

WORSHIP THE LORD DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

PSALM 96

1 Isaiah 96:4-5 claims the uniqueness of God.

⚙️ *What are the things in your cultural context that threaten your loyalty to the one true living God and the uniqueness of Jesus Christ?*

⚙️ *Can you think of a Biblical case study of syncretism? What do you now recognize as subtle forms of syncretism in your own cultural context?*

🗨️ *How do you handle the challenge to be loyal to the uniqueness of Christ in the presence of other religions? We are called to bless, love and show compassion to all people (including those of other faiths) but how can we simultaneously love people and be loyal to the truth?*

2 Psalm 96 is a call to worship and a command to witness.

⚙️ *Are churches making a false dichotomy when they think of “doing worship” and “doing mission?”*

❤️ *How can we avoid talking about missions or worship as simply a program of the church?*

🗨️ *Without transforming all our public worship into “seeker-sensitive” mode, how should we strengthen the missional dimension of our church’s public worship (in the way we understand it and the way we do it)?*

3 John Piper begins *Let the Nations be Glad* by saying, “Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man.” He adds, “The goal of missions is the gladness of the peoples in the greatness of God.”

⚙️ *What are your thoughts on the goal of missions?*

4 The pagan world is marked by their fear of the spirit world. They try to placate their gods by putting out offerings of food and drink. They observe superstitious rituals so as not to offend the gods. But (Psalm 96:5) says that the only one we should fear is the Lord, who made the heavens. When the psalmist says (Psalm 96:5), "For all the gods of the people are idols," the Hebrew word for idols is elilim. It means nothings or nonentities and is a play on words with the Hebrew word for the true God, elohim.

 *Do you fear manmade idols, which are nothing, or do you fear the Lord? How do you see yourself fearing God in the midst of idolatry?*


 *How are you training others to fear God in the midst of an idolatrous world? What are signs in the life that you fear idols more than God?*

5 The worship described in this Psalm reminds us of Isaiah 6. You cannot get a glorious vision of God without getting a greater understanding of your own sin and depravity. You immediately sense that God isn't your good buddy in the sky! He is altogether separate from you. You shrink into nothingness in comparison with Him. What is your puny existence of a few short years compared with the One who is eternal? What are your attempts at holy living compared with His infinite purity? If you haven't experienced the awe and wonder of God along with the terror of His right to judge your sin, then you haven't really felt His mercy either.


 *Since getting a deeper view of God's greatness is foundational for worship, how can we grow in this understanding?*

6 Read Psalm 96:10-13.

PRAYER REQUESTS

 *What do you feel like when people talk about the judgment of God? Does the future judgment bring you fear or hope?*

 *Should Christians have any anxiety about the judgment?*

 *What phrases in the passage points us to how God wants believers to feel about judgment?*
