

Chapter 51: Worship

How can our worship fulfill its great purpose in the New Testament age?
What does it mean to worship "in Spirit and in truth"?

A. Definition and Purpose of Worship: Worship is the activity of glorifying God in his presence with our voices and hearts.

- (1) Worship is something we do especially when we come into God's presence, when we are conscious of adoration of him in our hearts, and when we praise him with our voices so others may hear. (Col 3:16)
- (2) The primary reason that God called us into the assembly of the church is that as a corporate assembly we might worship him. (Ex 7:16)
 - Rather than worshipping God in a unified, holy assembly, the people turned aside to serving idols, and rather than assembling the people to worship before him, "in judgment God scattered the people in exile." (Clowney)
 - But God promised that his purposes for his people would yet be fulfilled, and there would someday be a great assembly not just of Israel but of all nations before his throne. (Is 66:18-19)
- (3) Worship is a direct expression of our ultimate purpose for living, "to glorify God and fully to enjoy him forever." (Is 43:6-7; Eph 1:12)
- (4) God is worthy of worship and we are not. (Re 22:8-9)
 - God is jealous of his own honor. (Ex 20:5a)
 - God rightly seeks his own honor. (Is 48:11b)
 - Everything in our worship services should be designed and carried out not to call attention to ourselves or bring glory to ourselves, but to call attention to God and to cause people to think about him

B. The Results of Genuine Worship

- (1) We Delight in God (Ps 16:11; Ps 73:25; Lk 24:52-53)
- (2) God Delights in Us (Zeph 3:17; Is 62:1-5)
- (3) We Draw Near to God: The Amazing Unseen Reality of New Covenant Worship
 - In the old covenant, believers could only draw near to God in a limited way through the temple ceremonies.
 - Now, believers have the amazing privilege of being able to enter directly into the holy of holies in heaven when they worship. (Heb 10:19-22; Heb 12:18-24)
 - New covenant worship actually is worship in the presence of God.
- (4) God Draws Near to Us (James 4:8; 2 Chron 5:13-14; Ps 22:3)
- (5) God Ministers to Us
 - When we worship God he meets with us and directly ministers to us, strengthening our faith, intensifying our awareness of his presence, and granting refreshment to our spirits. (1 Co 14:26; Heb 4:16)
- (6) The Lord's Enemies Flee (2 Chron 20:22)
 - Similarly, when God's people offer him worship today, we may expect that the Lord will battle against demonic forces that oppose the gospel and cause them to flee.
- (7) Unbelievers Know They Are in God's Presence (1 Cor 14:25)

C. The Eternal Value of Worship (Eph 5:15-20)

- Worship is a way to use time well.
- Worship is doing the will of God.

D. How Can We Enter Into Genuine Worship?

(1) Worship is a spiritual activity and it must be empowered by the Holy Spirit working within us. (John 4:23-24)

→ To worship “in spirit and truth” is best understood to mean not “in the Holy Spirit,” but rather “in the spiritual realm, in the realm of spiritual activity.”

→ Unless our spirits are worshiping God we are not truly worshiping him.

(2) An attitude of worship comes upon us when we begin to see God as he is and then respond to his presence.

(Mt 14:33; Heb 12:28-29; Is 6:1-3)

(3) How can we bring ourselves to experience much more of the depth and richness of worship?

(a) Worship is a spiritual matter, and the primary solutions will therefore be spiritual ones.

→ Prayer in preparation for worship

→ Teaching about the spiritual nature of worship and the NT understanding of worship in God's presence (see Heb 12:22-24)

→ Making right any broken interpersonal relationships (1 Ti 2:8; Mt 5:23-24)

(b) The physical setting and structure of worship services also matter. (Mt 21:12-13; Mt 6:6)

(c) The atmosphere and mood are important. (1 Co 14:33a; Heb 12:28-29)

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