

Why do I go to Church if it bores me to death and I am getting nothing out of it?

Excerpt from the book: *The Crucible of Doubt*, by Terryl and Fiona Givens
Excerpt chosen and title at the top selected by Cameron Ford

As the moral lesson without parallel and the basis of our own salvation and the world's hope, the Atonement fittingly serves as the focal point of our Sunday worship.

Most of us get this, if only vaguely. We know that the main purpose of Sabbath observance is to partake of the Lord's Supper. But we sometimes grow frustrated with all the peripherals. Lessons and talks are to some Mormons what cafeteria food is to teenagers—not just in the way they can be bland and boring, but in the way that they sometimes bring us together in mutual griping rather than mutual edification. But what if we saw lessons and talks as connections to the sacrament rather than as unrelated secondary activities? What if we saw them as opportunities to bear with one another in all our infirmities and ineptitude? What if we saw the mediocre talk, the overbearing counselor, the lesson read straight from the manual, as a lay member's equivalent of the widow's mite? A humble offering, perhaps, but one to be measured in terms of the capacity of the giver rather than in the value received. And if the effort itself is negligible—well, then the gift is the opportunity given us to exercise patience and mercy. If that sounds too idealistic, if we insist on imposing a higher standard on our co-worshippers, if we insist on measuring our worship service in terms of what we “get out of” the meeting, then perhaps we have erred in our understanding of worship.

The first time the word *worship* appears in the King James Version of the Old Testament, it appears with appalling import. “Abide ye here,” Abraham tells his servant, while “I and the lad will go yonder and worship.” (Genesis 22:5) The terrible offering of his son's life is what the Bible's first instance of “worship” portends. In the New Testament, the word *worship* first appears again in conjunction with a costly offering. It is used in reference to the wise men, who “worshipped” the Christ child by “open[ing] their treasures” and “present[ing] unto him gifts.” (Matthew 2:11) Worship, then, is about what we are prepared to relinquish—what we give up at personal cost. When, in the Old Testament, King David sins against God, the prophet Gad tells him to offer a sacrifice by way of reconciliation. Hearing of this, a well-intentioned King Araunah offers to ease David's burden by providing both the site for the altar and the sacrificial oxen. David reproves him, asking, how can “I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing”? (2 Samuel 24:24) Abraham, the wise men, and King David understood that in true worship, we approach the Divine with the desire to offer treasures and gifts, not to seek them.