

Worship in Spirit and Truth

John 4:19-24 (NIV)

¹⁹ "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

²¹ Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the **true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth**, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

How would you define "worship"?

What was the woman's focus with regard to worship?

**Jesus indicates there was an old way and now a new way to worship.
What was the "old" way to worship?**

Why does Jesus say there is now a new way to worship? What brought about that change?

John 2:18-19 (NIV)

¹⁸ Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" ¹⁹ Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."

What is Jesus referring to in the above verse?

Revelation 21:22 (NIV)

I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

How does this relate to our conversation in John 4?

How might focusing worship on a person change one's approach to worship?

In what ways might we be tempted to forget this principle in our worship?

What do you think it means to worship in "spirit"?

John 3:3-7 (NIV)

³ In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

⁴ "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"

⁵ Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁷ You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'

Note: The Greek word (anothen) translated "again" can also mean "from above". In this story Jesus is playing with words and Nicodemus is getting very confused. Jesus is saying that no one can get to heaven unless he is born "from above", but Nicodemus is hearing born "again".

What is the issue determining whether one is born from below or born from above?

How does this understanding of the Holy Spirit affect our understanding of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman?

Why is it necessary to worship in spirit?

How does the presence of the Holy Spirit allow us to worship God as Father?

In what ways might we be tempted to not worship in spirit?

What do you think it means to worship in “truth”?

Colossians 2:17 (NIV)

These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

Hebrews 9:9-10 (NIV)

⁹ This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. ¹⁰ They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings--external regulations applying until the time of the new order.

Hebrews 10:1 (NIV)

The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.

How might knowing this help us understand what it means to worship in truth?

John 14:6 (NIV)

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

How would understanding this have changed the Samaritan woman's perspective about worship?

Hebrews 1:6 (NIV)

And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."

What are some ways we might “not” worship in truth?

When we think of Old Testament worship we think of the temple, sacrifices, priests in flowing robes and animals being led through the crowds. What picture comes to your mind when you think of the worship today?

When Jesus talked about a new way to worship, do you think he was limiting it to a one hour worship service each week? How would you define worship in a broader sense?

In what way is every aspect of our life to be an act of worship?

Romans 12:1 (NIV)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

How would you paraphrase the above verse?

Colossians 3:22-24 (NIV)

²² *Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.* ²³ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, ²⁴ *since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

How were slaves to show worship to God?

What are some implications if we do not do whatever we do as if we were doing it for the Lord?

How might this perspective influence how we work and relate to others?

Ephesians 5:18-21 (NIV)

¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹ Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

If we have not worshipped God in this way through our week, how might it affect how we worship on Sunday mornings?

How can we make everything we do an expression of worship this week?

What is one specific way you can change this week to bring glory to God through your life?