

WORSHIPING GOD OUTLINE

Dennis McBride - 1992

Note: Click on the Navigation Plane icon in the tool bar above, then click on a bookmark to proceed to the corresponding section of this study.

INTRODUCTION

I. THE ROLE OF GENUINE WORSHIP

A. Worship Is Fundamental To Our Humanness

1. Worship is present in every culture
2. Worship reveals our creatureliness
3. People are compelled to worship
4. Most people reject true worship

B. Worship Attempts To Fill A Void

1. A God-shaped vacuum
2. We are created in God's image
3. We are God's image-bearers
4. The unredeemed search for meaning
5. Their search is futile
6. Observing fallen man

II. THE MEANING OF GENUINE WORSHIP

A. Representative Quotes

1. David Julius
2. Rufus Matthew Jones

B. The Greek Term

1. New Testament word picture
2. "Worship" = Proskuneo
3. "Proskuneo" = "To kiss toward"

C. The Basic Meaning

1. "Obeisance, reverence, prostration"
2. Greeks = adoration of the gods
3. Its derivation

D. An Added Element

E. A Summary Definition

III. THE OBJECT OF GENUINE WORSHIP

A. God Stated It Clearly

B. He Guards It Jealously

1. Old Testament examples
2. New Testament examples

C. Jesus Reiterated It Forcefully

D. Jesus Received Worship Willingly

1. No contradiction
2. Appropriate New Testament worship
3. Hebrews 1:6

IV. THE PRIVILEGE OF GENUINE WORSHIP

A. Understand It

B. Take Advantage of It

C. Live It

V. THE PERVERSION OF GENUINE WORSHIP

A. By Worshiping the Wrong God

1. The condition of idolatry
2. The conduct of idolatry
3. The consequences of idolatry
4. The categories of idolatry
 - a. Worshiping creation in general
 - b. Worshiping angels
 - c. Worshiping man

B. By Worshiping the Right God In the Wrong Way

1. Through images
2. Through conceptual idolatry
3. Through practical idolatry
4. Through self-styled approaches
 - a. Nadab & Abihu
 - b. King Saul
 - c. Uzzah
 - d. King Uzziah (Azariah)

- e. Jewish religious leaders
- f. A personal consideration
- g. Note Paul's priority

C. By Worshiping the Right God with Wrong Motives

1. When we lose our first love
 - a. A New Testament example
 - b. Some Old Testament examples
 - c. The solution
2. When we exchange God's glory for man's need
 - a. A shift in priority
 - b. Walter Chantry quote
 - c. An added ingredient
3. When we become greedy
 - a. A warning
 - b. The Word of Faith Movement
 - 1) Its alternate names
 - 2) Its leaders
 - 3) Its publications
 - 4) Its primary premises
 - a) Believers can tell God what to do
 - b) Words have creative power
 - 5) Some representative quotes
 - a) Charles Capps
 - b) Norvel Hayes
 - c) Kenneth Hagin

VI. THE PARTICULARS OF GENUINE WORSHIP

A. The Passage

B. The Preface

1. Jesus reveals Himself
2. Some Old Testament background
 - a. Forms of Old Testament worship
 - b. Samaritan worship
3. Jesus revolutionized worship

C. The Particulars

1. Genuine worship begins with Christ
 - a. Recognizing who He is
 - b. Recognizing what you are
2. Genuine worship isn't ethnic
3. Genuine worship isn't geographical
4. Genuine worship is selective
5. Genuine worship is intelligent

6. Genuine worship is personal
7. Genuine worship isn't mere religion
8. Genuine worship is spiritual
9. Genuine worship is biblical
10. Genuine worship is God's delight

WORSHIPING GOD

Selected Scriptures

Dennis McBride, 1992

INTRODUCTION:

1. To stand in a worship service like this and remind you that worship is central to our Christian faith is a little like taking ice to Eskimos.
2. But I do it because:
 - Genuine worship is very important to God, and therefore must be to us as well.
 - I want each of you evaluate your worship to be sure you are a true worshiper.
 - I want to warn you about some of the confusion that exists regarding the nature of true worship.
3. For example, the following story appeared in the July 7, 1978 edition of Bob Greene's column in *The Chicago Tribune*. It was titled *Jesus On A Tortilla: Making Of Miracle?* You decide for yourself!

It was a hot New Mexico morning. Mrs. Maria Rubio was making burritos for her husband's lunch. The husband, Eduardo, was still in bed. Mrs. Rubio was working with the tortillas, rolling them around the ingredients. She had rolled two of the tortillas into burritos, and was preparing to roll the third, when she looked down at the tortilla. She gasped and spoke aloud. "It is Jesus Christ!" she said.

She was referring to a pattern on the tortilla, made by a series of skillet burns. She was convinced that the skillet burns formed a picture of Jesus. She determined that this was a miracle.

She ran to her daughter, Rosie. Rosie looked at the tortilla and said, "It is Jesus." Mrs. Rubio took the tortilla to her sister, Margarita Porras. Mrs. Porras said, "I think it's Jesus, too." She took the tortilla to the bedroom. Her husband examined the tortilla and said, "It's Jesus, all right."

Mrs. Rubio called a family friend, Mike Salmon. "She was crying," Salmon recalls. "She said that there was the image of Jesus on her tortilla, and she thought that perhaps God was punishing her. I had her sister get on the phone, and her sister said, 'I have seen it, and it looks like Jesus.'"

By now the group knew they would have to do something. They decided to have the tortilla blessed. Carrying the tortilla very carefully, they walked to the Our Lady of Guadeloupe Church, across the street from the Rubios' home. The Rubios live in the small New Mexico town of Lake Arthur, 200 miles south of Albuquerque. When they got to the church,

they found that the pastor was not there; he serves three churches in the area, and alternates among them. So, still guarding the tortilla, they got into the Rubios' 1968 Chevrolet and drove the 17 miles to the city of Dexter. There, at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, was the Rev. Joyle Finnigan.

Mrs. Rubio explained about the image of Jesus appearing in the tortilla. Father Finnigan examined it. "I think this is just a coincidence," he said. "It is not a coincidence," Mrs. Rubio said. "I have been rolling burritos for 21 years, and this is the first time the face of Jesus ever appeared in a tortilla." So, reluctantly, Father Finnigan blessed the tortilla. He warned Mrs. Rubio that if she tried to save it, it would undoubtedly get moldy, even if she kept it in the refrigerator.

