

*How
Would God
Have Us Worship Him?*

A Message from Jesus Ministry

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How Are We to Worship God?

God, in various times and places down through the ages, has instructed His followers on how to worship Him. Yet there is much confusion among believers about when, where, and how to reverence God. There are even conflicting views on what constitutes worship. Does worship mean singing praises to God in song? Does it include praying? Is it reflective reading and studying the Bible—the Word of God?

Does the proper reverence of God also include special days and times?

What does money have to do with worship?

Wouldn't it be great to know if we were worshiping God in the manner He has directed and in the way that pleases Him? Let's look into the Word of God and seek understanding from our Lord as He leads us into all truth through the Holy Spirit.

God's Covenants

If we use the Bible as our guide, it is necessary for us to understand how the Bible was constructed. There are two main parts to the Bible consisting of the Old and New Testaments. Each Testament contains covenants with God's people. Each agreement has instructions and promises for those to whom God gave that contract. We will not fully comprehend God's instructions concerning worship until we completely understand the agreements God has made with His people.

In the Old Testament, before the Covenant with Israel, God made different agreements with His people. It is important for us to note the terms, the conditions, and the promises of the various covenants God has given. We must ask, "For whom was the contract intended? What were the conditions and promises of it? What was its duration? And are we or God bound by that covenant today?"

In Noah's time, God made a covenant with him and his family to protect them from the flood (Gen. 6:18). After the flood, God made another agreement with Noah, his family, and all living creatures to never send another worldwide flood. "And the [rain] bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth" (Gen. 9:16).

In Abraham's day, "...the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river

Euphrates” (Gen. 15:18).

To this agreement with Abram was added the covenant of “circumcision.” It was between God, Abraham, and his descendants that followed him. (See Gen. 17:7-21.)

Look closely at the promises and conditions. Abraham and his male descendants were to be circumcised, God pledged to give Abraham’s descendants the land of Canaan, and God covenanted to be their God.

After Israel came out of Egypt, God remembered His covenant with Abraham and established a new one with Israel, Abraham’s descendants. Moses read the terms and conditions of the contract and the people agreed to its terms. “...All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, ‘Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words’” (Ex. 24:7-8).

This covenant contained a set of national laws, statutes, and ordinances to govern a nation. It had promises and blessings that God would give for obedience. In this covenant with the nation of Israel, God promised to be their God and the people agreed to have no other gods. This covenant had both physical and spiritual aspects to it.

The Ten Commandments were part of this covenant with Israel and were established as a set of national standards or boundaries for a relationship with God, the nation of Israel, and its fellow citizens. Some of these principles were in existence long before the nation of Israel was formed and it was considered sin to ignore them. (Look at the following scriptures for further clarity: Gen. 4:7; 18:20; 20:9; 31:36; 39:9; 42:22; 50:17; and Ex. 10:17.)

For most people, there is confusion about what part of God’s Word applies to them today. They want to know what segments, if any, of the Old Covenant have been replaced by the New? And, is there any of the Old Covenant that is applicable today?

Unless we understand the covenants, the Bible will make no sense. We read in the Old Covenant serious consequences and even death for violating its commands. Yet, in the New Covenant, we see Jesus not so concerned about the technicalities of the Sabbath commands and, thereby, greatly offending the Pharisees and keepers of the law. Jesus did not worry about doing good on the Sabbath; He still took the time to care for the needs of the people. He allowed His disciples to pick grain on the Sabbath. He healed the sick, straightened out a woman bent over for eighteen years, and allowed a man to see that was blind from birth—all this was done on the Sabbath.

Many of the recorded miracles in the Gospels were accomplished on the Sabbath. The religious rulers of the time even accused Jesus of not being a man of God because He wasn’t keeping the Sabbath as they were accustomed to keeping it. They were even plotting His death because of what He did on the Sabbath! Yet, “...as His custom was, He [Jesus] went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read” (Luke 4:16). Jesus both healed and worshipped on the Sabbath.

So, how is it that Jesus, the Son of God, came to the earth and lived a perfect life—that is, a life without sin, yet, in the eyes of the Pharisees, broke nearly every Sabbath rule according to their view of the Old Covenant?

With all these conflicting opinions to consider, what is a believer and worshiper to do?

Jesus shows, through the parable of patching an old piece of clothing and preserving new wine, the need for changes in the old system (Luke 5:34-38). In this parable, Jesus was speaking in a much larger sense than fasting, patching clothing, and preserving wine. He was talking about our approach to the Old and New Covenant.

“No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved” (Matt. 9:16-17).

The Old Covenant was not going to be patched up with the New Covenant. The New Covenant, with the worshipers of God, was going to be a new document—a new contract! The new wine was a symbol of the new terms and conditions that were going to be placed into a New Covenant! By doing it this way, the new worshiper of God (Christian) and the new contract (New Covenant) would both be preserved.

