

HOW IS CHRISTIAN WORSHIP DONE "STEADFASTLY"?

Acts 2:42 says the early Christians worshipped "steadfastly." This means "steadily or without being moved away." *Heb. 10:25* commands regular assembling together and forbids forsaking church services "as the manner of some is." Some members are habitually regular in attendance, while the manner of others is to be irregular and unfaithful. God excuses absence when attendance is impossible, but man's many excuses God will not accept. Worship that is not steadfast is not Scriptural worship. If worship is to me a mere human social tradition, then Christmas and Easter worship to be seen of men can do. I will follow the social crowd and worship with the biggest group and worship God by men's traditions in vain. But if true worship of the true God is the most important thing in my life, I will seek first the Kingdom of God (*Matthew 6:33*) and worship steadfastly and faithfully every Lord's Day (*Acts 2:42*) and not do my own will, but the will of God in heaven (*John 6:38*). True worship is steadfast — every Lord's Day.

GOD SEEKS OUR WORSHIP

John 4:23 says that the Father "seeks" true worshippers to worship Him. This amazing truth means that God longs for companionship with man. *Genesis 3:8* reveals that God had fellowship with Adam in the Garden of Eden "in the cool of the day." God made man for the pleasure of togetherness with him (*Revelation 4:11*). God is eager for our worship.



Man longs for fellowship with God. God has made us for Himself, and we are restless until we rest in Him. There is a God-shaped emptiness in every man that can only be filled with fellowship with God. Togetherness with God is the reason for man's existence.

Man can worship God only through an awareness of God's greatness. Heavenly beings who are closest to God fall down before His throne and cry "Worthy!" (*Revelation 4:10, 11*). The prophet Isaiah saw a glimpse of the Lord "high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple." Angels cried one to another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory" (*Isaiah 6:1-3*).

Man can worship such a great and holy God only after an awareness of his own sin. Isaiah confessed his uncleanness and the sinfulness of all men, because, he said, "mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Isaiah was cleansed from sin and his uncleanness purged so that he could enter into the presence-of a holy God (*Isaiah 6:5—7*). When I realize God's greatness, and then see by contrast my own uncleanness, I will seek God's cleansing that will seek God's cleansing that will allow me to worship Him.

The Words of Jesus make us clean (*John 15:3*). The saving blood of the atoning death of Jesus has been shed on the cross for the remission of our sins (*Matthew 26:28*). We purify our souls in obeying the truth (*1 Peter 1:23*). This is finalized in being baptized to wash away our sins in obedience to the wonderful words of Jesus in the cleansing Gospel message (*Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 22:16*).

Will you be cleansed by obeying the Gospel so as to have this holiness from God "without which no man can see the Lord"? (*Hebrews 12:14*). If so, you can spend the rest of your life in worshipful daily sacrifice to God (*Romans 12:1*). You can find the real meaning for your existence on earth, and then join the angel hosts in everlasting praise to God in heaven when this life is over.

TRUE WORSHIP

WHAT IS WORSHIP?

Worship is giving "worthship." It is an outward expression of an inward sense of praise and inward feeling of need. All worship is not true, for the true God must be worshipped in the true way for one's worship to be acceptable.

"Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne . . . forever and ever."
Rev. 5:13

WHAT MAKES ONE'S WORSHIP ACCEPTABLE?

The first worship recorded in the Bible was that of Cain and Abel (*Gen. 4*). Abel offered acceptable worship by faith (*Heb. 11:4*). But Cain's worship was rejected by God. Since faith comes from hearing God's Word (*Rom. 10:17*), we know that Cain and Abel heard God's commandment as to how to offer sacrifice. Abel obeyed that command by faith and was accepted; Cain chose his own method of worship and was rejected. Acceptable worship is that which is according to God's Word. Unacceptable worship is following one's own wishes or opinions in worship. All worship is either accepted or rejected by God.



WHAT IS VAIN WORSHIP?

Jesus said that teaching for doctrine the commandments of men makes worship "vain" (*Mt. 15:9, Mk. 7:7*). Worship that is "vain" is empty, worthless, or useless. Following the catechisms, prayer books, and other commandments of men in worship makes worship vain. Most worship today follows man's pattern instead of God's.

WHAT IS IGNORANT WORSHIP?

Acts 17:23 shows that the educated and polished people of Athens worshipped in ignorance. They did not know the true God nor the true way to worship Him. They were ignorant of God's Word. But ignorance is no excuse. *Verse 30* shows that these Athenians were commanded to repent of their ignorance. Idol worshippers or other ignorant worshippers today must be taught the Word of God and repent of their ignorant worship. Educated people today can worship God in ignorance.

WHAT IS TRUE WORSHIP?

Jesus explained that true worshippers worship God "in spirit and in truth" (*John 4:23, 24*). Worship "in spirit" is worship from one's spirit or heart. Worship "in truth" is worship within the teachings of God's Word of Truth. True worship is both from the worshipper's spirit and directed from the Word of God. Unless both these elements are found in worship, that worship is not true worship. For instance, a shouting, dancing, clapping worshipper might be worshipping from his spirit, but he is not worshipping "in truth." His efforts are not true worship. On the other hand, a worshipper might know the truth about worship but yet not put his heart into it. He would not be worshipping "in spirit." True worshippers worship God according to both basic requirements of Jesus — "in spirit and in truth." Either element without the other is not true worship.





WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF SCRIPTURAL WORSHIP?

Acts 2:42 describes the first worship of the church: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." In other New Testament verses the parts of Christian worship are described as: (1) preaching, (2) singing, (3) communing, (4) praying, and (5) giving. This is the Bible pattern for true Christian worship.

HOW IS PREACHING TO BE "IN SPIRIT"?

