



**LESSON FIVE**

*ESD. 2017*

# NEW TESTAMENT WORSHIP



## — LESSON 5 —

# NEW TESTAMENT WORSHIP

In Exodus 3:5, God insisted that Moses show honor in His presence: “Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.” Under the Old Law, disrespecting God could be punished by death, but dishonoring Jesus is even more serious under the New Covenant (Hebrews 10:28-29). As God’s people, we must revere Him and His Son Jesus when we assemble for worship.

### THE OBJECT OF WORSHIP

The Apostle Paul laments the fact that man “worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator ...” (Romans 1:25). Sadly, men have worshiped false gods, angels, other men, and animals. Today, few in America set up statues, temples, and shrines as objects of worship; however, people still make idols of, possessions, activities, and even other people. People worship money, sports, entertainment, sex, and countless other things. We must understand that when we worship anything but God, we worship Satan, the “god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

God alone is worthy of worship (Exodus 34:14; Deuteronomy 8:19), and He is justly indignant when men worship created objects! Even though Cornelius had pure motives when he bowed down to Peter, Peter insisted he bow down only before God (Acts 10:25-26). The devil offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world if He would fall down and worship him. Jesus responds in Matthew 4:10, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’” Is there any more grievous sin than offering worship to anything or anyone but God?

What do people worship in the U.S.? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

“You shall \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord your God, and Him \_\_\_\_\_  
you shall serve.”

## THE MEANING OF WORSHIP

Well-intentioned people blur the lines between service and worship. They say, “I don’t need to go to church; I can worship God in the woods, on the lake, or even in bed.” This misunderstanding may be rooted in part in the different words translated “worship.”

The primary New Testament word for worship (**proskuneo**) means, “to fall upon the knees and touch the ground with the forehead as an expression of profound reverence” (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon). This word is translated “worship” all sixty times it is found in the New Testament. Another Greek word (**latreuo**) is translated “worship” or “worshiper” four times in the King James Version of the New Testament; the other seventeen times it is translated “serve” or “do the services.” These words are similar but different.

All we do may be called worship in the sense that it is service. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service (**latreia**)” (Romans 12:1). All worship (**proskuneo**) is service (**latreia**), but not all service is worship. Jesus distinguishes between these two words in Matthew 4:10: “You shall worship (**proskuneo**) the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve (**latreia**).”

The American Standard Version footnote for worship (**proskuneo**) in Matthew 2:2 reads, “The Greek word denotes an act of reverence whether paid to a creature (Matthew 4:9), or to the Creator (Matthew 4:10).” Worship, then, is something done at a point in time, not continuously. For example, the Bible says in Genesis 22:5, “And Abraham said to his young men, ‘The lad and I will go yonder and worship...’” The Samaritan woman says in John 4:20, “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain... .” In Acts 8:27, we read of an Ethiopian “who...had come to Jerusalem to worship... .” The Apostle Paul says in Acts 24:11, “it is no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship.”

All \_\_\_\_\_ is service, but not all \_\_\_\_\_ is worship.

Worship is an act of \_\_\_\_\_ paid to a \_\_\_\_\_ or to the Creator.

“... I went up to Jerusalem to \_\_\_\_\_.”

## THE WORSHIP ASSEMBLY

A 2016 Barna poll reveals that while 73 percent of Americans identify themselves as Christians, only 31 percent say they attend church at least once a month. Some say their “church” is religious programming on TV, radio, or online; but, is this idea scriptural? Hebrews 10:25 reads, “**Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some... .**” Clearly, the Spirit teaches Christians have an obligation to God and their local congregation to assemble for worship. This time should be the highlight of our week!

The church assembles for worship on the Lord’s Day: “**Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread**” (Acts 20:7). Again, in 1 Corinthians 16:2, the Bible states, “**On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.**”

This practice prevailed in early church history. Several quotations from ***The Ante-Nicene Fathers*** (a work that contains translations of early Christian writings into English) prove this point:

- The Didache: The Teaching of Twelve Apostles (AD 100): “Every Lord’s day do ye gather... and break bread...”
- Ignatius (AD 105): “... no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of Lord’s Day... .”
- Epistle of Barnabas (AD 130): “God says to the Jews, ‘Your new moons and Sabbaths I cannot endure.’... Wherefore we Christians keep the eighth day for joy, on which also Jesus arose from the dead... .”
- Justin Martyr (AD 160), Clement of Alexandria (AD 190 – ANF.II.545), and Tertullian (AD 200), insist that the Lord’s Day supplanted the Sabbath. (ANF.III.155).

Some contend, “The Bible doesn’t say every first day of the week!” In the Old Testament, God tells His people, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 12:8). God did not say every Sabbath; He did not have to. Every week had a Sabbath day, and every week has a first day. First century disciples “came together to break bread” “on the first day of the week.” We demonstrate our love for God, our brethren, and our appreciation for Jesus’ sacrifice by assembling to worship God every Lord’s Day.