The New Covenant is a Spiritual agreement with those who have the Holy Spirit. It is eternal, with Spiritual promises and blessings.

One part of the New Covenant is the Sabbath. Jesus helps us understand the Sabbath by saying, “... ‘Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungered, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the showbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?’ And He [Jesus] said unto them, **‘The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath’**” (Mark 2:25-28).

In the New Testament application of the Sabbath, God does not intend the Sabbath to be a millstone around our necks or a ball and chain secured to our legs. The Sabbath was given to us as a blessing and a gift so we would have a chance to get to know God better. It was to be special time set aside to have quality time with Him; a time to bask in His presence and enjoy His company. The more we take advantage of His offer, the more God reveals Himself to us in personal and intimate ways.

There were spiritual aspects or instructions given to Israel which went “over their heads,” so to speak; spiritual things given to them that they simply didn’t fully comprehend or understand. One example was the Ten Commandments. These Commands were Holy (Rom. 7). Another example was the Holy Convocations given to Israel in Leviticus 23. These Convocations, of which the Sabbath was included, were

given, for the most part, to carnal-minded people (those without the Holy Spirit). Therefore, they couldn't fully understand the spiritual intent and meaning of these commanded meetings. These Holy Convocations were to point to events in the future and would help them to understand and to remember God's plan for them and all mankind.

To learn more of how these days fit into Christian worship, please go to our website www.amessagefromjesusministry.org and download our informative booklet [*Customs and Traditions of the First Century Church of God*](#).

The Ten Commandments

About this time, "red flags" may start going up in the minds of many people. Some in one camp will say, "The Ten Commandments are still in effect today!" Another group may state, "The Ten Commandments are done and gone with the Old Covenant."

Let's seek God's answers by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth.

What were Jesus' teachings about the law? "Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. [Christ did not come to get rid of the Ten Commandments.] No, I came to fulfill them. I assure you, until heaven and earth disappear, even the smallest detail of God's law will remain until its purpose is achieved. [The purpose for the law and when its usefulness will be over is missed.] So if you break the smallest commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be great in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 5:17-19 NLT).

Which camp would you like to be in, with those who break the commands of God and teach others to do the same, or with those who obey God's laws and are willing to teach them to others?

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets [Christ did not come to do away with the law]: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. [The last we checked, the heavens and the earth were still in existence, therefore, the law is still in force and in effect.] Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:17-19).

Jesus came to magnify the Spiritual intent of the Ten Commandments. "You have heard that the law of Moses says, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust in his eye has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matt. 5:27-28 NLT).

Here Jesus Christ established the Law of God in its expanded, spiritual intent as a

part of the New Covenant. Jesus confirmed the spiritual application of the law. The purpose for the law is where many Christians become confused.

We see in Romans 7 what the Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to say about the laws of God. I would encourage everyone to read this chapter in two or more translations to better understand what God intended.

Paul makes the point about the sanctity of marriage and clarifies the terms and conditions of that contract. He shows that, if one of the parties of the marriage contract dies, the other is free to marry and is no longer bound by that marriage law.

Christ's death on the cross freed Him from the Old Covenant as the Husband of the Nation of Israel and allowed Him to make a New Covenant or contract with us.

Paul uses this analogy of the marriage contract to illustrate how death can satisfy the requirements of the law. And so it is with Christians of the New Covenant. "So this is the point: The law no longer holds you in its power, because you died to its power when you died with Christ on the cross..." (Rom. 7:4 NLT).

It is our willingness to die with Christ on the cross, that is, to accept the death of Christ to cover all our sins, which releases us from the penalty phase of the law (its indictment of death). When we accept His death, we too die to our old way of life. But our death doesn't do away with the law or make it any less powerful.

The Apostle Paul continued to explain, "What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, 'Thou shalt not covet'" (Rom. 7:7). Paul went on to show, "Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (v. 12). He also said that, "...the law is spiritual..." (v. 14). It is the holy, spiritual Law of God that shows us what sin is. The law is not done away. It has a place and purpose in the New Covenant. The Ten Commandments will continue to be in God's plan until there is no more physical matter in the universe.

But because Christians accept, by faith, the death of Jesus for their sins, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:1-2).

Or, "So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to Him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death" (Rom. 8:1-2 NLT).

We, as Christians, have a different law to live by now. It is "the power of the life-giving Spirit in Jesus"! It is the NEW LAW OF LOVE! (See John 13:34; Rom. 13:10.) We now live in the Spirit because we died with Jesus and now walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is*

death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Rom. 8:5-9).

If we now live by a different standard, why does God still place so much importance on the Ten Commandments that were given to Moses? Let’s find out why these laws and their Spiritual intent are still in effect today.

