**What kind of worship is God seeking?**

*John 4:19-24*

**Introduction**

1. Anyone can observe that there are varying forms of worship offered to God throughout the religious world.
2. Most hold the view that each worship holds its own special value in the eyes of God, so all are right and acceptable as long as it is offered from the heart.
3. The concept of varying forms of worship offered to God is not something new. Jesus addressed a leading statement from a woman concerning worship – **John 4:19-24**
4. What can we learn from what Jesus said to the Samaritan woman about worship?
5. Does God care how He is worshiped?
6. **John 4:19-24** Implies He Does
   1. **(v. 20)** – people in the past have consistently understood that God cares.
      1. This does not mean they have always been right themselves.
      2. However, the relativism of today in regard to fundamental matters such as worship has not always been the case among seekers of God. (Think Jews and Samaritans)
   2. **(v. 22)** – worship what is known (God) vs. what is not known.
      1. All would understand that if worship is not an action of the heart toward God it cannot be acceptable.
      2. How can worship be heartfelt to God if we don’t even know God.
      3. **Samaritans** – rejected all revelation after the 5 books of the Law – do not know God.
   3. (**v. 23)** – The Father is seeking such to worship Him.
      1. He is seeking a specific type of worship.
      2. Worship from “true worshipers,” thus, true worship.
   4. **(v. 24)** – God’s nature is noted in connection with the worship He desires.
      1. **Cf. Acts 17:24-25, 29** – He is Spirit, we shouldn’t think of Him as physical, and our worship shouldn’t reflect such.
7. He Has Cared in the Past
8. Pattern of the Tabernacle – **Exodus 25:1-9** – specs of the place for worship must be ***“just so.”***
   1. When David sought to build God a house – **2 Samuel 7:1-7** – didn’t say He wanted that.
   2. **Acts 7:47** – Solomon built Him a house.
9. Place of worship – **John 4:20, 22** – Mount Gerizim (Samaritans) or Jerusalem.
   1. God said He would provide a place – **Deuteronomy 12:5-7**
   2. God chose Jerusalem – **1 Kings 12:26-27** – Jerusalem understood as the prescribed place of worship by God. (Jeroboam, king of Israel, afraid the people will return and leave him – rebelled and made a different place of worship – **1 Kings 12:28-29**)
10. Worship offered in the past – **Leviticus 10:1** – He had not commanded, which means He had commanded something else.
    1. God specified which fire He wanted.
11. He Says He Cares
    1. **John 4:23** – Jesus said His Father is seeking true worshipers to worship Him in a specific way.
    2. **Colossians 3:17** – it must be done according the authority of the Lord.
    3. **2 Timothy 1:13** – it must be according to the pattern – like the tabernacle of the past (cf. Exodus 25:9).
    4. **Matthew 15:7-9** – in quoting from Isaiah, Jesus calls worship that is not according to God’s specifications vain (empty, unacceptable).
12. Will our type of worship affect our standing with God?
13. **John 4:19-24** Implies it Does
    1. **(v. 24)** – Jesus used the word “must”
       1. *dei*; it is (was, etc.) necessary (as binding) (STRONG)
       2. Must means there is no choice otherwise, but to do otherwise is to disobey God.
    2. “Must” implies law – i.e. matters disclosed by God as binding, that “must” be followed.
    3. Sin is lawlessness – **1 John 4:3**
    4. Sin, or lawlessness, is what affects our standing with God – **Isaiah 59:1-2**
    5. Ironically, a person can come to God seeking to pay Him respect through worship only to further damage their relationship with Him by worshiping improperly.
14. It Has in the Past
    1. Israelites making the gold calf – **Exodus 32:1-10** – turned from God’s commandment, and God’s wrath burned hot against them.
    2. Nadab and Abihu – **Leviticus 10:1-3** – devoured because they didn’t regard God as holy.
    3. King Saul – **1 Samuel 12:8-14** (When the Philistines were advancing) – time set for the proper worship offered by the priest Samuel but ignored by Saul – rejected from being king.
