



**An undenominational publication
devoted to the teachings of Jesus and
His apostles and dedicated to those
who want to know more about the Bible**

1st Quarter, 2022

WORSHIP THAT PLEASES GOD

Jesus said: *“True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him”* (John 4:23). From this scripture we learn that God wants to be worshiped, but God has defined the basic essentials of worship: it must be in *“spirit and truth.”* There can be no compromise on the conditions of acceptable worship. God wants to be worshiped the way he has defined: in *spirit* and in *truth*.

“In spirit” describes *attitudes* we must have in order for God to accept our worship. We must be sincere, humble, loving and wanting to declare the worthiness of God. (The English word ‘*worship*’ comes from *worth ship* — showing worth of God.). Those whose hearts are not in their prayers offer vain worship. *“This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. In vain do they worship, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men”* (Matthew 15:8-9).

“In truth” indicates worship must be in keeping with the teachings of God, whose word is truth (John 17:17). God has the right to determine the kind of worship that pleases him. Human be-

ings do not have the right to bring any other worship into His presence. If we worship him in ways which do not please him we are wasting our time. This is an awesome thought!

At the beginning of creation, Cain did not worship God in a way that pleased God. His worship was rejected (Genesis 4:5). The ancient king Jeroboam, established a priesthood, erected idols and ordained religious ceremonies that he *“devised from his own heart”* (1 Kings 12:25-33). He made up his own rules and suffered the most severe result -- he lost fellowship with God! Whenever human beings create their own rituals, fasts or feasts, ceremonies, rites or sacraments (baptisms and communion) without divine approval of the scriptures, their worship is *“in vain”*. It simply does not please God.

In these brief articles you will discover what pleases God in prayer, communion, singing, giving and teaching. Check everything with your own Bible and make sure God is listening when you pray! Do not be satisfied until you have found a church that worships God in the way that truly *pleases him*.

— **David Tarbet, Church of Christ
New Milford, Connecticut**

BIBLE TEACHING PLEASES GOD

The potential for life and the power of growth is found in the seed. Jesus taught: *“The seed is the word of God”* (Luke 8:11). It is only through the power of the word that the human heart is convinced and convicted of sin. *“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart”* (Hebrews 4:12). When this imperishable seed is planted in human hearts, it *“is able to save your souls”* (James 1:21).


Once saved, Christians must continue to *“grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”* (2 Peter 3:18), through the pure spiritual milk of the word (1 Peter 2:2). God’s word is our spiritual food. *“Man shall not live by bread alone,*

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Jews under the Old Testament were physically born into their religion, a faith that is taught. This faith is created, nourished and sustained through learning and living the word of God. As our Lord said, *“It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me”* (John 6:45). For the word of God to be effectively taught, there must be Biblically sound preachers and teachers.

but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). As Christians consistently study God’s word, they mature in Christ and grow in their faith. *“Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ”* (Romans 10:17).

tament were physically but Christianity is a

Preaching is ordained by God as the approved method of communicating His holy word. God has provided *“evangelists, shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”* (Ephesians 4:11-13). On the otherhand, teaching and preaching man-made traditions and rules is condemned by Jesus (Matthew 15:9). How does one tell the difference between the truth of God and mere human inventions? We must study the Bible for ourselves!

When preaching and teaching God’s word is given priority, Christians will mature in Christ and be strengthened in genuine Christian faith,

— Terry Schmidt,
Southern Maine Church of Christ, W. Kennebunk, ME



What Is the Significance of Communion? God in his love did not leave us confused in matters of such great importance. Instruction is provided in the scriptures. Communion is intended to be a memorial of the death of Jesus on the cross. The apostle Paul wrote: *“For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you...”* (1 Corinthians 11:23), recounting that the Lord Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper in an upper room with the apostles *“Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘Take eat; this is my body.’ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins”* (Matthew 26:26-28). Paul continued, *“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes”* (1 Corinthians 11:26).

How Often Should Communion Be Observed? Paul’s conduct provides an example of when the Lord’s Supper was observed by the first Christians. *“On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread”* (Acts 20:7). Preserved writings from the early church history indicate that when Christianity began, Communion was observed every Sunday and only on Sunday. This was the teaching of the apostles.

What Are the Emblems of Communion? Bread, and fruit of the (grape) vine represent the body and blood of Christ. These do not change into the actual body and blood of Christ, but rather are a memorial of His death. When Jesus said *“I am the door,”* he did not mean he became a literal door, but that the door symbolized him. When he said, *“I am the vine”* (John 15:1) he did not mean he literally became a grape vine. In a similar way, Christians should partake of Communion *“in remembrance”* of Jesus (1 Corinthians 11:24-25).

When Communion is observed the way God intended, it becomes a great blessing.

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— Charles Cordon, Church of Christ
Concord, New Hampshire



PRAYER PLEASES GOD

Prayer is submitting to a Power we do not possess. The first example of prayer in the Bible was when a king whose life was in jeopardy was instructed to ask Abraham (God's man) to pray for him that his life would be spared. The scripture reads: *"Then Abraham prayed to God and God healed Abimelech (the king) and also healed his wife and female slaves so that they bore children"* (Genesis 20: 7-17). We see from Abraham what is called a journey of faith. Faith to trust God and his word and prayer to communicate that trust.

