

The Worship of the True God

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I can remember back in the 60s at the Feast or on a holy day, Mr. Armstrong would often say; right at the very beginning, he says, “Why are we here?” And on a holy day you can understand the importance or at the Feast, but I guess we should ask the question by way of introduction, “Why are we here today? Why are we here on the Sabbath?”

And some might say—and rightly so—“Well, we’re here because God commands us to.” Or somebody could say, “I’m here because I want to learn more about God.” Both of which are correct, but both of those miss a very important point. And one of the things that I learned very early on in the Church, Mr. Armstrong said it, (and it was a compilation of a bunch of scriptures, obviously), but he said, “The purpose of the Sabbath (or one of the purposes of the Sabbath) is to keep us in the true worship of the true God.” That was a very profound statement. One of the purposes of the Sabbath is to keep us in the true worship of the true God.

And here we are in Moses Lake or wherever you are listening right now or watching right now or you will do so in a few days. We’re here in a formal worship service. We come together in a formal worship service to worship the true God. So, I thought this might be a timely subject to talk about worship. So, the title of the sermon is:

The True Worship of the True God

We want to discuss this subject because, if we don’t understand why we are here or if we don’t come with the object of worshipping God, then we’re missing a huge part of the purpose that God had in mind when He created the Sabbath.

Now, first we need to set the background.

The first point I’d like to make is to ask the question: What is the definition of worship?

Because “worship” appears 102 times in the Bible; 62 times in the Old Testament and 40 times in the New.

The Hebrew word for “worship” in the Old Testament is Strong’s #7812. And it literally means to *depress or to prostrate*. (Not in the case of the male gland, prostate.) But it is prostrate; that means to *bow down* or to *depress*. And it means; it says: *especially bowing down in homage to royalty or to God*. The literal meanings are *bow yourself down, to crouch, to make to stoop down, to fall down flat* (That’s the English word prostrate when you fall down flat.), or *to do reverence*.

In other words, what this word means is that it means to lower yourself physically, mentally; to lower yourself relative to the one that you are worshipping, and to acknowledge by lowering yourself the greatness of the one you are worshipping.

Let's go to 2 Kings 17 and just see a verse that uses this word. And also, we're getting ahead of ourselves, but it tells us who we should worship. 2 Kings 17:36. Notice what it says.

2 Kings 17:36. *But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, ... (KJV)*

What Moses says, 2 Kings 17:36, he says:

2 Kings 17:36b. *... him [you shall] fear, ... (KJV)*

Meaning: to honor and reverence.

2 Kings 17:36 continued. *... and him [you shall] worship [that God], ... (KJV)*

Now, we understand that Christ is the God of the Old Testament and Christ was doing God's will. So, we're really talking about both God and Christ—the God family. "Him you shall worship."

Now in the New Testament, as I said, the word "worship" appears 40 times. And in the Greek, it is Strong's #4352. The literal meaning is *to kiss as in the sense of a dog licking his master's hand*.

And we had a little cocker spaniel we got when I was about six years old. She lived to be twenty-two-years old. And that dog was a part of our family. Boy, that dog would come up and lick your hands, lick your face just out of dog-love as dogs are able to express that.

And that's what this word means, to kiss like a dog licking his master's hand. It means *to fawn* (meaning to acknowledge somebody's greatness), *to crouch, or literally or figuratively to prostrate oneself* (That means lay down flat.) *in homage, to do reverence to, or to adore* (and the Greek word for "adore" means simply *to love someone intensely*.) So, there again, we're talking about loving someone intensely, prostrating oneself in homage, to do reverence, to crouch down before somebody.

Now let's go to Hebrews 1 and verse 6 and see where that word is used. This is talking about the angels, but obviously it applies to the firstfruits. Hebrews 1:6, notice what it says. It tells us:

Hebrews 1:6. *And again, when he [brings] in the [first begotten] into the world, he [says], And let all the angels of God worship him. (KJV)*

This is talking about Jesus Christ, the very first begotten, but obviously Christ and God are part of the God family and we worship them. All the angels worship them. And we are to worship them.

The word “worship” (I’ll just read this from the [Encarta World English Dictionary](#).), it just means *to love, to admire, to adore, to be devoted to, or to respect a deity/god*. Or it has a secondary meaning that applies to us today: *The rites or services through which people show their adoration, devotion, or respect to a deity*. The services (the formal services which people show this love, this adoration, this respect to a deity) and we’re doing that very thing here today. We wouldn’t be here if we didn’t want to show worship, love, adoration, and respect for God Almighty and Jesus Christ.

Now point number two we want to establish: Who should be the object of our worship?

I think that’s fairly obvious, but let’s start out with the example that we find in the New Testament of what Christ said (remember?) to the Samaritan woman at the well. I won’t go through the scripture just for time’s sake, but you can find the occurrence in John chapter 4. Remember Christ came to the well. And this Samaritan woman was there. He said, “Give me water to drink.” She said to Him, “Well, how come you, being a Jew, are asking me to give you water to drink because the Jews don’t have any dealings with Samaritans. They just ignore us.”

