



AUTHENTIC
WORSHIP

• • • •

THE PATH TO
GREATER UNITY
WITH

GOD

A.W.
TOZER

COMPILED AND EDITED BY JAMES L. SNYDER



**AUTHENTIC
WORSHIP**

Books by A.W. Tozer

COMPILED AND EDITED BY JAMES L. SNYDER

Alive in the Spirit
And He Dwelt Among Us
Authentic Worship
A Cloud by Day, a Fire by Night
The Crucified Life
The Dangers of a Shallow Faith
Delighting in God
A Disruptive Faith
The Essential Tozer Collection 3-in-1
Experiencing the Presence of God
The Fire of God's Presence
God's Power for Your Life
Going Higher with God in Prayer
Lead like Christ
Living as a Christian
My Daily Pursuit
No Greater Love
Preparing for Jesus' Return
The Purpose of Man
The Pursuit of God
The Quotable Tozer
Reclaiming Christianity
Voice of a Prophet
The Wisdom of God

BOOKS BY JAMES L. SNYDER

*The Life of A.W. Tozer: In Pursuit of God—The Authorized
Biography*

AUTHENTIC WORSHIP

THE PATH TO
GREATER UNITY
WITH GOD

A.W.
TOZER

COMPILED AND EDITED BY JAMES L. SNYDER



BETHANYHOUSE

a division of Baker Publishing Group
Minneapolis, Minnesota

© 2023 by James L. Snyder

Published by Bethany House Publishers
Minneapolis, Minnesota
www.bethanyhouse.com

Bethany House Publishers is a division of
Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Printed in the United States of America

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—for example, electronic, photocopy, recording—without the prior written permission of the publisher. The only exception is brief quotations in printed reviews.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Tozer, A. W. (Aiden Wilson), 1897–1963., author. | Snyder, James L., editor.

Title: Authentic worship : the path to greater unity with God / A. W. Tozer;
compiled and edited by James L. Snyder.

Description: Minneapolis, Minnesota : Bethany House Publishers, a division of
Baker Publishing Group, [2023]

Identifiers: LCCN 2022047544 | ISBN 9780764240287 (trade paperback) | ISBN
9780764242120 (casebound) | ISBN 9781493440795 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Public worship.

Classification: LCC BV15 .T682 2023 | DDC 264—dc23/eng/20221125

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022047544>

Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by
Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Cover design by Rob Williams, InsideOut Creative Arts, Inc.

James L. Snyder is represented by The Steve Laube Agency.

Baker Publishing Group publications use paper produced from sustainable forestry
practices and post-consumer waste whenever possible.

23 24 25 26 27 28 29 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents



- Introduction 7

- 1. My Quiet Crusade for Authentic Worship 11
- 2. The Roots of Authentic Worship 19
- 3. Our Presence in Authentic Worship 27
- 4. The Power of Praise in Authentic Worship 35
- 5. God's Holiness in Authentic Worship 43
- 6. God's Perfection in Authentic Worship 51
- 7. The Art of Song in Authentic Worship 59
- 8. The Lord of Glory and Meekness Revealed in Authentic
Worship 65
- 9. The Voice of God in Authentic Worship 73
- 10. The Secret Place of the Most High in Authentic
Worship 81
- 11. Spiritual Sight in Authentic Worship 89

12. The Manifest Presence of God in Authentic
Worship 97
13. Our Unity with God in Authentic Worship 107
14. Our Conscious Awareness in Authentic Worship 115
15. Our Freedom in Authentic Worship 125
16. The Power of Fire in Authentic Worship 135
17. The Beauty of God in Authentic Worship 143
18. Conclusion 151

Introduction



Anyone who has read an A.W. Tozer book will readily admit that worship was at the center of almost everything he wrote. He might be dealing with a certain subject, but the idea of worship will come in somewhere along the line.

In using the word *authentic*, Tozer emphasizes that not all worship in the Church today is authentic. Much like in the Old Testament when Israel slowly succumbed to many false gods, so the Church today is following suit. Tozer's passion concerning worship was that it always be pleasing to God, as authentic worship, not worship that pleased the carnal Christian or the world.

Once when I was talking to his assistant pastor, Reverend Raymond McAfee, he mentioned that often when he would go into Tozer's study at the church, he would find him lying facedown on the floor in the form of worship. It was part of his persona.

In all his preaching, he regularly touched on the subject of worship. In fact, he preached several series on worship. But

everything he preached or wrote about had something to do with his relationship to God, which was clearly expressed in worship.

According to Tozer, how you worship God reveals what kind of Christian you are. In this book, Tozer mentions that everybody worships, even those who don't believe in God. It's not if you worship God, but *how* you worship God that is so important. Also, it is what you are worshiping. In our world today, we are worshiping everything except God. A.W. Tozer's passion was for the Church to get back to the kind of authentic worship that excluded everything else.