The Apostle Paul clearly understood this when he wrote, “But some teachers have missed this whole point. They have turned away from these things and spend their time arguing and talking foolishness. They want to be known as teachers of the law of Moses, but they don’t know what they are talking about, even though they seem so confident. We know these laws are good when they are used as God intended. **But they were not made for people who do what is right.** They are for people who are disobedient and rebellious, who are ungodly and sinful, who consider nothing sacred and defile what is holy, who murder their father or mother or other people. These laws are for people who are sexually immoral, for homosexuals and slave traders, for liars and oath breakers, and for those who do anything else that contradicts the right teaching” (I Tim. 1:6-10 NLT).

Do we now understand? The principles and standards of the Ten Commandments are not for Christians who are living rightly before God. We are now to live by “the power of the life-giving Spirit in Jesus Christ”—the expanded, spiritual law of love. The Ten Commandments are for the disobedient, the ungodly, and the sinful ones. Why is this? **It is to show everyone how sinful we really are!** Its purpose is to help us to realize our only hope of redemption from the penalty of sin is through Jesus Christ. If there was no law, there would be no sin and if there was no sin, there would be no need for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. (See Rom. 4:15.)

The Ten Commandments are, therefore, for the unbelievers and the disobedient, not for the faithful and obedient worshipers of God. We now live by a higher standard: “the law of the Spirit of life in Jesus”—the Spiritual law of love.

When we apply this “power of the life-giving Spirit in Jesus,” we begin to understand the purpose of the Law was to point us to a relationship with God. This connectedness could only be accomplished through Jesus Christ. The first four commands, which included the Sabbath, were a call for us to unite with our Creator. The Sabbath was like a spiritual straitjacket to make us spend time with Him.

Today, living by the “law of the Spirit of life in Jesus,” we have not just a physical rest on a certain day, but a spiritual rest in God through Jesus Christ twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year. We now have closeness with God, not on a physical level only, but on a Spiritual level too. Our rest with Him is now through our Spiritual life in Jesus Christ. The spiritual application of the Sabbath day is that of a relationship with God, by and through His Spirit dwelling in us. We now have peace with God through faith. We

are no more cut off from Him.

Is there a place for the Ten Commandments? Yes! To the sinner, sin is the transgression of the Law and the penalty for sin is death. (See I John 3:4; Rom. 6:23.) The Ten Commandments are not a standard or way of becoming right with God under the New Covenant. **Their purpose is to bring the unbeliever and sinner to the knowledge of sin and to help him see his need for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ!** If he is willing to accept that sacrifice of Jesus for his sins, Christ will give him right-standing with God.

A New Covenant

The Apostle Paul said, “He [God] is the one who has enabled us to represent His new covenant. **This is a covenant, not of written laws, but of the Spirit.** The old way ends in death; in the new way, the Holy Spirit gives life. That old system of law etched in stone led to death... Shouldn’t we expect far greater glory when the Holy Spirit is giving life? If the old covenant, which brings condemnation, was glorious, how much more glorious is the new covenant, which makes us right with God! In fact, that first glory was not glorious at all compared with the overwhelming glory of the new covenant. So if the old covenant, which has been set aside, was full of glory, then the new covenant, which remains forever, has far greater glory” (II Cor. 3:6-11 NLT).

Under the Old Covenant, the standard to live by was the law. It kept the nation of Israel in protective custody, so to speak, until they could put their faith in the coming Savior. (See Gal. 3:23 NLT.)

In the New Covenant, our faith is in the ever-living Son of God. “Until John the Baptist began to preach, the laws of Moses and the messages of the prophets were your guides. But now the Good News of the Kingdom of God is preached, and eager multitudes are forcing their way in. But that doesn’t mean that the law has lost its force in even the smallest point. It is stronger and more permanent than heaven and earth” (Luke 16:16-17 NLT).

Even God found fault with the Old Covenant. “If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a second covenant to replace it. But God Himself found fault with the old one when He said: ‘The day will come,’ says the Lord, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt. They did not remain faithful to My covenant, so I turned My back on them,’ says the Lord.

“‘But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day,’ says the Lord: ‘I will put My laws in their minds so they will understand them, and I will write them on their hearts so they will obey them. I will be their God, and they will be My people. And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their family, saying, “You should know the Lord.” For everyone [that has the Holy Spirit from God—that is, if they have accepted and come under the terms of the New Covenant],

from the least to the greatest, will already know Me. And I will forgive their wrongdoings, and I will never again remember their sins.’

“When God speaks of a new covenant, it means He has made the first one obsolete. It is now out of date and ready to be put aside” (Heb. 8:7-13 NLT).

This conflict of trying to understand the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant is not new. The Galatians of the Apostle Paul’s day had teachers that were still trying to convince the early Christians of the need to follow the Old Covenant principles, like circumcision and other traditions, to be saved.

“Oh, foolish Galatians! What magician has cast an evil spell on you? For you used to see the meaning of Jesus Christ’s death as clearly as though I had shown you a signboard with a picture of Christ dying on the cross. Let me ask you this one question: ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit by keeping the law?’ Of course not, for the Holy Spirit came upon you only after you believed the message you heard about Christ. Have you lost your senses? After starting your Christian lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort? You have suffered so much for the Good News. Surely it was not in vain, was it? Are you now going to just throw it all away?

