



***Bible Correspondence
Course***

09 - Worship

Truth For The World 

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Worship

In this lesson:

**1. What is
Worship?**

**2. How We Must
Worship**

**3. Acts of
Worship**

In the previous lesson we looked at the different names for the church. You may recall that one of those was “temple of God.” This describes the worship aspect of the church. In older times, the tabernacle and the temple were a place to worship God. The place where we worship God today is in His temple, the church.

In this lesson we are going to look at what worship is. Then we are going to look at how we must worship God. Then we will look at the different acts of worship that are acceptable to God.

What is Worship?

There are different words translated “**worship**” in our English Bibles. We will not examine every one, but we will look at one that gives us the idea of what worship is. We will transliterate the word from Greek to English. When something is transliterated it is not really defined. It is just the bringing of similar sounds into another language. If we transliterate the Greek word we are examining, it would look like “proskuneo.”

The word “proskuneo” has a definition that paints some interesting pictures. One picture is that of a dog licking his master’s hand. Perhaps you have seen a dog that comes up to its master and licks his or her hand. The dog is obedient and shows affection by this act. Another picture is that of someone falling down or prostrating themselves in front of someone to give them

reverence and respect. For example, a servant might bow down or prostrate themselves by lying on the ground in front of a king. That servant is showing that they honor and respect the king they serve. We use the first four letters of “proskuneo” when we use words like “prostrate” or “prospect.” There is an idea of pointing towards or moving towards something. The servant prostrates himself by bowing down toward the king. The prospector goes out to look for the future treasure of gold. Someone with good prospects has a bright future. Similarly, the idea of “proskuneo” has been defined as “to kiss toward.” The idea of a “kiss” would of course show love and respect, and the idea of “toward” would show the direction the love and respect was given.

If we summarize it all, we could say that worship is love, respect, and honor being sent in a certain direction towards someone. In the case of Christianity, our worship is love, respect, and honor being sent to God. In other words, worship is approaching God and directing our love, respect, and honor to Him. We are the servants and God is the audience and recipient of our worship!

In the Mosaical dispensation, the tribe of people known as the Levites performed the functions of the priests. The Old Testament describes them as “approaching” God. ***“And thou shalt give to the priests the Levites that be of the seed of Zadok, which approach unto me, to minister unto me, saith the Lord GOD, a young bullock for a sin offering.” (Ezekiel 43:19)***

In the Christian dispensation, those who have obeyed and become Christians are described as priests. ***“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:” (1 Peter 2:9)*** Christians may approach God in worship, including the asking of forgiveness, without going through another earthly man. The days of going to earthly men for sacrifices and worship to God were under the Mosaical dispensation which is no longer in authority. Christians are now the priests and Jesus is the High Priest who is the mediator between God and men. We, as Christians, may now approach God. ***“For we have not***

an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:15-16)

How We Must Worship

Keep in mind that worship is the idea of the forgiven Christians approaching the perfect and holy God. We are the inferior and God is the superior. We are the worshipers and God is the audience of our worship.

But how should we approach God and worship Him?

Jesus makes it clear that we must worship God in two ways. ***“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:24)***

The idea of worshiping God ***“in spirit”*** can mean with the proper frame of mind, and with the right attitude. We should take our worship seriously. We should also do it sincerely. God can see our hearts, as Jesus showed us. Can we really offer God love, honor, and respect without being sincere? We may be able to fool other people, but God is not fooled. When we worship, we have a great opportunity to approach the Creator of the Universe and praise Him with love, honor, and respect for the wonderful things He has done for us and for the love He has shown us. We need to remember how much God has loved us and given to us throughout the entire worship service.

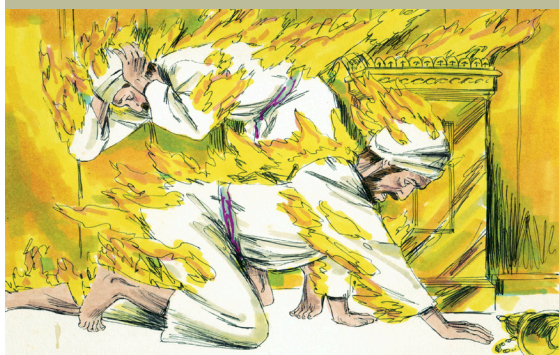
The idea of worshiping God ***“in truth,”*** simply means according to His word. Jesus gave a definition of what “truth” is. ***“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” (John 17:17)*** When God speaks, it is true. God would be an unjust God if He did not tell His people how to approach Him in worship and then condemned them for doing it wrong! Instead, God has always shown people what He desires when approaching Him in worship.

