

## WHEN WORSHIP IS UNACCEPTABLE

*Nicolas Edwards*

Not all worship is accepted by God. Throughout Scripture, there are examples of worship that was unacceptable. Worship is unacceptable when:

**IT IS NOT BY FAITH.** In Genesis 4, Cain and Abel brought offerings to the Lord. The Lord respected Abel's offering, but not Cain's. Hebrews 11:4 says, *"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."* Since *"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Rom. 10:17), a person cannot do something by faith apart from the word. To do something by faith is to do what the word of the Lord says. Abel did that, but Cain did not. Thus, his offering was unacceptable.

**IT IS NOT WHAT GOD COMMANDED.** In Leviticus 10:1-2, *"Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died*

*before the Lord."* When we act without authority and worship in a way that God has not commanded, it is unacceptable! One example of this is the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship.

**IT FAILS TO DO WHAT GOD COMMANDED.** King Saul was commanded to utterly destroy Amalek and spare them not (1 Sam. 15:3). Saul and the people disobeyed, sparing the king and the best. They did not utterly destroy them (1 Sam. 15:9). Because of this, the Lord said Saul *"Is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments"* (1 Sam. 15:11). Saul said, *"I have performed the commandment of the Lord"* (1 Sam. 15:13). Men can disobey God and still claim to have obeyed God. This wasn't true! He blamed the people for his sin and used the excuse that the people had spared to sacrifice unto the Lord (1 Sam. 15:21). God said to obey is better than sacrifice (1 Sam. 15:22). Disobedience to God, even for a good cause, makes worship unacceptable.

**IT COMES FROM SINFUL PEOPLE.** In Isaiah 1, God's people in Judah were now a *"Sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked*

*the Holy One of Israel unto anger; they are gone away backward"* (Is. 1:4). They have rebelled against God. In this state, the people were still offering sacrifices to God (Is. 1:11-15). God says His soul hates their worship and it is abomination (Is. 1:13-14). When you or I have sin in our lives, this separates us from God, and our worship is unacceptable. Those members of the church, living in sin, refusing to repent, are not accepted by God. They need to be warned and withdrawn from (1 Th. 5:14; 2 Th. 3).

**IT IS NOT OUR BEST.** In Malachi 1, God's people were not giving their best! They had better, but did not give better. God said, *"I have no pleasure in you"* (Mal. 1:10). Through this, they had profaned the great name of the Lord (Mal. 1:11-12). The Lord is *"A Great King"* (Mal. 1:14). When we give less than our best to Him, we make common, we belittle, we disrespect Almighty God! This, God does not accept.

Just worshipping God is not enough. There is a line of acceptability before God and if we do not strictly adhere to His pattern, we are not living right, we have the wrong attitude, we do not give our very best, we fall below that line and are unaccepted by God!

## WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT TALEBEARING

John Edwards

Talebearing is kin to slander. A talebearer is one who gives birth to or carries an account of a real or imagined event, a piece of gossip (easy, fluent, trivial talk; talk about people behind their backs), a lie (*The New Webster's Dictionary*). The talebearer exerts a power no less harmful to the Lord's body than the slanderer.

**TALEBEARING IS A SHALT NOT.** The old covenant contained this talebearing ordinance: "*Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people...I am the Lord*" (Lev. 19:16). To understand the seriousness of violating a spiritual "*shalt not*", simply take note of the sentence pronounced upon Adam and Eve for doing that which divine law said not to do (Gen. 2:16-17; 3). You're not known as a talebearer among thy people, are you?

**TALEBEARING REVEALS SECRETS.** In setting forth moral virtues and their contrary vices,

Solomon uttered, "*A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter*" (Prov. 11:13). Again it is written, "*He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips*" (Prov. 20:19). The talebearer cannot work alone — he must have a second party. Are you aware that you are a facilitator to talebearing when you give ear to a talebearer? If I should encounter a bearer of tales, wisdom tells me not to get involved with such. If folks would quit listening to it, perhaps they would quit telling it.

**TALEBEARING INFLECTS DEEP, PENETRATING WOUNDS.** "*The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly*" (Prov. 18:8; 26:22). Words from the mouth can be like arrows from a bow. The Psalmist penned, "*For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart*" (Ps. 11:2). These lacerations can be long in healing.

**TALEBEARING KINDLES STRIFE.** Sacred poetry writing records, "*Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth. As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife*" (Prov. 26:20). Contention and strife may reveal the presence of a talebearer. A fire is constantly burning, among some brethren, as there are those constantly stirring up strife. Brethren just need to smother it by not tolerating talebearing!

Along with slander, talebearing needs to be flushed out of the church.

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with  
**Ron Halbrook**

**Oct. 28-Nov. 3**

**The Terre Haute **SPEAKER**** is published weekly by the church of Christ at Terre Haute, Indiana.

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Terre Haute, IN 47803  
[Exit 11 (I-70) W on HWY 46,  
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