

### **Our offerings are not acceptable if our lives do not please God**

[GOD, SPEAKING OF HIS UNFAITHFUL PEOPLE:] For *they have paid no attention to what I have said, and they have rejected my law.* <sup>20</sup>*I take no delight when they offer up to me frankincense that comes from Sheba or sweet-smelling cane imported from a faraway land. I cannot accept the burnt offerings they bring me.* JEREMIAH 6:19B–20A

### **We should in fact offer ourselves to God, in service to him**

[PAUL:] I appeal to you: *offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him.* ROMANS 12:1B GNT

### **Also offer other spiritual sacrifices to God**

So *offer spiritual sacrifices that God accepts* through Jesus Christ. 1 PETER 2:5B GW

Through him then *let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, acknowledging his name.* HEBREWS 13:15

Remember the persecuted

## 27. Worshiping God

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## I. General

See also: 25. *Exalting God*, p. 219; 28. *Serving God*, p. 245

Worshipping God is one of the most important and fundamental duties of believers. It involves honoring him by acknowledging his worthiness, including his divine characteristics and wondrous deeds. This is done through such things as praise and thanksgiving, offered with adoration and reverence.

It is also done through offering our resources and even ourselves to God. The former is born out in the second half of this chapter. The latter is done largely through serving God. As such the following chapter on serving God is also pertinent to worshipping him.

## Worship God

### Worship God alone

Again, the devil took him [Jesus] to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their grandeur. <sup>9</sup>And he said to him, “I will give you all these things if you throw yourself to the ground and worship me.” <sup>10</sup>Then Jesus said to him, “Go away, Satan! For it is written: ‘You are to worship the Lord your God and serve only him.’” MATTHEW 4:8–10

They [Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego] were willing to die rather than serve or worship any god other than their own. DANIEL 3:28B NCV™

### Worship God for his glory and sovereignty

Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength! <sup>8</sup>Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts! <sup>9</sup>Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth! <sup>10</sup>Say among the nations, “The LORD reigns!” PSALMS 96:7–10A ESV

### Worship God for his great deeds . . .

All the nations, whom you created, will come and worship you, O LORD. They will honor your name. <sup>10</sup>For you are great and do amazing things. You alone are God. PSALMS 86:9–10

## How to Give to God

### Give willingly

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *Each one of you should give just as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, because God loves a cheerful giver.* 2 CORINTHIANS 9:7

### Give generously

[PAUL, TO THE CORINTHIAN BELIEVERS:] Therefore I thought it necessary to urge these brothers to go to you in advance and to arrange ahead of time *the generous contribution* you had promised, so this may be ready as *a generous gift and not as something you feel forced to do.* <sup>6</sup>My point is this: *The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously.* 2 CORINTHIANS 9:5–6

### Give regularly

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *On the first day of the week, each of you should set aside some income and save it to the extent that God has blessed you, so that a collection will not have to be made when I come.* 1 CORINTHIANS 16:2

This verse is quite probably speaking of money being brought to Christian gatherings held on the first day of every week.

## Righteousness and Making Offerings

### We must live righteously to acceptably worship God

[GOD:] You, Israel, turn justice into poison and throw righteousness on the ground. . . . <sup>21</sup>I hate your festivals; I despise them. I’m not pleased with your religious assemblies. . . . <sup>23</sup>Spare me the sound of your songs. I won’t listen to the music of your harps. AMOS 5:7, 21, 23 GW

Then they’ll bring an offering in righteousness to the LORD. <sup>4</sup>Then the offering to the LORD by Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable as it was in the past, even as in former years. MALACHI 3:3B–4 ISV

For any form of worship to be acceptable to God, including making offerings, we must live righteously, doing what is right.

## What to Give to God

### Give the “firstfruits” to God

As soon as the command was spread abroad, the people of Israel gave in abundance the firstfruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field. [2 CHRONICLES 31:5](#) ESV

The OT speaks of giving to God the first portion of what we produce, often referred to as the “firstfruits”. Today many believers emulate this by giving to God a portion of their wage on first receiving it. By this God’s provision and goodness is acknowledged in a way that honors him (cf. Proverbs 3:9) – putting him first, rather than simply offering him the leftovers that we can spare. Note also that offering the firstfruits to God was a statement, made in faith, that the rest of the harvest would take place – a principle also applicable today.

