

Let's Get to the HEART of WORSHIP

All Jesus really wants is your love. Have you experienced it?

On a recent morning God reminded me of the need for simplicity in worship when my youngest child, Christa, came into our bedroom early in the morning, as she often does. She stood by our bed and waited to see if her mom or dad would stir. As soon as she saw us look at her through sleepy, half-opened eyes, she leaned over and gave us a big kiss. Then she hopped into bed with us and just snuggled for a few minutes. Soon, she jumped up and wanted breakfast. That brief time with us was so nice—while it lasted!

Through that incident, the Lord showed me how complicated my worship had become. I was convicted about how long it had been since I simply blew Him a kiss and said, "Jesus, I love You." Just as Christa's first desire in the morning was to kiss her parents and spend time snuggling with them, so our desire in worship should be simply this: kissing God's face and spending time with Him.

Permit me to explain. When my children were younger, every night before they went to sleep we prayed together. At the end of our prayer time I would say, "Let's give Jesus a big kiss." They blew Jesus a big kiss and told Him that they loved Him. What did this teach them? It taught them that worship, to be true worship, must be an expression of love.

Blowing Jesus a kiss became very big in my family. This expression of worship eventually became one of the things I loved doing in all the worship services I led. I just wanted people to understand how simple worship can be and how

complicated we have made it.

During the last 17 years, I've been on a journey to learn all I can about what true worship really is. The years have been filled with teaching, studying and listening to others teach about worship. I have attended conferences that revolved around learning about worship and what it means.

I discovered that there are many wonderful "schools of worship" all over the world. People everywhere have a genuine personal hunger to learn all they can about worship. Worship leaders and theologians have made every attempt to describe what it is and how to do it right. Volumes of books have been written on nothing other than worship.

By all means, go to the conferences. Read the books. Take volumes of notes. Listen to tapes and CDs. But please, never lose the simplicity of just falling in love with Jesus and simply blowing Him a big kiss. It sounds too simple—almost foolish—but do it anyway.

Come on; I dare you to put this article down and do something that may feel foolish at first. Put your hand on your mouth and just do it: Blow Him a big kiss. Then tell Jesus how much you love Him.

Wasn't that simple? I truly believe that a simple act of blowing a kiss to Jesus, done with all your heart, can be as effective as standing for hours in a service singing your favorite worship songs.

You Are Created to Worship

The reason is, worship is not something you do; worship is who God created you to be. God is after you—not your worship songs.

God doesn't need your songs. He wants you to be the song. He wants you to be the worship. Worship is a lifestyle rather than a time in a service on Sunday or Wednesday.

I have passed hundreds of church marquees inviting those who pass by to "Come and worship." People come, but all they really do is hear a message. They come, but they never worship. I have seen many signs that read, "Morning Worship—11 a.m. Evening Worship—6 p.m."

So what's the problem? Why are so many people still experiencing such a hunger within for the presence of God?

The worship services themselves are not the problem. The problem is a mind-set. Too many Christians act on the belief that worship happens at a certain place—a building called church—and during a certain time—on Sundays.

But worship isn't a service, just as church isn't a building. Worship is a lifestyle. Church is a person. Say aloud to yourself: "I am the church. My life is the worship service."

Worship must be more than merely a time-filler between the collection of the offering and the sermon. There is nothing wrong with an order of service for our Sunday services. But what if God wants to interrupt our plan with His plan? What if He supercedes our order of service with a move of His Spirit? Would He have our permission to do it?

In some services the remarks before the offering are longer than the period of time allowed for people to express their hearts to God. Sadly, when hearts are being touched the most, we often stop the worship to say, "And now if you will please look in your bulletin for some very important announcements." Have we become so blind to the Spirit of God that we think a good message can replace the presence of God in worship?

I hear people all over the body of Christ crying out, "There must be more to God ... right?"

And it's not just others who are asking for more. I too am questioning: "This can't be it, can it? There must be more to God, right?"

The answer is a wholehearted, Yes! There is more for us to experience in worshiping God. Yes, there is more than what we have already tasted! It is my deepest desire to see God's people become worship rather than have a time of worship.

One night Christa taught me just how simple worship can be. After we prayed together at bedtime, we both blew Jesus a big kiss. As I turned to walk out of her room, Christa said, "Daddy, blow me a kiss." So I did.

Then she did something that has left a mark on my life. As I blew her a kiss, she threw her hand into the air as if to catch it. Then she kissed my imaginary kiss and ate it, enabling my kiss—my love—to go down deep into her heart.

I don't know about you, but right now my heart is pounding with conviction: "Lord Jesus, bring back the simplicity of

worship into my own heart. I've learned to complicate what can be so simple."

I wonder how many mornings have gone by when He just stood there staring at us, waiting for any kind of movement. God patiently comes to us and waits. God anticipates our awakening so that we will tell Him, "I love You." God waits for us to kiss His face.

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