

# What Does It Mean To Be A Christian?

A Christian Is A True Worshiper



Discovering God's Word

Bible Study Series

# A Christian Is A True Worshiper

Learn about true worship and how Christians can worship God acceptably

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## Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

**Study Number:** DGW113

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**About the author:** My name is Eric Krieg. I am a disciple of Jesus, a Bible student, a truth seeker, and an evangelist. My interest is in using the Bible as my only guide in my faith. My desire is to help others understand the message of the Bible and pursue true, New Testament Christianity.

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**My plea:** It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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What Does It Mean To Be A Christian?

# A Christian Is A True Worshiper

What does it mean to be a Christian? Being a Christian means a great deal. Fortunately, God has given us all the information we need to know about what being a Christian really means. As we study His saving message, we discover that a Christian is a true worshiper.

## *What Is Worship?*

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“Worship” is a term that is somewhat difficult to define. You see, English Bibles commonly translate many different Hebrew and Greek words as “worship.” And, the Bible does not say “*this* = worship.” Instead, the subject of worship is presented in the pages of Scripture as something that God’s people have done in the past and should do in the present and future. Still, we can gain some understanding of worship by considering specific teachings the Bible gives on the subject.

### **Examples of worship**

As we begin molding our ideas about worship, let’s look into the Scriptures for some examples of when individuals are said to have worshiped. First, whenever Abraham’s servant had been sent to find a bride for Isaac, he was assured of God’s help in finding a bride for Isaac. And, whenever he had found one, Genesis 24:52 pictures him as worshipping God. “And it came to pass, when

Abraham’s servant heard their words, that he worshiped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth.”

Second, after Hannah had vowed that if God would give her a son she would dedicate him to God, Eli (the priest) told her that God would grant her request. Then 1 Samuel 1:19 says, “Then they rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord, and returned and came to their house at Ramah.” And, after Samuel was born to her and was weaned, she took him to the house of the Lord. They took with them provisions that would be used for a sacrifice and “worshiped the Lord there” (verse 28).

Third, in Nehemiah 8, all the people of Jerusalem gathered together in the open square, the book of God’s Law was brought out before the people, and Ezra read from it from morning till midday. Then, Nehemiah 8:6 says, “And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. Then all the people answered, ‘Amen, Amen!’ while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.” Later, in Nehemiah 9:3, the Israelites “stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the Lord their God for one-fourth of the day; and for another fourth they confessed and worshiped the Lord their God.”

Fourth, there was a man with an unclean spirit in the country of the Gadarenes who ran out of a tomb to meet Jesus. This man could not even be bound with chains and shackles. Night and day he was in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones. Then, Mark 5:6-7 says, “When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. And he cried out with a loud voice and said, ‘What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.’” From that point, Jesus proceeded to cast the demon out of him.

Fifth, in Matthew 28, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary had seen Jesus’ empty tomb. And, as they went to tell Jesus’ disciples, verse 9 says that “Jesus met them, saying, ‘Rejoice!’ So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him.”

Sixth, 1 Corinthians 14 is a chapter that talks about the assembly of a local church in which spiritual gifts would be used. And, verse 25, specifically makes reference to a situation in which

an unbeliever comes in among the assembly and is convicted by what was being done. “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.”

### **Worship is not...**

As you search the Scriptures for an understanding of what worship is, you do need to recognize certain things that worship is *not*. These are important to identify in order to help us keep from diminishing worship. Consider a few points.

First, worship is not sacrificing. Under the Old Testament system, sacrifices were often included in a person’s worship to God. But, merely making a sacrifice was not worship. Observe the distinction made in 1 Samuel 1:3. Elkanah (Hannah’s husband) went to Shiloh yearly “to worship and sacrifice to the Lord of hosts.”

Second, worshiping is not the same as serving. The Scriptures frequently distinguish worship and serving (though they are often coupled together in the same verse). For instance, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego refused to worship or serve the god set up by king Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 3:12, 14). Also consider Deuteronomy 8:19, Deuteronomy 11:16, 1 Kings 9:6, Jeremiah 25:6, and Romans 1:25.

