

FOUNDATION OF FAITH!
GOD THE FATHER
PART 8

Over the last several weeks in our series on Foundation of Faith we have been looking at God the Father and we finished up last time looking at the moral attributes of God. And as we have studied God the Father and seen all that He is, His character, His nature, what flows naturally from Him, I pray it has moved you to love Him even more. And in loving Him more I also pray that it has moved you to learn even more about Him. You see, as I have said before, the more you know Him the more you will love Him and the more you love Him the more you will want to know Him.

This morning, after studying all these things about God the Father, I want to focus on our response to God in light of all that He is. You see, after we know all this of God the Father it should cause us to live a certain way. It should cause us to walk as God desires us to walk. Let me share this story with you and you will see what I mean. We are told,

When Queen Victoria was a child, she didn't know she was in line for the throne of England. Her instructors, trying to prepare her for the future, were frustrated because they couldn't motivate her. She just didn't take her studies seriously. Finally, her teachers decided to tell her that one day she would become the queen of England. Upon hearing this, Victoria quietly said, "Then I will be good." The realization that she had inherited this high calling gave her a sense of responsibility that profoundly affected her conduct from then on.

- Source Unknown

You see, once you realize that you are a child of God, once you have come to the saving faith that is only found in Jesus Christ, once you have realized that you have inherited this high calling of God in your life you should walk accordingly, that should impact you to live a life that is pleasing to God. Paul put it like this in Ephesians chapter 4, after he spent 3 chapters speaking of doctrine, the things of God and now he said this in Ephesians 4:1-3, **“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”**

The Amplified Bible puts these verses like this, **“I THEREFORE, the prisoner for the Lord, appeal to and beg you to walk (lead a life) worthy of the [divine] calling to which you have been called [with behavior that is a credit to the summons to God's service, Living as becomes you] with complete lowliness of mind (humility) and meekness (unselfishness, gentleness, mildness), with patience, bearing with one another and making allowances because you love one another. Be eager and strive earnestly to guard and keep the harmony and oneness of [and produced by] the Spirit in the binding power of peace.”**

You see, what good is all this information about God if it does not impact our lives? It is useless really! As you read this you can't miss what Paul is saying. Paul is calling for us to walk worthy or "after a godly sort" because that is what we are called to do! Now we don't walk worthy of this high calling by which we have been called so that God will love us more, so that we will earn favor with God because God can't love us anymore than He already does nor can He love us any less – we are His children! Then why do we walk this way? Because He does love us, we do it, in a sense, out of gratitude and not out of merit! John tells us in I John 4:19, "**We love Him because He first loved us.**" You see, God is the initiator and we are the responders. We respond to His love and we thus, walk accordingly! Thus, it is important to know about God the Father and as I have said, as you do, as you see His rich, His deep, His unending love for you, it should cause you to walk accordingly, out of love and not out of Law!

Now before we look at how we are to respond to God the Father let me say this because for some of you, you may be wondering why we are even doing this. Listen carefully. When we look at, when we study the attributes of God, which we have done, we are describing the God of the Bible, who He is. Thus, all other ideas about God are, according to what the Bible tells us, false gods. In other words, they are made up from the imagination of our own hearts and are not true. Thus, by learning the attributes of God you may praise God for who He really is and for how each of His attributes impacts your life in a positive way. That is what we are doing and that is what we will see this morning, how we are to respond to who God is. So let's dig in with the first reason.

1. WALK IN A WAY THAT WOULD PLEASE GOD

Let's begin looking at I Thessalonians 4:1-2, which says, "**Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.**" The first thing that we see that we should be doing is walking in a manner that would glorify God, bring praise and honor to Him, in a way that would please Him!

As Christians we are called to grow in the faith and that is part of that sanctification process. It is a walk you might say and the Lord has shown us how we are to walk in His Word. And Paul is exhorting us to abound, to excel in our faith, in our walk and that would please the Lord! Some of you have read of Jonathan Edwards who was one of the leaders of the First Great Awakening in New England. One of the things that Edwards life was filled with was not just personal devotion in the work he was doing for the Lord, but His thirst for God or what we might call his love for God. Listen to the words of Jonathan Edwards and then I will expound on them. He wrote,

My mind was greatly fixed on divine things; almost perpetually in the contemplation of them. I spent most of my time in thinking of divine things, year after year; often walking alone in the woods, and solitary places, for meditation, soliloquy [a dramatic or literary form of discourse in which a character talks to himself or herself or reveals his or her thoughts without addressing a listener], and prayer, and converse with God; and it was always my manner, at such times, to sing forth my contemplations. I was almost constantly in ejaculatory prayer, wherever I was. Prayer seemed to be natural to me, as the breath by which the inward burnings of my heart had vent. The delights which I now felt in those things of religion, were of an exceedingly different kind from those before mentioned, that I had when a boy; and what then I had no more notion of, than one born blind has of pleasant and beautiful colours. They were of a more inward, pure, soul-animating and refreshing nature. Those former delights never reached the heart; and did not arise from any sight of the divine excellency of the things of God; or any taste of the soul-satisfying and life-giving good there is in them.

