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By Jim Mathis

Even In The Workplace, We Are Made To Worship

It seems all human beings are designed to worship something, even within the scope of our professional lives. We seem to require having an object for our affections if we are to be whole, to be complete. Some people worship sports or a particular sport, team, or player. They know all the statistics, and devote countless hours and significant amounts of money to following their team. The line between dedicated fan and ardent worship can easily become obliterated.

Other people worship music, giving highest honor to their favorite band or entertainer. Some people worship a political affiliation or an important cause. Others worship a specific profession, such as the military, or a symbol, like a flag, and give special honor to the object of their worship. Nationalism, which is worshipping one's country and considering it superior to every other nation, has spawned real problems in some places, including my home country, the United States.

For many business people, their work becomes an object of worship. They might devote inordinate amounts of time to their company or profession to the exclusion of family, friends, their health, and especially God.

Sometimes we worship money or its pursuit, forgetting money is intended only as a tool, not as a "god." This is one reason Jesus said, in *Matthew 6: 24*, "*No one can serve two masters*". Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. He was asserting we cannot grow spiritually if money competes with God for our time, energy and reverence.

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Even within Christianity, worship can take many forms, some that distract from our devotion to the one true God. People often worship a particular style or order of worship, or even the Bible, placing it above the God whose story it tells. Some people worship their spouse, confusing such worship with normal love and affection.

From the beginning, God knew this would be a problem. He built into us a desire to worship, but when He handed down the Ten Commandments to Moses, made clear He alone should be the focus of our worship. The very first commandment God gave to His people said, "I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other gods before me."

The Message, an paraphrase of the Bible, expresses *Exodus 20:3-6* this way: "*No other gods, only me. No carved gods of any size, shape, or form of anything whatever, whether of things that fly or walk or swim. Don't bow down to them and don't serve them because I am God, your God, and I'm a most jealous God, punishing the children for any sins their parents pass on to them to the third, and yes, even to the fourth generation of those who hate me. But I'm unswervingly loyal to the thousands who love me and keep my commandments.*"

In reading the biblical account that surrounds the giving of the Ten Commandments, we discover that by the time Moses had gotten back from the mountain with commandments, the Israelites had already built a calf of gold to worship. It did not take long for them to let the object of their worship to become divided.

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We have a need to worship something. The question we must ask ourselves is whether the object of our worship truly deserves our devotion and dedication? Is it a "god" that will never fail us? In my experience, there is only one, the God who said, "*I will never leave you nor forsake you*" (*Hebrews 13:5*). What other "god" can say that?

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Reflection/Discussion Question

1. How would you define worship? In your opinion, is worship strictly a religious practice, or does involve other aspects of life, as Mr. Mathis asserts?
2. What types of things do you find yourself inclined to worship?
3. If we realize our worship has become divided, that we are worshipping more than one thing or object, how can we order our lives to eliminate other "gods" or prevent them from creeping in?
4. In your view, how should worship affect your approach to your career and how you approach the work you do every day?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

Exodus 20:5, 23:24-26; 2 Kings 17:36-39; Psalm 29:1-2; Matthew 4:8-10; Luke 4:5-8

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