

How to Get Lost in Worship

Shortly after I was healed from a life-threatening disease and baptized in the Holy Spirit, I was asked to minister in a Pentecostal church. There I was introduced to a dimension of worship that I had never experienced before.

Sitting on the platform in my studied dignity as a former Methodist professor, observing the worship service that was so different from that to which I was accustomed, I was fascinated by all that was going on around me. Though their worship expression seemed disorderly—almost irreverent—in comparison with Methodist tradition, I could tell these people deeply loved the Lord and were expressing their love to Him.

I looked down from my seat on the platform and saw a pretty red-headed woman standing with her hands raised and her eyes closed worshiping God. She was perhaps 35 years old. Her face glowed as if it reflected a thousand-watt lightbulb. Tears were flowing down her cheeks, and I heard her say, “I love You, Jesus.”

As I watched her, it seemed to me that her face got brighter and brighter. I couldn’t hear everything she was saying from where I was, and I was curious. So I walked down off the platform and stood in front of her. She ignored me.

I leaned over and said, “You and the Lord are having a good time, aren’t you, honey?” Still she didn’t pay attention to me. I was insulted. I thought, *Doesn’t she know I am the guest evangelist?*

I heard her say, “You are the lily of the valley. I love You. You are the bright and morning star.” I recognized that she was quoting love phrases from the Song of Solomon. She continued, “Thank You for being my husband, my friend.” Somewhat awed, I went back to the platform.

But I could not take my eyes off her. I knew she was experiencing the presence of God in a way that I never had. I watched her awhile then walked back down to stand by her.

She did not know I was there. So I returned to the platform a second time. Still watching her, I thought, *Maybe she doesn't hear well.*

I walked down a third time and stood behind her so I could speak into her ear. Again I said, "You and the Lord are having a good time together, aren't you?"

What I really wanted to say was, "What is going on? I don't understand what it is you are enjoying." I thought she could explain it to me, but still she did not acknowledge my presence.

This time when I returned to the platform, I felt someone punch me. I recognized that it was the Lord trying to get my attention. He spoke to me so sweetly: "Fuchsia, you can have that if you want it." I didn't even know what "that" was, but I assumed He was referring to my fascination with the young worshiper.

I went to my room after the service and got on my knees. I said to the Lord, "All right, what is it? You said I could have the thing that made that girl so 'lost' she didn't know I was there. What is that?"

The Lord answered, "I seek a people who worship Me in spirit and truth."

I asked, "Is that worship? Then what have I been doing all these years?"

"Without this revelation of worship," He replied gently, "you have simply been having religious services."

"How can I have that?" I cried out.

Revelation of Worship

Then the Lord asked me three simple questions. First He inquired, "What would you do if you had just heard the gates of heaven click behind your heels, and you knew you were through with the devil forever?"

I responded, "I would shout, 'Glory!'"

He said, "Shout it." And I did.

I told Him that I would cry, "Hallelujah!"

He said, "Do it." And I did.

Then He asked me what I would do if I looked up and saw Jesus for the first time.

I said that I would bow at His feet, kiss His nail-scarred hands and wash His feet with my tears.

He said, "Do it."

I meditated on the efficacious, vicarious, substitutionary and mediatorial work of Calvary, and suddenly I experienced a fresh glimpse of the Lamb of God. I began to bow before the Lamb who was slain, but He asked me to look up into His face. "When you see Me face to face," He asked, "what will you tell Me?"

When I heard those words, it was as if a dam within my soul broke, allowing torrents of praise to flood my lips. I told Him how wonderful He was. I recited the attributes of God I had learned in Bible college. When I finished, He asked me if these were the only adjectives I had for Him.

With a sense of awe I responded simply, "You are wonderful."

A picture came to my mind, and I saw the face of Jesus before me as if it were framed. Then the frame faded. As I looked

into His face, I told Him how much I loved Him. I had never done that in my life. I told Him how precious He was to me. I went on and on, trying to express my love for Him with my limited vocabulary.

When I was answering His three questions, it seemed as if just a few moments had passed. But it had actually been an hour and a half since I first knelt there. For the first time in my life I had been in the presence of God in such a way that I had lost all consciousness of time. I had begun to experience true worship—my heart responding to the love of God and expressing adoration and love to Him. All my years of Bible training, study and ministry had not evoked the response of worship from my heart that a few moments of divine revelation in His presence had.