Third, worship is not everything an individual does. As you search the Scriptures, you discover that worship always had a start and end point – and was something that was very intentional. For instance, Genesis 22 records the events of Abraham obeying God in sacrificing Isaac. Notice verse 5. “And Abraham said to his young men, ‘Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.’” 1 Samuel 1:19 (as referenced earlier) says that Elkanah and Hannah “rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord, and returned and came to their house at Ramah.” Then, Acts 24:11 references how Paul “went up to Jerusalem to worship.” From all of these examples, notice that their entire lives were not one continual worship service. Instead, their worship occurred for a particular period of time – and then it ended. Yes, while everything you do in your

life must be done in such a way that it will glorify God (see 1 Corinthians 10:31 and Romans 12:1), everything you do in your life is *not* worship! As examples, mowing the grass, using the toilet, driving a car, etc. are not (of themselves) worship.

Fourth, worship is not limited to a specific place. There may be some who are under the impression that worship is only something that we can do whenever a local church assembles together. Yet, while local churches do engage in collective worship in their assemblies (and there are a couple of activities of worship that we only read about being done in these assemblies – i.e. the Lord’s Supper and the collection), God has not limited worship to these assemblies. Jesus addressed this issue in John 4. The Samaritan woman He met at Jacob’s well asked about the place of worship (note that at that time, some had said the proper place was Jerusalem and others said the proper place was Mount Gerizim, see John 4:19-20). And, Jesus responded by saying that the time had come when worship would not be confined to a specific physical location. Instead, true worshipers would worship the Father “in spirit and truth” (see John 4:21-24). Then, as an example, Paul and Silas are seen as “praying and singing hymns to God” while they were in prison (Acts 16:25). Today, God’s people are both authorized and expected to be worshiping the Father privately (as well as collectively). Since every Christian is identified as being the temple of God (see 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:19-22), true worship is not limited to one specific place or environment.

Fifth, worship is not “five acts.” Now, please do not misunderstand my point. The worship a local church is authorized to engage in during its assemblies is limited to five specific activities. These are: Singing, praying, gospel teaching, the Lord’s Supper, and the collection. However, let’s not confuse true worship with a specific physical activity. For instance, not all singing is worship. There are many people who sing all different kinds of songs (i.e. country music, pop, rap, R&B, rock-n-roll, folk music, etc.). There are even some who sing spiritual songs with the accompaniment of instrumental music. There are some who sing spiritual songs that do not express Bible truths. There are some who sing spiritual songs but are not focused

on the words they are singing. There are some who are among people who are singing spiritual songs but are not engaged in singing themselves. Are all of these individuals engaged in true worship just because there is singing involved? Absolutely not!

## **Worship is...**

Now that we have been discovering some things that worship is not, let's consider the consistent picture of worship in the pages of the Scriptures. When our English Bibles use the word "worship," the consistent ideas of the Hebrew and Greek words they are translating are the ideas of bowing before and kissing toward. Worship is always pictured as an intentional act that is done to express praise and reverence toward something/someone. It is a bowing of the heart before the object of worship.

Worship, then, is something that is intentional (not accidental or continuous) and it is directed toward a specific object. And, the Bible records a number of activities that have accompanied this worship. For instance, Old Testament worship frequently was accompanied by the activity of offering sacrifices to God. And, the worship local churches of Christ engaged in during their assemblies were the five activities I have previously identified (singing, praying, gospel teaching, the Lord's Supper, and the collection). As we will discuss later in this study, true worship is bound by the criteria of being done in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).

## ***Not All Worship Is True Worship***

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As we continue to consider the subject of worship, let's now move beyond a generic understanding of "worship" and begin to really focus on "true worship." You see, there are a number of ways people can worship that do not have God's approval. In John 4:23-24 (a passage I will continue to reference throughout this study), Jesus told the Samaritan woman who had inquired about the place

of worship, "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." As you recognize God's desire for true worship (and before we discuss what is involved in being true worshipers), you need to clearly understand that not every kind of worship man offers is true worship.

