

Worship God In Spirit & Truth

Randolph Dunn



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Randolph Dunn, President

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Worship God In Spirit and Truth

Lesson 1

Worship in General

Most people, if not all, now and throughout antiquity have worshipped an entity. "Primitive man feared all manifestations of power; he worshiped every natural phenomenon he could not comprehend. The observation of powerful natural forces, such as storms, floods, earthquakes, landslides, volcanoes, fire, heat, and cold, greatly impressed the expanding mind of man. The inexplicable things of life are still termed 'acts of God' and 'mysterious dispensations of Providence.'" ¹

"It is known that between five hundred to six hundred such tribal units had their own independent history of social and religious development ... in complete isolation from each other except for occasional marginal contacts at the boundaries of their territories. ... In all the tribes of Australia, without exception, there exists a belief in one Supreme Power, who is the first cause of all creation." ²

Ancient Egyptians had Ra, their sun god, and Osiris, the god of the underworld, while Babylon, Greece, and Rome worshipped mythological gods.

Today a significant portion of the world's population consists of Christians, Jews, and Muslims who worship God or Jehovah, the God of Moses and Abraham, or Allah, the God worshipped by the Muslims. There are colossal disagreements between and within each of them. Another significant portion of the world adheres to beliefs such as Buddhism and Hinduism. Still, there are others as in primitive nations that have their time-honored 'spiritual' beliefs.

These examples point to a fundamental trait of man that existed from creation, a desire to pay homage and to worship some entity.

The attitude of man's heart is most important for Jesus stated "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40). Later Jesus stated a new commandment: "I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

"It [the heart] was considered to be the seat of the emotions and passions and appetites and embraced likewise the intellectual and moral faculties-though these are necessarily ascribed to the soul (The International Standard Bible Dictionary).

¹ urantia.org/en/urantia-book-standardized/paper-85-origins-worship

² alislam.org/library/books/revelation/part_3_section_2.html

One is to love the Lord God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind, the whole man, therefore a living sacrifice. But as Jesus showed us true worship is directed to God from love and adoration that goes beyond performing some outward act or ritual.

Questions

1. Historical records reveal that from the beginning mankind has worshipped some entity.
T. ____ F. ____
2. There are colossal differences between and within all the various religions.
T. ____ F. ____
3. The greatest commands are
 - a. ____ Love God
 - b. ____ Love neighbor
 - c. ____ Love one another
 - d. ____ All the above
4. Man's heart is his seat of emotions, moral facility, his inner being.
T. ____ F. ____
5. Worship is love, adoration, reverence and not some action performed with little or no thought.
T. ____ F. ____

Lesson 2

Heart Worship

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (Genesis 6:6).

Micah wrote to the Children of Israel asking "With what shall I come before the Lord?" and then gave several possibilities in the form of other questions. He concluded, "He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8)?

Jesus stated to Satan "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only" (Matthew 4:10 referring to Deuteronomy 6:13). To some of the tradition-keeping Pharisees Jesus quoted Isaiah 29:13: "These people honor me with their lips [outward], but their hearts [inward] are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men" (Matthew 15:8). Other vain worship includes angel, idol, people, ignorant and devil worship.

Jesus **offered** his fleshly body as the only sacrifice that could remove sin from man. God accepted his offering raising Him from the grave thereby achieving victory over death and Satan's hold over man. The opportunity for forgiveness and reconciliation became available to all who chose to put their trust and obedience in Christ. Those reconciled to God by the forgiveness of sin express their love in reverence, homage and worship to Him.

One is devoted or religious when from within his inner being, soul, and heart, he serves God by his good works and renders homage or reverence to his God. Man may perceive someone as very religious a devout Christian, by observing all the good works he performs but be totally unaware of his motives for doing the deeds. For example, his desire for recognition of man, or to earn God's reward by obeying His commands is not true worship as there is no reverence, honor, or homage present. A deed is not worship, although it may benefit someone unless it originates within the inner man motivated by love. God alone knows the intent of man's "heart." Love, faith and action are needed for worship.

Questions

1. One's worship can be in vain and unacceptable to God.
T. ____ F. ____
2. By doing God's will in offering Himself as the only sacrifice acceptable to God, Jesus worshiped God.
T. ____ F. ____
3. What was the victory over death?
 - a. ____ Crucifixion of Christ
 - b. ____ Christ sin-offering
 - c. ____ Resurrection of Christ
4. People do not know if a man's good works are worship or action to receive praise from others.
T. ____ F. ____
5. Since God knows man's heart he knows if one's worship is real and genuine or vain.
T. ____ F. ____

Lesson 3

Who Is To Be Worshipped?

"God is spirit [not physical], and his worshipers must worship in spirit [not a ritual act but an expression of emotion and love the inner being] and in truth [real and genuine not false and fake]" (John 4:24). One can have all knowledge (truth) but not have love then his worship is unacceptable. It is vain and means nothing (1 Corinthians 13:2).

John 4:24 declares that "'God is a Spirit.' These words contain one of the most simple, yet most profound, truths which ever fell upon mortal ear. Their truth is one of the great glories of revelation, and corrects the mistaken conclusion of human reason. They show that:

1. God is absolutely free from all limitations of space and time, and is therefore not localized in temples (Acts 7:48).
2. That God is not material, as idolaters contend.
3. That He is not an abstract force, as [some] scientists think-but a Being.
4. That He is lifted above all need of temples, sacrifices, etc., which are a benefit to man, but not to God (Acts 17:25)."

The fourfold Gospel, p. 149, J.W. McGarvey and Philip Pendleton

The Scripture state that God's nature is:

- Love - 1 John 4:8
- Life - John 1:4
- Truth - John 14:6
- Just (holy, righteous) - 2 Thessalonians 1:6
- Merciful - Luke 6:36
- Peace - 2 John 3 and John 14:7
- Faithful - 1 Corinthians 10:13

What is Pleasing to God?

"What does the LORD **require** of you but to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8)? Jesus did not bless but had harsh words for the religious leaders who did not follow the Lord's requirements: "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth [the amount commanded, a tithe] of your spices-mint, dill and cumin [even to the smallest seed]. But you have **neglected** the more important matters of the law - justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former" (Matthew 23:23). These leaders required the physical aspect of the law thinking they fulfilled God's requirement but they neglected His intent, His nature.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Mathew 5, Jesus identified several **actions** and **attitudes** that are pleasing to Him, by stating "Blessed" indicating God is pleased and does the blessing of those who are:

Poor in spirit – those recognizing their own sinfulness and God's righteousness.

Mourn – those unhappy about their spiritual weakness as opposed to those unhappy with their physical plight in life.

Gentle – those not proud, arrogant or haughty.

Hunger and thirst for righteousness, – those who are constantly seeking to know and do what is right and pleasing to God.

Merciful – Compassionate, not judgmental or condemning.

Pure in Heart – those sincere, free from what is false, free from anything that soils, adulterates, corrupts

Peacemakers – those living at peace with their fellowman and helping others to do the same.

Speak and **act** as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful [exactly as the Old Testament law prescribed without any consideration of circumstances]. Mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:12-13)! Judgment (law) demands punishment but God gives mercy to those in Christ.

Jesus asked "'Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?' The expert in the law replied, 'The one who had compassion on him'" (Luke 10:36-37).

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged" (Matthew 7:1-2).

Christians must be careful how they treat a) anyone who hurts someone they love; b) someone who sins, repents and returns; and c) those who fall away and have not repented and returned to Christ.

All the attributes of God must be included in the meaning of His likeness or image in which God made man. God also gave man an intellect allowing him to think, reason, analyze and choose. Man could choose to continue in God's likeness by discerning truth, showing mercy, desiring justice and pursuing peaceful relationships, or he could choose not to do so thus remaining severed in his relationship with God, his Father and Creator.

Since all men have sinned and are in need of forgiveness, the reasoning ability given by his Creator allows man to change his ways, receive forgiveness, and begin living more like Christ. To those in Christ Paul wrote "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with **compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience**. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity" (Colossians 3:12-14). By growing in them Christians will reflect God's image and display the fruit of the Spirit which is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23).

The above characteristics of God cannot be felt, smelled, tasted, seen or heard. By observing Jesus' actions and attitude one can know the Father which is exactly what Jesus told Philip.

We desperately need love and forgiveness. In our state of sin and rebellion, we deserve death, which justice requires. God through Jesus' life, death and resurrection provides the opportunity to be forgiven. When one has accepted God's gift of forgiveness, Christ, through trust and obedience, there is an attitude of love, peace and gratitude within their inner being, and there comes forth a desire to express that love in various ways, words, thoughts and actions.

