

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Things to Consider Regarding Worship

Christians are commanded to worship according to the Lord’s divine will (Col. 3:17; Acts 17:16-31). Worship that is displeasing to God includes:

- Vain worship (Matt. 15:7-9).
- Ignorant worship (Acts 17:22-23; Rom. 10:1-4).
- Will worship (Col. 2:20-23; Matt. 7:21-23).

God demands, “*in spirit and in truth*” worship (Jn. 4:23,24). But, what are some things we should consider in order to benefit from our worship to God? Please consider these points:

Prepare your mind through prayer before going to the place of worship. Christians are commanded to “*pray without ceasing*” (1 Thess. 5:17). It would be well to pray for the preacher, teachers, song leaders, and all who lead us in worship. We should pray that all saints will be edified, and that sinners’ hearts will be smitten, resulting in obedience to the gospel of Christ (Col. 4:2-4; Rom. 10:1). We should pray for erring brethren to repent, and for the truth to be boldly spoken and received by those who have “*honest and good hearts*” (Lk. 8:15; Eph. 6:18-20). Pray at home **BEFORE** you assemble!

Prepare Bible lessons beforehand. Paul commanded Christians to study (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Tim. 4:13-16). This means doing some homework in preparation for the Bible study. We don’t think it strange to do homework for school, college classes, or other interests. Why do some think it strange when asked to do extra study to teach a Bible class, prepare a lesson, or fill in when the preacher is sick or out of town?

Be present at every opportunity to study the Bible. We are commanded not to forsake the assembling of the saints (Heb. 10:25). Saints in the first century were involved in daily study of the Scriptures (Acts 2:41-47; 17:11; 20:5-7). We should be present for gospel meetings, regularly scheduled worship services, Bible study classes, and necessary meetings of the congregation to which we are joined.

Be on time for the Bible study and worship assembly. Promptness is expected and practiced in worldly matters, why not for worship? We need to be on time so that we can greet visitors and other members. Being on time shows respect for the occasion; whereas, tardiness indicates lack of proper preparation, as well as disrespect (Matt. 25:1-13).

Assemble to be edified and to encourage others. Our desire should include being edified in the “*most holy faith*” (Eph. 4:1-16; Heb. 10:24). We must take an active role during worship. Open your Bible; open your song book; and open your heart and ears and make proper application (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Jas. 1:21; 2 Cor. 13:5, 6).

Wear attire that is appropriate for worship. Remember, we are worshiping God, in His house. Our outward adornment should reflect meek, humble, respectful, and pure hearts (1 Pet. 3:3-6; 1 Tim. 2:9, 10; Titus 2:1-8). Let your attire reflect the serious nature of worshiping God.

Listen to the sermon. How can we learn more about God’s word if we are sleeping, passing notes, daydreaming, or clipping our nails during the preaching? How does this show love for God’s word? (Matt. 5:6; Psa. 1:1, 2)

Apply what you learn to yourself. Yes, it’s wonderful to memorize passages, listen closely to the sermon,

take notes, and follow along in our Bibles as the preacher is speaking. All of this is important and needs to be practiced. Yet, the more important work is properly applying the truth we learn in our own lives (Jas. 1:22-25; Rom. 12:2).

Be considerate of others. Some churches need to put swinging doors in the back of the auditorium to accommodate those who continually go in and out during the worship services. Most congregations allow time to take care of personal needs (restrooms, drinks of water, etc.) between Bible study and worship services. Parents need to teach their children to take care of these needs prior to the beginning of the worship service. Distractions can interrupt another's train of thought and be disruptive to other smaller children. Yes, the babies are cute, but wait until after services to play with them and give them special attention (Matt. 7:12).

Forget the clock. In the past few years, I've observed a worrisome trend among God's people. Many judge preachers more by how long or (preferably) short their sermons are, instead of whether they preach the truth. Folks need to go back and read the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Ezra found the book of the Law and the people stood as it was being read from morning until mid-afternoon (Nehemiah 8:1-3). Preachers should be considerate of their audiences, mothers with small children, older Christians, etc., but in my experience, most of those who complain are the younger who don't have children or suffer from frailties. ***"Remember Lot's wife"*** (Lk. 17:32).

Be happy and thankful to be there. The Psalmist wrote, ***"I was glad when they said to me, let us go into the house of the LORD"*** (Psa. 122:1). God's people should look forward to times of worship and study. Why? We can encourage one another, strengthen our personal faith, and seek to help others do the same. We are in God's presence, giving Him honor and glory as we seek to worship Him. Beginning the week on the Lord's Day, with His people, and giving Him praise and honor should be the highlight of the week.

Conclusion: Never forget that we are worshiping the Creator of all things we see, the Father of all, and the giver of ***"every good gift and every perfect gift"*** (Jas. 1:17). Do not take lightly the serious nature of the occasion when making preparation to worship the true and living God. I trust you will consider the points of this article and that they will cause you to give serious thought to all aspects of worship. I encourage you to strive to make proper preparation, to be present at the appointed time and place to worship, and thereby ***"serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear"*** (Heb.12:28). Let us always be mindful that ***"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him MUST worship him in spirit and in truth"*** (Jn. 4:24). – *tgmc* ■

"He Ran and Worshiped Him"

By Joe R. Price

"When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him" (Mk. 5:6, NKJV).

Quite a number of people believe every part of their daily life constitutes worship. Today's verse (it is not the only one) shows that is not so. Worship ("to pay homage to, to prostrate oneself in homage") is a particular action by the worshiper given to the object of worship. Please notice the man was not worshipping Jesus when he saw him from a distance. The man was not worshipping Jesus when he ran to Jesus. It is when he arrived that he ***"worshiped Him."*** Christians are instructed to worship God ***"in spirit and truth"*** – such are true worshipers (Jn. 4:23-24). Worship involves particular actions directed toward God (prayer, singing praises, the Lord's supper, giving, and preaching God's word (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 14:15-16; 11:23-26; 16:1-2). Therefore, worship is more than just going to the lake or mountains and communing with nature. God has revealed the worship He accepts. It is our obligation to offer it to Him without our subtractions or additions. Let us live holy, devoted lives every day, and let us worship God as Scripture directs, with right hearts (***"spirit"***) and God-approved actions (***"truth"***). – *Sword Tips*, February 22, 2019. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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