

Wisdom Literature

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.” Proverbs 1:7

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” Proverbs 9:10

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5-6

“The conclusion, when everything has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.” Ecclesiastes 12:13

December Birthdays

17 Bill Brown 18 Alexis Brown 31 Bob Pescador

December Anniversaries

18 Jim & Marie Burruss

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.

Sunday.....10:45 a.m.

Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Website:
indiochurchofchrist.com

Preacher: Vacant

Church of Christ

81-377 Ave 46
Indio, CA 92201
(760) 342-1859

(Address Service Requested)

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Worship-tainment

John M. Buttrey II

Jesus said, *“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth”* (John 4:24). Simply put to worship God in spirit and truth means to worship Him in a way that pleases Him. Lest anyone wonder how to please God in worship, the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is quite clear on the subject. Sadly, many religious groups today have lost sight of exactly who is to be pleased in worship. People go to worship services expecting to be entertained. In many denominations, the experience of worship has become more an experience of entertainment, or what we might call “worship-tainment.”

Praise bands, soloists, choirs, dramatic plays, dynamic speakers, and comedians are part of the “show.” At times, even celebrity guests entertain those assembled. Praise in the form of cheers and applause is offered to preachers, musicians, singers, and actors. Audiences are pleased, but is God? It seems that many have forgotten that worship is about pleasing God, not ourselves! We are surrounded by countless forms of entertainment. We cannot get enough of it. Our televisions have hundreds of channels. There are numerous sporting events to attend. Many cannot survive two minutes without their phone’s entertaining features. Even the news has become more entertainment-driven than actual news! Is it any wonder that worship has become another form of entertainment?

Worshipping God has always been about doing things in a way that pleases Him. If worship were about pleasing the worshippers, Cain's sacrifice would have been accepted by God (Genesis 4:4-5). If we could do whatever we want in worship, Nadab and Abihu would have lived longer lives (Leviticus 10:1-2). If worship was about entertaining ourselves, where does the cross fit in? Jesus did

not experience the gruesome horror of the cross to entertain us! At the thought of the cross, are we to cheer and applaud, or to hang our heads in shame, realizing our sin put Him on the cross? Yes, we rejoice and give praise to God for the cross of our Savior, not because we have been entertained by it, but because we have been saved by it.

Let's balance this discussion with the Scriptural truth that we are to be edified through the experience of worship. Paul told the church at Corinth: *"What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification."* (1 Corinthians 14:26). How is one edified (encouraged, built up) through the experience of worship? Does edification in worship demand being entertained? No, worship need not be entertaining in order for there to be edification.

There are a number of ways edification takes place during the course of worship, none of which are entertainment driven. Again, to the church at Corinth, Paul spoke of the use of spiritual gifts in terms of providing edification to the church. For example, notice what he says of the gift of prophecy and the gift of tongues: *"But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church."* (1 Corinthians 14:3-4). Neither of these gifts were designed for entertainment purposes. In the church, all the gifts were for edification. The teaching we receive from the word of God is good for edification. *"For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."* (Romans 15:4). *"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."* (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Interestingly, Paul warned Timothy, way back in the first century, that a time would come when the Scriptures would no longer suffice for edification because the brethren would want more (2

Timothy 4:2-4). The weekly observance of the Lord's Supper is another means of edification we experience in worship. We are reminded each week how much God loves us (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John 3:16).

I have heard people say worship should be more exciting. However, what could be more exciting than the knowledge that the Creator of the world loves us so much that He died for us!? How about the excitement of learning something new in the Bible? How about the edification found in our prayers or songs? Our worship to God is a way we can say, "Thank You Lord for loving us so much!" We say it best when we sing, when we pray, when we give, and when we submit to God's instructions for worshipping Him. Listening to others sing and entertain us deprives us of the experience of heartfelt worship. When we come to be entertained, the thanks go to men, not God.

Worship God's Way, Not Ours

By Brad Harrub

Thankfully God has told us—through His inspired Word—exactly what our worship to Him should look like. In the New Testament we find five different acts of worship that God commands us to do. Each one of these is commanded, so again the question remains: Will we humble ourselves enough to do what God instructs? Next, in this series is "Teaching" as an act of worship:

Teaching

In Acts 20:7, we find that the disciples of Christ met together on the first day of the week and Paul spoke to them a message. Paul's message was probably similar to what you and I call sermons. A sermon or a lesson in worship services serves several purposes. First of all, it edifies the members. After a week of living in the world and in the secular workforce, it's refreshing to hear a portion of God's word taught to us and in many cases it motivates Christians for the upcoming week. Secondly, it can simply teach. Finally, a lesson can be used to convict members of sin in their lives. All three of these purposes are reasons why a sermon or an evangelical lesson is commanded for Christians to take part in during worship service.