

What To Do When We Worship

Introduction. Worship has always been a main focal point of the Christian faith. The Psalmist said long ago, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (122:1). The "house of the Lord" is now our worship services. Worship is a time when we honor and revere God. However, worship is a time where we need to reflect on ourselves also.

Because of the need for this reflection, we need from time to time to explore our obligations and motives when we come here to stand before God. Solomon said long ago, "Guard your steps as you go to the house of God, and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil" (Ecclesiastes 5:1).

The book of James has often been called the "Ecclesiastes of the New Testament" and I believe that his letter has very encouraging material which we would do well to benefit from. In view of that point, let us study from James 1:21-22 to see what to do when we worship.

I. **What To Do Before We Worship -- "*Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness.*"**

- A. Sin must be put away or renounced. The word was used as a metaphor for stripping off of clothes. The NIV states, "Get rid of it." Romans 13:12; Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:8; Hebrews 12:1 all state the imperativeness of the command.
- B. Filthiness is also translated as dirtiness or moral defilement. Wickedness means malice, ill-will, a vicious disposition. The phrase calls attention to the fact that wickedness is in reality an abnormal part of human character, not a normal part (Ecclesiastes 7:29).
- C. We must have the attitude that we will renounce sinful activities as though they were the most disgusting things we have ever been in contact with. The pure heart will be the one that will submit to this command (Psalm 24:3-4; Proverbs 15:26; 1 Peter 1:16). When we come before God, we need to be in a frame of mind which promotes purity. That means renouncing sin.
- D. When you come before God in worship, don't be a hypocrite. It just eats and gnaws at you and God will judge that unrighteousness (Job 27:8; Matthew 24:51).

II. **What To Do While We Worship -- "*and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.*"**

- A. While worshiping God, Christians must receive the word. "Receive" means to receive favorably, give an ear to, embrace,

accept or approve. The same word is used of the Bereans in Acts 17:11. Paul commended the Thessalonians for receiving the word gladly (1 Thessalonians 1:6; 2:13). Notice the action was always in the word, and not in some action of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:10).

- B. We are to receive it in humility, meekness, mildness or gentleness. This is the attitude which expresses itself in a patient submissiveness to offense (Zephaniah 2:3; Galatians 5:22-23). Being meek means coming to terms with our sinfulness and hearing our faults. It also means a desire to be molded and formed by the teachings of the gospel.
- C. The word "implanted" does not signify something at birth, but rather later in life. It was used to mean "sent into a man to be a part of his nature." The word of God must be rooted or implanted into our hearts by teaching and hearing (Romans 10:17).
- D. The primary design of the word of God is to save our souls. Anyone who attempts to change this purpose does a terrible injustice to the gospel. The gospel still has the power to change people's hearts (Romans 1:16).

III. **What To Do After We Worship -- "*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*"**

- A. Doing must fall in line with hearing (Luke 6:46-49). A "doer" is one who performs an action or obeys. We must practice what we hear! If we were to hear a sermon everyday of the week from an angel in heaven, yet did not act upon it, the words would never bring us to heaven. There must be inward practice by prayer and meditation, and outward practice in obedience.
- B. Being a "doer" means that it is not enough to remember what we hear and be able to repeat it, to agree with it, to commend it, to write it, and preserve it; that which finds the best acceptance in the sight of God is being a doer of His word.
- C. The commandments of God are not beyond our ability to bear (1 John 5:3). In fact, those who really want to serve God will not revile His commandments and despise those Christians who want to help weaker Christians.
- D. Hearers who are content to "hear only" delude themselves. The word means to deceive, misjudge, miscalculate, or reason falsely. Self deceit is the worst deceit of all (Galatians 6:3; 1 John 1:8). Those are the people who believe that they can be saved by "hearing only" or "faith only." That is a grave mistake. Acceptance to God requires action (Hebrews 11), which in turn implies the steps in God's plan of salvation.

Conclusion. How do you want God to view your worship? Pleasing worship will require more than dressing nicely, coming to a comfortable building and spending three or four hours a week. If you think you are going to get by with that, you are fooling yourself.

Have the courage to make yourself pure, receive the word and then go out and fulfill that word. That is what must be done when we worship. When Jesus told the rich young ruler what he needed to do to inherit eternal life, the young man went away very sad. Do you think that Jesus went running after him and said, "Wait a minute, may we can work something out ..." I do not believe that Jesus would have caved in just because He saw someone who was unwilling to go the distance. I cannot cave in either. We have examined what must be done and now it is up to you to decide if you want to do it.