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## Understanding Worship Part 9

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### What Worship is Not

#### **Matthew 4:10; 9:35-38; Colossians 2:9; Revelation 4**

What worship is *not* is just a routine or rhetoric (meaningless expressions) we do to fill air time on Sundays between 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., or something we do by compulsion or by habit. Worship is not about the set up, the instruments, or the traditions. It is not liturgies or confessions, although these are means to worship Him. Worship is not to be mundane or ordinary, although we can worship Him in the mundane and ordinary aspects of life. Our God is not ordinary or mundane; He is Magnificent and Omnipresent. Thus, we need to make sure our worship does not become monotonous or it will become meaningless. We must see ourselves in His presence whether we are in a splendid cathedral, on a beach, or in a basement, hiding from those who would persecute us.

Worship is not for unbelievers, although they are, of course, welcomed. Worship is not evangelism nor is it to be a platform from which to invite people to know Him. Worship is primarily for Believers who have been paid for by Christ, to come together to express praise for Him. It is about Christians proclaiming Christ as Lord. Thus, it must be taken seriously and passionately and never compromised or watered down. We must realize that the gospel and our Lord offend, and people who are not in Him will not understand it (John 6:61-67). That does not mean we patronize to their ways and do silly things like remove our cross or neuter our message or take the essence away, afraid we will hurt somebody's feelings. Yes, we will offend! Praise God in that! We are to evangelize with our attitudes and activities, but never water down or subjugate our worship of Him to please those who do not know or understand Him. When we do this, we miss the point and do our church a disservice, our community a disservice (because they are not getting an accurate picture of worship; they need to see sincerity, not pretentiousness) and most of all, we are not glorifying our Lord (Lev. 10:1-7; 1 Sam. 15:22; Psalm 1; 131; 2:11; Matt. 15:8-9)!

We tend to think that when we come to church, we should feel emotionally moved or be seeking what we can get out of it. Worship does not depend upon where we are or if we are pleased or moved. Yes, worship should be pleasing and we should be moved, but not in the way a lot of us Christians today think. We tend to think we are the ones to be pleased and moved, but this is the opposite of true worship. He is to be pleased and we should be moved when we are pleasing Him. It is not about feeling good or being caught up in the experience or being affirmed or feeling good about self. It is purely giving Christ the glory. It is about bringing self into His presence with awe and reverence, joy and exuberance! Do you see the difference? The exuberance, energy, and excitement we are to feel is not what we receive, it is what we give...what we give to Him...and then we should feel good about that too (Psalm 111:1; Isaiah 29:13; Matt. 15:6; 1 Cor. 11:20; Col. 2:23).

How do we get our worship right? Basically, we need to understand what worship

is, and then we can go before our Lord in prayer, repent of our misguided ways of doing worship, and seek His ways. Then, we can start to do worship with sincerity, joy, and eagerness. Worship involves our whole being. We must engage our intellect so we can know Him and His precepts, then we are to “feel” Him and partake in His presence. These are exercises that we do not just get up and do; we slowly learn over the entirety of our earthy lives. We partake, and in the struggle and practice, we get to know Him and experience Him more. He will transform us; we have to receive His transforming power and grow it as we do with Faith and Fruit. As this takes place, we become more of His and less in us. We become mature in the Spirit and in the Truth, and our lives will touch others more profoundly and deeper. This also takes a commitment to continually practice walking in His presence. You can do it; the only one stopping you is you. Take the step and walk in His ways. Be a Christian who really and truly has a will that has been transferred to Him and a mind that is renewed in Him, and then tell Him so with gladness and joy. This is a process that will last a lifetime, so be in prayer and seek Christ, for He first sought you!

### **Questions to Ponder**

#### **Read Colossians 2:9-12, 20-23**

1. What would you tell Jesus with gladness and joy?
2. Music is important, but do you know it is only a way to worship, not the way? How can music and your ideas of worship be distracting to a genuine, pleasing worship attitude of Christ?
3. Why is worship *not* to be just a routine or rhetoric or filler for air time on Sundays?
4. How can worship become something we do by compulsion or by habit and not by heart?
5. Why would some Christians think that worship is all about the instruments, or the traditions? What can be said or done to change their minds so it is lined up to Christ more?
6. How can your liturgies or confessions get in the way of worshiping Christ?
7. How can you better worship Christ through your liturgies or confessions?
8. What are some of your favorite means to worship Him?
9. Why is worship not to be mundane or ordinary? How does it get that way? What can you do?
10. What can your church do to make sure your worship does not become monotonous or it will become meaningless?

11. Have you ever seen yourself in His presence? How can you more?
12. Why is worship not for unbelievers (of course they are to be welcomed)?
13. Why is worship not evangelism?
14. Why must your worship of our Lord be taken seriously and passionately?
15. Why must a church never compromised or watered down its worship?
16. Do you have a better understanding of what worship is now? How so?
17. What do you need to repent of any of your misguided ways of doing worship?
18. What does it mean to put Him first in all that you do in life? How do you maneuver your Church to be under His rule and kingship, rather than your committees and trends?
19. How can your worship experience help you be better at “doing” church and being a Christian community, so that it is more meaningful, relevant, and important?
20. How will you worship Christ with more sincerity, joy, and eagerness?

**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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