“I ask you again, does God give you the Holy Spirit and work miracles among you because you obey the law of Moses? Of course not! It is because you believe the message you heard about Christ.

“In the same way, ‘Abraham believed God, so God declared him righteous because of his faith.’ The real children of Abraham, then, are all those who put their faith in God” (Gal. 3:1-7 NLT).

“But those who depend on the law to make them right with God are under His curse, for the Scriptures say, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all these commands that are written in God’s Book of the Law.’ Consequently, it is clear that no one can ever be right with God by trying to keep the law. For the Scriptures say, ‘It is through faith that a righteous person has life.’ How different from this way of faith is the way of law, which says, ‘If you wish to find life by obeying the law, you must obey all of its commands.’ But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When He was hung on the cross, He took upon Himself the curse for our wrongdoing...” (vv. 10-13 NLT).

Our righteousness in the New Covenant comes by faith in Jesus Christ. “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom. 3:20). Paul goes on to say, “Well then, why was the law given? It was given to show people how guilty they are...” (Gal. 3:19 NLT). “...The law was our guardian and teacher to lead us until Christ came. So now, through faith in Christ, we are made right with God” (Gal. 3:24 NLT).

Varying Degrees of Faith

If the statutes and ordinances of the Old Covenant were to end at the death of our Lord and a New Covenant was to begin with the resurrection of Christ and the giving of the Holy Spirit, where does this leave us today?

Today we live under the New Covenant. The sacrifice for sin was made once for all time through the crucifixion of Christ. The use of the law was changed from a standard for righteousness to a tool to show how guilty we are as sinners.

We now understand the purpose for the Ten Commandments, under the New Covenant, is to show people their sins. God makes us right with Him only through faith in Jesus Christ. “Well then, **if we emphasize faith, does this mean that we can forget about the law? Of course not! In fact, only when we have faith do we truly fulfill the law**” (Rom. 3:31 NLT). The principles of the Ten Commandments have been taken to a whole new level in the New Covenant (the Spiritual Law of Love).

The Old Covenant and the old system of worship ended with the death of Christ. Therefore, there is no requirement to carry out its commands today. This statement may make some people very upset, but please bear with me as we see how we are to worship God today.

Some have dropped many of the Old Covenant systems of worship but have retained similar clothing designs worn by Aaron and the priests, including such things as the miter (headdress), long flowing robes, habits, and other items of dress. Some have also kept the burning of incense as a significant part of their worship.

We also see other believers feeling strongly about observing Sunday as their day of worship. Easter and Christmas also play a big role on their worship calendar.

Then throw into the mix the vegetarians who worship God by not eating meats. Others cling to the dietary law of clean and unclean meats given to the nation of Israel. Yet another part of worship, with some, is fasting.

How are we to live peaceably with one another as Christians when we have such a wide variety of beliefs and methods of worship? We have many Christians with staunchly ingrained feelings about the appropriate days, times, and places for worship.

If we are going to take the name “Christian,” it is imperative that we do all we can to follow Christ. The Church is, “...built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner *stone*” (Eph. 2:20).

The Church should have decorum. It must have good customs, proper manners, suitable behavior, modesty, correctness, restraint, respectability, and unanimity. It needs to bring the new believer from where he is to where God wants him to be. The Church cannot allow anyone to drag into it any pagan, Satan-filled ideas that one may have had before becoming a Christian. This is not done by judging the person, but rather by setting a good example by

using the teachings, customs, traditions, and principles from Jesus Christ, the Apostles, and the Prophets of the New Testament Church!

The Apostle Paul said, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ” (I Cor. 11:1). He went on to teach, “Therefore, brethren, **stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle**” (II Thess. 2:15).

In the Church we need to follow the customs and traditions of Jesus Christ and the first century Apostles. We must, “...earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3). **We are not to judge newcomers to the faith. We must teach them sound doctrine, give them the tools needed to strengthen their faith, and bring them from where they are to a point where they will be able to teach others the doctrine, customs, and traditions of the Church.**

If you are interested in the doctrine, customs, and traditions of the Church, please go to our website and download our free booklets [*The Doctrine of Christ*](#) and [*Customs and Traditions of the First Century Church of God*](#).

What we eat and the days we keep are matters over which we should not be judging one another. Paul said, “Accept other believers who are weak in faith [This doesn’t mean we leave them weak in the faith! Neither should we accept every wrong habit they had before they came into the Church!], and don’t argue with them about what they think is right or wrong” (Rom. 14:1 NLT). We aren’t to quarrel about doctrine, customs, and traditions of the Church. We must set the example and follow the doctrine of Christ and the customs and traditions of the First Century Church and not allow sedition and heresy within the Church!