What Does God See and Hear?

1. Beautiful sound of the human voice **or** expressions emanating from of man's heart.
2. Money that is given **or** reasons why money is given.
3. Words of the song **or** heartfelt thoughts generated by the words.
4. Words of prayer **or** a contrite heart even if difficulty expressing his feelings.
5. Sermons presented **or** sermons lived.
6. Partaking of the Lord's Supper **or** remembering Christ atoning sacrifice and resurrection.
7. Failing to assemble together **or** failing to edify others when assembled.
8. Reading the Bible **or** meditating on God's Message.

9. Living a good moral life **or** living a sacrificial life.

Daily living to mirror or reflect God's image is offering "...your bodies as living sacrifices, dedicated to God and pleasing to him. This kind of worship is appropriate" (Romans 12:1).

A grateful Christian will seek ways and opportunities to express his gratitude to Christ as his savior. He will live as close to Jesus' example as possible, and seek to understand God's will which He gave through the apostles by the Holy Spirit. The Christian will praise Him in all his actions including the remembrance of Christ's life, death, burial and resurrection when partaking of the "Lord's Supper."

Questions

1. Actions that do not express the thoughts of one's heart are ritual not spiritual.
T. ____ F. ____
2. One can perform all things men consider worship but without love, his actions are not acceptable to God.
T. ____ F. ____
3. A Christian's daily living reflects the degree of his love of God.
T. ____ F. ____
4. One should speak and act with mercy and love because of the law that gives freedom
T. ____ F. ____
5. What does God see and hear?
 - a. ____ Money given
 - b. ____ A contrite heart
 - c. ____ Songs sung with feelings from the heart
 - d. ____ All the above
 - e. ____ a and b
 - f. ____ b and c

Lesson 4

When Does Or Should One Worship?

By being a living sacrifice, one will worship God at all times and in everything giving thanks, glory and praise to God while looking for ways to:

- a. Assist other children of God and those in need.
- b. Encourage others to live sacrificial lives.
- c. Proclaim the message of forgiveness and salvation; the life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Christ.

Christians should not abandon (cease, forsake) being with, edifying or fellowshiping others in Christ, regardless of when or where they assemble. They will be faithful to their Savior, to His Message, to His people and not be ashamed. Paul was not ashamed for he stated "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation" (Romans 1:16).

Paul also put it this way “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts [your whole being] on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things [things to satisfy self] for you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” ... “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name [authority] of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Colossians 3:1-4 ... 15-17).

The following two examples relate to Jew and Gentile Christians having assembled, neither of which should be considered a command but an action in different locations.

“So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ... And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people” (Acts 2:41-47).

“These went on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas, but we sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days we came to them at Troas, where we stayed for seven days. On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread [could mean Lord’s Supper, a common meal or both], Paul talked (preached KJV) [Greek word *dialogomai* meaning to converse, discourse with one, argue, discuss] with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight” (Acts 20:5-7).

Worshipping God by serving, teaching, singing, and admonishing is not limited to meeting together on any specific day.

Questions

1. When should a Christian worship God?
 - a. ☐ Daily
 - b. ☐ Sundays
 - c. ☐ a and b
2. The purpose of assembling together is to
 - a. ☐ Edify one another
 - b. ☐ Fellowship with others
 - c. ☐ Encourage faithfulness
 - d. ☐ All the above
 - e. ☐ a and b
 - f. ☐ a and c
3. Christian’s minds are to be focused on pleasing God rather the satisfying self

T. ____ F. ____

4. The examples in New Testament must be followed.

T. ____ F. ____

5. Whatever a Christian does it should be done with thanksgiving.

T. ____ F. ____

Lesson 5

Where Is One To Worship?

When God delivered the Children of Israel from Egyptian slavery, he established a covenant with them that included a tent of meeting where His priest offered sacrifices to God. Years following their settlement in the Land of Promise, Solomon built a temple in Jerusalem for their worship and sacrifices. Years later Jesus told the Samaritan woman "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain (Gerizim) nor in Jerusalem" (John 4:21). In the coming New Covenant worship would not be in manmade temples or in specific locations but in the heart of man, his temple.

The New Covenant eliminated the Old Covenant Temple worship. "Jesus has now obtained a more superior ministry, since the covenant he mediates is founded on better promises. If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need to look for a second one, but God found something wrong with his people when he said, "Look! The days are coming, declares the Lord, when **I will establish a new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors at the time when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. Because they did not remain loyal to my covenant, I ignored them, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord: **I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts**. I will be their God, and they will be my people" (Hebrews 8:6-10).

By offering His earthly body to God as the sin-offering, atoning sacrifice, Jesus fulfilled the Old Covenant, with its Temple worship, given by God through Moses and replaced it with a New Covenant founded on better promises with redeemed man becoming God's Temple: "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. [Does one destroy God's temple by causing or leading another away from God?] For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple." ... "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So, glorify God in your body" (1 Corinthians 3:16-17 ... 1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Since Christians are His temple and the Holy Spirit dwells in them, they are to "present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Romans 12:1).

Neither the location nor physical structure is important. But the desire, intent of mind and attitude of those in Christ are important. How one lives his life and treats others, and responds by giving his resources, money, time and abilities is what matters. Our living sacrifice, the actions in our lives, is to be done everywhere rather than a physical location, such as Mt. Gerizim, Jerusalem or a church building for God is spirit not matter, flesh and blood.

Love, purity, gentleness, justice, mercy and faithfulness – God’s very nature – are very important and are essential for Christians to be living sacrifices.

Questions

1. Did the New Covenant eliminate Old Covenant temple worship?
T. ____ F. ____
2. Jesus’ atoning sacrifice
 - a. ____ destroyed the Old Covenant
 - b. ____ fulfilled the Old Covenant
 - c. ____ established a new covenant
 - d. ____ All the above
 - e. ____ a and c
 - f. ____ b and c
3. Christians are now God’s temple since the Holy Spirit dwells within them.
T. ____ F. ____
4. Where is one to worship God today?
 - a. ____ Mt. Gerizim
 - b. ____ Jerusalem
 - c. ____ A church meeting facility
 - d. ____ Within the individual
5. Love, purity, gentleness, justice, mercy and faithfulness are essential for a Christian to be a living sacrifice.
T. ____ F. ____

Lesson 6

How Is One To Worship?

Understanding the **what**, **who**, **when** and **where** of worship should help in understanding the **how** of worshipping. If giving ourselves as a living sacrifice is a lifestyle of service then there are many acts one can and should do that would be considered worship. But, they must be motivated out of a desire to be more like Christ by following His examples while giving God glory, honor, praise and adoration.

Man is to worship in his spiritual being and in truth [from the heart not ritual], which requires knowledge. Worship is not some physical act, a ritual, but something coming from within, from love and desire to honor, praise and please. One totally incapable of performing a physical act can still worship and serve God.

The outpouring of love, adoration and praise from within man's inner being, his heart and seat of emotion, feelings and attitude is service, true worship. This can be done alone or with a group. Similar actions absent emotions and feelings of love, adoration and praise done for the purpose of complying with a command or those centered on self are vain worship. Jesus stated "these people honor me with their lips, [the voice is heard], but their hearts [no thought] are far from me. They worship me in vain" (Matthew 15:8-9, Mark 7:6 quoting from Isaiah 29:13).

If one's thoughts and emotions are based upon a knowledge of God and they have an intimate relationship with Him, then they have trained their whole being to love, adore, praise, serve and worship God with a real and genuine desire to please him [Spirit and truth - not fake or some ritual]. He is now prepared to serve God in spirit and truth. But what is one to do when serving or worshipping God?

One can read in Genesis that while God was delivering Abraham's descendants from bondage in Egypt, He established a Covenant with them. In this covenant, He selected a group of people to serve Him as priests to offer animal sacrifices for themselves and all the people. God through Moses gave very specific instructions on how their service of offering sacrifices was to be done.

Many years later God came to earth in the form of the man referred to as Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ. He lived as one of His creations facing the same type of temptations as man but without sin thus becoming the perfect sacrifice for sin by offering Himself up to the Father as the blood sacrifice required to remove man's sins. The apostle John in Revelation 1:6 states "He has made us a Kingdom of priests for God his Father."

God's instructions to the New Covenant priests were also specific although very different than those of the Old Covenant. The New Covenant priests, those men and women in Christ, are to be living sacrifices (Romans 12:1) as they daily serve God by doing good deeds, encouraging others toward faithfulness and offering thanks, praises and adoration to Him from the heart.