Then Christ said, remember He said, “If you knew who is asking you, then you would turn around and ask Me about getting a drink of living waters.” Of course, this confused this woman. And she said, “Are you greater than our father Jacob who gave us this well, and drank the water himself? Are you greater than him when you talk these living waters?”

Jesus, as He often did, He would answer a question either by another example or another question. He said to her; He says, “Go call your husband,” which seems like an odd reply in the middle of this discourse. He says, “Go call your husband.” She answered and said, “I don’t have a husband.” And then Christ said... Can you imagine being on the receiving end of this? Christ said, “You have well said you don’t have a husband.” He says, “You have had five and the guy you are currently shacking up with is not your husband.” And I’m sure she had a big gulp and her eyes bugged out and she said the obvious thing. “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. You’re reading my life. You’re reading my mind.”

Then Christ replied to her in verse 22. He says:

John 4:22. [You] worship [you] know not what: ... (KJV)

Then she said, “Well, we’ve got Jacob and we’ve got our forefathers.” As the Pharisees said and the Sadducees said, “We have Abraham” and all of that. The religion of the Jews at the time bore no resemblance to any kind of true religion. And Christ is saying to everybody really, “You worship you know not what.” And it’s a scary position to be in worshipping “You know not what.” Obviously, that’s something that should apply to all of us that we should be very careful about what we worship.

So, under this Second point, who should be the object of our worship, well, it shouldn’t be angels—not angels. Let’s go to Colossians 2 and verse 18 to see that. We can’t worship angels. That has been tried. There are several examples in the scriptures of humans trying to worship angels. And, in every case, not including... (We’re not talking about demons here, but angels that are loyal to God.), they quickly tell us not to do that. Colossians 2:18, I’ll read it out of the New Living Testament. It says:

Colossians 2:18. *Don’t let anyone condemn you by insisting on self-denial. (NLT)*

That was problem then.

Colossians 2:18b. *... And don’t let anyone say you must worship angels, ... (NLT)*

That was going around at the time.

Colossians 2:18 continued. *... even though they say they have had visions about this [about worshipping of angels]. These people claim to be so humble, but their sinful minds have made them proud. (NLT)*

And in a couple of cases, men tried to bow down and worship an angel, women too. There are several examples in the New Testament. And the very first thing they say is “Get up. Don’t worship me.”

Another warning for all of us today that is going to happen probably in the not too distant future (nobody knows for sure) is we are certainly not to worship the Beast or the False Prophet when they come on the scene. We should not do that at all. Let’s go to Revelation 14 and verse 11. Just one scripture, but it’s a warning that the Beast and the False Prophet are going to deceive the entire world into worshipping them because of the miracles they perform, all that they do. And we’re going to see that and it will be a temptation. Revelation 14:11:

Revelation 14:11. *And the smoke of their torment... (KJV)*

This is the end result.

Revelation 14:11b. ... [ascends] up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever [receives] the mark of his name. (KJV)

And this is something that we should be geared up for. We should be prepared for that when things happen that just astound everybody, might even astound us because we probably haven't seen things like that, we should be on guard not to worship the Beast or his image or that system or the False Prophet. It will be a strong temptation to those who have not prepared themselves in advance. This is something we all should be thinking about.

Another thing that we should not worship (You would think it was obvious, but it happens in God's Church all too much.) is we should not worship a man, a human being. Let's go to Acts chapter 10. This is a situation where Peter came in contact with Cornelius. And Cornelius, as is human nature, wanted to bow down in front of a man. Acts 10 verses 25 and 26, notice what it says.

Acts 10:25. *And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.*
26) *But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself [am] also a man [just like you are].* (KJV)

And I venture to say there are some human beings today (both in the Church and out of the Church), if that happened to them, they would keep them down there and say, "Yeah, you better worship me. You better listen to me. You better pay attention to me," and exalt themselves and put themselves in a position of worship that only belongs to God and to Jesus Christ. Many do that today.

The Catholics worship the Pope. Boy, if they can have their child held, if they can kiss the foot, if they can kiss the hand of the Pope, they will bow down and they do; they worship him. People worship Mary. Look at the number of people that bow down before a statue of the Madonna and commit themselves to worshipping her or pray to her for this blessing or that blessing. Or bow down in front of the saints, the statues, the images, the pictures; and they bow down and worship those icons. It is just amazing.

And, some today in the greater Church of God put themselves between human beings and God and Christ. They insert themselves in between. And they cultivate... And it's a condemnation. They cultivate that relationship for people to worship them, look to them or think, as one man said, "You've got to go through me to get to God." That encourages worship of a human being. And that is blasphemy and it's something we should all just run away from.

There are people today in the greater Church of God saying that "You can't go to the place of safety unless you come through me. You can't be in the Kingdom of God unless you come through me." Then, there are others who elevate the writings of

Mr. Armstrong or of the current leader of the day. They elevate those writings to a level of scripture, to a level of infallibility. And, again, that is a form of worship and it is a blasphemous doctrine. The object of our worship should only be the God family, God and Jesus Christ.

Let's go to Revelation chapter 19. We'll just read the beginning of verse 10. Here is another example of John trying to fall down... I mean here is the apostle John in his vision trying to fall down and worship an angel. So, we learn two things: Don't worship the angel, and then, we learn who to worship. Revelation 19 verse 10:

Revelation 19:10. *And I [John] fell at his feet to worship him. ... (KJV)*

And, if we saw an angel, the glowing and just supernatural, there is a human tendency to do that.

