

The Posture of Worship —

It May Not Be Everything; But It Is Something

Geoffrey R. Kirkland

Christ Fellowship Bible Church

New Testament believers quickly assert that worship of the one, true God no longer is limited to a particular location as it was in the days of Old Testament Israel. In former times, God required that His people worshiped Him in the place He so chose. Jewish men had to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem three times a year for the Jewish feasts. Christians today boldly and rightly assert that those who worship God must worship Him in “spirit and in truth”. Christ has come and has died so that His people, Spirit-indwelt believers, may approach the Father at any time and at any place.

Nevertheless, though God does not require a certain place or posture of worship as He spoke to ancient Israel, is there still benefit in worshiping God in various biblical postures? One would be unable to point to *one* verse in the Scriptures to command all believers to worship in a certain posture at all times. God does command worship, praise, thanksgiving, confession, adoration, petitions; yet God provides various expressions concerning the posture of worship. So, though the posture of worship may not be everything; we must remember that it is *still* something.

In Psalm 95, David commands believers to come and sing to the Lord, to shout joyfully, to come before His mighty presence with thanksgiving, and to sing joyfully to him with songs (vv.1-2). Jehovah is the mighty God and the great King over and above all other gods (v.3). He proves His supreme power and matchless sovereignty in that he holds the unsearchable depths of the earth in His hand as well as the mountain peaks. The sea and the dry land belong to Him for He made them all (vv.4-5).

In verse 6, the Holy Spirit commands believers to come, to lie prostrate, to bow down, and to kneel before the Lord. The outward act is only indicative of the inward heart. Any outward form or expression of worship without the inward heart and passion is cold rituals which God hates and rejects. But a heart that is aflame with love for God, for Christ, and for the Spirit, will manifest itself and express itself physically *at times* through certain postures of worship. Does the psalmist command that believers must *always* and *only* pray in this posture? By no means. For instance, Christ prayed standing, walking, looking upwards, hands raised and hanging from a cross. Yet Christ did, on occasion, fall down in fervent, heartfelt, passionate prayer while in Gethsemane.

Psalm 95:6 incorporates three words that can be beneficial and expressive postures of worship.

- 1) **“Worship” [NASB]** — The Hebrew word speaks of lying prostrate on the ground before a Superior as an expression of surrender and obedience.
- 2) **“Bow Down” [NASB]** — The Hebrew word here indicates one who has bowed low from the waist. It can speak of those who bow down to the ground just as Gideon’s men bowed to lap water (Judg 7.5)
- 3) **“Kneel” [NASB]** — Here the Hebrew word speaks of kneeling down as a camel would fall to his knees for rest (Gen 24.11).

To come before God’s mighty presence prostrate, or bowing down, or kneeling can benefit the believer in the following ways:

1. It reminds the worshiper of his humility and surrender before the Almighty sovereignty of the King.
2. It expresses the internal heart-attitude of the worshiper who falls down in full obedience to the Master’s bidding.
3. It pictures one’s utter helplessness, impotency, and desperate dependence on God for His mercy, grace & power.
4. It physically speaks to the believer’s heart that God’s sovereign will and decrees are good, just, right and true.
5. It powerfully expresses gratitude and gladness as the humble worshiper thanks God for redemption and propitiation.

Again, it is crucial to re-emphasize again that the posture of worship without the penitence in the heart is worthless worship. And God does not require a particular form or posture of worship every time a believer prays. Let us learn from the psalmist and come, bow down and kneel before the sovereign King. And though the posture of worship may not be everything; it *is* still something.