

Reverence in Worship

The reverence that is necessary for proper worship is not based on externals such as dimmed lights, etc. The proper reverent attitude that is to characterize every worshiper of God comes from within the individual. While this attitude must come from the heart of each person there are a few things that would aid worship and help develop the reverence needed. Here are a few suggestions to help us improve in our worship:

- First, prepare your mind mentally for worship. Know what you are doing and why you are doing it. Read a passage from the Bible, look over some of the songs that are to be sung or pray a silent prayer for strength and focus.
- Second, keep the use of the rest rooms by you and your children to a minimum during the worship period.
- Third, be aware of toddlers to teens. They are never too young or too old to worship. Remember, attitudes learned while one is a youth are carried into adulthood.
- Fourth, be as well-rested as possible. You will then be physically and mentally alert.
- Fifth, concentrate on what is going on. Put all other things out of your mind.

Many other things could be suggested but if we use these guidelines and determine in our heart to offer worship that is well-pleasing to God, it will reap great benefits for us in this life and the life to come. Let us all learn to truly serve our merciful Father in spirit and in truth.

- by Gene Taylor

The Power of A Young Person's Influence

Children are natural imitators, not only of their parents, but also of each other. Paul alludes to this inborn mimicry when he commands us to "be imitators of God as dear children." (Ephesians 5:1). So, children are "imitators." We know this. But we get so focussed on "peer pressure" as a negative thing that we forget that young people can and should influence one another to do good. Yes, it is possible for them to imitate good. In fact, the Bible commands it! The Bible says, "Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good" (3 John 11).

There are important reasons for young and old alike to work at imitating good. For one thing, we'll have much less to fear in the way of negative consequences for our behavior. In 1 Peter 3:13, Peter asks, "And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?" It's just not very likely that you'll ever get in much trouble or be punished severely for following a good example. Besides this, the Lord will love and appreciate you if you will allow yourself to be influenced to do good. Proverbs 15:9 says that, "The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But He loves him who follows righteousness."

The fact that young people can be influenced BY others necessarily implies that they can also be influences ON others. The Bible commands the young to be good examples, so that others will have something worthwhile to imitate. The young man Timothy was told, "Let no one despise your youth, but BE AN EXAMPLE to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

So, to the young we say BE INFLUENCED and BE AN INFLUENCE:

- Let yourself be influenced to obey the gospel, and then influence someone else to do the same.
- Let yourself be influenced to use pure speech, and then influence someone else to do the same.
- Let yourself be influenced to dress modestly, and then influence others to do the same.
- Let yourself be influenced to reverently participate in worship (no note passing, giggling, whispering), and then influence someone else to do the same.
- Let yourself be influenced to be kind to others, and then influence someone else to do the same.

- by Steve Klein

Resolution Require Commitment!

A reportedly true story is told about a school principal who, at the end of the year, encouraged all his teachers to write out their resolution for the new year. He promised to post these on the faculty bulletin board so that all could benefit from them. When the resolutions were posted, all the teachers crowded around to read the suggestions from their co-workers. Suddenly one of the teachers erupted in a fit of anger. "Mine is not here! He's purposefully left mine off the board. He doesn't care about me. That just shows how little I'm appreciated around here!" The principal was shocked. He had not intentionally left anyone's resolution off the board. He rushed to his desk and found the missing note under a pile of papers. He immediately proceeded to post it. The resolution read: "I resolve not to let little things upset me anymore."

What we see here is a clear case of resolution without commitment. All of us are guilty of this -- and it happens too often. Failed diets, abandoned exercise plans, neglected projects, etc., are all the result of lack of commitment.

But, without doubt, the most serious area of concern is in our spiritual service to God. At one time or another we have all said, "I need to do better, and I intend to do so!" It may involve our attendance at the worship services and Bible studies, or it might be in personal study and prayer. Perhaps it involves personal work, or sharing hospitality with other Christians. Whatever it might be, the resolve is good, but we need commitment to see the task through.

As we enter into this new year, let's do some serious personal evaluation; make some needed resolutions; and then, FOLLOW THEM THROUGH!

- by Greg Gwin