Jesus taught his disciples to pray to God: *"Father, hallowed be your name"* (Luke 11:1). Jesus asks us to love and pray for our enemies (Matthew 44-45) because he came to save the unrighteous (Luke 5:32). Jesus is commended for his prayers as living proof of the power and promise of God. *"Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death and he was heard because of his reverence"* (Hebrews 5:7).

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We have access to the promises of God, namely peace, by making our requests known (Philippians 4:6) God knows our needs (Matthew 6:8) but tells us to ask, seek and knock (Luke 11:9-10).

Jesus prayed for his apostles just before his trial that they would be made holy and stand united by God's word. He ended his prayer motivated by God's love. He prayed: *"The glory that you have given me I have given to them that they may be one even as we are one. I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you have loved them even as you loved me"* (John 17:22-23).

— Tom Beyers, Church of Christ
Farmington, Connecticut

SINGING PRAISE PLEASES GOD

One cannot deny that the human voice is beautiful when it is practiced, tuned, and engaged in song. The voice is an amazing instrument, and it speaks to us! God designed and created our vocal cords to be strummed by the air when we breathe both in and out. Singing is one of my favorite parts of worship.

God tells us in Ephesians 5:19 to “*speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your hearts to the Lord.*” The singing voice is a speaking voice. Singing is the act of producing musical words with the voice. Our voices convey through words of song our reverence and praise for the Lord’s greatness, and our gratitude for His Son. The melody which accompanies singing is carried in our hearts. Scripture says “*making melody with your hearts to God.*” How deep is the love we have for our Lord!

Many people are unaware that singing without instrumental accompaniment was the practice of the church Jesus built and continues to the practice of Churches of Christ.

It is universally acknowledged by church historians that from the beginning of Christianity in the first century and extending for almost 1000 years, all hymns in church were sung without instrumental accompaniment. In fact, the Latin word “*a cappella*” is used to describe vocal music because it means “*in the style of the chapel.*”

Churches of Christ do not dislike instrumental music in other settings. Neither do we lack the financial means to purchase instruments or capable musicians to play them. We are not holding to a long established tradition. Vocal music in worship is not simply a matter of personal preference. It’s a matter of following scripture. The New Testament does not authorize instruments to be played in worship.

The decision for *a cappella* singing in worship is by faith, following God’s instructions for worship without injecting our own reasoning into sacred worship. God has defined the worship that pleases him. Let all who desire to please God worship him in the way God has approved in Scripture. In the words of the Bible: “*In the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise*” (Hebrews 2:12). “*Let us offer to God acceptable worship*” (Hebrews 12:28). “*The fruit of lips*” is acceptable to God (Hebrews 13:1).

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GETTING TOGETHER FOR

“Coming to church brings out our spiritual underpinnings of faith and gives us more strength. We should never underestimate our value in our sphere of influence. A simple hug can pull someone out of a slump. Others need us to be present for their own encouragement. We often speak of people we saw in worship who have special needs. Each one of us has a lot to give to others!”

— **Bill & Emily Coggins**
Martha’s Vineyard,
MA.



“I go to church to reaffirm my faith and to keep the truth I believe in. I need to confirm my faith and to reinforce it. I need the fellowship of my brothers and sisters in Christ also.”

—**Doug Roy, Pittsfield, MA**

“I was away from the church for a number of years but when I decided to go back I told my husband I would be a better wife. I prayed for 24 years that my husband and I would worship together again.”



When Monday comes I look forward to the upcoming Sunday. We commit our attendance to the services of the church to our King who has done everything for us.”

— **Beverly McKay,**
New Milford, CT.

“I go to church to stay right with God.”



He has asked us to be in worship and I want to do what He asks. I get a feeling of satisfaction. The brethren are glad to see me and I am glad to see them. It is uplifting to see others besides myself interested in saving their souls and that of others.”

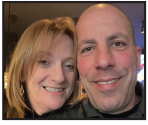
— **Bill Ingram**
Ashaway, RI.

“Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day ap-

“I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord.’”

— **Psalms 122:1**

WORSHIP PLEASES GOD



“After living through the pandemic

and worshipping on-line we learned one cannot get the sense of fellowship and “oneness” that comes from getting together for worship. I know the Lord was with us through this experience, but at the end of the day “fullment” is missing. God’s plan is clear: love and good works are created by meeting together (Hebrews 10:24).

Worship at home has many distractions. It is only to be expected that spiritual fervor will be diminished, daily problems will be more difficult to deal with, and our sense of helping others will lose its urgency.

God is love. He calls for us to grow in love for one another. Worshipping together provides an opportunity to love one another. Without gathering together love for Christian brothers and sisters suffers.

