

**WORSHIP**  
**HINDRANCES TO WORSHIP–PART 1**  
**JOHN 4:19-24**

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**Introduction**

***(READ TEXT)***

We began looking last week at **WORSHIP** in the message **RESTORING A RIGHT WORSHIP OF GOD** which was the last message of the four part series of messages on **ADDRESSING SPIRITUAL DECLINE**.

I want to expand our look at **WORSHIP** and see some additional things from Scripture today that can be **HINDRANCES TO OUR WORSHIP!**

We say that we have come to worship today. Last week we saw some wrong ideas about **WORSHIP** and then we defined the word **WORSHIP!**

**Hebrew word translated WORSHIP means “to bow down, to do homage.”** (i.e. *To pay respect to by external action; to give reverence to; to express someone as exalted above one’s own self; it implies a humbling before.*)

**The Greek word that is most often translated WORSHIP in the New Testament means “showing reverence” or “bowing down to God.”**

We said that there is also another **Greek** word translated as “**WORSHIP**” that means “**to serve, to minister.**”

Our English word contains the ideas of “**ascribing honor and worth to.**” The dictionary defines *worship* as “**adoration or, homage to be given to God.**”

**Now, let me share with you some brief introductory thoughts about WORSHIP before we get into the meat of the message today:**

**1. The LORD Is Worthy Of Our Worship!**

*Psalm 29:2–“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.”*

*Psalm 99:5–“Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.”*

*Revelation 5:12–“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”*

**2. The LORD Alone Is Worthy Of Our Worship!**

*Psalm 86:10–“For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.”*

*Psalm 148:3–“Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.*

*Matthew 4:10–“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”*

**3. The LORD Tells Us How We Are To Worship Him!**

*1 Chronicles 16:29-30–“#1-Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: #2-bring an offering, and #3- come before him: #4 worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. #5-O fear before him, all the earth:”*

**Our Text**

*John 4:23-24–“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. 24God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”*

This morning I want us to consider some things that **HINDER OUR WORSHIP** of God. We are to **WORSHIP** God, but there are some things that block our ability to **WORSHIP** God as we should. What are they?

**Let’s see what the Scripture says:**

**I. UNDERSTAND THAT SELF-WILL CAN HINDER WORSHIP! (Leviticus 10:1-2)**

What do we mean by **self-will**?

**Self-will** is when **WE** choose the **WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, or HOW** we want to do things—in this instance, **WORSHIP**.

It is the “**I did it my way**” mentality...God **IS NOT** interested in that!

**WORSHIP**  
**HINDRANCES TO WORSHIP–PART 1**  
**JOHN 4:19-24**

Now, some might be thinking, well isn't the important thing that we just come and **WORSHIP** and **just be sincere** about our **WORSHIP**? That idea didn't come from God!

**A. Here We See That Nadab And Abihu Knew WHAT God Expected In Their Worship (God Told Them!), But They Chose To Do Things Their Own Way And The Result Was Devastating For Them!**

So many people think they can just come **WORSHIP** God just any old way they want to and it will be OK with God, but that is just not true!

**B. Although There Are Different Ways In Which We Can WORSHIP The LORD, We Should Not Violate God's Principles And Then Expect Our WORSHIP To Be Acceptable To The LORD!**

What am I saying? The LORD is the One Who decides what **IS** and what **IS NOT** proper **WORSHIP**, not us!

**C. In Our Text, We See The Importance That Our WORSHIP Be In SPIRIT And In TRUTH!**

**1. We Must WORSHIP God In SPIRIT**

(i.e. **WORSHIP** that doesn't come from a heart that has been changed by God is improper **WORSHIP**!)

*(e.g. In John 3, Nicodemus sincerely came to Jesus by night to talk to Him. But even as he said some good things about Jesus, Jesus told him that he needed to be born again...that is, **he needed to be born of the Spirit...to even see the kingdom of God!**)*

Think about this with me...One who is **physically dead** has no ability to properly respond to one who is **physically alive**! Right? In the same manner...One who is **spiritually dead** has no ability to properly respond to one who is **spiritually alive**!

