

IN RESPONSE - WORSHIP: WHERE WE HAVE BEEN

by Dennis Prutow

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In this article, before moving on in our discussion of worship, I want to review the terrain we have covered by way of a short reconnaissance.

First, we defined worship as the proper response to the dignity, honor, and rank of God. He alone is worthy.

Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created (Revelation 4:11).

We then said worship is the response of joy and gladness. Psalm 92:4 says, "For Thou, O Lord, hast made me glad by what Thou hast done, I will sing for joy at the works of Thy hands." Worship is also the response of delight. Psalm 37:4 exhorts, "Delight yourself in the Lord." Finally, we looked at worship as the response of rest. Psalm 46:10 directs, "Cease striving and know that I am God." When we cease striving, we find rest before God. We contemplate His greatness. The pause for rest and refreshment before God is epitomized in the word *Selah*. This direction in many of the psalms like Psalm 46 indicates a dramatic pause, an extended rest. At such times, the Lord enjoins us, "Be still, and know that I am God" (King James Version). This should be our response to Him in worship.

Understanding worship as the proper response to the honor and majesty of God is helpful. Seeing worship as the response of joy, gladness, delight and rest gives us needed perspective.

To help those who thought I was not beginning properly with Scripture in our definition of worship, I turned to a study of the biblical terms translated in our English Bibles as *worship* or *service*. We looked together at two Greek words in particular. The first is actually translated *service of worship* in the New American Standard Bible.

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual *service of worship* (Romans 12:1, italics added).

The study of this term indicated worship is not a response to God designed

by us. Service is just that. It is serving the desires and dictates of the sovereign. In this case the Sovereign happens to be God, the Almighty. We serve Him according to the pattern set forth for us in Scripture. This is no more important than in the most intimate contact we have with God, our worship.

Sitting across the lunch table with a professor of communications and discussing worship proved revealing. This man said bluntly, "I appreciate the psalms, but where is the opportunity for *me* to give *my* response to God." The emphasis was on the words *me* and *my*.

Scripture however shows us worship as service to God which is regulated by God. This will be true in heaven in a way not experience on this earth.

The study then turned to a second word meaning worship or service. It is the Greek word from which our English word *liturgy* is derived. This word, in the New Testament, often points to the Old Testament sacrificial system. Beyond doubt, Old Testament worship was closely regulated by God. Infractions were punished swiftly.

Good examples are the deaths of Nadab and Abihu for offering "strange fire" before the Lord (Leviticus 10:2) and the death of Uzzah in 2 Samuel 6:7. "The anger of the Lord burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God." Uzzah was not a Levite. It was not his place to steady the Ark of God. The directions given by God concerning the vessels of worship were very clear.

Worship as service involves following a liturgy stipulated by God. Jesus Christ is our supreme example.

Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister [liturgist] in the sanctuary, and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man (Hebrews 8:1-2).

Christ is a minister, a servant, in the true sanctuary of God. He performed the ultimate sacrifice, giving His life on behalf of sinners, in strict accord with the plans and purposes of God. His liturgy required

this of Him. We are also directed by God in our worship.

We now have two things coming together in a rather dramatic fashion. We have worship in response to the holiness and majesty of God in joy, gladness, delight and rest. We also have worship guided and directed by God as service to Him. We have form stipulated by God along with inner substance founded upon and produced by the Spirit. We have worship in spirit and truth.

At this point I introduced a new concept, a distinction between celebration and worship. By the term celebration, I mean that which is secular and worldly. Old Testament celebrations took the party atmosphere of secular national gatherings and used it in giving thanks to God. We find examples of this in Judges 11:34 and 1 Samuel 18:6-7.

Note two things. First there was nothing inherently evil about these celebrations. Second, I am using the word *celebration* in a narrow way and differently than often used in the Old Testament. When the people *celebrated* Passover this simply meant they *observed* the Passover as God directed.

This is key. *Celebration borrows from the world in the sense that it uses the means, music, and instrumentation offered by the world for worship*. We see this in the Old Testament passages. Oddly enough, the euphoria often experienced in celebration may simply be caused by the rush of adrenaline and may be mistaken for the Spirit. This is worldly power in worldly form. It is old wine in old wineskins.

Biblical worship, on the other hand, borrows from heaven in that it follows the dictates of God, it serves God; it is also really empowered by God. It is new wine in new wineskins. God is weaning us from the former, worldly celebration, and preparing us more and more for the latter, heavenly worship.

