



The Reflector

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IS ALL OF LIFE WORSHIP?

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That's what some are saying. In his book, *Unbroken Bread*, Mike Root says: "Worship is a life given in obedience to God. It's not a when or where proposition, but a what. It's what we are. You can't go to it or leave it, dress for it or from it, and you can't start it or stop it... it doesn't open and close with a prayer, and it doesn't have human leader or a special day" (115).

Appealing To the Scripture

The New Testament clearly teaches that a Christian is to present his body as "a living sacrifice" to God (Rom 12:1-2) and do everything in the name of the Lord (Col 3:17) and to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). It is also true that a Christian can and should worship God apart from those times when the church assembles together (Acts 16:25; Heb. 13:15). Does this mean, however, that all of life is worship?

Just a few examples in the Bible clearly illustrate that all of life is not worship. Abraham told his servants that he and Isaac would "go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you" (Gen. 22:5). God told Moses to "come up to the Lord ...and worship from afar" (Ex. 24:1). After the death of his son, David "went into the house of the Lord and worshiped. Then he went to his own house ..." (2 Sam. 12:20). The wise men came to Bethlehem to worship Jesus (Matt. 2:2) and when they found him, they "fell down and worshiped Him" (Matt. 2:11). John "fell at his feet to worship"

the angel (Rev. 19:10; 22:8). The Bible clearly teaches that worship has a beginning point (Matt. 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 28:9,17; Mark 5:6; John 9:38; Heb. 11:21) and an ending point (Luke 24:52) and that worship does involve a "when" and a "where" (John 12:20; Acts 8:27; 24:11).

In light of this kind of evidence, from where does this "all-of-life-is-worship" concept come? The proponents of this concept hang their hat on Paul's statement: "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship" (Rom. 12:1, NASB; cf. ESV, NIV, NRSV). Other translations say "which is your reasonable service" (KJV, NKJV) or "which is your spiritual service" (ASV). Although the original word translated "spiritual service of worship" (*latreia*) can refer to worship (Rom. 9:4; Heb. 9:1,6), it more generally refers to service (John 16:2; Luke 1:74). In fact, the verb form (*latreuo*) is contrasted with the usual word for "worship" (*proskuneo*) (Matt. 4:10; Luke 4:8; Rom. 1:25), suggesting a difference between the two. This evidence indicates that while all of life is service, not all of life is worship.

What Is Behind the All-Of-Life-Is-Worship Concept?

1. **Informality.** Of the assembly in Troas (Acts 20:7), Mike Root says: "This first day of the week assembly was as unstructured and informal as an

unplanned reunion of college friends” (Spilt Grape Juice, pp. 50-51). Who says so? Luke certainly doesn’t say anything like that, and since Paul taught the same things in all the churches (1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17), there is every reason to believe that the assembly in Troas followed the principles of decorum that Paul taught the church in Corinth (1 Cor. 14:26-40).

2. Pep-rally religion. For the promoters of the all-of-life-is-worship concept, it’s all about me (or to be as charitable as possible, it’s primarily about me); it’s not about God. Root says: “Encouragement is the glue that keeps us close, the rah-rah that keeps us going, and the hook that keeps us coming back for more. It’s a drug we can’t get enough of and a gift that we never tire of giving” (Spilt Grape Juice, p. 73). The New Testament teaches, however, that worship is not about me; it’s all about God (Matt. 4:10; John 4:21-24; Rev. 14:6-7).

3. Eating together. That sounds pretty innocent until you learn that this includes, in Root’s theology, the eating of a common meal when Christians assemble. All of this despite the fact that Paul told the Corinthians, after they had turned the Lord’s Supper into a common meal, to “eat at home” (1 Cor. 11:22, 34).

4. An expanded role for women. With a touch of sarcasm, Root writes, ... women can talk all they want before and after those magical opening and closing prayers, because being silent in the church is referring to the formal assembly. Five minutes before that opening prayer, the same women in the same building, sitting in the same seats, could comment, share, and edify others, simply because it was called “a Bible class,” and everyone knows that’s not the same as the formal worship. There is some sense of consistency in this; neither Bible classes nor formal worship are found in the New Testament, so we can make up the rules as we go (Unbroken Bread, p. 128).

Root suggests that Paul’s restrictions on women (1 Tim. 2:11-12; 1 Cor. 14:34-35) were “just dealing

with specific first century problems in Corinth and Ephesus” (Unbroken Bread, p. 180); but in the context Paul instructs men “everywhere” (1 Tim. 2:8) and his instructions for the Corinthians were the same “as in all the churches of the saints” (1 Cor. 14:33-34, ASV, ESV, NIV, NRSV). Others argue that these restrictions were based on first-century culture, and, therefore, have no application in twenty-first-century America; but Paul bases his restrictions on women on Creation (1 Cor. 11:7-9; 1 Tim. 2:13), the Fall (1 Tim. 2:14) and the Law (1 Cor. 14:34)—three things that have absolutely nothing to do with culture.

Brethren, some preachers are trying to affect radical change in the church as we know it today. The all-of-life-is-worship concept is a step in that direction. This concept, however, lacks divine foundation and must be rejected.

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SOME OF OUR FACEBOOK POSTINGS

Edward O. Bragwell

A Debt or Free Gift?