Questions

1. As a Christian giving yourself to Christ as a living sacrifice is a lifestyle of worship and service.
T. ____ F. ____
2. Worship in spirit and truth comes from the inner man requiring
 - a. ____ Knowledge
 - b. ____ Some ritual physical act
 - c. ____ Desire to honor and praise
 - d. ____ a and b
 - e. ____ a and c
3. Worship occurs only in group gatherings.
T. ____ F. ____
4. God through Moses gave specific instructions on how people today are to worship Him.
T. ____ F. ____
5. God's instruction to His New Covenant people is to daily serve God by doing good deeds and by offering thanks, praises and adoration to Him from the heart.

T. ____ F. ____

Lesson 7

Assembling Unto Edification

The Bible does not provide specific instructions for the frequency of or the location for assembling together. Jesus in talking with the Samaritan woman (John 4) was explicit in that future worship was not about location.

“The meetings of the early church were marked by every member functioning, spontaneity, freedom, vibrancy, and open participation (see for example 1 Corinthians 14:1-33 and Hebrews 10:25). The first-century church was a fluid gathering, not a static ritual. And it was often unpredictable, unlike the [our] contemporary [institutional] church service.”³ They met in temple courts public places, and in Christians’ homes. With the onset of persecution by the Jews and the Romans the temple courts and Solomon’s colonnade ceased to be available. This left homes and other available sites.

The Hebrew writer admonishes Christians “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works not forsaking the assembling [intentionally choosing to cease assembling with other Christians] of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but **exhorting one another**, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24 - 25). The emphasis clearly was to assemble together, to be knowledgeable of one another’s difficulties and concerns, and to encourage fellow Christians to live faithfully and do work pleasing to God and beneficial to others.

What causes forsaking assembly and fellowship? There are innumerable possibilities. Fear of persecution may have been the greatest contributor for the early Church. Self-centered unloving members, dominating and controlling personalities, being ignored, not fitting in economically or socially and many other reasons can discourage fellowship. This should not be so among Christians.

Scriptures referring to Christians coming together:

- Many were gathered together praying (Acts 12:12)
- The disciples came together to break bread (Acts 20:7)
- Gathered the church together they reported (Acts 14:27)
- Gathered the multitude together - delivered a letter (Acts 15:30)
- When you come together to eat (1 Corinthians 34)
- In the presence of all rebuke sinning elders (1 Timothy 5:20)
- When you gather together ... deliver one to Satan (1 Cor. 5:4-5)
- Read Scriptures and teach give your understanding and listen to others understanding (Colossians 4:16 and Acts 11:26)
- Sing to one another (Ephesians 5:12)
- If the whole church comes together in one place (1 Cor. 14:23)

³ Pagan Christianity?, Frank Barna and George Viola pg. 50

“3 But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort. 4 He who speaks in a tongue (Greek *gloóssee* ⁴) edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. 5 I would like every one of you to speak in tongues (*gloóssais*) but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, (unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified. 1Corinthians 14:3-5)

“9 So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue (*gloóssees*) how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. 10 Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. 11 If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me. (1Corinthians 14:9-11)

“18 I thank my God I speak with tongues (*gloóssais*) more than you all; yet in the church [assembly] I would rather speak five words with my understanding, **that I may teach others** also, than ten thousand words in a tongue (*gloóssee*). Therefore, if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues (*gloóssais*), 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 unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convicted 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. How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. **Let all things be done for edification.** If anyone speaks in a tongue (*gloóssees*), let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church [assembly –], and let him speak to himself and to God. Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. Let your women, *or wives*, keep silent in the churches, 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 church, assembly. ... Let all things be done decently [respectfully] and in order [one following another, not all speaking at the same time]” (1Corinthians 14:18-40 NIV).

The assemblies of the Corinthians were marked by disrespect, chaos and confusion. To correct this problem Paul wrote stating:

1. Prophets were to speak in succession, not at the same time.
2. Speakers were to be silent if their language could not be understood and no one was available to interpret.
3. Speakers were to take turns while addressing the assembly as God is not a God of confusion.
4. Wives of prophets were to show respect to their husbands by not questioning them in public but to seek clarification in the privacy of their homes.

⁴ a tongue, i.e. the language used by a particular people in distinction from that of other nations: (from Thayer's Greek Lexicon)

5. "Let ALL things be done decently and in order" does NOT mean there must be an established order or ritual without any extemporaneous activity whether song, prayer or speech.

Lessons to be learned

1. Teaching is more important than being heard
2. Orderliness and understanding are critical
3. Participation by all Christians encourages all
4. Edification is necessary for faithfulness
5. Respect for others enhances unity
6. Respect for law and customs cannot be ignored

Questions

1. Church gatherings are not to be structured as a ritual but personal participation encouraged.
T. ____ F. ____
2. Christians are to exhort one another unto good works and faithfulness when assembled together.
T. ____ F. ____
3. There was chaos and confusion in the Corinthian church as many put self-first.
T. ____ F. ____
4. Teaching, edifying, respect of others and individual participation is of primary importance when assembled.
T. ____ F. ____
5. The primary purpose for assembling as the body of Christ is to encourage and edify.
T. ____ F. ____

Lesson 8

Singing

Songs are expressions of feelings – love or hate, joy or sorrow, and spiritual or sensual. Songs and singing may be for one's personal enjoyment, directed to a loved one, or to praise God. Songs are also teaching tools for committing beliefs, events and people to one's memory.

Old Covenant Singing

"Come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms" (Psalm 95:1-2).

God instructed Moses "Now write down for yourselves this song and teach it to the Israelites and have them sing it, so that it may be a witness for me against them. When I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, the land I promised on oath to their forefathers, and

when they eat their fill and thrive [become affluent], they will turn to other gods and worship them, rejecting me and breaking my covenant” (Deuteronomy 31:19-21).

“Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise him [God] for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: ‘Give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures forever’ ” (2 Chronicles 20:21-22).

In the Old Testament most of the singing references relate to expressions of praise and gratitude for God’s blessings, everlasting love and holiness.

New Covenant Singing

New Testament references to singing lets us know God’s New Covenant Children are to sing praises to Him from their heart, one’s inner being and to encourage one another by singing.

Colossians 3:12-17 – “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body [Jew and Gentile; master and slave; man and woman] you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly **as you teach and admonish one another** with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

Ephesians 5:15-20 - Paul in writing to the Ephesian Christians states “Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speaking to one another [possibly responsive or antiphonal singing] with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. **Singing and making music (melody) in your heart to the Lord**, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Paul tells the Colossian Christians that the singing emphasis is on one’s thought process as one expresses his feelings **toward God**. Paul does not specify the particulars about individual or assembled singing. Instead, he stresses an attitude of gratitude from one’s heart. Whatever the setting, one’s singing is to be directed toward the unity of the Body, teaching and encouraging someone and toward praising God is worship.

There are several components to singing and making melody or music in your heart to the Lord

- a) Singing – plucking of strings [of instruments, vocal cords or strings of heart]
- b) Making music in the heart – emotions and feelings with sincerity
- d) Unto the Lord –directed toward God
- e) Real and genuine, not feigned or fictitious but action taking place in the inner man, heart or soul, the part of man that loves and adores.
- f) One can sing to another person whether assembled or not.

Other New Testament scriptures that relate to singing

- “I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind” (1 Corinthians 14:12-17; 26
- “Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise” (James 5:10-13)
- “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and sing praises to him, all you peoples” (Romans 15:7-11)
- “In the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises” (Hebrews 2:10-12)

Singing for enjoyment appeals to the outward man while singing from the heart reflects the feelings of the inner man. Therefore, whatever overrides the thoughts of the heart and becomes pleasing to the ear, whether harmony, instruments or chants, ceases to be pleasing to God.

A brief Review of singing.

Who:

“Be filled with the Spirit. Singing and making music in your heart to the Lord - personal

Where:

As an assembly:

In the midst of the assembly, I will **sing praise** to You

As individuals

Teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God

When:

Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise

How:

I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.

