

“The Priority of True Worship”
John 4:21-26

The story of the Samaritan woman reinforces John’s main theme that Jesus is the Messiah and son of God. The thrust of these verses is not so much her conversion, but that Jesus is Messiah

John 4:21 “Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.”

There was no reason to debate locations, since both places would be obsolete soon and neither would have any role to play in the lives of those who genuinely worship God.

Notice that Jesus does not reprimand her for worshipping here rather than in Jerusalem. God cannot be contained in a house. [Acts 7:48](#)

John 4:22 “Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.”

The Samaritans did not know God. They did not have the full revelation of Him, and thus could not worship in truth.
[Hebrews 11:1-6](#)

What is the foundation of proper worship? first let us go to [Exodus 3:1-5](#), [Matthew 2:11](#)

A proper foundation of our worship depends on our motivation. If we are motivated by what appeals solely to our lustful desires, then our worship will not be pleasing to God. [1 John 2:15-16](#),

However, if our worship is based on our love for God because of what He did by sending His Son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins, it is pleasing to Him [Isaiah 56:6-7](#); [2 Corinthians 5:5-9](#).

John 4:23 “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.”

Jesus is explaining to the woman here, that true worship takes place in your heart. Worship (true), is not in all the ceremonial things you do, but do you really love the Father in your heart and desire to please Him?

Spirit is not capitalized above because this is speaking of **man's spirit**. The will of true Christians is to do what God would have them do. They diligently search the Bible to find the will of the Father, that they might live in it. [2 Timothy 2:15](#)

Only the spirit of man can truly worship this God who is Spirit. If we submit our will to the Father as Jesus did when He said “Nevertheless not my will but thine”, we will be worshipping the way He would have us to.

John 4:24 “God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”

What Does It Mean to Worship in Spirit And Truth?

Worshiping in Spirit and in truth is more than just a slick phrase to put a stamp of approval on how we worship. It literally means that our practices of worship are examined to see what sort it is [1 Corinthians 3:11-14](#).

Worshiping in Spirit means that our practice of worship should be produced by God the Holy Spirit. Evidence of this would be a worship practice that reflects the fruit of the Spirit as found in [Galatians 5:22-23](#).

With the proper foundation, we can then focus on what it means to worship in Spirit and in truth.

What does it mean to worship in truth? True worshipers are all those everywhere who worship God through the Son, from the heart. [Deuteronomy 18:9-14](#);

Worshiping in truth means that our practice of worship should reflect proper Biblical doctrine/ teachings
[Psalms 71:22-24](#); [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#); [Ephesians 4:17-25](#)

The Evidence of Worshiping in truth would be avoiding worship practices that God condemns theologically [1 Corinthians 10:20](#).

Even when it comes to gospel music it also requires that the lyrics and even the writers of music used should be examined theologically. This is to ensure that the truth is being told **beautiful way**, preventing possible endorsement of persons or organizations that are not doctrinally correct. [Romans 16:17-18](#). [Acts 10:25-26](#)

If we take the time to examine our worship practices theologically, then it is worshiping in truth or according to the teachings of God's Word. [John 17:17](#)

In the end, worship in Spirit and in truth motivated by love is pleasing to God and edifying to the body of Christ. [Philippians 2:10](#)