

Worship

Who?

Who is the object of worship? Who is worthy of worship? Who is welcome to worship? These three questions are of primary importance when it comes to worship. A failure to recognize the object of worship and the requirements of worship will result in worthless worship.

The object of all worship must be God. When Jesus was offered the kingdoms of the world by Satan in exchange for a single act of worship directed at the devil Jesus replied:

Matthew 4:10

“Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the _____ your _____, and Him _____ you shall serve.’ ”

Worship must be rendered to God alone. The Psalmist David captured the reason worship must be rendered exclusively to God when he stated:

Psalm 86:8-10

Among the gods there is none like You, O Lord;
Nor are there any works like Your works.
All nations whom You have made
Shall come and _____ before You, O Lord,
And shall glorify Your name.
For You are great, and do wondrous things;
You _____ are God.

Regardless of where people live, the culture they are surrounded by, the language they speak, or their rank in society, every person on earth was created by God and owes Him worship because He is God. He alone is worthy of our praise. He alone must be the object and center of our worship.

Having recognized God as the object of worship we must ask, “Who is worthy of worshipping God?” This question is a curious question for most people, yet one of great interest to the people of the Bible. Listen to the wise man:

Proverbs 28:9

One who turns away his ear from hearing the _____,
Even his prayer is an _____.

Jesus himself stated it this way:

John 9:31

Now we know that God does not hear _____; but if anyone is a
_____ of God _____ does His _____, He hears him.

Both the wise man and Jesus taught an important truth: Worship must be rendered through obedience. To state it negatively, God rejects the worship of the rebellious; even their prayer is an abomination. Not only is it pointless for a rebellious person to offer worship to God, such worship is damnable.

Worshiping God is a serious and sobering activity and must be entered with great reverence and holiness.

Consider the scene of Isaiah when he found himself in the presence of Holy God while in a defiled condition:

Isaiah 6:5

“_____ is me, for I am undone!
Because I am a man of _____ lips,
And I dwell in the midst of a people of _____ lips;
For my eyes have seen the _____,
The Lord of hosts.”

Isaiah cried out to God because he realized he was not worthy to be in the presence of Holy God because of the sins his lips had uttered. Yet because of Isaiah’s repentant attitude God purged him of his sin so that he could not only worship but also become God’s prophet.

Isaiah 6:7

“Behold, this has touched your lips;
Your _____ is taken away,
And your sin _____.”

Worthy worshipers are not people who are worthy through merit (self-righteousness), but rather people who have been made worthy by God.

The apostle John captured the relationship between God and His worshipers beautifully when he wrote:

Revelation 1:5-6

and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and _____ us from our _____ in His own _____, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

God washes us (purges) from our sins through the blood of the lamb when we through obedience are baptized into Christ.

Acts 22:16

And now why are you waiting? Arise and be _____, and _____ away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'

Romans 6:3-4

Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized _____ Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were _____ with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in _____ of life.

Those who submit themselves to the Lord in humble obedience to share in His death and resurrection through baptism have their sins washed away by the blood of the Lamb. Those who rebel against God and refuse to obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ remain in a lost condition unworthy of offering praise to God. One cannot simultaneously reject God and offer Him acceptable worship.

Why?

Why do we worship God? We have answered this question in part but need to consider it further.

Worship is not about the individual; worship is about God. To put it another way, worship is about what we give- not what we receive.

We worship God because of who He is and what He has done rather than because of who we are and what we desire. The object must be the reason for the worship.

Man-centered worship is a repulsive thing to God and should be to His people as well. At Sinai God's children engaged in worship to God offered in a man-centered manner and their experience should serve as a warning to all who would worship God.

God warned Israel that they were not to worship any images/idols in Exodus 19:4, yet in Exodus 32 the people engaged in God centered worship through the medium of a golden calf. What many fail to realize is that Israel did not worship a different god, but rather worshiped God in a different manner than how He had commanded. Israel changed worship into a form that

fulfilled their desires rather than offering worship that revered and honored their Redeemer.

