

Purifies  
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Mark 11:15-19; 12:41-44

**What do we mean by the term, “going through the motions?”  
Have you seen an example of it this week? What was it? Why is  
it a bad thing?**

Our topic is worship. In the last few days before Jesus went to the cross He observed and expressed His reaction to two different displays of worship. One situation was a display of pure worship by someone who was “all in.” The other was a display of impure or defiled worship that wasn’t about God at all.

As we look at Mark’s account of these two situations and some other scripture, our goal will be to answer these questions: What is worship? What is the worship of God? How, when, and where should we worship God? Is my worship of God “pure?” When it comes to worshipping God am I “all in” or just “going through the motions?”

Our Lifeway lesson writers summed up this lesson with this sentence: *“Jesus desires pure worship expressed by total trust in God.”* No argument from me!

My Big Idea: Do I really understand what pure worship of God is? When it comes to the worship of God, am I “all in” or just “going through the motions? If I will just surrender my life, God will turn it into an act of worship to Him.

Let’s set the stage. It’s the week of the celebration of Passover just days before the cross. On Sunday Jesus had ridden into Jerusalem on a donkey to the praises of the people (Triumphal Entry.) Jesus went to the temple and looked around. If Jesus came to our church this morning, what would He see? What if He eavesdropped on our conversations, or on what happened on the way to church? We tend to forget that Jesus is always observing His people. As we’re about to see, clearly Jesus was not happy about what He saw at the temple. Let’s begin at 11:15:

<sup>15</sup> And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. <sup>16</sup> And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple.

- It was the beginning of Passover week and thousands of Jews were streaming into Jerusalem to bring their offerings in worship to God.
- The temple, which was to be treated with holy respect, looked more like the outside of a NASCAR track filled with vendors!
- All this was happening in the huge “courtyard of the Gentiles” which was designated as the place where Gentiles could pray and worship because they were not allowed in the temple as the Jews were.
- Not only had it become a marketplace, it had become a “cut through” for people who were transporting deliveries! Try praying in that setting!
- **Why were animals being sold? Why was there money changing?**
- What should have been a place of reverence and worship of God had been turned into a “flea market.” **Why did temple leaders allow it?**
- Jesus came in and asserted His rightful authority as the Son of God over the situation. Worship had been turning into a “sham” and a “scam” and Jesus was cleaning up the mess with incredible, bold force.
- While He was shaking it up, He was “teaching” WHY He was so upset:

<sup>17</sup> ...“Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers.”

- We would look at this scene and say, “Good for you Jesus!”
- The religious leaders had a violent reaction. “Who does He think He is? The High Priest is in charge of the temple and he authorized this! We’re just providing a service to the worshipers (with a nice profit margin for us!)”

<sup>18</sup> And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching.

- That was just Monday! On Tuesday, Jesus is back at the temple and the religious leaders were again challenging His authority. He delivered some powerful teaching including the Great Commandment (12:28-31.)
- He was again observing. This time He saw a true act of worship.

Mark 12:41–44 (ESV) 41 And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. 42 And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. 43 And he called his disciples to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. 44 For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

- Look at the contrast. The religious leaders had installed a moneymaking scheme in the temple to line their own pockets. The rich people were making a great public show of their giving. This poor widow gave all she had and trusted God to provide for her needs.
- The rich people were so rich they would never miss what they gave. It wouldn't make a “dent” in their lifestyle. They didn't even “feel it!”
- The widow gave so sacrificially it would “alter” her lifestyle.
- She wasn't just “going through the motions;” she was “all in.”
- In these verses we see three examples of people coming to worship.
- The first two were the plotting profiteers and the prosperous and proud.
- For both groups worship was not about God, it was all about THEM.
- Jesus quoted Isaiah in Mark 7:6–7 (ESV) *‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me;’<sup>7</sup> in vain do*

*they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'*

- Then came the woman poor in resources but PURE in her worship. She clearly understood what it meant to worship God and she was “all in.”
- What about you and me? Do we understand what worship means?
- Let’s begin with the word worship in the New Testament (*proskyneō*): [it means to] bow as an act of allegiance or regard (Mt 2:2); 2. prostrate oneself before, kneel down before as an act of reverence (Rev 3:9)<sup>ii</sup>
- God designed us to worship. Louie Gilgio writes: “...everybody has an altar. And every altar has a throne. So how do you know where and what you worship? It’s easy: You simply follow the trail of your time, your affection, your energy, your money, and your allegiance. At the end of that trail you’ll find a throne, and whatever, or whoever, is on that throne is what’s of highest value to you. On that throne is what you worship.”<sup>iii</sup>
- Yes, God designed us to worship; the problem is Satan has perverted worship by tempting us to worship things/people/or self instead of God.
- So, how can we be sure we’re worshipping only God?
- There are many verses about worship of God. Here’s one: 1 Chr. 16:29 (ESV) <sup>29</sup> Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him! Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness;
- We worship God because He is God. While we should also be thankful to Him for the things He does for us (provision, healing, blessing,) worship is about acknowledging the glory He deserves because of Who He is.
- Worship is about glorifying God ALONE because He ALONE is worthy.
- **What do most people think of regarding the term “worship” of God?**
- Praise songs, lifting our hands, and the hour we spend on Sunday morning in the “worship center” are parts of worshipping God. But true worship of God is more than those things.