- Edward Hickman, *Memoirs of Jonathan Edwards*,
lv. In vol. 1 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*

This is truly what Paul is saying here, that we are to excel in Christian living, we must grow or walk in the faith and that is only going to happen as you nurture that faith and then and only then will faith grow, will it progress forward. Too often today Christians feel there is no need to grow, they are saved and what else is needed? Really, have you attained all there is of God, are you walking in a way that is pleasing to God and you have no further need to grow? I doubt that and if you feel that way, you better deal with the pride that is in your life! You see, Satan had a big problem with pride and it brought him down and thus, if you are prideful, arrogant, you are not walking in a way that is pleasing to God.

Paul, in Philippians 3:12-14 reminds us of his walk as he wrote, **“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”** Paul realized that he is not perfect before God and what did he do? He pressed on! He kept his eyes focused on the Lord! He did not let the past hold him back and he reached forward to obtain all that God had for him and thus, he was walking in a way that was pleasing to the Lord, he was growing!

Where is your walk today as compared to a month ago, a year ago, 5 years ago, 10 years ago and-so-on? You see, it should be moving forward, not that we are perfect, but there should be that growth, that maturing and as we do it is pleasing to the Lord!

A good illustration of not growing is seen in this story of a class reunion. We are told,

A close friend of mine was asked back to his forty-year high school reunion. For months he saved to take his wife back to the place and the people he'd left four decades before. The closer the time came for the reunion, the more excited he became, thinking of all the wonderful stories he would hear about the changes and the accomplishments these old friends would tell him.

One night before he left he even pulled out his old yearbooks, read the silly statements and the good wishes for the future that students write to each other. He wondered what ol' Number 86 from his football team had done. He wondered if any others had encountered this Christ who had changed him so profoundly. He even tried to guess what some of his friends would look like, and what kind of jobs and families some of these special friends had.

The day came to leave and I drove them to the airport. Their energy was almost contagious. "I'll pick you up on Sunday evening, and you can tell me all about it," I said. "Have a great time."

Sunday evening arrived. As I watched them get off the plane, my friend seemed almost despondent. I almost didn't want to ask, but finally I said, "Well, how was the reunion?" "Tim," the man said, "it was one of the saddest experiences of my life." "Good grief," I said, more than a little surprised. "What happened?" "It wasn't what happened but what didn't happen. It has been forty years, forty years - and they haven't changed. They had simply gained weight, changed clothes, gotten jobs . . . but they hadn't really changed.

And what I experienced was maybe one of the most tragic things I could ever imagine about life. For reasons I can't fully understand, it seems as though some people choose not to change."

There was a long silence as we walked back to the car. On the drive home, he turned to me and said, "I never, never want that to be said of me, Tim. Life is too precious, too sacred, too important. If you ever see me go stagnant like that, I hope you give me a quick, swift kick where I need it - for Christ's sake. I hope you'll love me enough to challenge me to keep growing."

- Tim Hansel, Holy Sweat, pp. 54-55

But what can we do to help us keep that edge, to help us continue to grow? Let me give you a few things that can help us all in our walk with the Lord. They are,

- ***Daily Food.*** Take in the "pure milk of the Word" through study and meditation. Peter tells us in I Peter 2:1-3, "**Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.**" Make sure you get your daily milk intake!
- ***Fresh Air.*** Pray often or you will faint. Prayer is the oxygen of the soul. Remember what Paul said in Philippians 4:6-7, "**Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**" Thus, make sure you get fresh air, breath!
- ***Regular Exercise.*** Put into practice what you learn in God's Word. Paul put it like this in Colossians 4:5-6, "**Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.**" Make sure you get your daily exercise. Exercise your faith by living what you believe! Get your regular exercise!