## **Examples**

Before we consider some direct statements about various types of worship which fail to meet God's approval, let's consider some examples. First, consider the example of Cain in Genesis 4. Both Cain and his brother, Abel, offered sacrifices to God. Abel (who was a keeper of sheep) brought an offering to the Lord of the "firstborn of his flock and of their fat" (Genesis 4:4). Cain (who was a tiller of the ground) "brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord" (Genesis 4:3). However, even though both of these individuals offered sacrifices to the same God, consider what is said about God's response to these sacrifices. "And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering" (Genesis 4:4-5). Though we are not given many details about what made Abel's offering acceptable to God and Cain's unacceptable, the Scriptures do teach that Abel offered his sacrifice by "faith" and that it was a "more excellent sacrifice" than Cain's (Hebrews 11:4). By implication, Cain's sacrifice was not accepted by God because it was not according to what God wanted from their sacrifices.

Second, consider the example of Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus 10. Verses 1-2 say, "Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord." God had given specific instructions concerning the offerings the priests were to make, including instructions concerning its fire. Though we have not been told everything about the nature of their error, the Scriptures say that they offered "profane" (unauthorized) fire "before the Lord." And, this fire was such that it was not according to God's

commandments. Clearly, God did not accept their attempt to serve and (presumably) worship Him – as He sent fire to devour them.

Now that we have considered a couple examples in which attempts were (presumably) made to worship God that were unacceptable to God, let's focus on some direct statements about such in the Bible.

### *Idol worship*

Idol worship is worship that has the wrong object. Romans 1 identifies a situation in which individuals who should have known the truth about God so as to serve and worship Him chose instead to serve and worship the creature rather than the Creator (see verses 18-25). Paul said that “Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man – and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things” (verses 22-23). Then, Paul explains that God gave them over to the lusts of their hearts and they “exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen” (verses 24-25). Certainly, their worship was not acceptable to God whenever they were bowing their hearts before something/someone other than Him! In fact, idolatry is repeatedly condemned in both the Old and New Testaments – and will result in everlasting torment in Hell for the one who practice such (Revelation 21:8).

### **Vain worship**

Vain worship is worship that goes through the motions or may appear to be pleasing to God, but it is empty of what God actually desires from worship. Jesus identifies a case of vain worship in Matthew 15. In the text, Jesus condemned the actions of the Jewish leaders (i.e. the scribes and the Pharisees). Jesus said that they had transgressed the commandment of God by holding to their own tradition (verse 4-6). Then, Jesus referenced the prophecy of Isaiah that Jesus said was applicable to those hypocritical Jews. “These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the

commandments of men” (verses 8-9). Though they were honoring God verbally, their hearts were not pleasing to God. Thus, their worship was vain (empty). Furthermore, their worship was empty because they were not teaching the truth of God. Instead, they were teaching their own man-made commandments and ideas. Certainly, their worship was not acceptable to God whenever they appeared as if they were bowing themselves to God but their hearts were not fully engaged or when they were not worshipping according to God's truth!

### **Self-imposed worship**

Self-imposed worship is worship that is focused on self. It is what you choose to view as being acceptable worship, without being focused on what God views as being acceptable worship. Colossians 2:20-22, for instance, speaks of individuals who were subjecting themselves to man-made regulations, commandments, and doctrines. Then, Paul said, “These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh” (verse 23). Many translations say they were involved self-imposed “worship.” Rather than being focused on what God wanted from their worship, these individuals were imposing their own desires on God – trying to make Him accept whatever they chose to offer Him. Certainly, God would not accept their worship just because they wanted to offer God something they called “worship”!

## ***God, The Object Of True Worship***

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The entire subject of true worship hinges around the Object of worship – God. The only one who can ever be acceptably worshipped is God. Therefore, all who possess the nature of being God (God, the Father; God, the Son; and God, the Holy Spirit) are deserving of worship.

