

Worship and Culture.

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Worship is universal. It goes beyond religious conception. Everyone has a god, idol, hero, role model, icon, star, mentor, Teacher, Guide, Master, Leader, guru etc. Our relationship to these objects/subjects of worship is functional. It has its roots in our desires to **become**.

Worship is Appreciation, Deference. Emulation. Imitation, Adoration, Fascination, Veneration, Obeisance, Honor, the bowing of the knee, Submission, the surrender of one's heart/will. These are the human dispositions involved in worship and it all has one aim in mind. **Becoming**. Worship allows us to be vulnerable and highly susceptible to the influence of our object/subject of worship. It is voluntary entrancement. The surrender of one's will to a higher power (we exalt/ make higher that power/person through worship). We tend to become who / what we worship.

The Old English original W-e-o-r-s-c-i-p-e means **worth**-ship and connotes worth / value. The logic of worship is in valuation – establishing worth /priority / preference.

Values determine choice. Choice determines behavior. Values are at the root of identity. Tell me your values and I understand who you are, what you cherish, repudiate, prefer, how you will behave, your potentialities, what affects you and how; what you will do and will not do and under what circumstances.

Worship is the spiritual /psychological technology of **becoming**. On the input side is belief. The output side is behavior. Values are based on accepted beliefs. One's belief system is the structural support for their value system. Belief is like spiritual DNA. Worship is spiritual RNA. In other words, Worship converts Belief to Behavior. Worship is how we upload, update and virus clean our **value system**.

Worship is binding, like social glue. It collectivizes thought and behavior. Collective behavior is what we call culture. Culture is reinforced by law. What is 'normal' or taboo from one society to another is determined by the codification of value in the collective consciousness. Culture accounts for

commonalities of thought and action. It is passed on through space and time consciously (through **word** / logos) and unconsciously (through **spirit** /pathos) the two dimensions of liturgy – codified dogma and ritual.

Christian Worship

Christian worship is embodied in the quintessential phrase "**Worthy is the Lamb!**" Rev 5:12. As with all other worship of icons (animals, plants, legendary or mythical characters / gods, games, sports, revelries, entertainments, commodities, disciplines etc) the virtue(s) associated with the particular icon is the focal point of identification. Worship is identity construction.

That all Christian worship should be centered in a Lamb, indicates that the central or core Christian value is **sacrifice**.

*This is my commandment, That ye love one another, **as I have loved you,***

*Greater love has no one than this: to **lay down one's life** for one's friends John 15:12-13*

*Hereby perceive we the love of God, because **he laid down his life** for us: and we ought to **lay down our lives** for the brethren. 1 John3:16*

The entire New Testament resonates with this single central theme.

All ancient and modern Christian teachings, doctrines, practices and movements are measured ultimately by this sole plumb-line of the faith.

*For every tree is known by his own **fruit**. Luke 6:44*

*"And they'll know we are Christians by our love" - {from popular song **We are one in the spirit** - Scholte © 1966*

Worship can be **vain** or false.

Math 15: 9 *Their worship of me is pointless, because their teachings are rules made by humans.*

Isaiah 29:13 *The Lord says:"These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught.*

John 4: 20-24 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

True worship is effective (transformational)

Christ (is) fully formed in the heart 1st Peter 3:2

We are transformed into the image of God (Love) selflessness.

..... with ever-increasing glory. 2 Corinthians 3:18

*By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because **as he is so also are we in this world.** 1 John 4:17*

*....be (ye) conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be **the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.** Romans 8:29*

*Can we examine ourselves, our worship, our practices and motives and make any objective determinations about the effectiveness and sincerity of our worship....with a view to aligning with the measure and standard of Christian value - the currency and coin of our faith - **sacrificial love**.....as embodied in our Savior and Exemplar, Jesus Christ, the Eternal Lamb of God.*

Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine..... 2 Cor 13:5