- *Adequate Rest.* Rely on God at all times in simple faith. In Psalm 37:1-8 we are told, **“Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass. He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret — it only causes harm.”** Make sure you get your needed rest each day!
- *Clean Surroundings.* Avoid evil company and whatever will weaken you spiritually. Remember what Paul said in I Corinthians 15:33-34, **“Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits.’ Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.”** What are you filling your life with? May it be clean surroundings!
- *Loving Care.* Be part of a church where you will benefit from a pastor’s teaching and Christian fellowship. Some think they are on their own, they don’t need to go to church and that is wrong and it is unscriptural. Paul reminds us in Hebrews 10:24-25, **“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”** Make sure you find a body of believers who will lovingly care for you and you for them!
- *Periodic Checkups.* Regularly examine your spiritual health. Again, this is important for us to do, to examine our walk with the Lord. In Lamentations 3:40-41 we are told, **“Let us search out and examine our ways, And turn back to the Lord; Let us lift our hearts and hands To God in heaven.”** Let us examine our lives before the Lord so we can get rid of those things that don’t belong there. Make sure you get your periodic checkups!

These are things we can do to help us in our walk with the Lord, to keep us sharp, to keep us moving in the right direction. Make sure you get your daily supply of milk – the Word of God! Make sure you take in fresh air – prayer! Make sure you get regular exercise- exercise your faith, put it into practice! Make sure you get adequate rest – rest in the Lord! Make sure you are living in clean surroundings – avoid evil company! Make sure that you surround yourself with people who love you – go to church! And make sure you get periodic checkups, examine your faith! These are all things that can help us in our walk with the Lord, help keep us sharp, keep us walking in the right direction!

I pray that we keep growing, that we do not become stagnant or sluggish in our walk with the Lord. And think about what we have been studying the past several weeks, the nature of God, the attributes of God, we are seeking to know God better so that we may love Him more and as we do we may obey Him more and as we obey Him we follow His commands, His Word, we live according to the commands of the Scriptures! And it is what Paul tells us in II Corinthians 3:18, **“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”**

Yes, we can't see the Lord clearly at this time but we do have a picture of Him and that is found in His Word and as we walk in Him we are being transformed into His image, we are becoming like Christ. But again, we must look into the mirror of Scripture to see God and as we do, as we apply that to our lives, we will grow in Him. And so the first thing that we do in response to God in the light of all that He is, we are to ***WALK IN A WAY THAT WOULD PLEASE GOD!***

2. WE ARE TO WORSHIP HIM

Next, we are to worship Him and let's look at Psalm 95:1-6 which says, "**Oh come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. For the Lord is the great God, And the great King above all gods. In His hand are the deep places of the earth; The heights of the hills are His also. The sea is His, for He made it; And His hands formed the dry land. Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.**" The second thing we are to do or our response to God in light of all that He is, is that we are to worship Him, we are to fall down before Him as God, as the creator of the heavens and the earth and give Him the honor that is due Him! This Psalm is a call to worship God, to thank Him for all He has done. And keep in mind that Jewish worship was a celebration of thanksgiving and praise unto God. And worship should be joyful; it should be focused upward, unto the God of our salvation!

In regards to worship, A. W. Tozer wrote, "What is worship? Worship is to feel in your heart and express in some appropriate manner a humbling but delightful sense of admiring awe and astonished wonder and overpowering love in the presence of that most ancient Mystery, that Majesty which philosophers call the First Cause, but which we call Our Father Which Are in Heaven." Folks, worship is not about us it is about the Lord and too often today we have that reversed. And one of the reasons for that is because we have lost the presence of God and thus, we must develop a worship that tickles us, makes us feel good, but it is not pleasing to God.

You see, when you understand who God is, when you understand the attributes of God, His character, His nature, then in awe, in wonder, in amazement you come before Him and worship Him. And as you do it is a worship that comes from the heart and not manufactured!

That is what James Packer wrote in regards to worship,

To worship God is to recognize his worth or worthiness; to look God-ward, and to acknowledge in all appropriate ways the value of what we see. The Bible calls this activity “glorifying God” or “giving glory to God,” and views it as the ultimate end, and from one point of view, the whole duty of man (Ps. 29:2; 96:6; 1 Cor. 10:31).

Scripture views the glorifying of God as a six fold activity: praising God for all that he is and all his achievements; thanking him for his gifts and his goodness to us; asking him to meet our own and others’ needs; offering him our gifts, our service, and ourselves; learning of him from his word, read and preached, and obeying his voice; telling others of his worth, both by public confession and testimony to what he has done for us. Thus we might say that the basic formulas of worship are these: “Lord, you are wonderful”; “Thank you, Lord”; “Please Lord”; “Take this, Lord”; “Yes, Lord”; “Listen everybody!”

