

# G.R.O.W.

## Lesson 4—Worship

### OVERVIEW

#### G.R.O.W. Acrostic:

Week 1—G—Go to Church

Week 2—R—Read, Study and Memorize God’s Word

Week 3—O—One-on-One Time with Jesus

Week 4—W—Worship

**Bible Stories:** Matthew 23:23-28 and Isaiah 1:11-17

**Key Verse:** Isaiah 29:13—“The Lord says: ‘These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.’”

### BEFORE CLASS

**Preparation:** *Your preparation will determine what direction your class will go.*

- Consider the significance worship has for you.
- Consider the depth of obedience to Christ that is revealed in your life on a daily basis.
- Study and prepare your lesson so that you are familiar with the direction and outline.
- Contact students who missed Sunday School last week.
- Pray for each student by name.

### TEACHING TIPS

*Greet the students in your class personally as you see them before they enter your classroom. Your connection with them outside the class will determine your relationship with them inside the class.*

### OPENING ACTIVITY

#### As Students Enter

As students enter the room, greet them by name and **ASK**:

- *How was your week?*
- *What did God do in your life this past week?*

**SAY:** I've asked you this question for four weeks because if for four weeks you've been unable to identify something God is doing or teaching you in your life, the chances are that you are in a stagnant relationship with Christ—a relationship in which you are not growing. When this happens you can almost always trace the problem back to neglect in one of the four areas we've talked about:

- G—Go to Church
- R—Read, Study and Memorize God's Word
- O—One-on-One Time with Jesus
- W—Worship

### **TEACHING TIPS**

*Before class look for opportunities to ask students about their week or to refer back to last week's prayer requests—i.e., How is your grandma doing? How did you do on your big test, etc.*

## **What is Worship?**

- *What is something you praise God for?*

(Go around the room and let each student answer.)

**SAY:** Praise is a form of worship, but sometimes we confuse singing and praising God as the only way to worship.

- *What are other ways that you can “worship”?*

You can worship:

- By tithing
- By going to church
- By reading, studying and memorizing God's Word
- By spending one-on-one time with Jesus
- By praying
- By sharing God with others
- By obeying God in every area of life.
- Others: \_\_\_\_\_

- *Would you say these elements describe someone who lives a “worshipful life”?*

- Answer this to yourself: *Would you say that you live a “worshipful life” or are there aspects of worship that don't exist in your life?*

- *Are there aspects of worship you don't enjoy?*

**SAY:** Worship means to “Give God His Worth.” It is the act of adoring Christ in any and every area of your life—not just by singing songs but by living a life of love for Christ which results in *full* surrender and obedience to Him. Love is at the heart of worship. In fact, one of the words in our Bible translated “worship” literally means “to turn to kiss.”

- *Have you ever had to kiss a relative that you didn't want to—perhaps a cousin or an aunt?*

- *How did this make you feel?*

**SAY:** You did it because you had to. You were obligated. That's how many people feel about some of the ways you can worship God. They do it because they are supposed to or because they have to. Consider this: Everything mentioned above as a part of a worshipful life is outward. A person can have every one of these outward actions and not be worshiping God. Anyone can "go through the motions."

- *What do you think someone is like who goes through the motions of knowing or worshiping God?* (They can outwardly look just like a true worshiper but the difference is in their heart.)

## **BIBLE LESSON**

**Take the Pharisees for Example:** The Pharisees were the religious leaders in Israel during the time of Jesus. Listen to the degree of their obedience:

- *Tithing*—They gave a tenth of everything to God. There was a popular mint plant in their day. They would pluck off every tenth leaf and give it to God.
- *Going to church*—They continually (some even daily) went to the temple to "worship."
- *Knowing God's Word*—The Pharisees knew and loved God's Word. They would read and study it for hours. They even wore phylacteries—these were small leather boxes in which they would insert Scripture verses. They wore one tied around their forehead and one tied to their wrist. This way they would point to their forehead and say, "God's Word is in my mind," and hold the wrist to their heart and say, "God Word is in my heart." This was an outward symbol of the importance of God's Word to them.
- *Prayer*—The Pharisees had set prayer times, several times each day, and when the time came for them to pray, they would stop wherever they were and whatever they were doing to pray. This means, if they were in the middle of the street and it came time to pray, they would stop in the street and give long and loud prayers while traffic backed up.
- *Obedience*— The Pharisees were obedient to God's word to the letter and even set extra rules to make sure that they didn't even come close to breaking God's commands. For example, one sect of the Pharisees were known as the "Bleeding Pharisees." These religious leaders were so afraid that they might be tempted to lust that they would not even look at a woman. They would literally walk down the street with their eyes closed. As a result they were continually getting cuts and wounds from bumping into things, and hence the name, the "Bleeding Pharisees." But such was their "commitment" to being obedient to God's Word.
- *Would you consider the Pharisees to be worshipful? If not, why—After all, they obeyed the law and followed it to the letter.*

