

In Spirit and In Truth

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John 4:23-24 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. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

- I. All worship directed toward heaven is not acceptable to God.
 - A. Obviously, there are endless forms of worship.
 - B. Unregenerate people and people who are simply ignorant of the matter suppose that all worship is honorable and pleasing to God, but this is not true at all.

Luke 16:15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

- C. Unacceptable worship includes:
 - 1. Adoration directed toward a place.
 - 2. Feelings and emotions for anyone or anything but God himself.
 - 3. Indulgence of fleshly desires and pleasures.
 - 4. Any aspect of it that feeds the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of the life.
 - 5. Any kind of worship that unifies around a cause, an identity, or a person instead of God himself.
- II. What does it mean to worship “in spirit?”
 - A. It is hard to put a precise definition to that without simply showing what it is NOT.

John 3:8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

- B. To worship in the spirit is to not worship in the flesh.
 - 1. It is not worshipping in the spirit when you cannot keep your body still.
 - 2. It is not worshipping in the spirit when you cannot get your mind off of yourself.
 - 3. It is not worshipping in the spirit if you feel pressured to move, to jump, to shout, to run, or with others in any kind of physical display of emotion.
 - 4. It is not worshipping in the spirit if it is exciting.
 - C. To worship in the spirit is to be completely open and honest before God.

1 Corinthians 2:11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Luke 8:15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

Psalm 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

- 1. No secrets; nothing hidden.

- D. To worship in the spirit is to commune with God intimately and privately, even though you may be surrounded by others – it is a private and personal thing.
 - 1. Public worship is when a group of people are all together and each one is worshipping God with their heart open before Him.
- E. There is not true worship when we are offering resistance to God and holding any door in our heart shut.
- F. Those who worship, but not in spirit, are a great hindrance to those who would worship in spirit.

III. What does it mean to worship “in truth?”

- A. Again, we can understand it more clearly by contrasting it with what is most certainly is NOT.
- B. To worship in truth means that we cannot mix a lie, a theory, anything false, or a fantasy with it.
 - 1. This excludes fables, drama, dreams, visions, unknown tongues, etc.
- C. To worship in truth means that it must be based on, and flowing from, what is absolutely true and factual.
- D. To worship in truth means that we honor and extol what we do know about God.
- E. When we worship in truth this way God is able to reveal more about himself to us.
- F. Worshipping in truth is about knowing God and realizing how well He knows us.
 - 1. We cannot worship God in truth if we have some false idea about Him.
 - 2. We cannot worship God in truth if we do not really know Him and who He is.
 - 3. People who cannot tell the difference between the gods of this world and the God of Heaven who created all things cannot worship God in truth.
 - 4. People who cannot tell the difference between the Jesus of the Bible and the Jesus of this ungodly world cannot worship God in truth.

IV. This woman could not worship in spirit and in truth until she knew who Jesus really was.

- A. First, He had to get the doors of her heart open and reveal all her secrets.
 - 1. But even then, she was still thinking of worship as being directed in ignorance to some unknown, and uncertain time in the future:

John 4:25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

- B. Then she had to know who He was in truth, so He told her plainly:

John 4:26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

- C. That’s why Jesus inserted that little phrase in the previous verse:

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.

- D. Now she can truthfully say,

John 4:29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

- E. To worship God in spirit and in truth does not happen until we are open and honest before God and we absolutely know who He is.