God’s Word, the Holy Bible, is Jesus Christ in writing! Jesus Christ is the author and finisher of our faith. He is the chief cornerstone of the Church and He sets the doctrine for the Church.

The Apostle Paul explains these differences we have with new believers as being varying degrees of faith (Rom. 14:1-5).

Colossians 2:16-17 says, “Let no man therefore judge you [or you judge others] in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.” This verse is saying the Sabbath, the Holy Convocations, the new moon, and any such practices of the Old Covenant were a shadow of the real things to come.

If we choose to eat or to drink only certain foods, it is not right for other believers to judge us, or for us to judge them. Eventually we will all come to understand and have unity in Jesus Christ. We, as Christians, are not to be concerned by what other people think about us. We must follow the examples given to us by Jesus Christ and the Apostles. The key here is to determine and to prove what are God’s instructions for Christians.

Traditions as Part of Our Worship

Nowhere in the New Covenant do we find a command to stop worshiping on the Sabbath, nor do we find a command to worship on Sunday. We do, however, see customs and traditions of worship on the Sabbath and observances of other Holy Convocations throughout the New Testament. “And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, **as His custom was**, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read” (Luke 4:16). **It was Christ’s custom to go to the Synagogue on the Sabbath.** Luke was not inspired to write, “Jesus, as He has commanded us, went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath.”

What we must understand is that these are the examples of the customs and traditions Jesus and the Apostles set for us as the foundation of the Church. They are what the First Century Church of God observed and we should follow their examples in our worship of God.

Traditions are valuable if they convey truth or examples of important parts of God’s plan that should not be forgotten. The Sabbath and holy convocations of the Old Covenant did impart meaning and purpose. They outlined God’s plan for mankind and are worthy examples to follow. Traditions of the early Christians should continue to be observed under the New Covenant today.

The New Testament scriptures do not make observing these days a doctrine! It is not sin to worship at other times or places. There is no Biblical support for observing Sunday, Christmas, or Easter as days of worship! The Holy Spirit will not lead you to that conclusion.

Let’s be honest!

Don’t let your preferences drive your doctrine! And don’t try to force a day for worship on others or compel them to eat the way you do. To do so would be sin! But it is the responsibility of the Church to set the standard by following the examples of Jesus and the Apostles in how to worship God in spirit and in truth.

Don’t be like the Pharisees. “Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, ‘Why walk not Thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?’ He answered and said unto them, ‘Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, “This people honoureth Me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.’ And He said unto them, ‘**Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.** For Moses said, “Honour thy father and thy mother”; and, “Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death”: But ye say, “If a man shall say to his father or mother, ‘*It is Corban* [a gift offered to God],’ that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free.*” And ye suffer him no

more to do ought for his father or his mother; making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye” (Mark 7:5-13). We are to be careful in the area of traditions. “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8).

“Don’t let anyone lead you astray with empty philosophy and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the evil powers of this world, and not from Christ. For in Christ the fullness of God lives in a human body, and you are complete through your union with Christ. He is the Lord over every ruler and authority in the universe.

“When you came to Christ, you were ‘circumcised,’ but not by a physical procedure. It was a spiritual procedure—the cutting away of your sinful nature. For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with Him you were raised to a new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.

“You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ. He forgave all our sins. He canceled the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ’s cross. In this way, God disarmed the evil rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by His victory over them on the cross of Christ.

“So don’t let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not [or for] celebrating certain holy days or new-moon ceremonies or Sabbaths. For these rules were only shadows of the real thing, Christ Himself. Don’t let anyone condemn you by insisting on self-denial. And don’t let anyone say you must worship angels [Angel means messenger in Greek. So, in other words, don’t try to worship those who bring you the message of the Gospel. The tradition of trying to worship the church leadership had already begun and God never wanted that to happen.], even though they say they have had visions about this. These people claim to be so humble, but their sinful minds have made them proud. But they are not connected to Christ, the head of the body. For we are joined together in His body by His strong sinews, and we grow only as we get our nourishment and strength from God.

“You have died with Christ, and He has set you free from the evil powers of this world. So why do you keep on following rules of the world, such as, ‘Don’t handle, don’t eat, don’t touch.’ Such rules are mere human teaching about things that are gone as soon as we use them. These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, humility, and severe bodily discipline. But they have no effect when it comes to conquering a person’s evil thoughts and desires” (Col. 2:8-23 NLT).

Varying degrees of faith can be attributed to how much we have grown in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (See II Pet. 3:18.) “Hast thou faith? Have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth” (Rom. 14:22). “For you have been called to live in freedom—not

freedom to satisfy your sinful nature, but freedom to serve one another in love” (Gal. 5:13 NLT).

In Spirit and in Truth

So here we are, Christians all over the world, worshiping God in different ways, observing divergent customs on dissimilar days, and wearing various dress and apparel. Are some right and others wrong?