There are varied opinions as to what constitutes acceptable singing to God under the New Covenant. One must look beyond opinion or personal belief and interpret scripture consistently in its context, not arbitrarily. Interpreting from a faulty premise produces faulty conclusions:

- a. Worship occurs in a ‘worship service’ so acceptable singing must occur in a ‘worship service’ assembly.
- b. Singing must be only chants or in unison since harmony focuses on sounding good to the hearer and is entertainment
- c. Only a cappella in unison or four-part harmony is acceptable
- d. If anyone has a song means the congregation selects songs to be sung
- e. Singing from one’s heart in a cappella, chants, harmony or with instruments is acceptable unless the focus is on the sounds rather than thoughts of one’s heart.
- f. Song leader or director is a performer
- g. Multiple song leaders, group leaders, or praise teams constitute entertainment even though as many participate with them as when only one song leader.
- h. Singing must be from memory without songbooks or projection on a screen.
- i. If one’s focus is on the quality of sound it is entertainment whether with instruments, a cappella or in harmony.

Singing for entertainment occurs when one allows the enjoyment of singing and music to override the thoughts toward God from their heart whether it occurs – a) with or without musical instruments on radio, TV or CD, b) when assembled or alone or c) with no leader, one leader or multiple leaders. Of course, one can have great feelings of awe, reverence, honor and praise in worshipping God in song and at the same time enjoy and even be edified by the melody and music of other voices praising and worshipping God. **It is a heart matter.**

Questions

1. Singing under the Old Covenant was to teach a lesson and to express praise and thanks to God for His love.
T. ____ F. ____
2. The Colossian Christians sang to teach and admonish
T. ____ F. ____
3. Singing acceptable to God must always be from man's inner being, his heart.
T. ____ F. ____
4. Anything that prevents man's heart from focusing on his thoughts toward God while singing also prevents worship in song.
T. ____ F. ____
5. Singing from the heart is an individual matter even when one is assembled together as a church.
T. ____ F. ____

Lesson 9

Praying

Jesus discussed prayer during His discourse commonly referred to as 'The Sermon on the Mount' stating "And whenever you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to stand in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they will be seen by people. I tell you with certainty, they have their full reward! But whenever you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees from the hidden place will reward you. "When you are praying, don't say meaningless things like the Gentiles do, because they think they will be heard by being so wordy. Don't be like them, because your Father knows what you need before you ask him" (Matthew 6:5-6). In Mark 11:17 Jesus refers to Isaiah 56:7 stating God's temple is a place of prayer. Now God's temple dwells in man.

"One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples'" (Luke 11:1). Jesus then repeated what he stated in Matthew 6:9-13 in the Sermon on the Mount prayer discourse.

What is significant in their request to be taught how to pray? Did Jesus' disciples not know how to pray? Could it be the disciples' perception of prayer was tainted by observing their religious leaders, the Pharisees, pray? Did the patriarchs pray or was God's direct communication with

them the same as prayer? Under the law given by God through Moses were the priests, prophets or kings the only Israelites who could pray?

In the Old Testament patriarchs, priests, prophets and Hanna prayed. Their prayers appear mostly to be requests for forgiveness, deliverance and pleadings for relief from suffering. They were not the only ones as Daniel and others were “praying toward the temple,” the place of God’s presence.

The New Testament prayers are noticeably different from those in the Old Testament as they were generally about spiritual things. Luke records in Acts 10:1-5 that a Roman centurion, Cornelius, prayed to God continually and that God heard his prayers.

Attitude of the One Praying

“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, ‘I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess’ [arrogant- look how good I am]. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner [humble]’” (Luke 18:10-13). From the following verses, one understands that prayers of the humble rather than the self-righteous are heard.

Answered Prayer

John tells us that Jesus is the Vine and Christians are the branches. If the branch (a Christian) does not remain attached to the Vine (Christ) death occurs and the branch (Christian) is cut off and cast out – no longer in a save condition. Those who remain attached to the vine are in Christ and their prayers are answered as they glorify God, not self (John 15).

Hindrance to Prayer

God may not always hear a prayer as there are situations, conditions, attitudes and motives that hinder one’s prayer from being heard.

- James 4:2-3 “You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”
- 1 Peter 3:7 “Husbands, in the same way, be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.”

Frequency of Prayer

“Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: ‘In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’ For some time he refused. But finally, he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice so that she won’t eventually wear me out with her coming!’ And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry

out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth" (Luke 18:1-8)?

Followers of Christ should consistently pray for help in overcoming life's daily adversities as they live for Christ. Paul states "praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints" (Ephesians 6:18).

Prayers and Instructions by

Jesus

- Personal Prayer - let this cup (Jesus' pending death by crucifixion) pass, but Thy will be done
- Instruction on Prayer – do not use vain repetitions
- Warning –prayers to be seen of men are not heard

Apostles

- Prayer for boldness – Upon Peter's release by Council
- Prayer for Action – Peter prayed and said, "Tabitha arise"
- Personal – in jail and at midnight Paul and Silas prayed

Apostles and Christians

- General Instructions – is any afflicted, let him pray
- For others – we give thanks and pray for you always
- Prayers for self – build up self and pray in Holy Spirit
- For Forgiveness – Repent of this wickedness and pray

Always have doing God's will foremost in your heart. Pray constantly. Prayers can be short and very specific. Pray for things that last forever. Seek God's guidance in keeping His Kingdom first in daily living and in putting others ahead of self. Pray for and help the spread of the Gospel of Christ. Pray for others and for thankfulness are always appropriate.

Prayers can be very short, at any place, for self or others, when happy or sad or specific or general, but not self-centered.

Questions

1. The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray as prayer was not practiced under the Old Covenant.
T. ____ F. ____
2. God answers the prayers of the
 - a. ____ Arrogant
 - b. ____ Humble
 - c. ____ Both
3. What hinders prayers
 - a. ____ Nothing, as God always answers anyone's prayer
 - b. ____ Improper treatment of spouse
 - c. ____ Selfishness
 - d. ____ a and b
 - e. ____ b and c

4. When is the hour of prayer?
- a. ☐ Four times a day at morning, 9 o'clock, 3 o'clock and night
 - b. ☐ When you need something
 - c. ☐ Constantly
 - d. ☐ a and b
 - e. ☐ b and c
5. For a Christian's prayer to be acceptable to God he must remain in Christ.
- T. ☐ F. ☐

Lesson 10

Lord's Supper - Remembering Christ

"And he {Jesus} said to them, 'I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer (crucifixion)'" (Luke 22:1 7).

While the Children of Israel were still in slavery to the Egyptians the Passover was established after the ninth plague and before the death angel plague (vs. 1-7). During this feast the Israelites were to kill before twilight a lamb without blemish (vs. 5). They were to sprinkle some of its blood on the doorpost and the lintel over the door. This told God and the death angel where His people were (vs. 13). The lamb was to be roasted and eaten (Exodus 12). Therefore, the Jewish Passover was a lamb to be eaten every year on the 14th day of the first month in remembrance of God delivering them from the death of their firstborn and from, Egyptian slavery (Numbers 9).

Jesus's Last Passover

"And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the apostles with him. And he said unto them, with desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I shall not eat it [the Passover], until it [the Passover] be fulfilled in the kingdom of God" (Luke 22:14 - 16).

"When it was evening, [time for the Passover meal] he (Jesus) reclined at table with the twelve . . . Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing (giving thanks) it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.' And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives" (Matthew 26:20 ... 25-30). Then a few verses later Jesus stated ". . . 'My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.' And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will'" (Matthew 26:38-39).

Jesus' plea for the removal of the cup was neither the bread nor the container and its contents. It was His sacrificial death by crucifixion, His cup of suffering. When one recalls the cup Jesus desired to have removed, one remembers, gives thanks and praises God for Christ's blood sacrifice required for the remissions of their sins. Jesus' act of offering Himself as the only sacrifice

that could remove sin. It also established the New Covenant which is why His suffering and sacrifice could not be removed. The following is a comparison of the Old and the New Covenants.

	<u>Old Covenant</u>	<u>New Covenant</u>
Sacrifice	Lamb without blemish	Jesus - without sin
Removal from	Control of Egyptians	Control of Satan
Free from	Physical slavery	Spiritual Slavery
Promised Land	Canaan - physical	Heaven - spiritual
Wrath against	Pharaoh	Devil
Blood identifies	Israelites	Those in Christ

Mark 14:23-26 "And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.' And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."

Luke 22:17-24 "And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, 'Take this, and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.'"

1 Corinthians 10:16-18 "The cup of blessing that we bless [we bless no request God to bless], is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar?"

1 Corinthians 11:25 Paul includes another statement "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death [atoning sacrifice, sin-offering, crucifixion] until he comes."

Every time one partakes of the Lord's Supper one must focus on Christ and His atoning sacrifice - Remember Me!