This then is worship in its largest sense: petition as well as praise, preaching as well as prayer, hearing as well as speaking, actions as well as words, obeying as well as offering, loving people as well as loving God. However, the primary acts of worship are those which focus on God directly - and we must not imagine that work for God in the world is a substitute for direct fellowship with him in praise and prayer and devotion.

James Packer, *Your Father Loves You*,
Harold Shaw Publishers, July 1986, P. 15

In the Old Testament there are a few words that speak of worship. One of them is SHAHA and it means to “bow down” or to prostrate oneself before another in order to honor him and reverence him. And this is the one that is used of God, the worship of the true and living God and not idols. There are a few others but they tend to focus on the worship of idols, falling down and worshiping them, to serve them instead of the Lord. In the New Testament it is the Greek word PROSKUNEO and it means to, “kiss the hand to (toward) one” and it speaks of bowing down or kneeling before someone to pay them homage.

And please understand that our worship of God is not just in song. We tend to think that worship is music and singing and that is only part of what true worship is about. Make no mistake about it, songs, music were a big part of the worship of God in the Old Testament, just look at the Psalms, which were the worship songs of the Jews unto the Lord! But we also pay homage, reverence; we also worship the Lord with our lives, how we live them out, what we do and what we say! That is what we read in Psalm 95:6, **“Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.”**

Warren Wiersbe simplifies it like this in regards to worship. He wrote,

True biblical worship so satisfies our total personality that we don't have to shop around for man-made substitutes. William Temple made this clear in his masterful definition of worship:

For worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the quickening of conscience by His holiness; the nourishment of mind with His truth; the purifying of imagination by His beauty; the opening of the heart to His love; the surrender of will to His purpose -- and all of this gathered up in adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable and therefore the chief remedy for that self-centeredness which is our original sin and the source of all actual sin.

- Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Integrity Crisis*, p. 119

Are we willing to place our lives on the altar of sacrifice before the Lord? That is what the Lord desires of us. Paul, in Romans 12:1 put it like this, “**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.**” The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, “**I APPEAL to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship.**”

Why should we live unto God? Why should we worship the Lord? Because of all the mercy He has shown us, like justification, sanctification, election, adopted into the family of God, God’s Spirit indwelling us, the love of God and so much more that Paul covered in the first 11 chapters of Romans.

It is as Harrison said: “Whereas the heathen are prone to sacrifice to obtain mercy, biblical faith teaches that divine mercy provides the basis of sacrifice as the fitting response.” You see, how can we not live unto God with all the mercy He has bestowed upon us? How can we not worship Him when He has bestowed so much mercy, love, forgiveness, grace and-so-on upon us?

And Paul tells us that we are to be a living sacrifice unto God. That is our lives are to be placed on the altar to be offered up as a burnt offering, totally given to God, and it will be a sweet smelling sacrifice unto God as we do. Too often we give God portions of our lives but not our entire being. He wants it all and as we do, He gives it back to us so we may bring Him glory! As we give ourselves to God, Paul tells us that it is our **“reasonable service”** or literally **“spiritual worship”** for the word **“service”** in the Greek is LATREIA (lat-ri’-ah), which speaks of the worship of God! So not only is a life given to God reasonable service but it is also our reasonable or spiritual worship unto God!

A great example of worship, one that costs a person something is seen in the life of David. You remember the story in II Samuel chapter 24. David was numbering the people, seeing how many soldiers he had in direct disobedience to the Lord and the Lord brought judgment upon them in the form of a plague that killed seventy thousand people in Israel, from Dan to Beersheba or from north to south! And as the Angel of the Lord stood over Jerusalem ready to strike, the Lord stopped him and we are told beginning in verse 20 of II Samuel 24, **“Now Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming toward him. So Araunah went out and bowed before the king with his face to the ground. Then Araunah said, ‘Why has my lord the king come to his servant?’ And David said, ‘To buy the threshing floor from you, to build an altar to the Lord, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people.’ Now Araunah said to David, ‘Let my lord the king take and offer up whatever seems good to him. Look, here are oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing implements and the yokes of the oxen for wood. All these, O king, Araunah has given to the king.’ And Araunah said to the king, ‘May the Lord your God accept you.’ Then the king said to Araunah, ‘No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing.’ So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. And David built there an altar to the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the Lord heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel.”** II Samuel 24:20-25.