But Mrs. Rubio had different plans for the tortilla. She drove back to her home, and placed it in a plastic frame, covered with glass. Beneath the tortilla she placed a mass of cotton, giving the appearance that Jesus was floating on a cloud. She built a small shrine to the tortilla, placing it on a table and erecting a makeshift chapel around it.

"This is a miracle," she announced to her friends. "It is meant to change my life." She resigned her job as a maid, and said that she would be tending to the tortilla full-time. Her husband kept his job as a farm worker.

Soon the word spread about the tortilla with the face of Jesus. People began to come to Mrs. Rubio's front door. She let them in and led them to the tortilla shrine. According to witnesses, many of the visitors dropped to their knees as soon as they saw the tortilla. Some prayed aloud. Many cried, the tears streaming down their cheeks.

Local newspapers heard about the tortilla, and sent reporters and photographers to take a look. More and more people came to the Rubio house, and became convinced that it was, indeed, the image of Jesus in the tortilla. (In fairness, it must be mentioned that reporter Ken Walston of the Albuquerque Journal said, "It looks more like [former heavyweight boxing champion] Leon Spinks to me.")

Mrs. Rubio put a sign on the outside of her green stucco house, inviting anyone who wished to see the tortilla to come in, free of charge. The tortilla shrine rapidly became a phenomenon. Mrs. Rubio purchased guest books, and so far more than 8,000 persons have signed the registers. "They have come from New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, Colorado, California, New York--everywhere," she said.

The visitors began to light candles in front of the tortilla, and place flowers around it. They placed photographs of members of their families who

were ill in front of the tortilla and left the photos there, hoping for a healing power.

“The tortilla has not become moldy,” Mrs. Rubio said. “It is just like on the day I first saw the image of Jesus on it. “I used to be an impatient woman. I used to have troubles. Since this miracle happened, I am no longer impatient. I do not know why this has happened to me, but God has come into my life through this tortilla. “I see happiness come into the faces of the people who visit the tortilla. That is enough for me.”

So still the visitors come, and every night Mrs. Rubio kneels down and prays in front of the tortilla. Some people have offered to buy it from her, but she has refused. “It is my own miracle,” she said. “I will keep the tortilla forever.”

4. I share that story, not to mock or belittle the people involved, but to illustrate the confusion that can come when we abandon true worship for superstition or mere emotionalism.
5. When we consider God’s vision for our church, in addition to glorifying and loving Him, worshiping Him must be a high priority. But our worship must be according to God’s Word, lest it become mere ritualism, foolishness, or even mockery.
6. Incidentally, the term “worshiper” is used only once in Scripture: John 4:23, where Jesus says that God seeks true worshipers. We will explore that passage in some detail later in this study.

I. THE ROLE OF GENUINE WORSHIP

A. WORSHIP IS FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR HUMANNESS

1. Some form of worship is present in every culture--always has been.

a. Dorothy Thompson

“The instinct to worship is hardly less strong than the instinct to eat” (Mead, *The Encyclopedia of Religious Quotations*, p. 480).

b. William Jennings Bryan

“Man is a religious being; the heart instinctively seeks for a God. Whether he worships on the banks of the Ganges, prays with his face upturned to the sun, kneels towards Mecca or, regarding all space as a temple, communes with the Heavenly Father according to the Christian creed, man is essentially

devout” (Mead, *The Encyclopedia of Religious Quotations*, p. 478).

Bryan is correct, but devotion doesn’t necessarily constitute true worship. Apart from faith in Jesus Christ, worship is reduced to idolatry, which instead of lifting man to God, damns him to eternal hell.

2. *Worship reveals our creatureliness (awareness of God, and dependence on Him - Rom. 1 & 2).*
3. *People are compelled to worship--even those who might consider themselves non-religious.*

Example: A typical rock concert displays the utter confusion, personality cults, and reckless emotional abandon so typical of many forms of pagan worship.

4. *Yet most people misunderstand or reject true worship.*

B. FALSE WORSHIP ATTEMPTS TO FILL A VOID

1. *A God-shaped vacuum*

It has been said that within everyone there’s a God-shaped vacuum that only communion with the true God can fill. That’s true.

2. *We are created in God’s image.*

Gen. 1:26 - “God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’”

3. *Man’s purpose is to bear God’s image, glorify Him, and enjoy Him forever.*

4. *Unredeemed people are severed from that purpose.*

Therefore they embark upon a life-long search for the meaning of their existence.

5. *Apart from saving grace, that search is futile.*

It ends in despair and eternal damnation.

6. *As we observe fallen man:*

- We see he is a worshipping creature. He will worship someone or something.
- The object of his worship reveals who his god is--whether it be the true God, idols, demons, or even Satan himself.

II. THE MEANING OF GENUINE WORSHIP

A. REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

1. David Julius

“Worship is pictured at its best in Isaiah when the young prophet became aware of the Father; aware of his own limitations; aware of the Father’s directives; and aware of the task at hand” (Mead, *The Encyclopedia of Religious Quotations*, p. 479).

2. Rufus Matthew Jones

“Worship is the act of rising to a personal, experimental consciousness of the real presence of God which floods the soul with joy and bathes the whole inward spirit with refreshing streams of life” (Mead, *The Encyclopedia of Religious Quotations*, p. 479).

B. THE GREEK TERM

- 1. *The New Testament presents an interesting word picture of worship.***
- 2. *The most common word translated “worship” is Proskuneo.***
- 3. *A compound word from the preposition pros, (“toward”), and the verb kuneo, (“to kiss”).***

C. ITS BASIC MEANING

- 1. *“To make obeisance, do reverence to, prostrate oneself.”***
- 2. *It was a technical term among the Greeks for the adoration of the gods, meaning to fall down, prostrate oneself, adore on one’s knees.***
- 3. *Its meaning was probably derived from practice of casting oneself on the ground to kiss the earth deity or the image of a god.***

D. AN ADDED ELEMENT

As applied to Christian worship, *Proskuneo*, in addition to the external act of prostrating oneself in worship, it denotes the corresponding inward attitude of reverence and humility (Colin Brown).

In the New Testament, *Proskuneo* is used 59 times, and denotes worship that is, or should be, addressed *exclusively to God or to Jesus Christ*.

E. SUMMARY DEFINITION

Biblical worship, then, is to bow to God in heart and life, from a motive of love and adoration.

III. THE OBJECT OF GENUINE WORSHIP

A. GOD STATED IT CLEARLY

Deut. 6:13 - “You shall fear only the Lord your God; and you shall worship Him, and swear by His name.”