You find yourself broke and very much in need of money. You receive a call from a concerned friend telling you that he has decided to make you a gift of a few thousand dollars. You ask if it really is a gift and you won’t have to do anything to earn it. He assures you that such is the case. You ask when can you get it, because you really need to pay some bills. He says as soon as you come over to his place and pick up the check. You ask if he means that you must come all the way across town to get it. He assures you that this is right. You say that you thought he said it was a gift that you did not have to do anything to earn, yet he is now telling you that you have to come across town to get it. You tell him that if such is the case, then it would no longer be a gift but a debt for your having to come get it.

Do you think your friend would be favorably

impressed with your response to his offer?

Why then do men quibble over God's offer to save them from sin by forgiving them, as a gift from him, by asserting if there are **any** conditions that require effort or work on our part to receive it makes it no longer a gift but a matter of debt.

If salvation is an offer to all men without conditions, then salvation would have to be universal or God is a respecter of persons. No way is faith, repentance, confession and baptism payment for our salvation, but conditions for receiving the free gift of forgiveness from God. ■

Another "Modesty" Tip from this Old Fogey ...

Folks, when standing before the mirror, trying to determine if what you are about to go out in public wearing is showing too much skin take a couple of more looks.

Look at yourself bending over to pick up something off the floor.

Sit down in a chair like you usually sit and look at your dress or "shorts" (both men and women) and see what one standing or sitting across from you can see.

No charge for this tip. No bill will be sent. ■

On Being Your Own Person ...

Over the years, I have noticed many young Christians, about the time when they reach the point where they consider themselves adults, begin to assert their "independence." They make it a point to show the world that they are their "own person." They serve notice, in one way or the other, to not expect them to follow the ways of their parents or of the ways of "the church" they grew up in. The net result is they try to get as far away from "the way they were raised" as they can without completely abandoning their faith.

Now, I am all for studying and thinking for one's self. No one should follow in lock step anyone – parent, elders, church or otherwise. On the other hand, one should not assert independence for the

sake of independence – the "I have no need of you" mentality (cf. 1 Cor. 12:21).

If the parent's or "the church's" course has been wrong, then one should be prepared to take Bible in hand and show them their error. If his new "independent" course is right, then be able to take Bible in hand and show it is the right course to follow and urge them to accept the Bible way.

The test of any course one, young or old, follows should not be is it "independent of" nor is it "conforming to" others, but is it the course that pleases to God.

The danger of **over** flapping one's wings of independence is that one is often "carried about by every wind of doctrine" in an effort to establish his independence and show the world that he is his "own person."

I have a radical thought. The parent's and local church could have been right all along. So, don't lightly dismiss what they taught you. Rather "search the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." If after, and only after, you have done this and found their teaching and practice not so, then make your "declaration of independence." ■

About Our Relationship with God ...

There are some who spend a lifetime seeking a relationship with God that mirrors their relationships with close friends and relatives in this world. A relationship where there is a daily interchange between them and God comparable to two best friends sitting across the dining room table enjoying each other's company and engaging in conversation. They take the words of the song, "And He walks with me, and He talks with me," in a literal and immediate sense.

There is good reason why some never find that kind of relationship is because it does not exist except in the minds of some. There are those who have a vivid enough imagination to believe that they have such a relationship. In their minds, they are really able to carry on a conversation with God. They really, in their minds, feel a presence of God

comparable to what they feel toward a best friend when they are together. They speak of their love for God in the same way that they speak of their love for their friends in the flesh.

There are many others who are serving God that have not been able to capture that feeling and are made to feel inadequate as a Christian because they are told that the feelings expressed above are those of a true Christian.

Folks, a Christian's love and relationship to God is not the same as his relationship with a best friend or close relative. It is a by faith and not by sight relationship (cf. 2 Cor. 5:7) The other party in this relationship is unseen (and untouched, unheard, untasted, unsmelled). We do not relate to Him by our senses like we do with earthly relationships. Nor do we treat Him with the same familiarity that we do our earthly relationships.

To know, love, and relate to Jesus does not require an interaction comparable to physical interactions. "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Romans 10:6-9).

The exchange between a Christian and Christ is His speaking to us is the "word of faith" which the apostles preached (and left to us in their writings) and our responding to that by faith by speaking to God, in the name of His Son, through prayer and showing our love through obedience to his will (1 John 5:3). The way that we know that we know Him is not through a feeling of fraternal love but through an exercise of "agape" love – which is the highest form of love born of an active good will toward its object. This love from God is

communicated to us through His word that tells us of all of God's active good will toward us. We communicate ours to him by prayer and keeping his other commandments. "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." (1 John 2:3-6)

So, we know we know him not by working ourselves up to some feeling similar to our earthly relationships and loves, but by keeping his commandments. The text says it is by that way we can know that we know him. We do not have imagine it. ■

Are We Looking for Loopholes

While living in the Birmingham area, I received a call from a sister from across town telling about a congregation over that way that would not accept her daughter into their fellowship because of her "marriage situation." She wanted to know what I thought the Bible taught on divorce and remarriage.

I asked her to get her Bible and read with me Matthew 19:3-9, especially verse 9:

"And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery." (Matthew 19:9 NKJV)

After reading the passage without further comment, the sister said, "I know that it says that, but isn't there a loophole in there somewhere."

Do you reckon that there might be many other folks that, because of situations in their lives, might be looking for loopholes rather than accepting the plain wording and obvious meaning of the scriptures? ■

***...The truth shall make you free.
(John 8:32)***