

## “The Five Phase Worship Workout”

**Psalm 95** Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. 2 Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. 3 For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods. 4 In His hands are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. 5 The sea is his, for He made it, and his hands formed the dry land. 6 Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; 7 for He is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under His care.

### **Ephesians 5:15-20**

15 Be very careful then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. 18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery (moral corruption). Instead, be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[NOTE 1] Only a decade ago you couldn’t hardly turn on the television without seeing at least one advertisement or actual show that featured some celebrity’s new workout video or demonstrating some new exercise apparatus. Over the last 5 years advertising has shifted almost exclusively it seems to drug advertising. But just 10 years ago Jillian Michael’s demonstrating an elliptical, Bow Flex, Solo Flex, Nordic Track, The Maxi Climber, the Titan Home Gym, and Chuck Norris’s Total Gym dominated advertising, especially during sports and outdoor shows. Yoga instructors, P90X, Zumba, it was everywhere you looked. But just ask anybody in 60 or older age range if they used exercise equipment or exercise videos. I turn 60 this coming April and I remember as a kid that Nautilus and other exercise machine’s were just starting to come on the scene and that was only for Professional Sport’s Teams. Our High School in West Bend Wisconsin was cutting edge and had a Universal Gym. It was so expensive that even the rich rarely had that kind of stuff in their home. 60 years ago people worked hard enough at their regular job that they didn’t need a thigh master, P90X, or Tae Boe Video to get them to work out. They got their exercise at work. Less and less people get enough exercise at their job that they don’t need extra exercise to stay in shape. Our lifestyles and work schedules are all slanted toward removing the need for physical exertion. So if we want to stay in shape, look good, get rid of the weight, we need some other type of exercise outside of work. As a society, in general, we are becoming ever more conscious of our physical bodies and more and more unconscious when it comes

to our spiritual health. Just speaking of people I know, many almost religiously walk or bike every day but can't make a consistent 15 minutes for reading their Bible. [NOTE 2]

When it comes to spiritual health we are much more lackadaisical in our attitude. Instead of conscientiously exercising our spiritual muscles on a regular basis, we seem to think we can maintain a healthy, vital faith with the scantiest amount of exercise. Are we in good enough spiritual shape to muster up the ministries required to give everyone an opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and their Savior? As our text from Ephesians chapter 5 reads, "We should live as wise, not as unwise or foolish people." Wisdom tells us that we as a church, need to keep ourselves in good spiritual condition if we are going to make a difference in this world. A church in California has developed what they call "Five Phases of a Worship Workout." Their five-fold pattern is based on Psalm 95 and verses 19 and 20 of Ephesians 5. In each of these five "phases" the body of Christ can stretch another set of spiritual muscles. We dare not neglect the disciplines of prayer, Scripture reading, corporate worship, or sharing together in fellowship. Last week we talked about 7 things to do to develop a self-cleaning life. This week, 5 phases to develop a spiritual workout. You see, we are called to worship every day, not just on Sunday. Our spiritual health will not improve unless we worship daily, not just once a week.

For a period of 7 or 8 years I played about 2-3 hours of basketball every Saturday morning. But there were several of us that we plenty fat. We were exercising hard for two hours every week. Why were we not losing weight? Because it takes daily exercise. It was better than nothing but once a week just isn't enough to make an impact. If we are only tending to our spiritual health once a week on Sunday morning, it is better than nothing but simply not enough to make a significant impact. [Note 3 a, b,]

The first phase is the **Invitation** Phase. This is a sprint mode and it enthusiastically proclaims: "Let us sing for joy ... shout aloud..." An invitation is something you extend to another so we begin our spiritual exercises by getting out of our self-contained shells, our comfort-zones and direct our words and attention toward others. Singing for joy and shouting aloud are activities that invite others to join in. These are festive and infectious sounds. It's hard to be glum in the midst of such high-energy exuberance and excitement. As we begin worship it is time to wake up our spirits to the presence of God in our midst. God promises in His Word that where two are three are gathered in His name, that He is in our midst. He is here! We need to warm up our hearts to God's love; celebrate the freedom we have gained in Christ and clap hands with child-like enthusiasm.

