

Thou Shalt Worship the Lord Thy God Matthew 4:10

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What Is Worship?

Poetically, worship has been defined as "Man climbing the altar stairs to God." The dictionary defines worship as: "Worthiness, repute, respect, reverence paid to a divine being." Others have defined worship as: "Profound respect mingled with fear and affection; veneration. A token of respect or veneration; an obeisance."

In the New Testament the most common word translated worship is *proskuneo* which has the basic meaning of "to kiss toward." It appears sixty times and is defined as follows: "to do obeisance to, to prostrate oneself, do reverence to."

Acceptable Worship Involves a Conscious Effort

Worship is not an act that one engages in accidentally, neither is it a spectator activity, rather it is an activity in which the worshiper puts forth a conscious effort to accomplish God's will. Moses writes the account of Cain and Able worshiping God (Gen. 4:3-4). He wrote that God had respect for Abel's offering but no respect for Cain's. The Hebrews writer tells us: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain" (Heb. 11:4). Abel's sacrifice was by faith and since faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), Abel made a conscious effort and followed God's instructions.

When Abraham was obeying God's instructions concerning Isaac (Gen. 22:2; cf. Gen. 22:11-12; Heb. 11:17-18), he told his young men: "Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you" (Gen. 22:5). Abraham made a conscious effort to go to the place designated by God for the purpose of worshiping. God's children also assemble at designated places for the purpose of worshiping Him.

Jesus, in conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, instructed her that under the Jewish law Jerusalem was the proper place to worship (John 4:20-22). The Ethiopian eunuch traveled from his homeland to Jerusalem for the purpose of worshiping (Acts 8:28).

Acceptable Worship Involves Several Characteristics

Obedience—In the days of Malachi the prophet the priests were accused of despising the name of Jehovah because they were not following God's instructions concerning sacrifices. Instead of offering Jehovah sacrifices which met His specifications, they were offering polluted bread, blind, lame, and sick animals (Mal. 1:6-8). Because of this disobedience their sacrifices were rejected. In the New Testament, Jesus declared that worship was to be in spirit (from the heart) and truth (John 4:24). To worship in truth is to worship according to God's instructions (John 17:17).

Attitude—Jesus spoke a parable to certain men who trusted in themselves (not God) that they were righteous and set all others at nought (Luke 18:9). A Pharisee and a Publican (tax collector) went up to worship (pray). The Pharisee's worship was rejected because of his ungodly attitude. The Publican's worship was accepted because he worshiped with an acceptable attitude (Luke 18:9-14).

A Pure Life—God told the Jews in the time of Amos that He despised their worship and emphatically told them that He would not accept it. The reason? The Jews were walking in disobedience to God's Word (Amos 5:21-24). Jehovah spoke to the Jews through Isaiah and told them that He considered their worship as nothing more than trampling His courts and that He would hide His eyes from them (Isa. 1:11-17). The reason Jehovah would not accept their worship is vividly described earlier in the same chapter (Isa. 1:2-9). Christians are to offer their spiritual sacrifices as **holy** priests (1 Pet. 2:5). **Pure worship cannot come from an impure life.**

Five Types of Worship

God's Word informs us that there are five types of worship which man can engage in but only one is acceptable to God.

1. False worship—(Jer. 19:5). Israel's worship to Baal was false worship and an abomination unto God.
2. Ignorant worship (Acts 17:23).
3. Will worship—(Col. 2:18-23, especially v. 23).
4. Vain worship—(Mat. 15:7-9).
5. True worship—(John 4:23).

This is the only one that God will accept. Worship is an opportunity of a lifetime. May God help us to worship Him in spirit and truth, that He may be glorified and that we as Christians may benefit from the fellowship with Him and our fellow Christians.

Deceased

Worship God's Way!

Bruce Stulting

Beacon – July 6, 2009

In the first century, the church worshiped according to the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42). Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). He also promised the apostles that

when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come (John 16:13).

