

We must worship and serve God in both spirit and truth

In **Jn. 4:23,24**, it is recorded that Jesus said, “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.” Surely it is important for us to be the kind of people that God is “seeking . . . to worship him.” If that is what we desire then, according to these verses, ***we must worship and serve God in both spirit and truth.***

To worship in “spirit” means that we worship genuinely and from the heart. Jesus elsewhere spoke of being “pure in heart” (**Mt. 5:8**), that is, having a heart of single-minded devotion to God. If the things we do in worship and service to God do not spring from hearts that genuinely love and desire to please Him, then we accomplish little. There are many possible “ulterior motives” for doing what God has commanded, none of which produce true worship, even when the thing that is done may be correct in its outward form. God wants the sincere involvement of our hearts.

What, then, does it mean to worship in “truth”? Would it not mean that we worship on the basis of God’s truth, doing only what He has commanded? Just as it is important to act in the right “spirit” before God, it is no less important for the action itself to be what God has said pleases Him.

God is our Creator. It is His prerogative to set the terms of our relationship with Him, and He has the right to say how we may worship and serve Him. The Bible contains more than one example of people who did things God had not commanded and received His condemnation, even though the things were done with sincere motives. King David’s first attempt to bring the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem is a case in point (**2 Sam. 6:1-11**).

Neither of these elements of true worship — spirit and truth — can be ignored without dreadful consequences. Let’s consider that principle this week. As we live and work and study our Bibles, let’s remember to do the right thing, but let’s also remember to do it with the right heart. Those who worship God must worship “in spirit and truth.”

Monday: Acts 10:24-26

Key Idea: Being sincere, while doing the wrong thing, is not enough to please God.

Questions for Family Growth: What did Cornelius do that was wrong? Why do you think he did it? What do you think his attitude was? Did God accept his action just on the basis of his attitude? What did Peter say to him?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 25:3.**

Tuesday: Revelation 2:2-5

Key Idea: Doing the right thing, while having the wrong attitude, is not enough to please God.

Questions for Family Growth: What good things did the Lord say about the Ephesians? What was wrong with this church about which so much good was said? How important is it to love God genuinely? Consider [Mt. 22:37,38](#).

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 25:4,5](#).

Wednesday: Philippians 1:9-11

Key Idea: We must have all three: love, knowledge, and discernment.

Questions for Family Growth: What is “discernment”? What is the difference between knowledge and discernment? Are there people who have love without knowledge or discernment? What does [Hb. 5:14](#) say about the training of our discernment?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 25:6,7](#).

Thursday: Ephesians 4:15

Key Idea: We should speak the truth, and we should speak it in love.

Questions for Family Growth: What happens if we speak the truth but we have no love? What happens if we have love but we don't communicate the truth clearly? Practically speaking, how can we learn to have both truth and love?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 25:8-10](#).

Friday: John 4:19-26

Key Idea: We should worship in spirit, and we should worship in truth.

Questions for Family Growth: What is “worship”? What is the difference between worshipping in “spirit” and worshipping in “truth”? What kind of worshipers did Jesus say worship in both spirit and truth? How can we improve our balance between spirit and truth?

Wisdom for the Day: [Proverbs 25:11,12](#).

Gary Henry — WordPoints.com