

DATE: February 27, 2011

TEXT: John 4:19-24

TITLE: "ARE YOU WHAT GOD IS LOOKING FOR?"

SERIES: "The Things that Really Matter."

*Trevor sing- O Worship the King

INTRODUCTION:

(**John Cartoon) Worship can bring all kinds of responses. Jennifer Smith tells of observing an elderly woman in church standing with her eyes closed and hands raised in prayer and praise. The three-year-old standing in the pew in front of her turned around and gave her a high-five! It was a response she was not expecting.

Speaking of worship, Irwin Lutzer, pastor of the Moody Bible Church said, **"If we haven't learned to be worshipers, it doesn't really matter how well we do anything else"**.

ILLUSTRATION: Rick Warren, in The Purpose-Driven Life, says, "Anything you do that brings pleasure to God is an act of worship."

ILLUSTRATION: Author, William Temples says, "Worship is the submission of all our nature to God."

God is seeking worshippers.

Are you what God is looking for?

I. (vs.19-21) A WORSHIPPER FOCUSED UPON GOD

JESUS ADDRESSES THE WHO OF WORSHIP

"'Sir,' the woman said, 'I can see that you are a prophet.' Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." (John 4:19-20)

1. Conversation can open our eyes to many things.
2. Jesus had been having a conversation with a woman from Samaria at the well of Jacob in the Samaritan town of Sychar.
3. Out of that conversation, this woman had concluded that Jesus was a prophet.
4. A prophet was someone who gave a message from God and who gave special insight into the human condition.
5. In response to her conclusion, this woman raises the most burning issue between Samaritans and Jews, namely the place where worship must take place.
6. (**Map that shows both) The Samaritans believed worship needed to take place on Mount Gerizim, but the Jews believed worship must take place in Jerusalem.
7. Her observation brings up the simple question, "Where can I find God?"

“Jesus declared, ‘Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.’” (John 4:21)

8. In His response, Jesus gets to the heart of the issue of worship.
9. Jesus changes her focus from the mountain or Jerusalem to the Father.
10. God is not limited to a place, for He cannot be owned or held captive by a church or organization.
11. Worship is not limited to what takes place in a church.
12. Jesus declared that worship is not about a place but about a person.
13. Worship is about God the Father.

ILLUSTRATION: ** Sammy Tippit, in the book, Worthy of Worship, observes, “True worship does not originate with the need of man but with the worthiness of God.”

14. Worship is the Declaration of God’s Worth
15. The words by Robert Grant we sang earlier beautifully expresses the worthiness of God to be worshipped.

ILLUSTRATION:

**O worship the King, all glorious above,
And gratefully sing His wonderful love:
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise.**

**O tell of His might, and sing of His grace,
Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space.
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form
And dark is His path on the wings of the storm.**

**Thy bountiful care, what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air; it shines in the light.
It streams from the hills; it descends to the plain,
And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.**

ILLUSTRATION: **Ralph Martin, in his book, The Worship of God, says, "Worship is the dramatic celebration of God in His supreme worth in such a manner that his ‘Worthiness’ becomes the norm and inspiration of human living."

16. The declaration of God's worth is at the very heart of worship.
17. As one writer simply observed, "Worship is an active response to God whereby we declare His worth."
18. Worship is based on the worthiness of the one being worshipped.
19. We focus on God the Father in worship because He is worthy of our worship.

“For Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods... Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts. Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.” (Psalm 96:4,8-9)

20. The New Testament declares, **“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.” (Revelation 4:11)**

21. Worship is the declaration of the worthiness of God.

22. Jesus champions neither Jerusalem nor Gerizim as a place of worship.

23. He states the time is coming, referring to the eschatological hour or, in other words, the initiating of the new age of the Kingdom of God with Jesus when worship of God the Father will be tied to no place.

24. It refers to the completed sacrifice that would make possible true worship

25. God the Father is the object of worship.

ILLUSTRATION: (*John draw - Cartoon) A Sunday School teacher challenged her children to take some time on Sunday afternoon to write a letter to God. They were to bring their letter back the following Sunday. One little boy wrote, “Dear God, We had a good time at church today. Wish you could have been there.”

26. Worship is not about the place but about the person.

Illustration: **Well-known Pastor, Tony Evans, says, “If you limit worship to where you are, the minute you leave that place of worship, you will leave your attitude of worship behind like a crumpled-up church bulletin.”

27. You take worship with you when you leave today because worship is not limited with a place but is focused on God.

28. God calls us to a lifestyle of worship that goes far beyond being at a particular location, for weekly worship is not enough.