Why we worship is an attitude that effects **how** we worship and **when** we worship. If we worship God because of who He is and what He has done, we will seek to worship Him as He desires, when He desires, and where He desires to be worshiped. If we worship God out of self-interests, how, when, and where do not matter.

What/Where/How?

What constitutes worship, where is it offered, and does it matter how we offer it?

If God is both the object and reason of worship, He should be allowed to define the type of worship He desires. According to Scripture worship has both a general and a specific definition and it is wrong to pit one definition against the other. Consider the following passage:

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a _____, _____, acceptable to God, which is your _____ service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

According to the inspired apostle, our entire life is to be a “living sacrifice” to God. The “living sacrifice” model of worship is very broad and general, enveloping every aspect of life. For the Christian, every aspect of his or her life must be lived as worship to God and for His glory. Paul continued this same thought later when he wrote:

Colossians 3:17

And whatever you do in _____ or _____, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Every aspect of the Christian life, the “living sacrifice”, must be lived and spoken “in the name of the Lord Jesus”, i.e. by His authority. When Christ became Lord and King (Matthew 28:18) God granted Him all authority and He has the right to rule as Lord of your life (not merely over the corporate worship of the church). As children of God, we must be willing to submit ourselves to Him in all things, and be conformed to His image.

Romans 8:29

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be _____ to the _____ of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

We conform ourselves to the image of Christ because Christ became man in order to conform Himself to the image a God for our sakes.

Philippians 2:8-11

And being found in appearance as a man, He _____ Himself and became _____ to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the _____ of _____ the _____.

If our life generally is to be understood as a “living sacrifice” of worship in which every aspect is submitted to the direction and control of God through His word, do the specific acts of worship rendered by the collective church not also fall under those same regulations? Not only does Christ have the right to rule of our lives as Lord and the image of God, but He also has authority to reign over the church.

Colossians 1:15-18

He is the _____ of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him _____ things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. _____ things were created _____ Him and _____ Him. And He is _____ all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the _____ of the _____, the _____, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in _____ things He may have the _____.

Does Christ have preeminence in all things or not? Is Christ the head of the church? Were all things, including the church, made for Him and through Him or not? These rhetorical questions emphasize crucial points long forgotten. Man does not rule the church. The church was not built by man or for man. The church was built by Christ, for Christ, and as is answerable to Christ.

Christ’s headship authority gives him authority over all things, including worship. Worship in the church is not about what we want, think, feel, need, or like. Worship is about Christ, what He wants, what He thinks, what He likes.

How has Christ designed the worship of the Church to be conducted?

While some items of worship can be performed by the individual, there are certain items of worship that require an assembly of the church. “Require assembly” items of worship include:

- 1- **Preaching:** One of the reasons the body of Christ (the church) assembles together is to receive instruction from the Head (Christ). God is glorified in the church when the

church allows His voice to be heard, in unrestricted fashion, for the edifying of the body and the convicting of the lost.

1 Corinthians 14:23-25

Therefore if the whole church comes together _____, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind? But if all prophesy, and an _____ or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is _____ by all. And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you... Let all things be done for _____.

God's design for the church was that the whole church should come together in a single assembly for the edifying of the entire body and the convicting of unbelievers who might be in the audience.

Christ requires the single assembly of the church to be conducted decently and in order with one man speaking at a time.

1 Corinthians 14:30, 40

But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep _____. For you can all prophesy _____ by _____, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

Let all things be done _____ and in _____.

God further regulated speaking within the assembly by stating:

1 Corinthians 14:34-37

Let your women keep silent in the _____, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in _____. Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached? If anyone thinks himself to be a _____ or _____, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the _____.

May God's people allow God's voice to be heard in the church by those God has appointed messengers, for His glory and honor. May the church continue to submit to God's governing pattern of assembly regardless of how the world and its cultures feel about it.

2 Timothy 4:1-5

I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the _____! Be ready in season and out of season. _____, _____, _____, with all _____ and _____. For the time will come when they will not endure _____, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the _____, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

- 2- **Communing:** A second reason the church assembles together is to remember the death of her Savior. When Paul wrote the church at Corinth, he was concerned that the Lord's death be honored in a "worthy manner."

