

Chapter 3

Worship God Together

God is especially delighted when His people praise Him with thoughts, feelings and actions that match truth, especially about His character. This worshipping “in spirit and in truth” requires vigilant help from extremely close Christian relationships.

**Ex 8:1; Ex 20:2-11; Ps 100:4; Jn 4:23-24;
Rom 12:1; Heb 12:28-29; Heb 13:15-16**

Let's begin preparing for heaven by expanding your worship of God with other believers to worshipping in spirit and in truth.

The Bible tells us that Jesus told a woman at a well in Samaria, *“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. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”* That is found in Chapter 4 of the gospel of John.

Let me help you go way beyond worshipping in church services to this kind of worshipping in spirit and in truth.

If you are still able to attend worship services in a church, work at having joy that all of you Christians together are worshipping God, and not just that you are having a wonderful worship experience. Try to see it for what it is to God – His people together worshipping Him.

There is a lot we all need to do to grow our spirits to be able to worship God in spirit and in truth throughout the week. Lifestyle worship in spirit and in truth must not be ignored. Sunday worship in church is validated by your worship in spirit and truth all those hours and days outside the walls of your church.

To worship in spirit and in truth means that you live in your spirit consistent with the truth God has revealed to us in the Bible. Your spirit is the deep part of you and shows itself by how you think, feel and act. We are all spirits with bodies, and when we die only our bodies die. Our spirits go to heaven if we trust that Jesus Christ died in our place to pay the penalty for and to cover by His own righteousness what is not perfect and pure inside of us.

When we contradict God in our thinking or feelings or actions, we are actually doing the opposite of worship. So, between now and when we die we should want to change our spirits, our thinking, feeling and acting, to be consistent with the truth of the Bible. After all, the words of the Bible are God's words that tell us the truth and how to live.

There is a lot of truth in the Bible to incorporate into our lives. But, first priority is the truth about who God is. Especially for those of us with less than ten years to live because of age or illness, this should be the truth we first focus on to prepare ourselves for the biggest increase in our quality of life in heaven forever. Surely you want your spirit to truly, without doubt, embrace God now for Who He is so that you will enter heaven with a more familiar relationship with Him.

So, to prepare for heaven, you want to know and put into practice more and more truth about God as well as the truth He has told us in the Bible. This will allow you to begin life in heaven with greater relationship with God because you have lived now more consistently with truth and who God really is. The longer you yet have to live, the more you want to know Him and how He sees things. Growing to think more like God, have emotions more like His, and act like He would act will allow you to enter heaven with increased ability to understanding living God's truth there.

To do this best, you and your Christian friends and relatives need to help one another live like the truth of the Bible is really true. This is not something to do all alone. As much as possible, bring others into this spiritual growth process to align your spirit with more and more truth. Agree with one another that you will draw one another's attention to where life and truth do not meet. Then, together, help one another to truly know the truth and set your spirit free to think, feel and live out that truth. Follow that by identifying another inconsistency with your life and the truth of God.

You and each of the Christians close to you know God's character, but only in part. Since each of you will know truths about God the others do not yet have, you want to share with one another how you see God as He has revealed Himself to you in the Bible and in your lives. This will help you grow in your spirits to worship Him together with your spirits more aligned with who He is and with all the truth He has shared in the Bible, especially about the ways of love in his kingdom.

Think about this! If you meet an astronaut at a meeting you go to, it would be thrilling, but even greater if beforehand you knew more about him and what he had done to prepare to travel into space. It is the same with God. The more you know about God and truly believe it deep down inside of you in your spirit, the more you will know God personally. Then, when you get to heaven, more will remind you of God's presence and you will be able to hear His voice more clearly and understand what He says more completely. Think of the joy of that! The Voice you will hear created the universe!

For just one example of many you and your Christian friends and relatives can discuss, God is sovereign and things are never outside of His control. Few of us live like this is 100 percent true, even though we should. The wonderful thing is that often when you react to life as if things are out of control, someone in your Christian Inner Circle will see that God is watching over you no matter the circumstances – and

tell you about it.

Another thing about God that you and those Christians you are close to can consider is that God is absolutely good and that evil never comes from Him. Some difficulties we face do come from Him and are not evil. You and your friends can help one another see that God has in mind some good for you or for those you love. Other difficulties come from Satan and are truly evil. In these cases your Christian Inner Circle can discern that God is still good, but also that in Jesus together you all can work to defeat the devil and his destructive intentions.

Joy is another thing that can increase deep within your spirit by worshiping with other Christians in spirit and in truth. You can help one another understand how it brings great joy to God when you think, feel, and act consistently with His truth. You will learn more and more to derive your joy from giving God joy.

You and your Christian Inner Circle can learn the difference between your joy and the joy of the Lord. The joy of the Lord is His joy that comes from you doing those things that truly make God happy. We are told in Nehemiah 8:10 in the Bible that the joy of the Lord is our strength. What that means is that we derive strength to think, feel, and do things God's way because we know it will make God joyful. Surely, you have experienced this strength when you have lived for someone else's joy. Perhaps at someone's birthday you put out special effort for the birthday person to have a great day. Your strength to do all the hard work was the hope of giving joy to the person with the birthday. And your own joy came from the birthday boy or girl having a joyful response to what you did.

You give God joy when you live like the truth in the Bible is really true. In heaven, where everything will be about God and bringing Him joy, you will have developed increased ability to care more about His joy than your own. Then you will find that your joy is far, far more than it would be if you concentrated on your own joy rather than giving God joy.

