

WWJ U: Hollow Worship

Matthew 15:1-2, 7-9

Key Points:

- One of the things that breaks Jesus' heart is hollow, empty worship. He encounters this in the Pharisees (v1-2) and describes their worship as a farce (v.7).
- When we think and talk about worship we often focus on the type of music, the style of song, the atmosphere and the ambience. Which is right before God? **It's not about the style of music but the condition of our hearts.** And it goes deeper, **worship isn't just the songs we sing, but the life that we live.**
- How do we express our worship to God? Sometimes we **bow in reverence** (Psalm 95.6), sometimes we **lift our hands in adoration** (Psalm 63.4), sometimes we **dance in celebration** (Psalm 149.3), sometimes we **offer a sacrifice of praise** (Hebrews 13.15 - choosing to worship Him when we *don't* feel Him, when things aren't good. Our worship is not based on circumstances but on God's character). And always, we **lay down our lives as an act of worship** (Romans 12.1)

Questions:

Conversation Starter - Get the group involved with a question everyone can answer

1. Describe what a meaningful expression of worship (in church) looks like for you.
2. What different kinds of worship have you experienced in churches?

Start thinking - Get the group thinking around the subject,

3. Why do you think people have such strong opinions about different styles of worship?
4. Read Matthew 15:7-9. Talk about what it would be like to live out everything we sing with our lips.
5. Why was this such a big deal for Jesus? Aren't there bigger issues we should be dealing with?

Start sharing - Choose a question to create openness

6. Which of these biblical acts of worship feel most natural to you: kneeling, raising hands, dancing, or praising? Share your experiences.
7. How can you grow in your in-church expression of worship? Where does God need to stretch you?
8. Considering who God is and what He's done for you, how can you worship Him with the way you live this week?

Start praying - Write a short prayer that gets to the heart of 'so what' in your sermon.

9. God, You're our rock when we're broken, our way when we're lost, and our light on the darkest day. You are worth far more than every ounce of our worship, and every form of praise. Thank You, good Father. Amen

Start doing - draw out some steps to do (either in the meeting or this week)

10. Expand the ways you worship God in and out of church—not just this week, but for good. Perhaps take some time to write a note/letter/song words to God thank Him for everything He's done for you. Share it with your group during the week.