29. Worship is for and about God.

ILLUSTRATION:* Pastor and author, A. W. Tozer said, “We are called to an everlasting preoccupation with God.”

30. Don’t be distracted by the aspects of worship that can steal you from the object of true worship, which is God the Father.

31. Worship is NOT music-centered, man-centered, or self-centered, but God-centered.

ILLUSTRATION: * Author and Pastor, Tim Keller said, “Worship is pulling our affections off our idols and putting them on God.”

32. Worship is directed to God

33. Worship is not based on where we are, but upon the One we worship.

34. Worship is not based on what we have or don’t have, but on Him.

35. Worship is not based upon what is going on or not going on in our lives, but on Him.

36. Focusing upon God is our privilege and our responsibility.

37. Focus on the wrong things will always keep worship from being right.

38. Are you God-focused in your worship or are you easily distracted by other things?

ILLUSTRATION: * Devotional writer, Oswald Chambers wrote, “We used to think that the chief end of man was to glorify God. Now we’re tempted to say the chief end of God is to gratify man.” (Oswald Chambers)

39. It is a tragedy when worship becomes more about us and less about Him.

40. True worship is about the Father and an intimate relationship with Him and not about us.

41. Sadly, we often measure our worship by what we get out of worship and not what we give in worship.

42. Worship is about giving ourselves to God in response to who He is and what He has done.

ILLUSTRATION: Musician, Louie Giglio, in his book on worship, titled, *The Air I Breathe*, gives this excellent definition of worship.

“Worship is our response, both personal and corporate, to God – for who He is and what He has done, expressed in and by things we say and the way we live.”

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship.” (Romans 12:1)

43. Worship is about offering ourselves to God.

44. God is pleased with worship when it is about Him.

ILLUSTRATION: In the early 1990s, when President George Bush had fired John Sununu as his White House Chief of Staff, a reporter asked Sununu if his job was difficult. He quickly answered, "No." The reporter thought Sununu had misunderstood the question, so he asked again, and got the same reply.

Sununu, a former Governor of New Hampshire, then explained why he felt his job was easy: "I have only one constituent." He knew his job was to please the President.

45. Good worship leaves God feeling pleased.

46. Is God pleased with your worship?

47. Worship is not a time to seek only the blessing of God, but it is a time to seek communion with Him.

ILLUSTRATION: One person observed, “The problem with us is that we seek God’s hand and not His face.”

48. To seek His face is to seek His will, His heart, His approval, His very being.

“My heart says of you ‘Seek his face!’ Your face, Lord, I will seek.” (Psalm 27:8)

“Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.” (Psalm 105:4)

49. Worship is about the Father.

ILLUSTRATION: Gene Mims, in *Kingdom Principles for Church Growth*, said, “The purpose of worship is to come before the Lord in obedience to praise Him, to hear from Him, to confess to Him, and to commit our lives to Him. Every worship service is to be an encounter with the Lord, transcending our feelings, desires, and even our abilities to perform.”

50. Worship requires that we give God all our attention and we are committed to Him.

EXAMPLE: The book of Daniel records the story of King Nebuchadnezzar, who set up a golden image for all to worship at appointed times. However, the three Hebrews, Shadrach, Meshach and

Abednego would not bow. The king had them brought to him and he said, “But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown into the blazing furnace. Then, what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?” “If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.” (Daniel 3:17-18)

51. They were committed to God-focused worship regardless.

52. Worship was about the Father and, so, they would not pollute or dilute their worship.

53. God walked with them in the fire and kept them safe.

54. How committed are you to God-focused worship?

55. Look at that phrase in Daniel, “But even if he does not,” we will worship Him.

56. Even if He does not answer the prayer as we desire, we will worship Him.

57. Even if He does not change my situation, I will worship Him.

58. Even if things don't go as I hoped or planned, I will worship Him.

59. We need to learn how to worship God even if He does nothing for us at all!

60. Worship is about focusing upon God.

61. Worship is not, and never has been, something people attend in order to be entertained or fed.

62. Worship can be entertaining and it can be richly nourishing, but those are not reasons God calls us to worship.

63. Worship is about Him.

ILLUSTRATION: Matt Redmon, in his song, writes, “I’m coming back to the heart of worship, And it’s all about You. It’s all about You, Jesus. I’m sorry, Lord, for the thing I’ve made it, ‘cause it’s all about You. It’s all about You, Jesus.”