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IN RESPONSE - PART ONE: YAKITY YAK, DON'T TALK BACK

by Dennis Prutow

First Timothy 2:11-12 seems to cause much consternation. What is the problem? Women no longer see their role as one of being quiet. But what does Paul mean in this text? The words seem plain and simple. "Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet." In an effort to once again sort out the meaning of this text, we will look at the word translated *quietly* and *quiet* in verses 11 and 12 respectively.

In both verses 11 and 12, our word is a noun and the object of a preposition, ἐν ἡσυχία. This noun [n] appears four times in the New Testament. The verbal form [v] of the same root appears five times and the adjective [a] two times. We will examine these nouns, verbs, and adjectives in the New Testament to see what light they shed on 1 Timothy 2:11-12.

Our word first appears in Luke 14:4. "But they kept silent [v]. And He took hold of him, and healed him, and sent him away." Jesus asked the lawyers and Pharisees, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" (Luke 14:3). In response, "they kept silent." They did not answer Jesus. Their silence betrayed their antagonism toward the Savior. In this case, our word refers to lack of speech.

The word has an different denotation in Luke 23:56, "And they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. And on the Sabbath they rested [v] according to the commandment." Here we again find the verbal form translated *rested*. Here, to be quiet means to take your rest in accordance with the Fourth Commandment. There is a quietness of spirit inherent in this rest. You cease your labor and striving. The word does not refer to discontinuance of speech. There is a deeper meaning. The word points us to the spiritual rest of heaven pictured in the Sabbath.

The use of our word in Acts 11:18 combines different connotations. "And when they heard this, they quieted down [v], and glorified God, saying, 'Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.'" The context is the report of Peter concerning the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon the

Gentiles. When believers in Jerusalem heard Peter's report regarding the Gentiles, "they quieted down." That is, first, the grumbling stopped. Agitated hearts were pacified by the news. Emotions became quiet. Second, when the grumbling ceased, the accusations and harsh words ended. However, there was not silence. The quietness of spirit which came upon the people expressed itself in different words, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life." These words reflect quiet spirits submitting to the will of God in the calling of the Gentiles.

Similarly, Acts 21:14 sets before us a picture of submission to the will of God. "And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent [v], remarking, 'The will of the Lord be done!'" When Paul was in the home of Philip the evangelist, Agabus prophesied his imprisonment. The believers begged Paul not to go to Jerusalem. He would not be dissuaded. "I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:13). "And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, 'The will of the Lord be done!'" The silence is a cessation of argument against Paul. There is not a lack of speech. Rather, the people express their submission to the will of God. In these cases, the silence is a silence regarding opposition *and* a resting and submission to the will of God.

Acts 22:2 is again similar. "And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew dialect, they became even more quiet [n]." Paul is arrested in Jerusalem. The people thought he defiled the temple. A riot ensued. When arrested, Paul addressed the crowd. Hearing his Hebrew, the crowd became silent. The quietness of the people is twofold. There is a lack of speech but more importantly there is a lack of frenzied opposition.

These examples of the use of our word indicate two primary meanings. Bible dictionaries, Greek lexicons, show them both. The first meaning is the rest associated with the Sabbath. The second meaning is silence. These meanings run together as just indicated.

We see this is the case when we look at Paul. In 1 Thessalonians 4:11 Paul exhorts, "Make it your ambition to lead a

quiet [a] life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you." What is Paul after? He wants Christian people to mind their own business. They are to live quietly, not intruding themselves upon others in an unseemly way but displaying their confidence in God and His dealings with humankind with a "quiet and gentle spirit" (1 Peter 3:4). The emphasis here is not upon complete silence but upon wisdom in our speech exemplifying inner rest and quietness coming from the Spirit. As Proverbs 15:1 tells us, "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." Paul's demeanor exemplified this stance.

Second Thessalonians 3:11-12 confirms the picture. Our word is *quiet*.

For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet [n] fashion and eat their own bread.

We find added confirmation in 1 Timothy 2:1-2. Once again our word is *quiet*.

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet [a] life in all godliness and dignity.

The texts emphasize heart rest before God and outward rest from verbal conflict and combativeness.

The final text is 1 Peter 3:3-4.

And let not your adornment be merely external-- braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet [a] spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

Our word is once again *quiet*. Peter seeks the demeanor we have already discussed. All speech is not prohibited; a preachy spirit and preachiness is (1 Peter 3:1). A *quiet* spirit wins the evangelistic day.

