



Bible Discussion – April 29, 2020

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How Does the Bible Say We Should Worship?

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Nearly every church includes some time of praise and worship. But depending on what sort of church you go to; it will likely look *very* different. Hands raised and concert lights. Church organ and hymnals. Shouting and dancing. What exactly is worship? Is there a right and wrong way to do it? What does the Bible say about how we should praise God?

Many people love singing in church. Some churches are known and defined by the quality of their singing or the vibrancy of their praise and worship. Have you ever stopped to consider what the Bible says about music and worship?

It is a part of every church service I have ever been in, but the question is why? Well, the Bible has a lot to say about this topic so let's jump into it.

What Is Worship?

Just about every church I have ever visited begins their service with a time called praise and worship. The order of service probably flows out of Psalm 100:4 which says "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise." With that being said let's define these terms.

Praise is acknowledging and thanking God for the things he has done in your life. We offer praise to God as thanksgiving, remembering the wonderful works he has done. The word *praise* in the dictionary means to express warm approval or admiration. When we praise God, we are expressing our admiration to him. Anyone can do this. You don't have to be a Christian to offer praise. You can see something God has done and praise him for it.

Worship is something different. Though they are often grouped together, worship goes beyond praise. Worship happens when you apply great worth to something or someone. In essence, we worship God not just for the things he has done but because of who he is. Worship is a spiritual act that happens when your spirit connects with God's Spirit. Notice what Jesus says in John 4:24:

"God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

Because of this requirement, worship is reserved for those who are in fellowship with God. Only those who are born-again believers who belong to the body of Christ can truly worship God.

Real worship is not about the songs that you are singing, it is about your spirit connecting. When you understand who God is, when you see his wonder and greatness, when you recognize the awesomeness of his splendor and the beauty of his holiness, then worship will occur. Let's Go to the Word

Let's dig a little deeper and consider what the Bible says about worship. Since God is the object of worship, he has a lot to say about it. Here are a few verses:

Psalm 96:9 - Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.

John 4:23 - Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.

Hebrews 12:28 - Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.

1 Chronicle 16:23-31 - Sing to the Lord, all the earth; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples. For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy are in his dwelling place. Ascribe to the Lord, all you families of nations, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him. Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness. Tremble before him, all the earth! The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved. Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations, "The Lord reigns!"

Is There a Right or a Wrong Way to Worship?

If you had any doubt before I think it's clear, worship is a part of who we are as Christians. It is one of the ways we enter into fellowship and communion with God. Understanding that leads to a question: how? What does the Bible say about how to worship?

There are different ways you can offer up worship to God. I don't know what type of church you go to, but some of these expressions of worship are not present in every church. However, just because your church may not express worship in these ways, they are all found in the Bible. You have to decide how you will worship God.

What I want you to remember is we have already identified the most important aspect of worship. Regardless of the expression of worship you choose, you must worship God in spirit and in truth, which means from your heart and with all sincerity.

Kneeling or Bowing Down

Psalm 95:6 – “Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.”

Lifted Hands

Psalm 134:2 – “Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the Lord.”

Psalm 63:4 – “I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.

1 Timothy 2:8 – “Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing.”

Dancing

Psalm 149:3-4 – “Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with timbrel and harp. For the Lord takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with victory.”

Clapping Hands

Psalm 47:1 – “Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy.”

Shouting

Isaiah 12:6 – “Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.”

Revelation 19:6-7 – “Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: ‘Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.’”

Singing

Ephesians 5:19 – “Speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord.”

Colossians 3:16 – “Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.”

Psalm 95:1 – “Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.”

Silence

Habakkuk 2:20 – “The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.”

As you can see, worship is most often something that is done with expression and emotion coming from within you and being poured out to God. In other words, worship is not something you keep bottled up inside of you. It is something that bursts out of your heart, expressing your love and admiration to our great and loving God.

Worship rises up from within your spirit, comes out of your mouth and goes to God’s ears. I know silence can be part of it but it should not be the only part. Worship is designed to be outward and vocal. So, open your mouth and let it flow out. I promise you it will be pleasing to God’s ears.

Does the Type of Music Matter?

One of the things that happens in churches is that sometimes we associate praise with fast songs and worship with the slower songs. It doesn’t have to be that way. I think this happens because we tend to think of worship as being a little more reflective. However, you can worship God with fast music, slow music, and all different styles of music. Remember it’s about your spirit connecting with God’s spirit and there are many different types of songs that can cause that to happen.

I will caution you though, music is a powerful tool and you need to be careful of the type of music you listen to. Here is the power of music. How is it that you could go years without hearing a song and the moment you hear it you can recite all of the words? The rhythm and especially lyrics to songs stick with you. So be mindful of what you listen to.

I would never tell someone that listening to secular music is sinful or not permissible. I would remind you of 1 Corinthians 10:23, though it may be permissible it may not be beneficial for you. Philippians 4:8 is a good guideline as to what we should be listening to:

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” Are There Forms of Worship That Don’t Involve Music?

I want to point out three forms of worship that don’t involve music:

1. Sacrifice/Surrender – “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship” (Romans 12:1-2).

When you offer yourself to God as a vessel to be used for his glory, this is an act of worship.

2. Giving – “Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7).

When you give, it is a form of worship that gives acknowledgement and thanksgiving to God

3. Working – “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Colossians 3:17).

Your vocation, your ministry service, your family time, your career are all forms of worship. In everything you do God can be glorified through it, so then it becomes a form of worship.

Going Forward

As we have looked at what the Bible says about worship and music I want to remind you of the most important thing in worship, your heart. Regardless of the form or expression you use to worship, let it all flow out of a heart that is genuine. If you do this, then whether you lift your hands, sing, shout or dance you will be honoring God and will be the type of worshipper the Father is looking for.