

The Influence of Worship

Daniel 3: 1-30

Worship has impacted and influenced my life for many years now. I have been saved for over 36 years and I have been privileged with the opportunity to worship the Lord for all of those years. Many times, the worship experience has touched and affected my life. It was always a positive influence. Even when I felt conviction and had to repent, it was for my good.

We have read one of the most familiar passages in all of Scripture. We all know of the three Hebrews and their encounter with the fiery furnace. There is a strong sense of worship revealed in this passage. King Nebuchadnezzar had made an image of gold and demanded that all the people worship his image. All of those present that day did as he commanded except for these three men. Their worship was reserved for the true and living God. Worship had an influence on their lives as well as those around them.

As we continue our study on worship, I want to examine several [aspects](#) of worship and its influence on our lives. Let's take a few moments to consider: [The Influence of Worship](#).

I. The Obstacle of Worship (1-7) – In the beginning verses of this passage there is a lot of emphasis placed on worship, but it isn't biblical worship. Anything that isn't biblical worship is an obstacle to genuine worship. First, we discover:

A. An Idolatrous People (1) – King Nebuchadnezzar had made an image of gold and set it before the people so that they would worship his idol. The people of God had been taken to Babylon, an idolatrous land. The king had set up an idol of gold. It was literally an image of himself. It stood about 90 feet tall and 9 feet wide. He desired the worship of the people. He wanted to deify himself through an image of gold. Nebuchadnezzar demanded they worship him.

- I haven't seen many idols of gold erected in America, but many have a defective desire when it comes to worship. We are spiritual beings, determined to worship something. Many, like the king, desire to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. For Nebuchadnezzar it was power and prestige. For others it is simply the desire to satisfy themselves. If our desire is not to worship the Lord, then we are guilty of idolatry. Those desires are an obstacle to worship. We can't worship the Lord if He isn't preeminent in our lives.

B. An Indifferent People (2-3) – All of the people were brought forth to worship the king's idol. Many of them were no doubt Babylonians, but there must've been some Jews present in the

crowd. The majority was indifferent to the will of God. They were unconcerned about worshipping an image of gold, worship that is to be reserved for God alone.

- The same spirit of indifference remains today. Many are indifferent to the things of God. Some refuse to acknowledge the Lord or honor Him. They have no problem worshipping the gods of the flesh. Churches are often empty on Sundays and yet the places of the world are filled to capacity. Even among the church there is a spirit of indifference. Some have no real desire to worship the Lord. It appears they are content to find their place, but never participate in worship. Many times, real worship is pushed aside for entertainment or things that satisfy the flesh.

C. An Influenced People (4-7) – The people were gathered, the command was given, the music began to play, and the people bowed in worship to the king’s idol. Now, I realize that they had been threatened with their lives if they didn’t worship, but it is clear that the people were influenced in their worship. There can be no doubt that the surroundings and culture of Babylon had begun to invade their lives.

- Often within churches today, influenced people are a hindrance and obstacle to genuine worship. They are influenced by the world around them. They are influenced by those with whom they associate. Even in the worship services, folks are influenced by the fear of what someone might think. We tend to allow traditions to influence us rather than seeking to worship God. We need those who will set the standard and become a positive influence in worship. I was influenced by seeing the saints of God worship when I was a child. It reassured me that it was in order to worship the Lord and their worship created a hunger in me for worship.

II. The Observation of Worship (8-13) – As the Hebrews refused to bow, their actions were noticed by those around them. This reveals that:

A. Genuine Worship is Recognized (8-12) – I want us to get a mental picture of what is happening. Nebuchadnezzar had given the decree that all people must worship his image. No doubt thousands of people were gathered in the plain of Dura. As the music played the people bowed. As the king’s men surveyed the crowd, it appeared that his image worship was a success. But wait, in the midst of the crowd there are a few who have not bowed. They have refused to worship the king’s image. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had not bowed. They stood firm on their convictions to worship the Lord only and their worship was recognized.

