

## WORTHY OF WORSHIP

What do you mean by "worship"? You may think of things you do in church services: praises, prayer, preaching, offerings, serving, etc. These describe aspects of worship, but such actions do not actually define worship. In John 4, the woman at the well also focused on outward activities. But Jesus said, "*True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*"

The Bible word for worship pictures people kneeling or bowing to pay homage or honor someone greater. Our word contracts the Old English "*worth-ship*" and means acknowledgement of intrinsic worth. True worship transcends place, posture, practice, or doing certain things in certain times, places and ways.

Worship is the heartfelt response of your whole being to the supreme worth of God, expressed in all you think, say and do, so as to glorify Him. This requires intentional exercise. A great Russian ballet artist said, "If I miss training one day, I know the difference. If I miss two days, the company knows. If I miss several days, the audience knows." A healthy body needs strengthening exercise. Healthy spirits need intentional fine-tuning too. Let's look at six essential aspects of the spiritual exercise of worship:

**1- True worship is GOD-centered.** God is the divine object of worship because He is ultimate reality. Integrally worthy beyond all human reckoning or imagining, He is sovereign creator-sustainer of all things. God alone has the power of self-existence in and of Himself. We are accountable to God. He will judge us. He redeems us. We are created to worship Him, the most reasonable response in the cosmos.

In Exodus 20 "*God spoke all these words, saying, 'I AM the LORD your God... You shall have no other gods before Me.'*" No images to bow down or serve. No taking His name in vain. The first of the ten commandments requires us to know and acknowledge Him as the only true God, and as "our" God. The commandments reflect His own holy character, what He is like - and how His people are to be like Him.

We are to worship and glorify Him to whom alone worship and glory are due. Isaiah 29:13 says, "*This people draw near with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me, and their fear of Me is a commandment taught by men. You turn things upside down.*" God alone tells us what is worship, and He alone is the object of our worship.

**2- True worship is CHRIST-focused.** You cannot make too much of this. The one true God is triune, Father, Son, Spirit. The Gospel of John shows how Jesus is God in the flesh, come so we can know and relate to Him, and be saved. John 1:18 says "*No one has ever seen God, but the only God, who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known.*" Christ became flesh and dwelt among us, to reveal God to us. John 5:23 says God intends "*that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father.*"

Colossians 1 presents Christ as Lord above and before all things. He created and sustains the universe. He is head of His body, the church, "*that in everything He might be preeminent. For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.*" Through Christ all things are reconciled to Him, so that we "*draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.*" Just reading Scripture sparks true worship of God through Christ!

**3- True worship is SPIRIT-empowered.** The Holy Spirit regenerates dead sinners to spiritual life, so that we can know God. He indwells believers for the purpose, says John 16, to glorify Christ, who came to glorify God. In union with Christ, the Holy Spirit transforms believers into God's image, so that we produce the fruit of Christ in our lives, our character becoming like His holy character, by the Spirit's power.

Past columns have explored many aspects of the Holy Spirit. Next time: 4- true worship is WORD-based, 5- WHOLE-being, and 6- WHOLE-life 24/7. Meantime, what if everyone worshiped just like you? God doesn't leave it up to whatever you feel like. He prescribes true worship in spirit and truth. It's the activity of your true self, your spirit - according to God's truth, the Bible - all by the power of the Holy Spirit.