

"What is the meaning of Christian worship?"

Answer: The meaning of the New Testament Greek word most often translated "worship" (proskuneo) is "to fall down before" or "bow down before." Worship is a state (an attitude) of spirit. Since it's an internal, individual action, it could/should be done most of the time (or all the time) in our lives, regardless of place or situation ([John 4:21](#)). Therefore, Christians should worship all the time, seven days a week. When Christians formally gather together in worship, still the emphasis should be on individually worshiping the Lord. Even in a congregation, participants need to be aware that they are worshiping God fully on an individual basis.

The nature of Christian worship is from the inside out and has two equally important parts. We must worship "in spirit and in truth" ([John 4:23-24](#)). Worshiping in the spirit has nothing to do with our physical posture. It has to do with our innermost being and requires several things. First, we must be born again. Without the Holy Spirit residing within us, we cannot respond to God in worship because we do not know Him. "No one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God" ([1 Corinthians 2:11b](#)). The Holy Spirit within us is the one who energizes worship because He is in essence glorifying Himself, and all true worship glorifies God.

Second, worshiping in spirit requires a mind centered on God and renewed by Truth. Paul exhorts us to "present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind" ([Romans 12:1b, 2b](#)). Only when our minds are changed from being centered on worldly things to being centered on God can we worship in spirit. Distractions of many kinds can flood our minds as we try to praise and glorify God, hindering our true worship.

Third, we can only worship in spirit by having a pure heart, open and repentant. When King David's heart was filled with guilt over his sin with Bathsheba, he found it impossible to worship. He felt that God was far from him, and he "groaned all day long" feeling God's hand heavy upon him ([Psalm 32:3,4](#)). But when he confessed, fellowship with God was restored and worship and praise poured forth from him. He understood that "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart" ([Psalm 51:17](#)). Praise and worship toward God cannot come from hearts filled with unconfessed sin.

The second part of true worship is worship "in truth." All worship is a response to truth, and that which is truth is contained in the Word of God. Jesus said to His Father, "Thy word is truth" ([John 17:17b](#)). [Psalm 119](#) says, "Thy law is truth" (v. 142b) and "Thy word is true" (v. 160a). To truly worship God, we must understand who He is and what He has done, and the only place He has fully revealed Himself is in the Bible. Worship is an expression of praise from the depths of our hearts toward a God who is understood through His Word. If we do not have the truth of the Bible, we do not know God and we cannot be truly worshiping.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

John 4:21 (NLT)

Jesus replied, “Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem.

John 4:23-24 (NLT)

But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. ²⁴ For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

1 Corinthians 2:11 (NLT)

No one can know a person’s thoughts except that person’s own spirit, and no one can know God’s thoughts except God’s own Spirit.

Romans 12:1-2 (NLT)

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him ² Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Psalms 32:3-4 (NLT)

When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long.

⁴ Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat.

Psalms 51:17 (NLT)

The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.

John 17:17 (NLT)

Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth.

QUESTIONS:

- (T) (F) 1. The New Testament Greek word for worship is Proudskunktoe?
- (T) (F) 2. To worship means to fall or bow down?
- (T) (F) 3. Worship is a state or attitude of Spirit?
- (T) (F) 4. When we gather together as a church, we should worry if the person next to us is worshipping and not focus on worshipping individually?
- (T) (F) 5. We must worship in Spirit and in Truth?
- (T) (F) 6. In order to worship we must first be born again?
- (T) (F) 7. Without the Holy Spirit residing within us, we cannot respond to God in worship because we do not know Him?
- (T) (F) 8. Worshiping in spirit requires a mind centered on God and renewed by our own ideas?
- (T) (F) 9. Romans 12:2 says to let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think?
- (T) (F) 10. We can only worship in spirit by having a pure heart, open and repentant?
- (T) (F) 11. Praise and worship toward God can come from hearts filled with unconfessed sin?
- (T) (F) 12. To truly worship God, we must understand who He is and what He has done?
- (T) (F) 13. The only place God has fully revealed Himself is in the Bible?
- (T) (F) 14. John 17:17 says make them holy by your spirit; teach them your word, which is truth?
- (T) (F) 15. If we do not have the truth of the Bible, we do not know God and we cannot be truly worshipping?