When I was a child, I attempted a dangerous experiment. I believed all a lightbulb needed was “electricity” any kind without understanding the voltage or proper setup. So, I plugged two bare wires directly into a power socket and touched them to a bulb, expecting it to light up. Instead, the bulb exploded. Thankfully, by God’s mercy, the shards missed my eyes. That day, I learned that a lack of understanding can be dangerous even deadly.

The problem? I thought that the presence of electricity alone was enough. I completely ignored the process and design intended for safely using it. That mistake mirrors a common spiritual issue today: people try to worship God in ways He has not authorized.

The Danger of Unauthorized Worship

In Leviticus 10:1–2 (ESV), we see the tragic story of Aaron’s sons:

> “Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, which he had not commanded them. And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord.”

Their error? Offering “unauthorized fire” also called “strange fire” in other translations. This was a fire not taken from the altar of burnt offering, where God Himself had ignited the flame (Leviticus 9:24), and which was to burn perpetually (Leviticus 6:12–13). God had given clear instructions that any fire used in the tabernacle must come from His altar, symbolizing worship that originates from divine instruction, not human innovation.

“Holy Fire” vs. “Strange Fire”

The altar fire represented God’s holiness, His wrath against sin, and His provision for atonement through sacrifice. That fire was not just symbolic; it was sacred. To use a different fire was to treat the holy as common something God repeatedly warns against:

> “You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean.”
> *Leviticus 10:10 (NIV)*

In other words, Nadab and Abihu treated divine worship casually. They likely thought, *“Fire is fire as long as it burns, it works.”* But God doesn’t accept just any offering. He requires obedience, reverence, and holiness.

New Covenant Worship: In Spirit and in Truth

Jesus echoed this principle in John 4:23–24 (NIV):

> “Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

Worship under the New Covenant is not based on rituals alone, but it must still follow God’s guidelines: it must be sincere (“in spirit”) and doctrinally correct (“in truth”). Offering worship with unrepentant hearts, false doctrine, or self-centered motives is equivalent to offering “strange fire.”

Who May Offer Worship That Pleases God?

In Revelation 8:3–4 (NIV), we read about incense being offered with the prayers of the saints:

> “Another angel... was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God’s people... The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God’s people, went up before God...”

Only the prayers of the saints those who have been made holy through faith in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:2) are accepted on God’s altar. God does not receive worship from those who live in unrepentant sin.

> “The sacrifice of the wicked is detestable to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright pleases him.”
> *Proverbs 15:8 (NIV)*

> “If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.”
> *Psalm 66:18 (NIV)*

Beware of Lukewarm Christianity

God abhors half-hearted commitment. In Revelation 3:15–16 (NIV), Jesus speaks to the church in Laodicea:

> “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm neither hot nor cold I am about to spit you out of my mouth.”

Claiming to be a Christian while living in open sin (drunkenness, immorality, pride, rebellion, vanity, etc.) is not just hypocritical it is spiritually dangerous. Just like Nadab and Abihu, such people risk provoking God’s holy anger.

True Worship Requires True Conversion

If you have not been born again if your life hasn’t changed, your desires haven’t been transformed, and you’re still walking in darkness then you haven’t truly come to Christ. The first step toward acceptable worship is repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

> “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”
> *2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)*

> “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out…”
> *Acts 3:19 (NIV)*

After repentance comes baptism, as Jesus commanded in Mark 16:16 and as practiced in Acts 2:38.

A Call to Examine Ourselves

Before we offer anything to God whether it’s a song, a prayer, an offering, or a ministry we must examine ourselves:

- Are we truly born again?
- Are we walking in holiness?
- Are we following His Word or our own traditions?
- Are we worshiping in spirit and truth or offering strange fire?

Let us not take God’s holiness lightly. Let us not bring Him what we think is acceptable, but what He has commanded. Just like with electricity, the wrong connection in worship can be fatal. But when we walk in obedience, our worship becomes a pleasing aroma before His throne.

> “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God this is your true and proper worship.”
> *Romans 12:1 (NIV)*

May God open our eyes and teach us to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.

Be blessed.

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