

Date : 26 November 2023
Theme : Preparation for the next level
Topic : Seeking God's way of worship
Key passage : *Deuteronomy 12*
Key verse : ***But you shall seek the place where the Lord your God chooses, ...to put His Name for His dwelling place... And there you shall eat before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, you and your households, in which the Lord your God has blessed you. Deuteronomy 12:5, 7 (Nkjv)***

Introduction

What habits in our walk with God need to be changed for the new season or year ahead?

What old habit has to go for you to walk worthy of Christ?

How will this new season be different in terms of your worship habit?

In *Deuteronomy 12*, Moses addressed a habit of the Israelite community which needed to be changed. It was to stop doing what was right in their own eyes.

...You shall not at all do as we are doing here today – every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes... Deuteronomy 12:8.

Instead *...be doing what is good and right in the sight of the Lord your God... Deuteronomy 12: 25 & 28*

- What was God forbidding?

The repeated warnings *...You shall not worship... Deuteronomy 12:4, 31*

The immediate context was that they were not to worship the Lord God *...with such things... as...on high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree... Deuteronomy 12: 2, 4*

As the new Israelite generation was entering into a new season, Moses made the point that their worshipping of God in the Promised Land must be different. They were to follow God's commands and seek the place He had chosen rather than seek the convenient way.

- Do we have the habit of convenience that must be changed? (worshipping God as in Covid-19 days)?

- Although Covid-19 ended in early 2022, many Christians still choose to worship God from home and alone. While online service has a place for the sick and infirm, it is not an excuse to forsake meeting with the people of God.

- Others have the habit of worshipping as they please when convenient; these are habitually absent.

- Yet others have developed their own pattern of worship instead of doing it God's way.

Scriptures name those who were rejected when they did worship their own way, such as:

- When the Israelites worshipped Him with a golden calf, God was angry. *Exodus 32*

- When 2 priests presumptuously offered unauthorised worship, God struck them *Leviticus 10.*

God had instructed Israel to worship Him in His way.

These principles of worship in *Deuteronomy 12* are:

1. The Place of His Name (Where?)
2. The Provision of true unity and joy (What for?)
3. The Practice of sacrifice and offerings (How?)
4. Application: The Preparation of True Worshipers (Who?)

1. Where? The Place of His Name *Deuteronomy 12:1-14*

...seek the place where the Lord your God chooses. *Deuteronomy 12: 5, 11, 14, 18, 26*

- a) The specific Place to worship God's Name (=God's Person) *Deuteronomy 12: 5, 11, 21*
A unique place of God's dwelling (not where you please).
- b) The Place of covenant (not convenience)
God's statutes and judgements stipulate where He is to be worshipped. The demand for a commitment to God (1st commandment) begins in the place of public worship.
...*statutes and judgements* (covenant obligations) *which you shall be careful to observe* (covenant observance) *in the land which the Lord God of your fathers is giving you to possess* (covenant land), *all the days that you live on the earth* (covenant blessing)... *Deuteronomy 12:1*
 - God's selection (or rejection) of where and how to worship is in His Word.
 - not your way ...*you shall not...but you shall seek Deuteronomy 12:4, 5*
(problem – what is the source of our learning? Be careful of internet preachers)
 - not the world's way – distinguish between sacred and common
 - do not even ask how they worship their gods *Deuteronomy 12:30*.
 - God's people to 'clean house' *Deuteronomy 12: 2-4* (get rid of pagan shrines and altars)
 - Make room for worship of God *Deuteronomy 12:5-7*.
(God's first commandment is to have no other gods).

2. What for? The Provision of true unity and joy in His Presence *Deuteronomy 12: 7, 12*

- a) The unique joy of covenant worship ...*eat* (fellowship) *before the Lord... Deuteronomy 12:7, 12*
- b) Rejoicing for everyone in the household – family gladness (generations to join in).
...*Sons and daughters, male and female servants Deuteronomy 12:7*
- c) Rejoicing for the entire community - festive rejoicing (include the Levites) *Deuteronomy 12:12*.
 - Motivation to obey *Deuteronomy 12:28*
 - The family prospers.
 - The family is blessed.
 - The Lord is pleased

(Why is covenant worship so uniquely different from pagan worship?)

- Pagan worship was designed solely to please the gods (but our God wants to bless us too).
- Worshipper offers sacrifice; for gods' pleasure (example, Molech requires children to be sacrificed).
- Rituals appease gods' displeasure (but God cares for our benefit – to possess His inheritance).

3. How? The Practice of sacrifice and offering to the Lord

Deuteronomy 12: 6, 11, 13 – 14, 17 – 18, 26 - 27

At the God-ordained place of worship.

- a) Bring your sacrifices as prescribed by the Lord
 - Sacrifices (thanksgiving offerings) - to bring fellowship between God and worshipper.
 - Tithes (one-tenth) – give to God a tenth of any agricultural products.
 - Vowed offerings, freewill offerings and firstborn offerings – made to God as a vow.
- b) The Blood is an atonement for sins.
 - It symbolises the atoning sacrifice of our Redeemer.
 - Forbidden to consume the blood of the sacrifice.
The blood must be poured on the earth... Deuteronomy 12:16, 23 - 25, 27
- c) Practices detestable to God *Deuteronomy 12: 29 – 32*
(example, sacrificing children as in Molech worship *Deuteronomy 12: 31*)
 - Danger of enemies' corruption *Deuteronomy 12: 29 – 30*
 - Danger of curious investigations of pagan practices...*the Lord hates... Deuteronomy 12:31*

Application: Who? The Preparation of True Worshippers
(Choose an application to help you be a True Worshipper)