Much of what is in this book regarding worship would not have been acceptable to Christians, even in Tozer's day (he died in 1963), as the Church was moving away from what he referred to as "authentic worship." Instead, the Church was bringing the world into the Church to establish priorities, especially surrounding worship.

When it came to worship, Tozer would pick up his Bible and a hymnbook, and he would simply focus on God. (Who has a hymnal close at hand these days?) The significance of hymns for Tozer was in how they focused on the God of the Bible. This was important to him. Today, much of worship music is what Tozer would call a "feel-good kind of religion." Yet worship does not make us *feel good* all the time.

If there's something in my life that is out of tune with the character and nature of God, I cannot be made to feel good. Moreover, if I feel good all the time, something must be wrong. This idea was what Tozer often put forth. But, according to him, sorrow and discouragement can be used by God to bring us to a place of repentance, which can then lead us to pleasure in God.

One of my favorite stories of Tozer is when he was a speaker at a summer camp meeting. He was scheduled to preach in the evening service and did so for the first couple of nights. Then one night he didn't show up. At first they thought he was running late, but when it came time for him to preach, Tozer was nowhere to be found. Someone else had to fill in for him at the last moment.

The next day, somebody was talking with Tozer and asked him very bluntly where he was the night before. With a faraway look in his eyes, Tozer said, "I had a more important appointment." It was later discovered that he was worshiping God all afternoon and evening and had simply lost track of time. That's the kind of worship he emphasized.

In a few of his books, Tozer writes about "Cain Worship" versus "Abel Worship." Cain's worship was to offer to God that which pleased Cain. In contrast to Cain, Abel's worship was to offer to God in obedience that which God desired of him. So the two brothers were far apart when it came to the worship of God.

Many of today's churches tend to focus on Cain Worship rather than on Abel Worship, and yet both believe they are doing what pleases God. Of course, God alone is the judge; it is He who knows the heart and intent of each worshiper.

This book aims to sort out what is meant by authentic worship, which goes hand in hand with our developing an authentic relationship with God, a relationship that pleases Him. We were created to worship God, but after Adam and Eve succumbed to sin, they (and later, we) lost that level of worship. When Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose on the third day, our worship was restored according to the pleasure of God.

And this restoration did not lift us up to the level of Adam, but of Christ.

Tozer said, “If there is anything in me that doesn’t worship God, there is nothing in me that worships God to His pleasure.” Though this can be hard to put into day-to-day practice, I like the idea here, as it takes a serious believer to worship God in a way He deserves to be worshiped, and in the way we’ve been called to worship Him. With Adam and Eve, Satan took away the pleasure of worship, but through Jesus Christ it has been restored. The challenge, then, comes with our living up to that magnificent restoration.

Once you finish reading this book, I’m quite sure your worship will never be the same but will have a deeper, more genuine quality to it. So let us vow together before God that, regardless of the cost, we will worship Him and give Him the authentic worship He rightfully deserves.

Rev. James L. Snyder, D.Litt.

1

My Quiet Crusade for Authentic Worship

Many will say to Me in that day, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?” And then I will declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!”

Matthew 7:22–23

Since my conversion to Christ, I have had a growing passion for worship. Throughout the years, I have learned more as to what worship is all about and how I can best pursue a life of worship. I hope to continue learning more and more about that. I can’t wait to get to heaven, where my worship will be perfect in God’s view.

I'm using the term *authentic worship* throughout this book because I want to deal with the subject of what true biblical worship is all about. Worship that God cannot only accept but also take pleasure in. To understand that God takes pleasure in my worship is something I have yet to get over. He delights in my coming into His presence to worship and adore Him.

My crusade aims to address today's Church concerning authentic worship. Too often we allow the world to define what worship is and how we should worship God rather than focusing on what Scripture says about worship.

There are passages in Scripture that talk about the worship that has gone afoul today. The roots of false worship can be seen throughout the Bible and have affected authentic worship even today. Jesus' words in the seventh chapter of Matthew—"I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"—reveal the most damaging of experiences for someone. Therefore, I want to avoid ending up in that terrible position. It's not just what I do that matters; my relationship with God affects everything I do.

The trouble of false worship begins with God's rejection of Cain's worship. In the whole of Scripture, we also have Samaritan worship, Baal worship, and pagan worship, to name a few. These have become a problem in the Church today because, for the most part, Christians do not fully understand the biblical aspect of worship. Too often they have allowed the world to define their worship.

All kinds of worship down through the years have infected the Church. Hence I use the word *authentic* because there is much false worship practiced all over the world. Some people believe that if they just worship, they are okay. It doesn't matter

so much what they worship or how they worship, so long as they do it in a way that satisfies their souls and eases their consciences. A brief time, then, spent in worship enables them to go back to their normal lives the rest of the week.

My crusade, however, is to stir up authentic Christians by getting them to the point of dissatisfaction regarding their worship. I know that doesn't sound very nice, and what most people want to hear today is positive reinforcement of what they're already doing. "So long as I worship with good intentions, I'm okay," says the modern Church. Yet this mindset carries with it eternal consequences.