Revelation 19:10b. *... And he said unto me, See [you] do it not: I am [your] fellowservant, ... (KJV)*

He's not a fellow human, as Peter said to Cornelius. But he says:

Revelation 19:10 continued. *... I am [your] fellow servant and of [your] brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: ... (KJV)*

Then he said two words.

Revelation 19:10 continued. *... [W]orship God: (KJV)*

That's it. That's all we should worship is God.

Let's go to Matthew chapter 4 and verse 10. Christ had just conquered Satan. Satan had tried to get Christ to worship him by giving Him all the kingdoms of the world. And notice what Christ did. Matthew 4:10.

Matthew 4:10. *Then [says] Jesus unto him [Satan], [He says,] Get [out of here], Satan: for it is written, [You shall] worship the Lord [your] God, and him only [shall you serve]. (KJV)*

He was quoting Deuteronomy 6 and verse 13. Of course, Deuteronomy 6:13 was referring to Jesus Christ, the God of the Old Testament. So, the God family, God and Christ, are who we worship.

We are not to worship saints. We are not to worship icons, not to worship symbols, certainly not to worship men. We're not to worship power. We're not to worship position. We're not to worship wealth. And, yet, all of those happen in the name of religion. And we have to eschew that. We have to run away from that.

God and Christ are the only ones worthy of our worship or anybody's worship. So, that's the second point, who should we worship.

Now, we want to answer the third question: Why? Why should we worship the God family?

Why should we do it? I think all of us could think of a bunch of reasons, but we're going to cover a few major ones here.

A. (if you like to outline) we should worship God and Christ because of who and what they are.

Worship God, worship Christ because of their nature, because of who and what they are. And the first thing they are is holy.

1. God and Christ are holy.

Let's go to Psalm 99 and verse 5. It says it very plainly, very clearly one of the reasons we should worship God. Psalm 99:5, it says:

Psalm 99:5. *Exalt [you]... (KJV)*

That means *lift up, elevate.*

Psalm 99:5. *Exalt [you] the LORD our God, ... (KJV)*

The latter part of Psalm 99:5:

Psalm 99:5b. *... and worship at his footstool; (KJV)*

Now, that means *to bow down, to prostrate, to lower yourself, to crouch.* That's part of the meaning of the word.

Psalm 99:5b. *... and worship at his footstool; ... (KJV)*

Why?

Psalm 99:5 continued. *... for he is holy. (KJV)*

Not that He has holiness. He is holy.

Now, Webster's Dictionary defines "holy" as the following: *perfect in righteousness and love, infinitely good.*

Now isn't that something worthy of worship? Perfect in righteousness and love? Infinitely good, without limits good! Nothing bad. No nastiness. No evil. Nothing like that.

The Encarta World English Dictionary says *morally and spiritually perfect*. And, if that isn't a reason to worship God, I don't know what is because God is holy.

A second reason that we should worship them because of who and what they are because:

2. He is our maker; He is our creator.

Again, we we're in Psalm 99. Let's go to Psalm 95 and look at verse 6. David understood the concept of worship. David understood bowing himself down before God (Psalm 95:6), and he is encouraging all of us today. He says:

Psalm 95:6. *O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD... (KJV)*

Why?

Psalm 95:6b. *... [He is] our maker. (KJV)*

He is our Maker. And we know all things were created by Jesus Christ, but we know the Father directed that and they planned it together. And, in that sense, when we worship our creator, we are worshipping both of them.

So, because they are holy, because God and Christ made us, and because of another reason is because of:

3. Their glory and the glory due to them.

Let's go back to chapter 29 of Psalms. They are glorious in ways that we can only kind of scratch the surface as human beings. If we could see their throne, if we could see them face to face, we would be down on our face in an instant! Psalm 29 and verse 2, it says:

Psalm 29:2. *Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; ... (KJV)*

He is owed and we owe it to Him to give Him glory. It says:

Psalm 29:2b. *... worship the LORD in the beauty of [His] holiness. (KJV)*

Now, the word "glory" in the Encarta World English Dictionary means *to praise*. It means *praise and thanksgiving offered as an act of worship*, praise and thanksgiving.

So, when we glory to God, it means we are praising Him for who He is and we're thankful for who He is because remember? God says, "I change not." How would you like to worship a God that is maybe different tomorrow than He was today and there is nothing you can count on? And God assures us that "I change not."

Another reason that we should worship Him because of Who and what He is, and this is the biggest one of all, is because:

4. God is love.

We know the scripture, 1 John 4 verses 8 and 18. We won't turn there. It just says very simply, "God is love." And, because God is love, His love is never for our harm, never for our hurt, never for our being abused. But it is always for our benefit. Everything God causes or allows to happen to us is for our ultimate good, ultimate benefit to be in His kingdom as children in His family. If that isn't a reason to worship God, I don't know what is.

So, the first reason (point A) we should worship God and Christ is because of who and what they are.

Point B, another reason to worship God and Christ, is because of what they have done for us or what they do for us every day.