How does love demonstrate itself with others? How do we lift up others burdened with daily discouragements? How do we strengthen the weak? How do we “bear one another’s burdens”? Without connection how can there be compassion?”

— **Scott & Teresa Genco, Poughkeepsie, NY**



“The most important reason

we attend worship services is to be an encouragement to others, including our own children. We ourselves need the fellowship, too! COVID has been tough on us all. Worshipping via Zoom has been good, but it’s not the same.”

— **Brad & Brenda Shaw, Bennington, VT**

“Where two or three are gathered in my name there am I among them.”

— **Matthew 18:20**

“They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching, and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42).

God made us social beings. He does not intend that we be isolated from one another. He knows we need fellowship with one another.

That’s one of the most important reasons why he gave us the church in the first place.”

— **Mike & Carol Adaman, Castleton, VT**



“No matter what is happening in the world,

when our family goes to worship we are reminded that God is unchanging. That is a comfort to us. We want to set an example for our family who look to us for spiritual stability just as we looked to our parents for stability as we were growing up. Children follow the example of parents.”

— **Wesley & Davina Salmons, Kittery, ME**



GIVING GENEROUSLY PLEASES GOD

A church mentioned in the Bible sent some people to take money and supplies giving them to people in great need in another city. It was said they were “*rendering this service to supply for the needs of others which then overflowed in many thanksgivings to God.*” The word “render” has the idea of performing a service at one’s own expense. The people in this circumstance were taking from their own resources and giving to others in need. This is taken from a letter in the New Testament written to the church in Corinth (2 Corinthians 9:6-15).

I have re-read this letter to Corinth and asked the question, “**how should I give?**” These are thoughts that have moved me:

- I should be ready when the need arises
- I ought to be zealous in spirit
- I should arrange my gift in advance
- I am to be willing
- I need to give bountifully
- God expects me to give cheerfully
- God has given me enough of everything so I can be generous
- I will be enriched by giving
- God will provide “seed” to plant and harvest so I can be even more generous
- I will render this service
- Results of my generosity will go beyond what I imagine

Henry was a young boy, five years old, who would get cash gifts for holidays and birthdays. His grandmother gave him four envelopes and had him write on them: God, Henry, Savings and Others. When he received a gift of money his grandmother had him decide how much went in each envelope. The envelopes were placed in a special drawer in a desk.

Henry just turned 22 and was looking through the old desk where his envelopes had been. A surprise, they were still there, all empty except the one marked Henry, It had \$2 in it.

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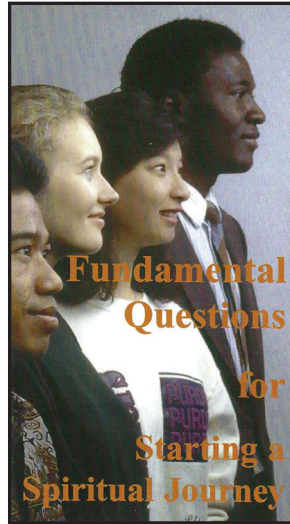
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WHAT GOD HAD NOT COMMANDED

In our daily Bible reading schedule we read the story of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10). It is a well-known story. The day had come to consecrate Aaron as high priest and his sons, Nadab and Abihu, to be priests. The holy garments had been made and Aaron and his sons had put them on. The bull of the sin offering, the ram of the guilt offering and the peace offerings had been sacrificed. Aaron and his sons had eaten a holy meal and separated themselves seven days. All of this was according to the commands of the Lord.

Then Aaron and his sons began to sacrifice as the Lord had commanded. Aaron consecrated the altar and presented the offerings. God was pleased with their obedience in worship and the Lord's fire came down to consume the offerings.

Nadab and Abihu stepped up to offer incense on the altar of incense. They took the special firepans made especially for this purpose (Exodus 27:3); they scooped appropriate amounts of incense (Exodus 30:34-38). They might have thought, "What difference would it make if we took fire to light the incense from this little fire over here?" and offered "*unauthorized fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them*" (Leviticus 10:1). Then fire came out of the presence from the Lord in anger to consume the priests who had taken such liberty despite the specific command about the fire!

What a powerful warning, illustrating an important principle that we ignore to our own spiritual peril! What God had commanded them was fire from a very specific source: the altar of sacrifice (Leviticus 16:12 and Numbers 16:42). Because he was specific, God didn't need to list the many other places from which a coal of fire might be taken for use in the firepan. This was because *specific* commands *limit* and automatically *eliminate* other possibilities.

So, shall we offer "*unauthorized*" music in the Lord's worship when he has specified *a cappella* singing? Shall we preach "*unauthorized*" man-made traditions when we've been told to preach God's word? Shall we pray to "*unauthorized*" gods in our prayers? Will we introduce "*unauthorized*" Old Testament rituals into the practices of the New Testament church? Things which the Lord has not commanded us? The obvious answer must be No. When the Lord commands specific things for worship, practice and teaching, we understand that He needn't list the many things that he doesn't want.

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— Park Linscomb, former President & Director
Ganderbrook Christian Camp, Raymond, Maine
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