**SAY:** Outwardly the Pharisees were obedient. What was missing was inward.

Listen to what Jesus said to them: **Read Matthew 23:23-28**

- *What do you think Jesus meant when He compared them to cups and dishes that were clean on the outside but dirty on the inside or tombs that are beautiful on the outside but full of dead men's bones on the inside? (He was referring to their righteousness—it was all outward but inwardly they were filthy. In verse 33 He continues to say, “You serpents, you brood of vipers, how shall you escape the sentence of hell?”)*

- *Does the harshness of Jesus' tone toward the Pharisees surprise you? How would outwardly religious people today respond if they were called hypocrites, blind guides, serpents, and broods of vipers?*

- *How would you respond if your “religion” was all outward and someone said this to you?*

**Listen to what God said to the nation of Israel: Read Isaiah 1:11-17**

**SAY:** The people of Israel were going through all the outward modes of worship.

- They were bringing sacrifices. *Does it surprise you that God said He took no pleasure in them?*
- They were bringing offerings. *Does it surprise you that God said they were worthless and to bring them no more?*
- They were going to the temple. *Does it surprise you that God referred to it as the “trampling of my courts?”*
- They were observing religious holidays. *Does it surprise you that God said He hated them, that they were a burden to Him and that He was weary of bearing them?*
- They were praying. *Does it surprise you that God said He would hide His eyes from them and not listen?*

**SAY:** Outward obedience to God's commands isn't always the result of the right inner motive.

**For example:**

- Someone can be made to go to church or might go because a cute guy or girl goes. Going to church is a form of worship but not if a person goes for the wrong reasons.
- Someone might sing songs in church but just because your voice is making noise, doesn't mean you're worshipping. True worship comes from the heart, not the lips.
- Someone might pray or read their Bible or witness in public to be seen, so that others can see how “spiritual” they are, but this isn't worship—This is self-righteousness. Actions of true worship are the same whether people are watching or not.

## Important Questions:

- Answer this to yourself: *Would you say that you have a truly worshipful heart or that you just go through the motions?*
- *If you just go through the motions and your religion and obedience (if you even obey) is outward, what do you think God would say to you? The same thing He said to Israel or what Jesus said to the Pharisees?*
- Answer this to yourself: *On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you love Jesus?*
- Answer this to yourself: *On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you obey Jesus?*

**SAY:** Someone who lives a “worshipful life” will always be characterized by full surrender and obedience to Christ because both true worship and obedience are born from a heart of love for Him.

**SAY:** Did anyone have the same number on both the above questions? The two numbers should be the same because how much you obey Jesus is a direct reflection of how much you love Him.

*Jesus said, “If you love me, you will obey what I command” (John 14:15).*

**SAY:** In other words, God has given you a measuring stick: If you want to know how much you love Jesus, just look at how obedient you are. Everything else is just religious talk.

### TEACHING TIPS

*If time permits, instead of reading verses such as John 14:15 (to the left) out of the lesson, ask students to look them up.*

## KEY VERSE

**SAY:** Remember what God said through Isaiah to the people of Israel. Listen to what He says later:

**Isaiah 29:13—“The Lord says: ‘These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.’”**

### Consider your own life:

- *With your words do you come near to God and honor Him (i.e., “Jesus, I love you,” “I’m a Christian,” “I want to follow You,”)? Does your life and actions through the week—how you talk, what you look at, what you say and do—line up with this?*
- *Do you consider yourself to be a person whose heart is near God or far from Him? Why or why not?*

**SAY:** God does not desire lip-service or outward religious obligation. He desires your heart and your life. True worship flows from a heart of love for Him.

*Psalm 51:16-17 says to God, “You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”*

Consider your motive:

- *Why do you do the religious things you do? Why do you read your Bible? Why do you pray? Why do you go to church? Why do you witness to your friends? What’s your motive—is it inward or outward? Is it to be seen by people, liked by people, praised by people? Is it because others are doing it or because you want to look good? Or do you do it out of a pure heart of love and devotion for Christ? Or do you do these things at all?*
- *Is there anything in your relationship with Christ or your life that needs to change?*

## **WRAP IT UP**

### **Final Thoughts**

**SAY:** During the past four weeks we’ve talked about four foundational elements God has put in your life to help you grow as a follower of Christ. These are:

Week 1—G—Go to Church

Week 2—R—Read, Study and Memorize God’s Word

Week 3—O—One-on-One Time with Jesus

Week 4—W—Worship (Not from the aspect of singing or praise but a life of full obedience and surrender to Christ—A life that gives God his “worth.”)

- *Are all four of these supports present in your life? (If not, just like the chair that has had a leg chopped off each week, you are setting yourself up for a fall.)*
- *Which of these areas do you feel you are weakest in?*
- *What can you do or have you done to strengthen your walk with Christ?*

### **Prayer Time**

List prayer requests below and on the back of this page and pray for your students throughout the week. *Ask if any of your students want to pray today.*

## Prayer Requests