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## Understanding Worship Part 7

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### Worship is to be Real

#### Psalm 105:1-5; 138:1-4; John 4:23-24

Real, sincere, God—exalting adoration must be the focus of worship in our daily walk with Him. It is also an imperative and covenantal call to have genuine, heartfelt, God—exalting reverence in the worship service. It must never lift up the leaders or be a performance to entertain either Christians or the public. The point I am seeking to make for you is that it is God who is the audience, and we are the people who are to praise and glorify Him!

Worship is real when we fully realize that it has only one true agenda, and that is...you should get this now...*God!* As He is our reason and purpose for life and all that we do, so our worship, as Scripture proclaims, must be also. It is not to be how we benefit from it, but how we promote God and His Kingdom. It is our response to His Word that affects our character, maturity, and growth in Him. We need to know Him before we can truly honor Him more deeply. As we get to know His holiness, character, and percepts, we seek to know, learn, and apply them to our life. This encourages and promotes our ability, and supports our drive to worship. In a church, the essence of the service must propagate to the attendees to worship, as in the reading of the Word, the preaching of the Word, the liturgies, confessions, music, and so forth. All of these instruct us about His nature so we can know and worship Him more. God speaks to us, and then we speak back in our adorations, and in our behaviors toward one another (Psalm 105:3; 1 Cor. 6:20).

We are still to make our services friendly and innovative; there is nothing wrong with plays and contemporary themes as long as the service glorifies Christ and does not become merely a medium to entertain the people. God really does not care what instruments we use or how we structure the service as long as it is biblical, relevant to Him, and glorifying to Him. He seeks our heart, not our talents and abilities; our heart yearning after Him is the praise He seeks! Remember, the congregation is the performer; the worship team is the leader; and God is the audience! Don't mix these up! Seek to be your best and also bring your best. This is where all of the church growth and spiritual growth principles we do at *Into Thy Word* come to their focal point—the reason for our discipleship and maturity. All that we do in the church—from faith, fellowship, and outreach to the physical place where we meet—comes to this point and reason: TO WORSHIP CHRIST! (Psalm 138:1-4)!

We need to be aware that it is human nature to listen to our desires rather than to God. We live in a culture that tells us to be “me—centered,” yet God wants us to draw close to Him. Therefore, we have to get ourselves lined up with His Way and not ours. It is about our yielding to Him, not seeking to turn our church into a club; if we do this, we end up “lording it” over Him with our trends and faulty ideas! We are to worship in the way God has revealed to us; what He commands, not the way we prefer to see it. Worship is not about popularity, what a survey has revealed, or the latest inclinations,

but it is our adoration and gratitude to Christ—and to Him alone! Worship is about aligning ourselves to Christ according to His precepts, not our preferences. If we do not, we are drawing near to idols and self-expressions, sweeping ourselves into idolatry. This is what the second commandment is all about (Ex. 20:4-6; 1 John 5:20-21).

Why is focusing on people's desires and needs for worship idolatry? Because, they become the centrality of the worship rather than God. Idolatry is wrong, because it is substituting the One True God for what is feeble—what we want! In the book of Exodus, right after God and Moses gave them this commandment, the Israelites blasphemed God and immediately broke the first two commandments by worshiping God as they saw fit, forgetting how God wanted them to do it. We have to see the sober nature of how we are called to come before Him. Again, the bottom line is that we are to be focused on God. As leaders in worship, we are not to be centered on or even concerned with the worshiper. (Ex. 20:18; 32:15; John 4:23-24)!

### Questions to Ponder

#### Read Psalm 105:1-5; 138:1-4

1. How would you define Idolatry?
2. How have you seen Idolatry in church worship services?
3. Why is focusing on people's desires and needs for worship idolatry? What can be done to prevent this?
4. How have you practiced this Psalm precept, *praise you, O LORD, with all my heart?*
5. How can this Psalm precept affect you: *let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice?* How do you rejoice? How should you?
6. Consider that God has extreme love and faithfulness to you? How should you respond?
7. What happens when you worship God as you saw fit? Does this cause you to forget how God loves you?
8. What happens to your worship both private and at church when you do not have a fear of God?
9. How would you describe real, sincere, God—exalting adoration? What can you do to focus your worship so it affects your daily walk with Christ?
10. How does your worship service give Christ glory? Where does it stay? What can you do?
11. Why must your worship of God never lift up the leaders or be a performance to

entertain either Christians or the public? What happens when we do?

12. How have you benefit from good worship? How can you promote God and His Kingdom through worship?
13. How is worship also a response to His Word?
14. What happens when you listen to your desires rather than to God?
15. What can be done to make your services friendly and innovative at the same time not compromise what Worship is?
16. Can contemporary themes at church services glorify Christ? How so? When does it not?
17. Have you ever looked at worship as you are the performer and the worship team is the leader; and God is the audience? How so? What happens when we do not do this or skew it?
18. How does worship help you to learn, grow, so you can pass on to others what you have learned?
19. What needs to take place in your heart to embrace submission to His Lordship in your life? How does keeping His precepts and Word help?
20. What can you do to better align yourselves to Christ according to His precepts, not your preferences? What impact will this have on you and others around you?

**Principle Passages on Worship: Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 50; Psalm 65:13; 79:13; 95:6-7; 100; 150; Matthew 4:10; 2:2,11; 14:33; John 4:23; 9:35-38; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 4**

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