

Worship “In Spirit”

*“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,”* John 4:23,24.

In these oft quoted Scriptures we learn that God seeks or desires the worship of “*true worshippers*,” and that “*true*” worship includes the worship of God (the Object of our worship) and that it must be “*in spirit and in truth*.” The coordinate conjunction “*and*,” used here to separate “*spirit*” and “*truth*,” separates two items of equal rank and importance. Consequently, worship “*in spirit*,” but **not** “*in truth*,” is inadequate, ineffectual, and “*vain*.” cf. Matt. 15:8-9. On the other hand, worship “*in truth*,” but **not** “*in spirit*,” is equally unacceptable. True worship must be “*in spirit and in truth*.”

In a sincere effort to “speak where the Bible speaks” and to “do Bible things in Bible ways” (two very definite requirements, I Pet. 4:11; Col. 3:17), we have long emphasized the scriptural “items of worship” (and justifiably so), because scriptural worship must be “*in truth*.” After all, “*the truth shall make you free*,” John 8:32. However this alone is only “half safe,” and to be “half safe” is to be completely **unsafe**. Even the Pharisees sought to be correct as to form, but as to spirit, they completely “missed the boat.” “*True*” worship must also be “*in spirit*.” It is in this area that so many members of the church so greatly err. Let us ponder this “*in spirit*” requirement a bit further.

First, “*God is a Spirit*.” Being “*Spirit*,” He is invisible and omnipresent, and is not composed of flesh and bones. He “*dwelleth not in temples made with hands*,” Acts 7:48. Such cannot contain Him. Though Solomon’s temple could not “contain” God, to the Israelites it was nonetheless “*an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel*,” the place where God said: “*mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually*,” I Kings 8:17; 9:3. When the Israelites looked toward or entered the temple, which was an earthly house composed of material stones, they were reminded of God’s Name and of His abiding presence. On the other hand, the church Jesus built is God’s temple, His “*spiritual house*,” and is composed of “*living stones*,” Christ Jesus Himself being “*the chief corner stone*,” Eph. 2:21; I Peter 2:5-6. How much more ought we be aware of God’s abiding presence when we come together to offer up — not animal sacrifices — but “*spiritual sacrifices acceptable to god by Jesus Christ!*” This awareness should better enable us to worship God “*in spirit*.”

But as we ponder the fact that God “*is Spirit*,” we are also reminded and humbled by the awareness that we were created in His “*image*,” Gen. 1:27, and that we, too, possess a spiritual nature. Each one of us consists of both “*the inward man*” as well as the “*outward man*,” 2 Cor. 4:16. We are composed of both “*body*” and “*spirit*,” Jas. 2:26. The spirit of man is that sentient part of our being by which we perceive, reflect, feel, and desire, Matt. 26:41; Acts 17:16; I Cor. 2:11.

Hence, worship is not all outward, consisting only of form and ritualistic activity.

If we come together and merely go through the “items of worship,” and our hearts or minds are elsewhere, our worship is in “*vain*,” Matt. 15:8-9. Worship “*in spirit*” will add life to the song service, fervor to prayer, interest in the sermon, meaning to the Lord’s supper, and will make us better people. Twisting, turning, clock watching, note-passing, disinterest, etc., ad. inf., are not activities characteristic of the sincere, humble, “*in spirit*” worship which God requires of each Christian. We would all do well to ponder and

apply these thoughts seriously. —Bobby
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