

Most Who Attend Church Are Not Worshipping God

by Shane Idleman

Most people who attend church are not worshipping God, but going through the motions, and it's time to prioritize genuine worship and spiritual growth.

Scripture: Psalm 29:2, Luke 19:10, John 1:29, John 4:24, 1 Timothy 2:8, Hebrews 12:28, 1 Peter 2:24

Topics: "Genuine Worship", "Spiritual Revival"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the importance of genuine worship, which involves both attitude and acts focused on reverence to God. He highlights the need for worship to come from a sincere heart rather than mere actions or rituals. Idleman points out that the lack of genuine worship may stem from misplaced priorities, distractions, and a failure to engage with God on a deeper level. He challenges listeners to examine their hearts and prioritize worship as a vital aspect of their spiritual lives.

Transcript

Most who attend church are not worshipping God, they are simply going through the motions. But what is genuine worship? Worship is a combination of attitude and acts focused on reverence to God. The Hebrew meaning denotes a "bowing down, or prostrating oneself"; it is a posture reflecting homage and reverence toward the one true and living God. If there is a problem with worship, the problem isn't with God, the problem is with us. Thousands will hear the Word this weekend, but not experience God. People will arrive to church hungry, but leave starving. The very thing they need is the very thing they're avoiding: The power and the presence of the Spirit. (Watch the sermon on worship here: <http://vimeo.com/86412057>.)

Worship serves as the thermometer of the heart by measuring our spiritual condition...are we hot, cold, or lukewarm? Granted, worship isn't necessarily measured by actions such as jumping up and down; it's measured by the condition (temperature) of our heart--is it rejoicing for joy and submitting to God? Sadly, many confuse false worship with genuine worship. According to numerous theological resources, false worship is when an entity, person, or object is worshiped instead of God--our passion for "something" outweighs our passion for Him; it draws us away. This is one of my concerns with many worship leaders and groups today (and Christian leaders)...it's all about us. We say, "I must increase, and He must decrease."

Why is there a lack of genuine worship? The reason may not only be in the pew, but on the stage as well. Much depends on the prayer life of the worship leader and the pastor. Prayer is the first sign of a spiritually healthy church and a spiritually healthy leader. We don't need more marketing plans, demographic studies, or giving campaigns; we need men and women filled with the Spirit of God. Worship shouldn't come from pop-psychology and the latest fads; it must come from the prayer closet where God prepares the messenger before he or she prepares the people to worship.

Most don't have idols on the shelf because they are parked in the garage. We don't pay homage to a statue in the living room because we are memorized by a 50" box affectionately known as "the entertainment center." We don't sacrifice things on the altar, but we do sacrifice our time (and time with of our children) on the altar of misguided priorities. Of course cars, televisions, and the Internet are not evil, they are neutral; but it is our love for them that tilts the scale away from God. We find hours a day for entertainment, but have little time to worship. Do we honestly believe that this misapplication of priorities doesn't affect our spirituality? Think again.

False worship also includes inappropriate and improper acts supposedly directed toward God. Many simply go through the motions at church. They attend as if they are doing God a favor. The heart is not engaged and the soul is not lifted up...they are bored, or they are focused on entertainment.

Here is a test to measure the spiritual condition of the heart: Do we want the worship time to hurry and finish? Are we dreading another song as our eyes glance at the clock? Do we come late to miss the boring worship? Are we failing to draw closer to Christ as the result of worship? If so, I would seriously encourage heart examination. I am not suggesting that if the worship seems dead it's our fault...not all of the worship taking place is heartfelt and Spirit-led. There is dry formalism and dead ritualism taking place, and there is a lot of noise but not changed hearts. Many sing "about" God but they have never truly experienced Him--head knowledge without heart knowledge. He is the Creator of heaven and earth. He is not a cosmic force, universal love, or a doting grandfather, He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. We must worship Him. He created, redeemed, and saved us. One of the countless hymns states it well, "O' The Blood: washes me; shed for me...what a sacrifice that saved my life, yes the blood, it is my victory!"

Luke 19:10 records, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." John 1:29 passionately declares, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." And 1 Peter 2:24 reminds us that "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross." These facts demand worship. Many go ballistic when a favorite team wins, but appear handcuffed and bored in church. How sad.

Worship must be a priority. This is not optional, it's vital. "I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands..." (1 Timothy 2:8). We cannot live like hell all week and expect heaven to fall during worship. We cannot fill our mind with dark entertainment 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. Worship is a lifestyle! Worship and holiness are interwoven. Holiness begins in the heart: "The Holy Spirit is first of all a moral flame. It is not an accident of language that He is called the Holy Spirit, for whatever else the word holy may mean it does undoubtedly carry with it the idea of moral purity" (A.W. Tozer).

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