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IN RESPONSE - PART TWO: YAKITY, YAK, DON'T TALK BACK

by Dennis Prutow

What does our study of the words *quiet* and *quietly* tell us about 1 Timothy 2:11-12? These words do not necessarily prohibit all speech. Paul says, "Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet." Paul does not prohibit all speech by women in the church. In 1 Corinthians 11:5 Paul instructs them in public praying and prophesying. All teaching by women is also not disallowed. When Apollos spoke out boldly in the synagogue and "Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately" (Acts 18:26). Here, teaching outside the context of the gathered church is commended. As worked out in previous lessons on "The Biblical Concept of Authority," the teaching activity denied women is the proclamation of the Word of God on behalf of Christ while standing in office as an official representative of His church.

This being the case, *all speech* by women is not forbidden in 1 Timothy 2:11-12. The words *quiet* and *quietly* do not automatically require total silence from women in the gathered church. We begin to see the profound significance of Paul's words when we couple the results of our last lesson with this position.

At root, the words translated quietly and quiet, respectively, in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 refer to an inner disposition of rest before God. They point to a certain inner peace and tranquillity which comes from the Holy Spirit. This inner rest is epitomized in the Sabbath rest into which God entered at creation. Luke uses the very word with which we are concerned with regard to the Sabbath rest. Speaking of certain women who took perfume and spices to Jesus' tomb Luke reports, "And on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment" (Luke 23:56).

Entering into Sabbath rest is the ultimate goal of every Christian. "There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9). Entering into this rest means, in this life, we exhibit "a gentle and quiet spirit" (1 Peter 3:4). As Paul tells us, we pray diligently "in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life" (1 Timothy 2:2). This is one of the ways

you "make it your ambition to lead a quiet life" (1 Thessalonians 4:11). You make it your goal to "work in a quiet fashion" (2 Thessalonians 3:12).

One of the ways this concept of rest is worked out in the church is given in 1 Timothy 2:11-12. "Let a woman quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet." Such rest and quietness involves submission to the will of God. We saw two examples of this in the book of Acts. "And when they heard this, they quieted down, and glorified God, saying, 'Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life'" (Acts 11:18). "We fell silent, remarking, 'The will of the Lord be done!'" (Acts 21:14).

The genius of the Sabbath is in part heartfelt acquiescence to the plans and power of God accompanied by rest in His hands. A contentious spirit opposed to the revealed will of God is the opposite of the rest and quietness we are discussing. To remain *quiet*, to *quietly* receive instruction does not mean don't talk. It means be teachable.

This applies to men as well as women. There is good ground to translate the requirement for eldership "able to teach" (1 Timothy 3:2) as simply "teachable." The text would then read, "An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, teachable...."

Interestingly enough, God tells us the relationship between men and women is disrupted by sin at the precise place we are discussing. In Genesis 3:16 God tells Eve how her sin affects her disposition and the disposition of her husband, "Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." For a more complete analysis of this text see my series, "Biblical Submission" and my expositions of 1 Peter 3:1-2. Because Genesis 3:16 speaks of the *results* of the fall, the desire Eve has for Adam is a sinful desire. It is the desire to control and dominate. The parallel text using the same words is Genesis 4:7. God says to Cain, "If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and *its desire is for*

you, but you must master it" (italics added). Sin's *desire* is always to control, dominate, and rule. The word *desire* is used in the same way in Genesis 3:16. Because of sin, Eve would desire to control, dominate and rule her husband. Sin does not produce a quiet and gentle spirit. Sin does not produce inner rest and peace. Men are just as bad. Many men are dictators. Sin produces a spirit in which mastery is sought. Because of sin there is a clash between men and women rupturing the original harmony. This clash breaks out in words and in conduct exposing a lack of inner peace and rest.

Paul's words in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 are not harsh. They are not meant to bind women in an unnatural way by forbidding them to talk or even teach their peers. Paul's emphasis is quite different. Paul is exhorting rest and quietness under the hand of God. Paul is exhorting a teachable spirit. If the revealed will of God gives wives and mothers certain roles within the family, Paul's words encourage rest and contentment in those roles. He exhorts this particularly in the context of the gathered church.

Oddly enough, those caught in the web of so-called biblical feminism often fall into the very conduct about which God warns in Genesis 3:16. They therefore miss the very quiet and rest urged by Paul in 2 Timothy 2:11-12. Make no mistake about it, many men so misinterpret Paul they shackle women in the church to the point of setting the stage for unrest. We have a two way street here.