The first thing they did for us is:

1. They called us.

Right? They called us. They picked us out of the mud, out of billions of human beings. And what an honor and what a privilege it is to be called! I think sometimes we neglect to be thankful for that calling. If we were out there in the world, I just hate to think.... I would be dead already probably! But if we're out in the world what confusion, what upset, what turmoil, what fear and what evil we would be involved in!

Let's go to 2 Timothy 1 and verse 9. One of the things that God has done for us is to call us. Our time is now—thankfully! 2 Timothy 1:9, the verse starts out "Who" and it's referring to God, and obviously, to Christ too. 2 Timothy 1:9.

2 Timothy 1:9. *Who [has] saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, ... (KJV)*

Boy, that's for sure. Because we're the weak of the world and we, of all people, don't merit being called.

2 Timothy 1:9b. *... not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace [unmerited pardon], which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, (KJV)*

That plan was set in place before the creation of the world. And there was a part of that plan for a group of firstfruits to be called. And we are part of it! And how thankful should we be! That should translate into our worshipping the one who called us and the one who saved us through His sacrifice.

Another reason of worshipping God because of what He has done for us is:

2. He made a covenant with us, an agreement.

When we were baptized, we entered into an agreement with God Almighty. Look at Hebrews chapter 10. We'll read verses 16 and 17. God made a covenant with us, an agreement with us. Hebrews 10:16. Now this is referring to a covenant that will happen after Christ's second coming and we are the firstfruits. We are the precursors to that covenant. Hebrews 10:16.

Hebrews 10:16. *This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, [says] the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; (KJV)*

And when we were called before we were baptized, as Christ said, "My spirit is with you and shall be in you." Before we were baptized, God's spirit was with us. And God, at that point, began to put His laws in our minds and in our hearts. He said, "I will write them." That process started; it led us to a point where we were then baptized. We committed ourselves to God and Jesus Christ. We gave up jobs. We began to tithe. We began to eat differently. We began to follow the laws (that were in place for our benefit), and then, as a result of that, verse 17, we're told:

Hebrews 10:17. *And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. (KJV)*

This is quoting Jeremiah chapter 31, verses 33 and 34. That is a covenant that will be offered, to call all mankind, but we have the distinct honor and privilege of being the firstfruits of that covenant, the first ones offered that covenant, as well as those called prior to our being alive.

So, God not only called us; He made a covenant with us. These are things He has done for us and we don't deserve any of it. None of it. We don't deserve one part of it.

Then, the fact is that every good thing we have, every blessing we have comes from God. Now isn't that worthy of worship? If somebody blesses you and blesses you and gives you life and breath and health and wealth, and we don't want to worship God because of that? We drag our heels because of that. We're too tired to worship God because of that.

Look at James 1 and verse 17. This is something that we need to be daily thankful for, during the day thankful for, anytime we get a small blessing thankful for. James 1:17, something we need to remember and always look on the positive and not the negative.

James 1:17. *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and [comes] down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. (KJV)*

And we worship Him because He gives us so much. And above all, He gives us salvation. It's a gift. We don't deserve it.

David said it best, describing what God has done for us, back when he was addressing Israel regarding the construction of the upcoming temple. Let's go to back to 1 Chronicles chapter 29. Notice what David said, his attitude of gratitude for everything God has done for him and for the nation of Israel. 1 Chronicles 29, we'll begin in verse 10. David is in front of the whole congregation and in verse 10 of 1 Chronicles 29, it says:

1 Chronicles 29:10. *Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: ... (KJV)*

And this is what he said:

1 Chronicles 29:10b. *... Blessed be [You], LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. (KJV)*

Not just now, but forever and ever. Verse 11:

1 Chronicles 29:11. *[Yours], O LORD, ... (KJV)*

Not us, not a man.

1 Chronicles 29:11. *[Yours], O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is [Yours]; [Yours] is the kingdom, O LORD, and [You are] exalted as head above all. (KJV)*

Now, here is David, King of Israel, who will have a very responsible and high position in the Kingdom of God, and he's saying, "We're nothing. Everything belongs to You. All the glory, all the praise, all the exultation belongs to You." And he could have just as well said that it belongs to me. Look at what Nebuchadnezzar said: "Look what I've done. Look at my creation. Look at my building. Look at my might. Look at my armies." David said none of that.

Today in the Church of God, people say, “Look at me. If you want to get to God, you have to come through me. If you’re going to go to the place of safety, you’ve got to come through me. You have to be part of my group.” This is not a godly attitude.

Going on in verse 12, David says:

1 Chronicles 29:12. *Both riches and honor come of [You], ... (KJV)*

It’s a gift. It’s a blessing. Nothing that we earned.

1 Chronicles 29:12b. *... and [You reign] over all; ... (KJV)*

Meaning: Everything is subject to You.

1 Chronicles 29:12 continues. *... and in [Your] hand is power and might; and in [Your] hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. (KJV)*

What he’s saying is, “Any strength I have as King of Israel, the title I have of King of Israel, comes from You. It’s nothing I’ve done. I was just a shepherd and You made it all happen.” He understood that. He didn’t get vain. He didn’t get pompous about it.