64. Worship is focused upon the Lord.

ILLUSTRATION: Matt Woodley says, “For the past few years, my friend, Chris has managed a nursery farm on Long Island. During the height of the growing season, Chris supervises 28 workers from Central America, mostly from Guatemala. As a follower of Jesus, he also tries to share Christ's love and treat each worker with respect and dignity. He invests in them personally, showing love and sharing Christ. He told me, ‘One day, two of the men, Gonzalo and Daniel, wanted to show their appreciation for me, so they decided to splurge on a special gift. They pooled their resources (most of which gets sent back to their families in Guatemala), and took me out for a special dinner—a \$7 Value Meal at the local Burger King. By spending \$3.50 a piece, Daniel and Gonzalo were giving me a sacrificial gift. The week before they gave me this gift, a storm had cut their work hours and their income in half. But that didn't deter their generosity. Honestly, throughout my life, I've been treated to some special meals and I've received some expensive presents, but that was one gift that I'll treasure forever. During the meal in Burger King, Gonzalo and Daniel treated me like a king. I never knew a fast-food

burger and fries could taste like a foretaste of the heavenly feast.’ They sacrificially gave of themselves, giving to their boss.”

65. Worship is giving of ourselves to the King of king in sacrificial love.

66. God is seeking worship that is focused upon God, giving to Him.

II. (v.22) A WORSHIPPER WHO KNOWS GOD

JESUS ADDRESSES THE WHAT OF WORSHIP

“You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.” (John 4:22)

1. Jesus makes a strong observation about the difference between the worship of the Samaritans and of the Jews.

2. The Samaritans did not really know the God of their worship.

3. They worshipped a God they really did not know.

ILLUSTRATION: A writer by the name of A. Pink observed, “An unknown God can neither be trusted, served, nor worshipped.”

4. Knowing God better is a burning need for every one of us.

“This is what the Lord says; ‘Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,’ declares the Lord.” (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

5. Though they worshipped the true God, the Samaritans did so very imperfectly.

ILLUSTRATION: In teaching, the students have to send in an autobiography. I read each of those before I begin. There are certain things that are to be part of their biography. If I only read the first five lines, I would miss out on some of the important things of that student that helps me to know them.

6. The Samaritans rejected all of the Old Testament except the Pentateuch.

7. In other words, they read the first five lines.

8. They had a limited view of God.

9. In contrast, the Jews accepted all of God's revelation in the Old Testament and, therefore, knew the God whom they worshipped.

10. The God who is to be worshiped has been revealed in the Old Testament.

11. Jesus' appraisal of the inferiority of their worship is reflected in the use of the neuter pronoun, “what.”

12. The object of their worship was impersonal, little understood, and vague.

13. Jesus was saying “You know who to worship, but you do not really know him!”

14. They had what might be called ‘Selective Worship.’

15. They choose what they want to know about God and omit the rest.

16. It is a danger today to desire smorgasbord worship or a buffet approach, picking what you feel like or what tastes good, leaving out the rest.

17. To worship God, we must worship all that God is.

18. The better we know God, the better we will worship Him.

ILLUSTRATION: Author, John Stott wrote, "Our greatest claim to nobility is our created capacity to know God, to be in personal relationship with him, to love him and to worship him. Indeed, we are most truly human when we are on our knees before our Creator."

19. Jesus is making it clear that not all religions are acceptable before God.

20. Worship must be vital and real from within and it must be based on a true perception of God.

21. A superficial understating of God will result in superficial worship.

EXAMPLE: Acts 17, Mars Hill is a classic illustration ... classic. Paul observed, "For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you." (Acts 17:23) They were worshipping in ignorance. It does no good at all to worship God as you imagine Him to be.

22. God intended His revelation to result in salvation for humankind.

23. In that sense, salvation had come through the Jews in the Messiah.

24. Saving knowledge of God should flow from the Jews to the world and not the world to the Jews.

25. When Jesus said, "Salvation is from the Jews," He was speaking of the messianic salvation, which comes from this nation, for the Messiah was a Jew.

26. Jesus is talking about knowing God in a personal and intentional way through Jesus Christ the Savior.

27. Do you know God as He really is?

28. You can know Him as Savior and Lord.

29. You can know Him as Redeemer and Friend.

ILLUSTRATION: The noted conductor of the 20th century, Bernard Reichel was taking his choir and orchestra through their final rehearsal of Handel's beautiful and inspiring "Messiah". When the soprano soloist came in with the refrain, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," she sang it with flawless technique, perfect breathing, and clear enunciation. After she completed her part, everyone looked at the conductor, expecting to see his responses of approval. With a motion from his baton for silence, he walked over to the soloist and said, almost sorrowfully, "My daughter, you do not really know that your Redeemer lives, do you?" Embarrassed, she answered, "Why, yes, I think I do." "Then sing it!" cried Reichel. "Tell it to me so that I'll know you have experienced the joy and power of it." Then he motioned for the orchestra to begin, and she sang the truth with a fervor that testified of her personal knowledge of the risen Lord. Those who listened wept and the old master, eyes wet with tears, said to her, "You do know, for this time you have told me."

