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Presbyterianism 101

ALL TO GOD'S GLORY:
Religious Worship: How and When?
(WCF 21.3-8)

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The Christian Life: Worship

- **New Section of WCF:** Law and Liberty, Worship and Church, Civil Government
- **Critical Chapter to for Christian Life**
- **Review:** Duty and Object of Worship
- **Regulative Principle of Worship:** preserves freedom in (not of) worship
 - God's Freedom
 - Man's Freedom

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Forbidden	Good Ideas?	Commanded
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Cult Prostitutes •Images of God/ any person of the Trinity •Raffle/Gambling •Adoration of Creature (book, candle, cross, altar, wine, bread, etc) •Prayer to Creature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Advent Wreath / Candles •Worship on "Good Friday" •Liturgical Dance •Announcements •Recognition of Achievements •Clowns on Unicycles singing Bible Songs •Missionary Report instead of Sermon •Exchange of Peace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reading of Scripture •Singing Psalms, Hymns, Spiritual Songs •Corporate Prayer •Preaching of Scripture •Lord's Day Worship •Offerings •Sacraments •Vows

The Christian Life: Worship

• **Reformed Worship is Simple**

- Complexity of Old Covenant Worship
 - Roughly 4% of Israel involved directly in sustaining worship operations
 - Old Covenant worship communicates spiritual truths to spiritually immature
- New Covenant worship has same focus as OC
- NC Worship Requirements, Bible, Bread, Wine

The Christian Life: Worship

• **Reformed Worship is Simple**

- RPW enables freedom from cultural norms
- Is RPW Euro-Centric? White Supremacy?

• **Non-Reformed Worship is Ethnocentric:** reflects the preferences of the culture, establishes cultural barrier to worship

• **Emphasis on Liturgy, Pageantry, Ceremony removes emphasis on Spirit**

The Christian Life: Worship

• **21.1 Worship is Natural and Worship is Regulated by God**

- We never worship God rightly according to nature alone due to sinful depravity
- God tells us how to please Him in worship
- It is tyranny to impose what God has not

• **21.2 Worship is due to God alone;** worship is not optional

Duty of Prayer (21.3)

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Prayer, with thanksgiving, being one special part of religious worship, is by God required of all men: and that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of the Son, by the help of His Spirit, according to His will, with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and, if vocal, in a known tongue

Duty of Prayer (21.3)

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- **How shall we pray?**
- **Prayer is required by all people to God**
 - But prayer that is not by the mediation of Christ is sinful!
 - Prayer must reflect an attitude of reverence
 - Prayer must be in a known tongue

Prayer is Governed by the Word (21.4)

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Prayer is to be made for things lawful; and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter: but not for the dead, nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death.

Prayer is Governed by the Word (21.4)

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- **Prayer is act of worship:** therefore governed by the Scripture! We are not free to pray for unlawful things!
- **Pray for lawful things the Scripture teaches us to pray for**
- **Prayers for the dead are not to be offered**
- **1 John 5:16,** *If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that.*

Elements of Public Worship (21.5)

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*The reading of the Scriptures with **godly fear**, the **sound** preaching and **conscionable** hearing of the Word, in obedience unto God, with **understanding, faith and reverence**; singing of psalms with **grace** in the heart; as also, the due administration and **worthy** receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ; are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God: beside religious oaths, vows, solemn fastings, and thanksgivings, upon special occasions, which are, in their several times and seasons, to be used in a holy and religious manner.*

Elements of Public Worship (21.5)

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- **Note the Modifiers:** worship is to be done from the right attitude of faith and love

Psalm 50:7-18, *Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will testify against you. I am God, your God. Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you; your burnt offerings are continually before me. I will not accept a bull from your house or goats from your folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine... Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High, and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.*

But to the wicked God says: "What right have you to recite my statutes or take my covenant on your lips? For you hate discipline, and you cast my words behind you. If you see a thief, you are pleased with him, and you keep company with adulterers."

Elements of Public Worship (21.5)

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- **Reading of Scripture:**
 - Godly fear
 - Not simply to accompany the sermon, but the reading of Scripture is an element unto itself
- **Preaching:** Sound; worship where sound preaching is absent is not biblically ordered worship
- **Hearing:** it's hard to hear Christ's word; we should actively listen to the sermon, work at it

Elements of Public Worship (21.5)

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- **Singing of Psalms**
 - Scriptural songs; *psalm* did not refer only to the biblical psalter; "inclusive psalmody"
 - Singing with *grace* is the attitude, not the skill
 - Congregational singing is not optional
- Eph 5:18-19,** *And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing (pl) and making melody to the Lord with your (pl) heart (sg)*

Elements of Public Worship (21.5)

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- **Sacraments**
 - Received worthily, always tied to the preaching of the word because they are *visible words*, the only pictures suitable for NC worship
- **Occasional Elements of Public Worship**
 - Oaths, Vows
 - Thanksgivings
 - Fastings

Location, Frequency of Worship (21.6)

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Neither prayer, nor any other part of religious worship, is now under the Gospel either tied unto, or made more acceptable by any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed: but God is to be worshipped everywhere, in spirit and truth; as in private families daily, and in secret each one by himself; so, more solemnly, in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly or wilfully to be neglected, or forsaken, when God, by His Word or providence, calls thereunto.

Location, Frequency of Worship (21.6)

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- **Worshipped anywhere, any position:** no spiritual advantage due to geography
 - **God Worshipped Daily:** private and family worship
 - **Public Worship:**
 - far more important than private worship, family worship
 - Public testimony that God is worth of worship
- Psa 87:2**, *the LORD loves the **gates** of Zion more than all the **dwelling places** of Jacob.*

The Day of the Sabbath (21.7)

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As it is the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in His Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men, in all ages, He hath particularly appointed one day in seven, for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto Him: which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week; and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which, in Scripture, is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath.

The Day of the Sabbath (21.7)

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- **Nature makes pattern of rest/work clear:** but nature does not tell us how much time to devote to rest, worship, work, etc.
- **Day of Sabbath**
 - Old Covenant: Seventh Day; looking back to creation and redemption from Egypt
 - New Covenant: First Day; looking back at resurrection, looking forward to New Creation

The Sanctifying of the Sabbath (21.8)

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This Sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs beforehand, do not only observe an holy rest, all the day, from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations, but also are taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.

The Sanctifying of the Sabbath (21.8)

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- **Not out of legalistic spirit**
- **With preparation beforehand:** so the day can be one of rest, worship, not idleness and stress
- **Sabbath a gracious gift of God:** remarkable the Day was not forfeit after the fall