- The bread represents Jesus who as God came to earth to live among us in a body of flesh, not a phantom.
- The fruit of the vine, the contents of the cup, represents the blood of Jesus which ushered in the New Covenant by His atoning sacrifice – the sin-offering.

Questions

1. What did Jesus plead to have removed?
 - a. ____ A physical cup
 - b. ____ The cup of crucifixion, cup of suffering

- c. ____ Contents of cup
2. "Proclaim the Lord's death" signifies the blood sacrifice, sin-offering, crucifixion
T. ____ F. ____
 3. Christians are to remember Christ sin-offering (atoning sacrifice) only on Sunday when they partake of the Lord's Supper.
T. ____ F. ____
 4. The bread represents God in a human body being tempted and suffering as man
T. ____ F. ____
 5. The fruit of the vine represents the shedding of Jesus' physical blood, the atoning sacrifice required for a sin-offering for an eternal life.
T. ____ F. ____

Lesson 11

Giving

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only and unique Son, so that everyone who trusts in him may have eternal life, instead of being utterly destroyed" (John 3:16). There appears to be a direct correlation between love and giving.

In Christ we must learn to love and to communicate that love through giving - the sharing of what God has entrusted to us.

"And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, **their overflowing joy** [their hope for eternal life] **and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity**. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints (2 Corinthians 8:1-7).

"If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8).

Attitude

One's love of God is expressed in taking care of those in need. "Religion [*threeskeía* – *external activity*] that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after [provide for their needs] orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" (James 1:27).

A greedy person loves himself more than God or others.

"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve both God and Money**" (Matthew 6:24).

"If I **give** all I possess to the poor and **surrender** my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing." [I have not offered my spiritual being to God for my gift was out of duty or command.] (1 Corinthians 13:3).

“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God” (1 Tim 6:17-19). In Mark 10:17-21 we read of a wealthy man who kept the Law but was unwilling to share with the needy. One cannot earn eternal life by keeping the letter of the law. The desire that pleases God is to do good, live holy and trust God. The rich man stored his wealth on earth rather than in heaven. Compassionate giving to those in need are treasures stored up in heaven. Whether rich or poor those in Christ store up treasures in heaven by doing good in helping others materially and spiritually. The amount is not stored but attitude of one’s heart in the generous giving of self and material possessions he has at his disposal.

“Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven” (Matthew 6:1-4).

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! **You give a tenth** of your spices — mint, dill and cumin. But you have **neglected** the more important matters of the law — **justice, mercy and faithfulness.** You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former” (Matthew 23:23-24).

“Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife’s full knowledge he **kept back part of the money for himself**, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles’ feet” (Acts 5:1-2). It is not the fact they did not give all of the proceeds but their attitude in giving desiring praise of men.

Greed and Selfishness

Greed is the focusing on self – my possessions, my time, and my desires.

“Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and **greed**, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.” (Colossians 3:5-6)

- And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?” (Luke 12:19-20)
- “Watch out! **Be on your guard against all kinds of greed;** a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Luke 12:15).
- “But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. **People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap** and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the **love of money** is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs” (1 Timothy 6:6-10).

- **“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth**, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But **store up for yourselves treasures in heaven**, [acts of service to others] where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:19-21).
- The parable often referred to as the rich man and Lazarus, (Luke 16:19-31) vividly depicts the plight of those who use God’s resources on themselves without regard for the plight of those with whom they come in regular contact. Unless one changes and begins employing his resources for the benefit of God, he will most certainly be cast out from God’s presence.

“Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, **‘How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God’**” (Mark 10:23)! Riches is not the problem. It is relying on one’s wealth to earn salvation and eternal life rather than on God.

Generous in Material Things

“Remember this: [Paul writing to the Corinthians Christians] Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion (duty or grudgingly) for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work As it is written: “He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.”

Paul writing to Christians states “He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must **work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need**” (Ephesians 4:28).

Generous in Our Intellect

Do not blindly continue to accept what you have been taught. Personally examine the scriptures, discuss with other Christians, obtain a clearer understanding of His will. Prove all things yourself rather than relying on and accepting the belief or opinion of a trusted friend, teacher, preacher or pastor. Accept Christ’s commands and put your trust in Him by obedience. If one does not attempt to understand, how can he change?

Generous in Our Influence

Your influence is measured by what others think or say about you. Christian stewardship requires that one’s influence glorifies God and is used to **see that justice and mercy are administered to the poor.**

Generous with His Gospel

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16).

God has entrusted to those in Christ with His most treasured and important possession. He made no other plans for communicating His Gospel Reconciliation Message. He expects us to do His will, if we do not someone else will. They will receive His reward; we will not. The question is “are we doing His will or are we letting someone else do it for us?”

Generous with Our Time

The proper use of our time involves spending time on self, family, needy, study and in taking the gospel to the world to meet their spiritual needs. In addition to assisting financially to defray cost, one can participate in:

- a. Individual one on one Bible studies
- b. Bringing people to a teacher
- c. Distributing and evaluating Bible correspondence courses
- d. Developing written lessons
- e. Encouraging others in their ministry

Personal Responsibility in Giving

Am I responsible for doing His will? Of course, the answer is obvious – a resounding YES I am personally responsible!

It is not only the faithful followers of Christ but everyone will be called into giving an account. “ ‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.’ So then, **each of us will give an account of himself to God**” (Romans 14:11-12).

Giving is a response of the heart in accordance to how one has been prospered. It is not some “legal requirement” like the tithe.

A Christian must be aware of things that influence his giving either for good or bad. One’s actions and speech are to glorify God; otherwise, it glorifies the Devil and his cause. One is personally responsible for their giving and stewardship!

Unacceptable Giving

- Not using the resources God has provided to do His will.
- Giving because it is a command rather than from the heart
 - Jesus referred to those who gave because of a command as hypocrites. They focused on performing the command and neglected the more important things of life – justice, mercy and faithfulness
- Giving to be recognized by man
- Sin-stained meaningless giving
 - Many years before in Isaiah 1:10-17 God stated: “Do not bring any more meaningless offerings; ... I cannot tolerate sin-stained celebrations! ... Wash! Cleanse yourselves! Remove your sinful deeds from my sight. Stop sinning! Learn to do what is right! Promote justice! Give the oppressed reason to celebrate! Take up the cause of the orphan! Defend the rights of the widow!

Questions

1. Why should a Christian give?
 - a. ☐ It is a command that must be obeyed
 - b. ☐ Because of love of God and man
2. How much should a Christian give?
 - a. ☐ Ten percent, the tithe
 - b. ☐ Until it hurts
 - c. ☐ As one has been prospered
3. Greed is focusing on self and satisfying one's desires rather than focusing on satisfying those in physical and spiritual need.
T. ☐ F. ☐
4. Who are those who will give an accounting for things done or failed to do while here on earth?
 - a. ☐ Sinners
 - b. ☐ Christians
 - c. ☐ All mankind
5. What is unacceptable giving?
 - a. ☐ Giving because it is commanded
 - b. ☐ Giving to receive personal recognition
 - c. ☐ Giving with unforgiven sin
 - d. ☐ All the above

Church Discipline

Lesson 12

Christians are in fellowship with Christ and should be with all others who are in Christ. They are equal in God's love, their salvation and all benefits derived from being in Christ. However, being human they all differ in abilities, intellect, knowledge, wisdom and maturity in both physical and spiritual worlds. Therefore, there will be conflicts of varying degrees that must be resolved.

There will also be differences in understanding and personal interpretation of the scriptures. Some may attempt to force their interpretation on others as a condition of fellowship which is contrary to Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 8. In addition, there will be those who teach their belief that is foreign to the Bible.

The purpose of congregational disciplinary action is to bring back a Christian who has wandered away and no longer living a life pleasing to God. It is intended to prevent loss of one's soul, prevent contamination of the Body and to display God's love, justice and mercy to the World. Discipline must never be over some personal interpretation one requires to be accepted by all to be in fellowship.

Hebrews 12:5-7 – "My son, do not think lightly of the Lord's discipline (chastening) or give up when you are corrected by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he punishes every son he accepts." What you endure disciplines you: God is treating you as sons. Is there a son whom his father does not discipline?"

2 Timothy 3:16-17 – “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training (instruction) in righteousness.”

Hebrews 12:11 – “For the moment all discipline (chastening) seems painful [not necessarily physical pain] rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

Ephesians 6:4 – “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up by training and instructing them about the Lord (discipline and instruction).

