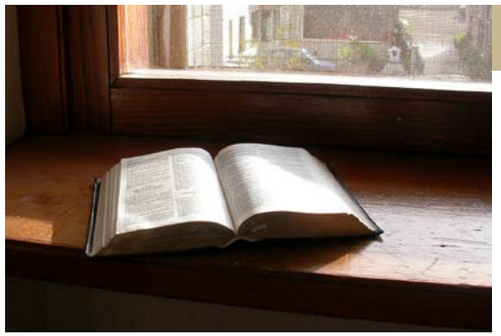


give cheerfully, willingly and bountifully (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:7-8; 8:12; 9:5-7). It is essential to learn the truth about giving as much as it is to learn the truth about partaking of the Lord's Supper on the first day of each week or about singing praises to God without instrumental music. Failure to give as God instructs will make my worship vain.

My worship needs to be improved if, in any way, it is according to the commandments of men rather than instruction from God. My worship needs to be improved when it is only from my mouth and not from my heart. Whatever we can do that is in harmony with God's expressed will—to worship according to truth and to worship from our hearts—needs to be put into practice. And remember, true worship glorifies our heavenly Father and edifies our brothers and sisters in Christ.

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Faithful Sayings

BULLETIN OF THE OLSEN PARK CHURCH OF CHRIST

Services
Sunday: 9:00 AM
9:30 AM
10:30 AM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:
Patrick Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Jeff Nunn

Deacons:
Ben Hight
Blake McAlister
Walker McAnear
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Justin Smiley
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:
Kyle Pope

Improving Our Worship

By R.J. Stevens

The New Testament tells us what early Christians did in their worship and also the manner in which their worship was done. It is not up to man to invent ways to improve worship *apart* from the word of God. **"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work"** (2 Tim. 3:16-17). John 4:24 records, **"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."** If I practice something in worship for which there is NO scriptural authority or if I have an attitude of bitterness in my heart when I worship, such is unacceptable before God (Matt. 5:23-24; 15:8-9). Therefore, worshiping God acceptably involves doing what God says and doing it from a sincere heart.

Throughout the Bible, we can see that God has always required that His children give the best of themselves and of their sacrifices to Him. For ALL that He has done since the creation of the world, God deserves it! Today in New Testament worship, God deserves my best! Obviously, as a disciple of the Lord, I can worship God at any time and in any place. However, as a Christian, I have the responsibility and privilege to assemble with fellow disciples. Even though there are times when we worship with others in an assembly, worship is still an individual matter. What can I do, personally, to improve my worship before God? Please give the following areas of worship your consideration:

How can I improve my worship in song? Passages such as 1 Corinthians 14:15, Ephesians 5:19, and Colossians 3:16 teach us to sing with spirit, with understanding, with melody in your heart and with a heart filled with grace. *The command to sing involves MY learning something about singing*. If I am a song leader in song worship, I need to learn to lead singing to the best of MY ability in order to encourage others, so that they, too, can give of their best in song worship as followers.

How can I improve my worship in partaking of the Lord's Supper? It's obvious that the early disciples partook of the Lord's Supper on the first day of every week (Acts 2:42; 20:7). However, according to 1 Corinthians 11:23-29, I must partake of the bread and the fruit of the vine in memory of Christ. I must discern the Lord's death till He comes again. Sometimes it helps me in my discernment to read Scriptures and lyrics to songs that take my mind back to the cross of Christ.



How can I improve my worship in teaching and hearing God's word? A preacher is worshiping God when he preaches. As a preacher of truth, I can improve my worship in proclaiming the word when I speak with all boldness (Acts 4:29). My worship in preaching will be more effective when I preach in the spirit of meekness and humility (Gal. 6:1-2). I must also speak with love in my heart; not only for my Lord, but also for the same people He loves (1 Cor. 13:1). Those who hear the gospel are also worshiping while listening. As a hearer, I should receive the message with all readiness of mind—just like the Bereans (Acts 17:11). The worshipful hearer not only receives the word but also embraces it (believes) and obeys. If I want to improve this part of my worship, I will show reverence for the word.

How can I improve my worship in praying to God? As one leading the prayer, I need to prepare myself. The lack of preparation in prayer often leads to wordy repetition. I need to pray loud enough that the congregation can hear the words and be able to say, "Amen." The Scripture teaches me to pray with spirit, understanding and faith. I need to be enthusiastic when I pray and mean every word that I say. On the other hand, as a listener to a public prayer, I need to concentrate on what is being said while having an attitude of prayer in my heart.

How can I improve my worship in giving? The Bible teaches me to give on the first day of the week, as I have prospered, as I have purposed, and to