In heaven you want to have as much ability as you can attain to experience God's joy and derive your own joy from having made God joyful. That comes from living as if the things God has said are true and believed by you in thought, emotions and actions, not just head knowledge that is not incorporated deeply into your daily life.

Letting the Holy Spirit change your spirit through faith together with your closest Christian friends and relatives will enable you to enter heaven with God first, in the highest place in your heart. You will be more aligned with the very essence of heaven. And, God will draw closer because you and your Christian Inner Circle worshiped Him together with your spirits matched to His truth. Life in heaven will be centered on God and giving Him worship in spirit and in truth that gives Him joy.

So, whenever you get together with one or more of your close Christian friends and relatives, try to make sure that you grow in your ability to live sincerely for God's joy. Comment to one another what you see in their thinking, feeling and behavior that is evidence that they have lived to give God joy. Don't just

say that your friend did a good job, say that she or he pleased God and made Him joyful. Help one another sense God's joy when your spirits have led to living consistently with biblical truth. Derive your strength to live God's way by anticipating the joy God will have from your biblical thinking, feeling and acting. Help one another make God's joy the reason for living.

Now let's talk about how wonderful it will be to recognize God's personality in everything you see when you get to heaven. You have the opportunity to go to heaven and appreciate it more. You can develop your spirit now to go to heaven and find great joy that everything brings to mind the God who loves you so much and the One Who is everything to you. Or, you can ignore preparing for heaven in this way and for all eternity be completely happy with less appreciation of God and His heaven.

Imagine the joy you would have if you could visit a friend or relative you know very well but haven't been able to travel the thousands of miles to see her or him where they have lived for the past ten years. Then, you finally get to go there. When you walk into her house, you see her in everything – the furniture, the decor, the atmosphere of her home. Or you walk into his garage and see him in the tools hanging over his workbench. You exclaim joyfully, "This is so you!"

This is how it can be in heaven. The more you know about God and His character, the more you will be able to see that everything in heaven is so Him!

One other thing to consider. Have you ever gone to a place you always wanted to go and you wanted to fit right in, know how to behave in the presence of the person who has invited you? Worshiping God Together by learning about God's character and growing to think, feel and act in more harmony with that knowledge will help you know the One whose home is heaven. Learning about God's desire for social relationships in His heaven through the 65 Togethers of Scripture will give you greater knowledge through the Togethers of how to act in heaven. Your Christian Inner Circle can worship God in spirit and in truth, and later all of you can enter heaven with increased ability to concentrate on God and living His truth.

Therefore, you need to bring your Christians friends and relatives into this work of preparing for heaven by matching more and more of your thinking, feeling, and acting in line with biblical truth. Identify one area of truth that you haven't yet fully absorbed into your spirit, your innermost self, and tell your friends to help you by praying and telling you why they believe that truth in the core of their being.

There are many areas of faith where you might say, "I think I believe that." To prepare for heaven, you want to change "I think" to "I know". Do you know that heaven exists or do you just think or hope that it does? It is difficult to throw yourself into preparing for heaven if you do not truly believe and have no doubt that heaven exists. You might ask, how can I be sure that heaven exists? You can say this about a hundred things of your faith.

The Bible is the source of the truth that God has revealed to us. Therefore, if you doubt that what the Bible says is certain, ask your Christian friends, relatives and other contacts to help you become sure that

the Bible is true. Be open to having God through the ministry of the Holy Spirit assure you that the Bible is God's message to you. Then, if the Bible says that eternal life is yours because you believe in Jesus Christ and His death on the cross and resurrection from the dead, tell yourself to believe heaven is real. Have the emotions appropriate to eventually going to heaven as your new home that will last for all eternity, and act like this world is only temporary and risk loving in sacrificial ways.

For example, in the Bible heaven is mentioned a lot. Jesus said that He came from heaven and went back there after He died. He taught a lot about the kingdom of heaven. So, once you believe that God knows and loves you enough to write it down in the Bible, decide to believe that heaven is your destiny. It is where you are going when you die. And that is completely wonderful! Once you decide something is real, like that God is going to allow you into heaven and you will never have to leave it, then live like you are going to heaven.

There are so many things to decide with God's help that what the Bible says is true. So, if we find one thing after another in our thinking or in our feelings or in our actions that indicates that we do not really embrace the truth, we want to make one change after another to believe God and what He tells us in the Bible. This is the way to prepare for heaven by worshiping in spirit and in truth, and your Christian friends and relatives can help.

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There is more about worshiping God together at our website ChristiansTogether.org. Just go down the list of the Togethers and click on the first one: "Worship God Together".

Prayer to Embrace this Together

Magnificent Lord of All, I and those in my Christian Inner Circle will need Your help to grow our spirits to worship You together as You wish. I seek Your grace for all of us to give You more glory. Help us to yield to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives in this way.

Please help us all to become more like Jesus and have His thoughts, emotions, and actions. May You see Your Son's reflection in our lives.

Help us to absorb the Scriptures categorized by the 65 Togethers into our lives and actions and glorify you by our obedience to them. May our lives worship You more because we live by Your instructions for relationships with each other in our Christian Inner Circles.

Make us strong in Your power to defeat the devil by worshiping You in spirit and in truth. Help us to help one another in our Christian Inner Circles to live more and more with lives consistent to the truth we know from the Bible. When Satan tries to distort our understanding of truth, help each of us to have spirits that discern his deception that we will continue to live by Your truth.

Help us to grow in having the joy of the Lord be our strength. Help us all to prepare for heaven by growing more completely to enjoy worshiping You. And, please help us to grow in our own joy at giving You joy through our lives lived consistent with Who You are and what You desire as we learn more and more from the pages of Scripture.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.