30. Does our worship tell God we really know Him

III.(vs.23-24) A WORSHIPPER WHO WORSHIPS THE WAY GOD DESIRES JESUS ADDRESSES THE HOW OF WORSHIP

“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.” (John 4:23)

1. Jesus deals with the ‘how’ of worship.
2. God has some requirements for worship.
3. Worship must not be reduced to ritual.
4. True worship must be done in God’s way.
5. God is looking for a particular type of worshipper.
6. God is more interested in your worship than you are.
7. Worship is not something to be observed but to be participated in by every worshipper.

ILLUSTRATION: There is a ridiculous story about a wealthy Texan who died, and his attorney gathered the entire family for the reading of the will. Relatives came from near and far to see if they were included in the bequests. The lawyer somberly opened the will and began to read:

"To my cousin Ed, I leave my ranch."

"To my brother Jim, I leave my money market accounts."

"To my neighbor and good friend, Fred, I leave my stocks."

"And finally, to my cousin George, who always sat around and never did anything, but wanted to be remembered in my will, I want to say, 'Hi, George.'"

8. Worship is more than just saying ‘Hi’ to God now and then.
9. It is more than sitting back and being a spectator of others or just a fan of God.
10. Worship is giving God your love and devotion.
11. Worship requires your participation.
12. True worship has two ingredient or characteristics that must always be present in worship.
13. Worship is to be done in Spirit and Truth.

ILLUSTRATION: Two of the key characters in the story of *The Wizard of the Oz* are the Tin Man, who does not have a heart and the Scarecrow, who does not have a brain. True worship requires intellect or truth but it also requires heart.

14. True worship requires heart, but it also requires knowledge of the truth.
15. Oswald Chambers observed, “Worship is giving to God the best He has given us.”

16. True worship is not one-sided, as it takes both Spirit and Truth.

ILLUSTRATION: Dr. Perry Buffington, author and columnist, said, “Research psychologists have found there are at least three situations when we are not ourselves. First, the average person puts on airs when he visits the lobby of a fancy hotel. Next, the typical Jane Doe will try to hide her emotions and bamboozle the salesman when she enters the new-car showroom. And, finally, as we take our seat in church or synagogue, we try to fake out the Almighty.”

17. True worship is about authenticity.

18. It is about being open and honest before God.

19. Worship is not about holding back from God, but coming openly before Him.

“God is spirit and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”
(John 4:24)

20. “God is spirit” defines God according to His work in the world.

“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands.”(Acts 17:24)

21. Because of who God is, there is no other way to worship but in Spirit and in truth.

22. God belongs to His own realm.

23. God is spirit so God is not confined to things.

24. True worship must conform to the Father’s nature, for God is spirit.

25. By implication, only through divine assistance – through the Holy Spirit, may a person worship God appropriately.

26. Since the Kingdom of God is the age of the Spirit’s outpouring, true worshippers will worship the Father in virtue of the life, freedom, and power bestowed by the Spirit, and in accordance with the redemptive revelation brought by the Redeemer.

ILLUSTRATION: **John Piper: “Worshiping in spirit is the opposite of worshiping in mere external ways. It is the opposite of formalism and traditionalism.”

27. To worship in spirit means that we yield our wills to God’s will, our thoughts and plans to God’s for us and for the world.

28. To worship in spirit means to worship as one who is spiritually alive.

29. Spiritual worship is fundamentally the offering of ourselves to the Lord God.

30. No one can do this for you.

31. Spiritual worship is your responsibility.

32. It is to worship in union with the Father.

ILLUSTRATION: Author on worship, Judson Cornwall said, “Worship helps us find who we are and why God has placed us here on the earth. When we bow in God's presence with worship, only then are we made complete.