Our holy God holds us to a high standard in worship. Unfortunately, man has become casual. Many Bible students believe as long as they direct their worship toward God, the Father is pleased. The careful student of Scripture finds more is required than the “heart being in the right place.”

Where has boundary-free worship led? Different denominations hold clown-led, Lord’s Day worship services. The Church by the Glades homepage describes itself as “a hyper-creative and a fully-charged church where no perfect people are allowed.” Video from this Coral Gables, Florida “church” that hosted the Florida Baptist Convention shows young ladies dressed in Halloween costumes dancing and singing “Calling all Monsters.” Baptist website wayoflife.org reports, “Northpoint Church of Springfield, Missouri, performed ‘*Sympathy for the Devil*’ by the Rolling Stones [in] 2011.” Do not be deceived, worship can dishonor God even without going to such extremes.

### **True or False:**

A religious program may replace the church assembly.                      True    False

As long as worship is directed towards God, He is pleased.    True    False

“Not forsaking the \_\_\_\_\_ of ourselves together . . .”

How often should I assemble with the church? \_\_\_\_\_

## IGNORANT WORSHIP

Thankfully, through scriptural guidelines on acceptable worship, we can know when we are right and when we are wrong (2 Timothy 3:16-17). While we may interact with Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, and people who identify with different faiths (1 Corinthians 5:12), we should tread carefully (2 Corinthians 6:14). Our culture pressures us to stretch tolerance into validation. When it comes to worship, however, all roads do not lead to Heaven. Jesus tells us in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

Speaking frankly to pagan idolaters in Athens, Greece, Paul states, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands (Acts 17:22-24).

An individual's honesty and sincerity are insufficient (Acts 22:3-8; 23:1). The apostle gently corrected his idolatrous audience for worshiping the true God in ignorance and urged them to devote themselves fully to Him (Acts 17:30).

Jesus said, “No one comes to the \_\_\_\_\_ except through Me.”

### **True or False:**

Honesty and sincerity alone is required for worship. True False



## VAIN WORSHIP

Jesus did not give His Jewish brethren a pass. After the Pharisees criticized Jesus' disciples for not keeping the elders' tradition of handwashing, He rebuked their hollow professions of piety in Matthew 15:9, saying, "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." Their worship was vain, meaningless, fruitless, worthless, and unacceptable. In order to avoid offering God worthless worship, we must support our practice with the New Testament. The Apostle Peter writes, "If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11).

Jesus said, "And in \_\_\_\_\_ they worship Me, Teaching as \_\_\_\_\_ the commandments of men."

What is meant by "vain" worship? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## WILL WORSHIP

The Spirit warns against submitting to human regulations in Colossians 2:20-22. Then He censures "will worship" (KJV) as objectionable. This word means "worship which one prescribes and devises for himself, contrary to the contents and nature of faith which ought to be directed to Christ" (Thayer). God does not accept human innovations in worship.

"\_\_\_\_\_ worship" is worship one prescribes for himself ...

### True or False:

God likes man to come up with his own worship ideas.      True    False

## TRUE WORSHIP

Men and women who love God will reject counterfeits in favor of true worship. In John 4:20-24, we find a conversation between the Lord and a Samaritan woman:

Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

The existence of true worshipers suggests that some are not true. Jesus says the Samaritans worshiped in error. When Jesus says true worshipers “[must worship in spirit and truth](#),” He demands the right attitude *and* the right activity, the right frame of mind *and* the right form, the right motives *and* the right mechanics.

Worship cannot be merely ritualistic: we cannot just go through the motions of worship even if we are following the New Testament teaching about worship. We must be attentive to the words of the songs, prayers, and sermons (1 Corinthians 14:15, 16, 26). We must contribute with a generous heart (2 Corinthians 9:7). We must be conscious of Jesus’ sacrifice when we observe the Lord’s Supper—His body, His blood, the New Covenant brought into effect by His blood—as we partake of the emblems that represent these three items (Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29).

Worship must be more than positive God-thoughts and gratitude for Jesus. True worship demands proper practices while, at the same time, avoiding ignorant worship, vain worship, and will worship. The Apostle Paul rebukes the church at Corinth for departing from the pattern set for the Lord’s Supper, saying, “[I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse](#)” (1 Corinthians 11:17). Earlier, Paul explains the church must “[keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you](#)” (1 Corinthians 11:2), including the “traditions” or “ordinances” in the assembly.



The items of worship are addressed in Acts 2:42, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” The “apostles’ doctrine” involves the teaching in the assembly. This activity includes the singing of spiritual songs as a form of instruction (Colossians 3:16). “Fellowship” refers to the contribution; the same Greek word is used in Romans 15:26. The phrase “breaking of bread” is a synecdoche, a figure of speech in which a part (breaking of bread) represents the whole of the Lord’s Supper.