## **Worship is about the Object**

Every activity involved in worship must have an object. Think about it. If you are going to bow your heart in worship (expressing reverence and praise), there must be an object you are bowing before. And, in order for an object to rightly receive that kind of devotion, it must be *worthy* of your worship.

Though there are many good and wonderful people and things, nothing and no one surpasses God! Listen to a couple of passages from the Psalms. Psalm 95:1-6 says, “Oh come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. For the Lord is the great God, And the great King above all gods. In His hand are the deep places of the earth; The heights of the hills are His also. The sea is His, for He made it; And His hands formed the dry land. Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.”

Psalm 96:1-6 says, “Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless His name; Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples. For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are idols, But the Lord made the heavens. Honor and majesty are before Him; Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.”

This God is the only one who is eternal. This God is the only one who possesses limitless power to do whatever He desires. This God is the only one who has complete knowledge and wisdom. This God is the only one who sees and hears everything that goes on – because He is ever-present. This God is the only one who is perfectly holy, righteous, just, and fair. This God is the only one who loved mankind enough that the Father sent His Son to the earth to die so that mankind could be saved from the eternal consequences of his sin. This God is the only one who has revealed His perfect message by the Holy Spirit so that man can know what God desires, obey it, and live eternally in Heaven. Certainly, there is no other who is so deserving of being worshiped!

Everyone living on this earth should surely long to worship such a marvelous and awesome God!

## **True worship is controlled by the Object of worship**

To continue emphasizing the fact that true worship is *about* the object of the worship, you need to recognize that the object of the worship controls how it is to be worshiped. Take a moment to consider this principle. Let's suppose that you believed you needed to worship a world leader. You admired this individual so much and were so appreciative of what he had done that you dedicated yourself to worshipping him. And, for the sake of this illustration, suppose that this individual both desired and demanded to be worshiped. However, suppose that you also chose to worship another world leader during the times you were not worshipping the first and most prominent individual (even though this one had demanded your entire allegiance). Do you suppose he would be pleased?

Furthermore, what if (as an attempt to worship him and express your reverence) you decided that you would offer the best corn that you could bring him from your garden. You meant for it to be an expression of your reverence. But, suppose that he had instructed everyone within his kingdom to bring him tomatoes. Would he be pleased with your offering?

While this is a completely fictitious example, I believe that it demonstrates an important point concerning worship. God, the one most deserving of worship, has given some definitive instructions regarding worship. Specifically, I want us to consider two areas – in light of the fact that God is the one who has full authority to control our worship!

First, He has said that He does not want you to worship any other besides Him. God is so great and worthy to be worshiped that He demands all of your worship and devotion. There is nothing and no one He permits to be worshiped in your life besides Him. When God gave the Israelites the foundational ten commandments, consider the fact that the first two of these had to do with this one principle. Exodus 20:3-6 says, “You shall have no other gods before Me.

## ***Elements Necessary For True Worship***

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You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

Please recognize that when God said no other gods were to come before Him, that meant there must be no other gods – period! No other gods could be put before Him at any point in their lives. So, this gives absolutely no room for worshiping or serving another besides God. In Matthew 4:10, after Jesus had been tempted to worship another god (Satan, the god of this world – 2 Corinthians 4:4), Jesus stated this same truth. In quoting from the book of Deuteronomy, He said, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.”

Second, God has set certain criteria for worship that is acceptable to Him. Since God is the one who is to be worshiped, He is the one who has full authority to instruct you how to worship Him. After all, it would only be self-imposed and vain worship to try to force God to accept something as worship that He had not authorized (like Cain, Nadab, and Abihu were apparently guilty of doing).

God has specified two elements (in addition to worshiping only Him) that are involved in true worship. These are both identified in what Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:23-24 (as quoted earlier). Notice, from this text, that God is “seeking” those who are “true worshipers.” And, He defines a true worshiper as one who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. Therefore, any worship that fails to meet both of these criteria is *not* true worship that pleases God (the kind of worship He is seeking)!

Now, having identified these two elements that are necessary for true worship, let’s consider what is involved in each one. Again, your worship must be in spirit and it must be in truth.