As a sincere Methodist professor and pastor, I had thought I understood what worship of an omnipotent God involved, and I regarded our worship services as important expressions of true reverence for God—the creature worshiping his Creator. Though we did honor God sincerely from our hearts, I now understand that we had defined worship very narrowly according to the tradition of our church fathers.

My renewed study of the Scriptures concerning worship has helped me understand the divine destiny each of us has to become worshipers. Much of what is written in my book *Worship Him* (Creation House) is what I have learned as I have allowed my Teacher, the blessed Holy Spirit, to open my spiritual eyes to the purpose of God for our personal fulfillment—to become worshipers of God in spirit and in truth.

When I searched the Scriptures with this purpose in mind, many passages I had read before and thought I understood doctrinally began to live in my heart in a new way. Since that pivotal worship experience in my room, I have enjoyed God's manifest presence in praise and worship many times. I have also experienced the glory of His presence while studying His

precious Word, observing communion and fellowshiping with other believers.

Worshipping God has many facets of reality, as we shall discuss, that make it a central theme of the Scriptures. Understanding true spiritual worship is imperative for all believers who sincerely want to know God more intimately.

Worship Defined

As we learn about different aspects of worship, our definition of *worship* will become more comprehensive. But we can begin with a simple working definition from Webster's Dictionary: "showing honor or reverence to a divine being or supernatural power; to regard with great, even extravagant respect, honor or devotion; to take part in an act of worship."

The Old English spelling of the word is *worthship*, which aptly conveys the idea that the one to whom we show honor has worth. Worship is not an arrogant demand of God toward His creatures; it is rather a natural response from hearts that comprehend the infinite "worthship" of God—hearts that are surrendered, silent, repentant and mature.

1. A surrendered heart. The biblical pattern of worship is based on the surrender of the heart to the lordship of Christ. Without the heart reality of obedience and submission to the Word of God, we will never experience true worship in spirit and truth. Participation in the sacraments as well as in charismatic expressions of worship must reflect a heart that is bowed in gratitude and love for God in order to become true expressions of worship.

This is the fundamental essence of worship: I bow my heart before God Almighty and acknowledge His supreme lordship over my life. It is realized through total surrender of the worshipper to the One worshipped. Only as we choose to acknowledge God in all our ways (Prov. 3:6) and give Him control of our lives and destinies can we become true

worshippers of God.

2. A *silent heart*. Worship will not always constitute the forming of words or phrases to utter before God. But it will always involve the humble prostration of our souls before God as we revere His greatness in silence and stillness. The psalmist understood this when he wrote of the Lord, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10).

Even in human love, affection is not always expressed verbally. Sometimes more is said through eye contact than could ever be expressed in words. Worship involves eye contact with God; it is staring at God! A worshipping heart longs to gaze upon the Beloved and know the fulfillment that comes when that gaze is returned.

3. A *repentant heart*. Brokenness over our own sin characterizes a worshipping heart. When Mary came into the Pharisee's house to express her love for Jesus, she wept, washed His feet with her tears and anointed them with a costly ointment. The Pharisee condemned her as a sinner and accused Jesus for not knowing what kind of woman she was. But Jesus rebuked the Pharisee for not offering to wash His feet, the customary thing for a host to do. Then He forgave this sinful woman for all her sins (Luke 7:36-50).

Mary's tears were an outward manifestation of a heart that was deeply stirred before her Lord. She was repentant and so overcome with desire to express her love that she rejected the protocol of the day and barged into a private home uninvited. This was not a show. Her tears and her kisses were a sincere expression of her penitent heart.

4. A *mature heart*. As we grow in our relationship with God, we will grow in our desire and our ability to worship. Spiritual maturity does not exempt one from being a worshiper; it enables one to worship more perfectly and to teach others to worship.

We were made for worship! God created us with a longing to be rightly related to Him in a loving relationship that evokes worship.

Surrender to His lordship in every area of our lives releases us into greater dimensions of worship that bring new revelation of God to our hearts. With each new revelation, we become more satisfied and walk more fully into the divine destiny for which we were created. The priority of worship God purposed will become the dynamic of our lives that brings true fulfillment.

Read a companion devotional.

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