In the Patriarchal dispensation, Cain and Abel offered sacrifices to God. One person sacrificed according to God’s

word and the other one didn't. *"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."* (**Hebrews 11:4**) How did Abel offer a sacrifice pleasing to God? He did it by faith. How



To worship "by faith," you must worship according to the word of God.



did he get faith? *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* (**Romans 10:17**) Abel offered by faith because he heard the instructions for worship God had given and he obeyed. Cain did not offer his sacrifice according to God's word and his sacrifice was rejected. In the Mosaical dispensation, laws were given to the people on how to perform sacrifices and how to approach God. One of those regulations was the use of a certain type of fire. Two men, Nadab and Abihu, decided to use a "**strange**" or unauthorized fire when approaching God. *"And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified*

in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.” (Leviticus 10:1-3) How did God react when those who approached Him did not follow His word? The same way He did when Cain offered an incorrect sacrifice, it was rejected! Notice that God talked here about those who *“come nigh me.”* God is talking about those who approach Him. So, what can we learn about approaching God in worship? We learn that Jesus was right. If you are going to worship God you must worship Him *“in truth,”* meaning according to God’s word. Cain, Nadab, and Abihu found out that God was not kidding.

This should really not be that strange of an idea to us. We see the rules and regulations of how the inferior is to approach the superior. Imagine you worked in a business office as an assistant. One day, you, the inferior assistant, went in to the boss’s office without knocking on the door or asking for an appointment, and propped your feet up on the boss’s desk and you told the boss how he needed to change how he did his job, how you needed to be promoted, and how you needed a raise. Imagine the boss’s reaction. The boss might say something like, “How dare you?! You are arrogant! You do not come into this office and tell me what to do! I am the boss!” Imagine a private or lower-ranking man who has been in an army for a few weeks doing the same thing to the office of a general or high-ranking official who has been in the same army for 30 years. The general might say the same thing as the boss. “How dare you?! You are arrogant!” Most of us would not dare do that because we recognize that the inferior has to approach the superior with respect and honor and on their terms. The boss will see me if I can make an appointment with him. The general will see me if he decided that he wants to see me. In short, how the superior is approached by the inferior is decided by the superior, not the inferior. The same is true with approaching God in worship!

Most of the religious world seems to have this backwards. The individual groups decide how they will worship God, what types of activities they will do, what type of music they will have, and then they just expect God to accept it. Cain, Nadab and Abihu decided to approach God in the way they wanted and expected God to

just accept it. It didn't work! Could not God say to many today, "How dare you?! You are arrogant! You do not approach me and tell me how I am going to accept whatever you decide!" It is true that people who do this are not directly corrected, like Cain was, or directly punished, like Nadab and Abihu. But, that just goes to show the longsuffering of God, who is giving them a chance to learn from His word and do it right. God has always shown people what He desires when approaching Him in worship. That is still true in the Christian dispensation. We will now look at the New Testament and see what God approves of in worshipping and approaching Him!

Acts of Worship

When we look at the New Testament, we see different "acts" or "activities" of worship being performed. We understand that they are approved of by God because of one or more reasons:

- The inspired apostles instructed Christians to perform these acts or participated in worship services where these acts were performed. Since the apostles were inspired by the Holy Spirit and were instructed what truth was (**John 14:26**), and since they participated in and approved of these activities, then we can conclude that they are in accordance with God's word, the truth.
- The Holy Spirit inspired the writers of the New Testament and these acts were instructed or performed by 1st century New Testament Christians. While the Bible does not always record truth (for example, it records the devil's lies) it does record things accurately. If God did not approve of these actions then the Holy Spirit would not have inspired the writers to instruct Christians to perform these activities, or instructed the writers to record these activities, or would have instructed the writers to record the activities but make it plain that they were condemned (such as the activities of Cain, Nadab, and Abihu)

In a previous lesson, we saw that when we sow the seed of the New Testament we grow Christians, just like in the 1st century. If we worship like the Christians did in the 1st century, and believe

and teach the same doctrine as the Christians did in the 1st century, then there will be no difference between our church in the current century and the church in the 1st century.

Communion

Communion may also be called the “Lord’s Supper.” The act is taken from the event of the Passover supper that Jesus had with His apostles before He went to the cross. ***“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”*** (**Matthew 26:26-29**) Jesus told the apostles to partake of the bread and the fruit of the vine to remember His body and His blood. The bread was not literally His body and His blood had not been shed yet. Jesus was speaking figuratively. By partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine (grape juice), we remember the body and blood that was given as a perfect sacrifice to pay the penalty for our sins.

We have an example of the Christians and the apostle Paul doing this act on the first day of the week. ***“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.”*** (**Acts 20:7**) The idea of “breaking bread” is a figure of speech referring to the partaking of the Lord’s Supper. Christians did this on the first day of the week and an apostle is seen taking part. Therefore, we also do this on the first day of every week to be like the church in the 1st century.

