

TRUE IDENTITY *I have called you by your name. You are mine.*

March 14 – In Worship

Psalm 100

“Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth! Worship the Lord with gladness. Come before Him, singing with joy. Acknowledge that the Lord is God! He made us, and we are His. We are His people, the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving; go into His courts with praise. Give things to Him and praise His name. For the Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and His faithfulness continues to each generation.”

What is the lesson from this passage of scripture?

- Worship encourages the joy of the Lord.
- Worship reminds us of who God is and a clear picture of who we are.
- Worship inspires confidence of the believer for our faith journey.

Additionally, Jesus indicates in **Luke 19:37-40** that,

- worship will unite people in a chorus of praise to God, and if not the people, all of nature will rise and shout!

What a beautiful and positive picture of worship.

But the problem with worship this side of heaven... is the people.

Even though we've been coached and taught the truth about worship, we lean away from the call of worship on our hearts by the Lord Himself.

Exodus 34:14 says, *“Do not worship any other gods, for the Lord, whose very name is Jealous, is a God Who is jealous about His relationship with you.”*

Let's take a explore some things we have done to worship over the centuries and the evidence of these mistakes today.

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FALSE WORSHIP

1. Some people worship without true identity with Jesus.

- a. We must experience new birth in the Spirit of God.

John 3:3, 5-8

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God."

⁵ Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. ⁷ So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.'⁸ The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit."

- b. Otherwise, we assume a false character of God.
- c. We assume a false relationship with God.
- d. We assume that sin poses no threat to our eternal destiny.

2. Some people worship with a selective belief system.

- a. Choosing what truth best fits our interest by applying our human reasoning.

Jesus addresses this with the Samaritan woman at the well.

John 4:19-22

"Sir," the woman said, "you must be a prophet. ²⁰ So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?"

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²¹ Jesus replied, “Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. ²² You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews.

Samaritan worship, as taught by their “ancestors”, merged several cultural and secular religions with some Jewish theology, making a hybrid of the Jewish God and his teaching.

Luke 4:8 Jesus responded to Satan in the wilderness:
“It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.’”

3. Some have practiced secular worship.

In other words, an appreciation for the extensive, yet limited potential of the human spirit.

- Belief in self-awareness, alone.
- Practice self-worship.
 - Focus on physical and mental health,
 - Trusting in self-preservation and identity.
- Standing alone this is pagan worship.

Let’s finish that conversation with Jesus and the Samaritan woman.

John 4:23-24

But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. ²⁴ For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.

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TRUE WORSHIP – SPIRIT AND TRUTH

A.W. Tozer:

“Jesus was born of a virgin, suffered under Pontius Pilate, died on the cross and rose from the grave to make worshippers out of rebels.”

To worship in truth is to worship with a true identity in the Spirit.

1. Only the Holy Spirit can enable fallen man to worship God acceptably.

Since God is spirit, and our understanding of God is the foundation upon which everything rests, then the whole acceptability of our spiritual journey is doing everything through the Spirit of the living God – including worship.

Only the Holy Spirit –

- Can **pray** acceptably to our Father in heaven,
- Can **preach** acceptably,
- Can **teach** acceptably,
- Can **lead** acceptably,
- Can **forgive** acceptably,
- Can **serve** acceptably, and
- Can **WORSHIP** acceptably

2. To truly worship God – we must accept some foundational truths.

a. We must believe what God says about Himself.

- i. That He has always been,
- ii. That He is our creator and sustainer of life,
- iii. That He loves us with perfection
 1. Faithfully, justly, mercifully
- iv. That He has a plan and purpose for us (Eph. 2:10; 2 Cor. 5:18-20),
- v. That He has prepared a place for all who surrender to His gracious gift of salvation (John 4:1-6),

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vi. That He will restore all of creation through Christ's return.

b. We must believe what God says about His Son – Jesus Christ.

- i. That He is the Son of God, the visible image of God to the world,
- ii. That He has taken the penalty for our personal sin upon His sinless life and died, so that we could live free from sin's guilt in the glory of God's grace.

c. We must believe what God says about us.

- i. All the bad,
- ii. All the good, and
- iii. All the potential.

d. We must believe whatever God says about sin.

- i. It is rebellion toward God's ways and plan,
- ii. It separates us from Him for all eternity,
- iii. It is a part of our human nature.

Is it possible to have a religious experience, even conversations with God without really being in a renewed relationship with God?

Look at Cain, Adam's first born. He offered an offering but without a true understanding of God's desire because he had an unregenerated heart. Obviously, he had a "religious" experience but was unacceptable to God.

Balaam, an ungodly prophet, spoke with God, yet God was not pleased with him because of his disobedience, and the negative outcome for His chosen people.

Yes, it is possible to experience God without a true relationship with Him.

Many are guilty of this even today.

1 Corinthians 3:12-15

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Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. 13 But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person’s work has any value. 14 If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. 15 But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames.

Tozer says, “A worker who does not worship [in Spirit and truth] is only piling up wood, hay and stubble for the time when God sets the world on fire.” (*What happened to Worship*, 1984, p.10.)

Before we immerse ourselves in His work, let us meet with Him **in His word... in prayer... in worship.** (*Living Insights Study Bible*, NIV, 1996 The Zondervan Corp, p.627, ref. Psalm 143:5-10.)