The inspired Word instructs us in the steps needed to maintain faithfulness, unity and fellowship with God and man:

1. Christians who sin against you or God are to be approached by their Christian brethren to explain why their actions are sinful so they can mend their ways.
2. Discipline must begin immediately, not tomorrow, not next week, not next month or not next year.
3. Discipline must be consistent and continue until repentance occurs or until every opportunity for repentance is exhausted.
4. Discipline must never be exercised on hearsay. This is why the parties involved must attempt resolution first. They know the facts but may understand them differently.
5. Discipline must be administered to rich and poor, man and women, and elderly and young without partiality.
6. Love must always be foremost.

Discipline By Local Congregational

The most effective method to train/instruct and bring about change is the one-on-one method. “If your brother sins against you, **go and tell** him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother” (Matthew 18:15).

When one-on-one does not produce change then others must become involved. A few, perhaps two or three, Christians respected by the offender and the whole congregation should go with you to the offended, not your buddy who always agrees with you, to discuss his situation (Matthew 18:16).

“My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins” (James 5:19-29).

“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8).

God’s people are to correct their brethren sometimes in what may appear to be extreme punishment. “**Purge** (cleanse) out the old leaven” (V7) “do not to **keep company** (associate) with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of” (v 11) [the practice of] sin. The whole congregation, those assembled, need to confront him in person, not by letter, e-mail, text

message, tweet, phone call or public announcement. It is not the elders' problem it is the whole congregation's problem and all are to be involved (1 Corinthians 5 and Matthew 18:17).

What does not associate with or keep company with entail? Is it shunning, not speaking to, not giving aid to, prohibit from assembling with, not eating or sleeping with family and the ceasing of close companionship? The purpose of discipline is to cause a change in action back toward reconciliation with brethren and God. No association of any kind prevents communication thus defeating the purpose of disciplinary action. Stopping all close companionship; such as, not eating the communal meal, agape meal, when the Lord's Supper was observed, is the intended action.

Success of Disciplinary Action

As stated earlier the purpose of discipline is to produce a change from the practice of sinning and for reconciliation to God. The assembly's action following repentance is critical. Reread Paul's admonition "But if anyone has caused grief, he didn't cause me any grief. To some extent—I don't want to emphasize this too much—it has affected all of you. This punishment by the majority is severe enough for such a man. So, forgive and comfort him, or else he will drown in his excessive grief. That's why I'm urging you to assure him of your love" (2 Corinthians 2: 5-8). Love will prevent him from feeling he is a second-class Christian. He is a returning servant. His Lord wants him to be a worker in the kingdom. All other Christians must encourage and assist him in becoming a faithful and productive servant of God. If the repentant reconciled brother is not allowed to function in Christ Body, the Body is impaired and not united.

Willful sin

Is there any difference between the practice of sinning and a willful sin? Is it impossible for one who does either to be restored to God? Hebrews 10:26. "For if we go on sinning deliberately (willfully) after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins."

John 8:34 "Jesus answered them – 'Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.'"

Does yielding to temptation make one a slave or is it the practice of sinning that determines one's status? It is not the yielding but the practice of sin, the desire to continue and the refusal to change, that produces slavery to sin. It is a lifestyle. Thus while still assembling with the saints; the unrepentant sinner is to be isolated during the eating of their communal meal (agape meal or love feast) the eating from the table of the Lord, an act reminding them of Christ's blood sacrifice given for their forgiveness.

Questions

1. The purpose of church discipline is to bring a brother back into reconciliation with God.
T. ____ F. ____
2. When a brother sins against you what is the initial process of restoring your relationship?
 - a. ____ Take your friends and confront him
 - b. ____ Tell the elders of the congregation
 - c. ____ Tell the whole church so they can withdraw fellowship
 - d. ____ Go to him and calmly discuss the problem

3. Not keeping company with a sinning brother who refuses to repent means having no contact of any kind.
T. ____ F. ____
4. What action must a Christian do when a brother who had abandon God repents and returns?
 - a. ____ Welcome but restrict his functioning
 - b. ____ Welcome him but have little fellowship
 - c. ____ Welcome him and encourage him in finding some function for him within the Body.
5. What sacrifice is available for a Christian who continues to sin deliberately?
 - a. ____ Christ
 - b. ____ None

AN ANALYSIS OF BIBLICAL WORSHIP ⁵

The term "Worship" is often used in a loose fashion, being applied to a variety of conditions and carrying several connotations. Perhaps worship has been inadvertently defined by the classical usage of the word and by certain ritualistic forms of religious activities. Individuals need to be aware of the Biblical concept of worship, of its freedoms and of its possible forms of expression.

Historically speaking men have been known to trust the stars, to pay homage to imaginary heavenly figures, to give gifts to the sun and to recognize certain powerful elements of nature. The Jews have their Jehovah, the Christians their Christ, the Buddhists their Buddha, the Moslems their Allah. In all cases the behavior of the people is partially explained in terms of homage, respect, honor, servitude and submission.

Several scriptures will be considered to determine how God has revealed himself with respect to acceptable worship. An Old Testament review will be conducted first, followed by the Heart of Man and finally a review of New Testament references. This study will be concluded by summarizing, to the best of our ability, the meaning of worship as recognized by God.

Old Testament Review

Insight into the elements of worship with respect to the Old Testament will be obtained through a study of several prominent characters. The personalities which will be considered in detail below include: Cain and Abel, Noah, Abram, Moses and Aaron, David, Hezekiah and Hannah.

The unique offerings of Cain and Abel strongly suggest acts of worship, even though Cain learned that his gift was not held in regard by the Lord. Abel's offering was accepted. Cain's offering was rejected. From the Genesis account, the reader is left to ponder whether the constituents were unauthorized or whether something else, such as Cain's attitude or personal character prevented his gift from being accepted (Genesis 4:3-7). The Apostle Paul commented on this event in Hebrews 11 where he stated that **because of faith Abel's sacrifice was better than Cain's**.

¹ The author of An Analysis of Biblical Worship - Old Testament Review wishes to remain unidentified.

Concerning Noah, Genesis 6 -10 states that he found favor in the eyes of the Lord and that he was obedient to all that the Lord commanded. Upon leaving the ark Noah built an altar to God and presented to Him burnt offerings on the altar. The author of Genesis says that the Lord sensed these offerings in a favorable manner and as a result He established the covenant of the rainbow.

Abram also offered burnt offerings to the Lord. The offering of his son Isaac in Genesis 22 was something special. Abram received specific instructions and he obeyed them. Of significance to us, however, is that Abram defined his actions to Isaac as worship.

Before going further note that in the examples cited above, **worship contained the elements of obedience, presentation of offerings, special acts of homage and faith.**

A history of the Jewish people and their great exodus from the land of Egypt under the leadership of Moses and Aaron is found in the book of Exodus. The reader is introduced to the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Passover event. Moses taught the people: "And you shall observe this event as an ordinance for you and your children forever." In the years thereafter the Passover rite was to be explained as a "Passover sacrifice" to the Lord; an offering referencing the original Passover sacrifice. Scripture says: "And the people bowed low and worshipped" (Ex.12:27).

Moses received from the Lord an array of commandments which were to serve as a basis for the Jewish civil and religious law. Included in the renowned Ten Commandments was the following one: "Ye shall not worship other Gods" (Exodus 20). This commandment reflected the Lord's intense jealousy of attention, servitude and homage given to gods and idols of any likeness. The conclusion here is that **the Lord equated servitude and devotion with worship**. This conclusion is further reinforced in the events of Exodus 32:8 where in the words of the Lord: "They have made for themselves a molten calf and have worshiped it and have sacrificed to it and said (declared), this is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt."

In Exodus 34 Moses is found communing with the Lord and "bowing low toward the earth in worship." In this instance, **worship included a prayerful petition** to the Lord on behalf of the Israelite nation coupled **with a sense of humility**. Exodus 34 also contains the Law of the covenant-observance of which involved worship.

Other aspects of worship are given in Exodus 35:21. The people were commanded to contribute gifts and labors for the building of a sanctuary. "And everyone whose heart stirred him and everyone whose spirit moved him came and brought the Lord's contribution for the work of the tent of meeting and for all its service and for the holy garments." **The emphasis here is on spiritual involvement and a receptive heart.**

Throughout the career of Moses he exhorted his people to obey the laws, the statutes, the commandments and ordinances from the Lord. Obedience, along with prayer, service, devotion, demonstrated submission, offerings, ritualistic activities and stirred hearts and spirits can be identified within the realm of worship. The above references furthermore illustrate these

elements of worship in both a formal and an informal manner. In his summary recorded in Deuteronomy 30 Moses presents a very pertinent contrast to worship; life with blessings or death with curses. In other words, **worship was depicted as being continuous and focusing on a way of life.**

Other examples of worship are in abundance in the Old Testament One needs only to consider the words of David, Solomon, Daniel and a host of others to see this fact. Only a few more Old Testament scriptures will be cited in our attempt to obtain insight to the history surrounding Old Testament worship.

