



God is spirit, and those who
worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

John 4:24

On Worship

with Pastor Steve

Is God Hungry?

I have thought for some time that no one but me can cook a steak exactly the way I like them. I know how long I want to tenderize the meat and what ingredients I want to put on the steak while it cooks. I know just how long to leave them on the grill to achieve my desired taste; medium rare. There is also the pleasure of smelling the aroma of that steak while it cooks. The anticipation of eating that steak heightens as the aroma of the smoke causes my stomach to rumble. Finally, it's ready! The hunger pains begin to subside as I enjoy a meal prepared just the way I like it.

Do you think God has hunger pains? At first glance this question has an obvious answer; no. God is not confined to a human body, he is spirit. He has no need for food. God is self-existent and does not need any outside source to assist him in sustaining life. However, though he is not physically dependant on food, there is a burning hunger in God that he actively seeks to satisfy.

As the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness God gave Moses specific instructions as to the sacrifices they were to offer. In Numbers Moses recorded the instructions given for the daily offerings. The Lord said to Moses, *Give these instructions to the people of Israel: The offerings you present as special gifts are a pleasing aroma to me; they are my food. See to it that they are brought at the appointed times and offered according to my instructions.* (Numbers 28:1 NLT)

God is hungry for our special gifts. He feeds from our daily offerings or sacrifices. The meal that satisfies the Father's hunger begins with a living sacrifice. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Roman church, *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.* (Romans 12:1 NLT)

To give our bodies as a living sacrifice is to render them dead to sin and alive to God. It means to give up all of our rights and yield totally to the will of the Father. A living sacrifice has at its core the greatest of commandments: To love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, all the time.

Another course in the Father's meal is the sacrifices of a broken heart and contrite spirit. David wrote, *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart -- These, O God, you will not despise.* (Psalms 51:17) A broken spirit is one that is burst open with repentance. The contrite heart has been crushed or crumbled, and in humility has collapsed to submit to the mastery of God.

David also wrote, *The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.* (Psalms 34:18) The prophet Isaiah records these words:

For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Isaiah 57:15

For all those things my hand has made, and all those things exist, says the Lord. But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at my word.

Isaiah 66:2

God's hunger is not fully satisfied until he has smelled the aroma and tasted the delicacy of a sacrifice of praise. The writer of Hebrews wrote, *Therefore by him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.* (Hebrews 13:15)

In my book *The Ingredients of Worship* I wrote, "Many people over the years have taught that a sacrifice of praise is praise that is given when the worshiper doesn't feel like praising. This definition totally misses the meaning of the scripture and places the focus of worship on the worshiper instead of the one receiving the worship. Worship doesn't depend on how the worshiper feels but on how great a God he is worshipping. Worship doesn't depend on the outward appearance of the worshiper or his circumstances, but on the greatness of the one who controls the circumstances and the work he has done on the inside of the worshiper."

A quick study of Numbers 28 reveals that the offerings that were acceptable to God were ones without spot or blemish. They were of the best of the flock. A sacrifice of praise is the best the worshiper has to offer. It is the "fresh" fruit of the lips; ripe for the picking; not fruit that is rotting on the ground. It is an offering of thanksgiving to God.

God told Moses to make sure the offerings were brought at the appointed times according to his instructions. The appointed time to offer our sacrifices is "continually." The writer of Hebrews agreed with David who wrote, *I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.* (Psalms 34:1) Another psalmist wrote, *By you I have been upheld from birth; you are he who took me out of my mother's womb. My praise shall be continually of you.* (Psalms 71:6) Psalm 199: 44 and 117 read respectively, *So shall I keep your law continually, forever and ever. Hold me up, and I shall be safe, and I shall observe your statutes continually.*

Jesus offers us the instructions of how our sacrifices should be presented. First they must be presented with blood. Jesus himself became the sacrifice by which our sacrifices are made possible. Without the shedding of his blood it would be impossible for our sacrifices to satisfy the hunger of the Father.

In Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well in Sychar he reveals the time and the ingredients of satisfying worship.

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

John 4:23-24

Do you know why he is seeking such people to worship him this way? He has a perpetual hunger for relationship with his children. God's food is our continual living sacrifices of a broken spirit, a contrite heart and a praise of thanksgiving offered in spirit and truth.

During a recent worship service a friend of mine had a vision. In the vision she saw the Lord sitting across a table from her; they were having a candlelight dinner. The Lord leaned forward and blew out the candle! She knew he was being amorous. He said, "I want to have more candlelight dinners with you."

What kind of meals do you serve the Father? Would your offerings leave him starving? Set fire to your passion and burn. Be a sweet smelling aroma to the Father. He will not be able to resist coming to the table you prepare for him. You will even have him coming back for more.