

# American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont MI 49412 231-924-4050 [www.americandecency.org](http://www.americandecency.org)  
Encouraging Christians to guard their heart August 2023

## Worship

By Mark Jones



God created us to worship him, which is His prerogative as God (Ps. 95:6; Rev. 4:11; 14:7). Humans are at their best when they are worshipping the triune God, just as they are at their worst when they are worshipping anything or anyone else. In English, “worship” derives from the old English word *weorthscipe*, which means acknowledgment of worth (Rev. 4:9-11; 5:2). The Greek word *proskuneō* means “to fall down” (Acts 10:25), and in Hebrew, *shachah* means to “bow down” (Ex. 24:1). However, the root meaning of these words does not give us a complete idea of worship.

Worship of God involves the whole person (Deut. 6:4-6). We apply our minds to His excellencies, to the thoughts of His attributes, such as His majesty and holiness (Ps.

29:1-4; 1 Chron. 16:29). Our wills submit to God’s majesty, and our hearts embrace His goodness and enter into communion with Him.

The heart of the worshipper is an essential component of true worship, for multitudes honor God with their lips but not with their hearts (Isa. 29:13). Thus, worship is also delightful (Ps. 67). In the Bible, the contrition and humility of the worshipper results in certain outward forms such as kneeling down and bowing (Ps. 95:6).

As creatures, we are to worship God, but as sinful creatures, we are unable to fulfill this obligation apart from Jesus Christ. Sin has perverted our worship and caused us to pursue the created rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:20-25). Redemption in Christ restores our relationship. Christ bridges the gap between God’s holiness and our sin (1 Tim. 2:5), establishing a covenant relationship between us. All knowledge of God, and so all worship of Him, is

rooted in this divine covenant (Ps. 25:14; 50:14-16). God begins this relationship and we respond. He comes in love, and we respond in love; He comes in glory, and we respond in reverence (Heb. 12:28).

The centrality of Christ’s mediation in the context of the covenant is a gift to the church, for we pray in His name, and, in the new covenant, priests are no longer necessary (Heb. 8-9). While worship can take an individualistic form, the corporate aspect of worship dominates the pages of Scripture, particularly in the new covenant, where worship is almost exclusively so. This reflects the growing maturity of the church (that is, Christ’s body) and God’s intention to have a treasured people for Himself (Ex. 19:5-6; 1 Peter 2:9). The goal of evangelism is to be involved in gathering such a people from all nations to worship the Lord (Ps. 67; Isa. 2:2-4).

From the beginning, man has had an obligation to hand himself over to God

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From the beginning, man has had an obligation to hand himself over to God



at a cost, and this obligation has only been increased by the penalties of sin. Worship in the divine covenant necessarily involves a sacrificial element (Gen. 4:3-5; 22:1-19; Lev. 1), and this reaches its consummate expression in corporate worship. The sacrificial offerings that were a major part of Israel's temple worship pointed to Christ, who was the fulfillment of what they typified (Heb. 9-10). In the new covenant, we approach God directly by Christ's sacrifice. In union with Jesus, we become living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1) and offer spiritual sacrifices (1 Peter 2:5; Heb. 13:15-16).

On the Lord's Day, the corporate nature of worship reaches its zenith. Using the body analogy, Paul argues against a sort of "communism" where each person has the same function/role in worship. Each member is a particular part of the body and, therefore, performs a different function. True, all

Christians are part of the royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9), but we minister differently according to the gifting of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12). Our worship consists not only of singing but also of listening, praying, and communion. Worship responds to God's acts and revelation in the Scriptures. For these reasons, worship must be in the power of the Spirit and according to truth (Jn. 4:24).

Worship is transformative: we become like what we worship (Ps. 115:8). For Christians, that means that as we now, by faith, behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, we are being transformed into His likeness (2 Cor. 3:18; 4:6). Moreover, worship transcends time and place: though we are on earth, it is performed in heaven (Heb. 12:22-24). The most important thing a Christian can do is worship God with the body of Christ. We come together each Lord's Day as a unified army, fighting the Lord's battles in different ways, knowing that God is fighting with us and for us.

Worship is giving glory to God for His worth in the name of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit according to truth. We praise God who gave to the church both His Son and the Spirit, for in giving these two persons He had nothing left to give. In response to Christ's sacrifice, we become living sacrifices as we behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ who is the new temple and draws all nations to Himself (Isa. 2:2-3). This is our delight as Christians.

[Taken from Tabletalk, Ligonier Ministries, November 2011]

#### **O Worship the King**

*O worship the King,  
all glorious above,  
O gratefully sing God's  
power and God's love;  
our Shield and Defender,  
the Ancient of Days,  
pavilioned in splendor,  
and girded with praise.*

*O tell of God's might,  
O sing of God's grace,  
whose robe is the light,  
whose canopy space,  
whose chariots of wrath  
the deep thunderclouds  
form, and dark is God's  
path on the wings of the  
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