

Developed by Desiring God

 **JOHN PIPER**
SMALL GROUP SERIES

GRAVITY AND GLADNESS

The Pursuit of God in Corporate Worship

A STUDY GUIDE TO THE DVD
featuring **JOHN PIPER**

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*The Pursuit of God in
Corporate Worship*

STUDY GUIDE DEVELOPED BY DESIRING GOD

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Gravity AND Gladness Study Guide

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS STUDY GUIDE

IN THE UNITED STATES, contrary to inflated poll numbers, it is estimated that about 20 percent of the population goes to a Christian church on any given Sunday. That is still about sixty *million* people who attend a Christian “worship service” on a Sunday in America. These sixty million people attend as many as five hundred thousand Christian churches.

If there are five hundred thousand Christian churches in the United States, what is happening in those churches during their Sunday morning service or services? What *should* be happening? How should the Christian leaders who are planning and leading those services think about what is happening? What should those who are participating in these worship services think about their participation, and how should they prepare for worship?

In view of these numbers and questions, it is clearly important for Christians to form what may be called a philosophy of corporate worship. That is exactly what this study guide and corresponding seminar is designed to do.

In order to understand how to plan for and participate in corporate worship services, however, we must first ask the crucial

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question of what worship is. Therefore, much of this seminar and study guide will be devoted to answering this question—to searching for the Bible’s teaching on the nature of true worship.

And in our search for the Bible’s teaching on worship we will discover that true worship is not only intended for Sunday mornings. God has created us to worship him in all of life, in gravity and in gladness.

This study guide is designed to be used in a twelve-session,¹ guided group study that focuses on the *Gravity and Gladness* DVD Set.² After an introductory lesson, each subsequent lesson examines one twenty-five minute session³ from the *Gravity and Gladness* seminar. You, the learner, are encouraged to prepare for the viewing of each session by reading and reflecting upon Scripture, by considering key quotations, and by asking yourself penetrating questions. Your preparatory work for each lesson is marked with the heading “Before You Watch the DVD, Study and Prepare” in Lessons 2–11.

The workload is conveniently divided into five daily (and manageable) assignments. There is also a section suggesting further study. This work is to be completed individually before the group convenes to view the DVD and discuss the material.

Throughout this study guide, paragraphs printed in a shaded box like this one are excerpts from a book written by John Piper or excerpts taken from the Desiring God Web site. They are included to supplement the study questions and to summarize key or provocative points.

The second section in Lessons 2–11, entitled “Further Up and Further In,” is designed for the learner who wants to explore the concepts and ideas introduced in the lesson in greater detail. This

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section is not required but will deepen your understanding of the material.

The third section in Lessons 2–11, entitled “While You Watch the DVD, Take Notes,” is to be completed as the DVD is playing. This section includes fill-in-the-blanks and leaves space for taking notes. You are encouraged to engage with the DVD by filling in the appropriate blanks and writing down other notes that will aid you in the group discussion.

The fourth section in each normal lesson is “After You Watch the DVD, Discuss What You’ve Learned.” Three discussion questions are provided to guide and focus the conversation. You may record, in the spaces provided, notes that will help you contribute to the conversation. Or you may use this space to record things from the discussion that you want to remember.

The final section is an application section, “After You Discuss, Make Application.” You will be challenged to record a “take-away point” and to engage in a certain activity that is a fitting response to the content presented in the lesson.

Group leaders will want to find the “Leader’s Guide,” included at the end of this study guide, immediately.

Life transformation will only occur by the grace of God. Therefore, we highly encourage you to seek the Lord in prayer throughout the learning process. Pray that God would open your eyes to see wonderful things in his Word. Pray that he would grant you the insight and concentration you need in order to get the most from this resource. Pray that God would cause you not merely to understand the truth but also to rejoice in it. And pray that the discussion in your group would be mutually encouraging and edifying. We’ve included objectives at the beginning of each lesson.

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These objectives won't be realized without the gracious work of God through prayer.

NOTES

1. While this study guide is ideally suited for a twelve-session study, it is possible to complete it in six sessions. For instructions on how to use this study guide for a six-session group study, turn to Appendix A: Six-Session Intensive Option.
2. Although this resource is designed to be used in a group setting, it can also be used by the independent learner. Such a learner would have to decide for himself or herself how to use this resource in the most beneficial way. We would suggest doing everything but the group discussion, if possible.
3. Twenty-five minutes is only an approximation. Some sessions are longer; others are shorter.

LESSON 1

INTRODUCTION TO *GRAVITY AND GLADNESS*

LESSON OBJECTIVES

It is our prayer that after you have finished this lesson . . .

- You will get a feel for how you and others in your group approach the issue of corporate worship.
- Your curiosity will be roused, and questions will begin to come to mind.
- You will be eager to learn more about how you can worship the true God in spirit and in truth.

ABOUT YOURSELF

- 1) What is your name?
- 2) Tell the group something about yourself that they probably don't already know.
- 3) What are you hoping to learn from this group study?

