

"Worship"

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*Jesus *said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. (John 4:21 NASB)*

The first question you may ask, "What is Worship?" We may go to a dictionary to see what it says. Looking in one dictionary we find that "worship" is "reverence or devotion for a deity, extreme devotion or intense love or admiration of any kind." Let us go a little deeper in the meaning of worship. Let us see what it means as we serve our God and Savior, Yeshua. The Hebrew word for worship means to "bow down or prostrate, showing the honor, reverence and homage paid to a superior being, such as God."

From these definitions it is obvious what worship involves, recognition of the worth in God, and the offering of our honor, praise, and adoration to the One who is altogether worthy. The English word means "worthship," and denotes the worthiness of the individual receiving the special honor due to his worth. The Bible dictionary goes on to say, "while the word is used of men, it is especially used of the divine honors paid to a deity, whether of the heathen religions or the true and living God."

When given to God, worship involves an acknowledgement of Divine perfections. It may express itself in the form of a direct address, as in adoration or thanksgiving, or in service to God; and may be private or public. Worship presupposes that God is, that He can be known by man, and that His perfections set Him far above man.

Another definition of "worship" is "Man's interaction with God." I like this one because we can worship the true God. We know and recognize that man is inferior and our God is Superior, Supreme and Sovereign. We also know and recognize that man is temporal and the creature God made, where God is the Creator and is Eternal. I like the verse in Hebrews 7:7; *But without any dispute*

the lesser is blessed by the greater. (Hebrews 7:7 NASB) We can be blessed by our Lord and Savior, Yeshua. But, to be blessed we have to be heard by Yeshua, Look at John 9:31; *Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.* (John 9:31 KJV)

The definition of worship is, “a condition of being worthy of honor or renown.....” As a matter of information, that you have already heard, worship comes from an old English word “worthship.” In other words, the greater the worth something had, the greater the honor or renown that something should be given. This writer says and I agree that the “Something” should have a capital “S.” The Person worthy of greatest honor and highest renown is my God and Savior Jesus Christ, Yeshua. Knowing all this, that our God and Savior is worthy of greatest honor and highest renown;

Why do I have to wait to go to a certain building to express His worth?

Why do I have to wait until the atmosphere is right?

Shouldn't I be expressing my adoration and honor to Him always?

I have heard it said or maybe read it somewhere that, “our lives should be

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an act of worship.” As we discuss worship, I would like to quote a Brother Lawrence-

“I know that for the right practice of worship, the heart must be empty of all other things; because God will possess the heart alone; and as He cannot possess it alone, without emptying it of all things, so neither can He act there, and do in it what He pleases, unless it be left vacant to Him.”

“Worthship” is the quality of having worth or of being worthy. Worship says that God has worth, that He is worthy. Worship is to declare or attribute worth to God.

It takes effort to truly worship. We can't worship without putting all our strength, all our hearts and all our minds into the picture and expect it to be meaningful to God. To clarify and confirm, look at what it says in I Corinthians

14; *"I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also."*

(1 Corinthians 14:15b NASB) Give it all to God.

The greatest commandment is to; *And he answered, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."* (Luke 10:27 NASB)

~Offering our bodies~

What does God say about us offering our bodies to Him as a sacrifice? We



are just to look in the Bible to Romans 12:1; *Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*

What is worship? One writer says;

- ✓ Worship is a response to God.
- ✓ 'Worship is not a unique religious act, but an act of submission.
- ✓ It is a human reaction to awareness of the characteristics of God: Some of them are, holy, sovereign, righteous, just, merciful, living.....Name them.
- ✓ Worship is a life and lifestyle, not just acts in isolated pockets of time.¹

~We are created to worship! ~

It's the purpose of the believer; Look at what Peter had to say about our purpose for which God has created us; *But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;* (1 Peter 2:9 NASB)

Three points from this I Peter 2:9 verse.

- ✓ We were called for the purpose of praising God.
- ✓ This is one of the job descriptions of a believer.
- ✓ We should declare that God is worthy, worth more than everything else put together.

¹ A. H. Herbert's Worship in Ancient Israel; Worship in the Hebrew Bible, www.tektonics.org/whiatis/whatworship.html

Another writer puts it well, worship is about what we value, cherish, and treasure. Worship is my response to what matters most to me. You see, worship happens naturally. Whatever matters to you, whether it is God, money, your job, your family, yourself or something else, you have placed worth in that, ascribing to it worth.....in worthship.

God has even placed eternity in man's heart, as the book of Ecclesiastes tells



us, let me read it to you; *He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.* (Ecclesiastes 3:11 NASB) “This urge (of eternity) causes men everywhere to worship. If they are not worshipping the true God, they are worshipping a god of their own composition. Worship therefore, is a universal phenomenon.”²

Many times in the Psalms we are told that we should bow down and worship our Lord and Savior, Yeshua. Look at Psalm 95:6-7.

Come, let us worship and bow down, Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. (Psalms 95:6 NASB)

For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you would hear His voice, (Psalms 95:7 NASB)

Can we distinguish among prayer, praise and worship? Is there a difference? Differences between prayer, praise and worship are.

- ✓ **Prayer** is our preoccupation with our human needs and problems. We come to God with our needs and ask Him for His supply.
- ✓ **Praise** is the preoccupation of our minds with His blessings. We are thinking of all that God has done for us and give thanks for how He has blessed us.
- ✓ **Worship** is our preoccupation with God himself, with the greatness of His being.