The items of the Lord’s Supper are 1) unleavened bread, and 2) unleavened fruit of the vine (grape juice). Remember, that the Lord’s Supper was instituted during a Passover meal. A Passover meal was to remember the night the 10th plague was given to Egypt and the Israelites who spread blood on their door post were spared. (**Exodus 12**). The Israelites were told, ***“Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened***

bread.” (Exodus 12:20). Leaven refers to yeast, or the thing which makes bread rise. The Israelites were going to be freed from slavery, and God wanted them to be ready to go. They were not to bother putting yeast in the bread and letting it rise. Yeast is also the thing which makes grape juice ferment into alcoholic wine. There would have been no yeast in the fruit of the vine Jesus served to His apostles. It was a passover meal and yeast was not allowed. Today, we also partake of unleavened bread and non-alcoholic grape juice.

But, why do we partake of things without leaven or yeast, when we are not preparing ourselves to leave slavery in Egypt, like the Israelites did? We remember things without leaven, because leaven is an analogy for sin or bad teaching. ***“Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees... Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.” (Matthew 16:6,12)*** When Paul wrote to the church at Corinth for the first time, he had to scold them for glorying in someone who was sinning. Instead of glorying about it, Paul told them to remove the sinner before his sin spread throughout the body of the church. ***“Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” (1 Corinthians 5:6-8)*** The church in Corinth were told to separate themselves from this sinner until he repented, so that he might learn how serious this sin was and turn away from it. Then he would be able to return to the church and to God. But, notice that Paul calls this sinful act as ***“leaven.”*** The Lord’s Supper is to remind us of Jesus. Since leaven represent sin, we eat unleavened bread and non-alcoholic grape juice and it remind us that Jesus did not have sin. He was sinless and without leaven. Unleavened bread and fruit of the vine was used in the Passover when Jesus implemented the Lord’s Supper and it reminds us of sinless Jesus.

Teaching

Did you also notice that when the Christians came together on the first day of the week they heard teaching? ***“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.” (Acts 20:7)***

Today, as we imitate the 1st century church, we have a sermon or Bible-centered lesson during our worship service on the first day of the week. This lesson may serve different purposes, such as, teaching us how to correct our lives to be more like Jesus, giving us hope by reminding us of our salvation and future home in Heaven, or giving us a deeper understanding of God’s word, the Bible. We can then take that knowledge and live better lives that are more pleasing to God. ***“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)***

Giving

Paul traveled around at one time in the past to take up a collection for the church in Jerusalem because they needed assistance. Along those lines he said, ***“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” (1 Corinthians 16:1-2)***

The church still can do good with its collection today, whether that be paying a preacher to help with evangelism, giving aid to those in need, or using funds to help teach and edify its members. Apparently, Paul was telling congregations to take up a collection on the first day of the week. This would seem logical if they were already meeting on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord’s Supper and to hear teaching.

Today, we also give back to God as an act of worship on the first day of the week. We should do so, not because we have to, but because we want to be a part of God’s work in

His kingdom. ***“But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:6-7)*** If we want to reap bountiful spiritual rewards, we should sow bountifully! God gave us His only Son. No amount we can give can ever pay that debt back. If we remember what God has done for us, we can be a more cheerful giver when giving back to God.

Prayer

Finding authority in the New Testament for Christians to pray to God is not hard. Jesus did it and we even have a writing from Paul that says prayer is acceptable to God. ***“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;” (1 Timothy 2:1-3)***

Coming together as a congregation to worship God on the first day of the week is a good time to offer prayer to God. It allows members to share their prayer requests with each other and pray for each other. Prayers may include adoration of God. ***“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.” (Matthew 6:9)*** The prayers may include confessions of sins and asking for forgiveness. ***“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12)*** The prayers may include thanksgiving. ***“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18)*** The prayers may include supplications and intercessions. Supplications are where we ask God for what we need. ***“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give***

good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” (Matthew 7:7-11)

Intercessions are when we pray for others. Prayers of intercession may include prayers for the sick, (James 5:13-15), prayers for our enemies (Matthew 5:44), prayers for those in authority, (1 Timothy 2:1-3), prayers for each other, (2 Timothy 1:3), and prayers for those among us who have sinned and need forgiveness. *“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” (James 5:16)*

Singing

When we come together to worship we also partake in singing. There are about nine references to religious music in the New Testament and they all involve singing. When we go to the New Testament to see what has been commanded or recorded for us as a good example, we find the music that we use when we approach God is singing.

