

The Value of Acceptable Worship

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“The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:19-24).

In order to understand the value of acceptable worship one must first understand what worship is. Many believe it to be the five acts of worship and that which is confined to the church building. A quick study of two of the Greek words used in the New Testament will help us better understand the meaning of worship. The first Greek word used in the New Testament is *proskuneo* (used ~54 times). It means “to kiss the hand to one or towards one (in token of reverence), to fall on your knees before one, and to kneel in homage in order to pay respect. We see this Greek word used when Jesus told the woman at the well that true worshipers will worship in spirit and truth. The other Greek word is *latreia* (used ~5 times). It means service rendered for hire including performing spiritual services such as those assigned in the Levitical law. We see this word used in Romans 12:1, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship”. Some translations use the word service instead of worship.

After studying these Greek words, we first see an attitude that is essential for Christians. We must have an attitude of paying homage and respect to God. Several times in the Bible a person would fall and worship at the feet of another. In Revelation 19:9-10, John says “And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.” Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Notice John’s attitude as he fell down at his feet like he was kissing the hand of a noble. The application for Christians in this generation is that we must always have this attitude as we exist before God. We don’t physically see God, but we are always in his presence and must be on bended knee before him in our actions, reactions, interactions, and decisions. This means you can’t separate worship from your Christian walk because it describes who you are and how you present yourself before God.

Romans 12:1 adds to that concept by saying the Christian presents his life as a living sacrifice to God and this is spiritual worship. This verse couples kneeling before God at

all times and serving him in whatever capacity is necessary. That would include what we do together on Sundays and Wednesdays as well as every other day. Jesus explains this concept to the woman at the well who thought worship was confined to a mountain or in Jerusalem. He answered her question by saying true worshipers' worship in spirit and truth. The Old Testament was all about fleshly ordinances such as the tabernacle, clothes for the priests, and animals for sacrifices. Under the New Testament the temple is spiritual, and the Christians are the priests who offer spiritual sacrifices. It's not about the physical but the spiritual. We need to be careful when we confine worship only to the church building. It is necessary that we worship together as Christians and that we meet to do this on Sundays and Wednesdays. God put us together to hold each other's hands and help each other get to heaven. He has also outlined worship elements that we do together. The warning is to not let our commitment to God be so confined to our public services that we miss the big picture that Jesus painted for the woman at the well. God expects a living sacrifice where we live every day on bended knee before him.

Be on guard that you don't under value daily worship. It is Biblical and an essential part of the walk of a Christian. In Matthew 25 Jesus discusses the final judgment and the litmus test for who are his true disciples. He does not speak of the five acts of worship or Sunday or Wednesday services. He speaks of watching for the coming of the Master, using your talents, and serving others. These all represent serving God on bended knee and offering a kiss towards him in honor and respect. Worship God always, acceptably, with honor for "worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created" (Rev. 4:11).