do you think you would feel if God knocked on your door? What would you do?
- Read John 1:18 and 1 Timothy 6:16. If God the Father has never been seen, how do you think God appeared to Abraham?
- Do you think Abraham recognised the three guests? Why or why not?
- How does Abraham welcome the guests? What does he do?
- What do you think he meant when he said, “please do not pass your servant by”?
- How is Abraham worshipping God in this passage and what can we learn from it?

*Thinking about our own walks with Jesus...*

- What could be described as “unnoticed” worship. How can we draw near to the presence of God in our lives continually?
- (If you have time) Discuss what Jesus teaches about unseen worship in Matthew 6:5-14.

### Serve

How can you serve in an unnoticed way this week? Think about St James, your friends and family, and your work colleagues.

## Prayer

Close in prayer for each other: pray that you would know God with you at all times this week. Pray that: ‘...whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God’ would be true for each other this week (1 Corinthians 10:31).

## Study 4: The Undivided Worshipper



### Live

If you could be a professional at any sport, what would it be and why?



### Love

Start your time together in prayer and worship; try something different from what you might usually do in your group.



### Grow

*Read Romans 12 together.*

- 12:1-2 - What does God require of us?
  - What is spiritual worship?
- 12:3-8 – What part do our gifts have to play in our worship?
  - Why are different gifts important?
  - Are all God's gifts mentioned here? Can you think of any others?
- 12:9-21 – How might these verses look practically?
  - Pick a few phrases that jump out and discuss what they look like in your own lives.
- How does all this relate to worship?



### Serve

Out of the gifts mentioned in 12:3-8, which one(s) do you have and how are you using them at the moment? Have you learnt or grown in any gifts in the last 12 months?



### Build

Have there been times when others have seen how you have behaved and been intrigued about why (see 1 Peter 3:15-16)? Share with the group.

## Prayer

Close in prayer for each other: pray for God to help you use your gifts and for you to show God's love as described in Romans through the week.

## Study 5: The Unending Worshipper

### Live

What one thing do you hope there will be in the new creation?

### Love

Start your time together in prayer and worship; try something different from what you might usually do in your group.

### Grow

*Read Revelation 4 together.*

- What images do you recognise from this passage? What might the different images represent?
  - The door into heaven and the trumpet blast (4:1-2).
  - The rainbow and jewels (4:3).
  - The thrones and elders (4:4).
  - The throne (4:5-6a; see Exodus 19:16-23 and Isaiah 11:2-3).
  - The different living creatures (4:7-8).
- Who is at the centre of worship?
- Compare their worship song with Revelation 1:8 and 22:33.
- What does the final song teach us about ourselves?

*Read Revelation 5 together. This probably represents Jesus ascending to the throne after his ascension from earth.*

- What do the Lion and the Lamb represent about Jesus?
- What do we learn about God's people from this passage?

### Serve

Now that this is the final study, reflect on the ideas we had of how we can better worship God in our everyday lives. Share which ones you tried and which ones you liked and did not like.

### Build

Knowing that there will be a new creation and all will worship God one day, how does this change our view of those around us who do not yet know Jesus?

## Prayer

Close in prayer for each other: pray for God to help you continue to worship him throughout the week and with all that you are.



## Notes: Images in Revelation

- In Revelation 4 John sees a door standing open before him. He is invited to pass through it – and finds himself in the presence of God, surrounded by the worship of heaven.
- God is at the centre - seated on His throne. John says His appearance is like the beauty, sparkle and lustre of jewels.
- He is encircled by a rainbow recalling the grace and mercy He extended to the world after Noah's flood encircles him.
- God's throne is surrounded by twenty-four others; twelve for the tribes of Israel and twelve for the apostles of Christ. Together they sum up the whole people of God. The elders who sit on the thrones – white robed and gold crowned – share God's heavenly reign.
- From God's throne come lightning and thunder as there had been on Mount Sinai when God's people stood in His awesome presence and He gave Moses the Law.
- Before the throne burn seven lamps. They recall the seven-branched lamp stand which stood first in the tabernacle and the temple. The lamps represent the sevenfold Spirit of God – the spirit of wisdom and understanding, counsel and power, knowledge, fear of the Lord and delight in worshipping Him.
- Before the throne is a sea of glass. The cruel sea (the sea of dread and chaos in our lives) is now conquered, cleansed and in perfect peace.
- Around the throne are four living creatures. With faces of lion, ox, human and eagle they represent all God's creatures in earth and heaven. Like the seraphs of Isaiah's vision, they have six wings. Like the cherubim of Ezekiel's vision, they are in close attendance on God's throne.
- Their worship confirms that God is the Alpha and the Omega – the beginning and the end. This description is given in the first chapter of Revelation; the same description is used of Jesus in the last chapter. The Father and the Son were there at the beginning of the universe and they will be there at its end.
- The worship of heaven gives all glory, honour and thanks to God – the One, eternal God who reigns forever. Worship is not about us but all about God.