



Swept off your Feet

Beyond Worship-as-Usual

Connecting with God for a Strong Finish

CHAPTER 29

Worship Mavens

Mavens are trusted experts. They know the truth and comprehend its significance. Being both knowledgeable and experienced, they exert a far-reaching and long-lasting influence. The word maven (also mavin) comes from the Hebrew/Yiddish language. It literally means, “one who understands”.¹ Mavens understand the facts and they communicate them with authority.

Our Heavenly Father seeks worshipers who understand and experience the truth. By the quality of their words and the integrity of their deeds, worship mavens convey effusive gratitude with the passion of an affectionate lover. Since they appraise God’s worth with in-depth understanding, they articulate highest praise with informed intensity.

In “Outliers: the Story of Success”, Malcolm Gladwell draws on a maven in expertise theory to highlight a key ingredient for success.² Swedish psychologist K. Anders Ericsson found that standouts in virtually every field share one thing in common—10,000 hours of “deliberate practice”.³ Experts in the performing and fine arts, sports, education, writing, software development, etc., all excel because they dedicate the

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maven>

² Malcolm Gladwell, “Outliers: the Story of Success”, Little, Brown, and Company, New York, 2008.

³ Malcolm Gladwell, *Outliers: The Story of Success*, Little, Brown and Company, New York, 2008

equivalent of 20 hours per week for 50 weeks each year for 10 years refining their talent and developing their skill.

As we contend with competing interests and rival attractions, our Heavenly Father seeks attentive worshipers who really know Him. They understand what He has done and they appreciate what He offers. Ten thousand hours of deliberate attention—that is a good place to start.

Above all else, worship mavens show their Heavenly Father what He is looking for—a response grounded in the knowledge of the truth. Informed by theological certitude and inspired by divine revelation, worship mavens bow with expressive veneration—then they arise to perform exploits beyond their own strength and courage. Worship mavens inspire others to comprehend the value of God’s worth, to praise Him with accomplished excellence, and to worship Him with steadfast devotion.

*“the people who **know** their God
will display strength and take action”*
Daniel 11:32 (NAS)

Makes His Praise Glorious

Intending to make the most of our time, we are obliged to do more than bow down occasionally. God’s wisdom urges us to apply inspired insight with dynamic foresight. After appraising Jesus for all He’s worth, we propel our faith into the future by living, loving, and influencing for all that we are worth.

Time limits our potential for knowing the truth about God. Finite moments divide our life with irreversible permanence. Once time passes, we cannot click a rewind button to relive a single moment. Each season holds special meaning. Every increment exists for a purpose. Our eternal destiny rests on a foundation of finitude, set between conception and expiration.

As time winds down, our Heavenly Father anticipates a unified response led by worship mavens. He is not looking for professional disci-

ples doing sophisticated religion or pious performers staging a show. With eyes fixed on His beloved children, our Heavenly Father seeks shining stars bursting with praise and established in worship. While some may bow in hidden solitude, others will convene publicly to make His praise glorious.

The future, which John saw in the Revelation, reaches back with prophetic urgency—it thrusts worshipers forward with intrepid hope. Fearless and valiant, worshipers will resist Satan and they will venerate Jesus. As each generation waits for Jesus to return, faith, hope, and love sharpen their perspective. The time has come for those who know the truth about Christ to reclaim their heritage as shining stars holding forth the word of life with a far-reaching and unquenchable influence.

Over the centuries, talented believers have vacillated between leading and following—especially in the performing and fine arts. As worship mavens proclaim God’s highest praise, they will restore strategic initiatives in music, song, dance, drama, painting, and sculpture. With accomplished expertise, they will captivate longing hearts and sway searching minds. Worshipers do more than inform society; they transform culture with inspired awareness and provocative assurance. Instead of mimicking secular trends, prophetic artistry speaks to the heart with a powerful language beyond words.

As God waits for sinners to recognize and acknowledge His worth, enlightened saints are preparing a glorious response—one that resonates with the heavenly host. Vast multitudes will eventually assemble before God’s regard on a foundation of informed worship. As crescendos of praise ascend with sonic authority, worship mavens will present their creative masterpiece propelled by reverence.

Worshiping God—Without Uzzah’s Mistake

While ushering God’s presence onto Mt. Zion, King David showed favoritism to two brothers, Uzzah and Ahio, sons of a Hebrew nobleman.⁴

⁴ 1 Chronicles 13 and 2 Samuel 6

Like other high-profile performers, these men enjoyed special privileges in the spotlight of service. Contrary to God’s command, David appointed persons of prominence to chauffeur the Ark of the Covenant. When their ox-powered cart stumbled, Uzzah reached out to grab the seat of God’s presence. He immediately died because the Lord struck him for acting “*irreverently*”, i.e., without appropriate reverence.

Adopting the ways and means of Israel’s adversary proved fatal for Uzzah. For all practical purposes, he extended himself far beyond his spiritual authority. God had specifically commissioned priests to carry the Ark of His presence. The method that had worked for the Philistines failed when Uzzah held the reins. He had performed an unfortunate solo by taking matters into his own hands—literally.

In a similar way, employing the methods of rival religions or popular entertainers may prove disastrous for the church at the end of this age. Worshiping God while contending with Satan requires more authority than a professional musician or noble benefactor can offer. As the spiritual climate changes dramatically, connecting with God and responding with reverence will become increasingly important.

After Uzzah’s disastrous attempt to help others connect with God’s presence, “*all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouts, with the sounding of rams’ horns and trumpets, and of cymbals, and the playing of lyres and harps*”.⁵ When it comes to celebrating a divine connection, our Heavenly Father desires all-inclusive participation. King David stripped down from his royal garments to stand on an even plane with everyone else for this occasion.⁶ When connecting with God, every member in the Body of Christ has something to contribute—novice and maven alike.

Unlike the strict rules of engagement, which applied to an Old Covenant priesthood, everyone can now participate in praise and worship.

⁵ 1 Chronicles 15:28 NIV

⁶ 2 Sam 6:16, 20-22 NKJ

Connecting with Jesus is not an exclusive affair reserved for VIPs or elite priests. God's circle of friends extends beyond the privilege of a favored few. He welcomes a large response from vast multitudes.

A Graphic Legacy in Heaven

Knowing the truth about our Heavenly Father replaces casual religion with a supernatural relationship. It reinvigorates stale rituals, transforming them into dynamic encounters. Christ's love sets the record straight by sweeping us off our feet. It triggers an extravagant response, embellished with praise and enriched by worship.

Our Heavenly Father never forgets sentiments conveyed by a worshiper. Their reverence reverberates forever. Whether brief or prolonged, worship defines our connection with God and guides our connection with others. It confirms our destiny and affirms our humanity. Each gesture highlights our signature in the Book of Life with eternal significance. By ascribing reverence on earth, we engrave an everlasting autograph in heaven's archive. Scripted by spirit, choreographed by soul, and performed in body, reverence on earth initiates a graphic legacy. Each response validates our divine design and authenticates our eternal purpose.