**WORSHIP**  
**HINDRANCES TO WORSHIP–PART 1**  
**JOHN 4:19-24**

**(God is Spirit! We came into this world spiritually dead!)**

*Ephesians 2:1–“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;”*

Now, Nicodemus, who was a very religious man, thought he had been worshipping God all his life. He even had some very high thoughts about Jesus!

a. He called Jesus **Rabbi!** (**A word meaning a Jewish scholar or teacher!**)

b. He said that he believed that **Jesus was a teacher who came from God.**

c. He said that he believed that **God was with Jesus** because of the miracles He did!

At that point, Jesus told him that he needed to be **born again (i.e. born of the Spirit)** to even see the kingdom of God!

**What was Nicodemus missing? Spiritual life** that would allow him to properly respond to the Lord Jesus Christ—God the Son!

*We Must WORSHIP God in SPIRIT!*

**2. We Must WORSHIP God In TRUTH!**

a. **It Must Be In Harmony With The Person And Work Of Jesus Christ!** *John 14:6–“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, **the truth**, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

b. **It Must Be In Harmony With The Word Of God!** *John 17:17 – “Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth.**”*

**WORSHIP**  
**HINDRANCES TO WORSHIP–PART 1**  
**JOHN 4:19-24**

So, **WORSHIP** that does not line up with the **Person And Work Of Christ** or with **God's Word** is **NOT** an **ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP!**

It is about **THE LORD'S WILL...NOT SELF-WILL!**

*UNDERSTAND THAT SELF-WILL CAN HINDER WORSHIP!*

**II. UNDERSTAND THAT WORLDLINESS CAN HINDER WORSHIP! (1 John 2:15-16)**

Listen to Jesus' prayer in *John 17:14-17*.

**A. Believers Are In The World, But We Are Not Of The World!**

*Colossians 3:1-4 – "1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."*

**B. Someone Illustrated This Way: Believers Are Like A Boat That Is In The Water!**

A boat in the water is no problem. But if the water starts filling the boat then you have a real problem! If that problem is not corrected it will eventually sink the boat!

**C. Understand That "Worldly" Does Not Always Mean Things That Are Outward, It Also Has To Do With Our Inward Attitudes.**

*In 2 Timothy 4:10, Paul said, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."*

Demas allowed worldliness to divert him from God's purposes!  
Demas allowed worldliness to exchange his Godly desires for worldly ambitions!

**D. The World And Worldliness Will Pull Us Away From God! *James 4:8–Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.***

**WORSHIP**  
**HINDRANCES TO WORSHIP–PART 1**  
**JOHN 4:19-24**

*SELF-WILL CAN HINDER WORSHIP!*  
*WORLDLINESS CAN HINDER WORSHIP!*

**III. UNDERSTAND THAT DOUBLE-MINDEDNESS CAN HINDER WORSHIP! (Joshua 24:14-20)**

In this passage, Joshua is coming to the end of his life. The LORD has given one last message for him to give to Israel.

In *verses 2-13*, Joshua delivers that message where the LORD gives His people a brief history of the many benefits He has given to them from the time of Terah (Abraham's father) until where they are now in the Promised Land.

In *verses 14-15*, Joshua challenges them to renew their covenant with the LORD.

The words "*in sincerity*" here means "*entirely in integrity, truth.*"  
The words "*in truth*" here means in "*in stability; certainty, truth, trustworthiness.*"

The LORD was looking for that **whole-hearted Worship** as recorded in the "*Shema.*" *Deuteronomy 6:4-5–"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: 5And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."*

Now understand that the children of Israel were interested in having a **form of WORSHIP**. But that is just what it was –**just a form**. What they were **not** interested in was giving themselves **wholly** to God!

