

# The Focus of Worship

By Steve Pruitt

*But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.*

John 4:23 ESV

According to the Gospel of John chapter 4, Jesus and his disciples were on a trip from Judea to Galilee, but Jesus needed to take a route often avoided by Jews; the land of Samaria. Their journey took them outside the city of Sychar and they rested at the place where Jacob's well was located. Jesus' disciples had gone into the city to buy food when a Samaritan woman came to the well to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink."

The woman was probably somewhat shocked by Jesus' request. Jews were not supposed to speak to Samaritans. Samaritans were considered half-breeds and were treated with contempt by the Jews. Besides, Jesus was a Jewish teacher, and it was unusual for a Jewish rabbi to speak to women in public. In fact the rabbins voiced their contempt for women by teaching that they were neither to be spoken to on the street nor taught the law.

As they conversed the woman perceived Jesus to be a prophet and challenged him about the proper place of worship. Her ancestors had worshiped on Mount Gerizim while the Jews worshiped in Jerusalem. Jesus' response to her inquiry made two things perfectly clear concerning the proper focus of worship. The first was that the place of worship was not the focus of worship, rather the person who was being worshiped. Jesus replied, *...the true worshipers will worship the Father*. Secondly, Jesus made it clear that outward forms were no longer the focus of true worship, rather the inward focus of spirit and truth.

Though our houses of worship are useful they are not to be worshiped in the place of God, nor can they produce true worship. Our methods of worship (rituals and traditions) are not to be the focus of our worship, nor can they produce true worship. All outward forms of worship are but the overflow of a heart that is worshiping the Father in spirit and truth. Those who are worshiping the Father in spirit and truth are the ones the Father is seeking.

Are you a true worshiper? Is the Father the focus of your worship? Has spirit and truth replaced ritual and tradition as the focus of your worship? Ask the Father to remove anything in your life that keeps him from being the focus of your worship.

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**Scriptures for meditation:**

- Mark 12:30
- Psalm 63:1-5
- Psalm 73:25-26