As all true worship must be "in spirit and in truth," every part of Christian worship must be done "in spirit" or from one's heart. Preaching the Word of God must be done "in spirit." The preacher must preach the truth "in love" (*Eph. 4:15*). If he speak with the tongues of men and angels and have not love, he is like sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal (*I Cor. 13:1*). Listening to the preaching must also be done in a spiritual manner. Jesus said, "Take heed therefore how ye hear" (*Luke 8:18*). We must give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard (*Heb. 2:1*). A spirit of reverence must prevail during the preaching of God's Word (*I Thess. 2:13*). The preacher is preaching from the words of the Holy Spirit (*I Cor. 2:13*). Spiritual worship cannot be practiced by a person who is talking, laughing, or sleeping during preaching.



HOW IS SINGING TO BE DONE "IN SPIRIT"?

I Cor. 14:15 says singing must be done with the spirit and with the understanding also. It must not be a formality or an empty ritual. It must come from the heart. *Eph. 5:18, 19* says to be filled with the Spirit, to sing spiritual songs, and to make melody in one's heart to the Lord. *Col. 3:16* says to sing with grace in one's heart to the Lord. Christians must sing meaningfully in praise and devotion to God. Thoughtless or meaningless singing is vain. Our heart and understanding must be in each song, and we must live the truths we sing.

EXPLAIN COMMUNING "IN SPIRIT"

1 Cor. 11:27 says, "Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup unworthily (in an unworthy manner) shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." *Verse 29* says, "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily (in an unworthy manner), eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." These verses have nothing to do with whether we are worthy or "feel worthy" to eat and drink. They are talking about a worthy or proper manner in partaking. They stress the kind of attitude or spirit in one's heart during communion. Communion is "common-union" with Christ's spirit.



HOW DOES ONE PRAY "IN SPIRIT"?

I Cor. 14:15 says to pray with the spirit and with the understanding also. Prayers must be sincere, not formal. The thoughts must come from a real sense of longing and need in one's heart. They must not come from a prayer book or memorized and meaningless phrases. Neither must the one leading prayer try to use big words or vain repetitions (*Matthew 6:7, 8*).

IS GIVING TO BE DONE "IN SPIRIT" ALSO?

As giving is a part of Christian worship, it must be done "in spirit and in truth." Scriptural giving is done every first day out of gratitude for how God has prospered us (*I Cor. 16:2*). We prove the sincerity of our love by our giving (*II Cor. 8:8*). A Christian's giving must not be done grudgingly or of necessity. This means that giving must be counted a privilege or joy rather than a duty or chore. It must first be purposed in one's heart; it is a heart-felt gift. It must be done cheerfully and gladly (*II Cor. 9:7*). It is more blessed (more joyful) to give than to receive (*Acts 20:35*). If we give all our goods to feed the poor, and even give our body

to be burned, and have not love, it profits us nothing (*I Cor. 13:3*). Giving is a heart-searching spiritual experience. It is done cheerfully and joyfully with thankfulness in one's heart. It is done "in spirit" or sincerely with one's heart.

HOW MUST PREACHING IN WORSHIP BE "IN TRUTH"?

As each part of worship must be "in spirit," each must also be "in truth." Preaching must be within God's Word of Truth (*II Tim. 2:15, John 17:17*). It must abide in the doctrine of Christ and not go beyond (*II John 9, Rev. 22:18, 19*). Early Christian worshippers continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (*Acts 2:42*). Preaching from a prayer book or catechism is not "in truth." Preaching one's opinion does not enable the hearers to worship "in truth." Preaching the truth enables worship "in truth."



HOW MUST ONE'S SINGING BE "IN TRUTH"?

Col. 3:16 -says, "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." This verse shows that singing must come from the Word of Christ dwelling in our heart. Our songs must teach and admonish other Christians. All songs, therefore, must be Scriptural songs which teach Scriptural truths. Many denominational hymns do not and must not be sung. Neither can one remain in the truth of God's Word and use instruments, drums, and dancing in worship. These practices are outside or beyond God's Word of Truth. Bible Christians never used mechanical instruments of music. To do so today is to "add to" and to "go beyond" God's pattern for worship in the Word of Truth. It can only be done by following the traditions and commandments of men which make worship vain.



HOW IS COMMUNION TO BE DONE "IN TRUTH"?

Scriptural communion is done steadfastly every Lord's Day (*Acts 2:42; 20:7*). Outside the truth are denominational plans of monthly, quarterly, or annual communion services. Within the truth of God's Word communion is a remembrance (*I Cor. 11:24, 25*). Outside the truth is the Catholic doctrine of a miracle to change the bread into Jesus' actual body and the wine into real blood. Catholic communion in one kind (only the bread for "laymen") is outside the truth. Communion fees are outside the truth. **Only** by abiding in Bible teaching can communion be "in truth."



HOW DOES ONE WORSHIP IN PRAYER "IN TRUTH"?

Praying for unscriptural things is not "in truth." Some pray for forgiveness and salvation without meeting the conditions in God's Word. Praying "in truth" is praying as the Bible instructs us to pray: praying with faith (*James 1:6, 7*), without selfishness (*James 4:3*), with holy hands, and without wrath and doubting (*I Tim. 2:8*), with the spirit and the understanding also (*I Cor. 14:15*). Praying "in truth" is praying according to God's Word of truth. Counting beads or hailing Mary are not found within God's Word of Truth.



MUST GIVING ALSO BE "IN TRUTH"?

Giving by Bible instructions is giving "in truth." Every first day of the week every Christian gives as God has prospered him (*I Cor. 16:2*). This is a free-will and personal donation (*2 Cor. 8:3*), not a church assessment or denominational tax. Regular, weekly giving is God's plan for God's work, not church bingo parties, cake walks, or other financial schemes of men. Giving as part of Christian worship must be done "in truth."