First of all this threshing floor of Araunah was located on Mount Moriah and we also need to keep in mind that the city of Jerusalem during the time of David was much smaller than what we see today. In fact, it was not even located near the top of Mount Moriah or Mount Zion but on a lower ridge and was only about ½ city block wide and 2 city blocks long. So David does not own this piece of property yet, but the Lord, through the prophet Gad calls for David to go and purchase this piece of property, this threshing floor of Araunah. And keep in mind the threshing floors were located near the top of a hill or mountain so that the breeze could blow away the chaff, separate it from the wheat. Also keep in mind that according to II Chronicles 3:1, as I have said, this threshing floor of Araunah was located on Mount Moriah.

As these two men meet, David and Araunah, this man asks David why he is here? And David tells him that he wants to purchase this piece of property to build an altar and worship the Lord. And you have to love the generous heart of Araunah here, he offers David everything, the land, the oxen, the wood for the sacrifice, all free for David, but David rejects this gift, why? Here is one of his servants offering to give David this land so that he can worship the Lord, what is wrong with that? There is a lot wrong with that kind of logic, even though it may sound good from a casual view of it, there is a problem with it. I like what Clarke said regarding this. He wrote, “Had Araunah’s noble offer been accepted, it would have been *Araunah’s sacrifice*, not *David’s*; nor would it have answered the end of turning away the displeasure of the Most High.” That was the reality and we may not like to think of it this way in our own lives, but that is just the way it is. Let me explain.

David was not going to give to the Lord that which cost him nothing. Again Clarke tells us, “He who has a religion that *costs him nothing*, has a religion that is *worth nothing*: nor will any man esteem the ordinances of God, if those ordinances cost him nothing.” David was truly a man of worship, he loved to worship the Lord, look at all the Psalms he wrote, some 75 at least, of the 150 Psalms!

I think that is a valuable lesson for each of us because it is true in our own lives, that what we give to the Lord must cost us something or if it doesn't, then was it really a sacrifice? Of course what we give to the Lord must cost us something, that is what the word “sacrifice” is all about! That is what Paul said in Romans 12:1, as we have already read this morning. You see, we don't place animals on the altar for sacrifice any longer, but we do place ourselves upon this altar before God and that is what true worship is all about! Don't give to God that which costs you nothing, for true worship will cost you your time, your resources, your money, it will cost you ***YOUR LIFE!***

I like the way that Meyer put it. He wrote, “Where there is true, strong love to Jesus, it will cost us something. Love is the costliest of all undertakings . . . But what shall we mind if we gain Christ? You cannot give up for Him without regaining everything you have renounced, but purified and transfigured.”

I can truly tell you from my own life that when I give to God all of me, He gives me back more than what I gave to Him. For instance, in regards to my time, it is amazing to see what God can do when my time is short, as long as I am faithful; I get done what I need to! It may not be what *I WANT* to get done, but what *I NEED* to get done will be taken care of! When I am exhausted after a busy day and am going to teach in the evening, as tired as I am when I start, the Lord refreshes me. That is our God, we can't out give Him and we have the privilege of giving to Him!

So as David purchases this threshing floor and the oxen he offers to God a burnt offering and a peace offering. The burnt offering was to atone for sin while the peace offering was to enjoy fellowship with God. That was David; he enjoyed his time with the Lord. Morgan adds to this as he tells us, "We finally see the man after God's own heart turning the occasion of his sin and its punishment into an occasion of worship." May we have hearts of worship!

In regards to worship, let me share with you these words from John MacArthur as he wrote us: "True worship does not consist of elaborate and impressive prayers, intricate liturgy, stained-glass windows, lighted candles, flowing robes, incense, and classical sacred music. It does not require great talent, skill, or leadership ability. Many of those things can be a part of the outward forms of genuine worship, but they are acceptable to God only if the heart and mind of the worshiper is focused on Him. The only spiritual service of worship that honors and pleases God is the sincere, loving, thoughtful, and heartfelt devotion and praise of His children."

As you came here this morning and as the worship team began to sing unto the Lord, I am sure you were singing, your lips were moving, but where was your heart? When you were singing what were you thinking about? Maybe the housework that needs to get done, or just relaxing after church, or watching this football game or that sport event, or the workweek is starting up again, or I need to fix that, or “I can’t believe she wore that dress today?” and of course the list can go on, but you get the point! You see, you can mouth the words and yet your heart can be far from God, you can be thinking of so many different things like I have said and thus, are you really worshiping God?

