

TRUE WORSHIP

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Worship is the word worthship or worthscope. It is not prayer or praise, but these two elements can lead to worship.

A P Gibbs made the distinction in a simple illustration. A man falls into a fast flowing river and calls for help. That is prayer. Another man jumps in and rescues him. The one rescued thanks the man for saving him. That is praise. The saviour takes the redeemed back to his house, warms him by a glowing fire, gives him fresh clothes and a meal and looks after him. The redeemed is so very grateful to the man for all his kindness and appreciates his worth as a saviour and friend. He is humbled by the kindness shown to him and quietly reverences his saviour.

Prayer, praise and worship are three different things.

God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4. 24). Note the word must.

Worship is, therefore, spiritual. It is not physical, it is not clapping, it is not dancing, it is not jumping up and down, it is not raising hands or anything physical.

Some claim that as David danced before the Lord this is acceptable in today's worship. But everything we do is before the Lord and that does not mean it has the Lord's approval. David's dancing was vile, offensive and indecent exposure. See the article on David.

In any event, dancing is physical and the worship of the Lord is not physical, but spiritual.

In Acts 17.24 we are told that God is not worshipped with men's hands. Worship is not physical. God is not worshipped with the physical body.

The devil tries all means to infiltrate and he does this in worship as well as in prayer and praise. He suggests that we worship God our own way, but worship is not to be our way or how we feel and it is not self-impression. Worship is obeying what God says. He has set out the means by which we are to worship Him. We are to pray, praise and worship Gods way. We must do what the Bible says. When we preach or minister the Word it must be the Bible way. And the Bible states that we do not preach self but Christ and Him crucified. (1 Corinthians 1.23). We are not to preach self (2 Corinthians 4. 5).

The purpose of worship is to honour God and please Him. It is to be in humility (James 4. 23ff.) and God resists the proud (James 4. 6), the show off and the entertainer. Some Christians are not full of the Spirit, but full of self.

God the Father seeks true worshippers (John 4. 23ff.) Note the word true. Worship is from the heart not the hands, feet or body. Worship is not physical, it is spiritual.

And yet people want to worship God their way. Consider Jeremiah 10. 13,' O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself ; it is not in man to direct his own steps.'

Worship only centres on the Lord. Worship is for God alone. It does not centre on the priest, vicar, pastor, elder, the choir, the rock band, the dancers, any individual or member of the congregation. The expression 'leader of worship' is not a Scriptural one. Worship is setting your mind on things above and not the things on the earth (Colossian 3.2). It is not setting your mind on the speaker, the band, singers, dancers and certainly not concentrating on anyone who is talking about themselves. The true worshipper wants, or should want to hear about the Lord Jesus, not John Smith or Emma Thomas!

Worship is spiritual. It must not be secular. It must not be of the world. Love not the world neither the things of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in Him (1 John 2.15). Pop music,

nightclubbing and living with someone outside of marriage are examples of the world which we are not to love or emulate.

Worshipping God in spirit and in truth means with reverence and quietness. In quietness and confidence is our strength says the Scripture. So many meetings are noisy and boisterous. God is not deaf. He is not heard in the earthquake or in the din of a noisy exuberant meeting but in a still small voice.

Consider Psalm 89. 7, 'God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints and to had in reverence of all them that are about Him.' The fear is the respect and dignity afforded to God. The assembly of saints refers to those who are met together for worship. And there must be reverence.

When it comes to the Lord's Supper there is a warning in 1 Corinthians 11. 27ff that we are to eat the bread and drink the cup worthily rightly discerning the Lord's body, which was broken for us, and drinking the wine which symbolically speaks of His Blood that was shed.

1 Peter 1. 15ff. states that worship must be holy and this word holy means without any defilement or unworthiness. Pop music is often explicitly sexual and dancing is often sexual as well and that is defilement. People like to gossip and believe that fellowship is coffee, tea and cake and poking into other peoples lives to find out all about them. Fellowship is sharing the things of Christ and nothing else (1 John 1. 3 etc.)

Worship is not entertainment but people want to do their own thing and they offer God that in worship. They do not consider what God wants... holiness, reverence, quietness, humility and obedience to His Word.

People think that to get people into church they must offer them entertainment. But, in so doing, the actors, the band, the singers and the dancers get the attention and praise. God does not.

Prayer, praise and worship must be worthy of the Lord. Consider Matthew 10.37 and the words of the Lord, 'He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me'.

Put this into modern day perspective. " I going to church today because they have this new band. ' or " I am going to church today because they have that dancing group of lovely young women.'

'He that loveth the rock band or the dancing troupe more than Me is not worthy of Me.'

Whether it is prayer, praise or worship, it is not to be regulated by any individual, group or organisation, conference or synod. If the priest, vicar, minister, pastor or church leaders says this is the way we are going to do it and it is not in accordance with the Scriptures it is wrong.

We must worship in truth.

There is another warning in Scripture, " There is a way that seems right to man but the end is the way of death '(Proverbs 14.12). In modern day worship, there are ways which men and woman think are right, but they are not. Paul spoke of the Athenians ignorance in worship (Acts 17.23) and there is a lot of that in modern day so-called Christian worship.

Worship is not a wide spectrum to cover all ideas. "Enter ye in at the straight gate for narrow is the way that leads to life" (Matthew 7. 14)

It is extraordinary that people do not ask what God wants in prayer, praise and worship. It does not matter what He wants. They are going to do their own thing. The main cause for divisions within the church is because men and women have not adhered to the scriptures and made many variances. God is not the author of this confusion (1 Corinthians 14.33) but people want to depart from Scripture and set up their own cults and doctrines.

Baptism is by immersion of believers when they confess faith in Christ. That is clearly scriptural (Romans 6,

for example) but many denominations disagree. The bread and wine at the Lord's Supper are only symbols and not the actual flesh and blood of Christ. Homosexuality is condemned in the Bible and yet some Christians disagree, and so on.

People will not accept God's Word as the final authority They will pray, praise and worship their way. It does not matter what the Word of God says.

It does.

The parallel may be in the offerings of Cain and Abel in worship. Abel brought the best of his flock as an offering and this was by faith. Cain did not. Romans 14.23 say that whatsoever is not of faith is sin. If our worship is not of faith and not of the Spirit or of the Truth then it is sin.

The Lord Jesus warned of this in Mark 7.7. 'And in vain do they worship Me, teaching, as doctrine, the commandments of men.'

And yet we hear of pastors who say that we express ourselves our way in worship such as in dance, in music, in joyful physical movement and so o

Do they not know what the Scripture teach?

In some Methodist churches now they have Multiple worship. Everyone meets together for the first ten minutes and then they have a choice :

they can go into another room and have a discussion group

they can go into another room and have an arts and crafts session

they can go into another room for coffee and read the Sunday papers

they can stay in church for the sermon.

How secular! How unBiblicial. And you can read about the football and the latest sex scandal in the Sunday papers while on church premises!

This is of the world and not of the Spirit!

God seeketh true worshippers to worship Him. Are you one of them?

The Christian is to be obedient to God's Word. As Graham Scroogie said, "There are no superior or better Christians... but there are more obedient ones".

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