

GOD DESERVES WORSHIP

CORE PASSAGE: JOSHUA 24:14-25

CONTEXT

The Israelites had taken the promised land and divided it among the tribes. In Joshua 24, Joshua recounted Israel's history and reminded them of God's faithfulness. God delivered them from Egypt, carried them in the wilderness, and gave them land they didn't have to labor for, cities they did not have to build, and vineyards they didn't have to plant (Joshua 24:13). Joshua called the people to respond to God's gracious gift through worship and obedience.

KEY CONCEPT

God rightly deserves our full worship, which includes obedience to Him.

As you examine Joshua 24:14-25:

- Consider for yourself the question Joshua posed to the Israelites about whom to serve, the God who helped them or the false gods of the Canaanites.
- Recognize that the call to worship God alone requires faith in God, knowing who God is and what He has done for His people.



TIMELINE

The Israelites Conquer Jericho and Ai
(Joshua 6–8)

The Land Is Divided Among God's People (Joshua 13–21)

The Israelites Make a Treaty with Gibeon and
Drive Out the Canaanites (Joshua 9–12)

SESSION STUDY: God Renews His Covenant with
Israel, and then Joshua Dies (Joshua 23–24)

Daily Readings

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| ☐ Day 1: Joshua 18:1–19:51 | ☐ Day 4: Joshua 23:1–16 |
| ☐ Day 2: Joshua 20:1–21:45 | ☐ Day 5: Joshua 24:1–33 |
| ☐ Day 3: Joshua 22:1–34 | ☐ Day 6: Psalm 136 |



Scan this QR code
to access this session's
Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

JOSHUA 24:14-18

GOD IS WORTHY OF OUR FULL WORSHIP.

*Underline the options Joshua gave the people.
Highlight the reasons they gave for worshiping the Lord.*

14 “Therefore, fear the LORD and worship him in sincerity and truth. Get rid of the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and worship the LORD.

15 But if it doesn’t please you to worship the LORD, choose for yourselves today: Which will you worship—the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living? As for me and my family, we will worship the LORD.” **16** The people replied, “We will certainly not abandon the LORD to worship other gods! **17** For the LORD our God brought us and our ancestors out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery, and performed these great signs before our eyes. He also protected us all along the way we went and among all the peoples whose lands we traveled through.

18 The LORD drove out before us all the peoples, including the Amorites who lived in the land. We too will worship the LORD, because he is our God.”

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

WORSHIP: While many reduce worship to an event or the singing of worship songs, worship is first and foremost something of the heart and extends to all areas of life. The aim and focus of worship is God, giving Him the exact due of praise and adoration that He deserves. Worship should be carried out not only at a personal level within a Christian’s life but also in joining with other Christians in the corporate act of worship and stewarding our gifts for the glory of God. Corporate worship serves to edify and strengthen other Christians, but it also serves as a witness to non-believers of the greatness of God.”

Key Concept: God rightly deserves our full worship, which includes obedience to Him.



In a famous commencement address at Kenyon College in 2005, the writer David Foster Wallace said: “Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship.”¹ That is a deep biblical truth, one that Joshua himself knew as he stood before the Israelites at Shechem. We cannot choose not to worship; we can only choose whom we worship.

So Joshua drew a line in the sand and called Israel to make a decision. As they faced their new future, they needed to decide whom to follow. Throughout the time leading up to this moment, Joshua continually called Israel to cling to God and serve Him with all their heart and soul (Joshua 22:5; 23:8). How could they not worship Him after all He had done in, through, and for them? They had seen all that the Lord had done, and they had also seen all that the gods of the Egyptians and the Amorites did not do.

Why do you think Joshua had to draw a line in the sand and call Israel to a decision point after all that they had seen and heard?

The people of Israel knew where Joshua stood. He and his house would worship the Lord, and for good reason. God had worked in Israel’s history, revealing Himself as the one true God all along the way. The Lord brought them out of slavery in Egypt. He did great signs before them, protected them, and drove out their enemies. Throughout it all, He proved Himself worthy of worship.

On this side of the cross, we have even more reason to worship God. Christ brought us out of slavery to sin. He lived a sinless life, died publicly on a Roman cross, and rose gloriously that first Easter Sunday. We have seen the work of the Lord, and over all the false gods of this world, He stands as the only One worthy of all our worship—the only One who will never fail us nor forsake us. Only one God will love you with a love so great that it cannot be limited to what you deserve. All other gods will demand your all and fail you when you most need them. The God of the Bible will give you His all even when you fail Him. Isn’t the choice obvious?

Consider for a few moments: Who could possibly be better than the God of the Bible? What do you have to praise Him for right now?

YHWH

PERSONAL PREPARATION

JOSHUA 24:19-25

WORSHIP OF GOD INCLUDES OUR OBEDIENCE TO GOD.

Highlight the responses of the people to Joshua's warning.

19 But Joshua told the people, "You will not be able to worship the LORD, because he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions and sins. **20** If you abandon the LORD and worship foreign gods, he will turn against you, harm you, and completely destroy you, after he has been good to you." **21** "No!" the people answered Joshua. "We will worship the LORD." **22** Joshua then told the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you yourselves have chosen to worship the LORD." "We are witnesses," they said. **23** "Then get rid of the foreign gods that are among you and turn your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel." **24** So the people said to Joshua, "We will worship the LORD our God and obey him." **25** On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people at Shechem and established a statute and ordinance for them.

