

*“I did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).*

## The Worship of God

“God is a spirit, and they who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.”  
(John 4:24 MKJV)

True worship is a gift of God, a miracle, a work of the Spirit. It's the expression of the faith of Jesus Christ in a human being who, looking to God, loves Him and does His will. False worship is the opposite; it's egocentric - man doing his will for his own purposes and gain, albeit in the Name of God. It's worship of God by the flesh, which is contradictory and impossible.

False worship is everywhere and highly visible, but true worship is rare and hidden from carnal sight. False worship is often visible because the worshippers seek the approval of men, but true worship is for the praise of God alone:

Matthew 6:1-4 MKJV

- (1) Take heed that you do not do your merciful deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward with your Father in Heaven.
- (2) Therefore when you do your merciful deeds, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may have glory from men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward.
- (3) But when you do merciful deeds, do not let your left hand know what your right hand does,
- (4) so that your merciful deeds may be in secret. And your Father Who sees in secret Himself shall reward you openly.

**Do we, as true worshippers of God, always *appear* to give thanks and praise to Him?**

So how is true worship manifested? The giving of thanks and praise to God is one way. However, true worship can only be determined by the motive. For example, wasn't the Pharisee giving thanks to God, beside the publican, who wasn't?

Luke 18:9-14 MKJV

- (9) And He spoke this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves, that they were righteous, and despised others:
- (10) Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-collector.
- (11) The Pharisee stood and prayed within himself in this way: **God, I thank You** that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-collector.
- (12) I fast twice on the Sabbath, I give tithes of all that I possess.

(13) And standing afar off, the tax-collector would not even lift up his eyes to Heaven, but struck on his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner!

(14) I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself shall be abased, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted.

**What can externals** tell us? Do we, as true worshippers of God, always *appear* to give thanks and praise to Him? If not, does it mean we aren't worshipping Him? While it's right and good and needful to do this, there's much more to worship than giving thanks and praising God. As the wise man said, there's a time for every season under Heaven, and God brings these seasons into the lives of His people who worship Him.

We worship when we weep and rejoice: "Rejoice with rejoicing ones, and weep with weeping ones" (Romans 12:15 MKJV).

"For His anger is only a moment; in His favor is life. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning" (Psalms 30:5 MKJV).

"Blessed are they that mourn! For they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4 MKJV). As with the publican?

There is suffering and sorrow in true worship. Jesus was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. Was He ever found falling short of worshipping the Father? When He said, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" was He failing in worship? Indeed, no; that very cry of anguish was exemplary of perfect worship.

**True worship is unrelenting dependence on God and acceptance of one's circumstances from Him.**

When David was in his wilderness, as has been every saint that ever lived, he had many days of fears, tears, and desperation. He wasn't constantly giving thanks and praising God, and no one should think this is an obligation or a constant act. Even in his crying out to God, however, David affirmed his faith in the Only One he knew could keep him from harm and cause him to prevail over his enemies, working his way to giving thanks and praise.

There were times Moses greatly despaired, and several times when he was angry with the children of Israel, God's chosen. He wasn't constantly flowing with thanksgiving and praise. Was he failing in worship at those times?

When John the Baptizer was in prison with doubts ("Are you He Who should come or **do we look for another?**"), was he failing in worship?

**When Paul was** scolding the Galatians and Corinthians, was he failing to worship? When he was casting out a sinner from the Corinthian assembly, was he failing to worship?

Wasn't it his duty to do what he did? If doing his duty in obedience to God, wasn't he worshipping in spirit and in truth? What about, "Be angry and sin not" (Ephesians 4:26)?

True worship is an unrelenting dependence on God and acceptance of one's circumstances from Him as both Author and Answer. For this reason, true worship includes many things; indeed, it includes *everything*. True worship is **looking to the Lord** in war or peace, in sadness or joy, in scarcity or abundance, in loss or gain, in sickness or health, in weakness or strength, in labor or rest, in darkness or light, through night and day, thick and thin, failure and success, defeat and victory.

True worship is faith in God, our Redeemer and Lord of all. True worship doesn't guarantee constant happiness, which can be an idol, but it speaks of being set on Him Who governs all, trusting Him for everything.

