

WORSHIPING GOD: WHEN, WHERE, and HOW MUCH?

Please recall Jesus' statement on worship made to a Samaritan woman 2,000 years ago. "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:23-24).

Remember, too, that we have defined the terms of Jesus' two part formula for one's being a true worshiper. The spirit referred to by Jesus is man's spirit consisting of his intellect (I Cor. 2:11); his will (Mat-thew 26:41); and his emotions (Mark 8:12; Acts 17:16). The truth of this formula is God's own word (John 8:31-32; 17:17).

And we have also pointed out that worshipping God is not confined to the feelings of our spirit expressed through prayers, hymns, com-memorating Jesus' sacrifice, contributing from our means, and study of the Scriptures, but also involves our active service to God.

Are we saying, then, that the acts of worship listed above that are usually rendered in an assembly of a local church are not necessary and vital? No, not at all. To the contrary they are specified in the Bible and are therefore essential to our worship of God. But we are saying that these things alone do not constitute the fullness of worship God re- quires apart from a church assembly as we cope with tasks, issues and problems in our daily lives. Following are two examples.

Joseph, steward of the house of the captain of Pharaoh's guard (Potiphar), was tempted by his master's wife, not likely the ugliest woman in Egypt. But what was Joseph's response? "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9). Young Joseph knew God's will, conformed his will to God's, and did so gladly bearing the heavy consequences of "a woman scorned." In this way, in this "real world" situation, Joseph honored God. This was true worship.

Jesus, facing the ghastly horror of crucifixion, prayed, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me;" but then added, "Neverthe- less, not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39). Jesus knew his atoning sacrifice was essential to God's plan, conformed his will to that of his Father and went to the cross with love in his heart, not only for the Father, but also for each one of us whose sin made that terrible sacrifice necessary. An example of true worship—the greatest of all!

What, then, about our daily lives? Are we true worshipers? Only if we submit daily to the truth of God's word?

—Jerry F. Bassett