

God Isn't Looking for Performance But for True Worship

Why God isn't looking for performance but for true worship in response to His love

Pure and *love* are not two words that we often put together. Maybe it's because most of the love we experience is anything but pure. As flawed people, we rarely love without somewhat tainted motives. We all have probably "loved" someone because we wanted something from them, and I'm sure we've all been "loved" because someone only wanted something out of or from us.

We often feel we have to earn someone's love by training ourselves to give them what they want. Unfortunately, this kind of love isn't "pure" at all, and it doesn't come close to reflecting God's true heart. But we're so used to performing and trying to impress the people we want to love us that we treat God the same way. We go around and around in circles trying to make Him happy without ever stopping to consider that maybe His love is really, truly, pure—without any selfish or deceptive motive. Maybe God doesn't want anything from us except us.

I love the story of Mary and Martha because it perfectly captures God's pure love. Martha worked so hard to get every little detail right for Jesus. I think that, whether she realized it or not, she was trying to impress Him and earn His love. She thought He cared about how perfect, clean and comfortable His visit to her home would be. She didn't realize that His love was so pure that the only thing He wanted was to spend time with her and her sister.

Because Martha thought His love was impure, her response of

love back to Him was impure. It was all about performance. Mary, on the other hand, understood His deep, pure love for her. Her loving response of sitting at the feet of Jesus and spending time with Him came from a heart that had grasped His pure love for her.

I am a worshipper and a worship leader because I believe worship is an expression of honesty between our hearts and God's. It's an exchange of pure love. We receive and experience His love for us and cannot help but give it back to Him.

I do wonder sometimes, though, if we view our worship the way Martha viewed her housework. Do we ever worship God like we're trying to impress Him? It's easy to fall into the trap of thinking that our worship has to be just right before God will meet with us.

But when we worship this way, it can become about formula. It can lead us to idolize our songs and to focus too much on what we're singing and how things sound, all without a real heart connection. Don't get me wrong, I love worship songs, and I definitely have my favorites, but I want to make sure I really mean the things I sing and that my worship is just not a formulaic effort to win His love.

In John 4:23, Jesus says, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him." This verse tells me that God wants our love and our worship toward Him to be pure.

I don't know about you, but when I'm striving and stressing to impress someone and make them love me, well, that's not really love; it's performance, and it's not exactly what I would call pure.

The Lord wants our honesty and truth. He wants our hearts and spirits to be completely connected to what our mouths are

saying to Him and singing to Him. He wants our pure worship.

The only way for our worship to truly be pure is for us to receive His pure love for us. We must realize that no matter what, He loves us. His love is completely pure. He does not love us because we can give anything to Him or do Him any service. He loves us without an ulterior motive. He simply loves us for us and wants us to know Him and experience that love.

We can't earn His love because He's already given it to us! That's absolutely incredible to me and makes me want to worship Him and give Him all of my love.

When we focus on how good He is and on everything He has done for us, then we can, like Mary, focus on spending time with Him rather than just "doing things" for Him. We can hear Him, listen to Him and experience His affection for us. Only then can we respond in worship to the Lord and exalt who He is over every other name and every other circumstance, giving Him our pure love as we receive His.

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