### **Worship God in spirit**

The expression of your worship to God requires that you recognize God is Spirit. Jesus plainly stated that “God is Spirit” in John 4:24. The conclusion is that you must worship Him in spirit. Though individuals could physically bow before and express their worship to Jesus while He lived on this earth (Matthew 28:11 says that two women held Jesus by His feet and worshiped Him), God does not exist in human form to worship Him in that way now.

Now, it requires the spiritual element of man to be engaged in worship. You see, God created mankind in His own image (see Genesis 1:26-27). Numerous Bible passages help us to understand that this means mankind has been created with a spiritual existence (a soul). Therefore, of all God’s earthly creation, it is only mankind who is able to express worship to God. In fact, man (as a spiritual being) longs to worship. Unfortunately, mankind has often worshiped the wrong object or has failed to worship God acceptably.

The necessary element of worshiping God in spirit, then, requires you to be fully engaged in your expression of worship. Since God does not exist in the flesh, you must bow your heart before the awesome God. You must not just be going through the motions of an external act of worship – while allowing your heart to be far away from God (as condemned in Matthew 15:8-9). Instead, you must be focused on whatever you are doing. For instance, when you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs in worship to God, you must be focused on the words and meanings of those songs and not focused on the melody or some other thing!



## **Worship God in truth**

The expression of your worship to God also requires you to recognize that God has revealed an objective standard of truth. You cannot express your worship to God in just any way or corrupt the true nature of God. Instead, John 17:17 says that God's word is truth. And, John 8:32 says that it is God's truth that will set you free from sin. Yes, God has revealed His word of truth in the pages of the Bible.

Then, consider what Paul stated in Colossians 3:17. "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." God's word reveals the standard for all things in our lives. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says that the Scriptures (which have been given by inspiration of God) are profitable "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." Everything God wants you to be doing that pleases Him can be found within the pages of the Bible (His word of truth). Therefore, in everything that you do, you must have Bible authority! This is the only way to know that what you are doing pleases God.

Furthermore, this general truth must be applied specifically to your worship. You can only please God in your worship if what you are doing has Bible authority behind it! Otherwise, it is self-imposed worship (worship you are trying to force God to accept). Again, recognize that God has told us (in His word of truth) exactly what pleases Him in worship. If you decide to offer Him something He does not want, how can you please Him through your worship? You simply cannot. As an example of this principle, God has authorized singing as an expression of worship to Him. Colossians 3:16 says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." However, in addition to the authorized action of singing, many people have attempted to worship God by using a mechanical instrument of music. Yet, God has not authorized the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship anywhere in the pages of the New Testament (which governs God's people today).

Simply put: Anything that is according to God's standard of truth for worship is acceptable to Him. But, anything that He has not authorized is not acceptable to Him for worship!

## ***Principles Involved In True Worship***

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Before closing this lesson, I want to emphasize some principles involved in worship that pleases God. If you desire to please God in all things, then I encourage you to take these principles to heart and apply them to your worship.

### **God is the only one to be worshiped**

This point has already been demonstrated in this lesson. However, I want you to make some personal application of this point. You see, idolatry is not limited to worshiping before a statue made of wood, gold, silver, bronze, etc. Instead, idolatry occurs anytime we worship or serve the creature rather than the Creator! For instance, Colossians 3:5 references covetousness as idolatry. So, anything and anyone can be an idol. Your family members can become idols. Your friends can become idols. Your job can become an idol. Your physical possessions and wealth (or the pursuit of such) can become an idol. Your hobbies and recreational activities can become an idol. So, you need to seriously evaluate your life so as to make sure that you are not worshiping any idol. You need to do this because God (as we have seen) will not accept your worship that is directed toward Him whenever you are also worshiping an idol in your life at other times!

