

TEENS ASK: What is worship?

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THE BIG IDEA:

All of life is worship.

The issue of worship is sorely confused and poorly understood, even among Christians. Let's first determine what worship is NOT. Worship is NOT:

- Something that happens on Sunday morning
- Just singing songs
- Something that starts and stops
- Only done by spiritual people

The Bible is clear that worship is a continuous lifestyle and that all people are continual worshipers. Romans 11:36-12:1 says the following...

For from him [Jesus] and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever! Amen. I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

What this means is that worship involves two things: the **glory** of someone or something and **sacrifice** on the part of the worshiper. True Christian worship is sacrifice of oneself (a "living sacrifice") for the glory of God.

Any and all sin is a form of worship and, as such, is really a worship problem. The immoral, the drunkard, and the thief all have what is ultimately a worship problem. The immoral person worships pleasure; the drunkard worships booze; the thief worships possessions. These people should not categorize their life but rather acknowledge that something or someone has taken the place that God rightfully owns as the place of highest glory.

The true bible storyline is that one worships God and escapes eternal hell to receive eternal heaven. When we sin, we are living a false gospel and defining for ourselves what we truly see as hell, heaven, and our savior. For example, the alcoholic's functional hell is reality, their functional heaven is freedom from problems, and booze acts as the functional savior to escape hell and enter heaven. The problem with this is that worshipping a functional savior like booze leads to a life of emptiness while worshipping the True Savior, Jesus Christ, leads to a life of joy.

The sinful life is worship wrongly directed. When we sin, we must realize that *all* sin is ultimately sin against God, since it removes him from his rightful place of glory. We should also realize that we are making sacrifices to false gods! We harm ourselves and others through sin.



Jeremy Edgar

Martin Luther said that the whole Christian life is one of repentance. As Christians, we daily need to ask God to forgive us for sinning and removing him from glory. This proper understanding of worship may help you to determine what false gods exist in your life. Ask yourself questions such as these:

- What am I most afraid of?
- What do I long for most?
- What do I sacrifice my time/energy/money on?
- What sin(s) do I struggle with most?

Answering these will help you to identify what false gods you have and where your worship is wrongly directed. Once you determine this, repent to God and ask his forgiveness. Also, you should seek to make better lifestyle choices to help you avoid the worship of false gods through sin. Pray today and make the change!

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What misconceptions do I have concerning worship?
2. What false gods exist in my life? Who or what has replaced God in my life in the position of highest glory?