B. HE GUARDS IT JEALOUSLY

1. Old Testament examples

- a. **Ex. 20:2-5** - “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God.”

Note: “No injury to God compares with the denial of his uniqueness and the transfer to another of the recognition due to him. In this light must be understood his references to himself as a jealous God (Ex. 20:5)” (E.F. Harrison in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p. 1192-93).

- b. **Deut. 8:19-20** - “If you ever forget the Lord your God, and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you shall surely perish. Like the nations that the Lord makes to perish before you, so you shall perish; because you would not listen to the voice of the Lord your God.”

2. New Testament examples

- a. **Acts 10:25-26** - “When it came about that Peter entered (the house of Cornelius, the Roman Centurion), Cornelius met him,

and fell at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter raised him up, saying, ‘Stand up; I too am just a man.’”

- b. **Rev. 22:8-9** - “I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. And he said to me, ‘Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book; worship God.’”

C. ***JESUS REITERATED IT FORCEFULLY***

Matt. 4:8-10 - “The devil took [Jesus] to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; and he said to Him, ‘All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Begone, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.”’”

D. ***JESUS RECEIVED WORSHIP WILLINGLY***

1. ***Jesus said to worship only God, yet Jesus Himself received worship.***

- a. **Matt. 28:9, 17** - “Behold, Jesus met [Mary Magdalene and the other Mary as they departed from the empty tomb] and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him. . . . [Then, later on, the disciples] saw Him, [and] they worshiped Him.”
- b. **John 20:28** - “Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’” (Note that Jesus didn’t rebuke him for false worship).
- c. Jesus received worship, and appropriately so, because He is God!

2. ***New Testament worship is especially appropriate before the risen and exalted Lord.***

3. ***Note Hebrews 1:6***

“When He [God the Father] again brings the first-born [Jesus] into the world, He says, ‘And let all the angels of God worship Him.’”

- a. God, who said to have no other gods before Him, commands the angels to worship the Son! How can that be?
- b. One commentator replies:

“But did not angels always worship Christ? Yes, they had worshiped Him throughout all the time of their existence; but prior to His incarnation, they worshiped Him as God. Now they are also to worship Him as Son, in His incarnate character.

“This Son who became a man is higher than angels. He is the very God that the angels had always worshiped. It is an absolute sin and violation of the most basic of God’s laws to worship anyone but God. So if God Himself says that the angels are to worship the Son, then the Son must be God! In His incarnate Person, even as in His eternal Person, Christ is to be worshiped” (John MacArthur, Jr., *Hebrews*, p. 30).

IV. THE PRIVILEGE OF GENUINE WORSHIP

A. UNDERSTAND IT

Simply put: it is our privilege to worship the true and living God.

B. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT

Take full advantage of that privilege each day.

C. LIVE IT

Let God know you love Him--by your words and your deeds.

Ps. 96:7-10 - “Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory of His name; bring an offering, and come into His courts. Worship the Lord in holy attire; tremble before Him, all the earth. Say among the nations, ‘The Lord reigns; indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved; He will judge the peoples with equity.’”

V. THE PERVERSION OF GENUINE WORSHIP

Because man is created in God’s image, he must worship, but because sin has alienated him from God, he will pervert true worship.

How does man pervert worship? Several means are mentioned in Scripture. We’ll condense them into four:

A. BY WORSHIPING THE WRONG GOD

(This is the most common form of outright idolatry.)

1. Idolatry’s condition: a hardened heart

- a. Most people attribute idolatry to ignorance and superstition, but God attributes it to sinful rebellion.
- b. ***Romans 1:18-32***

“The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

“For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

“Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

“For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

“And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and, although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.”

2. *Idolatry's conduct: exchanging the Creator for the creature*

- a. Note Romans 1:21-25
- b. At its heart, idolatry is an attitude that permeates one's worldview and everything he or she does.

Col. 3:5-6 - "Consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come."

3. *Idolatry's consequences: divine judgment*

- a. Note Romans 1:24, 26-27
- b. Idolatry always has moral and spiritual consequences. Often it has physical consequences as well.
- c. When you reject God and His absolute moral standard, you either settle for a relative standard or try to embrace God's standard with no power to live accordingly (exchanging Him for His standard).

For example: The issue in evolution isn't so much the origin of the species as it is man seeking to free himself from accountability to his Creator.

4. *Idolatry's categories: varied*

- a. Idolatrous practices range from:
 - Primitive to highly sophisticated
 - Seemingly harmless to cold-blooded murder
 - Borderline immoral to outright fornication and adultery
- b. Habakkuk gives us an example:

Hab. 2:18-19 - "What profit is the idol when its maker has carved it, or an image, a teacher of falsehood? For its maker trusts in his own handiwork when he fashions speechless idols. Woe to him who says to a piece of wood, 'Awake!' To a dumb stone, 'Arise!' And that is your teacher? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, and there is not breath at all inside it."

- c. Of Israel, the psalmist said,

Ps. 106:34-39 - “They did not destroy the peoples, as the Lord commanded them, but they mingled with the nations, and learned their practices, and served their idols, which became a snare to them.

“They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons, and shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and their daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with the blood. Thus they became unclean in their practices, and played the harlot in their deeds.”

- d. Some may object, “But that was a primitive culture. It couldn’t happen to modern, enlightened man.”

But the People’s Temple of Jonestown, Guyana, and the Branch Davidians of Waco, Texas, along with many others, have demonstrated the ability of modern man to sacrifice its children to poison, bullets, and fire. Modern man is not immune to demonic influence or outright possession.

- e. Note what happens in the future as Christ pours out His wrath during the tribulation period:

Rev. 9:20-21 - “The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.”
Some things never change!

- f. “Well,” some would say, “I’d never do that!”

- I’m not going to murder someone
- or throw my child into a fire
- or bow to a rock
- or worship some image.

- g. Perhaps not, but let’s explore some of the more subtle forms of idolatry that are just as damning:

1) ***Worshipping creation in general***

- a) Example

Deut. 4:19 - “Beware, lest you lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away and

worship them and serve them, those which the Lord your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.”

That’s Romans 1 revisited! They worshiped the creature rather than the Creator.

- b) Today, worship of creation in general is often tied to evolutionary, pantheistic, and New Age thinking.
 - i) Pantheism = God is everything and everything is God.
 - ii) That’s the thinking behind much of the militant ecological movement.

That was illustrated recently in the L.A. Times, wherein Beach Boy Mike Love condemned George Bush for his administration’s alleged assaults against the environment.

