

LIVING AN AUTHENTIC FAITH, PART 2

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

ONCE IN A WHILE YOU’LL HAVE OPPORTUNITY to play golf with dark skies in the distance. Black thunderheads—not threatening to your game but stark on the horizon—form the backdrop for your next tee shot. Then you send it soaring. And the circle of that little white ball contrasted with that ebony sky is really quite beautiful. It helps us see the difference between playing the game on the ground, as they say, and playing it in the air.

When we consider the notion of worship, we are likewise directed to consider where are worship is given. Does it go to those on the ground (our fellow citizens of this earth), or is it given vertically to the Lord God in heaven? At first blush, we may find this question funny. Few people confess to worshiping other human beings. But our Western emphasis on celebrity and power unveils our true hearts. From the royal families of Europe to the trophy winners on Tour, people capture our eyes and draw them from the King of kings.

When Jesus spoke to the woman at the well in Samaria, their conversation turned to worship. Her own faith was more cultural than personal, but she knew the party line. For her, worship was a matter of place and time. Must we worship over there, or is right here acceptable?

Jesus corrected the woman. “Worship,” he told her in so many words, “is about what’s inside of you.” He outlined this with a remarkable insight into what the heavenly Father seeks: those who worship *in spirit and in truth*.

What does this mean? We should be desperate to know! If God has told us what he is looking for, we should possess every interest in being that kind of person.

To worship God in spirit and in truth is to worship him without pretension or pride. We lay down our efforts to impress God with our religious devotion and lift our eyes to him instead. We thank God for who he is and for what he has done for us, especially in providing a way of salvation above our dreadful sin.

God knows who you are. There is no sense hiding from him—not when what he wants is our authentic worship of him.

Opening questions What are the most beautiful conditions under which you’ve ever played golf? • What would you say are some of the things that draw your eyes from God?

READING John 4:19-24; Hebrews 13:15-16; Psalm 84

Spirit and truth (John 4)
 What makes our worship authentic? How can we move to set our eyes and hearts on Christ rather than on lesser things?

Sacrifice of praise (Hebrews 13)
 How would we bring a sacrifice of praise? What sacrifices must you make in order to worship God in word and in deed?

Full expression (Psalm 84)
 What phrases of deep worship catch your attention from this psalm? What would it take for you to worship God this expressively?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2015 Links Players International. A 6-minute video accompanies today’s study at <https://youtu.be/XFivIM06k2A>