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## It Takes Both Oars

By Teresa Hampton

There's nothing like the calming experience of being out on a lake in a boat. The oars gently helping the boat glide forward across the water. But have you noticed? Something strange happens when only one oar is used, and only on one side of the boat. You go in circles. You get nowhere. It doesn't matter how passionately you stroke the water, or whether you have the right technique in paddling. You still go in circles. It takes both oars, each on a side, working in unison, to propel the boat forward. The same is true in a spiritual sense, when we approach God in worship. Jesus said, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

We can experience the exhilaration of emotion-driven worship, but God requires more than a *spiritual feeling*. If you don't believe that, just ask Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-4). On the flipside, we can have the *form* of true worship, all of the "i's dotted" and "t's crossed," but God requires more. When Jesus entered the synagogue on the Sabbath and encountered a man with a withered hand, the Pharisees questioned whether He could lawfully heal the man's hand. Jesus replied with a few simple questions. "If one of your sheep fell into a pit, would you not lift it out?" "How much more value then is a man than a sheep?" He reasoned, "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath" (Matthew 12:9-13). Jesus correctly identified the Pharisees' problem. They attempted to worship God according to the Law, but had lost the spirit.

When we worship God, let us engage our hearts in adoration, praise, and sober contemplation of Jesus' sacrifice. That part of worship is under our control. And let us do so with true, authorized form. That part is under God's control.

Remember the principle of the oars. Acceptable worship is that which we do in spirit *and* truth. It takes both. One without the other gets us nowhere.

**Today's Verse:** "...I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding" (1 Corinthians 14:15).

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