Verse 13:

1 Chronicles 29:13. *Now therefore, ... (KJV)*

Because everything that he just said of the greatness of God:

1 Chronicles 29:13. *Now therefore, our God, we thank [You], and praise [Your] glorious name.*

14) But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? (KJV)

“To give, to build a physical building to You who are spirit and You who have a temple in heaven that we can’t even imagine, who are we to be able to build a physical building to honor You?”

But notice what he says.

1 Chronicles 29:14b. *... for all things come of [You], and of [Your] own have we given [You]. (KJV)*

He’s saying, “The stones and the gold and the wood and the tapestries and all of that, we’re just giving back to You because You’ve already given it to us.”

So, you see here in this point B of worshipping God because of what He's done for us, in the worship of God; we praise God; we glorify God; we give thanks to God because He is our holy, perfect, righteous, unchanging, unchangeable God who gives us salvation and who gives us everything we have. And if that isn't a reason to worship God, that isn't a reason to be here today, I don't know what is.

Now that leads us to the fourth point. And this is something—now we get down to the rubber meeting the road because I think all of know we should worship God and for the reasons I just described.

The fourth point is: How does God want us to worship Him?

As they say, the key is in the details. How does God want us to worship Him? Point A of how does He want us to worship Him:

A. He wants us to worship Him in spirit (meaning with a spiritual mind that links to His mind) and in the truth—in spirit and in truth.

Let's go to John chapter 4. This is where Christ very early on in His ministry mentions these two points, spirit and in truth. Beginning in verse 23, we'll read verses 23 and 24, John chapter 4. Notice what Christ says. He says:

John 4:23. *But the hour [comes], and now is, when true worshippers... (KJV)*

And we want to be true worshippers. Not false worshippers.

John 4:23b. *... when true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: ... (KJV)*

Now, He got all over the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the scribes and all those people because they were not worshipping God in the spirit and they were not worshipping God in the truth. He says, "But the time is now. It's here that the true worshippers of God are going to worship Him in spirit and in truth." He says:

John 4:23 continued. *... the Father [seeks] such [those who want to worship in spirit and in truth, He seeks those] to worship him.*

24) God is a Spirit: and [for that very reason] they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. (KJV)

We can't worship God physically. Yes, we have the trappings of worship. We're here today physically, of course, and we sing songs physically and we have a piano that plays physically and all of that. But the connection that we have is through His holy spirit and that is where we worship God in the spirit and motivated by the spirit. What that means is **we** should worship God with a spiritual mind, a spiritual mind, not a carnal mind, but a spiritual mind and worship Him in the manner in which He wants us to.

Now if we worship God to get for ourselves, that's not a spiritual mind. That's a carnal mind. That's to receive. If we worship God in a spiritual mind, then we want to give of ourselves to God. We want to give everything. As weak as we are, as minimal as our contributions are physically to God, we want to give everything we have to Him. And that comes with a spiritual mind.

And we want to worship Him the way He tells us. Not the way we think we ought to worship Him, but the way He wants us to worship Him. And we are warned. God started very early on with the nation of Israel. He says, "Don't you worship Me the way you think you ought to worship Me. You worship Me the way I want you to worship Me."

Let's go to Deuteronomy 12 and verse 30. They were going into a pagan land that had worshipped all kinds of animals and physical things. And they worshipped demons and they worshipped Satan. And they were going in to conquer this land and He had some very strong warnings. Deuteronomy 12:30. God, through Moses, is saying:

Deuteronomy 12:30. *Take heed to [yourself] that [you] be not snared by following them [meaning those they were going in to conquer], after that they be destroyed from before [you]; ... (KJV)*

He says:

Deuteronomy 12:30. *Take heed to [yourselves] that [you] ... inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so I will do likewise. (KJV)*

"I'm going to follow these. Hey, that seems like a good idea. Christmas seems nice. We get around the tree and we thank God for our blessings and all of that. Or we face to the east and the sun comes up in the spring and we worship God. That seems logical to us." And God's saying, "Don't you do that. That's the way they did it."

Part of worshipping Him in truth is to never worship Him the way unconverted people worship their gods because we know (and that's not a put-down of unconverted people). Their time is not yet. They are blinded. They don't understand, but the fact is the unconverted, the uncalled worship the god of this world, which is Satan. And Christ and the Father say, "Don't you do that. Don't get close to that."

So, How does God want us to worship Him? Point A: in spirit and in truth.

Point B, How does God want us to worship Him?

B. By coming to Him in humility.

Not with a pompous attitude. Not with an arrogant attitude. Not with an attitude of “Look, God. Look at what I’ve done for You today.”

I’ve counseled with people over the years and sometimes they come into the Church thinking “I’ve got something to offer God. I’ve got some talents and abilities. And I’m just going to do all this wonderful stuff for God.” God doesn’t need anything from a human being. God would snort at that if we think we had something to offer God.

