

WORSHIP AND SERVICE

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About the author...

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"Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (Matthew 4:10)

"Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name." (Deuteronomy 6:13)

With these two passages it is easy to see that God has wanted throughout time for man to worship/fear as well as to serve Him. The Hebrew word fear (03372 *ary yare' yaw-ray'*) is defined as follows;

"a primitive root; TWOT-907,908; v AV-fear 188, afraid 78, terrible 23, terrible thing 6, dreadful 5, reverence 3, fearful 2, terrible acts 1, misc 8; 314 1) to fear, revere, be afraid. 1a) (Qal) 1a1) to fear, be afraid 1a2) to stand in awe of, be awed 1a3) to fear, reverence, honour, respect 1b) (Niphal) 1b1) to be fearful, be dreadful, be feared 1b2) to cause astonishment and awe, be held in awe 1b3) to inspire reverence or godly fear or awe 1c) (Piel) to make afraid, terrify 2) (TWOT) to shoot, pour." (*Online Bible Hebrew Lexicon*).

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible defines it as

to fear; mor. To revere; caus. to frighten:—affright, be (make) afraid, dread (-ful), (put in) fear (-ful -fully, -ing), be had in reverence (-end), X see, terrible (act, -ness, thing)." In Matthew the corresponding word that Christ used was worship; "4352 *proskunew* *proskuneo pros-koo-neh'-o* from 4314 and a probable derivative of 2965 (meaning to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand); TDNT-6:758,948; v AV-worship 60; 60 1) to kiss the hand to (towards) one, in token of reverence 2) among the Orientals, esp. the Persians, to fall upon the knees and touch the ground with the forehead as an expression of profound reverence 3) in the NT by kneeling or prostration to do homage (to one) or make obeisance, whether in order to express respect or to make supplication 3a) used of homage shown to men and beings of superior rank 3a1) to the Jewish high priests 3a2) to God 3a3) to Christ 3a4) to heavenly beings 3a5) to demons . (*Online Bible Greek Lexicon*)

Strong's defines the same word as follows;

4352. proskunew proskuneo *pros-koo-neh'-o* ; from 4314 and a probable derivative of 2965 (meaning to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand); to fawn or crouch to, i.e. (literally or figuratively) prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to, adore):--worship.

What is obviously inherent in both words, fear and worship, is the idea of one having an attitude of reverence, awe, and homage that is due to the almighty God. At the same time it is also evidenced in both passages that one that professes to have this reverential awe is also expected to serve the one towards whom the awe is directed. Of course as both passages indicate the direction of the reverence and the awe is heavenward, directed toward the Almighty Creator of this wondrous universe of which we as individuals are only a small part of.

If that was all that was contained in the concept of worship then we probably wouldn't have any trouble defining today what worship is. There would be none, I think, that would argue that we shouldn't have reverential awe toward the God of Heaven at all times regardless of what we may be doing. In having this reverential awe we will then remember that our God is a consuming fire, *"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: {29} For our God is a consuming fire"* (Hebrews 12:28-29). We will remember that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, *"For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. {31} It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"* (Hebrews 10:30-31). We will also be reminded through maintaining our reverence and awe toward the almighty that should we sin wilfully there remain no more sacrifice for sin, *"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, {27} But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries"* (Hebrews 10:26-27).

One who has this proper reverence would also recognize the need to **work** out their salvation, *"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"* (Philippians 2:12).

There is without a doubt a distinct lack of absence on the part of many, both within and without the church, that reverential awe that one should have toward God which is the cause of the moral decline of our society as well as a leading away from God's word by many of those within our church. When we air national television programs that promote the idea that not only does everybody lie, but that lying is necessary and that this would be a terrible world to live in if we did not lie to one another (see Revelation 21:8 to see God's stance on this subject), when laws are developed to protect such sins as abortion and homosexuality, when a nation's prime leader can be caught lying and breaking the law because of infidelity to his marriage and a nation says "no big deal," then it is indeed evident that such a society has lost any reverential awe toward the Almighty that it may have collectively once had.

By the same token, when God's people profane the church, identify it as just one of many "denominations," bring the mundane into the worship, and turn worship into the mundane then it becomes evident as well that they have forgotten the reverence, awe, and homage due to the Most High.

It can easily be seen that were reverential awe all that was contained in the concept of worship

there would be no problem. Such, however, is not the case and this is where we begin to have a problem with certain brethren today that argue that everything one does is an act of worship. They confuse the life of service that is a result of ones reverential awe with the specific acts of obeisance that God has commanded as part of that life of service, such acts to be performed with the specific intent of bowing the head to, kissing the hand, and prostrating oneself to and toward the Almighty.

Burt Jones writes in an article entitled "If Worship Were Sin": "Worship, true worship, must be prompted by the right motive, actuated by the highest purpose, and with a deep desire to meet heaven's approval through obedience to His gospel. Worship is an attitude of mind as well as a physical act (John 4:23-24)" (7). That is precisely what Jesus was teaching the woman at the well when He said that one must worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). He was teaching that one must worship with proper reverential awe directed toward God and in the manner or in accordance with those acts with which God has specified that man is to direct toward Him as worship. To worship in truth must mean to worship in accordance with His word (John 17:17). If then God has specified in His word specific acts to be directed toward Him as acts of worship (and He has), then there is no sense in which it can be logically argued that "everything that we do that is not sin is worship." In fact, the opposite would be true, anything offered as an act of worship that is not specified by God as such would be vain worship. *"Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"* (Mark 7:7).