Love contended that Bush’s policies were a detriment to the lifestyle the Beach Boys have promoted for thirty years, and are sinful because they violate the earth, which is God (classic pantheism).

Love’s theology comes from the Hindu teachings of the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, so the answer to our ecological problems, says Love, is Transcendental Meditation.

- Which is inextricably linked to Eastern Mysticism
- Which is inextricably linked to pantheism
- Which elevates creation to godhood, thereby replacing the Creator with His creation.

2) *Worshiping angels*

Just as God forbids worship of humans, he also forbids angel worship.

a) *Angels in general*

Col. 2:18 - “Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he

has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind.”
 (Note: “Angels” here could refer to holy angels. The specific designation isn’t clear.)

b) ***Holy angels***

- i) ***Rev. 19:10*** - “I [John] fell at [the angel’s] feet to worship him. And he said to me, “Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God.”
- ii) ***Rev. 22:8-9*** - “I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. And he said to me, “Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book; worship God.”

c) ***Fallen angels: demons***

- i) ***Rev. 9:20*** - “The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk.”
- ii) ***1 Cor. 10:19-20*** - “What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God.”

Note: At the heart of all idolatry is demon worship. *All* idolatry is demonic.

- iii) ***Ps. 106:34-39*** - “They did not destroy the peoples, as the Lord commanded them, but they mingled with the nations, and learned their practices, and served their idols, which became a snare to them.

“They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons, and shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and their

daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with the blood. Thus they became unclean in their practices, and played the harlot in their deeds.”

d) ***The fallen angel: Satan himself***

Note: One of Satan’s ploys is to masquerade error as truth by making it seem trendy, sheik, and acceptable (2 Cor. 11:13-15 - “Angels of light”).

i) His deception often comes under the guise of

- freedom of speech
- freedom of press
- freedom of religion
- freedom of thought
- freedom of individual expression

ii) Through it our society is

- first exposed to error
- then tolerates error
- then accepts error
- then propagates error
- then legislates error
- then bows to error
- then enslaved to error

iii) Kids flirt with it in rock music lyrics and other forms of media blitz.

iv) It culminates in Rev. 13 with worship of the dragon, who is Satan himself.

3) ***Worshiping man***

a) Example: A contemporary free verse poem (from a collection of similar poems--source unknown):

Meditate on yourself
 Worship yourself
 Kneel to yourself
 Understand yourself
 God dwells within you, as you.

b) Scripture specifically forbids worship of men--even godly men like:

i) Paul

Note Acts 14:11-18

Note how fickle idolatry is - v. 19.

ii) Peter

Acts 10:25-26 - “When it came about that Peter entered (the house of Cornelius, the Roman Centurion), Cornelius met him, and fell at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter raised him up, saying, ‘Stand up; I too am just a man.’”

c) Don’t take this lightly

The end times will feature unparalleled worship of a human being:

i) The Anti-Christ

Rev. 13:4, 8 - “They worshiped the dragon [Satan], because he gave his authority to the beast [Anti-Christ]; and they worshiped the beast, saying, ‘Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?’ And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.”

ii) The consequences

Rev. 14:9-10 - “Another angel [said] with a loud voice, ‘If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or upon his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.’”

iii) That’s what you get when you couple an unredeemed propensity for worship with a humanistic worldview.

d) Replacing God with man, and elevating man to godhood isn't new.

i) Satan said - "I will be like God"

Isa. 14:14 - "I will make myself like the Most High."

ii) Satan told Eve in the garden - "You can be like God"

Gen. 3:4-5 - "'You will not surely die,' the serpent said to the woman. 'For God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God.'"

iii) Modern cults echo the same satanic lie

- Mormonism

"Here then is eternal life, to know the only wise and true God. You have got to learn how to be God's yourselves; to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done; by going from a small degree to another, from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you are able to sit in glory as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power" (Joseph Smith, Jr., *Times and Seasons*, August 15, 1844, p. 613. Cited in *Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 204).

Every male member of the Mormon priesthood aspires to godhood.

- Armstrongism

(Herbert W. Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God)

Herbert W. Armstrong said, "The purpose of life is that in us God is really re-creating his own king--reproducing himself after His own kind--for we are, upon real conversion, actually begotten as sons (yet unborn) of [God]; then, through study of God's

revelation in His Word, living by His every Word, constant prayer, daily experience with trials and testings, we grow spiritually more and more like God, until, at the time of the resurrection we shall be instantaneously changed from mortal into immortal--we shall then be born of [God]--We shall then be God!

“Do you really grasp it? The purpose of your being alive is that finally you be born into the Kingdom of God, when you will actually be God, even as Jesus was and is God, and His Father, a different Person, also is God!

“You are setting out on a training to become creator--to become God!” (Cited and documented in *Kingdom of Cults*, p. 318).

- Eastern or New Age thinking, which is based upon Hindu Pantheism (all is god, god is all).
- iv) Some Televangelists teach that believers are little gods.

They're telling us that we not only can *become* God, but that we *are already* gods.

Michael Horton, in his book *The Agony of Deceit*, cites the following illustrations (pp. 90-92):

“Earl Paulk, Charles Capps, Robert Tilton, Kenneth Copeland, and Kenneth E. Hagin are among the leading televangelists who espouse the ‘Little gods’ teaching.

- “**Earl Paulk** writes, ‘Adam and Eve were placed in the world as the seed and expression of God. Just as dogs have puppies and cats have kittens, so God has little gods.’ But, he says, ‘we have trouble comprehending this truth.’ He adds, ‘Until we comprehend that we are little gods and

we begin to act like little gods, we cannot manifest the Kingdom of God.’

- “**Robert Tilton** asserts, ‘You are . . . a God kind of creature. Originally you were designed to be as a god in this world. Man was designed or created by God to be the god of this world. . . . Of course, man forfeited his dominion to Satan who became the god of this world.’
- “**Casey Treat**, pastor of Seattle’s Christian Faith Center, tells us in his tape series ‘Believing in Yourself’ to come to the point where we feel comfortable claiming our godhood:

“‘The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost had a conference and they said, ‘Let us make man an exact duplicate of us.’ Oh, I don’t know about you, but that does turn my crank! An exact duplicate of God! Say it out loud--”I’m an exact duplicate of God” [The audience repeats it a bit tentatively and uncertainly.]

“‘Come on, say it! [He leads them in unison.] “I’m an exact duplicate of God!” Say it again, “I’m an exact duplicate of God!” [The congregation is getting into it, louder and bolder, with more enthusiasm each time.] Say it like you mean it! [He’s yelling now.] “I’m an exact duplicate of God!” Yell it out loud! Shout it! [They follow as he leads.] “I’m an exact duplicate of God!” “I’m an exact duplicate of God!” [Repeatedly]. . . .