### Give the best to God . . .

[A DIRECTIVE TO THE ISRAELITES:] *You must bring the best of the firstfruits of your land to the Holy Tent of the LORD your God.* [EXODUS 23:19A](#) NCV™

### . . . Do not give what is inferior to God

[DIRECTIVES TO THE ISRAELITES:] *You shall not offer anything that has a blemish, for it will not be acceptable for you.* [LEVITICUS 22:201](#) ESV

### Give all that you can

[PAUL, SPEAKING OF THE MACEDONIAN CHURCHES:] They have been tested by great troubles, and they are very poor. But they gave much because of their great joy. <sup>3</sup>I can tell you that they gave as much as they were able and even more than they could afford. [2 CORINTHIANS 8:2–3A](#) NCV™

And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, worth less than a penny. <sup>43</sup>He called his disciples and said to them, “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the offering box than all the others. <sup>44</sup>For they all gave out of their wealth. But she, out of her poverty, put in what she had to live on, everything she had.” [MARK 12:42–44](#)

### . . . Worship God for his creation of everything

He [an angel] declared in a loud voice: “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has arrived, and worship the one who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water!”

[REVELATION 14:7](#)

### Worship God because of his care of his people

*They bowed down and worshiped the Lord because they knew that he had seen their suffering and was going to help them.* [EXODUS 4:31B](#) CEV

## Worshiping before God

### Worship God in spirit

But a time is coming – and now is here – when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such people to be his worshipers. <sup>24</sup>God is spirit, and the people who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. [JOHN 4:23–24](#)

To worship “in spirit” is primarily an inward activity, rather than being centered on the performing of rituals (which were prominent in OT worship). It involves one’s spirit – and thus one’s mind and will. To begin with, the heart and/or conscience of the worshiper must be right before God. Then one must be honest and open in approaching God (cf. John 4:23–24 ↑), and fully focused on God; obviously this needs to be done willingly. Not least, the worshiper must worship by the Holy Spirit (cf. Philippians 3:3). This involves being conscious of the Spirit, relying on the Spirit’s enablement to commune with God and being open to the Spirit’s promptings.

### Worship God in reverence and awe

Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, <sup>29</sup>for our God is a consuming fire. [HEBREWS 12:28–29](#) ESV

The description of God as a “consuming fire” points to his power and preparedness to fierily devour or destroy that which is opposed to him and incompatible with his holiness.

## Worship God with praise

Then the man knelt down and *worshipped the LORD*. <sup>27</sup>*He said, "Praise the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has faithfully kept his promise to my master.* GENESIS 24:26–27A GNT

## Worshipping Together

### Join with fellow believers in worshipping God

Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people replied "Amen! Amen!" as they lifted their hands. *Then they bowed down and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.* NEHEMIAH 8:6

[A CALL TO FELLOW ISRAELITES:] *Come! Let's bow down and worship! Let's kneel before the LORD, our creator!* PSALMS 95:6

### Offer praise and thanksgiving together

*They [Israelites] praised the LORD and gave thanks as they took turns singing: "The LORD is good! His faithful love for Israel will last forever." Everyone started shouting and praising the LORD because work on the foundation of the temple had begun.* EZRA 3:11 CEV

### Pray together

*They [the apostles] gathered frequently to pray as a group, together with the women and with Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brothers.* ACTS 1:14 GNT

Remember the persecuted

## II. Offerings

Making offerings to God of money and/or goods is an integral part of worshipping God. Moreover, the Bible gives a number of good reasons to give offerings to God. It also gives guidelines on what to give and how to give to God. Additionally, the Bible emphasizes the need for our lives to please God in order for our offerings to be acceptable to him.

## Reasons to Give to God

### Offerings are an important part of worshipping God

*They will worship with sacrifices and food offerings.* They will make vows to the LORD and carry them out. ISAIAH 19:21B GW

### Offerings acknowledge God's provision for us

[MOSES, TO THE ISRAELITES:] You must count seven weeks; you must begin to count them *from the time you begin to harvest the standing grain.* <sup>10</sup>*Then you are to celebrate the Festival of Weeks before the LORD your God with the voluntary offering that you will bring, in proportion to how he has blessed you.* DEUTERONOMY 16:9–10

The people were to bring an offering of an amount that was in proportion to the size of the harvest that God had blessed them with. Today believers likewise offer a portion of what they have earned from their work.

### Offerings express thanksgiving to God for his deliverance

[DAVID:] O God, I have taken vows before you; therefore *I will offer thanksgiving sacrifices to you.* <sup>13</sup>*For you have delivered me from death and my feet from stumbling, so that I may walk before God in the light of the living!* PSALMS 56:12–13 ISV

### Offerings support the service of God

*The Israelites brought a freewill offering to the LORD, every man and woman whose heart was willing to bring materials for all the work that the LORD through Moses had commanded them to do.* EXODUS 35:29