In Psalm 2:11 David instructed the people to **worship with reverence**, to rejoice with trembling. In a prayer recorded in Psalm 86, David says **to glorify God's name** is to worship. David exhorted the people to praise the Lord in Psalm 95: "O come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; ... Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms ... Come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker."

Many of the kings of Israel after David and Solomon did not do right in the sight of the Lord. They ignored the book of the law of the Lord given by Moses. There were, however, two kings who attempted to restore the ways of the Lord. They tore down the idols which were on the high places and taught the people to consecrate themselves before the Lord. King Hezekiah and King Josiah stand out in their dedication to God and in renewing proper worship, specifically in reference to Passover worship. II Chronicles 29 describes King Hezekiah's activities with respect to restoring the Passover ordinance. On this occasion Passover worship included: burnt offerings, songs accompanied with trumpets (i.e., with the instruments of David), the songs of a chorus while the assembly worshiped, demonstrations of humility — bowing down, and songs of praises and joy. The experiences of King Josiah are found in 2 Chronicles 34 and 35. Verse 31 of chapter 34 records the covenant King Josiah made with the Lord: **"To keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and with all his soul."**

Chapter 1 of 1st Samuel describes a touching story about Hannah. Her womb had been closed, and she petitioned the Lord to look on her affliction and remember her. **The worship of Hannah consisted of sacrifice, intense prayer and a vow.** She said, "I have poured out my soul to the Lord" (1 Samuel 1:15). The Bible says that the Lord remembered her and she remembered her vow to give the child (Samuel) to the Lord.

Now in all of the above examples, certain characteristics are revealed and constitute a framework of worship to the Lord within the boundaries of Old Testament.

Summarizing, the following elements are observable:

- Obedience (to specific as well as generic commands)
- Presentation of offerings
- Special acts of homage
- Communication (directly and through prayer)

- Ritual (specific example cited was the Passover memorial)
- Servitude and devotion
- Contributions (gifts and labors)
- Spiritual involvement
- Reverence
- Glory of God's name
- Songs accompanied with trumpets
- Songs of chorus, songs of praises and joy
- Humility
- Vows

These elements were molded into both formal and informal aspects and were identified as worship. The formal portions were found in ritualistic activities commanded by the Lord; such as the offering of burnt offerings on altars and the observance of regulations surrounding the first covenant. Paul comments in Hebrews 9:1 on the formalities of the first covenant: “the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary” and in verse 9 **“according to which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience.”** The informal part was **reflected in the involvement of the heart in conducting a life pleasing to the Lord**. Moses gave the proper attitude of mind: “I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him” (Deuteronomy 30:19-20). To worship is to live; otherwise it is to die.

The Heart of Man

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over ... all the earth ... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him (Genesis 1:26-7 NIV). The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being (*nephesh*) [soul – KJV & ASV] (Genesis 2:7 NIV).

So, God’s creation called man, *'adam*, became a living being - a creation having - emotion, desires, feelings, mind, soul and with the ability to rule, have dominion and make decisions.

God referred to David as a man after my own heart (Acts 13:22).

When questioned by the Pharisees about the greatest commandment Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart [*lebab* (OT) *kardia* (NT)] and with all your soul [*nephesh* (OT); *psuche* (NT)] and with all your mind' [*me`od* (OT) *dianoia* (NT) strength or might] {quoted from Deuteronomy 6:5}. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself' {quoted from Leviticus 19:18}. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22:37-40).

Paul when referring to preaching stated “But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, *who has believed our report?*’ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: *‘Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world’*” (Romans 10:16-18).

In one since hearing could include reading, in that information is passed from the writer to the reader, the same as if spoken. Therefore, hearing includes the receiving of information whether audibly or visually. But faith involves more than the hearing or reading as evident above. Therefore, believing faith, and hearing, requires more than acquiring knowledge and understanding. In fact, **to generate a believing faith something must occur in one's heart** (not the physical blood pump) **that causes some type of action**. "Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, perhaps justice, mercy, humility and faithfulness, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them" (Romans 2:14-16).

So, what is man's heart? Is it his mind, intellect, thought process, seat of emotion, inner self, conscience, soul or the human brain (ones central processor with its large internal storage possibly similar to a computer)?

From the New Bible Dictionary one will find the following description and definition of "heart." In the Old Testament the Hebrew words *lēb* and *lēbāb* are used in various senses.

- a. Physical or figurative ('midst'; 29 times).
- b. Personality, inner life, or character in general (257 times, e.g., Ex. 9:14; 1 Sa. 16:7; Gn. 20:5).
- c. Emotional states of consciousness, found in widest range (166 times); intoxication (1 Sa. 25:36); joy or sorrow (Jdg. 18:20; 1 Sa. 1:8); anxiety (1 Sa. 4:13); courage and fear (Gn. 42:28); love (2 Sa. 14:1).
- d. Intellectual activities (204 times); attention (Ex. 7:23); reflection (Dt. 7:17); memory (Dt. 4:9); understanding (1 Kings. 3:9); technical skill (Ex. 28:3) (latter two = 'mind' in rsv).
- e. Volition or purpose (195 times; 1 Sa. 2:35), this being one of the most characteristic usages of the term. (H. Wheeler Robinson)

In the New Testament the Greek word *kardia* is used. "It (the heart) does not altogether lose its physical reference, for it is made of 'flesh' (2 Cor. 3:3), but it is the seat of the will (e.g. Mk. 3:5), of the intellect (e.g., Mk. 2:6, 8), and of feeling (e.g., Lk. 24:32). This means that 'heart' comes the nearest of the NT terms to mean the total '**person**'" {the whole man – } (C. Ryder Smith).

"The Hebrews thought in terms of subjective experience rather than objective, scientific observation, and thereby avoided the modern error of over-departmentalization. It was essentially the whole man, with all his attributes, physical, intellectual and psychological of which the Hebrew thought and spoke, and the heart was conceived of as the governing centre for all of these. It is the heart which makes a man, or a beast, what he is, and governs all his actions (Pr. 4:23). Character, personality, will and mind are modern terms which all reflect something of the meaning of 'heart' in its biblical usage.

"Yahweh knows the heart of each one and is not deceived by outward appearance (1 Sa. 16:7), but a worthy prayer is, nevertheless, that he should search and know the heart (Ps. 139:23), and

make it clean (Ps. 51:10). A 'new heart' must be the aim of the wicked (Ezk. 18:31), and that will mean that God's law has to become no longer merely external but 'written on the heart' and make it clean (Je. 31:33).

“Thus, it is that the heart, the spring of all desires, must be guarded (Pr. 4:23), and the teacher aims to win his pupil’s heart to the right way (Pr. 23:26).

“It is the pure in heart who shall see God (Mt. 5:8), and it is through Christ’s dwelling in the heart by faith that the saints can comprehend the love of God (Eph. 3:17)” (NEW BIBLE DICTIONARY, Inter-varsity Press, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.).

The human brain is the control center for all human activity. All its functions when taken together make up the whole man, the person i.e.:

- a. The physical section that processes all data and information relating to vital bodily functioning.
- b. The mental part appears to be that part of the brain that receives facts and other external information for processing, analyzing, sorting, comparing, storing and retrieving required for decision making and could be referred to as the intellectual section.
- c. The emotional and spiritual section is often referred to as the heart, the inner man or seat of emotion. It is here where one finds love, hate, fear, courage, trust, integrity, conscience, character and feelings. It should be noted that one’s conscience can be trained to accept various ethical standards, ones character can become either good or evil and ones feelings can be based upon opinion or belief rather than knowledge and facts.

Conclusion

The heart is that part of man created in the likeness of God and may not necessarily be all physical. Man can train his heart for good or for evil. It is in one’s heart that man is to worship. Jesus stated in Luke 17:20-21”

The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is within you.”

Man’s worship must be genuine and real; in spirit and in truth and with feelings and emotion. Any activity that is done just “to obey” a command or to “fulfill” some perceived requirement appears to be a ritualistic practice in an attempt to earn one’s salvation. Refer to Appendix 1 and 2 in the Book of Appendices for references to the heart. [The Heart of Man is not part of An Analysis of Biblical Worship.]