“‘When God looks in the mirror, He sees me! When I look in the mirror, I see God! Oh, hallelujah!. . . .

‘You know, sometimes people say to me, when they’re mad and want to put me down. . . . “You just think you’re a little god!” Thank you! Hallelujah! You got that right! “Who d’ you think you are, Jesus!” Yep!

“Are you listening to me? Are you kids running around here acting like gods? Why not? God told me to. . . . Since I’m an exact duplicate of God, I’m going to act like God!”

- “*Kenneth Copeland* informs us, ‘You don’t have a god *in* you. *You are one!*’”
- v) All that springs from rebellion toward God, buying into Satan’s lie, rejecting God’s Word, and exalting human wisdom.

That’s why *James 3:13-15* says, “Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.”

B. BY WORSHIPING THE RIGHT GOD IN THE WRONG WAY

1. Through images

- a. The Golden Calf, though supposedly an image of the true God, was still an idol (Ex. 32:7-9). Note the severe consequences for that form of idolatry (vv. 25-28).
- b. See also Deut. 4:14-19.

2. Through “conceptual idolatry”

- a. For many people, bowing to an idol is unthinkable, yet they bow in their hearts to a non-biblical concept of God:
 - They don’t take the Bible seriously, so in effect they worship a god who doesn’t mean what he says.
 - They don’t take sin seriously, so they worship a god who winks at sin.
 - They don’t take purity seriously, so they worship a god who never demands holiness.

- They don't take judgment seriously, so they worship a god who would never judge or send them to hell.
 - All such concepts of God are false and amount to conceptual idolatry.
- b. Most of the Jewish people of Christ's day fell into this deception.

1) ***John 8:42-47***

The Jewish people said: "We worship God; He is our Father."

Jesus said: "If God were your Father, you would love Me. . . . You are of your father the devil. . . . He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."

2) ***1 John***

"If we *say* that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth" (1:6).

"The one who *says*, 'I have come to know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (2:4).

"The one who *says* he is in the light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now" (2:9).

3) ***Matthew 7:21-23***

Jesus said, "Not everyone who *says* to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who *does* the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'"

- c. How can we know we're not conceptual idolaters? "So then, you will know them by their fruits" (v. 20).

3. ***Through "practical idolatry"***

(Closely akin to conceptual idolatry).

- a. Practical idolatry is when you don't see yourself as an idolater philosophically or theologically, but you are *in practice*.
- b. A practical idolater is similar to a practical atheist: one who affirms belief in God but lives like He doesn't exist.

4. *Through various self-styled approaches*

- a. Nadab & Abihu - Lev. 10:1-3
 - They were sons of Aaron, the High Priest.
 - They offered strange fire (apparently not taken from the brazen altar as prescribed).
 - They may have been drunk.
 - They paid with their lives.
- b. King Saul - 1 Sam. 13:8-14
 - He usurped the priestly office and made a burnt offering.
 - He paid with his kingdom.
- c. Uzzah - 2 Sam. 6:1-7
 - The Ark of the Covenant was to be carried only by the Levites.
 - David was transporting it on cart.
 - The cart hit a bump in the road.
 - Uzzah tried to steady the Ark with his hand (a noble gesture?).
 - In doing so he violated God's holiness, which the Ark represented.
 - God struck him dead on the spot.
- d. King Uzziah (Azariah) - 2 Chronicles 26:16-21
 - He was a good king (2 Kings 15:1-5).
 - But he usurped the priestly office.
 - He was struck with leprosy and died.
- e. The Jewish Religious Leaders - Matt. 15:1-9
 - They favored their religious traditions over God's Word.
 - They forfeited the kingdom.
- f. Consider carefully:

- On what basis do you worship God?
- What makes your worship acceptable to Him?
- Are you attempting to worship Him in some self-styled manner?
- We must worship God in His way: through His Son, Jesus Christ. Anything less is worse than unacceptable, its idolatry and is damning!
- Jesus said, “No one comes to the Father but by Me!”

g. Note Paul’s priority:

Phil. 3:7-9 - “Whatever things were gain to me (Jewish heritage, tribal affiliation, Pharisaic fundamentalism, religious zeal, etc.), those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.”

C. BY WORSHIPING THE RIGHT GOD WITH THE WRONG MOTIVES

1. When we lose our first love

a. A New Testament example: The Church at Ephesus - Rev. 2:1-7

They exchanged: Motive for methodology
 Attitudes for activities
 Devotion for duty
 Love for liturgy

b. Some Old Testament examples:

1) ***Isaiah 1:11-15*** - “What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me? I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed cattle. And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats. When you come to appear before Me, who requires of you this trampling of My courts?”

“Bring your worthless offerings no longer, incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies--I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, they have become a burden to Me.

“I am weary of bearing them. So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you, yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood.”

- 2) **Hosea 6:4-6** - “What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? For your loyalty is like a morning cloud, and like the dew which goes away early. Therefore I have hewn them in pieces by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of My mouth; and the judgments on you are like the light that goes forth. For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings” (see also Amos 5:21-27).
- 3) God rejected the very forms of worship He had instituted, because the people’s hearts were far from Him. They needed to repent before their worship would be acceptable.
- 4) You can’t merely add God to your religious agenda, as if He were a good luck charm. He requires absolute allegiance.

c. The Solution: guard your motives carefully

1 Tim. 2:8 - “I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.”

- “Holy hands” refers to a moral posture, not a physical posture.
- It represents purity of life and conscience.
- **James 4:8** - “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” Cleansing = confession of sin, not soap and water.
- I don’t object to uplifted hands in prayer. It’s a biblical posture, but not a prescribed one.

- If we take 1 Tim. 2:8 literally, only men can pray with uplifted hands. Women are excluded.

2. *When we exchange God's glory for man's need*

- a. For an increasing number of professing believers, the priority in Christianity has shifted from God's holiness and justice to man's desires and needs. That is evident even in our gospel presentations.

- b. **Walter Chantry** has rightly observed:

“Evangelism always requires preaching on the attributes of God. When Jesus met the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well [John 4], He taught her that God is a Spirit. When Paul addressed the heathen on Mars' Hill [Acts 17], he had to devote even more of his evangelistic message to the character of God, who was unknown to them. He began by speaking of God as the Creator, as the Sustainer of all life, as the Mighty One who raised Jesus from the dead. This element, of exalting God's character, is essential to bringing honour to God in our preaching.

