

Unified Worship | What is Worship? Part 4

I. The Commands and Models for Unified Worship

- Romans 12:1; II Kings 18:1-7, 23:4-15; II Chronicles 31:20-21 Isaiah 37:36;

II. A Practical Approach to Unified Worship

- **You need to actively keep the High Places of self-worship from creeping back up in your life.** I Peter 5:8
- **No one can worship God who doesn't have a relationship with Him.**
 - Our first responsibility to our kids or our friends is to be an Evangelist. Nothing is more important than helping the people in your life *know* they have a genuine relationship with God. This is the first step in being that salt and light to which Christ calls us.
 - And we need to share the Gospel time and time and time again until God does the work in their hearts necessary for them to submit to and choose to follow Him.
- **Follow the example of Hezekiah and Josiah.**
 - Recognize that it God commands you to help other people tear down their High Places.
 - Exodus 17; Matthew 18:15; I Thessalonians 5:14; Proverbs 27:17; Galatians 6:1; II Timothy 2:24-26; James 5:16, 19-20; Hebrews 10:24; Luke 17:3; I Timothy 5:20; Galatians 2:11; II Thessalonians 3:14-15; Acts 20:31; Ezekiel 3:18
 - **Figure out where in *your* life God is not allowed, then invite Him in.**
 - If there are any areas like that, then you know there are some High Places in your home — places where self is worshipped instead of God.
 - **Make the issue about loving God not about a list of do's and don'ts.**
 - II Chronicles 31:21
 - Rarely do you have a romantic relationship built on a list of do's and don'ts. Usually, the care we have for one another keeps us from wanting to hurt the person we love.
 - If your spouse is allergic to certain flowers or food, you're not going to pick those flowers or food for him or her . . . because you love, you're not doing it because your spouse laid down an edict that "thou shalt not get her those flowers or candy."
 - Now, it's true that God has written out His law, but that doesn't detract from the fact that our obedience of the law is going to be rooted in our love for God, not mere adherence to a list. This is why Jesus said, "*If you love me, you will keep my commandments.*"
 - **Hate sin, but keep the commandments of the Lord.**
 - When we see our need and His grace, we will desire to serve Him. We should pray, "*Dear God, help us to hate sin and love you more.*"
 - There are a bunch of things God expects us to hate. But it can't simply be about taking a stand against sin, it must be beautifully complimented by our *love of righteousness*.
 - **Remove the negative influences, but celebrate the things that glorify God.**
 - If you want to help other people tear down the High Places in their lives, you need to start with the obvious external areas.
 - What items, belongings, activities, schedules, and the like are providing your friend an easy excuse to worship self? This can be anything from the sport they sacrifice to themselves, their entertainment system, their bedrooms, their music, their jobs, their toys, their relationships . . . anything. And you probably noticed that nothing mentioned above is inherently sinful. We all know we need to remove the drug paraphernalia and liquor and wicked music and pornography, but what about the otherwise good things?

- Way back during the Exodus, God commanded Moses to make a Brazen Serpent that would be used to heal the people from the snake bites they received after they sinned against God. Well, it seems the Jews held onto that keepsake. I know I would have. But the problem was that they'd started worshipping themselves by sacrificing to the Serpent! That's why Hezekia "*broke [it] in pieces, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it.*"
- The unfortunate reality is that we're all prone to taking the good things in this life and using them to glorify ourselves instead of God.
- So, as you work to help your family and friends tear down their High Places, you're going to have to acknowledge that even "good" things can be used in a sinful way, and you're going to have to ask the hard questions and investigate closely to keep them accountable.
- But — again — we often spend all of our time talking about the negative instead of focusing on the positives. We need to make an even bigger deal about the things that glorify God! Celebrate church. Encourage righteous living. Teach your friends and family how to use their possessions to actively worship God instead of self. Many people default to self-worship — in part — simply because they don't know any other way. But we can teach them a new and better way.
- **Remove the negative influencers, but celebrate the people that glorify God.**
 - Josiah not only deposed and executed the false priests, but he first surrounded himself with the priests and keepers of the threshold and the soldiers that wanted to do right.
 - It was with the combined might of these followers of God that they were able to stand up against the many people who sacrificed at the High Places.
 - But it's also important to note that Hezekiah rebelled against the king of Assyria. Now, I don't know what the king of Assyria wanted from him, but whatever it was, God was pleased that he rebelled.
 - If our friends or family are especially susceptible to the lies of the world, we should help them remove those negative influencers from their lives — as much as possible.
 - Yes, we have to acknowledge that they're going to have negative influences in their lives simply because they know us (and we're sinners), but that doesn't give us an excuse to encourage relationships that are damaging.
 - We need to take a stand against negative influencers even if they're famous. And I'm not talking about the ones who are obviously evil. We need to take a stand against sin no matter if it comes from an atheist or our favorite Christian speaker.
 - Of course, we need to not only remove the negative influencers, we need to help our fellow disciples thrive in a community of *positive influencers*.
 - The problem is that too many immature believers are more followers than leaders. They're more easily influenced than they are influencing.
 - Remember, we're not describing breaking contact with just anyone who sins or who is a negative influence. We're talking about breaking contact with people who are actually influencing you and your friends for evil — people by whom you're happy to be negatively influenced.
- Do you want to be a parent, a friend, a coworker, a spouse who God can use to establish True Worship? Trust the Lord, hold fast to Him, do not depart from following Him, keep His commandments, and feel free to rebel against sin. And then trust God to prosper you and your Christian community.