

HOW SHOULD YOU SERVE GOD?

Note to the speaker:

Help audience to see how easy it is for someone to think he is serving God acceptably and yet not be pleasing him at all. Make clear that while it is necessary to live a moral life and to refrain from hurting others, these things of themselves are not all that God requires. Encourage each person to examine his own service to God in the light of Jesus' teachings

THERE ARE MANY OPINIONS AS TO HOW TO SERVE GOD (5 min.)

Opinions vary as to how we should serve God (Comment on what people of local religions do, such as attend church, donate, burn candles. Do not condemn, but show conflicting views)

Many believe they serve God acceptably simply by being kind and not hurting others (*rs* 327)

If someone asked you how to serve God, what would you say?

Is your way of serving God the right way?

Just because a human says a certain way is required by God does not make it right (Pr 14:12)

Apostle John showed need to test source of knowledge (1Jo 4:1; *w88* 4/1 30; *w86* 7/15 19)

Person offering view could himself be misled

Need to keep checking, examining (2Jo 7-9; *w83* 4/1 22-4)

Too serious a matter to be determined by mere opinion of any man

Will help us avoid being deceived

Can help us to see areas in which our service to God might need to be improved

THE BIBLE TELLS US HOW TO SERVE GOD (7 min.)

Bible is God's inspired word, so it is proper to check form of service we are rendering against Bible

John's writings, which concluded Bible canon, helpful

Apostle John alerts us to the fact that those who think they are serving God acceptably may be missing mark of what is required (Joh 8:41-47; *gt* 69)

Even people who believe they are sincere could allow personal interests to cause them to miss point of God's message (Relate Joh 6:1-13, 22-26; *gt* 52-4)

Some drew near to God or to Jesus out of interest in personal needs, but that was not satisfactory

As with Israelites who ate manna but did not persist in faith, some who heard Jesus did not persist in search for right way to serve (Nu 21:4-6; Joh 6:27-29, 48-51, 66)

Some sincere individuals may even be working against God's purposes (Joh 16:2; *pe* 31-2)

We do not want to be like such ones

Need to have a heartfelt desire to serve God according to his requirements

Willingness to learn and accept what he says

Determination to do his will fully

JESUS SET THE EXAMPLE IN HOW TO SERVE GOD (30 min.)

Prime example of how we should serve God is Jesus Christ

Because of the vital role he plays in God's purpose, Jesus could rightly say: "I am the way and the truth and the life" (Joh 14:6; *it-2* 60; *w92* 3/1 18; *g66* 9/8 5-8)

He is "the way" for proper relationship with God and the way to approach Him in prayer (*it-2* 1174)

He is "the truth," the embodiment of truth, the living reality foreshadowed by the Mosaic Law (*it-2* 62, 1131)

He is "the life," for by means of his sacrifice, we can gain eternal life (Ac 3:15; 4:12; *it-2* 61)

Jesus' teachings and example prove that our service to God goes beyond our moral conduct and acts of human kindness (*w80* 8/15 31)

(In developing the following, adapt to needs of congregation. Include practical examples and experiences to make points live and to show that Christians today are serving God acceptably)

Jesus insisted on high standards of morality; all who would serve God acceptably today must do likewise

Do we manifest in our entertainment and speech that we hold firmly to high moral standards? (1Jo 1:6; 3:8; *w86* 7/15 11, 16)

At the same time, Jesus showed that our service to God is acceptable only if our lives reflect his righteousness (*om* 191-2)

He exposed and condemned the practicing of wicked works (Joh 3:19-21; 7:7)

He spoke highly of being free of deceit and urged disciples to become free from slavery to sin (Joh 1:47; 8:31-36; *w88* 5/1 9; *g79* 2/8 27-8)

Being imperfect, we might unintentionally sin, but one serving God does not "practice," or persist in, sin and then rationalize or hide it (1Jo 3:9; *w86* 7/15 16)

Christ promoted genuine love of fellow humans (Mt 22:39; Joh 13:35)

Vital to love other humans if we claim to love and serve God

Must show it in deeds (1Jo 3:15-18; *g86* 10/8 23-4; *w86* 7/15 17-18) (Relate experiences of brothers who showed human kindness to neighbors or others, with good results; *w92* 2/15 18; *w90* 5/1 31; *yb90* 8)

Jesus discouraged pride, competition, selfish practices (Joh 13:12-17)

Those who claim to serve God but who do not imitate Jesus in this must make changes (3Jo 9; *w83* 4/1 28-9)

Those having more money, education, or ability than others, for which they receive praise or attention, must strive to maintain Jesus' outlook as they serve God

In serving God, Jesus directed attention to divine name (Joh 12:28; 17:6, 11; *na* 14-16)

Many religions that claim to serve God are reluctant to use God's name

Some argue over what is most accurate Hebrew pronunciation, and they use that as an excuse to avoid saying the name (*na* 8-11)

Do we include use of divine name in our speech, thus making it evident who we are and whom we serve? (*w80* 2/1 13-16; *na* 7, 11, 28-31)

We never want to hide or be ashamed of name

Christ steadfastly remained neutral regarding worldly affairs (Joh 6:14, 15; 17:14)

Are religions of Christendom doing that? Can they be said to be serving God as Jesus did?

However, many true Christians today experience ridicule, harassment, and persecution because of maintaining neutrality (Joh 16:1, 2; *yb94* 98-9, 207-8; *yb89* 111-25; *w86* 1/1 27; *w80* 4/15 6-15)

While not necessary for us to dwell on possible future troubles that might come our way for neutral stand, it is good to think through our resolve to be as Jesus, no part of world

Jesus emphasized sharing in seeking out worthy persons and proclaiming good news of Kingdom to them (Joh 4:34-36)

Many people who claim to serve God are reluctant to speak about him and his worship (Joh 12:42, 43)

Do we seek opportunities to speak to others because we desire to find sheeplike persons and because we are happy to praise God? (*w90* 9/15 12-17; *w77* 117-19)

Good for each of us to analyze own share in preaching work

Has it improved in quality or quantity?

Do we find any tendency to view it as less important than we formerly did?

Energetically observing God's commands, including the one to tell out the good news, is important way to show that we love God and want to serve him (1Jo 2:3, 4; 5:3; *w86* 7/15 12)

YOU CAN SERVE GOD ACCEPTABLY, BUT WILL YOU? (3 min.)

We *can* serve God acceptably

Humans like us in first century C.E. served God acceptably by observing Jesus' commands and following his example (Joh 14:21; Ac 4:13, 19, 20)

Many around us today have also served God acceptably (See experiences listed under "Life Stories of Jehovah's Witnesses" in *Watch Tower Publications Index*)

Each of us faces final question: *Will* we serve God?

To do so will call for effort, faith, endurance

God wants us to serve him, so he provided assistance through Bible and Christian congregation

Will we accept such assistance and serve him?

John assures us that if we do so, the outcome will be a blessing (1Jo 2:24, 25)

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read. Source material in parentheses need not be mentioned)