

Improve your participation in the assembly & Bible classes!

Intro:

- → **Title:** Improve your participation in the assembly & Bible classes!
 - → **You must worship in spirit and truth, to obey God.**
 - **Story - Jn. 4** story Samaritan woman at well: living water (salvation), springing up to eternal life
 - **Read - Jn. 4:23-26** church (Messiah teach all things), worship spirit and truth; not animal sacrifice, etc. — pg. # for pew Bibles on PP
 - **rf. Jn. 4:23** God wants our worship
 - **rf. Jn. 4:24** we must worship in spirit and truth
 - **rf. Jn. 17:17** God's word = truth
 - → **Review Part I: Preparedness**
 - **Examples:**
 - **Israel met God at Sinai:**
 - 3 days of preparation, wash garments, set boundaries
 - attitude: fear and reverence
 - **Israel's tabernacle worship:**
 - one year to prepare
 - place, furnishings, consecration, clothes, order
 - **Jesus' parable of the wedding feast:**
 - those who were originally called were not ready, not respond, punished
 - **Jesus' parable teaching preparation:**
 - **difference** between 5 foolish and 5 prudent — preparation
 - **difference** between 5 rewarded and other 5 — preparation
 - **difference** between saved and lost after judgment — preparation (obedience)
 - **application:** to worship God in spirit and truth requires preparation
 - **Made suggestions** for us to consider, help us prepare for assembly and Bible study
 - more suggestions in today's lesson
- #1 **To worship in spirit and truth, you must start in the right frame of mind, and stay in the right frame of mind. — reverent, humble** (specific part of preparedness, Lesson I - mind)
 - e.g., **Israel's worship after return from Babylonian captivity:**
 - **story of Babylonian captivity:**
 - destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., many Jews exiled to Babylon (e.g., Daniel and his three friends [Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-nego], Ezra, Nehemiah)
 - after Babylon fell to Cyrus the Great in 539 B.C., the Jews were released from captivity, many chose to return home
 - three groups of exiles returned to Jerusalem:
 - first group left shortly after Cyrus' edict in 538 B.C., led by Sheshbazzar, numbered 42,360, traveled over 1,000 miles to Jerusalem - [here to Canada????](#)
 - Cyrus appointed Sheshbazzar governor and sent the vessels of the temple back with him
 - rebuilt the temple, spurred on by Haggai and Zechariah, new temple dedicated in 515 B.C.
 - second group, led by Ezra arrived in 458 B.C.
 - third group returned with Nehemiah, arrived around 445 B.C., rebuilt the city wall and reformed the government

- **Israel's worship in Jerusalem** (after wall rebuilt) — **frame of mind to worship — humility, reverence**
 - **Read - Neh. 8:1-9** first day of the 7th month
 - **vs. 1-3** gathered, assembled, listen, understand, attentive
 - **cf. our assembly**
 - **vs. 4a** Ezra stood on podium made for the purpose (preparation)
 - **cf. our podium and building for the purpose — okay to have just for this purpose**
 - **vs. 5** people stood up for reading of the law — **long time???** (rf. 1 Ki. 8:12-14)
 - **e.g., church, stand for hours, reading of word and explaining; e.g., Russian Orthodox**
 - **vs. 6** blessed Lord, Amen twice, lift hands then bowed with face to ground
 - **reverent position of prayer — cf. us today in church**
 - **vs. 7b** people remained in their place
 - **not moving around, distracting themselves and others, not in and out going to the bathroom unnecessarily, etc.**
 - **vs. 8** explained, so people understood
 - **people today often not patient with someone to explain God's word, we just want to know enough to feel good**
 - **vs. 9** people wept, heard and understood God's word
 - **e.g., our attitude at the reading of God's word, explaining of it???????**
 - **Read - Neh. 9:1-3** 24th day of 7th month
 - **vs. 1** fasted, sackcloth with dirt
 - **right frame of mind — humility, reverence**
 - **vs. 2** confessed their sins and the sins of their fathers
 - **would we do this today???? — e.g., Read - Acts 19:17-20**
 - **vs. 3** stood, read law 1/4 of day (3 hours??), confessed and worshiped 1/4 of day (3 hours) — **stood for 6 hours**
 - **what would be your reaction to a six hour day of worship and study???????**
 - **Application: proper attitude of worship — humility, reverence**
 - **like Israel, we must humble ourselves, to turn to the Lord and worship as God desired**
 - **illus.: great growth of the church after USA had been humbled by the depression;** produced the greatest generation in US history (maybe with exception to our founding father who had also been humbled)
 - **e.g., Pop (grandfather), tomato** from back yard when leave for work
 - **e.g., visited my mom's home** when young girl, showed where garden was, many grew food because did not have \$
 - **e.g., Dad in 6th grade** work after school and walk home in dark and then do homework late at night, **than who had to work in high school** to help support family
 - **illus.: brethren in Philippines** — work supported here
 - Vacation Bible School
 - brethren used school, about 600 kids attended
 - up at 5:00 am, start day with exercise
 - Bible class started at 8:00 am, several lectures each day
 - Sunday travel, hours spent to assemble and for Bible study
 - someone who has transportation has make several trips to pick everyone up
 - have worship, Bible study
 - someone makes several trips to take everyone home
 - **like Israel we must be reverent when assembling for Bible study or worship — frame of mind**
 - reverence seen by the things they did: stood, wept, fasted, humbled themselves with sackcloth and dirt