Key Concept: God rightly deserves our full worship, which includes obedience to Him.



Joshua wanted to ensure the Israelites understood their commitment to worship God alone. This decision had consequences. Dale Ralph Davis comments: “Yahweh is not a soft, cuddly Santa in the sky who drools over easy decisions during invitation hymns. Joshua seeks to put down that blathering self-confidence that makes emotional commitments rather than shutting its mouth and counting the cost.”²

We don’t often think of a cost to worship, but there is one, and it begins with obedience. In Luke 6:46-49, Jesus spoke about the foundation upon which we can build our lives. He who hears the words of the Lord and acts on them has a deep foundation that will not waver when the floods come. He who hears but does not act on God’s word has no foundation and will collapse at the slightest opposition. Jesus rightfully says to such people, “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and don’t do the things I say?” (v. 46). Worship is more than lip service. It is acting upon God’s words in our life and deeds. True worship is wholehearted.

How would you define “worship” to someone who asked?

Some have called Joshua 24:19 the most shocking verse in the Old Testament. Will God not forgive transgression and sins? Isn’t the whole message of the gospel that He indeed will forgive? Yes, but Joshua was not speaking to individuals; he was speaking to a nation. If Israel decided to follow the path of the Canaanites they had just conquered and turned their back on the God who brought them there, God would judge them in His holiness.

Joshua rightly pressed the point. Worship is not flippant. God takes it seriously. The Israelites’ vow would be a witness against them. They made their choice, and going forward they would have to live with that decision. They needed to worship and obey the Lord as they swore they would do. That is, after all, what true worship is.

Why is obedience a key aspect of worship?

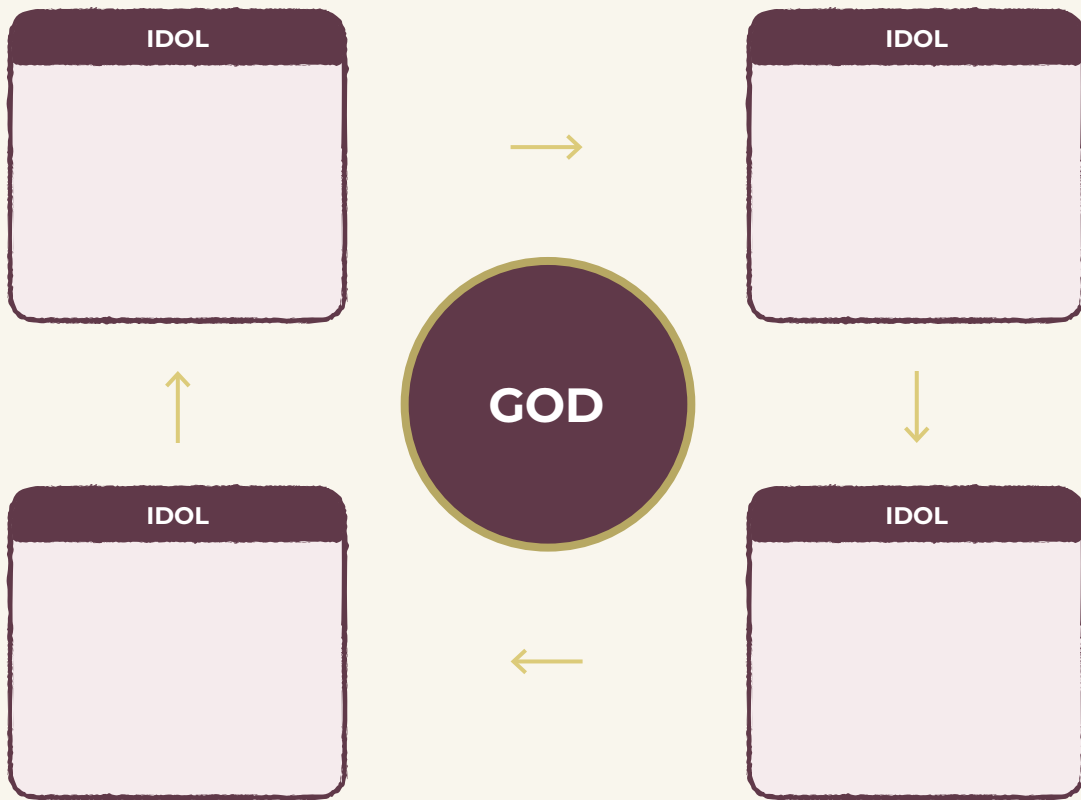
GOSPEL CONNECTION

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Because God is holy and just, He will not forgive our sins without due punishment. But because Jesus paid the penalty for our sins, forgiveness is now available to all who trust in Him.

TURN YOUR HEARTS TO THE LORD

Write in the blocks provided different idols that sometimes pull our worship away from God alone.



Why is it important to have our full devotion on God alone?

Key Concept: God rightly deserves our full worship, which includes obedience to Him.



HEAD

How do you think the knowledge of God informs the worship of God?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE



Read Psalm 136. Embrace the repetition: "His faithful love endures forever." Pray through this history of God's faithfulness and love, and thank God for the same in your life.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HEART

How can you guard your heart to stay close to Jesus?



HANDS

Where in your life are you disobeying God? Will you take that to Jesus for forgiveness?