“Much of modern preaching is anemic, with the life-blood of God's nature absent from the message. Evangelists centre their message upon man. Man has sinned and missed a great blessing. If man wants to retrieve his immense loss he must act thus and so. But the Gospel of Christ is very different. It begins with God and His glory. It tells men that they have offended a holy God, who will by no means pass by sin. It reminds sinners that the only hope of salvation is to be found in the grace and power of this same God. Christ's Gospel sends men to beg pardon of the Holy One. . . .

“Evangelists today are making the dreadful miscalculation that sinners know who God is. The sad truth is that our age knows less than the Jews of our Lord's day. Nevertheless, evangelicals plunge right in with ‘five things God wants you to know.’ They all centre upon the man's eternal fortunes and utterly ignore the question, ‘Who is God?’. The sinners thus treated never realize the gravity of their plight. They don't know whom they have offended. This is tragic” (*Today's Gospel: Authentic or Synthetic?*, pp. 25-28).

- c. Add to that the incessant cry of the health, wealth, and prosperity preachers, and we have perhaps an entire generation of “Christian converts” who understand little about true Christianity, much less true worship.

3. *When we become greedy*

a. A warning:

Eph. 5:5 - “This you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”

b. Greed is evident throughout Christianity today, but especially in what has come to be known as the Word of Faith Movement.

1) Alternate names:

The Faith movement; Faith-Formula; Word of Faith; Hyper-Faith; Positive Confession; Name It and Claim It; or Health, Wealth, and Prosperity teaching.

2) Its leaders:

Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, Robert Tilton, Fred Price, Charles Capps, Oral Roberts, Gordon Lindsay, Jerry Savelle, and others.

3) Its theology is evident in the titles of some of its publications:

- How to Write Your Own Ticket with God - Hagin
- Godliness Is Profitable - Hagin
- The Laws of Prosperity - Copeland
- God’s Creative Power Will Work for You - Capps
- Releasing the Ability of God Through Prayer - Capps
- God’s Formula for Success and Prosperity - Roberts
- God’s Master Key to Prosperity - Lindsay
- Living in Divine Prosperity - Savelle

4) Its two primary premises:

a) Believers can tell God what to do.

God is bound by spiritual laws that govern health and prosperity. If we say the right words, or believe without wavering, God is forced to respond in whatever way we determine.

One proponent claims that God is already committed to his part of a covenant relationship with us. We

can make whatever commitment or promise to him we want, “then we can tell God on the authority of his word, what we would like him to do. That’s right! You can actually tell God what you would like his part in the covenant to be!”

- b) Words have creative power. Faith is more a matter of what we SAY than of whom we TRUST or what doctrines we BELIEVE.

God has surrendered his sovereignty and creative power to believers. Believers, therefore, simply speak God’s will into existence.

- 5) Some representative quotes:

(Documented in John MacArthur’s *Charismatic Chaos*, pp. 270-281.)

- a) **Charles Capps** has written: “In August of 1973, the Word of the Lord came unto me saying, ‘If men would believe me, long prayers are not necessary. Just speaking the Word will bring you what you desire. My creative power is given to man in Word form. I have ceased for a time from my work and have given man the book of MY CREATIVE POWER. That power is STILL IN MY WORD.

“‘For it to be effective, man must speak it in faith. Jesus spoke it when He was on earth and as it worked then so it shall work now. *But it must be spoken by the body.* Man must rise up and have dominion over the power of evil by my Words. It is my greatest desire that my people create a better life by the spoken Word. For my Word has not lost its power just because it has been spoken once. It is still equally as powerful today as when I said, “Let there be light.”

“‘But for my Word to be effective, *men must speak it*, and that creative power will come forth performing that which is spoken in faith.”

- b) **Norvel Hayes** says, “You aren’t supposed to talk to Jesus about [your difficulties]. You’re supposed to talk directly to the mountain in Jesus’ name-- whatever the mountain is in your life.

“. . . Stop talking to Jesus about it. Stop talking to anybody else about it. Speak to the mountain itself in Jesus’ name!

“Don’t say, ‘Oh, God, help me. Remove this sickness from me.’ Say, ‘Flu, I am not going to let you come into my body. Go from me in the name of Jesus! Nose, I tell you to stop running. Cough, I tell you to leave in Jesus’ name.’ Say, ‘Cancer, you can’t kill me. I will never die of cancer in Jesus’ name.’

“Do you have a financial mountain in your life? Start talking to your money. Tell your checkbook to line up with God’s Word. Talk to your business. Command customers to come into your business and spend their money there. Talk to the mountain!”

- c) **Kenneth Hagin** writes, “You can have what you say. *You can write your own ticket with God.* And the first step in writing your own ticket with God is: Say it. . . . If you talk about your trials, your difficulties, your lack of faith, your lack of money--your faith will shrivel and dry up. But, bless God, if you talk about the Word of God, your lovely Heavenly Father and what He can do--your faith will grow by leaps and bounds.”
- d) Such foolishness flaunts greed and self-centeredness rather than promoting sound biblical doctrine and personal responsibility.

VI. THE PARTICULARS OF GENUINE WORSHIP

A. THE PASSAGE

John 4:1-26 serves as both a summary and expansion of what we’ve already learned about genuine worship:

“When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.

“And He had to pass through Samaria. So He came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; and Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

“There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give Me a drink.’ For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman therefore said to Him, ‘How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?’ (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

“Jesus answered and said to her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, “Give Me a drink,” you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.’ She said to Him, ‘Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water? You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?’

“Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.’

“The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty, nor come all the way here to draw.’ He said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come here.’ The woman answered and said, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You have well said, “I have no husband”; for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly.’

“The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father. You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.’

“The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am He.’”

B. THE PREFACE

1. In that passage Jesus reveals himself as:

- The One who satisfies spiritual thirst (vv. 7-15).

- The One who sees into the heart and speaks truthfully about the spiritual condition of the woman (vv. 16-19).
- The Prophet who describes true worship of the Father as spiritual, not ethnic or geographical (vv. 20-24).
- The Messiah Himself (vv. 25-26).