- Ligon Duncan writes: “...worship is declaring—with our lips and lives—that God is more important than anything else to us, that He is our deepest desire, that His inherent worth is beyond everything else we hold dear.”<sup>iv</sup>
- Spurgeon: “The Christian religion is not confined to hours, times, and places but is a thing of spirit. It pervades the whole human spirit and makes one turn his entire life into worship. God is worshiped by servants who fulfill the duties of their station, by judges who decree righteousness, by merchants who deal justly, by children who obey their parents, and by parents who train up their children in the fear of the Lord.”<sup>v</sup>
- “In a broad sense, worship is seen as a way of life (Rom. 12:1). In this context all of life is viewed as an act of worship or service before God.”<sup>vi</sup>
- Christ-followers are to worship God with everything we are, have, and do.
- Paul described TRUE worship in Romans 12:1: *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*
- What is my motivation to worship God? Because of who He is and His mercies to me. **What are the mercies of God?**
- That’s WHY I worship God. So, HOW do I worship God?
- By presenting our bodies – our WHOLE SELVES as a living sacrifice.
- Sacrifice means to surrender EVERYTHING. To be “all in.”
- Peterson’s paraphrase *The Message* helps us to understand this: “Romans 12:1–2 <sup>1</sup> So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.
- Okay, so how do I do that? Peterson continues:
- <sup>2</sup> *Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of*

*immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.*

- Final point: How can I be sure my worship is PURE worship?
- The definition of “pure” is *“free from anything of a different, inferior, or contaminating kind; free from extraneous matter.”*<sup>vi</sup>
- Since God is to be our only object of worship, if we value anything else as equal to or more than we value Him, our worship is not pure. I love my family but if I love them more than I love God, then I’ve begun to WORSHIP my family. That means my worship has become IMPURE.

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- We asked: Do I really understand what pure worship of God is? Am I “all in,” or just “going through the motions?”
- Matthew West has a great song about this: *“I don't wanna go through the motions, I don't wanna go one more day, Without Your all consuming passion inside of me, I don't wanna spend my whole life asking, What if I had given everything, Instead of going through the motions?”*<sup>viii</sup>
- Worshipping God means giving Him glory because of Who He is and the “mercies” He has shown to me.
- It’s not just singing praise choruses or even having a quiet time.
- My WHOLE life should be an act of worship to God.
- Wait a minute! A lot of my daily life is nothing close to a display of worship to God. None of us is can live a life of worship on our own.
- That’s why Paul says we have to surrender ourselves, and “renew our minds” through time in God’s word and in His presence through prayer.
- If we will do the surrendering, God will do the renewing and make our lives “holy and acceptable” to Him.

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<sup>i</sup> Explore the Bible Leader Guide –© 2018 LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, TN 37234.

<sup>ii</sup> Swanson, J. (1997). [\*Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek \(New Testament\)\*](#) (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>iii</sup> Duncan, J. L., Kimball, D., Lawrence, M., Quill, T. C. J., Wilt, D., Dever, M., & Pinson, J. M. (2009). [\*Perspectives on Christian worship : 5 views : Ligon\*](#)

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[Duncan, Dan Kimball, Michael Lawrence & Mark Dever, Timothy Quill, Dan Wilt](#) (p. 102). Nashville, TN: B&H Academic. From the book: Louie Giglio, *The Air I Breathe: Worship as a Way of Life* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2003), 10–11.

<sup>iv</sup> Duncan, J. L., Kimball, D., Lawrence, M., Quill, T. C. J., Wilt, D., Dever, M., & Pinson, J. M. (2009). [Perspectives on Christian worship : 5 views : Ligon](#)

[Duncan, Dan Kimball, Michael Lawrence & Mark Dever, Timothy Quill, Dan Wilt](#) (p. 101). Nashville, TN: B&H Academic.

<sup>v</sup> Spurgeon Study Bible copyright 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Pg. 529

<sup>vi</sup> Nelson, D. P. (2003). [Worship](#). In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen, & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (p.

1687). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

<sup>vii</sup> <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/pure>

<sup>viii</sup> Songwriters: Cindy Mizelle / Jason Houser / Jason C. Houser / Matthew West / Matthew Joseph West / Samuel C. Mizell - The Motions Lyrics © Warner/Chappell Music, Inc, Essential Music Publishing, Amplified Administration