² On worship by Ray C. Steadman; <http://ldolphin.org/worship.html>

~Worship – Keep it Real~

We must have obedient lives for our worship to be acceptable to God. Ritual is not enough – The attitude is what is most important. And where as worship must be sincere. And we all know that God is worthy of all worship. If we believe it in our hearts, it will show in our actions. Real worship changes everything we do, because it changes who we are. Worship must be in the heart, not just at the place of worship.



Micah says: *With what shall I come to the LORD And bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, With yearling calves?* (Micah 6:6 NASB)

Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams, In ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? (Micah 6:7 NASB)

He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8 NASB)

And then in James we read;

If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless. (James 1:26 NASB)

Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world. (James 1:27 NASB)



We will know the saved by there actions and their life style, in other words we will know them by what they do, from the heart. Even in the Old Testament, in the book of Isaiah chapter one it tells us what God does not want.

"What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?" Says the LORD. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle; And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats. (Isaiah 1:11 NASB)

"When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courts? (Isaiah 1:12 NASB)



"Bring your worthless offerings no longer, Incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies-- I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly.

(Isaiah 1:13 NASB)

"I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, They have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them. (Isaiah 1:14 NASB)

"So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood. (Isaiah 1:15 NASB)

The people were doing rituals, bringing animals, keeping Sabbaths and festivals, even praying, but despite all that, there was something seriously lacking in their worship.

Why didn't God like their worship? He does not say they were keeping the wrong days nor doing the rituals incorrectly. The problem was that their lives were full of sin. So Isaiah counsels:

"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, (Isaiah 1:16 NASB)

Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow. (Isaiah 1:17 NASB)

"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool. (Isaiah 1:18 NASB)

"If you consent and obey, You will eat the best of the land; (Isaiah 1:19 NASB)

Their sacrifices, prayers and praises were not accompanied by performance in their day-to-day lives. They had worship rituals, but they did not obey God's commands for how to treat their neighbors, and the result was unacceptable worship. Jesus said, quoting Isaiah 29:13, their worship was in

vain. It is hypocritical to do worship, if it isn't changing the other aspects of our lives. One purpose of worship is to bring us closer to the throne of God.

Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And



honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition

learned by rote, (Isaiah 29:13 NASB)

Not only does Isaiah talk about the heart for God, but Jesus repeats it in the book of Mark, chapter 7. The heart is far from me He tells the Pharisees and the scribes.

*The Pharisees and the scribes *asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?" (Mark 7:5 NASB)*

And He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. (Mark 7:6 NASB)

'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.' (Mark 7:7 NASB)

"Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men." (Mark 7:8 NASB)

~Worship – Be Sincere~



The Gospel's most direct teaching about worship is in John 4. It's set in the context of the centuries-old Jewish-Samaritan squabble about the correct place of worship. The woman said, *"Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."* (John 4:20 NASB) Jesus replied, *Jesus *said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. (John 4:21 NASB)*

Location will not be important. Worship will not be associated with any particular spot.

Then Jesus added, *"You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.* (John 4:22 NASB)

"But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. (John 4:23 NASB)

"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:24 NASB)

God seeks people who will worship Him. God desires worship. He wants us to worship Him by His criteria. Jesus echoes the prophets when He says "spirit and truth."



Worship must be sincere. External things don't matter if the heart isn't right. It doesn't do us any good to worship at the right place or with the right rituals if our attitude isn't right. We can sing the right songs and hold our hands in the right way, but if our heart isn't in it, it isn't acceptable worship to God.

~Worship – Be Real, Be Sincere~

Jesus criticized the Pharisees, quoting Isaiah, when He said, *'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.* (Matthew 15:8 NASB) They are hypocrites. They said the right things, but they didn't believe or practice what they said. God wants real and sincere worship. We aren't suppose to fake it. We must believe the praises we say, and live our lives to show it.

Externals are not primary, but if our hearts are right, then we will have externals. Rituals are not primary, but we do have rituals. Jesus himself gave us some, and it inevitable that people will also develop some customs in their worship. But the focus should be real and sincere praise for God.

~Worship – Where's the Benefits~

Ask yourself three questions:

- ✓ **First**, does worship help me experience God's presence in beauty and power in a manner true to His word? Am I in touch with the real God? You can have worship experiences that do not reflect the reality of God. They often reflect God in a perverted or distorted way. They may minister to your emotions, but they do not teach you anything about the real God. A true worship service ought to send us out feeling that we have been standing in the presence of the real God. We are to know something more of His greatness, His mercy, His compassion, and His love. We are to be daily learning and maturing with Jesus.
- ✓ **Second**, does worship foster a sense of unity in the Body or does it damage it? Do I go out feeling closer to my brothers and sisters, more understanding of them, or do I go out angry and upset at them, ready to cut them off and have nothing to do with them? The purpose of worship is to increase the love and unity of the Body. (The 'Church Body)
- ✓ **Third**, does worship motivate me to take practical steps to help others?



Do I feel stimulated, motivated to do something to help my brother? Could I talk to him, not to bawl him out but to be a friend? Whatever the need may be, am I

motivated to meet it? Am I ready to reach out and respond to the needs of my neighbor in very tangible ways, making those things I possess available to him as I serve God by serving my neighbor?

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