

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: Hebrews 11:4 “By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.”

Quote: “Worship is, essentially, the reverse of sin. Sin began (and begins) when we succumb to the temptation, ‘You shall be as gods.’ We make ourselves the center of the universe and dethrone God. By contrast, worship is giving God His true worth; it is acknowledging Him to be the Lord of all things, and the Lord of everything in our lives. He is, indeed, the Most High God!” - Sinclair B. Ferguson

God rejected Cain’s offering of the fruit of the ground and accepted Abel’s offering of the firstborn of his flock. He asked Cain, “Why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted...?”¹ God’s acceptance of Abel’s offering showed that Abel acknowledged and obeyed God’s instruction on sacrifices to atone for his sin. His *obedience demonstrated faith*. Cain acknowledged God, but *not* his own sin. His anger at God, murder of Abel and dishonesty with God showed his heart’s true condition. He practiced a religious ritual without a relationship of obedient, repentant faith.

Isaiah offers a glimpse of worship that focuses upon God’s holiness and our sinfulness, His grace and our guilt, His sovereignty and our submissiveness. “I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, *high and lifted up*, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!’ And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. So I said: ‘Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen *the King*, the LORD of hosts.’ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he

touched my mouth with it, and said: ‘Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.’ Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’ Then I said, ‘*Here am I! Send me.*’”² True worship will prompt reverence, repentance and service!

We worship God in our prayers that *petition Him* as the Source of all good and perfect gifts, and that *praise Him* for Who He is and for what He does on our behalf. Jesus taught, “But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name...”³ The word vain means “to stutter; to prate tediously,” or “talk long and idly.”² This does not mean that we do not go to God often

Portraits with Purpose: Abel’s Worship

in humble, submissive petition as Christ did in Gethsemane. It does, however, mean that whether thinking, speaking or serving, we must demonstrate humble reverence, joyful gratitude and eager obedience to the King of kings. Solomon warned, “Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil. Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few.”⁴

How subtle is the flesh within
That worships worship and not Him—
The great and glorious God of light
Whose grace redeemed me from sin’s night.

Oh, Holy Spirit, guide my thoughts...
That I might worship as I ought,
And weigh⁵ the word-gift that I bring
In homage to the King of kings.

¹ Gen.4:7 ² Isa.6:1-8 ³ Matt.6:6-9 ⁴ Eccl.5:2; Matt.6:7 ⁵ consider carefully