True worship is confessing and repenting of sins. While introducing the Messiah to Israel, John the Immerser called for [confession](#) and [repentance](#), and the people who were earnest about being right with God believed John.

True worship is manifest in [obedience](#) to the Lord in all that He commands and expects of us. It is to honor His desire and will in spite of our own. True worship says, "Not my will, but Yours be done." Wasn't Jesus offering up praise to God when denying Himself and submitting to the Father's will?

**True worship is to seek God for what He wants and not for what we want.**

True worship means to forsake all, deny self, take up [the cross](#), and follow the Lord Jesus Christ. It is to know Him and to delight in doing His will.

True worship never puts the worshipper first in any way at any time. True worship is to seek God for what He wants and not for what we want. "What would you have me do, Lord?" was the first thing Saul of Tarsus asked of Jesus when suddenly stopped on the road to Damascus. He wasn't asking for himself, but was, in godly fear, looking to honor God.

**Prayers by many** are far and away selfish prayers. "Lord, give me this, bless me in that, save me from this, and protect me in that." One may be asking for good and needful things, but the essence of such prayer is about getting, with little, if any, concern for God's desires and interests. This is not true worship. (Not that the publican's prayer was invalid; he was asking out of a recognition of his intrinsic utter unworthiness before God - a very good state to be in for anyone.)

Men are so inclined to have religious services, with all sorts of formal activities, and call it worship. These include music and singing, verbally praising God, lifting up hands, praying, preaching, testifying, witnessing, prophesying, praying in tongues, laying hands on people in prayer, tithing, bringing and collecting offerings, dressing up in one's best for church,

reading the Bible, memorizing Scripture, reading “Christian” literature, and inviting guests to one’s home from church. All these things men deem to be worship, and truly they may be, but they may not. None of these are worship in and of themselves. The essence of worship is never in the act.

**To worship in spirit and in truth is to have no other gods of any kind, besides God.**

Men will worship any creature, object, or activity - the Bible, prayers, pastors, tithing, congregations, denominations, Bible schools, seminaries, buildings, doctrines, and fellowship. They will even worship worship. They will worship anything but the Lord, if their hearts aren’t turned from themselves to Him. They will, instead, worship idols that reflect their own self-serving motives. The Father, however, seeks men to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

The Scriptures speak of those who worshipped God and also worshipped other gods. That isn’t worship in spirit and in truth. It’s a mixture, which God hates. He commanded, “You shall not have strange gods before Me.”

2 Kings 17:33-34 MKJV

(33) They feared the LORD and served their own gods, according to the custom of the nations whom they removed from there.

(34) Until this day they do according to their former ways. They do not fear the LORD, neither do they do according to their statutes, or according to their ordinances, or according to the Law and commandment which the LORD commanded the sons of Jacob, whom He named Israel.

(For more examples of this, you can read Zephaniah 1:4-6, 2 Kings 23:13, Acts 7:42-43, and for more on God’s view, read the surrounding verses of the one quoted - 2 Kings 17:32-41.)

To worship in spirit and in truth is to be honest, frank, and consistently persistent in self-denial, not for self-denial’s sake, but for His. To worship in spirit and in truth is to have no other gods of any kind, great or small, besides God. This worship is something only God can do for a soul, which He accomplishes in His chosen ones through fiery trials.

Abraham, by God’s commandment, took his only heir and beloved son to offer him up:

“Then he said to the servants, ‘Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go over there and worship, and then we will come back to you’” (Genesis 22:5 GNB).

**True worship is summed up in Jesus Christ, Who shows us the way by Word and deed.**

True worship is the yielding up of everything. There were no other gods for Abraham - there was nothing between him and his God. So it is for Abraham's children of faith. They sell all for the Pearl of Great Price:

“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Matthew 13:45-46 MKJV).

True worship is summed up in Jesus Christ, Who shows us the way by Word and deed, because He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Mark 12:29-31 MKJV

(29) And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord;

(30) and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” This is the first commandment.

(31) And the second is like this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these.

True worship is depending on Christ as one depends on air and breathing, on food and eating, on water and drinking. As we in body can't live without those elements, so we in spirit can't live without God and His Word. He is the Bread of Heaven and the Water of Life. Without Him we have and are nothing. Is it not best to acknowledge that fact and act accordingly? By His grace, we shall do so. That is God's will.

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