
Understanding Worship Part 10

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How Important is Reverence?

Are you Reverent, is this Relevant?

Psalm 89:5-18; Proverbs 1:7, 29: 3:5-9; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 5:21; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Peter 2:13-14; 3:15a

VERY! Reverence is an aspect of adoration, it is the true response that leads to worship to all that come before God. It is recognizing and honoring the authority of God with awe and fear because He is God, and He is more awesome than anything or anyone-- period. It also means respecting people, not just because of their position and authority, but as brothers and sisters in the Lord, regardless of their personality, and knowing He loves them too!

Hatred, disdain, disloyalty, and contempt are the opposites. With these attitudes, we will flee from God's love and precepts, ignore His call, and just do our own thing. We will have no fear of God; we will do as we please, thus placing us on a path of chaos, strife, and destruction. We will have no desire to serve Him, or do the right thing, outside of obligation. We will miss out on true intimacy with Him, destroy relationships, hinder growth in ourselves, others, our church, and miss out on the process of maturity, as well as the wonder of His plan.

Proverbs tells us that *the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom*. This type of fear is not being scared, or fearful of what will happen, nor is it distrust or terror of God. Rather, it is reverence and awe that fuels our worship and faith. It is the understanding of the wonder and majesty of our incredible God, who transcends time and space, and who is bigger than the entire universe He created, yet, He personally knows and loves us with deeper and more love than we could ever comprehend. In the Old Testament, the stipulation put to the Jews was that they follow their God and stick to the covenant. The covenant we have now is grace; the stipulation is that we accept it by faith. The growth of our fear (awe) is the response to His majesty. Reverence is taking the incredible knowledge of His majesty, and applying it to our lives, so we will walk with confidence in our Lord, and operate with respect to Him, and to the others whom He knows and loves.

Reverence leads to worship because we can acknowledge whom God is, and respond in the only way we can, to surrender our will to Him and worship Him! As His created being, saved by His grace from a destiny we created and deserved, we have an obligation to give Him all of our honor, all our praise, and all our adoration. This is the reason for the primary purpose of our saved lives--to give God the glory that is rightly due Him. Why must we? Because He is the Holy, Sovereign, the Creator (Duet. 7:21; Neh. 4:14; Psalm 48:1; 86:10; 95:3; 97:2; 145:3; Dan. 9:4; 1 Cor. 13:12; Heb. 12:28,29)!

The Bible plainly tells us that we are to show reverence to God and to the things that represent His person and presence (Heb. 12:28,29). Most Christians will say, yes, to the first part, to fear and respect God, but do they do so with one another? What about the

things and stuff that represent God, such as stained glass, icons, pews, and the church lobby? Many Christians today do not believe that church facilities need respect. Yet, God's Word tells us, "*Observe my Sabbaths and have reverence for my sanctuary. I am the LORD*" (Lev. 19:30, 26:2). This passage is referring to a tent where God's sanctuary was set up, not the great temple of Solomon that was built later. So, even the most commonplace location is considered very special to God, and thus is also deserving of our reverence.

Reverence is a very important character regarding how we relate to both God and others. *Reverence* and *respect* have similar meanings. However, *reverence* has more of the meaning of worship, and pertains to God. We used to call our ministers, "Reverend" as a means of respect. However, we do not worship them, only God. Ministers are God's representatives, and to a degree, all Christians are included in the doctrine of the "priesthood of the Believer." But, most people no longer call their pastors, *reverend*, no longer do children respect their parents. Often they even call them by their first names. We mock our church leaders; ignore their advice, while our churches run down into dysfunction and irrelevancy. We need to be respectful to all people, whether we agree with them or not. We need to recapture the respect of parents and authorities, something that has eroded, and caused so much rebellion, creating strife, dysfunction, and chaos in our society (Rom. 12:10; 1 Peter 5:5).

When we grow in maturity in the Christian walk, we will naturally show more reverence and respect for God's presence. This mindset must also transfer to how we deal with His creation, with people, and with what represents Him.

We do not wake up one day with Character. When we do have it, others will see it, may even point to it, or be disciplined from it.

Questions

1. How would you define Reverence? Do you fear God?
2. What part do reverence and respect play in our relationships with church leaders, the elderly, and to one another? Do you think God desires that we give special care or reverence to the church sanctuary and facilities? What about traditions?
3. How does Contempt counteract Reverence? What is the cost to others (God, family, friends, neighbors, church, workplace, etc.) when you are a disloyal person?
4. What happens to your relationship with God, with others, and with the opportunities God gives you, when you are disrespectful?
5. When have you been filled with Reverence the most? Do people have to earn your respect? If so, why? Is that Biblical?
6. In what situation did you fail to be respectful to someone when you should have been?

7. What issue is in your life that would improve with more Reverence?
8. Think through the steps you need to take to put Reverence into action in a specific instance. What can you do to develop a deeper sense of reverence to God? How would this respect and honor of God affect your relationships?

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