



Part 1 Review
Does God Care
How We Worship
Him?

Presented by George Bradley



Who is God?

**God Is Infinite – He is Self-Existing,
Without Origin -**

God Is Immutable – He Never Changes

God is Omnipotent – He Is All Powerful

God Is Omniscient – He Is All-Knowing

God Is Omnipresent –

He Is Always Everywhere –



The Attributes of God

**God Is Wise – He Is Full of Perfect,
Unchanging Wisdom -
God Is Faithful – He Is Infinitely,
Unchangingly True –
God Is Good – He Is Infinitely,
Unchangingly Kind and Full of Good Will –
God Is Just – He Is Infinitely, Unchangeably
Right and Perfect in All He Does –
God Is Merciful – He is Infinitely,
Unchangeably Compassionate and Kind –**

Some Definitions

Legalism

Liberalism

Antinomianism

Syncretism



How We Shouldn't Worship God

**God has given us many examples of
how we shouldn't worship Him.**

**God gave specific instructions to
His priests on how to worship Him.**

**God issued warnings in
Deuteronomy**



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Part 2**

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When the Philistines captured the Ark, God restored His honor by bringing His ark back without the Israelites' doing anything at all (1 Samuel 6:10-12). However, David knew he had violated the principle of worship causing the death of Uzzah (2 Samuel 6, especially vs. 3, 13).

³ And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart. ⁴ And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark. ⁵ And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.

⁶ And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. ⁷ And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God. ⁸ And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place Perez-uzzah to this day. ⁹ And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me?

¹⁰ So David would not remove the ark of the LORD unto him into the city of David: but David carried it aside into the house of Obededom the Gittite.

¹¹ And the ark of the LORD continued in the house of Obededom the Gittite three months: and the LORD blessed Obededom, and all his household. ¹² And it was told king David, saying, The LORD hath blessed the house of Obededom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obededom into the city of David with gladness. ¹³ And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings.

God's rejection of pagan rites in Jeremiah's day "which I never commanded or spoke of, nor did it ever enter My mind" (Jer. 32:30-42)

³⁰ For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth: for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, saith the LORD. ³¹ For this city hath been to me as a provocation of mine anger and of my fury from the day that they built it even unto this day; that I should remove it from before my face, ³² Because of all the evil of the children of Israel and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

³³ And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction. ³⁴ But they set their abominations in the house, which is called by my name, to defile it. ³⁵ And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

³⁶ And now therefore thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof ye say, It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence;

³⁷ Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: ³⁸ And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: ³⁹ And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: ⁴⁰ And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. ⁴¹ Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul. ⁴² For thus saith the LORD; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them.

By this time you may be thinking this isn't the loving God I serve – Surely Yeshua would never care as long as we worship Him alone, or would He?

Yeshua Rejected Pharisaic Worship

(Matthew 15:1–14), Yeshua cares about the how of worship, His critique is their laxity about God's law that undermined the moral law. Matthew's text is a picture of the human-made religion of the Pharisees:

"Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, "Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." And He answered and said to them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother is to be put to death.' But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God," he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, **But their heart is far away from Me.** But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’” After Jesus called the crowd to Him, He said to them, “Hear and understand. It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.” Then the disciples came and said to Him, “Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?” But He answered and said, “Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.”

Tradition in the New Testament can be either positive (2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6) or negative (Mark 7:3, 9, 13; Col. 2:8; 1 Peter 1:18), depending on the context. Here it refers to the traditions of the elders, which involved (1) very high estimation of the specific interpretations and applications of the Torah by the elders, even approaching the point of these views and deductions being considered to be equally binding as the law of God itself;

(2) not only applications of the law of God that went beyond what the law of itself taught, but often went beyond it in the wrong direction; and (3) interpretations and applications of the law that failed to do justice to certain central moral requirements of the law (focusing, rather, on the ceremonial/ritual). This exchange on the issue of the tradition gives Jesus the opportunity to discuss the important matter of ceremonial versus moral defilement and, ultimately, that of worship.

