

An Introduction to Worship

John 4:22-24

Today, I want to lay the groundwork for a series regarding biblical worship. The verses I read are likely familiar to each of us. (Illus. context.) Just as the woman at the well, many today have no concept of biblical worship. I want to spend the next several weeks looking at particular passages that deal with worship.

But before we get too far, I wanted to take some time to introduce this matter of worship. I'm sure if I were to ask each of you to describe worship, our views would be varied. For many, worship consists of signing, praying, teaching, and preaching. I would agree that each of these is an element of worship, but in themselves they do not necessarily constitute worship. We tend to think of worship in terms of actions or activities, but I firmly believe the heart of worship is an attitude that motivates particular actions. We can be as busy as we please with activities that are perceived as worship, but if our hearts are not right toward the Lord and centered on Him, we haven't achieved worshipped. I don't know about you, but I am interested in genuine worship that pleases and honors my Lord.

In his book, *Worship: The Christian's Highest Obligation*, Alfred P. Gibbs offers some relevant insight to genuine worship. He notes some distinctions between prayer, praise, and worship. 1) Prayer is the occupation of the soul with its needs. 2) Praise is the occupation of the soul with its blessings. 3) Worship is the occupation of the soul with GOD Himself. I believe Mr. Gibbs has rightly determined distinct differences in these. Certainly, praise and prayer are forms of worship, but genuine worship is the occupation of our souls with God Himself! Real worship isn't focused on needs or particular blessings, but with the God in whom our total existence lies. Real worship is consumed with an awareness and awe of our Lord. Real worship gets beyond our needs, desires, wants, or thoughts and focuses solely on Him. Worship is achieved when we are totally consumed in the Lord.

Gibbs quotes various writers concerning worship:

- "The overflow of a grateful heart, under a sense of Divine favor." Here the writer has emphasized the fact that worship is spontaneous and heartfelt. It isn't something which has been worked up or thought out, but that which wells up within the heart and soul, and overflows with a sense of the greatness and goodness of GOD. This has the idea of a heart that is so completely filled with the power and presence of God that it cannot be contained or hidden.
- Another has put it thus: "Worship is the occupation of the heart, not with its needs, or even with its blessings, but with GOD Himself." Genuine worship is consumed with God and focused upon Him. ⁱ

Today, I want to examine a few aspects that must be present if we are to worship the Lord. We can worship, and we should worship, but we need a proper understanding of worship. I don't want us to be as the woman at the well, worshipping without purpose or a proper perspective. As we discuss these [aspects](#), let's consider: [An Introduction to Worship](#).

I. The Object of Worship – [Matt.4:10 – 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.](#) I know that we are aware of the one we have gathered to worship, but many times we get sidetracked and lose our focus. We are not here for a social gathering. This is not just a time to come together for fellowship. I love to meet with God's people and enjoy our fellowship, but we are here to worship the Lord. He is the reason we have gathered today. Were it not for the Lord's saving grace and His goodness in our lives, we would not be here. I have not come to be seen or to be heard. I have not come for an update on the latest happenings.

- My purpose is not even to hear of the needs within our congregation. These are necessary, and we need to be mindful of them, but that is not why we are here. We are here to worship the Lord. I know that some would disagree and think I am insensitive, but much of our time is spent focused on the wrong things. It is good to take prayer requests; it is good to share our needs and burdens, but we have met to worship the Lord. The focus of our time should not be centered on our needs, but on worship of the Lord!

- [Ex.34:14 – For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.](#) The Lord is a jealous God. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* says this: "*This particular word is used only of God, occurring but five times in the O.T., and illustrates the parallel between idolatry and adultery.*"ⁱⁱ Many cannot grasp the fact that our God is a jealous God. He will not compete with another for our devotion and service. He doesn't have to! We are here to worship the God of our salvation. We are here to worship the Redeemer of our souls, the one who brought us out of our miserable, condemned state and offered eternal life. God should never take a back seat in our services, but I am afraid that He often does. Our worship must be focused on the Lord.

II. The Obligation of Worship – [Jer.7:2-3 – Stand in the gate of the LORD's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD.](#) ^[2] [Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.](#) When we come to the house of God to worship, we are to amend our ways. This literally means "*to make well, to be accepted, to be pleasing, to deal well with, to do thoroughly.*" Are you getting the picture? God expects us to come before Him in righteousness. We are to search our hearts and amend our ways.

- I rejoice that this is a place where the Spirit brings conviction and our hearts are touched. It is here that we often deal with sin in our lives. But we cannot worship until our hearts are right toward the Lord. We cannot expect to worship if we are not right with the Lord. We would do well to have these things taken care of before we get to the house of the Lord. I fear many in our day never consider worship, much less the condition of their hearts until they get to church. Worship cannot happen with unconfessed sin in our lives.

III. The Offering of Worship – Worship is something that involves the offering of our praise and thanksgiving. When we reach the place that we are consumed with the glory and majesty of God, worship will happen. It won't have to be worked up or planned out – it will just happen in a way that pleases the Lord. [Ps.100:3-4 – Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. ^{\[4\]} Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.](#) Having the frame of mind that the psalmist had will lead to worship. I am a sheep of God's pasture; He is my Lord, my God; He has made me; He has brought me to where I am. I can't help but offer Him praise.

- [Ps.116:17 – I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.](#) [Heb.13:15 – By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.](#) It ought to be the desire of our hearts to offer the sacrifice of praise continually to the Lord. We need to come before Him with a desire and undeniable determination to worship. Many don't experience worship because there is no desire or commitment to worship.

IV. The Opportunity of Worship – I thought of the joy and privilege we have to worship the Lord. It is through worship that we have the opportunity to praise the Lord and thank Him for all He has done. It is during worship that we realize the wonder and awesomeness of our God. I could have been left in my sin. I could be in a position where worship wasn't possible. I could be in a spiritual condition where worship was not a priority or desire. But praise the Lord He came to me in my time of desperation. He saved my soul and adopted me into the family of God. It is a privilege to worship the Lord. I rejoice that I have the opportunity to come unto His house and worship Him. Many today have no concept of worship. They don't know the joys of worshipping the Lord. They've never experienced genuine heartfelt worship, where they experienced the Lord. I have that opportunity. We are blessed to be able to come together and worship Him! We have that privilege because of who He is and what He has done.

- [John 1:12-13 – But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: ^{\[13\]} Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.](#) [Rom.8:14 – For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of](#)

God. Jesus said – **God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.** We have been given the Spirit to lead us in worship of the Lord!

- **Psalm 65:4 – Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.** What a privilege to be chosen of the Lord and given the opportunity to approach Him in worship. Genuine worship should never be taken lightly or for granted!

Conclusion: I trust that we have been challenged and enlightened concerning worship. As we spend some time in the coming weeks studying biblical worship, I pray that God will speak to us regarding our worship and place a burning desire to worship Him in a way that pleases Him.

I wonder if you have a hunger for worship. Are you thankful for the opportunity to worship the Almighty God, the Savior of our souls? Maybe you just want to come and spend some time in worship, basking in His glory and offering praise to Him. If you are yet unsaved, I urge you to respond to His offer of grace and be saved today.

ⁱ Gibbs, Alfred P., *Worship: The Christian's Highest Occupation*.

[<http://baptistbiblebelievers.com/Books/WorshipTheChristiansHighestOccupation/tabid/89/Default.aspx>]

ⁱⁱ Gaebelein, Frank E., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol.2*, p.486. (WORDsearch – POSB – OT 4, Exodus II Commentary).