

# Swept off your Feet

## Beyond Worship-as-Usual

Connecting with God for a Strong Finish

### CHAPTER 23

## Worshippers Do Worship

When “we face up to the glory of God,  
we soon find ourselves facedown in worship.”<sup>1</sup>

Matt Redman

The Bible does not dictate a preferred response for worshipers. It avoids imperative commands and approved protocols. Unlike rules for offerings and sacrifices, it issues neither detail nor directive for style and substance. Instead, the Bible emphasizes what worshipers stopped doing when they conveyed reverence. Nearly everyone stopped standing, stopped looking, and most stopped speaking. Angels, demons, and humans pressed themselves low to exalt God’s highness. Smitten by His glory, they offered unsolicited veneration—more by what they did not do than by anything they did.

As if on cue but without a rehearsal, most worshipers fell facedown. Fascinated by His presence, impressed by His performance, and exhilarated by His promises, they assumed a posture of justifiable homage. The immense pleasure associated with knowing God and experiencing His love should literally sweep us off our feet.

When mortals encounter God’s manifest glory (and they rarely do), something constrains them to fall flat on their face. At times, the star-

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<sup>1</sup> Matt Redman, *Facedown*, Regal Books, Ventura, CA, 2004, p 13.

tling appearance of an angel or prominent leader mistakenly prompts a similar response. From pagan magi to seasoned disciples, from deranged demoniacs to desperate lepers, falling at Jesus feet was a typical response when they realized He was Lord.<sup>2</sup> When the Bible describes a divine appearance coined a theophany, it usually mentions a facedown response.

Like multitudes in heaven, worshipers on earth surrender every pose of dignified reserve. They declare God's paramount worth with actions that speak louder than words. As divine reality invades the moment, obligatory charades and disingenuous hype fall flat. True worshipers prostrate themselves with tacit determination—like water poured from a jug.

Throughout the Bible, worshipers express veneration with the utmost respect. Humans and angels repositioned their entire orientation with a stance-altering bow. This unique and radical response transcends thoughts, words, and deeds. Encountering God (not merely a conceptualized version of Him) transformed the posture of their spirit, soul, and body from that of a curious spectator into a fully engaged participant.

God is more than a belief system with theories to consider and principles to ponder. He transcends theological information and academic oratory. When worshipers experience God's presence, they know instinctively that thoughts are inadequate, words are insufficient, and works of service fall short. Announcing, "I worship you" without bowing in reverence is like sitting down to a delicious meal and saying, "I eat you" without ever taking a bite. True worship requires decisive action based on informed reason. According to N. T. Wright:

If your idea of God...is vague or remote, your idea of worship will be fuzzy and ill-formed. The closer you get to the truth, the clearer

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<sup>2</sup> (Matthew 2:11); (Matthew 14:33 and Luke 5:8); (Mark 3:11, 5:6-7 and Luke 8:28); (Matthew 8:2, Mark 1:40, Luke 17:16) respectively

becomes the beauty, and the more you will find worship welling up within you.<sup>3</sup>

Knowing the truth about God evokes an internal response bursting with external expression. Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks and the body moves. With integrated reverence, worshipers bow from the inside out. Spirit moves soul, which triggers body to act in one harmonious gesture.

In *“The Air I Breathe, Worship as a Way of Life”*, Louie Giglio defines worship as, “our response to what we value most”.<sup>4</sup> Later, he expands that definition to include the following assertion claiming that worship is:

Our response, both personal and corporate, to God—For who He is! And what He has done! Expressed in and by the things we say And the way we live.

Putting it another way, Giglio and others stretch worship to include:

... a whole-life response to God’s greatness and glory. A response that taps our mind, our soul, our heart of passion...and all our strength.<sup>5</sup>

### **Beyond Blind-Sighted Conformity**

Our Heavenly Father seeks worshipers because they radiate informed reverence. Without pretense, they mean what they say and do what they mean. When faced with the facts, true worshipers think for themselves and act with conviction. Unmoved by the suasions of others, they respond with integrity. They avoid peer-pressured routines imposed by the herd of collective religion. Conscientious worshipers perceive God objectively and then draw conclusions independently.

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<sup>3</sup> N. T. Wright, *For All God’s Worth*, Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, U.K., 1997, p. 10.

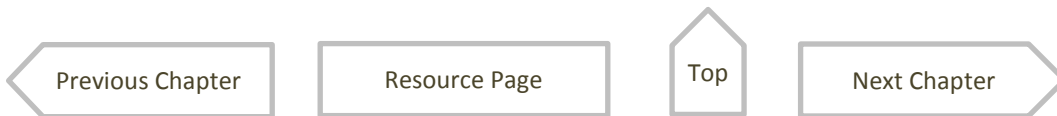
<sup>4</sup> Louie Giglio, *The Air I Breathe*, Multnomah Publishers Inc., 2003, p. 48-49.

<sup>5</sup> Louie Giglio, *The Air I Breathe*, p. 51.

According to Matt Redman,

“Facedown worship always begins as a posture of the heart. It’s people so desperate for the increase of Christ that they find themselves decreasing to the ground in an act of reverent submission. When a soul is so captivated by the Almighty, to bend low in true and total surrender seems the only appropriate response.”<sup>6</sup>

Heart attitudes assign meaning to the gestures that we offer. Redman describes facedown worship as “the overflow of a heart humbled and amazed by the glory of God”.<sup>7</sup> When we comprehend the truth about our Heavenly Father, our response spills all over the ground. It defies robotic customs and mechanistic habits. God sees through rote pantomime. He looks past empty-minded charades. Pretending to worship in thought, word, or deed is not an option when staring into the passionate gaze of our Heavenly Father.



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<sup>6</sup> Matt Redman, *Facedown*, Regal Books, Ventura, CA, 2004, p 14.

<sup>7</sup> Matt Redman, *Facedown*, Regal Books, Ventura, CA, 2004, p 14.