Yeshua, uses a phrase that precisely parallels the charge of the Pharisees, responds by charging them with breaking God's commandment. He then juxtaposes God's commandment with a practice that they have invented or endorsed: the rule of korban. Yeshua's charge against them is that they have undercut the authority of God's word in preference for human-made rules. They have taken away from the word by adding to it. Their teaching is "subtraction by addition." Yeshua illustrates that the Pharisees have a fundamental misunderstanding and foster a misuse of the ceremonial code in relation to the moral law (Matthew 15:3–6); and his verdict is that this misunderstanding/misuse stems from a hypocritical heart (Matthew 15:7–9).

It is important to note that Jesus does not critique the Pharisees for being too tied to old-fashioned practices, caring about what the Torah says too much, or being too picky about God's law. He charges them with ignoring God's law and attacking God's law by adding to it!

Indeed, Yeshua says that the words of Isaiah are perfectly suited to describe the Pharisees' worship: (1) it is lip service rather than God-honoring, in which their hearts are far away from him, rather than truly loving him; (2) it is empty worship, mere form; and (3) it is human-made, not based on the prescriptions of the word.

Note then that Jesus' critique is internal and external: it pertains to both the heart and to the outward obedience of God's word. It has definite application to "all-of-life worship," but also to corporate worship. Yeshua makes it amply clear here that he cares about the how of worship, about the heart and obedience to the word, not only in worship in all of life, but in the corporate praise we bring.



**How Should
We Worship
The Father?**

There are 2 main principles of worship:

The *regulative principle* of worship maintains that Scripture alone [Sola Scriptura] gives specific guidelines for conducting corporate worship services and that churches must not add anything to those guidelines.

The ***normative principle*** is the idea that anything **not expressly forbidden** by Scripture can be used in corporate worship. In other terms you can worship God anyway you choose as long as He didn't specifically say no. From the examples already given I think we can come to the conclusion this is not an acceptable form of worship.

Therefore we will focus on the regulative principle of worship.

Where did the regulative principle of worship originate?

Some believe Conrad Grebel [1498-1526] was the originator of the Regulative Principle: “Seek earnestly to preach only God’s word unflinchingly, to establish and defend only divine practices, to esteem as good and right only what can be found in definite clear Scripture, and to reject, hate, and curse all the schemes, words, practices, and opinions of all men, even your own.”

However, Tertullian [*Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus 155-220 A.D.*], In *De Corona*, which Tertullian wrote around the year 211 said: “Where in Scripture are we forbidden to wear a crown?” But, can you show me a text that says we should be crowned? If people try to say that we may be crowned because the Scriptures do not forbid it, then they leave themselves open to the retort that we may not be crowned because Scripture does not prescribe it. But “Whatever is not forbidden is, without question, allowed.” Rather do I say: **“Whatever is not specifically permitted is forbidden.”**



Who Adopted the Regulative Principle?

Calvin said: “God disapproves of all modes of worship not expressly sanctioned by His Word.”

The Continental Reformed tradition, reflected in the Belgic Confession (article 32) and the Heidelberg Catechism (Q. 96), asserts the same.

The Second London Baptist Confession of 1689 and the Philadelphia (Baptist) Confession of 1742 both say: “The acceptable way of worshiping the true God, is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshiped according to the imagination and devices of men, nor the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures” (22.1).

They also assert that “the whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless, we acknowledge . . . that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God . . . common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the word, which are always to be observed” (1.6).

The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order (1658), the Congregationalist emendation of the Westminster Confession (1647), affirms the same principles.

More recently, Anglican David Peterson defines worship as “an engagement with [God] on the terms that he proposes and in the way that he alone makes possible.” Even more specifically, Hughes Old, offers a description of this fundamental Reformed corporate worship principle that would have satisfied the Westminster Assembly: Most things we do in worship we do because God has commanded us to do them. It is because of this that we preach the gospel, we praise God in psalms and hymns, we serve God in prayer, we baptize in the name of Christ. Some things we do in worship not so much because they are specifically taught in Scripture but because they are in accordance with Scripture.

What is meant by that is that some of the things we do in worship we do because they are demanded by scriptural principles. For example we baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit because this is specifically directed by Scripture. It is on the basis of scriptural principles that before the baptism we offer the Baptismal Invocation asking the Holy Spirit to fulfill inwardly what is promised in the outward sign. The basic acts of worship we perform because they are clearly commanded in Scripture. The ways and means of doing them we try to order according to scriptural principles. When something is not specifically commanded, prescribed, or directed or when there is no scriptural example to guide us in how we are to perform some particular aspect of worship we should try nevertheless to be guided by scriptural principles.