People have wondered when, where, and how to worship God for thousands of years. Some think they must worship here, while others feel that it's over there.

A woman that Jesus met at Jacob's well, just outside the town of Sychar in Samaria, was concerned about how and where to worship God as well. After talking with Jesus for awhile she perceived, "...You must be a prophet. 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?" (John 4:19-20 NLT). She and her people thought the place for worship was important. And it is no different today. Some Jewish people are waiting for a physical temple from which to offer sacrifices. Only then would they feel that they were reverencing God properly.

Here is Christ's answer for the woman at the well, and it is the same answer for us today! "Jesus replied, 'Believe Me, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father here or in Jerusalem... But the time is coming and is already here when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for anyone who will worship Him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth'" (vv. 21, 23-24 NLT). Our Father wants a Spiritual relationship with us not just a physical one, as was the case under the Old Covenant with Israel.

To worship God in Spirit and in truth we, as human beings, must first have a new Spirit within us.

God has prepared a way, through Jesus Christ, to have much more than the physical relationship He had with the Nation of Israel. Now we can have a much superior, Spiritual connection with God and that is how He wants us to worship Him—in Spirit and in truth!

God lives outside time and space. He lives in eternity. He is eternity! God seeks us to worship Him in Spirit and in truth. That is, to transcend the physical realm. God wants our worship of Him to go far beyond the rotation of the earth, sunsets, physical time and space—to go beyond all material things.

Our worship of God must be much more than head knowledge and human intellect. We cannot worship God in Spirit unless we have His Spirit. It takes the Spirit of God and the Word of God to worship God in Spirit and in truth! This is the only way that we

can, “...love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind” and, “...Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:37, 39 NLT).

Religious Paraphernalia and Worship

People have always wanted to “see” and to “touch” the object of their adoration and worship. So men have created things to aid in their reverence of God. Idols are especially prevalent among the pagans. But because men are human, idols have found their way into Christian worship as well. It is common and natural for people to create likenesses in their method of reverence to help them “visualize” God. This thinking has its roots and inspiration from the demons and is idolatry. The Apostle Paul said, “So, my dear friends, flee from the worship of idols...” (I Cor. 10:14 NLT). “...What I am saying is that these sacrifices are offered to demons, not to God. And I don’t want any of you to be partners with demons. You cannot drink from the cup of the Lord and from the cup of demons, too. You cannot eat at the Lord’s Table and at the table of demons, too. What? Do you dare to rouse the Lord’s jealousy as Israel did? Do you think we are stronger than He is?” (vv. 20-22 NLT).

We, too, can “rouse the Lord’s jealousy” by using images and likenesses in our worship of Him.

Today the inspiration from Satan is much more subtle in blending objects and images with worship. He has, over hundreds of years, worked his ways of idolatry into Christian reverence. Many have come to believe that if it is a representation of God, or Christ, or Saint Peter, or Mary, the mother of Jesus, then, of course, it’s all right.

If we worship God in Spirit and in truth, there are no spiritual requirements to use physical accessories. We must be careful not to use images, likenesses, and other assorted paraphernalia in place of worshiping God directly in spirit and in truth. Don’t use substitutions for the real thing! And don’t pray to or worship anyone or anything else other than God!

I am sad to say that some religious organizations and denominations pray to and worship departed saints—even the mother of Jesus Christ.

Here are God’s instructions, “Thou shalt not make thee *any* graven image, *or* any likeness *of any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the waters beneath the earth [this would include depictions of God Himself, Jesus, a cross, Christ on a cross, the saints (including Peter and the other Apostles), and Mary, the mother of Jesus]: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate Me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments” (Deut. 5:8-10).

Under the New Covenant, the Ten Commandments point us to a new, Spiritual level of love and obedience. We love God by His Spirit dwelling in us and honor and respect

Him far more than we ever could under the physical terms of the Laws of Moses in the Old Covenant.

Therefore, we don't need, and must not use, depictions and created things to represent God the Father or Jesus when we have the real thing—that is, God living in us through His Holy Spirit! Do not attempt to replicate God! He is in us if we have His Spirit!

We cannot use departed saints to intercede for us. Jesus is our intercessor, “...*It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us*” (Rom. 8:34). And it is, “Likewise the Spirit [that] also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*” (Rom. 8:26-27).

When it comes to Whom we are to worship, we find in the Bible only two beings in the Godhead that are worthy of our worship—the Father and the Son Jesus Christ. (See John 4:24; Heb. 1:5-6.)

So we don't need, nor should we use, paraphernalia or attempt to go through saints to worship God. We have the real thing—God Himself and Jesus Christ!

Methods and Styles of Worship

As we mature in our Christian life, our methods and styles of worship may change. The Apostle Paul makes clear this process and growth in the fourteenth chapter of Romans.