2. *Some Old Testament background*

a. Forms of Old Testament worship

- 1) The oldest form of worship in the Old Testament is that of the family (as early as Cain and Abel).
- 2) Broadened to national forms of worship (Israel), with sacrificial worship in the Tabernacle or Temple becoming the central focus, though not replacing family worship.
- 3) Sacrifices were made on behalf of the nation, as well as for families. The Passover was a family sacrifice--one lamb per household.
- 4) Families would travel together to Jerusalem to present their offerings.
- 5) All of this was built upon personal worship. Many of the Psalms are written in the first person singular ("I") form.

b. Samaritan worship

(Notes taken primarily from *Unger's Bible Dictionary* and *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*.)

- 1) Samaritans were Israelites who lived in the Northern Kingdom.
- 2) It is impossible to trace their history accurately because their records are so scant and highly contradictory.
- 3) Generally, they were a mixed race of Jew and Gentile that resulted from the Assyrian captivity and repopulation of Samaria in BC 721.
- 4) The Samaritans were looked on with scorn by the Jews, who called them "no nation," and "the foolish people that dwell in Schechem."

John 8:48 tells of some Jewish people mocking Jesus, saying, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?” (i.e., a demonic half-breed).

- 5) However, the Samaritans are not always presented in an unfavorable light in Scripture:
 - A Samaritan leper returned to thank Christ for healing (Luke 17:11-19).
 - One of Christ’s best-known parables immortalized “a good Samaritan” (Luke 10:29-37).
- 6) The Samaritans were sometimes compared to the Sadducees, since both denied the resurrection of the body and both objected to the Pharisees’ emphasis on the traditions of the elders.
- 7) The Samaritans accepted only the Pentateuch (first five books of the Old Testament--probably due to the prominence given to Jerusalem as the city of worship in remainder of the Old Testament). But the Jews’ major theological indictment against the Samaritans was their insistence upon Mt. Gerizim as the true place of worship instead of Jerusalem.
- 8) The feud between Jews and Samaritans over worship dates back to the days of Ezra and Nehemiah when Samaritans weren’t allowed to participate in rebuilding and worshiping at the Jerusalem temple.

The Samaritans built an alternate temple at Mount Gerizim, which was destroyed in 129/128 BC. Consequently they had been without a place of worship for more than a century and a half before Jesus met the woman.

- 9) Bible historian J.A. Montgomery says, “To sum up the witness of the New Testament: the Samaritan appears as an Israelite, but one whose religion is in the condition of ignorance and whose institutions are irregular.”

3. *Jesus revolutionized worship*

- a. Both Jewish and Samaritan worship had many common elements, including:
 - Prayer

- Praise
- Petition for forgiveness
- Confession of sin
- Sacrifice
- Meditating on the scriptures (though limited to the Pentateuch by Samaritans)
- Preaching God's Word
- Commemorative observances (such as the Jewish Passover)
- Almsgiving

b. Jesus fulfilled them all

For example:

- Christian worship is based in a personal relationship to God through Christ.
- We pray in the name of Jesus (John 16:23).
- The works of God in Christ are the theme of our praise (Eph. 1:3ff).
- Our plea for forgiveness is that Christ gave Himself a perfect sacrifice for sin (1 John 1:7ff).
- Our confession is confession of Jesus as Lord (1 Cor. 12:3).
- The scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, testify of Christ (John 5:39).
- Preaching is the proclamation of Christ's gospel (2 Cor. 5:18ff).
- The Lord's Supper is the New Testament Passover, which celebrates Christ's full and final sacrifice for our deliverance (1 Cor. 11:26).
- Christian almsgiving reflects God's gift in Christ and our loving response to Him (2 Cor. 9:15; Matt. 25:31ff).

c. Like the Samaritan woman, we too must understand that:

- 1) Christian worship is worship of the Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) through God the Son (i.e., it is Christological).

- 2) Christian worship is worship of the Triune God through God the Son, as energized by God the Holy Spirit (i.e., it is Spiritual).

4. *With that background, let's explore several aspects of genuine worship from John 4:19-26.*

C. **THE PARTICULARS**

1. *Genuine worship begins with Christ* - vv. 19-20

"The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.'"

- a. Recognizing who Christ is - v. 19

"I perceive that You are a prophet."

- 1) Both Jews and Samaritans understood a prophet to be one who had special insight into human hearts.

Luke 7:39 - While a repentant woman was anointing Christ's feet with a her tears and wiping them with her hair, some Jewish onlookers said to themselves, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him."

- 2) The Samaritans acknowledged no prophet after Moses other than the one spoken of in Deut. 18:18, and him they regarded as the Messiah:

"I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him."

- 3) Perhaps she was moving into the area of messianic speculation.

In verses 25-26, "The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

- b. Recognizing what you are - v. 20

"Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

- 1) Christ had probed the depth of her heart and exposed her sin. She was beginning to understand who He was, and apparently was uncomfortable with the depth of their conversation.
- 2) So she attempts to divert the discussion to a less personal and threatening topic.
- 3) Perhaps she had a genuine interest in worship, but most likely she was uneasy about Jesus revealing her sin.
- 4) Note: It's always easier to discuss theological differences than to deal with sin.

Some people are comfortable talking about religion in general, or their concept of God, but ask them about their view of Christ or sin, and they recoil quickly.

- 5) What difference did this woman's religious beliefs make in her behavior? Not much!
- 6) True worship is impossible apart from a proper understanding of who Christ is, and what we are in His sight (sinners).

2. *Genuine worship isn't ethnic* - v. 20

“Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.”

- a. Genuine worship isn't confined to a specific race.
- b. “Our fathers” = Abraham & Jacob who erected altars at Shechem, which is on or near Mt. Gerizim (Gen. 12:7; 33:20).
- c. Both Jews and Samaritans thought they had a corner on true worship; Both were wrong.
- d. Paul recognized the true priority in worship:

Phil. 3:7-9 - “Whatever things were gain to me (Jewish heritage, tribal affiliation, Pharisaic fundamentalism, religious zeal, etc.), those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in

Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.”

- e. God’s elect from *every* tribe and nation will serve him (cf. Zeph. 2:11; Mal. 1:11).
- f. The Great Commission is to “go therefore and make disciples of *all the nations*.”

3. ***Genuine worship isn’t geographical*** - vv. 20-21

“Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither [exclusively] in this mountain, nor [exclusively] in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father.’”

- a. “Believe Me” is stated for emphasis. This was a revolutionary concept to Jewish and Samaritan thinking.
- b. Worship isn’t confined to specific places--it isn’t localized--not to Jerusalem, Mt. Gerizim, Mecca, the Ganges, Rome, or this church building.
- c. God isn’t confined to houses made with hands (Paul’s Mars Hill address, Acts 17:24).
- d. Any time and any place is appropriate for worship that flows from love for God.