Think of it like this. What if your wife came up to you and asked you this question while your mind was somewhere else? “Honey, does this dress make my butt look big?” Dangerous question, but you quickly respond, “Yes, honey, it looks great!” After you had awakened from your concussion, you realize that your lips were moving and you said some words but you were not really paying attention to your spouse or you would have never said what you said. That is very true with the Lord. Our lips can move but we can be thinking about so many other things and thus, that is not really worshiping the Lord.

And please understand that worship, like I have said, is not just signing, it is our entire lives and that too can be a problem. We can live out our day without focusing on the Lord and because of that, the way we live out our lives will not be pleasing to the Lord. We need to focus on Him, and as you do, as you worship Him, as you dwell upon Him, it will affect the way you live out your faith as you place your life on the altar of sacrifice!

You see, we exist, the church exists to worship God and to exalt God and when we talk about the worship of God we are speaking of bowing down before Him in honor of Him, who He is. It would be like bowing before a king to pay him homage, respect. In John 4:24 Jesus tells us, “**God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.**” His point is simple, you can’t worship God without first being saved, without first having the Spirit of God in you. Secondly, you must worship God according to truth, or according to His Word. You can’t worship God any way you want.

A great example of this is when the children of Israel were waiting for Moses to come down from Mount Sinai with the commands of God and they decided to worship God the way they wanted to by making a golden calf and worshipping that! And God did not accept false worship then nor does He accept it today, it must be in Spirit and in truth!

In fact, in Romans 1:24-25 Paul shows us what can happen as people turn from the true worship of God and do their own thing, negate the living God. We are told, “**Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.**” I find it interesting because we see that so prevalent today, the worship of self! We are only to worship God for He alone deserves our worship. As a body of believers, the church, we gather together to worship Him, to sing praises unto Him, to pray to Him, to exalt His holy name!

You see folks, worship is not just about singing songs unto God, as I have said, but it is giving our entire life over to God for His use, to bring Him glory. Now what does that mean to us today, what does it mean to be a living sacrifice unto God? Let me explain with this example. “The story is told of a Chinese Christian who was moved with compassion when many of his countrymen were taken to work as coolies [an unskilled laborer] in South African mines. In order to be able to witness to his fellow Chinese, this prominent man sold himself to the mining company to work as a coolie for five years. He died there, still a slave, but not until he had won more than 200 men to Christ. He was a living sacrifice in the fullest sense.” (John MacArthur).

Are you willing to go and do what God is calling you to do no matter the cost? You see, if you willingly lay down your life for God, that is worship! We saw that with David, he was not going to worship the Lord unless it cost him something otherwise it was not true worship.

The problem today is much of our worship is mechanical and we are even removed from worship by thinking of other things as we are trying to worship God, as I have said. We go through the motions but there is no real emotion with our worship of God. And folks, that is not acceptable to God. Let me explain:

There is an old story about a man who dreamed that an angel escorted him to church one Sunday. There he saw the keyboard musician playing vigorously, the praise team singing, the musicians playing their instruments with gusto. But the man heard no sound. The congregation was singing, but the sound was utterly muted. When the minister rose to speak, his lips moved, but there was no volume. In amazement, the man turned to his escort for an explanation.

“This is the way it sounds to us in heaven,” said the angel. “You hear nothing because there is nothing to hear. These people are engaged in the form of worship, but their thoughts are on other things and their hearts are far away.”

- Author Unknown

What is the solution? We are to fall in love with Jesus all over again. Focus on Him, fill your life with Him and as you do what will flow from your life is the worship of God! You see, we delight to bring praise to that which we enjoy! Enjoy your life with the Lord and see what will flow from your life – worship! In fact, according to Revelation 4:11 we see the reason why we were created, and this is from the KJV, “**Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.**” Thus, if you are not worshipping God, bringing Him pleasure, your life will never be satisfied because you are not doing what you were created to do – the worship of God – it is your reasonable service! The church exists to exalt, to worship God! Thus, ***WE ARE TO WORSHIP HIM!***

Let me leave you with this and we will continue looking at this subject next time, how we are to respond to God in light of all that He is, how are we to live out our faith towards God?

“Barclay quotes William Temple, the renowned archbishop of Canterbury, as defining worship as quickening the conscience by the holiness of God, feeding the mind with the truth of God, purging the imagination by the beauty of God, opening the heart to the love of God, and devoting the will to the purpose of God.” (R. Mounce, Matthew, p. 151).

May we not lose sight of what we are to do; ***WALK IN A WAY THAT WOULD PLEASE GOD*** and ***WE ARE TO WORSHIP HIM!***