



FAMILY STUDY

The Mayflower

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"The Mayflower"

What is Worship Worth to You?

In the days before Europe populated the New World, many of the simple things we now take for granted were unavailable in daily life. One of these was the freedom to worship and pray according to our beliefs. In England, the church was a function of the government, and the only legal worship option was to worship according to the will of the state church.

For a small group of devoted Christians who called themselves "Separatists," this was unsatisfactory. The Separatists knew that their secret meetings would endanger them. For if the state discovered their activities, they could have faced prison or other punishments. And so, aware of a new, unpopulated land across the sea, the Separatists chose to set out on a hard and dangerous journey to a land where they could freely worship and obey the Scriptures without the heavy hand of a sometimes corrupt government upon them.

Along the way, the Separatists faced challenges which included arrests, a leaky ship (the Speedwell), scarce food, and the breaking of the main support beam on the Mayflower; damage which could have brought the entire ship down had it not been for the provision of God and some quick thinking. They never gave up until they reached their goal.

Sadly, many people now misunderstand the intentions of those who fought to keep the church free from government rule, instead insisting that there is no room for Jesus in the government. We are moving closer once again to a state-run church, but this time, the recognition and worship of Christ will be outlawed.

For this reason, it is important that we not take for granted the freedom that we have to worship today--a freedom that is not available in many parts of the world. As you study the Scriptures listed on this page with your family, we encourage you to have thankful hearts for the many blessings which God has poured out on you. Just as the Separatists gave thanks to God for His protection and provisions for them, let us have thankful hearts for the countless provisions and protections of God, and let us not take for granted the freedom that others have fought to give us.

Worship In Spite of Hardship

Like the Pilgrims, there are many people in the world today who face great hardships so that they can worship God. Many examples of this are found in the Scriptures as well, and the decision made by these people to worship in spite of hardship makes them heroic. Below are just a few examples.

Job: Job 1:1-22	The Apostles: Acts 5:17-41	Others: Hebrews 11:32-12:2
Daniel: Daniel 1:1-20 and 6:3-24	Stephen: Acts 6:8-7:60	
Daniel's Friends: Daniel 3:1-28	Paul: 1 Timothy chapter 4	

Persevering in the Faith

As was true of the Pilgrims and of many men and women from the Scriptures, we should persevere in our faith and not give up. In the face of obstacles, inconvenience, adversity and persecution, we must not tire of living for God and making Him our top priority.

Joshua 23:8	Galatians 5:1	James 5:11
Job 11:14-15	Galatians 6:9	1 Peter 1:13
Job 17:9	Philippians 1:27	1 Peter 2:19
Matthew 10:22	Hebrews 12:1	1 Peter 5:9
John 15:9	Hebrews 12:7	2 Peter 3:17
1 Corinthians 15:58	James 1:12	Revelation 3:11

Thankfulness in Difficult Times

As we endeavor to live for God through thick and thin, it is important that we maintain thankful hearts toward God. This may be easy when things are going well, but as we all know, things don't always go well! This reality does not change the fact that we are told by the Scriptures to give thanks to God.

Job 1:21	1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
Philippians 4:4-9	James 1:2-4
Philippians 4:11-13	

Psalm 100

Upon being safely delivered to the New World at Plymouth on December 11th, 1620, the Pilgrims knelt in prayer and gave thanks to God by singing Psalm 100. We encourage you to do the same right now. Examine the words of this Psalm carefully and consider how God has provided for you in your life. Indeed, His faithfulness continues through all generations!

What is GOD Worth to You?

Aside from the examples given in this Family Study, there are many examples of people who go to great effort or who face great danger so that they can worship God. Compare those examples with the things that stop US from getting to church or worshipping God. A little bad weather? A football or soccer game? Didn't get a full eight hours of sleep?

What IS worship worth to you? What is GOD worth? If so many people have faced punishment, danger and death to worship the Creator of the Universe and the Savior from sin, why are we stopped by such small details?

The Pilgrims left their homes and embarked on a dangerous journey across the world, to a land which held no promises of being able to meet their needs. The only promises they held onto were those that came from God. Now, thanks in part to their bold undertaking, you are free to worship God simply by getting in a car and driving a few blocks on a Sunday morning. So, what IS God worth to you?