

November 9, 2025 Session 10
Undivided Worship Deuteronomy 12:1-11, 29-32

Intro: What comes to mind when you think of worship? Is it something we must do or is it something we want to do? I hope it is the second option. Worship is a privilege. It is something we can give to God! God reveals who He truly is and prescribes how He must be worshiped. We were created for God, and our hearts are restless until we are brought into relationship with Him. We all have a God-sized hole in our hearts which only He can fill. Worship is ascribing worth. We will sacrifice to whatever we believe is most worthy. Today, what people spend time doing or spending their money on reveals what or who they worship. If what we value or believe has the most worth is something or someone other than God, it is idolatry. However, God is not a tyrannical dictator who needs praise. God lacks no attributes or qualities in Himself that could be nurtured by the praise of others. **Acts 17:24-25** *"God who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things."* Only God is worthy of worship and He commands humanity to worship Him alone out of His generous love. God desires worship not because it meets His needs but because it meets our needs. For me, worshiping God makes it all the more reason to obey Him. God's laws are aimed at bringing about Israel's/our good.

Remove Idolatry (Deuteronomy 12:1-7) p. 93

Moses often instructed the people to be careful in following God's statutes and ordinances. How we worship God reflects how we perceive Him. I must be careful to be attentive to His Word because there is relentless and constant distraction and temptation. Spending time frequently in God's Word and with Him helps me stay on track and not be derailed by the chaos of the world. The Israelites would be living in a land filled with false gods and pagan shrines. Our world is filled with distractions. In the pagan religions of Canaan, outdoor shrines known as high places were usually dedicated to the Canaanite god Baal. The Ammonite god Molech, and the Moabite god Chemosh also were worshiped at some high places. For both Israel and the pagan nations, mountains were the place where heaven and earth met. For pagans, groves of trees symbolized fertility. These high places generally consisted of an altar, a carved wooden pole that depicted

the female goddess of fertility (Asherah), a stone pillar symbolizing the male deity, and some type of building.

At such high places, people offered animal and sometimes human sacrifices. People burned incense, prayed to their gods, ate sacrificial meals, and partook in cultic prostitution. God called for the Israelites to utterly destroy the pagan worship centers. Once the idols were obliterated, only the one true God of Israel would remain. The removal of all the idols of false gods and their places of worship would remove the influence and temptation for the Israelites to worship and serve these false gods.

Sometimes we need to remove ourselves from situations of negative influences. We are to remove ourselves from hindrances and enticements which might draw us away from our singular loyalty to God.

Vs. 4 Why did God need to tell the Israelites how to worship Him? The pagan worship practices were perverse and all other things that were worshiped were either made by people or imagined. God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and all that exists. The intent of pagan worship was to manipulate the gods. Christians worship God because of love and gratitude. We worship God because He alone is worthy and deserving of everything we have, including the very life He gave us.

Worship God (Deuteronomy 12:8-11) p. 95

It seemed like the Israelites were sacrificing whatever and however they wished. Some Israelites may have even incorporated pagan worship into their practices. For this reason, God wanted His people to be unified and centrally located for worship. God promised to give his people rest from all their enemies when they entered the promised land. The Lord would dictate the details about the place He would choose.

Stand Firm (Deuteronomy 12:29-32) p. 97

It was only after the nations of Canaan were defeated that centralized worship of God could be established and undertaken without the threat of Israel being lured into idolatry. Remember how they were lured into harlotry with the women of Moab (Numbers 25:1). Even with God's promise to annihilate the nations before them, the Israelites still had to take possession of the land and drive out the pagan peoples. Because of their past inclinations to follow false Gods, even curiosity about how other nations worshiped their gods was forbidden. For me this does not mean to not be informed. It is alright to know what other people believe who are not Bible

believing Christians. Knowledge of what they believe can help me direct them to the truth of the Bible and to know who God is.

Vs. 32 Ignoring the divine commands against worshipping other gods would violate the covenant relationship between God and Israel. The first two of the Ten Commandments and the Shema demanded a single-minded allegiance to God. Anything else would be a treasonous violation of their covenant. It is our spiritual obligation to worship God. Worship is an act of love, when we give God our undivided attention and receive the blessing of His presence and grow closer to Him.