Look at Psalm 84 and verse 10. Notice David’s attitude. If anybody could look back... Yes, he sinned with Bathsheba, but look at all the other things—a man after God’s own heart. Look what he did in the case of Goliath. Look what his resumé shows. Look what his street credibility is. And if anybody could say, “I’ve got something to offer God,” I guess David could. Psalm 84:10, notice what he says:

Psalm 84:10. *For a day in [Your] courts is better than a thousand. ... (KJV)*

Meaning: A thousand days not in Your courts. He said (This is the king of Israel):

Psalm 84:10b. *... I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. (KJV)*

He said, “Just to be there I’m so privileged. I’d rather hold the door for all the people that You’re going to call, all the people You’re going to deal with, billions of people. I’ll stand there and hold the door for all of them. I would rather do that than be outside Your kingdom.”

And you see the definition of worship (which we talked about in the very beginning where you bow down, you crouch down, you lay flat), the definition of worship all involves humility on the part of the worshipper. The one who is doing the worship can’t stand there haughty and proud and saying, “God, look at me! Everyone else is kneeling down or flat on their face and I’m standing here in front of You because I’m so great and I have some wonderful things to offer you. And you need to recognize me because of everything I’ve done for You.”

And I dare say, based on fruits, there are some leaders today in the greater Church of God that have that attitude that “You can’t get along without me because look at what I’ve done.” Or as one man who is now dead, “I know You’re going to wink at all my sins because of what I’ve done for You.” That is, again, that’s just blasphemy and it’s a wrong spirit.

So, point B is we’ve got to come near God with humility or He will not accept us.

Point C of how does God want us to worship Him:

C. By reverencing the sanctuary.

What do I mean by that? God says He wants us to worship Him by reverencing the sanctuary. Let's go to Leviticus chapter 26 and look at verse 2. God is instructing ancient Israel about how He wants them to worship Him. Now, they were doing it in a physical way. Today, we're doing it in a spiritual way and also a physical way, obviously. Leviticus 26 and verse 2, notice what Moses is saying. God told Moses this to tell ancient Israel. Leviticus 26:2. They lost the keeping of the Sabbath in captivity. It's being re-established. God says:

Leviticus 26:2. *[You] shall keep my [S]abbaths, ... (KJV)*

Weekly Sabbaths, holy day Sabbaths.

Notice what He says.

Leviticus 26:2b. *... and [in keeping My Sabbaths] reverence my sanctuary: [because] I am the LORD. (KJV)*

"I am eternal."

The definition of "reverence" in the Hebrew means *feeling of deep respect or devotion*. "You shall reverence My sanctuary" meaning, "You should have a deep respect or a deep devotion to the sanctuary."

Now, the definition of "sanctuary" in the Hebrew is a *consecrated thing or a consecrated place, a holy place*. Now we know the tabernacle and later the temple, God actually resided there. Therefore, it was a holy place.

But Christ also said, "When two or three come together," guess what? "I am in the midst of them." So, in that sense—Portland watching and listening today, wherever you might be, Wisconsin, Worden, Illinois, Sooke, East Coast, Canada, New York, wherever you are watching today or listening today or will do so on a Sabbath day—there where you are is the sanctuary. Where you are is where the group of people come together and Christ says He "and the Father will make our abode with them and we will be with them."

Sometimes in this carnal physical world we lose sight of the fact that we are here in a building—yeah, it's a physical building, a nice building. Thank God that we're here. It's cool in the summer and warm in the winter—but God is here and sometimes we forget that.

We're being told, "Do you want to worship Me properly? Then you reverence My sanctuary."

Now, we deeply respect God's throne. If we were standing in front of God's throne, do you think we might be flat on our faces, down on our knees with our foreheads on

the ground? Absolutely! So, in the same sense, we need to deeply respect where His people meet together. Not that we're respecting a building; I don't mean that at all. But we're respecting the occasion; we're respecting the purpose; we're respecting the fact that His people are coming together.

Obviously, you can't reverence the sanctuary if you don't show up. Some people today don't think it's a big deal. But there are people that would be close to death before they would miss services and that's the attitude that we should have.

Look at Ecclesiastes chapter 5. When we come before God—just be turning there—we need to deeply respect where God's people gather together.

In this Laodicean era, I'll have to say that we are spoiled. In these end times, we are spoiled. Dorothy and I were talking on the way over. She was mentioning she had been reading about Paul and all that Paul had to go through.

Here this man, he could have been a tentmaker. And he could have made a nice living staying in one location maybe pastoring a small group, but he didn't. He traveled all through the Middle East. If you follow his path on his three missionary journeys, man alive! He went through some rough territory. Then, by his own admission in those travels, he was shipwrecked; he was beaten; he was stoned; he was hungry and he was thirsty; he went without clothes; he was cold; he was hot.

And we're all talking about this as we're adjusting our power seats in our car or adjusting the temperature on the air conditioning or the heating. And some people today can't get off their fannies and come to church [services] in those conditions under those circumstances. And look what Paul did. Look what Paul did. Look at the obstacles he had to overcome to do God's will.

So, how can we reverence the sanctuary if we're not here? How can we do that?

Ecclesiastes 5 verse 1, I'll read it out of the New Living Testament.

Ecclesiastes 5:1. {The Importance of Fearing God--} *As you enter the house of God, ... (NLT)*

Now this is the sanctuary. And, by implication, in the New Testament times wherever we meet.

Ecclesiastes 5:1b. ... *keep your ears open and your mouth shut! (NLT)*

I like the New Living Translation because it kind of puts it very bluntly and plainly.