33. Worship is an opportunity for the Spirit of God to renew, refresh and realign us.

ILLUSTRATION: Nancy Cheatham tells, “My sister bought a new car that was loaded with high-tech options. The first time she drove the car in the rain, she turned a knob she thought would start the windshield wipers. Instead, a message flashed across the dash: "Drive car in 360 degrees." She had no idea what that meant, and so, when she got home, she read the car manual. She learned that while trying to turn on the windshield wipers, she had inadvertently turned off the internal compass, and the car had lost its sense of direction. To correct the problem, the car had to be driven in a full circle, pointed north, and then the compass had to be reset.” Each time we gather to worship, we are

resetting our internal compass. We establish "true north" in our soul, remembering who God is and what His truth proclaims.

34. We are to worship in Spirit and in Truth.

35. The word translated as 'truth' here is used 25 times in John.

36. To worship 'in truth' is to worship according to the revelation of the Son, who is the truth.

37. Christ alone has introduced us to the real or true God.

38. 'In truth' means that we are not worshipping an 'Image' of God, made out of our own ideas.

39. Worship must be conducted according to the truth of God as it has been revealed in Christ.

40. Worship points to the need for complete sincerity and complete reality in our approach to God.

ILLUSTRATION: "We can worship God imperfectly, but we cannot worship him insincerely." (Rick Warren)

41. Worship is not so much what I do in worship, but the heart I worship with.

"The Lord says: 'These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.'" (Isaiah 29:13)

42. Worship is an issue of the heart.

43. Out of approximately 180 references to worship in the Old and New Testament, almost 20% of them include the falling down of the worshiper - falling down at his footstool, falling at his feet, bowing low, kneeling down in worship.

"Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation." (Psalm 95:1)

44. These verses give an outward demonstration of what's going on in the heart.

45. Is your heart really in your worship?

ILLUSTRATION: There is the story of a man who went to church with an angel as his guide. The church was filled, but oddly, there was no sound. The organist played, but no music could be heard; the choir's lips moved, but no song came forth. The pastor went through the motions of preaching, but the man heard nothing. He asked the angel, "Why?" The angel's reply: "This is the service as God sees it. When there is no heart in it, there is no sound." Then, in the back pew, he heard a child pray, "Our Father, who art in heaven ..." The angel said, "You are hearing the only part God hears, that which comes from the heart."

46. God wants us to worship in spirit, - involved, engaged, connected, not just going through motions, real and in truth – being, real, honest, open.

ILLUSTRATION: John Piper states, "Together the words 'spirit and truth' means that real worship comes from the spirit within and is based on true views of God. Worship must have heart and worship must have head. Worship must engage your emotions and worship must engage your thoughts."

47. God seeks worshipers, for God seeks the best for us.
48. It is what He wants and what you need and what you were made for.
- ILLUSTRATION: *Westminster shorter catechism states, "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever"**
49. Worshipping in Spirit and Truth is not an option.
50. We were designed to be worshipers; nothing can take worship's place in your life.
51. Worship turns our attention to God like nothing else can.
52. There is no substituted for worship.
53. It is possible to be a thanks giver and a praiser, a singer, a listener, a church attendee and yet not be a worshipper.
54. The Father is seeking worshipers.
55. Let us not offer God anything less than our worship.
56. Worship and going to church are not necessarily the same thing.
57. One can come to church and not worship.

ILUSTATION: Clark Pfaff said, "My young son asked what the highest number I had ever counted to was. I didn't know, but I asked about his highest number. It was 5,372. "Oh," I said. "Why did you stop there?" "Church was over."

58. This young man was in church but not engaged in worship.
59. Stop going to church and come to worship with a heart and attitude to worship.

60. God is seeking those who worship in Spirit and in truth.

ILLUSTRATION: Many years ago, a man conned his way into the orchestra of the emperor of China although he could not play a note. Whenever the group practiced or performed, he would hold his flute against his lips, pretending to play but not making a sound. He received a modest salary and enjoyed a comfortable living. Then, one day, the emperor requested a solo from each musician. The flutist got nervous. There wasn't enough time to learn the instrument. He pretended to be sick, but the royal physician wasn't fooled. It is said that it led to a phrase "He refused to face the music." (Just Like Jesus, by Max Lucado)

61. Someday, we will face the music when we stand before the Lord.
62. Have we just held the instrument of worship to our lips or have we truly worshipped the Lord?
63. Are we authentic worshipers or are we faking it?

CONCLUSION:

God is seeking worshippers. Are you what God is looking for?

- I. (v.19-21) **A WORSHIPPER FOCUSED UPON GOD**
- II. (v.22) **A WORSHIPPER WHO KNOWS GOD**
- III. (v.23-24) **A WORSHIPPER WHO WORSHIPS THE WAY GOD DESIRES**