Paul explains our worship of God, “Accept Christians who are weak in faith, and don't argue with them about what they think is right or wrong. For instance, one person believes it is all right to eat anything. But another believer who has a sensitive conscience will eat only vegetables. Those who think it is all right to eat anything must not look down on those who won't. And those who won't eat certain foods must not condemn those who do, for God has accepted them.

“Who are you to condemn God's servants? They are responsible to the Lord, so let Him tell them whether they are right or wrong. The Lord's power will help them do as they should.

“In the same way, some think one day is more holy than another day, while others think every day is alike. Each person should have a personal conviction about this matter. Those who have a special day for worshiping the Lord are trying to honor Him. Those who eat all kinds of food do so to honor the Lord, since they give thanks to God before eating. And those who won't eat everything also want to please the Lord and give thanks to God. For we are not our own masters when we live or when we die. While we

live, we live to please the Lord. And when we die, we go to be with the Lord. So in life and in death, we belong to the Lord. Christ died and rose again for this very purpose, so that He might be Lord of those who are alive and of those who have died.

“So why do you condemn another Christian? Why do you look down on another Christian? Remember, each of us will stand personally before the judgment seat of God” (Rom. 14:1-10 NLT).

Paul said, “I know and am perfectly sure on the authority of the Lord Jesus that no food, in and of itself, is wrong to eat. But if someone believes it is wrong, then for that person it is wrong. And if another Christian is distressed by what you eat, you are not acting in love if you eat it. Don’t let your eating ruin someone for whom Christ died... For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit... Don’t tear apart the work of God over what you eat. Remember, there is nothing wrong with these things in themselves. But it is wrong to eat anything if it makes another person stumble. Don’t eat meat or drink wine or do anything else if it might cause another Christian to stumble. You may have the faith to believe that there is nothing wrong with what you are doing, but keep it between yourself and God. Blessed are those who do not condemn themselves by doing something they know is all right. But if people have doubts about whether they should eat something, they shouldn’t eat it. They would be condemned for not acting in faith before God. If you do anything you believe is not right, you are sinning” (vv. 14-15, 17, 20-23 NLT).

“...Some think one day is more holy than another day, while others think every day is alike. Each person should have a personal conviction about this matter” (Rom. 14:5 NLT). We are not to judge or to condemn one another about the days on which we worship or about the foods we eat.

When it comes to personal convictions about worshiping God, you must first prove your convictions based upon the Word of God with guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul said, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. 5:21). The Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth (John 16:13), but the Holy Spirit will not guide you into pagan practices, into the doctrines from demons, or into the commandments of men!

We should always ask, “What **did** Jesus do” then do the same. Jesus set us the example and we should follow in His steps (1 Pet. 2:21). Paul said, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). The scriptures do not allow us to worship God in any way we want!

While we should follow the custom and tradition set by Jesus and the Apostles of worshiping God on the Holy Convocations He established, we are now free to go above and beyond **by** worshiping God always—24/7—365 days a year. **We, as Christians, don’t have to wait for the weekend or a special day to worship God.** Neither do we need a special building or sanctuary in which to worship Him. We are now free to

worship God in Spirit and in Truth! But worshiping God in Spirit and in Truth doesn't mean to ignore all the examples set by Jesus and the Apostles.

What does it mean to worship God in truth? To know Truth is to know Jesus, for He said I am Truth (John 14:6). To worship God in Truth is to worship God through knowing and obeying Jesus Christ. If you are trying to worship God the Father apart from the instructions of Jesus, you are not worshiping Him in Spirit and in Truth. "Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also" (1 John 2:23 NKJV).

Worshipping and Fellowshiping Together

Is it necessary or important to worship together if we reverence God in Spirit and in truth everyday of the week?

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:24-25). A reason for gathering together is to encourage one another to love and good works. This is harder to do if we do not fellowship together. We need encouragement from one another to walk in the love of Christ. This assembling is also accomplished by visiting in one another's homes.

It is important to find a group that follows and obeys the Doctrine of Christ. By having a group of like-minded believers, you will be free to reverence God with the least distractions. "...I appeal to you by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ to stop arguing among yourselves. Let there be real harmony so there won't be divisions in the church. I plead with you to be of one mind, united in thought and purpose" (I Cor. 1:10 NLT).

Part of our worship is the fellowship we have with each other through the Holy Spirit. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (I John 1:3).

During the formation of the early New Testament Church, "...they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:42). Having meals together is a wonderful way to learn to appreciate the Holy Spirit in one another and is part of our overall experience of worshiping God.

Observance of the New Testament Passover

Jesus set us the example of how to follow in His footsteps, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps" (I Pet. 2:21).

A major example Jesus set for us was His observance of the New Testament

Passover. He began this new Passover service of demonstrating humility by washing the disciples' feet (John 13:1-17). They were reminded by this act that they were not greater than their Master. It showed them that they, too, should wash each others' feet and serve others just as Christ did.