The worship I want to focus on here is that worship which pleases God and meets His expectations. I need to know God in the most intimate way possible to accomplish this. It's an ongoing discipline meant to be experienced every day of our lives. In fact, it should be an obsession of the authentic Christian.

Comparing Cain's worship with Abel's worship shows the contrasting difference between the two. Although these two brothers looked a lot alike on the outside—we probably wouldn't have noticed much difference between them—their worship, on the other hand, was completely the opposite of each other.

Cain's worship pleased Cain and the people around him, whereas Abel's worship was not a popular kind of worship. There was blood involved in his worship, but there also was pleasure involved, and God accepted it because it pleased Him.

If through this book I can rouse believers to reevaluate their worship and get on the right spiritual track in this regard, I will have accomplished my purpose. We often want to write something that will please people and make them feel good about

themselves. But I'm afraid I will be writing things that will create a little bit of discontent among certain people. Here is my rationale: If I can create some discomfort and dissatisfaction in somebody's heart and life, it could spur them to go forward and discover the truth.

I have learned throughout my life that you can't simply present truth; you must stir up the heart and make that heart hungry for truth. I want your heart to be so hungry for worship that nothing else matters.

When I say I am on a "quiet crusade," I am referring to the fact that this is not a popular subject I'm dealing with, and therefore I cannot shout and so call attention to it. Instead, I must address those things that are apt to bring discomfort to the hearts of people trying to follow God and perhaps get them to evaluate their worship. In this way, I stand pretty much alone.

I understand that this is not going to be popular. I understand that worship today is popular, but not the worship of Abel. Nothing about the worship I'm advocating attracts people like Cain's worship would.

I selected Matthew 7:22–23 for this chapter because of the significance of God knowing me, which is what worship is all about. "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

Many people are not doing good in our world today, even those who believe they are in the Christian club. Like Cain, they are doing things that please them. The work they do is what

pleases them and lifts them above the people around them. They have risen to a certain level of celebrity.

Along with this, their worship is that which pleases them, and they take pride in it. Whatever doesn't please them is immediately edited from their schedule.

I want to show that my worship is not designed to please me. My worship is not convenient when I present it to the Lord, just like Abel's sacrifice was bloody and not very pleasant. I am not trying to please myself, but please God in my worship. Therefore, I need to bring to God that which pleases Him, and to do that, I need to seek to understand God and His character. And as my understanding of God grows and develops, so then will my worship.

That is the great challenge with authentic worship. Anybody can worship anything, but if the worship doesn't rise to the level of pleasing God, it is not authentic.

What stands out most to me is the phrase, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness." So they went through the motions of serving God all their lives, but the bottom line was that God never knew them. How tragic to work your entire life doing things that you think will influence God in your direction, only to find out that He did not accept anything in your worship.

God cannot accept my worship unless it meets His standards, and His standards have nothing to do with my ability or understanding. Rather, I must come to worship God by His terms, and in the way that pleases Him, not me.

Looking at the Old Testament style of worship, we find that God dictated their worship of Him. Of course, through the years, under the Pharisees' leadership, Israel drifted away from

the focal point of their worship until the time when Jesus came, and then their worship rejected Him.

If I could use a very simple illustration here, I would use counterfeit money. The danger of counterfeit money is that it looks like the real thing. Most people aren't able to tell whether it's counterfeit or real, and yet the counterfeit money is worth nothing.

Likewise, if we're involved in counterfeit worship, it is worth nothing insofar as God is concerned. The counterfeit may please some people, but it won't please the one or ones who know the difference between the counterfeit and the real or authentic.

Also, true worship has nothing to do with rituals. The apostle Paul said it so well: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). It is that oneness from which our worship flows.

Nor is true worship a denominational thing, though we tend to make it so. Denominations have so messed up the basic worship of God, that it must grieve God beyond measure. The problem with denominations is that too often they eventually become ruled by Pharisees.

What would happen in our world today if we set aside all denominational concerns among churches and instead adopted the biblical standard for worship and praising God? If that indeed took place, I believe there would be a wonderful move of God among worshipers, and because of that move of God, many would come to Christ. As Paul said, "For you are all one in Christ Jesus."

The authentic worship of God should be the primary focus of my life as a follower of Christ. What it takes for me to get

into that position is exactly what I'm willing to do. What I must give up to get into that position I will gladly give up for the glory of God. Authentic worship will cost me everything, but I give testimony that it is well worth the cost.



O God, I pray that You will purify my efforts to worship You. May this be the most important thing in my life today. May my worship be so authentic that it flows in every aspect of my life. May I be swept up in Your presence. In Jesus' name, amen.

O WORSHIP THE KING

O worship the King, all-glorious above,
O gratefully sing his power and his love:
our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,
pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise.

O tell of his might and sing of his grace,
whose robe is the light, whose canopy space.
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,
and dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

Robert Grant