**How Should We
Worship God?**

God was very specific in His plan for worship as He spoke in Exodus 25:40 "See that you make them after the pattern for them, which was shown to you on the mountain".

God sets us free from sin and slavery to sin so we may worship Him. In Exodus chapter 3-5 God repeats this theme, "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain.". Exodus 3: In Exodus chapter 4:23 God says, . "So I said to you, 'Let My son go that he may serve Me'; but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your firstborn." Strong words from a serious God.

The question we need ask ourselves is whom do we choose to please, God or our own desires? God's word must be the discovery point for our worship. Since our worship contributes to our knowledge of God that worship must be focused and directed by His Word.

God's commandments teach us the Bible is to be our guide for how we corporately worship God. Not our own innovations, experiences, opinions, and interpretations.

God is jealous.

He refuses to share his glory or his worship with anything or anyone else. The expression itself is an anthropopathism (an ascription of human emotional qualities to God), but it is linguistically or philologically an anthropomorphism (an ascription of human physical qualities to God): the older meaning of the word behind the term jealous or impassioned is that God is “to become red.”

Alan Cole helps us appreciate the force of this kind of idiom in forming our understanding of the character of God: Like “love” and “hate” in the Old Testament (Malachi 1:2, 3), “jealousy” does not refer to an emotion so much as to an activity, in this case an activity of violence and vehemence, that springs from the rupture of a personal bond as exclusive as that of the marriage bond.

This is not therefore to be seen as intolerance but exclusiveness, and it springs both from the uniqueness of God (who is not one among many) and the uniqueness of His relationship to Israel.

No husband who truly loved his wife could endure to share her with another man: no more will God share Israel with a rival.

Jewish commentator and Biblical scholar Nahum Sarna expresses the force of the second command this way:

The forms of worship are now regulated. The revolutionary Israelite concept of God entails His being wholly separate from the world of His creation and wholly other than what the human mind can conceive or the human imagination depict. Therefore, any material representation of divinity is prohibited, a proscription elaborated in Deuteronomy 4:12, 15–19, where it is explained that the people heard “the sound of words” at Sinai “but perceived no shape—nothing but a voice.”

In the Israelite view any [humanly initiated] symbolic representation of God must necessarily be both inadequate and a distortion, for an image becomes identified with what it represents and is soon looked upon as the place and presence of the Deity. In the end the image itself will become the locus of reverence and an object of worship, all of which constitutes the complete nullification of the singular essence of Israelite monotheism.

There are two ways to commit idolatry: worship something other than the true God or worship the true God in the wrong way. And the second word of the moral law speaks to them both. In fact, the second commandment disallows three things: making images of either false gods or the true God; using humanly initiated (un warranted) images in worship; and, by extension, using means or media other than those by which God has appointed us to worship.

Our Puritan ancestors called these innovations in corporate worship “will-worship.”

Not surprisingly, then, the second commandment is one of the biblical sources of what the Reformers called the regulative principle. Terry Johnson [*Author of The Case for Traditional Protestantism and Reformed Worship.*] puts it this way: “In prohibiting worship through images, God declares that He alone determines how He is to be worshiped. Though their use be ever so sincere and sensible (as aids to worship) images are not pleasing to Him, and by implication, neither is anything else that He has not sanctioned.”

We find in Yeshua's words to the Samaritan woman (John 4:20–26) an indication of the importance of the how of worship for believers today. In the account of Yeshua's encounter with the woman at the well, she asks him about a worship matter of long dispute between Jews and Samaritans and of great importance to them both: "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.

You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will **worship the Father in spirit and truth**; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am He.”

Yeshua answers with points of significance regarding the momentous redemptive-historical transition that he was effecting in his own life, ministry, death, and resurrection; but it also speaks specifically to numerous principles of corporate worship that remain essential for Believers today. Yeshua indicates a redemptive historical shift regarding the place of worship. For hundreds of years, the divinely appointed site for sacrificial worship had been in Jerusalem. This was the only place where the acts of worship, originally authorized in the giving of the tabernacle structure and ordinances in Exodus, were to be done.

