

Seven Scriptures to Improve Worship

by Shane Idleman

True worship demands a humble heart, full surrender, emotional engagement, and a recognition of God's holiness and sovereignty.

Scripture: Psalm 29:2, Psalm 59:16, Psalm 63:3, Psalm 95:6, Psalm 100:4, Romans 3:23, Romans 12:1

Topics: "True Worship", "Personal Holiness"

Description

Shane Idleman preaches on the importance of genuine worship, emphasizing the need for humility, full surrender, emotional engagement, and holiness in our approach to God. He highlights that true worship involves acknowledging God as the Creator, fearing Him with reverence, and seeking holiness by letting go of sins that hinder our relationship with Him. Idleman stresses the significance of knowing Jesus personally in order to worship Him authentically, as His sacrifice on the cross offers hope and redemption to all who believe.

Transcript

1. Psalms 100:4, "Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!" Before worshiping God we're instructed to first look within. Is jealousy, envy, or bitterness influencing my attitude? Do I have a critical spirit? Am I holding on to unforgiveness? These emotions prevent genuine, heart-felt worship. Humility is a vital first step toward seeking God. He guides the humble and teaches them His way (cf. Psalm 25:9).

2. Romans 12:1, "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." Full surrender provides fertile ground for worship. One man recently said, "I had become someone I never thought I would become. I was in complete darkness...I would sleep in my clothes for as long as I could. I began wishing that I would die. The emotional pain was unbearable." How many have truly experienced Jesus' words in John 7:38, "Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water?" Many have head knowledge, but they've never truly experienced the presence of God...once full surrender takes place, everything changes. This man continued after he finally turned his life completely over to Christ, "I only wish that everyone could feel the love that I experienced. I'm able to forgive others and genuinely love them. I feel like I have been re-born...elusive peace has now been found." When we present ourselves in full surrender to God, we are transformed.

3. Psalms 59:16, "But I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress." Many have been taught that emotions and the Word of God are enemies, but that is not the case. Worship demands emotional engagement. It's possible to be "Bible taught," but not "Spirit led"--straight as a gun barrel theologically, but just as empty. The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:6). Don't get me wrong, theological and expositional teachings are essential to Christian living, but how often are theology students encouraged to fast and pray as well as study? How often are they taught brokenness and repentance in addition to translating the Greek language? We can sometimes be more concerned about a Master's Degree than a degree from the Master.

4. Psalms 63:3, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork." God 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. As one of the countless hymns declares so well, "O' The Blood: washes me; shed for me...what a sacrifice that saved my life, yes the blood, it is my victory!"

5. Psalms 29:2, "Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness." J.C. Ryle noted that "holiness will cost a man his sins. He must be willing to give up every habit and practice which is wrong in God's sight...There must be no separate truce with any special sin which he loves." Ryle continues, "Our sins are often as dear to us as our children: we love them, hug them, cleave to them, and delight in them. To part with them is as hard as cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye. But it must be done. The parting must come." Holiness and worship come with a price--death to self and crucifixion to the world. To be mightily filled with the Holy Spirit and to worship God, we must seek holiness. Besetting sin hinders worship.

6. Psalms 95:6, "Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!" Fearing the Lord and worship go hand-in-hand. Fearing the Lord isn't the type of fear one would have toward an abusive father, but rather, it's the type of fear that involves respect and reverence for God. For example, I fear jumping off a 100-story building because I respect gravity. Fear, in this sense, is good and God-given, it protects us. 2 Chronicles 19:9 reminds us that we should "act in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and with a loyal heart." Psalm 25:14 declares, "The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him."

The present condition of the church in America leads one to wonder if this lack of fearing the Lord is contributing to her spiritually dead condition and lack of worship.

7. Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Only those who truly know Him can truly worship Him. No matter what you've done or have been through, you can accept or return to Jesus and become as new. Acknowledge that you are a sinner in need of a Savior (Romans 3:23), and acknowledge that Jesus died for your sins (John 3:16) and you will be saved. Christ's sacrifice on the cross cleanses, redeems, releases, crushes, and triumphs over sin. It offers hope and peace to a dying world.

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