### **Worship requires humility**

As we have seen, worship is about the object of the worship and not about the one who is worshiping. Therefore, in order to worship God acceptably, you must put aside your own feelings, desires, etc. and focus entirely on praising and showing honor for God. Consider how Jesus demonstrated this in Luke 18. In verses 9-14, Jesus taught a parable to some "who trusted in themselves

that they were righteous, and despised others” (verse 9). In the parable, He described two people who went up to the temple to pray. One man was a Pharisee. This man “stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men – extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess’” (verses 11-12). The other man was a tax collector. This man, “standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner’” (verse 13)! Then, Jesus said that it was only this tax collector who went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee. He said, “for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (verse 14). In the same way, if you are not clothed with humility when you try to worship God, you will not be able to get yourself out of the way in order to worship God acceptably (see 1 Peter 5:5-7).

### **Worship God with a pure heart and clean hands**

James 4:8 says, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” You should not expect God to accept your worship to Him if your life is not committed to His service. The prophet Isaiah prophesied against the people of God who had been failing to observe the instructions God had given them to live by (see Isaiah 1). And, as long as they were living for such wickedness, God asked, “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me” (verse 11)? Later, God said that their attempts to worship Him were troubling to Him and He was weary of bearing them (verses 12-14). In fact, God wanted them to bring no more worthless sacrifices to Him and He would not hear their prayers – even though their prayers were many (verses 13, 15). Listen, then, to verses 16-17. “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.” Similarly, God would rather you stop trying to worship Him if you are determined to persist in sinful activities!

### **God deserves your best**

What should the quality of your worship to God be? Certainly, this question is answered by the nature of the one who is being worshiped. If you were worshiping someone/something that was not all that special, the quality of your worship may be justifiably weak. Perhaps you would only offer your “leftovers” to this one. However, God is worthy of much more than you can possibly give Him! Therefore, He is certainly deserving of nothing less than your best. Read Malachi chapter 1 and observe how the people of God were rebuked for offering the blind, the lame, and the sick as animal sacrifices to God. Instead, you can search the Old Testament to see that God always expected the very best to be offered to Him. In the same way, you must not give God the leftovers you have in your life as worship to Him. You must always reserve the best of what you have for your worship to God!

### **Long to worship God**

Please remember that Jesus said the Father is “seeking” true worshipers. Now, if God is seeking true worshipers, don’t you think that it is important for you to devote yourself to worshiping Him? You see, worship is an expression of praise, devotion, reverence, thankfulness, etc. It is *not* to be a burdensome obligation for God’s people. In fact, 1 John 5:3 helps us to see that God does not want us to view any of His commandments as being burdensome. This is not true love for God! So, as you contemplate the subject of worship, recognize that God wants you to long to worship Him. You should work to develop the attitude the psalmist expressed. Psalm 42:1-2 says, “As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?” In Psalm 122:1, he said, “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go into the house of the Lord.’” There are certainly many things that you can do with your time. But, there is nothing better you can do than worshiping God – both privately, with others, and in the assemblies of the local church! Furthermore, you should long for the day when you can be with God eternally in Heaven and worship Him forevermore!

## Conclusion

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God is seeking those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. Are you entirely devoted to giving God the worship He deserves from you? If not, dedicate yourself today to being a true worshiper. For, if you do not long to worship God in the way He wants to be worshiped, you will not enjoy Heaven – where you will be worshiping God for all of eternity!

## Study Questions

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### 1. What Is Worship?

List some examples of worship in the Bible and explain what you learn.

List some things worship is *not*.

What is worship?

### 2. Not All Worship Is True Worship

List some examples in which individuals worshiped God in a way that was not acceptable to Him.

What is idol worship? Why does it fail to be true worship?

What is vain worship? Why does it fail to be true worship?

What is self-imposed worship? Why does it fail to be true worship?

### 3. God, The Object Of True Worship

Who is worship about? Why?

Explain how true worship is controlled by the Object of the worship.

### 4. Elements Necessary For True Worship

What does it mean to worship God in spirit?

What does it mean to worship God in truth?

### 5. Principles Involved In True Worship

Why is it necessary that God be the only one who is worshiped?

Why is humility important in true worship?

What does it mean to worship God with a pure heart and clean hands? And, why is it necessary?

Should you give God anything less than your best when you worship Him?

Describe the longing you should have to worship God.