- The same is true today. This world has set a standard that it expects us to follow. They are watching our lives to see how we respond. The world is watching our worship and I can assure

you that they notice our worship. Even in the church, worship is recognized. If you are committed to worshipping the Lord, folks will take notice.

B. Genuine Worship is Resented (12) – The Chaldeans were angry with those who refused to worship the image. They accused them before the king. They resented the fact that these three Hebrews didn't conform to the king's demand to worship as the others did.

- I hate to admit it, but genuine worship is still resented in our day. If you are determined to worship the Lord, there will be those who will not like it. The world doesn't approve of our worship. They can't understand why we live as we do and commit our lives unto the Lord. This world does not embrace those who worship the Lord.
- Even in the church, there are those who resent real worship. Some have no problem with the service as long as it follows the routine. They want everything to go as planned, even if real worship isn't achieved. But, if we get serious and begin to worship the Lord, some become resentful. They see no reason why the service had to go beyond 12:00. (Just keep in mind, if you are committed to worship, there will be a certain amount of resentment.)

C. Genuine Worship is Revealing (13) – When Nebuchadnezzar heard the news that some had refused to bow, his anger and rage came forth. The fact that these had not worshiped his image revealed his true character.

- Genuine worship has that effect on people. Worship has a way of separating the sheep from the goats. I know that we all worship in different ways and there are times when our lives are not where they should be with God and we fail to worship. But, if we have been saved, if the Holy Spirit dwells within us, there will be a desire to worship the Lord and we will not be angry when others worship.

III. The Obedience of Worship (14-29) – Here we discover their obedience in worship, even though their lives were threatened. We find worship:

A. Involves Confidence (14-17) – The Hebrews were brought before the king and questioned concerning their lack of worship of the image. There was no hesitation in their response. They were confident in God's ability.

- Aren't you glad that we worship one in whom we can depend? I am confident in my Lord's ability to meet my needs as well. If we don't possess that confidence then we will have a hard time worshipping Him. He has never failed me and I have no fear that He ever will.

B. Involves Commitment (18-23) – They knew that God was able to deliver them, but even if He didn't, they still were not going to bow. “Be it known, O king, that if it isn't God's will to deliver us, we still will not bow! He is our God and we are committed to worshipping Him and nothing else.” Their commitment was not just idle words. These men remained committed as they were bound and cast into the midst of the fiery furnace.

- Genuine worship involves genuine commitment. It can't be just words that we speak, but lives that we live. There must be a commitment to serve the Lord that this world cannot shake or obstruct. We need more commitment in our day. Real worship lacks commitment as well. We need those who are determined to serve the Lord no matter what. (I believe the day is coming in America that we will have to make a decision like these men made. Will you be committed to worship the Lord at the risk of prison or death?)

C. Involves Communion (24-27) – It must've appeared that these foolish Jews had signed their death warrant in rebellion. But wait, when the king looked in, he saw a fourth Man in the midst of the fire with them. They had stood for God, worshipping Him, and the Lord showed up in their fire.

- The best way I know to experience and enjoy communion with the Lord is to worship Him. He has never failed to meet with those who were committed to Him in worship. If you desire God's presence, worship!

D. Involves Conviction (28-29) – These men stood their ground and the idol worship was suspended the first day. Their worship and the sight of God honoring that worship touched the heart of Nebuchadnezzar. God used their worship to bring conviction to an ungodly king.

- We desperately need that in our worship services. We have lost our power in this day. There is no conviction in our services. God's people don't worship and there is little witness to the lost. We can't reach them if there is no commitment to worship on our part. The world is looking for something that is real. I am convinced that if we would get back to genuine worship, it would change our churches, our communities, and our world!

Conclusion: Has worship influenced your life? Are you worshiping in a way that can have an impact on the lives of others? We need to develop the passion for worship these men had. If there are needs in your life, come as the Spirit leads.