- → **No one can get you in the right frame of mind for worship and Bible study, but you!**
 - **Lessons from Lk. 14** only recorded by Luke, but similar teachings found elsewhere
 - **Review - Lk. 14:1-6** Jesus at Pharisee's house for a dinner, teaches lessons
 - doing good on the Sabbath, self-exaltation and humility
 - **Review Lk. 14:7-15** parable of the guests, comment by person in vs. 15 leads into next parable
 - **Read - Lk. 14:16-24** parable of the dinner
 - **vs. 18-20** all offered excuses, not in right frame of mind, preoccupied with worldly things
 - **cf. excuses for not assembling with the saints for worship and Bible study**
 - have to work, only day to rest, only day to do chores, was up too late the night before, didn't feel good after running myself in the ground all day yesterday, don't like the other people there, don't get what I want out of it, etc.
 - **cf. judgment**
 - **vs. 21** master was angry
 - **Jn. 4:23 God wants our worship, He's probably angry when we choose to do other things?????**
 - **Read - Lk. 14:25-35** what it takes to be in the right frame of mind to worship: God has to be first
 - **vs. 26-27** God has to be first in our lives
 - **cf. excuses above**
 - **vs. 28-33** have to count the cost and be 100% committed — give up everything (vs. 33)
 - **cf. excuses above**
 - **vs. 34-35** if we lose our soul (salt, salvation), we've lost everything
 - **i.e., if we don't worship God in spirit and truth, nothing else matters in life**
 - **Application:**
 - we have to be in the right frame of mind to worship God in spirit, or we will put other things before our worship — we'll rob God of the worship He wants and deserves
 - we'll not be committed; we'll lose our saltiness — soul
- → **It takes work on your part, to be in the right frame of mind for Bible study and worship!**
 - **you must realize** that God wants your worship, he's watching to see if you'll give it
 - **you must realize** that God and Jesus are here with us
 - Jesus: where 2 or 3 gathered in His name (Matt. 18:20)
 - **questions:**
 - What would you do if you could **see God** here, this very minute? - you should do it now
 - What would you do if you could **see Jesus, as Thomas** saw him? - you should do it now
 - **Summary / Application:**
 - To worship in spirit and truth, you must start in the right frame of mind, and stay in the right frame of mind. — reverent, humble
 - No excuses, if you can be here for worship we should be here — worship in spirit and truth.
 - It takes work on your part, to be in the right frame of mind for Bible study and worship!
- #2 **What can you do, to get in the right frame of mind for worship and Bible study?**
 - **days before: — mental preparation to assemble**
 - **pray about worship and Bible study:** self, family, brethren regarding worship
 - **pray for the people** on our local prayer list, and others
 - **discuss worship** (service, Bible class) with other family members
 - talk to children and help them get ready
 - **meditate about the last assembly and Bible study**, revisit notes
 - **prepare for coming lessons:** Bible classes, sermon series — don't wait till the last minute

