

ONE WOMAN WONDERED ABOUT WORSHIP

After Jesus identified her adultery, a woman asked Him about worship. *Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship* (John 4:20). Worship on that mountain was based on family tradition. Is that good enough for God? Is family and human tradition the basis of your worship?

Jesus says her fathers offered ignorant worship since true worship was offered in Jerusalem (v22). Did you know Jesus spoke plainly about adultery and false worship? This is love.

In verses 21 and 23, Jesus told her that changes were coming. The rest of the New Testament show us those changes: public worship is not only in Jerusalem but is anywhere saints gather in one place as a church (1 Cor. 11:18), eat the Lord's Supper each week not Passover each year (Acts 20:7; Col. 2:16), sing and make melody in your heart not play a melody on a harp (Eph. 5:19; Heb. 8:6).

Today, many people make the same mistake as the woman—they worship the way “our fathers worshiped” without knowing God has revealed another way. Don't follow your fathers, follow Jesus.

Editor's Note: In a private study this week, I studied John 4 with a few other people and was reminded of the power of this “private study” Jesus had with this woman. Can that record and this article help someone you know? Only if you offer it to them.

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

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WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT THE LOVE OF GOD

Chris Reeves

Our English word “love” is used in many ways. We might say, “I'm falling in love,” or “I love Mexican food.” But, when the Bible says, “*God is love*” what does that mean (1 Jn. 4:8,16)?

Love is an attribute of God. When speaking of the attributes of God we sometimes describe them as “natural attributes” and “moral attributes.” The term “natural attributes” is a term used to describe the attributes of the very nature of God's being or essence (eternal, infinite, immutable, etc.). These attributes are unique to God and they cannot belong to mankind. The term “moral attributes” is a term used to describe the attributes of God that he reveals to mankind and shares with mankind (holiness, righteousness, justice, goodness, etc.). These attributes are not unique to God and should be reflected by some degree in everyone. We should be like God in his “moral attributes.”

The goodness of God is one of several “moral attributes” of God. God is good. He deals kindly and generously with all those who are in need. He is the final standard of good. God demonstrates his goodness in five ways. He is: loving, benevolent, merciful, gracious and longsuffering. Love is one expression of the goodness of God. Indeed, God is “*the God of love*” (2 Cor. 13:11). “Love” (Gr. *agape*) means the concern for the welfare of another. Love is active goodwill toward another. For example, the “lovingkindness” of God focuses on the kind acts that proceed from God's love (Jer. 9:24). Love does not mean “unconditional acceptance” or “love regardless of behavior.” Love is not emotional sentimentalism that is better felt than told. When speaking of God's love, we must resist using the trendy phrases so popular in today's culture, and stay with what the Bible teaches.

(article continued inside)

God's love is described in Scripture in many marvelous ways. Let us examine them. The love of God is...

- Superlative (Jn. 3:16; 15:13; 1 Jn.3:1) – there is no love on earth like it.
- Unmerited and undeserving (Deut. 7:7-8; Mal. 1:2; Rom. 5:8; 9:13; Eph. 2:1,4,5; Tit. 3:4) – there is no human work or deed to merit it.
- Generous (Deut. 7:13; 10:18; Hos. 11:1-4; 2 Thess. 2:16) – there is no good gift that it will not give.
- Protective (Deut. 23:5; Isa. 38:17; Isa. 43:2-4) – there is no good protection that it will not offer.
- Saving (Psa. 51:1; Isa. 63:7-9; Hos. 14:4; Jonah 4:2; Mic. 7:18; Zeph. 3:17) – there is no sin that it will not forgive.
- Active (Isa. 63:9; Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 4:10) – there is no good deed that it will not act out.
- Sacrificial (Jn. 3:16; 15:13; 1 Jn. 4:10) – there is no sacrifice too great for it.
- Enduring (Psa. 89:31-33; Isa. 49:15-16; Jer. 31:3; Hos. 3:1-2; 11:1-4; Zech. 3:17; Rom. 8:35-39) – there is no obstacle that can stand in its way.
- Universal (Jn. 3:16; 2 Cor. 13:14) – there is no human being that it will not reach.
- Incarnate (Jn. 3:16; Tit. 3:4-7; 1 Jn. 4:9) – there is no good deed that it will not manifest.
- Personal (2 Sam.12:24-25) – there is no part of it that does not personally touch mankind.
- Demanding (Deut. 10:18-19; 1 Thess. 4:9; 1 Jn. 2:5; 4:11,12,21; 5:4) – there is no right conduct not required of mankind. God's love demands righteous conduct (Psa. 11:7; 33:5; 37:28; 146:8). God's love demands obedience to his commands (Jn. 14:21,23; 15:10; 1 Jn. 2:5). God loves all men, but the blessings and benefits of his love are applied to each one of us only when we meet the conditions he has laid down. God loves all men, but not all will be saved. If the benefits of God's love are not conditional, then universal salvation is the result! A man may be loved of God, but not saved by God because that man chose not to obey the conditions and commandments laid down by God (Mk.10:21-22).
- Corrective (Prov. 3:12; Heb. 12:6; Rev. 3:19) – there is no sin that it will not point out and reprove.
- Unforced – there is no part of it that is forced upon man against his will (Jn. 14:21-24).

Yes, "God is love." What a marvelous Bible truth! God is unselfish and benevolent in his concern for all mankind. In return, God expects us to be loving. God expects us

to have the same kind of love that he has. He expects us to love him, and to love our fellow-man (Mt. 5:43-48; 22:37-38; Jn. 13:35; 14:15; 15:12-13; Rom. 13:8-9; 1 Cor. 13:1ff; Gal. 5:14; Eph. 5:2; Heb. 10:24; 1 Jn. 2:7ff; 3:10ff; 4:11,19-21).

Friend, is the love of God shed abroad in your heart today (Rom. 5:5)?

BETTER MANNERS THAN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Dick Blackford [www.stonestreetbcv.com/id102.html]

Several years ago, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. wrote an article by this title in which he pointed out that it was not undignified or discourteous to call names. After all, Christ and the apostles called names of those with whom they disagreed and yet the Bible remained a dignified book. He concluded, his article by saying,

“When a paper develops better manners than the New Testament and a preacher becomes more dignified than the apostles, neither is worth anything to the defense of the truth.”

Sometimes preachers and papers are criticized for being too negative. We grant that such is possible and perhaps many of us have done that. But how does one make a positive response to statements toward which he holds a negative position? Where is the philosophy of “*always take the positive approach*” advocated in the Bible? Paul told Timothy to “reprove, rebuke, and exhort” (2 Tim. 4:2). That is two-thirds negative. Neither Jesus nor Paul felt that it was wrong to take a negative approach when they sustained a negative relationship to an idea or practice. Nor did they think it was wrong to make a direct response to that with which they disagreed. There was no “*beating around the bush*” (Matt. 15:1-20; 1 Cor. 11:17-34; Gal. 2:11-14). Since then, many great men have signed to take the negative regarding a particular proposition because they believed the affirmative to be in error.

We used to hear brethren say, “*We practice an open pulpit. If you disagree with what we teach and practice, we invite you to come and point out wherein we err.*” Similar offers were made regarding the pages of bulletins and papers. The Holy Spirit endorsed this open policy by recording both sides of an issue and by recording direct negative responses by those who were right and by those who were wrong.

When we maintain that no direct response is to be permitted to anything we say and that only the positive approach will be allowed, we are trying to have better manners than the New Testament and are occupying a non-biblical policy. It is a dangerous trend when we seek to squelch open and direct discussion.