Singing is a way to musically talk to God and give Him our worship. Remember, that when we worship, we are approaching God to give Him our love, honor, and respect.

Another purpose of singing is to teach each other. God saw fit for us to come together as an assembly, so there must be a good benefit to being together. Besides praying for each other,



One way to remember the components of prayer is the acronym ACTS, which stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplications and intercessions.

we can teach, admonish (warn or correct), and remind each other of biblical truths through song. ***“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)*** Paul told the church in Colossae to put the word of Christ in them, and then he told them how to do it, by teaching and admonishing each other with songs. Singing has the purpose of teaching because the words are what is important. Great songs teach us great lessons about how to live and how to treat each other. Great songs teach and remind us about the love of Jesus and what our sin cost. Great songs remind us to be faithful because a great home in Heaven is waiting for us. Not only do we remind each other in song about these important lessons, but putting them to music helps us to remember them throughout the week. ***“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.” (James 5:13)*** You may still remember a song about the alphabet, and can sing your “A-B-Cs.” We can also remember the words of songs as we go through life, and if the songs teach Biblical truths, they are a way to remember the truth of God’s word and take it with us.

We do not use instruments of music with our singing for three main reasons: 1) We do not see the authority for it in the Bible. The verse right after the one talking about teaching with singing is, ***“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” (Colossians 3:17)*** ***“In the name of”*** means by the authority of. A common example of the phrase is, “Stop, in the name of the law!” If a policeman says that, it means he is telling you to stop and the law gives him the authority to say that. When we approach God in worship, or live our lives, we had better do what we can find authority for in His word, the Bible. We find authority for singing, so we sing. Nothing more, nothing less. The instrument we are to use when singing is already defined in the Bible. It is the heart. ***“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;” (Ephesians 5:19)*** 2) The purpose of singing is to teach and admonish. ***“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) Words can teach and admonish, but the sounds that come from musical instruments cannot. I do not become more knowledgeable about God’s word by listening to someone bang on a drum, strum a guitar, or play a piano. 3) Since we are trying to be the church we read about in the New Testament and follow 1st century example, we want to sing “a cappella.” “A cappella” means without instruments, but the Latin has a meaning of “in the manner of the church.” This seems to indicate that a cappella music was what the church originally had. A study of history indicates that other religions besides the church of Christ, also did not originally have instruments of music, but they were eventually introduced into their worship. If we want to be like the 1st century Christians, and like other religions used to be, we will be “like the music of the church” and be a cappella and not use mechanical instruments. Besides, the Bible has defined the instrument to use, and that is our heart. When we sing we are speaking and praising God. God would be more concerned with the love we show Him and our sincerity, and **willingness to follow His word**, rather than the correct attuning of our voice, or the “entertainment value” of our musical performance. Remember, when we, the inferior, approach the superior, we do it according to His terms, not ours!

There are several examples of music to edify each other and to praise God mentioned in the New Testament.

- Matthew 26:30
- Acts 16:25
- Romans 15:9
- 1 Corinthians 14:15
- Ephesians 5:19
- Colossians 3:16
- Hebrews 2:12
- Hebrews 13:15
- James 5:13

In all instances we notice that the music used or commanded was singing.

TFTW-BCC-09-Review Questions

(Select the letter of the correct answer)

- 1. In worship, we show God our:**
 - a. love
 - b. honor
 - c. respect
 - d. all of the above
- 2. The audience of our worship is:**
 - a. God
 - b. ourselves
 - c. each other
- 3. Worshiping God “*in spirit*” means:**
 - a. with miraculous power from the Holy Spirit
 - b. with the right attitude
 - c. with my spirit, but not using my fleshly body
- 4. Worshiping God “*in truth*” means:**
 - a. I do not lie to God or others during the worship
 - b. according to the mutual agreement of all the members
 - c. according to the word of God
- 5. Who decides how the inferior approaches the superior?**
 - a. the inferior
 - b. the superior
- 6. Communion uses unleavened bread and grape juice:**
 - a. because that’s what Jesus would have used in the Passover meal
 - b. because the absence of leaven represents the absence of sin in Jesus
 - c. both A and B

- 7. Preaching and teaching is for:**
- a. learning how to correct our lives
 - b. maintaining hope for a life in Heaven with God
 - c. better understanding God's word
 - d. all of the above
- 8. The examples of music we have in the New Testament are:**
- a. singing
 - b. playing instruments
 - c. singing and playing instruments
- 9. The instrument to be used in singing is:**
- a. guitar
 - b. heart
- 10. The purpose of singing is:**
- a. entertainment
 - b. to achieve musical harmony
 - c. teach and admonish

After selecting all the letters for your answers, fill out the information below. Then save this PDF file and email it to your teacher for correction and credit toward your certificate.

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