



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

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## Worship

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Offering worship and yet it is offer to God is so important and yet it is often a disappointing part of our lives, because we fail to receive from it the strength and edification we want to receive. This is because of weakness on our part and indicates a need for more study of this important subject. If we can eliminate that empty feeling that we sometimes have because we have not truly offered worship in "spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24), then our lives will be much more successful as Christians. The purpose of this article is to help us make the experience of worshipping God both pleasing to Him and rewarding to us.

### Worship in Spirit

Jesus said that we "must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24). To worship in spirit is to put our spirit into our worship. Anyone can go through the mechanics of worship, but only when we truly put our hearts into the worship is it pleasing to God and edifying to us. Jesus also said, "Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, this people honoreth me with their lips; But their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men" (Matt. 15:79). Surely no one would refuse to accept the truthfulness of Jesus' statement. How could worship be acceptable to God if it is only from the mouth and not from the heart?

### Worship in Truth

As is true of all phases of Christianity, we must be taught before we can be pleasing to God in our worship. The Lord said, "It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (Jno. 6:45). Before we can worship in a proper manner we must learn from God's word what we are to do and the attitude we must have in doing these things. Anything God did not include in His word, we cannot include in our worship.

### Things That Will Help Us Worship Acceptably

#### REALIZATION OF GOD'S POWER

The abundant evidence that is all around us to remind us of the power of God will help us worship. Paul says, "The invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity" (Rom. 1:20). Through the natural realm we can see the tremendous power of God. In Isaiah 40 the prophet makes this argument to show the greatness of God and the foolishness of idolatry. When we think of the many miracles recorded in the Bible, and especially the coming forth of Jesus from the tomb, we will be able to worship with a deep appreciation for God and therefore humility on our part, which is an essential part of worship.

#### REALIZATION OF GOD'S PRESENCE

If we can truly be convinced that God is near and listening and watching as we offer praise and respect to Him, it will give us the needed incentive to make this period of devotion real homage to God and of great value to us. Paul told the Athenians "he is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27). Jesus promised that when two or three are gathered in his name, he is in their midst. (Matt. 18:20) God's presence at Mt. Sinai caused the people to stand off with fear and amazement. We should allow this knowledge of His presence when we assemble for worship to bow us in deep respect and love for Him. If we are fully convinced that God is there, we won't be late, noisy, indifferent, asleep, playing with babies, or any of the other things which might destroy our worship.

## REALIZATION OF GOD'S LOVE

To be fully aware of how much God really loves us will draw us closer to Him and cause us to submit in complete obedience. The many affirmations of God's love for man in the Bible and demonstration of that love in giving His son to die for us, must make a deep impression on us. Worship is an emotional experience that we have, and a true realization of God's love will affect our emotions. These emotions must be controlled, but they must also be stirred.

## REALIZATION OF THE MEANIN'G IN THINGS WE DO IN WORSHIP

There are certain outward acts that are performed as a result of an inward desire to show our respect to God. These can become meaningless formalities if we allow them to. This was one of the problems of the people in the time of the prophets. They went through a form but their heart wasn't in it. As we pray, sing, commune, give, and are taught from God's word, we will be filled with deep gratitude and therefore offer true praise and devotion to God. A complete study of each of these things would be valuable, but space will not allow such in this writing.

## PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

In this busy world, we tend to think that we can think and talk about material things for hours and then in an instant switch our thoughts to spiritual things for an hour or two and then change the dial back to worldly cares for the rest of the day. If we are going to participate in a period of public worship, we should prepare for the occasion. The priest of the Old Testament era spent much time in preparation to offer sacrifices to God.

Here are a few simple suggestions of ways we can prepare for worship.

1. PRAY before attempting to worship.
2. READ THE BIBLE before leaving home to participate in worship.
3. THINK ABOUT GOD and not other people. (Their dress, faults, mannerisms, etc.)
4. BE FILLED WITH A DESIRE to worship God.
5. PARTICIPATE in each service as if it were going to be your last opportunity to worship God on earth. It might be.

We must first be sure that we are Christians and in a relationship with God in which we can offer true worship and then be led by the word of God into a knowledge of how to worship God acceptably. May we put forth the effort to accomplish this. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 2:5). TRUTH MAGAZINE X: 2, pp. 16-17 November 1965

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