I also think so-called biblical feminists agitating for the ordination of women in conservative and Reformed churches fall into the conduct God warns against in Genesis 3:16. I think they miss the main point of 2 Timothy 2:11-12. In taking up the cudgel for ordination, they easily enter into unfortunate and unbiblical yakity yak. The response should not be a harsh, "Don't talk back." Neither position exemplifies the quiet and rest Paul speaks of in 1 Timothy 2:11-12.

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IN RESPONSE - WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

by Dennis Prutow

We now begin to discuss *how* we are to worship. We do so from a general perspective first. This will lead us to more particulars. Jesus Christ gives us direction concerning *how* we are to worship in John 4:23-24.

An hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall 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.

Note the final prepositional phrase. It is an adverbial phrase. It tells us how we are to worship. Also note there is one prepositional phrase and not two. Jesus speaks of worship in spirit and truth not worship in spirit and in truth. The older King James Version is in error at this point. This means these two aspects of worship, spirit and truth, are inseparably bound together. You cannot properly have one without the other.

First, we must worship in spirit. What does this mean? First and foremost, this means we must have the Spirit. We must be born again. Paul pointedly explains,

You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him (Romans 8:9).

An individual has no true relationship with God without the Holy Spirit dwelling within. Worship in spirit is therefore impossible without the indwelling presence and power of the Spirit.

To the Christian Paul says, "You have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'" (Romans 8:15). You are empowered to call God your Father when you are born again, when you receive the Holy Spirit. You are an adopted child of God when you trust in Christ's sacrifice as the only escape from hell and when you trust in Christ's righteousness as the only way to heaven. Only then are you able, do you have the real ability, to worship in spirit.

Second, to worship in spirit means we must be guided by the Spirit. Beyond doubt the Bible urges us to be guided by the Spirit in everyday matters. We are to

walk by the Spirit. "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). If this is true for our lives in general, how much more is it true for our worship?

We have already seen worship that borrows from heaven and not from the world takes its directions from God rather than the world. One of our next steps will be to see how the Spirit guides us in our worship.

We are also to worship God in truth. The Spirit by which we are guided in worship is the Spirit of truth. The apostle John declares, "We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (1 John 4:6). John tells us specifically there is a Spirit of truth and a spirit of error. We must learn to distinguish between the two. One of the great problems in our age is the lack of discernment so prevalent within the church. We see this very clearly in the heart, center and core of the church which is her worship.

Where do we find infallible truth? Jesus Christ tells us the Word of God is truth. In the midst of His high priestly prayer, Jesus implores, "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). The Word of God, the Bible, is truth because it was inspired by the Spirit of truth.

The Spirit of truth also guides us into truth.

But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come (John 16:13).

The apostles were promised the Spirit would guide them into *all* truth. That is, Christ promised they would be organs of special revelation and write Scripture.

We do not have the same promise. We do, however, have the promise of guidance. The Spirit guides us by opening our eyes to the truth of Scripture and empowering us to follow God through His directions given in Scripture.

Therefore, to worship in spirit and truth means to be empowered by the Spirit to give honor to God as outlined in the Word of God. These two aspects of

worship are tied closely together and must not be separated.

For example, to place emphasis on worship in spirit without adequate emphasis on truth will lead us into error. Jesus warns us. "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life" (John 6:63). The words spoken by God, spoken by Jesus Christ, spoken by the Spirit, in Scripture lead us to life.

We can easily be swayed by the flesh. How so? We may look for the same type of emotional high in a worship service as we experience in a crowd at a basketball game. When we do not experience the same emotional lift in worship, we may say the service is boring, dead. We are catering to the flesh. I commend to you my study "The Affects of Adrenaline Addiction on Spirituality and Worship" to help you see what can and does happen when we cater to the flesh in this fashion.

There are also those who insist, wrongly I think, tongues are the normative sign of the presence of the Spirit. Again, inordinate emphasis on Spirit without adequate truth causes error. The normative sign of the presence of the Spirit today is love as fully described in the Bible. See my exposition of 1 Corinthians 13 called "Christian Affections" for help in this area.

On the other hand, to place emphasis on truth without the Spirit leads to dead form. It is possible for us to latch on to a particular form of worship and consider ourselves fully spiritual if we simply go through the motions of using this form week by week. A church does not have to be highly liturgical to fall into this trap. I recall a man in my own denomination years ago who exclaimed in a morning class, "Well, we sing the psalms so we're OK." This ended the discussion, for him. It did not end the discussion for me. The prophet we were looking at condemns worship forms devoid of spiritual life and conviction. They are a work of the flesh. Worship in spirit *and* truth is essential.

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