

## What is Worship?

**James 4:6** *But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.* One's attitude toward God is of supreme importance. God punishes pride, and **rewards humiliation before Him**. Access to God is by recognizing His Sovereignty. The second and third commandments speak of wrong forms and objects of worship, the fourth commandment speaks of the day of worship (dedicated to the Lord). **Worship is simply the exaltation of God** by the person who honors Him. **Worship is a spiritual activity, it is an imitation of the morality (moral character) of God, it springs from the soul, it is the response to the Creator with esteem, actions and words that exalt Him in all that He deserves.** William Ames explains that there are two forms of worship, formal (in worship) and informal, of which he says, "One cannot give honor to God in any other way but by expressing faith, hope, and love." That is, **true worship is seen in one's activity and attitude.**

**Deuteronomy 10:12** *And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but **to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God** with all thy heart and with all thy soul, **13 To keep the commandments** of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?* At this point, says William Ames, **"God requires only one thing: worship of Him. This has to do with a fearful attitude (reverence), walking in His ways, loving and serving Him. This is the heart of worship."**

## Who do we Worship?

**Matthew 4:9** *And (Satan) saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10* Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. It is striking that **Satan wanted Jesus to worship him**, and God emphatically insisted that **worship is only for God Himself**. Firstly, "our Lord" is our Master, the one who rules our lives. Secondly, it is

important that **Satan wanted Jesus to worship him** "prostrate". That is; **to be valid worship**, it must be exactly as Satan commanded him. **Satan wanted worship as a sign and in a position of submission** (prostrate and humbling himself). That is, **worship must deal primarily with the object of worship** (God alone, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit **John 5:23**), and **then the form** (the humiliation and exaltation of God over us and our will). Satan wants to rob God of His worship. **Worship is to keep our eyes fixed, and to give Him attention and priority, offering Him what He requires, and it must be in the form God specifies.** Satan intends to draw us away from the right object by corrupting the proper forms. Also, **it is very clear that we must never worship anyone other than God Himself, the Creator.**

**Romans 1:25** *Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and **worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator**, who is blessed forever. Amen.* "Giving worship" is the word  $\sigma\epsilon\beta\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$  (sebazomai) which means to give reverence or adoration. It is forbidden to worship any creature, or thing, especially wealth. In **Colossians 2:18** and **Revelation 19:10** **it is forbidden to worship angels** who literally are "messengers" (which can be preachers or spirit beings appearing in vision with a message).

## The Elements of Worship

Worship comes from the fact that we are **creatures made by God for His glory**. **It is the primary obligation of every creature to worship God.** This is the reason God created us. It is the response of every creature to God, their Creator. Worship implies that we should **prostrate ourselves before the superior God** (exalting Him). The forms are not specific because the attitude is more important than the position of the body, but what the Scriptures command is that we kneel before God, bow our heads to the ground, and **be still and maintain silent listening before Him**. In general, let us show reverence, awe and humiliation in the presence of God. (Children whose parents do not accustom them to behave well in church will always have problems with worshipping God as adults. The teacher's authority in school comes from God, and

these children will also not be good students in school and will suffer in life).

## How should we worship God?

**Genesis 4:5** *But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. 6 And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? 7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and **if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.*** When we examine Cain, we do not understand his sin in a very clear way. **Cain's sin was that he worshipped in a way that did not please God** (the same thing that Nabad and Abihu did in **Leviticus 10:1-11** by offering "strange fire"). Many commentators are of the opinion that **Cain offered a bloodless offering, a requirement demanded by God**, although this could well be, God does not explain it to us. **His mistake was not to give importance to the details of his worship, when one has precise instruction from God, one must obey faithfully.**

**Deuteronomy 12:32** *What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it. Numbers 15:39* *And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; **and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring:*** We must study how it is that God wants us to worship Him, and **fulfill it exactly**. It was God's constant concern that His people that they not forsake His commandments to follow the thoughts of their hearts. Worship begins with God, and continues with hearing, studying, understanding and applying the Word of God to our own lives.

**Matthew 15:9** *But **in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.** Exodus 20:4* *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or 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: 5* *Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, **God forbade worship of that which does not***

**have God as its object, and especially not worshipping using images of any kind** (of God himself, or of persons, of saints, or of animals, plants, stars, the sun, the moon, etc.). **The method of worship is spiritual and not in symbols.** The form or method of worship is very important.

**John 4:23** *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.* The woman doubted the right place to worship (Jerusalem or Samaria). Jesus declined both centers of worship (which was of great contention between Jews and Samaritans) **and focused on spiritual worship, through the truth of God spiritually, dwelling and living visibly within the life of each one.**

**Colossians 3:16** *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. 17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. The most important part of worship is that we live God's moral character (morality) in our daily lives.* Thus, we will worship God in the way that pleases Him. **Ephesians 5:1** *Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.*

The most essential parts of worship in services are: 1) To know and **understand** the spiritual truth that we need to follow by reading the Bible itself. 2) To insist on this in **our way of worship** (hymns, Scripture reading, testimonies, etc.). 3) encourage our brethren in faith and love, **using spiritual examples**, (testimonies and actions of grace) where God shows His character in us, through our experiences.

### The "Lord's Day"

**Exodus 20:8** *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work...*

It is extremely important that one worships God. **Salvation is not really within you if you do not worship God WITH YOUR OWN LIFE, with your expressions, your words, and your deeds.** Furthermore, as a permanent habit of the child of God, **there is a specific time and place to worship God, and this is in the church services** (in the company of the brethren) **every first day of the week.**

The observance of the Sabbath (which is a rest from normal life) was of supreme importance in the Old Testament. Breaking the rules of reverence for God on that day was punishable by death.

**1 John 1:5** *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.* John observed that there are some people who do not easily fellowship with the brethren. (**1 John 2:19** *"they went out from us, but they were not of us"*) They abandon the church and the brethren. These people do not want to identify with the redeemed of God. **John saw the purification of sins, or moral change** (**1 John 1:7; 3:3, 6**) and **the love between brethren** (**1 John 3:10**) **as the clearest demonstration of a child of God.**

### Conclusion

The worship of God is the result of having changed one's life, leaving sin and living together with the brothers and sisters in the community of faith. This is emphasized in the formal worship services.

## The Worship of God The Principal Obligation for the Believer

By David Cox



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Let us think of God as the worthiest Being **who deserves a spiritual response from our souls** (which should be surrender, dedication and obedience). He is first and foremost our Creator. **Salvation is in essence, trust (or faith) in the person of God.** His promises of salvation are real, and He is always ready to save us. If we believe this *"we are calling upon God in our lives"*. And this is what saves us.

Salvation is not a prayer of magic words, which, being vain or feigned (lies), neither affects **nor changes our lives. It is putting great trust in God, knowing His character and imitating Him** (Ephesians 5:1).

**To worship Him is to recognize His character, to trust and exalt Him to be our only pattern. To worship Him is to express faith through words and actions** (meditations on His divine character). And it is in Sunday worship given to us by God that we best focus our worship of God.