Praising God in worship needn't be something we slide into gradually, like a hot bath. Rather, like a cold, clear mountain lake, we can jump right in and gasp as the waves of acceptance and love wash over and around us. Think about the beginning of our worship service here in Doster. You can definitely see the "invitation" phase.

The Second phase is **Engagement**. This is a jogging mode that moves us along with out wiping us out. Psalm 95 proclaims: "Let us come before Yahweh, our God with

thanksgiving.” In all our enthusiasm we can’t forget that the reason we come together to worship is not the beauty of the stain glass, not the architecture or building, it’s not the music or singing, or even the pleasure that our friendships in the body of Christ bring us. This engagement mode turns our attention away from one another and toward God, encouraging us to actively seek out God’s presence, His Spirit, His mercy through words of praise. That is why most Sundays I include in my opening prayer something asking God to help us get our eyes off of ourselves, busyness, and life and get our eyes, minds, and hearts focused on God and affirming His ultimate worthiness of honor, glory and praise. [NOTE 3 c, d, e]

When the ancient Jewish rabbis were quizzed, “Where is the Lord?” they did not cite distant mountainous or celestial markers. “The Lord is enthroned on the praises of His people,” was their reply. Where there is no praise, God cannot be enthroned.

The third phase is **Exaltation**. This is a walking mode that slows us down to fully appreciate the wonder and majesty of God. “For the Lord is a great God, a great King above all gods. In His hands are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are His as well,” it tells us this in verses 3 & 4 of Psalm 95.

All spiritual body-building is designed to strengthen our praise of God not to make us more like God. God and God alone is the focus of our praise because God is god and we are certainly, absolutely, positively ... not. God is awesome, God is great, even “the mountain peaks belong to God.” We need to exalt IN GOD—celebrate and worship this God who is so far away and yet so near for our sake. There is nothing too difficult for God. He sees all of time in one dot. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and everywhere present. Feeling God’s exalted status opens our spirit in wonder to the power God represents. In the fifth chapter of Ecclesiastes we are cautioned, “Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few.” God, by His very nature, should inspire awe. God is truly worthy of our praise. In worship we affirm God’s worth; His worthiness to receive honor and praise and glory. In Isaiah, God confronts the prophet and demands, “To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal?” and God reminds His servant Isaiah that, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways.”

The Fourth Phase is **Adoration**. This is resting mode. Ecclesiastes chapter 5 tells us to draw near to listen and how that is much better than the sacrifice offered by fools ... so let your words be few. Only when we stop our mouths and open up our hearts, can we even hope to hear God’s Words for us. This is the awe of God’s otherness. God’s transcendence leads us through praise to an intimate period of Adoration—this is a seated, a kneeling and even a silent mode, encapsulated by verses 6 & 7 of Psalm 95. “Come let us bow down ... let us kneel, ... for we are His children, the sheep of His pasture.” Just let the truth that you are one of God’s children, forgiven, free from the bondage of sin, a citizen of heaven (let it) sink in and wash over you. It’s only when we close our own mouths and shut out the clamor of our own insistent neediness, that we

can open up to God's fullest presence and power in our lives. When we still our fears and open up to the Holy Spirit, Ephesians tells us that we become empowered by that Spirit.

It is when we bow down in wonder at the greatness of God that the transcendent Lord moves towards us, and is felt as an immanent or personal God. God, the all-knowing and all-powerful, is also closer to us than a brother, nearer to our hearts than a sister. He knows the number of the hair on our head. God has established a relationship of divine intimacy with us in the person of Jesus Christ. Indeed, scholars contend that what was distinctive about Jesus' experience of God was "its intimacy and immediacy, and Jesus' "intimate awareness of God as his Daddy.