Ecclesiastes 5:1b. ... *keep your ears open and your mouth shut! Don't be a fool who doesn't realize that mindless offerings to God are evil [just blathering on].*

2) *And don't make rash promises to God, for he is in heaven, and you are only here on earth. So let your words be few.*

3) *Just as being too busy gives you nightmares, being a fool makes you a blabbermouth. (NLT)*

Now, verse 6 out of the King James:

Ecclesiastes 5:6. *Suffer not [your] mouth to cause [your] flesh to sin; (KJV)*

So, when we come into the sanctuary, when we come where we meet, we need to have God on our minds and we need to be careful about what we say. Not that it's not wrong to joke or to have fun or to talk about how things are going or how your week went, but we need to monitor our conversation so that it doesn't get off into the world and we keep our conduct and conversation in keeping with the occasion.

Let's go to Mathew chapter 12. Christ gives us an admonition here. Matthew 12. We've all been there. As the words are coming out of our mouths, we wish we could somehow just grab them and start pulling them back in—done that too many times. Matthew 12 verses 36 and 37, Christ says:

Matthew 12:36. *But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. (KJV)*

Even more so in the sanctuary. Verse 37:

Matthew 12:37. *For by [your] words [you shall] be justified, ... (KJV)*

That means putting yourself in a right relationship with God.

Matthew 12:37b. *... and by [your] words [you shall] be condemned. (KJV)*

So, you see what these scriptures are telling us is that we reverence God, we reverence the sanctuary by what we talk about on the Sabbath. We reverence God, we reverence the sanctuary by what we wear on the Sabbath.

And we've always said, "Wear the best you have." We're not competing in some fashion thing, but I know people in the past have come to Church and they had better. They had better clothes to wear but they chose not to wear them. And that is not worshipping God properly. That is not reverencing God properly.

We reverence God on the Sabbath by trying to be like Him when we come here. When we come to the meeting place, wherever it is, we want to be like Him in thought, word, attitude, frame of mind—be like the one that we are worshipping when we come together. But it can only happen... Guess what? If we show up. It can't happen; we can't reverence the sanctuary if we don't walk into the sanctuary.

We can't have a Christ-like mind in front of all the brethren if we're not there, because we not only come to worship and to gain instruction, but we also come to give to others by encouragement, by being uplifting, by helping.

The third point, C, is how does God want us to worship Him? By reverencing the sanctuary.

The last: How does God want us to worship Him?

D. By making God holy in our minds and in our hearts.

Now what do I mean by that? God is holy. He is who He is. But we can make God holy in our mind and in our heart by, obviously, not showing disrespect or belittling God or diminishing God in any way. We want to elevate God and hold God up and, thereby, make Him holy in our minds and hearts.

Look at 1 Peter 3 just the first part of verse 15. 1 Peter 3:15. The word "sanctify" in the Greek means *to make holy*. Sanctify means to make holy and notice what Peter says in 1 Peter 3, the very beginning of verse 15. He says:

1 Peter 3:15. *But sanctify [that means make holy] the Lord God in your hearts: (KJV)*

That means: God has a dear, a special place in our heart. When I say heart, obviously, everybody knows we're not talking about our physical hearts but in our inner core and in our inner being. That we have a special honored, revered place for God in our being.

With that in mind, let's go to Psalm 100. And David gives us an indication of how we should worship God, how we should come in His presence as we gather together to reverence the sanctuary, to reverence His sanctuary and make Him holy in our minds and hearts. Psalm 100, we'll read verses 2, 3 and 4. David says:

Psalm 100:2. *Serve the LORD with gladness: ... (KJV)*

Why? Because He's called us. We're here. What joy.

Psalm 100:2b. *... come before his presence with singing. (KJV)*

Which we do. But we could also sing in our hearts. We've all had times when we're just merry in our hearts. We're just dancing in our hearts. And we should come to services that way.

Verse 3:

Psalm 100:3. Know [you] that the LORD he is God: it is he that [has] made us, and not we ourselves; [he says,] we are his people [we belong to Him.], and the sheep of his pasture. (KJV)

Everything goes back to God! Verse 4, Therefore he says, because we're the sheep of His pasture; we're His people:

Psalm 100:4. Enter into his gates [into the sanctuary] with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. (KJV)

What I'm getting at in this: we have to make Him holy in our hearts and minds; and we have to reverence the sanctuary; and we have to come near Him with humility; and we have to realize who and what He and Christ are, is that we come to worship Him, not the way we want to, not the way we think is best, not the way we might see other people worshipping God, but we must worship Him the way He wants us to.

And the Bible is replete with examples of that.

So, the fifth and last point, we want to establish that it is possible (hopefully not with us,) but it is possible to worship God in vain.

To worship God in a way that is useless. That doesn't matter. That doesn't carry any weight.

Let's go to Matthew chapter 15. And we're breaking into the context here where the religious leaders of the day were just jumping all over Christ and the apostles because they didn't wash their hands. They didn't follow the religious dos and don'ts of the day. Matthew 15, we'll read verses 8 and 9. The context is not washing hands. Matthew 15 verses 8 and 9, and Christ is saying to those who were criticizing His disciples and, thereby, Him, He says:

Matthew 15:8. This people [draws near to] me with their mouth, ... (KJV)

"Oh, yeah, they have great swelling words." And He says:

Matthew 15:8b. ... [honors] me with their lips; ... (KJV)

But guess what?