After Jesus took up His garment and sat down He said, "Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for *so* I am. If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him" (John 13:13-16). Then, "...the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake *it*, and said, 'Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me.' After the same manner also *He took* the cup, when He had supped, saying, 'This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of Me'" (I Cor. 11:23-25). Jesus completed His comments to the disciples by saying, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17).

Our joy is fulfilled when we follow the examples of Jesus and do what He says. We worship God in Spirit and in Truth when we obey Him and do as we are instructed.

Sharing the observance of the New Testament Passover is a way of worshiping God. To worship God in Spirit and in truth is to commune with God on a Spiritual level. Because we have the Holy Spirit from the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, we no longer have a wall of division that separates us from God.

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (I John 1:3). This fellowship is accomplished by the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit.

This association we have with one another and God is expressed through our observing the New Testament Passover. It is this remembering the death of our Lord that unites us with one another, the Father, and Jesus Christ. We, "...were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (I Cor. 1:9). This is one reason for worshipping together and is one way to worship God in Spirit and in truth.

Celebrating the forgiveness of our sins through the death of our Lord preserves our fellowship and peace with God.

Sin was like the curtain that kept the people from the Holy of Holies in the temple. Because of faith in Jesus Christ, sin no longer separates us from God. We now are free to worship God all the time. Our Spirit can soar with God because we are now at peace with Him. We can continually be filled with the joy and happiness God gives through His Spirit.

Singing and Worship

For many, the word worship is synonymous with singing praises to God. It is one of the many ways to give praise and glory to God. “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. 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” (Col 3:16-17). When we worship in song, it should be our goal and desire to reach oneness of Spirit and union with God.

Bible Study, Prayer, and Worship

Communication is an important part of worshiping God. Bible study (one of God’s voices to us) and prayer (our communication with God) are essential to worship. “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” (II Tim. 3:16-17).

Bible study and prayer are here together because, in a sense, we can’t have one without the other. Relationship with and worship of God would be impossible without this two-way communication. We cannot understand the Word unless we pray and ask God to show us the truth. It is Jesus who is Truth and it is His Spirit that will lead us into all truth (John 14:6; 16:13).

As we read and study the Word of God, our meditation of God and the things of God allow us to dwell with Him in Spirit and in truth.

Our Spirit, that is the Spirit of God within us, can rise with God far above and beyond anything physical. This is how God wants us to worship Him!

Christian Service and Worship

Christian service is another form of showing reverence to God. It comes from a Spirit-filled life of love and devotion. Because we are dedicated to God, we want to serve and to give to our fellow Christians. “...Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done *it* unto Me” (Matt. 25:40). Everything we do should be a fruitful expression of our worship of God.

Giving and Worship

Because we are at-one with God through His Spirit, we reflect His joy and peace through our willingness to be involved wherever He is working. We give of what we have as a way of worshiping Him. This giving or sharing of the blessings God has given to us is an important part of our worship of God.

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matt. 6:19-21).

When we give to a widow in need or to a fatherless child, we are giving to God. **God loves a cheerful giver.** (See Psa. 10:14, 18; 68:5; Jas. 1:27; II Cor. 9:6-8 NLT.) **“...I assure you, when you did it to one of the least of these My brothers and sisters, you were doing it to Me”** (Matt. 25:40 NLT)! **When our gifts promote God’s goals and purposes, it is pleasing to Him.**

Ask God where He is working and let Him show you how to join Him in His work. Our desire and reason to give should be because it is the godly, loving thing to do. Giving to get for self is not God’s way. God’s intent is not to have us respond to Him because we are coerced. **God wants us to work with Him because we love Him, not because we are commanded.** God knows He cannot legislate love nor order anyone to love Him.

If you would like to understand more about working with God, please go to our website and download our free booklet [How God's Work is Accomplished.](#)

God’s principles in the New Covenant are simple, straightforward, and driven by our union with Him through the Holy Spirit. What drives us is love! That is why we give. **“...Freely ye have received, freely give”** (Matt. 10:8).

Paul’s comments about these principles of giving are very clear as well, “Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each make up your own mind as to how much you should give. Don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves the person who gives cheerfully. **And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.** As the Scriptures say, ‘Godly people give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will never be forgotten’” (II Cor. 9:6-9 NLT). The emphasis here is having plenty left over to share with others. The fruit of this giving results in having both physical and spiritual blessings to give to others. Isn’t God’s way of love under the New Covenant a wonderful way to live?

Work hard at following God as He leads you through the Holy Spirit. Be with Him in Spirit and follow Him in His Work.

This is what it means to worship God in Spirit and in truth and that is how the Father desires us to reverence Him. If our fellow brothers and sisters are weak in the faith and haven’t come to full maturity in Christ, be patient, realizing, “...They are responsible to the Lord, so let Him tell them whether they are right or wrong. The Lord’s power will help them do as they should” (Rom. 14:4 NLT). For it is by God’s grace, through faith,

that we are saved (Eph. 2:8).

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