“... Those who worship [God] must worship in spirit and \_\_\_\_\_.”

“Keep the traditions \_\_\_\_\_ I delivered them to you.”

**True or False:**

We must follow the pattern set for the Lord’s Supper.                      True    False

## LORD’S SUPPER

To observe the Lord’s Supper properly, we must follow the patterns given to us in Scripture (Matthew 28:20; Jude 3; Hebrews 8:5). Those assembled share one loaf that represents the one body of Christ (Matthew 26:26; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17). Two or more loaves would represent more than one body and would destroy the symbolism and pattern the Spirit presents. Those assembled share one cup, containing the fruit of the vine, which Paul calls the “cup of blessing” in 1 Corinthians 10:16: the cup representing the New Covenant and the fruit of the vine representing the blood of Christ (Matthew 26:27; 1 Corinthians 11:25).

How many loaves represent the body of Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

How many cups were used in the Lord’s Supper? \_\_\_\_\_

**Yes or No:**

Can we add to the scriptural pattern for the Lord’s Supper?    Yes    No

## TEACHING

One man teaches at a time when the whole church “comes together into one place” (1 Corinthians 11:20; 14:23). Bringing men, women, and children into one assembly is rooted in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 31:11-12). Note that even children could learn in the common assembly.

Not just anyone may teach in the assembly. The teacher must be:

- Faithful (2 Timothy 2:2)
- Male (1 Corinthians 14:34-35)
- Able to edify (1 Corinthians 14:12, 19, 26, 31)

The fact that the twelve apostles were men and that the Spirit restricts public teaching to men indicates a difference in role (1 Timothy 2:8-15), *not* in value (Galatians 3:28).

The teaching must be in a language all can understand. If necessary, a translator may be used, but still only one may speak at a time (1 Corinthians 14:27, 31, 33, 40).

### True or False:

Scripture teaches the church to divide up into classes.      True      False

In the assembly, the teacher must be \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_.

## SINGING

God's people relish the opportunity to sing praises to God. It is no wonder that Psalms is the longest book in the Old Testament with 150 chapters. While the emphasis in the Old Testament is on animal sacrifices, today God receives praise from our lips as a sacrifice (Hebrews 13:15).

Although we read about instrumental music in the Old Testament, it is conspicuously absent from teaching to the church in the New Testament and from the first six centuries of church history. Instead, God's people are commanded to sing: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16; see also 1 Corinthians 14:15; Hebrews 2:12). In order to please God, spiritual songs must have a scriptural, intelligible message (1 Corinthians 14:9-15). We are commanded to make melody in our hearts, not on musical instruments (Ephesians 5:19).

### True or False:

The apostles taught the church to use instruments.                      True    False

"...\_\_\_\_\_ and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and

\_\_\_\_\_ ..."

"\_\_\_\_\_ with grace in your hearts to the Lord."



## GIVING

While “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil” (1 Timothy 6:10), money is required for the spread of the gospel (1 Corinthians 9), benevolence (1 Timothy 5), and other spiritual needs (Ephesians 4:11-12).

The church is never taught to generate revenue through fundraising or soliciting the general public. Instead, Christians give generously and cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:6-7) on the Lord’s Day. The Spirit teaches in 1 Corinthians 16:2, “On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.” In their commentary on First Corinthians, McGarvey and Pendleton note:

The [Greek] word “thesaurizoon,” translated “in store,” means, literally, “put into the treasury,” and the phrase “par’heauto,” translated “by him,” may be taken as the neuter reflexive pronoun, and may be rendered with equal correctness “by itself.”

### True or False:

The early church had many fundraisers.

True    False

In 1 Corinthians 16:2, the phrase “in store” means “put into the

\_\_\_\_\_.”

## PRAYER

Prayers must be audible and plain so men present can say “Amen” and make the prayer their own (1 Corinthians 14:16). Thankfully, God does not require eloquent or wordy prayers. In fact, Jesus says in Matthew 6:7, “And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.”

### True or False:

God does not require prayers to be lengthy or eloquent.

True    False

## — PLEASING GOD WHEN WE WORSHIP —

For the sincere child of God, nothing is more gratifying to know that when we leave the worship assembly, we have done everything in our power to honor and glorify God. In order to accomplish this, the Scriptures provide a number of guidelines.

- The Almighty God is the only acceptable object of our worship.
- Although Christians serve God on a continual basis, the Holy Spirit prescribes specific acts of worship to be carried out when the local body of Christ assembles on the first day of the week.
- The Scriptures specifically warn God's people against ignorant worship, vain worship, and will worship.
- The worship assembly must be "in spirit" (with the proper attitude and focus) and "in truth" (in conformity with Scriptural teaching).
- Our Lord's Day assembly must include the Lord's Supper, biblical teaching, spiritual songs, prayers, and a generous self-determined contribution with a cheerful heart to the collection.

Name

Email





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