

Genuine Worship

by Shane Idleman

Genuine worship stems from a heartfelt relationship with God, requiring forgiveness, a focus on holiness, and a lifestyle that reflects His light.

Topics: "Genuine Worship", "Spiritual Character"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the importance of genuine worship, highlighting that it is a byproduct of true faith and should be reflected in our lifestyle. He stresses the impact of what we watch and listen to on our worship, stating that knowing Christ personally leads to powerful preaching. Idleman also discusses the crucial role of pastors' spiritual character in delivering impactful sermons and the necessity for genuine worship to begin with a desire for holiness and presence of God.

Transcript

As mentioned last week, most who attend church are not truly worshipping God--they are simply going through the motions. Those who have truly experienced God worship Him...it's a byproduct of genuine faith.

Our lifestyle should reflect a heart of worship. This is not optional, it's vital. We cannot live like hell all week and expect heaven to fall during worship. We cannot fill our mind with darkness all week and expect the light of Christ to shine during worship. We cannot worship ourselves, and things, all week and expect to turn our affections toward God on one designated day.

What we watch and listen to affects the heart--it's impossible to separate the two. If we would make it our goal to know Christ more personally, we would preach Christ more powerfully. For example, if a Christian fills their mind with the world all week and expects to worship God on Sunday, they will be gravely mistaken. "The gratification of the flesh and the fullness of the Spirit do not go hand in hand" (R.A. Torrey).

In regard to pastors and preachers, E.M. Bounds states, "The sermon cannot rise in its life-giving forces above the man. Dead men give out dead sermons, and dead sermons kill." Bounds continues, "Everything depends on the spiritual character of the preacher." Who he is all week is who he will be when he steps to the pulpit--the passion and conviction of his message is only as strong as the passion and conviction within him. The same is true for you: "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34). What goes in ultimately comes out. Genuine worship must begin with a desire for holiness...a desire to be in the presence of God.

Oswald Chambers offers this insight, "You have to wrestle against the things that prevent you from getting to God." Distractions can prevent us from worshipping God. Contrary to what many think, a devotional life centered around worship actually helps with the utilization of time. Worship aids in discipline, patience, peace, and joy.

What distracts you? Here is a clue: what zaps your time, energy, and resources? Time, like money, is multiplied when we give first to God. Social life, business life, and personal life all benefit from making worship a priority. If we are too busy to worship God--we are too busy!

Genuine worship also involves, and generates, heartfelt forgiveness and reconciliation. In Matthew 5:24, Jesus encourages us to fix broken relationships before worshipping. Why is this a key ingredient to genuine worship? In short, critical, divisive people who do not forgive or release bitterness, anger, and hurt, never experience freedom, happiness, or true worship. Worship is often hindered as the result of past pain and resentment. It silences the heart. The act of true worship from a grateful heart is impossible when these conditions exist.

Ephesians 4:31-32 reminds us, "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." Simply stated, bitterness, negativity, and anger hinder genuine worship. Take the time now and repent of these destructive attitudes if they exist. Call or write those who have offended you; asking for forgiveness (if warranted) or restoration, especially spouses (or x-spouses).

1 Peter 3:7 also reveals why worship is often stifled and why many prayers go unanswered, "Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers." We can't yell at our family all week and participate in heartfelt worship on Sunday. Repentance must take place first. Hebrews 12:15 encourages "that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many." Forgiveness, restoration, repentance are pivotal steps toward genuine worship.

Finally, many fail to worship God because they don't truly know Him--they have never embraced His truth. Jesus said, "For this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice" (John 18:37). Sadly, many go through the motions and believe that they are worshipping God and in right relationship with Him. But in Matthew 7:23 Jesus says the following to those who "thought" they knew Him: "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness."

Several years ago, I applied these verses to my life: "But Lord, I attend church and pray from time-to-time, and I'm basically a good person." The answer was the same, "I don't know you." That realization transformed my life. Knowing "about" someone is not the same as knowing someone personally. Matthew 7:19-21 also confirms this, "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them. Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."

These Scriptures are not promoting a works-based religion, they're demonstrating the importance of having a genuine relationship with Christ--a relationship that produces godly fruit. Genuine faith is reflected in worship toward the one true and living God. Does your life reflect genuine worship? Arrogance and a hard heart prevent us from turning to God. "The proud, self-justifying, self-reliant, self-seeking self has to come simply as a lost, undone sinner, whose only hope is a justifying Savior" (Norman Grubb).

Take time now and ask God to help you remove those things that hinder your relationship with Him. It is in the living and giving of genuine worship that we are transformed. Don't run from it, run to it!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/shane-idleman/genuine-worship/>

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