

A SERMON ON WORSHIP · COLOSSIANS 2:23

Will Worship

When Sincerity Is Not Enough

“According to His will, not ours.”

Men must worship God according to His directions — not according to their own imaginations, traditions, or preferences.



Why Worship Matters

Worship lies at the very heart of our relationship with God. It is not a side issue, not a secondary matter, and not something to be reshaped by culture, preference, or taste.

Worship is about approaching the Holy God — and because of that, it must be approached on His terms, not ours.

“

It is not something that can be reshaped according to culture, preference, or taste. Worship is about pleasing God — not about what makes us feel good.

THE HEART OF THE MATTER



Paul's Warning to Colossae

“

These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

COLOSSIANS 2:23, NKJV

“

It looks wise with its self-inspired efforts at worship — but in actual practice it does honor, not to God, but to man's own pride.

COLOSSIANS 2:23, PARAPHRASED · J.B. PHILLIPS

What Paul concedes — and denies

It looks wise.

It carries an appearance of **devotion** and seems deeply religious.

It feels sincere.

Yet sincerity alone cannot make worship acceptable to God.

It is of no value.

It neither honors God nor spiritually helps man.

What Worship Means

Greek

proskuneo

(“PROS-COO-NOW”)

*“Acts of reverence paid to God; to adore;
an act of homage or reverence.”*

From the meaning of the word

- 1 God-directed, not man-directed**
Worship is defined toward God, never invented for the pleasure of men.
- 2 Reverence, humility, submission**
The very word demands a bowed heart — not creativity or innovation.
- 3 Not born of human desire**
Worship is not a canvas for what we imagine or prefer; it is homage.

The Scriptures Speak of Different Kinds of Worship

01

Vain

Sincere and God-directed, yet governed by human tradition instead of divine revelation.

02

Will

Self-willed worship — where man, not God, decides what is offered and how.

03

Ignorant

Devotion offered to God without the knowledge of His revealed truth.

04

True

Worship “in spirit and in truth” — the worship the Father is seeking.

“

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth — for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

JOHN 4:23–24, NKJV

Worship Honors God — and Edifies His People

He is honored by it

God desires worship because it glorifies Him — the continual sacrifice of praise, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.

Hebrews 13:15, NKJV

His people are strengthened

Worship is designed for our edification. When we come together, “let all things be done for edification.”

1 Corinthians 14:26, NKJV

“

When worship follows God’s will, God is glorified and His people are strengthened. But when worship becomes will worship, it accomplishes neither.

THE DOUBLE PURPOSE OF WORSHIP

LET US EXAMINE

Three Things About Will Worship

I

The Manifestations

Where will worship shows itself — from strange fire to the traditions of men.

II

The Motive

Why men engage in it: a heart problem of human pride.

III

The Means of Correcting

How it is answered — by holding fast to the Head, who is Christ.



PART ONE OF III

I

The Manifestations of Will Worship

Where unauthorized worship reveals itself — in fire, in tradition, and in human preference.

Nadab & Abihu — Strange Fire

“

Nadab and Abihu ... offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them ... “I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.”

LEVITICUS 10:1–3, KJV

An innocent, unauthorized act became a sinful act

- God did not say they worshiped the wrong God.
- God did not say they were insincere.
- God said only: “which he commanded them not.”

“

When God specifies what He wants, He excludes every alternative. Silence is not permission.

Vain Worship Condemned by Jesus

“

These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.

MATTHEW 15:8–9, NKJV

Sincere

Their worship came from earnest, believing hearts.

God-directed

It was offered to the true God, not an idol.

Yet vain

It was governed by human tradition instead of divine revelation.

In true worship, God chooses for the worshiper what is done.

The Worship of Angels

“

Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.

COLOSSIANS 2:18, NKJV

Spiritual in appearance — unacceptable in truth

It may have appeared deeply spiritual. It may have sounded humble and reverent. But Paul says it was not acceptable.

Why? It did not come from the will of God — it came from the imagination of men.

Angels are real. Angels are servants of God. But nowhere has God authorized men to worship them.

Adding Human Desire to Divine Worship

The issue has never been whether a thing is exciting, appealing, or moving. The issue is whether the Lord has spoken.

”

“I like it.”

But the question is not “Do I like it?” — it is “Does God authorize it?”

”

**“It helps me
worship.”**

If God has not commanded it, it is not an aid to His will — it is an addition to it.

”

“It is so impressive.”

Impressive to whom? Worship is not designed to entertain men, but to honor God.

“

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. To go beyond the doctrine of Christ is not progress — it is transgression.

2 JOHN 9, NKJV



PART TWO OF III

II

The Motive of Will Worship

If will worship is so dangerous, why do men engage in it? The answer lies within the heart.

At Its Heart: Human Pride

“

Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels ... vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.

COLOSSIANS 2:18, KJV

“Vainly puffed up by a fleshly mind”

Will worship is not really about honoring God at all. It is about pleasing self.

It elevates human thought above divine revelation — taking matters into our own hands and deciding that our ideas about worship are acceptable, regardless of what God thinks.

“

The moment we begin measuring worship by human enjoyment instead of divine approval, we have already moved in the wrong direction.

PART THREE OF III

III The Means of Correcting Will Worship

The answer is both simple and searching — we must hold fast to the Head, who is Christ.

Hold Fast to the Head, Who Is Christ

“

... not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together ... grows with the increase that is from God.

COLOSSIANS 2:19, NKJV

“

He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body.

EPHESIANS 1:22–23, NKJV

A failure to stay connected to Christ

The problem at Colossae was not merely false practice — it was a failure to hold to the Head.

When men stop holding to Christ, they begin substituting tradition for truth, preference for principle, and appearance for authority.

The church is a body — and Christ is the Head of that body.

Three Anchors in Christ's Authority

1

God speaks through His Son

In these last days God has spoken by Christ. The Father's instruction still stands: "Hear ye Him."

HEBREWS 1:1–2 · MATTHEW 17:5

2

Christ is complete and sufficient

We are complete in Him; His word must direct our worship. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly."

COLOSSIANS 2:4–7 · 3:16

3

God seeks true worshippers

A will-worshipper cannot be a true worshipper — he follows his own will instead of God's.

JOHN 4:23 · LUKE 6:46

Three Marks That Expose Will Worship

1

Entertainment is not worship

Entertainment asks, “How did it make you feel?” Worship asks, “Did it glorify God?” True worship depends not on stimulation, but on submission.

2

Spirit and truth together

Spirit demands sincerity; truth demands obedience. Spirit without truth becomes emotionalism; truth without spirit becomes routine.

3

Who chooses worship?

In true worship, God chooses; in will worship, men choose. Worship is about faithfulness — offering God only what He has asked for.

CONCLUSION · A QUIET SELF-EXAMINATION

Do We Want His Will — or Our Own?

Do we want God's approval — or human response? Do we worship because it feels right — or because it is right?

*“Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”
(Luke 6:46, NKJV)*

May we be people who worship:

- *According to Christ's authority,*
- *Directed by His word,*
- *Offered humbly from obedient hearts.*

That kind of worship may not impress the world — but it delights the One we serve.

