

Going to buy new clothes with a teenager can be quite a task. With a great number of stores carrying an even greater number of styles and colors, the process can go on for days. There are so many things to consider: what's in, what's out, what fits, what's comfortable, etc.

Many people try on churches the way teenagers try on clothes. They look for a style and fit that suits them and is comfortable - whether it is traditional or avant guard. But is there a criteria other than ourselves in finding a church that is right for us? And if so, where are those criteria?

Not surprisingly, God gives us instruction in his Word. Consider some things that God teaches about worship:

▶ God is the focus of worship.

"... you shall worship no other god for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." Exodus 34:14

"Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before him, all the earth." Psalm 96:9

"Who shall not fear you, O Lord, and glorify name? For you alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before you." Revelation 15:4

The measure of worship must be how well God is glorified and exalted, not how joyful we are made to feel in the worship service.

▶ God regulates worship.

"You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way; ... Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; shall not add to it nor take away from it." Deuteronomy 12:31, 32

"Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you." Matthew 28:20

When people took it upon themselves to worship God in ways contrary to his instruction, they suffered the consequences:

"And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which he had not commanded them. So fire went out from the Lord, and detoured them, and they died before the Lord." Leviticus 10:1, 2

Christ Jesus severely rebukes the Pharisees for changing the right worship of God.

"Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. And in vain

they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' For laying aside the commandment of God you hold the tradition of men. . ."
Mark 7:6, 7

When men begin to worship God according to their own design, they usually design the god they worship as well - one who likes the things they like, and appreciates the worship they offer.

▶ God delights in worship

"...the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship him." John 4:23

True worship comes only from the renewed heart of a Christian. It is offered up to God the Father, through Jesus Christ the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit, according to God's Word. Such worship focuses on and exalts the glory and power of God. Indeed, God is "*enthroned in the praises of Israel*" (Psalm 22:3). When we make it our delight to praise and worship God according to his Word, then we expect the blessing and fellowship of our God. For God alone has power to regulate worship and God alone has power to bless our worship.

Is your worship according to God's command?

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