

Equipped to worship in spirit and truth

Balance is such an important part of successful living. Whether it's eating a healthy diet, juggling career and family commitments, or making sure we don't overspend, we need to have balance. Without it, we run the risk of being physically unfit, spending too much time at our work, or getting into serious financial debt. Balance keeps everything in its proper place. Whenever we live imbalanced lives, something - or someone - always suffers.

Balance is also necessary in worship. Probably the most direct comment about the importance of balanced worship comes from Jesus¹ when he talks about worshipping God in spirit and truth. If we are committed to biblical truth only at an intellectual level, and don't allow our spirits to be changed by that truth, then our worship will be out of balance. Similarly, if our spirits are touched by our worship experiences, but biblical truth is of secondary importance to us in the process, we are again out of balance. What we need is worship that is both true and touches our spirits. God is actually looking for people who will worship him like this.² He is more concerned with *who* we worship than with *where* we worship. Do you want to be one of these people? If so, you might find these suggestions helpful.

Worship in spirit - this includes responding to what we *experience* of God - not just with our intellects, but with our bodies and emotions as well. Several verses in **Psalm 63** highlight various responses that might be included as we worship God in spirit. Here are some of the words the psalmist uses in his worship: "*earnestly*"; "*thirsts*"; "*longs*"; "*praise*"; "*lifting up hands*"; "*clings*"; "*rejoice*". How many of these feature regularly in your worship? Do you worship God passionately or mechanically? Does your worship impact the way you live from day to day? Do you regularly take time out to worship privately as well as with other Christians? Is your worship of God a Sunday thing or a full-time thing? How you answer these questions might help identify whether or not you are worshipping in spirit.

Worship in truth - this includes responding to what we *know* about God and involves having a correct appreciation of who he is. There are many passages in the bible that tell us what God is like and we know that these descriptions of him are true. For example, he is ALMIGHTY;³ COMPASSIONATE;⁴ FAITHFUL;⁵ HOLY;⁶ MERCIFUL;⁷ SOVEREIGN.⁸ Try focusing on these, and other, characteristics of God as you worship. Another way that might help you worship in truth is to familiarize yourself with some of the commands and promises given in the bible and incorporate them into your worship. An example might be **Deuteronomy 31:6**, where we're told that our God goes with us and will never leave nor forsake us. This is a very comforting truth to hold on to and, as a result, we can consciously worship God as the One whom we can rely on completely. Another example might be **Matthew 11:28**, where Jesus invites those who are weary and burdened to come to him for rest. When you think you've reached the end of your own resources, you know from this verse that you can approach him in worship as the God who restores your soul. Try identifying additional bible verses that will deepen your understanding of what God is like.

Worshipping in spirit and truth is ongoing. Once we start worshipping in truth, we mustn't forget to worship in spirit. To help us do this, we need to allow our consideration of the above truths to make an impact on us. We should respond to them with a right attitude of humility, adoration, thankfulness and joy. We must let these biblical truths sink in to our hearts and minds so that our worship of God is wholehearted and genuine.

¹ John 4:23, 24

² John 4:23

³ 2 Corinthians 6:18

⁴ Psalm 145:8

⁵ Deuteronomy 7:9

⁶ Revelation 4:8

⁷ Luke 6:36

⁸ Psalm 68:20