    4. King Saul again – **1 Samuel 15:20-23** – in failing to destroy all of Amalek, and offering sacrifices from the plunder to God.
15. He Says it Will
    1. Many will say to Him – **Matthew 7:21-23** – they practiced lawlessness, and will have to depart from Him.
    2. Paul called the Athenians, who worshiped God falsely, to repent – **Acts 17:29-31** – He will judge.
    3. **John 12:48** – His word will judge us in the end. So, if our worship is not according to His word it will affect our eternal standing with God.
16. What kind of worship is God seeking?
17. True Worship
    1. **John 4:23-24** – Jesus described what the Father is seeking.
       1. True worshipers implies true worship.
       2. True worship implies a false worship.
    2. True worship defined – worship in spirit and truth.
18. Worship in Spirit
    1. Worship is spirit is that which involves our inner man – i.e. from the heart.
       1. God is spirit – **John 4:24** – why would He be pleased with something outward.
       2. **Acts 17:24-25** – there is no outward form or substance that can be offered God which would be inherently pleasing. (Even if it is the proper form prescribed, if it is not offered from the heart it means nothing.)
    2. The Jews had a problem with offering worship that was not heartfelt – **Psalm 50:7-15**
       1. **(v. 8)** – He was not rebuking them for improper form.
       2. **(vv. 9-13)** – implies the attitude of their worship as being wrong – thinking they were offering these things to God because He needed them.
       3. **(vv. 14-15)** – the call to proper mindset – an offering of thanks, paying of vows (doing what we said we’d do in service to God in Covenant relationship), appeal to God for help, and glorifying God.
       4. Worship is not in spirit when our lives do not reflect our reverence to God in worship – **(vv. 16-23)** – worshiped God, and then lived immoral lives.
    3. What does the Lord delight in? – **Psalm 51:12-17** – after David’s sin with Bathsheba.
       1. A Psalm of penitence.
       2. **(vv. 16-17)** – it is not that God did not require sacrifice upon sin.
       3. David’s point is that these sacrifices don’t take care of the problem. God wants the contrite heart from one who is truly sorry for their sin.
    4. **Micah 6:6-8** – The Lord wants our devotion, not simply outward form worship.
19. Worship in Truth
    1. Worship must be more than simply heartfelt. It must be in the correct form.
    2. Worship in truth is according to what God has revealed in His truth.
    3. **Luke 6:46** – must do what He says.
    4. **Matthew 7:21-27** – after showing people were cast away for practicing lawlessness, Jesus’ words show the importance of conforming to truth.
       1. To do anything according to a different standard (foundation) than the words of Christ is to ultimately fail.
       2. The worship offered contrary to Christ’s word will falter as it pertains to being pleasing to God.
    5. Example of Cain and Abel – **Genesis 4:1-5** – Abel’s respected, Cain’s is not.
       1. **1 John 3:11-12** – Cains works were evil, but Abel’s righteous.
       2. What made the difference?
       3. **Hebrews 11:4** – Abel’s offering was “by faith”
       4. **Romans 10:17** – faith comes by hearing God’s word.
       5. **Hebrews 11:6** – impossible to please Him without faith – includes worship being pleasing to Him.
       6. I.e. proper, or true worship is offered by faith, i.e. according to God’s specified standard in His word.
    6. What kind of worship is God seeking? – **1 Corinthians 2:11-13** – we cannot just guess what God wants, for we cannot know what He wants without Him telling us.
       1. God tells us what worship He wants!
       2. Singing – **Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19**
       3. Praying – **1 Thessalonians 5:17**
       4. Lord’s Supper – **Acts 20:7**
       5. Preaching – **Acts 20:7**
       6. Giving – **1 Corinthians 16:1-2**
    7. Ultimately – **Colossians 3:17** – all our worship must be “in the name of the Lord,” i.e. by His authority.

**Conclusion**

1. We must realize there is a specific worship the Father is seeking.
2. It is impossible to please Him if we do not worship Him as He specifies.
3. Let us offer to God acceptable worship.