In 1998 Buster Dobbs wrote an article entitled "Is All Of Life Worship" in which he presented the followings syllogism;

1. All sacrifice offered to God is worship.
2. Christians are to continually offer their bodies as a sacrifice to God.
3. Therefore there is a sense in which worship is continual... (Hatcher 4).

He then followed with the next statements;

Such devoted service to God is clearly worship. It involves *all* that we do. Whether we earn a living for our family, or seeking lawful entertainment and recreation, it is to be done in the name of the Lord. As holy, royal priests we make an offering to the father (sic) through the son (sic) in everything we do... (Ibid).

One year prior he stated;

The holy kiss is not worship. It is a greeting. Paul says so. It edifies no one. It is not something due a reigning God. It is not clearly taught in the New Testament as worship. It is alright for saints to greet one another with a holy kiss if they desire to do so, but it is not an item of worship. (Dobbs "O Holy..." 4)

Later in the same article he states; "Foot washing is in order when it helps and is benefits our fellow creature but it is not worship because, like the holy kiss, it is directed to humans and not deity." (Ibid).

Then in January 1999 he makes two statements in an article entitled "Worship;"

"The New Covenant authorizes five specific acts of worship on the prescribed assembly day." Then; "When a Christian offers a song of praise to God, whether in assembly or in a private setting, it must be in the prescribed way (without instrumental accompaniment) just as inner chamber prayer must be offered according to Bible instructions." (Dobbs "Worship" 3-4).

Then one month later he once more switches tracks and tells us;

The Holy Spirit, through the pen of Paul, defines spiritual service. In view of the mercies of God (John 3:16), he (sic) tells us to offer our bodies a living sacrifice, which is (now, he (sic) is about to tell us what the living sacrifice is...of what it consists...of its nature) which is spiritual service. The living sacrifice is service. Sacrifice connotes worship. The presenting our very souls to God as a sacrifice of worship. That is what it is! Paul said so. (Dobbs "Holy and Unholy," 4)

In the space of two years this man has told the reading audience that "everything we do is not worship, everything we do is worship, everything we do is not worship, everything we do is worship. His readers should be plenty confused at this point as to just where he really stands on the subject. If everything we do is worship then why is the "Holy Kiss" and "foot washing" not worship? If everything we do is worship then why has God "authorized five specific acts of worship on the prescribed assembly day?" If everything we do (that is not sin) is worship then why did God limit the worship of the assembly to only five acts?

Brother Dobbs is not the only one to take this position. Jess Hall Jr. wrote a book entitled *Worship A Living Sacrifice* in which he defends this same position. On pages 13-14 he states:

The mistake is concentrating on each separate act of the Christian's life instead of concentrating on the Christian's entire life.

The act of worship is not the offering of each act, but the offering of the entire life to God as a living sacrifice.

The Christian live his or her entire life to the glory of God, having laid it (and continuing to lay it) on His altar in the ultimate act of worship—the giving of self.

It is unfortunate the we now have conservative brethren siding with the liberals in their cry that everything we do is worship. Brethren, the Word of God never teaches us that everything we do, or that our entire life, is an act of **worship** to the Heavenly Father. What it does teach is that we are to sacrifice self as we live our lives in **service** to Christ our Lord and God our Father.

The argument that everything we do is worship seems to stem from abuse of Romans 12:1-2;

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. {2} And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The argument is made that sacrifice is always worship therefore everything we do is worship. First I would be careful with the argument that sacrifice **IS** worship. Sacrifice **WAS** authorized in the Mosaic law as worship, burnt offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, (Leviticus 1-7). Nowhere however has the New Testament suggested that sacrifice was worship. Christ was our final sacrifice offered for our sins upon the cross,

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; {19} But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: {20} Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, {21} Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. (1 Peter 1:18-21)....And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour (Ephesians 5:2)... For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: {25} Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; {26} For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. {27} And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: {28} So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation (Hebrews 9:24-28)... But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; (Hebrews 10:12),

and the sacrifice that we are now to make, a living sacrifice is that which is our reasonable service. It is the service that we logically should offer to the one whose grace was extended toward man through His Son's sacrifice upon the cross.

Our reasonable service is to make ourselves a living sacrifice that we may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. This is our reasonable service because no longer do we serve sin (Romans 6:17-23) and now are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people (or a people of God's own possession) that we should show forth the praises of Him that has called us out of the darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

How are we to do this? How do we present ourselves as living sacrifices? It is through our submission to Him, through our obedience to His word. It occurs when we seek first the kingdom of Heaven and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33). It occurs when we love him sufficiently to keep His commandments and thus be His friend (John 14:15; 15:14). It occurs when we visit the sick, feed the hungry, give the thirsty drink, tend the afflicted, visit those that are in prison (Matthew 25:31-46). It occurs when we let our light shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in Heaven, (Matthew 5:14-16). It occurs when we visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and keep ourselves unspotted from the world (James 1:27). It occurs when we restore a brother that has been overtaken in a fault and bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:1-2). It

occurs when we provoke one another to love and good works, when we do not forsake the assembling of ourselves together and exhort one another, (Hebrews 10:24-25). In other words as we dedicate ourselves to God, commit our lives to His service, do those things which He has commanded, then we present ourselves as a living sacrifice to Him. This is not an act of worship, rather it is a life of service (which is only reasonable) of which the acts of worship that God has authorized is but one part.

Let each of us consider our lives and make sure that we are offering to God in our lives that reasonable service that presents ourselves to Him as a living sacrifice. Everything we do is not worship, but everything we do we should do in the proper conduct that befits the servants of the King.

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