Matthew 15:8 continued. ... their heart [their innermost being] is far from me. (KJV)

Their motivations are far from holy motivations. Verse 9:

Matthew 15:9. But in vain they do worship me, ... (KJV)

And how do they do that?

Matthew 15:9b. ... *teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (KJV)*

We've all been there. We've all been subject to that. We've all made those sins and those errors and those mistakes. And it happens to this day because people are going to say when Christ returns, "Hey, we've printed books. We've printed magazines. We've been on cable TV. Look at what we've done for You. Look at the way we've spent our money for You."

And, yet, they worship God in vain because guess what? They put an organization or they put a man in front of God and Jesus Christ. "Oh, we obeyed Him. He told us to do that." I think they said that in the Nuremberg war trials, too, about certain people.

"So, we did what he told us." God say, "Well, ok, but what does My word say? Doesn't that matter? Are you going to put a man's word in front of what I tell you in My word?" It happens today.

Another example is when people say, "We love God," and then show favoritism. It might be bigots, racial bigots, religious bigots. It might be respect of persons. Paul talked against that. So, did Peter. So, did James. It's very important.

God judges based on our fruits. God judges based on what we actually accomplish, what we actually do. And what we have to do so as to not worship God in vain is we have to show by our fruits that we worship God with a pure heart, with an obedient heart, willing heart because we want to; because we realize who and what God is versus who and what we are; and we are just happy to be in His presence bowed down with our noses in the dirt, just happy to be in God's presence.

Look at 1 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 5. Paul is instructing Timothy and he says, "This sums it up." This sums up the commandments and the attitude we should have in obeying God. We have to show by our fruits that we have a pure heart, an obedient heart, a loving heart, a humble heart before God. 1 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 5, he says (Paul says)—and at this our ears should perk up, our antennas should come up.

1 Timothy 1:5. *Now the end of the commandment is ... (KJV)*

Oh, boy, what is the end of the commandment?

1 Timothy 1:5b. ... *[love] out of a pure heart, ... (KJV)*

Love out of a pure heart, meaning love not to get, not to elevate the self, not to call attention to the self, but love out of a pure heart. And it says:

1 Timothy 1:5 continued. ... [out] of a good conscience, ... (KJV)

Not putting on a show. Not putting on an act. Behaving in a certain way out in the world or on the job and then differently in the Church, then you are double-minded and your conscience is going to bother you. He says:

1 Timothy 1:5 continued. ... of a good conscience, and of faith [that is not]... (KJV)

The King James says unfeigned, meaning faith that is not fake, not putting on a show.

Love out of a pure heart. We should worship God. We should be here. Yes, to learn. Yes, to be obedient, but we should be here because we want to show our love to God and Christ. We want to do so not to be seen, not to put on a show. We do so because we have a pure heart and we realize who we are relative to God and Christ. We're just so thankful to be here, so thankful to be called. What an opportunity. And, God, just tell me what to do and I'll do it. With my nose down, in this case, in a rug, and we're just there. We're just glad to be there.

So, what have we seen, concluding? We've talked about the definition of worship. We've talked about who we are to worship and who we are not to worship. And we've talked about why we should worship God, how we should worship God, and we're just skimming the surface, obviously, and how that we can worship God in vain, how we can just do it all for nothing.

Now, in closing, let's go to two scriptures. Philippians chapter 2, something that we should keep in mind every day, but especially when we come together to worship God, Philippians 2 and we're going to read verses 7 through 10. Paul is talking about Christ to the Philippians, Philippians 2:7. He says, "But," referring to Christ.

Philippians 2:7. [Christ] made himself of no reputation [looked down upon], and took upon him the form of a servant, ... (KJV)

Not to exalt Himself, but to serve.

Philippians 2:7b. ... and was made in the likeness of men:
8) And being found in fashion as a man, ... (KJV)

Notice what He did. Did He exalt Himself?

Philippians 2:8b. [H]e humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.
9) Wherefore [because of what Christ did] God also [has] highly exalted him, ... (KJV)

The Father exalted the Son. The Son did not exalt Himself.

Philippians 2:9b. ... and given him [Christ] a name which is above every name:

10) That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven [all the angels in heaven], and things in earth [all of us], and things under the earth; [those who are now dead and buried but will be resurrected someday] (KJV)

And, of course, all the demons should bow. Satan should bow, but he has chosen not to.

This tells us that God and Christ are worthy of our worship. And that no man is worthy of our worship.

Now a final scripture, let's go to Revelation chapter 22. And, again, this is another example of a human being wanting to worship an angelic being, a spirit being, who was not God or Christ. Revelation 22 verses 8 and 9.

Revelation 22:8. And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which [showed] me these things [awesome things].

9) Then he [said to] me, See [you] do it not: for I am [your] fellowservant, and of [your] brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. (KJV)

As we keep this Sabbath, let's remember why we are here: to worship the true God in spirit and in truth and to give ourselves and dedicate ourselves to God and Jesus Christ on this very day.