

The Big Picture of Worship

Philippians 2:7-8

7) But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8) And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

The How of Worship!

We know or perhaps should know how God feels about worship. It's difficult to comprehend any doctrinal precept of greater importance to God than worshipping Him. However, if word usage holds any significance as far as biblical importance may be concerned, there is one more statute or scriptural principle to consider that evidently defines our attitude and approach to God through our worship. The impetus of our worship, and sincerity thereof, is measured in proportion to our inward submission unto God, which is outwardly manifested by our deeds of willingness to pleasingly serve Him.

The Breakdown:

The words "worship" or worshippers and worshipping appear 270 times in the Old Testament. Seventy times in the New. This is certainly strongly emblematic regarding how God views the issue. Yet the word "servant" or serve, and serving appears 1005 times in the O.T. and 299 in the N.T. This abundant usage of these particular terms in contrast to the word "worship" should alert the Bible student towards a deeper investigation of the spiritual meaning for us today. Time and space obviously limit us to simply a passing glance here; subsequently, we will attempt to deposit just a few soundbites in this overview today.

What It All Means:

Both the Hebrew and Greek define the word "servant" to mean "slave." Paul, on several occasions, opens his epistles with the introductory remarks of "Paul a slave" of Jesus Christ called to be a saint or called to be an apostle. Paul understood that his first duty was to humble himself by posturing as a slave for Christ.

This attitude and approach reveal that Paul understood any calling in God, or subsequent position that would be influential, and perhaps even successful among men, depended upon his humility of spirit and lowliness of mind. The affluent church of Philippi would get a stern reminder in the letter bearing their name. In chapter 2:3-5, we read:

3) *Let nothing be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

4) Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

5) Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Empty Conceit:

“Vainglory” or empty pride reflects the sin of selfishness which is a gateway sin that fuels all other sin and is strongly condemned by Paul. Lust, pride, adultery, fornication, anger, jealousy, etc., find their roots in the sin of selfishness. The humanist’s worldviews and regard for self-life destroy the apostolic concepts and purity of worship.

Instead of Paul teaching self-esteem as we hear it described today, he submitted a godly definition to us in verse 3 “...let each esteem other better than themselves.” Instead of self-esteem for building blocks of the self-centered postmodernist’s emotional character, we are taught a “new creature” definition. The promotion of others’ visions, burdens, dreams, works before and above our own. A godly “neighborly-esteem” rather than “self-esteem.” Christ revealed to us this precept whenever He taught that the greatest of all commandments hung on the law of servitude—serving God—serving man. Loving God is serving one another in that same spirit of love.

Ethics 101:

This dimension of ethical Christian servitude articulates authentic worship. They are worshippers who humbly serve Christ in lowliness of mind or with a slave’s mindset to serve the Master by promoting the cause of others before their ambitions in order to mirror the life and mind of Christ. “Let this mind be in you...” v. 5.

Eternal Servitude:

There is no end to our serving God. Even in eternity, wherewith we have received our crowns and white robes of righteousness, we still must serve all the more. The attitude that “we have now arrived in heaven and serving is no longer our disposition” is nowhere in view. Our worship then, as it is now, is referred to in the slave terminology of serving Him.

Rev. 7:15

15) Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

What's Mine Is Thine:

In order to initially break the stronghold of selfishness which is innately part of our sin nature, we begin by teaching our children to share. The natural man clings to the self-life. “That is mine” is the selfishness of a child. We initiate the sharing mindset first with a child, with the end goal being to graduate from simply sharing to the place of ultimate giving. With Christ as our example, we give our all to the kingdom.

For God so loved the world He gave, He did not simply share Himself, but rather He gave of Himself. He gave His all. God delivers us from the sinful perversion of selfishness and creates within us the heart and mind of a love slave.

The Gateway:

If selfishness is the gateway to all sin, then selflessness is the gateway to all righteousness. Denying ourselves while we serve another's cause is the climatical height and spiritual pinnacle of true worship.

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