

10. Destroying the New Testament Pattern with New Words: Praise and Praise Worship

Praise and *praise worship* are words used by change agents to describe their desired changes in worship.

Praise and praise worship.

What will they say? They will use the terms *praise* and *praise worship* to characterize the unique style and emotion of their innovative worship and distinguish it from what the true church of Christ does. One preacher characterized it this way in his attacks on true worship. "Does it always show? No." "We celebrate his holiness. Do we act like it? Well, no." "How often do we appear to be enjoying worship?" "Does it appear you are enjoying worship if there is no applause, if we sit quietly, stifling our feelings." In support, this preacher quoted the *joy* and *praise* passages from the Psalms of David. He further defined his meaning by strongly asserting that the church worshipers should shout, put hands up in the air, hug and kiss brothers and sisters in Christ and clap hands. He led them in a song, standing and clapping. By his own admission, some in the congregation were hesitant.

What does the Bible say? The Bible never uses the term *praise worship*. *Praise Worship* is an entertaining display aimed to excite and please the creature rather than the creator (See Rom 1:25). Those instituting it are moving as idolaters of old moved. They have re-defined *praise* as it is used in Biblical expressions such as *praise God*. When Ezra praised God, the preacher, cited above, interpreted it as celebrative. The meaning in the original language was *blessed* as in *blessed God*. Paul used the expression in Eph 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

In the Greek language of the New Testament, *praise* is to speak in praise of and then only of God. In English, the celebrative meaning of the innovators is also missing. The noun form is an expression of approval. The verb is to express a favorable judgment. Therefore, in worship, we approve God and the Savior as only they can be approved. We express favorably this judgment of approval in prayers, hymns, spiritual songs, communion with the body and blood of Christ, fellowship in giving to God and to those in need, and preaching and teaching the Gospel. The approval should be conveyed in the spirit and truth of God's commands and not by how we feel or by what we think. Therefore, in our worship "let us be thankful, and so worship God *acceptably with reverence and awe*, [emphasis added] 29 for our 'God is a consuming fire.'" Heb 12:28-29. Reverence is profound, adoring respect, and awe is an emotion combining dread, veneration, and wonder (Webster's 10th Edition).

Col 3:15-17 gives other attitudes of praise and worship:

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts . . . And be thankful.¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, 15 as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Other passages, too numerous to cite, detail the attitudes with which we are to approach the altar of God. The scriptures specifically call for restraining sensual indulgence in self-imposed worship.

23 Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence. Col 2:22-23 NIV.

In all of this remember, it is God who is to be praised, not we who are to be made to feel good. According to Eph 3:21: ". . .to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen." We ourselves, the church, do not receive the glory. The glory is to God!