



360 DISCUSSION 09.04.16

WHAT IS WORSHIP?



Nothing shapes who we are more than our worship. We all worship, and our worship determines who we are and what we are becoming. James K. A. Smith has written a book entitled, "You Are What You Love." The subtitle hits us like a ton of bricks, "And You Don't Love What You Think You Love."

He reminds us that most of our worship takes place on a subconscious level. While we may kid ourselves about what is most important to us, most of our friends, if they chose to be brutally honest, could tell us in a couple of seconds.

I am around a lot of guys who, with very little enthusiasm, will say that they love Christ, but they really come to life when the discussion turns to their favorite sports franchise.

I am around a lot of pastors who would much more enthusiastically say they love Christ, but it still seems as if they love the mechanics of church life, their mission strategy or even their theological system even more.

Sometimes our worship is tied up in our hobbies or the pursuit of a particular identity (whether it is being a good mom, a great dad, a together couple or the best in our field).

These are not bad things, some of them are even highly commendable things. But they are still things. When we take good things and turn them into ultimate things we are idolators.

The goal of Christian worship, then, is to allow God to recapture our hearts and minds and transform us into the people he created and redeemed us to be. The people we would want to be, if we were only smart enough to know who we really wanted to be.

A BASIC DEFINITION OF WORSHIP

We can define worship in general as, “a deep heart response to the things we value most that dramatically shapes all that we are, think, say and do.”

1. What are some of the things we tend to worship other than God?
2. How are these things adversely shaping who we are and the direction of our lives?

TWO IMPORTANT PASSAGES ON WORSHIP

READ JOHN 4:19-24

1. What does this passage add to our understanding of authentic worship?
2. What do you think it means to worship the Father in the Spirit?
3. What do you think it means to worship the Father in truth?
4. What happens when we emphasize the Spirit to the neglect of the Word?
5. What happens when we emphasize the Word to the neglect of the Spirit?

READ ROMANS 12:1-2

1. What does this passage add to our understanding of authentic worship?
2. What do you think it means to offer yourself as a living sacrifice?
3. Why must we have a renewed mind in order to give ourselves fully and completely to God?
4. What role does knowing and doing God's will play in our worship?

AN EXPANDED DEFINITION OF WORSHIP

If we build on the thoughts of the two critical passages we've just considered, we can define Biblical worship as “a deep heart response to God as he has revealed himself in Scripture and through the person and work of Christ, which encompasses all we are, think, say and do; flows from a heart and mind that are being renewed by the Spirit of God through the Word of God and results in growing delight in knowing and doing God's will.”

1. What are some of the ways this broader definition of worship is different from the ways we normally think about worship?
2. What are some of the elements in this definition that are most often neglected in our approach to worship?
3. What are some things you can do in the coming week to allow God to recapture your heart and transform you into the person he created and redeemed you to be?