New Testament Review⁶

There are many New Testament passages which directly reference some aspect of worship. These will be considered initially for the purpose of identifying elements or characteristics which necessarily define worship. Most of these characteristics will be of a positive nature, but some

⁶ The author of An Analysis of Biblical Worship - New Testament Review wishes to remain unidentified.

will be derived from negative criticism of various scenarios. Several examples of negative worship are studied. Last, we need to determine what worship structures, if any, are evident from scripture.

Elements of New Testament Worship

Our review of worship in the context of the Old Testament scriptures revealed many elements. Since the Christian religion is a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and since the Old Testament scriptures were given for purposes of doctrine, for training in righteousness, as examples for us (1 Corinthians 10 and 2 Timothy 3:16), we should anticipate some New Testament redundancy in the characterization of worship. On the other hand the Jews recognized that the Christian worship was different to that found in the Law and their traditions "This man persuades men to worship God contrary to the Law" (Acts 13:18).

As an example, we found that service to something or to a personality constituted worship from an Old Testament point of view, whether to idols or to the Lord. This trait is also carried over in New Testament teachings. Christ placed a strong emphasis on properly directed service as in Matthew 4:10; i.e., in rebuking Satan, Christ quoted Deuteronomy 6:13 — "You shall **worship** the Lord your God and **serve Him only**." Paul mentions service in numerous places as in Romans 12:11 — "Not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Service constitutes worship but not exclusively. Furthermore, our service can be misdirected and, as such, not be favorable to the Lord.

If service is to be properly directed, then obedience to specific and generic commands must be very basic to worship. Christ experienced the following: "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). In Colossians 1:10 Paul speaks of the need "to please Him in all respects." Demonstrated humility is a desirable trait of worship also found in the New Testament, as in 1 Corinthians 14:25 — "he will fall on his face and worship God." This passage refers to a new believer who has been convicted and who senses the need for reverence and awe.

However, Christ did introduce a new emphasis to worship in his discourse to the Samaritan woman, John 4:20f. He challenged tradition by declaring that neither "this mountain" (The Samaritans claimed the same heritage as the Jews. Their mountain of worship probably was Mount Gerizim mentioned in Deuteronomy 11:29) nor Jerusalem (where the Jews gathered) is the preferred place of worship. Instead the time "now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth; for such people, the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth." We must understand what is meant here in order to have effective worship. Without a doubt, the emphasis is on the spiritual rather than physical i.e. the place of worship. True worship is genuine, faithful, with sincerity — conforming to that which is desired or pleasing. Spiritual worship involves the heart and soul, that inner part of man made in the image of God. This concept represents a major shift in policy; Paul taught the Colossian Church that Christ nailed the Old Law to the Cross.

Another reference along this line is Philippians 3:3. Paul says that Christians worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus without placing confidence in human traditions.

Now Christians are able to measure whether they are being led by the Spirit of the Lord by comparing their behavior with desirable traits identified by Scripture. Paul lists a whole array of Spiritual attributes in his letters to the churches at Rome (chapters 12 & 13), Galatia (chapter 5), Ephesus (chapters 4-6) and Colossae (chapter 3). These passages go further in that they present a contrast between the characteristics of the lower nature of man with those of the spiritual man. The former are derived from the lust of man; the latter are derived from the desire to walk with God. The allegory introduced by Paul in the Galatian letter depicts the inner conflict within man. Paul himself experienced this inner conflict according to Romans 7.

Christian character is described by love, joy, peace, patience [steadfastness, endurance, perseverance] kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. All of these allow one to worship in the Spirit because they honor our Lord. Christians are to imitate God, to be of a forgiving nature, tender-hearted, speaking words of edification, and to have self-discipline. Romans 12:1 detail the ultimate: "...present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."

Paul was speaking of spiritual behavior, the spirit of worship, as opposed to a worldly behavior. That is, the majority of the people presented a norm which was unfavorable in the eyes of the Lord. Christians are to have a different norm. **They are to be set apart in a spirit of worship to the Lord which is continuous and which encompasses attributes of honor, servitude, obedience, respect, reverence, humility,** etc. They are to be filled with the spirit, to conduct their lives on a high plane, communicating as in Ephesians 5:19 - 21 "speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart (in your heart - NKJV) to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ."

The following two key passages amplify this theme;

- a. "So that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:10).
- b. "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do in word or deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father" (Colossians 3:16-17).

The main point here is that we are to have God enthroned in our hearts; we are to cultivate desirable personality traits as illustrated by scripture. Under these conditions, an environment of worship exists. Honor, reverence, obedience and love will be acknowledged both implicitly and explicitly.

Other Worship

An attempt was made to correctly identify aspects of worship which focuses attention on our Lord. This worship has been referred to as true and genuine, encompassing the desirable elements included in Holy writ. However, scripture speaks of vain, ignorant, devil and idol oriented, people oriented, angel and esthetic (nature) worship. Their formats are considered by scripture to have characteristics of worship. These events of worship are generally spoken of in negative terms and are in opposition to true worship. The following examples are given for consideration.

Ignorant worship

Christ's discourse with the Samaritan woman not only defined the spiritual aspect of true worship, but also the issue of ignorant worship. In John 4:27 Jesus stated to the woman that the Samaritan nation worshiped in ignorance. Salvation was from the Jews, yet the two nations avoided national intercourse partly because of ethnic overtones.

The void worship of the Samaritans as identified by Christ possibly alluded to the situation found in 2 Kings 17:27- 41. Verse 41 provides a summary: "So while these nations (Samaritans) feared the Lord, they also served their idols (placed in the houses of the mountains); their children likewise and their grandchildren, as their fathers did [tradition], so do this day." Paradoxically, they feared the Lord yet they worshiped their idols. At least two lessons are involved here. First, we should examine for truth the traditions handed down by each generation. In the above case, ignorant and false worship was fostered for generations and generations. Secondly, the Samaritans, as an ethnic group of people, were unacceptable to the Jews. This environment of racial tension and barriers perhaps hindered the Samaritans from having acceptable, worship. We need to be on guard from the pride of race, heritage, social status and tradition.

In speaking to the men of Athens (Acts 17:22f) Paul recognized their religious culture. But he also acknowledged their ignorant worship - to an unknown God." Paul differentiates between their format of worship (that is, incorporating idols, temples, images, art, silver, stone, etc.) and true worship. He supports the words of Moses, David, Solomon and others in Acts 17.27 – 28 "that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist." Their worship was ignorant because of the manner in which they tried to communicate and to reach the Lord. Yet they did have a form of worship because their actions involved service, gifts, and reorganization. Note that the above quote hints at a continuous relationship with God.

People Worship

People worship quite possibly existed in the Church at Corinth. In 1 Corinthians 1:12 Paul discusses the divisions of the congregation along the lines of personalities; "each one of you is saying, 'I am of Paul' and 'I of Apollos' and 'I of Cephas' and 'I of Christ'. These divisions may have been a result of a congregation made up of ethnic groups. Paul's ministry was primarily to the Gentiles, Apollos perhaps to the Greeks, and Peter to the Jews. The danger here was that attention and honor was being focused mainly on the individual teachers and not exclusively on Christ. This polarization prevented the existence of an environment conducive to true worship.

The lesson for us is simply this: our faith should be based on Christ and not upon a, dominant Christian personality.

Angel Worship

Paul mentions angel worship in Colossians 2:18. Verse 8 in this chapter also suggests worship conditions governed by nature (esthetic appeal), by traditions, by philosophies of men, etc. Remember that Colossae was exposed to the influence of the Jews, Greeks and other intellect.

Vain Worship

Isaiah 29:13 is quoted by Christ (Matthew 15:8-9) in rebuking the Pharisees and Scribes who invalidated the word of God for the sake of tradition. His response was: "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men." Christ classified these people as hypocrites. Vain worship can occur by engaging in traditional rites without being cognizant of one's motive; it can occur under the circumstances of going through certain motions without the involvement of a righteous heart. This concept is illustrated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 regarding partaking the Lord's Supper.

Vain worship is also evident in Paul's letter to the Galatian church (chapter 3). These Christians received the spirit via hearing with faith, yet they reverted to the Law and attempted to be justified by the works of the Law. This vain worship was a result of an insufficient faith; they failed to continue to grow in Christ.

Devil and Idol Worship

This worship is mentioned by John in Revelation 9:20. "But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk.



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