In response, however, to the woman's query whether to worship in this mountain or in Jerusalem, Yeshua begins by stressing that "an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father." In other words, in a sentence Yeshua indicates a time not far in the future in which the old-covenant place for tabernacle/temple/ceremonial/sacrificial worship would no longer have relevance for the true believer. In that hour, which came through his resurrection and ascension, the place of worship is no longer geographical but ecclesial. Wherever believers gather in his name will be the place of worship: "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst" (Matthew 18:20).

The Westminster Confession expresses this teaching of Yeshua this way: Neither prayer, nor any other part of religious worship, is now, under the gospel, either tied unto, or made more acceptable by any place in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed: but God is to be worshiped everywhere, in spirit and truth; as in private families daily, and in secret each one by himself, so more solemnly in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly or willfully to be neglected or forsaken when God, by his word or providence, calls thereunto. (21.6) Yeshua stresses that worship is response to revelation and thus must be according to revelation.

He went on to say, “You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.” In other words, the Samaritans were wrong to worship in their own self-chosen place. And because their worship was not in accord with God’s revelation, they were also confused about whom they were worshiping.

Yeshua’s words here are a confirmation that the Old Testament’s teaching on the central significance of the tabernacle/temple worship had been rightly understood by Israel and that any departure from it (precisely because it would entail a departure from the commands of God’s revelation) would lead worshipers, no matter how sincere, into confusion about God. Israel knew its God because it worshiped him according to his revelation; but because the Samaritans did not worship according to revelation, they did not know their God.

This is a new-covenant example of the maxim “how you worship determines what you become.” This is why Yeshua later says that worship must be “in truth.” True worship is impossible for the Samaritans (and for us) as long as we devise our own worship.

The Bible does more than show us that there is such a thing as corporate worship and that God cares about how it is done. The Bible testifies, in both New Testament and Old, in its teaching about God and his enduring moral norms, by precept and example, that corporate worship is to be conducted in careful response to divine revelation. And thus we can say that the Bible itself provides us with what the Reformed tradition sometimes labels the regulative principle of worship.

In Isaiah chapter 8 verse 20, God challenged the apostate house of Judah with those words. Go **"to the law and to the testimony!"** God said. "If anyone does not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in him." The phrase "the law and the testimony" (like "the law and the prophets" in Matthew 22:40, John 1:45, Romans 3:21, etc.) referred to the entire written Word of God. In other words, the Lord was commanding Judah, "Go to the Word of God alone as your authority - nothing else. If anyone doesn't want to be subject to the authority of the Word of God alone, it is because there is no light in him."

The phrase "there is no light in him" is quite graphic in the original language. It means that in the mind of such a person, someone who does not want to be subject to God's Word, dawn hasn't come yet. Light hasn't come yet. In **Isaiah chapter 8**, God was speaking against false prophets. He was saying, "If someone consistently does not want to be subject to the authority of the Word of God alone, such a person does not speak for Me. You have every reason to understand that such a person is not truly a believer."

Where do we find God's purpose for the assembly?

We find it only in the Bible - no place else. And when we go to Scripture, what do we find is God's purpose for His assembly?

We find two things, and two things only:
God's enduring purpose for His assembly is to proclaim the Gospel to the unbelieving world, and to build up the saints in sound doctrine.

Our authority for this is Yeshua himself. "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples from among all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18).

Proclaim the Gospel to the world, and build up the saints in sound doctrine. That's it. Nothing else. Every bit of the assembly's legitimate work comes under those two purposes, those two headings. And that, dear friends, is plenty for any assembly to do! If the assembly does those two things, and it does them well, those two things will occupy all of its time. There won't be time to get off the track into other things that God did not ordain.

You see, God has set a boundary for the assembly. In **Second Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 3**, the Apostle Paul calls that boundary "the simplicity that is in Christ." The word "simplicity" in that context speaks of single-mindedness - a single-minded focus on the thing that really matters. A single-minded focus on God's plan and God's purpose for the assembly, in Christ.

"The simplicity that is in Christ."

Don't be corrupted from that simplicity, Paul says to the Corinthians. Don't let anything pull you away from that simplicity. But our human pride doesn't like simplicity. Our sin nature doesn't like boundaries. Our flesh does not like restrictions.