The Fifth and final phase is Empowerment. This is a mobile mode that gets us up out of our seats and on our feet in service to the world. The empowerment phase asks with Psalm 95:7, "Oh, that today you would listen to His voice! When you wake up in the morning look at yourself in the mirror and ask the question, "Who am I going to listen to today?" and reaffirm *every day that your covenant is to listen to God*, to that still small voice, the moving of the Holy Spirit. Praising God in worship—vigorously inviting, engaging, exalting and adoring the divine, is not an exercise in selfishness. It is a period of spiritual conditioning that prepares us to go back out into the world empowered to be ministers and missionaries, ambassadors and representatives, little Christ's in the world. We should leave worship even as fitness instructors claim we should leave the gym after a good workout—refreshed, invigorated, and ready to go.

The problem with too many churches is that they are still focused on trying to attract people into their sanctuaries. What praise and worship should be more about according to the Bible, is enabling and equipping members to go out into the world. Churches do not attract people: Christ does---and Christ is only known through the witness of His disciples; you and me!! We need to go, and make disciples right where we are at, at work, in our neighborhood, with our relatives. [NOTE 4]

Just like the best health spas in Grand Rapids have the best equipment available to physically work out, so we have the best equipment available for getting a spiritual workout: psalms and hymns, new and old, and God's Word. We already have the greatest instructor of the ages in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So what is keeping us benched on the sidelines. Why aren't we going out to talk with, pray and invite?

Don't be filled with wine and/or the world. Be filled to overflowing with the Spirit of God. Pray regularly and ask to be filled with the Holy Spirit. In John's first letter we are told that if we ask anything according to His will, we will get what we are asking for. If God commands it, it follows that it must be His will, right. So if you pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit, because it is commanded in Ephesians 5:18, we can KNOW beyond a shadow of a doubt that we will get what we are asking for. Ask in faith and trust the Spirit to direct your life. Let's be a singing church to show our joy. Let's be a thankful church recognizing God's mercy and grace. Let's be a spirit-filled church that we may attract others and point them to Christ. Invitation, Engagement,

Exaltation, Adoration, and Empowerment; the 5 phases of a worship workout. Let's actually spend time getting healthy spiritually. Think about how you can do your part in keeping Doster Community Church spiritually healthy. **[NOTE 5]** Please write out a plan to grow more healthy spiritually in the next month. Write out an "I will ..." statement, regarding the next day, week and month. How can we build the five phases of worship into our daily life? Here are mine: "I will read my Moravian Text every day this week, highlight what sticks out to me, ask the questions of the text: What does this say about God? What does this say about people? And how does this apply to me? Then ask what am I going to do about it? I will ..." respond. I will, talk to the neighbors this week and set 15 minutes aside for a 5 phase workout every day this week. Those are my "I will ... statements" for this week. What are yours or what is yours? There is nothing wrong with starting small. Baby steps are fine, as long as you are moving toward Jesus instead of falling away. Write down one thing. If you do, it will make a difference.

Let's pray ... AMEN

**Sermon Notes for “The Five Phase Worship Workout”**  
**Based on Psalm 95: 1-7 and Ephesians 5: 15-20**  
**Given at Doster Community Church on October 23, 2022**

- I. It is extremely important to pay attention to staying spiritually healthy. What are we doing to stay spiritually healthy outside of going to church on Sunday?
- II. We are called to live as wise not unwise or foolish. The wise thing to do is to have a plan to grow spiritually and stay healthy. It is foundational.
- III. Five Phases of Worship to stay spiritually healthy {Not just on Sunday!}
  - a. Invitation (Sprint mode, sing for joy and shout aloud!)
  - b. Engagement (Jogging mode; thanksgiving, focus on God)
  - c. Exaltation (Walk mode; appreciate the wonder and majesty of God)
  - d. Adoration (Rest mode; through praise to intimate adoration)
  - e. Empowerment (Refreshed and empowered: now go and serve others)
- IV. Be filled with the Holy Spirit and let joy overflow so that people will see the faith, hope and love that is growing within you.
- V. What are you going to do about it? Please make the time to write an “I will ...” statement by the end of the day. This “I will ...” statement simply states one thing that you will do differently this week to apply the sermon to your life.