

God Seeks to Be Worshiped Through Prayer

(John 4:23-24)

Introduction:

1. According to John 4:23, the Father seeks "true worshipers" to worship Him.
2. True worshippers are those who worship God "*in spirit and in truth.*"
3. God does not accept all worship -- He only accepts true worship.
4. To help us in this regard, we are studying a series of lessons on worship.
5. In this lesson we are showing from the Scriptures that "God seeks to be worshiped through prayer."
6. Let us begin by showing that . . .

Discussion:

- I. THE NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORIZES CHRISTIANS TO PRAY IN WORSHIP
 - A. This is where we must begin because we are to only say and do those things that Christ has authorized in His Word (Colossians 3:17, 16a).
 - B. The New Testament certainly teaches Christians to pray (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
 - C. More specifically, a number of passages show that Christians are to pray in worship (Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 14:15).
 - D. The New Testament clearly teaches Christians to pray in worship.
 - E. Since this is the case, we must pray "*in spirit and in truth.*"
 - F. Let us consider several . . .
- II. PRINCIPLES THAT RELATE TO PRAYING "*IN SPIRIT*" [from the heart, sincerely, with the proper attitude]
 - A. To pray in spirit, our attitudes must be right toward:
 1. God (James 5:16b; 1 Peter 3:12)
 2. our fellow man (Matthew 6:14-15).
 - B. To pray in spirit, we must:
 1. pray "*believing*" (Matthew 21:22)
 2. pray with proper motives (James 4:3).
 - C. To pray in spirit, extremes must be avoided.
 1. We must avoid the extreme of failing to pray in spirit.
 - a. Failing to pray in spirit results in ritualistic prayer because the heart is not in it.
 - b. Jesus taught His followers to avoid prayers such as those offered by hypocrites and heathens (Matthew 6:5, 7).
 2. We must also avoid the extreme of over-emphasizing the spirit.
 - a. The church in Corinth had a problem in this area (1 Corinthians 14:14-17).

b. The cure is to pray "*with the spirit*" and "*with the understanding.*"

D. Let us turn our attention to several . . .

III. PRINCIPLES THAT RELATE TO PRAYING "*IN TRUTH*" [according to God's will revealed in the New Testament]

A. Prayer is offered to God (Matthew 6:9).

B. Prayer is offered to God through Christ (John 16:23b).

C. (1 Timothy 2:1) Various ways in which we are to talk to God include:

1. "*prayers*": addresses made to God

2. "*supplications*": asking God to supply needs (Matthew 6:11)

3. "*intercessions*": making petitions on behalf of others (James 5:16a)

4. "*giving of thanks*": expressions of gratitude (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

D. Prayer must harmonize with God's will (1 John 5:14-15).

E. In mixed assemblies, men are to lead prayer (1 Corinthians 14:34).

Conclusion:

1. The Bible has much more to say about prayer; however,:

a. we have shown that true worship includes prayer

b. we have covered a number of basic principles that relate to praying in spirit and in truth.

2. Are you among those who can call God "Father?"

3. Only His children can address Him in this way.

4. The Bible teaches in Galatians 3:26-27 how we become children of God so we can have the privilege of calling Him "Father."