What they wanted was a comfortable Sabbath-day only religion. They wanted to **WORSHIP God the way they wanted to WORSHIP Him** and then they wanted to **live the way they wanted to** the other days. **They were double-minded!** And Joshua knew that the people of God were **double-minded**. They said that they wanted to serve the LORD, but they had a problem that continued to surface in their lives.

**WORSHIP**  
**HINDRANCES TO WORSHIP—PART 1**  
**JOHN 4:19-24**

**They weren't true to the LORD! They weren't true to Him in either their WORSHIP or their LIVING!** They easily strayed because their mind was not wholly dedicated to the LORD!

May I tell you that things haven't much changed since the days of Joshua. There are too many people who are satisfied with just a **form of WORSHIP** on Sunday. They want to **WORSHIP** God in the way **they** want to **WORSHIP** Him. And then they want to live the way **they** want to live the rest of the time!

Let me share with you some attitudes I've seen in over 40+ years in ministry and over a lifetime of being in Church that have shown up in various ways in the various Churches I have been part of:

*(If the shoe fits...)*

*Many will attend church if its not too much trouble. They make more of an effort to do the things they like to do (like recreation) or things they have obligated themselves to do (like work) than they make an effort to do the things they should do (worship).*

*There are many who may sing a song once in a while—if its one they know and if it is one they like as long as they don't have to sing more than verse or two of it. (And some who never bother to sing at all or !)*

*I've even seen some over the years who have a place of service in Church who show up not fully prepared, and/or their heart is not in what they are doing. They may even show up habitually late. Or they may show up without any expectation of seeing God work (after all, some of them only told the preacher they would do it because he couldn't get anyone else to do it. So they don't think they really have to apply themselves to what they're doing. And they certainly don't have to like it!)*

*Some only give a semblance of an offering from time to time. It may not be a tithe, but it's the best they think they can do because they've overextended themselves in the things of the world and have never really learned to trust the LORD!*

**WORSHIP**  
**HINDRANCES TO WORSHIP—PART 1**  
**JOHN 4:19-24**

*In fact, some view their giving like an admission fee to Church. So, if they've not been to Church in a while, well please don't ask them to catch up on their giving, after all they weren't here for Church.*

*I've also seen many people who come to Church and only half listen to a sermon if they listen at all. These have never said "Amen" to anything. And commitment? Oh please don't ask them to make any sort of commitment to do anything about what's been preached!*

*It is as if some see the altar as being for those real wicked sinners, not for people like them!*

Some might be thinking "Now Preacher, you've gone too far" but the sad part of it is that I could go further than that. I won't but you know that I could!

If we were honest with ourselves and with God, we would acknowledge that, just like the Israelites, **we all have a problem with giving ourselves wholly to the LORD sometimes!** Think about it! I challenge you to honestly think about!

How much of our lives this week was lived selfishly with us in mind instead of God in mind?

Our lives are unstable and we wonder why—when God has said: *James 1:8—"A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."*

What do we need to do?

*James 4:8—"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and **purify your hearts, ye double minded.**"*

I'm not through with this message but the hour is getting late and I don't want to lose you, so we'll drive a peg here and pick up next week Lord willing.

**WORSHIP**  
**HINDRANCES TO WORSHIP–PART 1**  
**JOHN 4:19-24**

**Conclusion**

There are other attitudes and practices that can hinder our true worship of the LORD, but what about these we've dealt with today? As the LORD looks at our worship what does He see?

Number one, are you saved? Do you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour?

**That is the greatest hindrance to worship that there is!**

To WORSHIP GOD IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH YOU HAVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH (JESUS CHRIST) SO YOU CAN BE BORN AGAIN, BORN SPIRITUALLY!

If you are a Believer, does the LORD see anything that we've dealt with in your life today?

***SELF-WILL, WORLDLINESS, DOUBLE MINDEDNESS.***

We must break through these and other barriers that prevent us from approaching God with honesty and humility.

The question is, will you do business with God today?