4. ***Genuine worship is selective*** - v. 21

“Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father.’”

- a. God alone is the acceptable object of worship.
- b. We went into detail on this in our prior point “the object of worship.”

5. ***Genuine worship is intelligent*** - v. 22

“You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews.”

- a. “Intelligent” is not to be confused with “intellectual.” You don’t need a seminary degree to worship God. In fact, increasing numbers of seminaries are drifting toward liberalism and thereby robbing their students of sound biblical theology and a proper foundation for worship.
- b. Although you don’t need a degree to worship God, you must know God, as He is revealed in Scripture.
- c. Jesus indicted the Samaritan woman and here entire religious system for their ignorant worship.
- d. I remind you of Bible historian J.A. Montgomery’s summary: “To sum up the witness of the New Testament: the Samaritan appears as an Israelite, but one whose religion is in the condition of ignorance and whose institutions are irregular.”
- e. Because the Samaritans rejected all but the first five books of the Old Testament, they couldn’t possibly know in fullness the God whom they claimed to worship.

They thought they worshiped Him, yet they disregarded His Word.

- f. Does that remind you of anyone you know? Someone who says, “I worship God, but I don’t believe the Bible,” or, “I worship God, but I don’t study the Bible.”

However, true worship is directed toward the God of the Bible, not a god of our own creation (beware of conceptual idolatry).

- g. The Jews worshiped Who they knew: God, as revealed in the rest of the Old Testament.
- h. There is a direct relationship between your knowledge of God’s Word and your ability to worship Him in an intelligent, mature manner.

6. *Genuine worship is personal* - v. 22

“You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews.”

- a. Genuine worship is based on a personal, saving relationship with God.
- b. Unbelievers cannot worship the true God. Any attempts to do so apart from His saving grace are a mockery.

- c. *“For salvation is from the Jews”* - Literally *“The salvation”* (definite article in the Greek). The specific means of salvation came through the Jews.

Ps. 147:19-20 - “He declares His words to Jacob, His statutes and His ordinances to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any nation; and as for His ordinances, they have not known them.”

Rom. 3:1-2 - “What advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles [promises] of God.”

7. *Genuine worship isn't mere religion* - v. 22

“You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews.”

- a. What is religion?

Confusion mounts as we even try to define “religion” in the contemporary sense. There is no definition that would satisfy every religious practitioner, but generally we think of religion as characterized by:

- The acknowledgment of a higher, unseen power.
- An attitude of reverent dependence on that power in the conduct of life.
- Special actions (e.g., rites, prayers, and acts of mercy) as peculiar expressions and means of cultivation of the religious attitude.

- b. You may be very religious yet not truly worship God (implied).
- c. In fact, do you realize that, in a sense, Satan is more religious than Jesus?

I can prove that numerically:

How many religions did Jesus start? (One)
How many has Satan started? (all the rest).

- d. Am I saying that every religion other than biblical Christianity is satanic? Yes!
- ***Matt. 23:13-23*** - “Get behind me Satan!”

- **1 Tim. 4:1** - “The Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.”
 - **John 8** - The Jewish people (very religious) were sons of Satan because they rejected Christ’s words--and in doing so rejected *Him*.
- e. Incidentally, I’ve heard people say, “Christianity isn’t a religion, it’s a relationship.” Don’t overstate the case--it is both.

8. *Genuine worship is spiritual* - vv. 23-24

“An hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

There are three common interpretations of what “worship the Father in spirit” means. Perhaps the passage incorporates elements of each.

- Access to God through regeneration
 - Access to God through the Holy Spirit
 - An acceptable attitude in worship
- a. Access to God through regeneration
- 1) God is spirit, therefore He is present in the spiritual realm, and must be worshiped in that realm.
 - 2) But God is inaccessible to unredeemed people because they are spiritually dead.
 - 3) Simply put: to worship in spirit you must be born again. Spiritually dead people can’t truly worship.
 - a) John 3:1-10 (Jesus and Nicodemus). “Born of water and the Spirit” (v. 5) refers to regeneration.
 - i) Ezekiel 36:16-28 = The New Covenant
 - ii) New Testament testimony: Titus 3:3-7
 - b) The point: You can’t truly worship until you’re born again, because worship is spiritual interaction with a

God who is spirit, and unsaved people are spiritually dead!

b. Access to God through the Holy Spirit

- 1) Some see “spirit and truth” as equivalent to “Spirit of truth.”
- 2) This would fit the context in that both “this mountain” and “Jerusalem” represent (at least in part) man’s attempts to worship God in unacceptable ways.

But, Jesus points out, in the coming age men will worship God in the true way, which He Himself has chosen and provided through Himself, His Son, and the Holy Spirit. He makes us capable of worshiping Him in the right way: the spiritual way.

- 3) Also, worship is prompted by the Holy Spirit. Note the Spirit’s prompting of the woman’s heart as she is perplexed by Jesus’ omniscience and explores the question of true worship (v. 20).

c. An acceptable attitude in worship

- 1) Others say that “Worship in spirit” means to worship via the human spirit (this is a common interpretation):
- 2) “Spirit” speaks of a right attitude in worship as opposed to mere customs and rituals.

“The true worship is when man, through his spirit, attains to friendship and intimacy with God. Genuine worship does not consist in coming to a certain place nor in going through a certain ritual or liturgy nor even in bringing certain gifts. True worship is when the spirit, the immortal and invisible part of man, speaks to and meets with God, himself immortal and invisible” (William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible Series: The Gospel of John*, vol. 1, p. 161).

9. *Genuine worship is biblical* - vv. 23-24

“But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

- a. This point builds on point #5 (“Genuine worship is intelligent”).
- b. We have discussed the fate of some who attempted to worship God apart from, or contrary to, divine revelation (King Saul, Uzzah, Nadab & Abihu).
- c. The Samaritans were in that category too, having rejected all of Old Testament revelation except the Pentateuch.
- d. We cannot fully appreciate and properly worship a God about whom we are ignorant.
- e. Further, as we have seen, we cannot approach God in any way we choose. We must come on His terms, according to His truth, by His appointed means.
- f. By definition, all false worship violates God’s truth as revealed in Scripture.

10. Genuine worship is God’s delight - v. 23

“Such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.”

- a. This phrase has some ambiguity. It could read “The Father seeks such to be his worshipers” or, “The Father seeks that his worshippers be such.”
- b. The point is: True worship is what God seeks, and He seeks for us to be true worshipers.

Where we worship isn’t the issue; whom and how we worship is.