- **make sure you stay in your priorities** the whole week — God first
 - put assembly with the saints on the top priority of your schedule
 - schedule sufficient rest, so your alert and energized for Bible study and worship
 - don't lose your saltiness
- → **evening before: — mental preparation to assemble**
 - **continue to pray** (above)
 - **meditate** on the Lord, church, worship — get excited, fired up
 - **make sure everyone in your home is ready** for Bible study and worship
 - **review:** Bible lessons that you'll be studying the next day
 - **get in bed at a reasonable hour**, if possible — esp. kids
- → **morning of: — mental preparation to assemble**
 - **continue to pray** (above)
 - **figure out how to be a giver** (worship, encourage others), and you'll be a receiver
 - **get up early**, so you (family not rushed), enjoy the morning and anticipate worship
 - **brush up on Bible lessons**, esp. if you're teaching
 - **arrive early, greet others, take seat early**
 - **take care of personal needs** (drink, bathroom) as much as possible — try not to get up during service, miss something, disturb others and make it hard for them to concentrate (worship in spirit)
 - **get spiritually (mentally) prepared** before service starts
 - **you are the only one** who can get you prepared for worship
 - **if you're not prepared**, you have no one to blame but yourself
- → **during the service: - tips for worship in spirit, during different parts of the service**
 - **announcements: — stay in right frame of mind**
 - **take last few moments to make sure** you're already in the right frame of mind - concentrate
 - **be sure to absorb info** (notes, bulletin) of things you need to know as a member of this congregation
 - make sure you're in the right frame on mind, **no later than the end of announcements** — the prayer
 - **singing: — stay in right frame of mind**
 - **be mindful:** singing to Lord, brethren, making melody (accompanying) with heart, with thankfulness in heart to God (Eph. 5:19-20; Col. 3:16)
 - **sing with understand, so you will be singing with spirit**
 - **illus.:**
 - if **Jesus was standing up front, leading singing**, how would we sing - seeing Him, seeing His reaction and facial expressions — **illus.: Old Rugged Cross**
 - if we were **standing before God and Jesus in heaven**, before throne, how would we sing
 - **singing to encourage and admonish one another - matter of attitude**, not singing ability
 - e.g., dull, bored, weak voice, no enthusiasm, not care, etc.
 - e.g., opposite of above
 - ● **prayer: — stay in right frame of mind**
 - **remember what you're doing** - talking to God
 - **illus.:** if you could have an audience with God, stand before His throne, what would you act like (Is. 6; Rev. 4-5)
 - **listen to the prayer and follow along — concentrate**
 - remain respectful in the way you sit or stand, don't look around or do other things
 - **silently say Amen** (consent) silently in your mind throughout the prayer
 - **aloud, say Amen** at the end of the prayer - tradition of God's children
 - Jesus said Amen at the end of his prayer, sermon on the mount
 - Paul often said Amen in his epistles

- tradition among Christians to say amen (1 Cor. 14:16) — can't say Amen if not following along and understand prayer
- ● **Bible lessons, sermon: — stay in right frame of mind**
 - **your responsibilities:**
 - **learn:** follow along and learn, apply to yourself, make commitments to change and improve your life
 - **examine carefully — make sure truth is taught:** Acts 17, Bereans
 - if I teach error, I am guilty of wrong
 - if you don't correct me, you're guilty of wrong
 - **be a proactive learner: do things that help you concentrate**
 - **rf. classes on different types of learners** - know what kind of learner you are, do what you need to do to learn the lesson
 - **take notes:** helps mind not wonder, helps organize lesson in your mind, gives you something to refer back to afterwards when you think about the lesson
 - **use highlighter** or make notes in your Bible
 - **memorize the major points** of the lesson
 - **diagram the lesson**
 - **pray** during the lesson
 - for God to help you do the things we studying about
 - when you come across in lesson that impacts you, that you should change
- ● **Collection: — stay in right frame of mind**
 - **give with the proper spirit — be sure you have the right heart** (spirit) when giving: 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9 cheerful, purposed in heart, not grudgingly
 - **pray about** your giving, your heart, use of the \$ collected, other parts of the services
- ● **Lord's Supper: — stay in right frame of mind**
 - **realize you are attending a memorial service** — Jesus, do this in remembrance of Me (body, blood)
 - **think about Jesus and His crucifixion** — judge (discern) Christ's body rightly
 - **pray:** about your heart, to help stay focused (concentrate, worship in spirit), thankfulness to God and Jesus
 - **read scripture:** help stay focused (concentrate, worship in spirit), help discern the body of Christ
 - **1 Cor. 11:26-30** seriousness of the memorial
 - **vs. 26** proclaim the Lord's death — every Lord's day, till He comes
 - **vs. 27** whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, is guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord
 - **vs. 28-29** eat judgment to yourself, if not judge Lord's body rightly
 - **vs. 30** if we do not partake of the Lord's Supper in the right spirit, we will grow weak, get sick, and sleep

Conclusion of two lesson series:

- → **Summary:**
 - Fact: to please God, you must participate in the service - worship in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:24)
 - **rf. Jn. 4:23** God wants our worship
 - **rf. Jn. 4:24** we must worship in spirit and truth
 - To worship God in spirit, you must be **prepared.**
 - To worship in spirit and truth, you must start in the **right frame of mind**, and stay in the right frame of mind. — **reverent, humble**
 - No one can get you in the right frame of mind for worship and Bible study, but you!
 - It takes work on your part, to be in the right frame of mind for Bible study and worship!

- **What can you do this week, to improve your worship and Bible study?**

- **We all** can change, improve!
- **Will you** change for God?

→ **Inv.**

- **start** worshiping in spirit and truth **today**, become a Christian
- What has Jesus commanded us to do?
- **inv.**

Audio sermon notes:

- ► denotes where to proceed to the next slide PowerPoint slide.
- All Scriptures are NASB, unless otherwise noted.
- Sermon recorded 12/11/2005, Church of Christ, South Livingston Ave. In Lutz, FL, Allan McNabb, BibleGuide.org.