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

For I received from the _____ that which I also delivered to _____: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took _____; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My _____ which is broken for you; _____ in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the _____ after supper, saying, "This cup is the _____ in My _____. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

First, Paul's instructions were given by the Lord to the church. The Lord's supper is a matter of Christian fellowship given to the church – not the world.. As the Hebrew writer stated of the church,

Hebrews 13:10

We have an _____ from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to _____.

Second, Christ commanded that His memorial feast be observed by the church without alteration.

1 Corinthians 11:24

"_____ in remembrance of me."

To do something other than partaking of the one bread and one cup, as commanded by Christ, is to proclaim a different message than Christ authorized.

Third, the Lord's Supper is to be observed every first day of the week until the Lord returns.

1 Corinthians 11:26

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death _____. He _____.

Acts 20:7

Now on the _____ day of the week, when the disciples came together to break _____, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.

This first day of the week assembly is not an optional assembly but is a required assembly for all God's children.

Hebrews 10:25

not _____ the _____ of ourselves _____, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

- 3- **Singing:** In the New Testament the church has been commanded to sing songs of praise to God.

Ephesians 5:19

speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, _____ and making melody in your _____ to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the _____ of our Lord Jesus Christ,

First, singing is not optional; it is commanded by God. No matter how gifted the Christian, every Christian must sing. Thankfully God has not commanded us to sing well; He has simply required we sing to the best of our abilities (1 Peter 4:11).

Second, the command is to sing. If God had wanted to require or allow the use of instruments as He did in the Old Testament He would have done so. Since God has chosen to remain silent regarding the use of instruments of music in His worship, to offer such praise would be to offer praise that is not of faith.

Romans 10:17

So then _____ comes by _____, and hearing by the _____ of God.

Hebrews 11:6

But without _____ it is _____ to _____ Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who _____ seek Him.

To use instruments of music in praise to God is also to violate the command Paul attached to the command to sing when he stated:

Ephesians 5:19

“...giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the _____ of our Lord Jesus Christ”

As noted earlier in Colossians 3:17, to do something in the “name of the Lord” is to do it by His authority. The use of instruments of music in worship to God during the Christian era is neither by faith nor by the authority of Christ.

- 4- **Praying:** Offering sacrifice has always been a part of the worship of the people of God both collectively and individually. The children of God under the Old Law offered animal sacrifices while God’s children today offer the “fruit of their lips”.

Hebrews 13:15

Therefore by Him let us continually offer the _____ of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

The animal sacrifices of the Old Testament fell into three categories: Offerings for sin, offerings of dedication, and offerings of thanksgiving. Sin offering restored the relationship between God and man through the forgiveness of trespasses. Offering of dedication were presented once sin had been dealt with in order to renew the commitment of the worshiper to God. After the worshiper was restored and re-committed (never before) then he or she would bring forth offerings of thanksgiving and praise. In a similar way today, God’s people ask for forgiveness (1 John 1:9), commit themselves to the will of God (Matthew 6:10), and offer praise and thanksgiving (Hebrews 13:15) through prayer.

- 5- **Contributing:** The final act of worship that God requires of the church is the giving back of a portion of what He has blessed us with as an expression of thanks. To praise God with a prayer of thanksgiving (Hebrews 13:15), while at the same time begrudging Him of His blessing would be the epitome of vain worship.

1 Corinthians 16:1-2

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given _____ to the churches of Galatia, so you _____ do also: On the _____ day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

But this I say: He who sows _____ will also reap sparingly, and he who sows _____ will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not _____ or of _____; for God loves a cheerful giver.

Conclusion:

Worshiping God in an acceptable manner is the greatest honor God has provided mankind. To worship God as He desires to be worshiped is neither a burden nor a bore. May God's people ever adore their Father and may the words of Samuel echo in their ears:

1 Samuel 15:22-23

"Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,
As in obeying the voice of the Lord?
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
And to heed than the fat of rams.
For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft,
And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.
Because you have rejected the word of the Lord,
He also has rejected you from being king."