Therefore, the apostles' doctrine is in complete harmony with the will of the Lord.

It is imperative that we continue to worship according to the New Testament pattern. Failure to do so renders our worship vain (Mat. 15:9). We read how

Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord (Lev. 10:1-2).

This example admonishes us not to substitute our desires in place of God's commands.

New Testament worship was always carried out with reverence and in an orderly manner (1 Cor. 14:30). The order of the worship is usually determined beforehand by the elders. Godly men take the lead in the assembly and direct us in the various acts of worship. These men often briefly explain the item of worship in order to help us better prepare our minds to

worship God. Extremism in worship is to be avoided. Ritualism or emotionalism should never characterize our worship. Today, many “new innovations” such as choirs, swaying with upraised hands, spontaneous singing, and hand clapping are being added to the worship. However, a casual reading of the New Testament will find that these acts are not authorized in worship.

Authorized worship includes the Lord’s Supper, giving, singing, prayer, and teaching the Gospel. We dare not try to alter, substitute, add to or take away from the worship that God has authorized. As Christians, we are satisfied to worship God in the way that pleases Him. Any change on our part would be presumptuous and sinful.

During the singing, all members of the congregation are to join their voices together in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. In doing so, we not only praise God but also teach and admonish one another as well (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). With the specific command to “sing” addressed to the individual, we do not add mechanical instruments of music in our worship songs. For the same reason, we do not have choirs, solos, or any type of mood music for entertainment.

During worship on the first day of the week, Christians are to give liberally as God has prospered them (1 Cor. 16:1-2). Our liberality in giving is evidence of our devotion to God (2 Cor. 8:1-8). Although there are many factors to determine the amount given, our money must always be given freely (2 Cor. 9:6-7). Guests are not required to give, but they may do so if they choose. The funds collected are used in the work of the church which includes evangelism, benevolence, and edification.

A vital part of any Christian’s life is prayer. Through prayer the Christian gains strength, offers thanksgiving to God, makes requests, and intercedes on the behalf of others (1 Pet. 5:8; Phil. 4:6). When Christians come together to worship, prayers are offered frequently. During times of prayer, a

godly man speaks his prayer out loud with the rest of the congregation following him in silence (1 Tim. 2:8). Praying in this fashion allows us to maintain order, reverence, and avoid noise and confusion.

The Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus as a memorial of His death on the cross (Mat. 26:26-29). The unleavened bread and fruit of the vine are emblems which represent our Savior's body and blood and help us to center our minds on the events of His death. In partaking of the Lord's Supper we have communion (fellowship) with Christ (1 Cor. 10:16). In Acts 20:7 we have the example of the first century church partaking of the Lord's Supper on the first day of each week. We do not practice closed communion, but each person must examine himself that he may partake in a worthy manner (1 Cor. 11:27-29). Guests are not encouraged or forbidden to partake; it is their choice. We must, however, point out that there can be no communion or fellowship with Christ unless we are faithful children of God (1 John 1:5-7).

Teaching is also part of our worship. The Bible is the inspired, authoritative, and all sufficient Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). As such, we believe that if a man speaks it should be from the Word of God (1 Pet. 4:11). Therefore, our Bible class teachers usually teach directly out of the Bible. Sermons from the pulpit will be Bible centered with Scriptures given to enable the listener to check the Bible for oneself (Acts 17:11; John 5:39). At the close of each sermon an invitation will be given. This is an opportunity for the believing sinner to be reconciled to God by obeying the Gospel. This is done by repenting of sins, confessing Christ, and being baptized for the remission of sins (John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Mat. 10:32; Acts 2:38). The erring Christian also has the opportunity to repent and ask for the prayers of the congregation (Acts 8:22).

The foregoing is a brief account of New Testament worship. From the time of the apostles, men have sought to improve upon

the Divine pattern. All attempts to do so end in failure and sin. Let us stick with the pattern and worship God “in spirit and in truth.” We encourage all to accept the teaching of the New Testament and “Worship God’s Way!”

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