

SOME “WHY NOTS” OF WORSHIP

The worship of Almighty God is both an exalted privilege and an awesome responsibility. Failure to grasp this truth plunged the likes of Cain (Gen. 4), Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10), and King Saul (1 Sam. 13) into terrible calamities. Our Lord chastised His contemporaries because they worshiped according to the teachings of men, rather than those of God (Mat. 15:9). Worshipers of God **must** worship Him “in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). Some Christians do not enjoy worshiping God because they mistake its purpose.

Worship is not to please ourselves, but God. The Old Testament characters mentioned above pleased themselves rather than God. So it was with the vain worshipers Jesus rebuked. Since then all sorts of worship practices have been adopted, including the counting of beads, Mariolatry, employing instruments of music, and in a few cases (believe it or not), performances by “exotic” dancers. These and a thousand other things are done because men **like** them, regardless of what God’s Word says. Regrettably, even some members of the Lord’s church now care more for what pleases them than what pleases God. However, if we are not going to worship as God decrees, we worship in vain (1 Sam. 15:22; Mat. 15:9).

Worship is not to arouse, but to express, spirituality. *Worship* means “to bow down,” “to esteem,” “to pay reverence,” and such like. All of these terms relate to man’s expression of love, devotion, and willingness to serve and glorify God. However, men often are sorely disappointed unless there is something entertaining, “different,” or sensually “exciting” in their religious meetings. Now when one truly expresses his love and adoration for God as God teaches, his spirit will be stimulated and his love for God

will be intensified. However, these are the natural **by-products** that flow from true worship; they are not the **purpose** of worship.

Worship is not to receive, but to give. We should come to our worship assemblies ready to “offer up a sacrifice of praise” (Heb. 13:15). In the very avenues of worship ordained by God, we come together to **give** our praise, devotion, and money because we love Him. Those who drone, “I don’t get anything out of worship,” reveal their own selfishness; they come only to get rather than to give. True worshipers always **receive** many blessings, but again, these are wonderful by-products of **giving** ourselves in praise and service to God.

In worship, we are not the audience; God is. Failure to understand this turns those in the pews into hypercritics of preachers and prayer and song leaders. God observes the hearer in the pew as much as the preacher in the pulpit. He cares as much about the condition of the hearts of those who are singing and praying in the pew as He cares about the one up front leading.

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