

Key Text: Hebrews 13:15

“Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name.”

WHAT IS PRAISE?

Praise is the act of acknowledging the many deeds and virtues of God. Praise is how believers are intended to express joy, gratitude, and faith in God. The action of praising God is one of that distinguishes “healthy” believers from all others. At the very least, believers will accomplish these three things in giving God praise.

- We “Give thanks for all that God has done”. (*Gratitude is shown.*)
- We “Acknowledge & affirm who God is”. (*Faith is stirred up.*)
- We “Offer ourselves to God for His purposes.” (*Obedience is demonstrated.*)

When should people praise God? Is praise something we only do at a church or only in a church service? The answer...Praise is something that is to be given to God at all times. (*Psa 34:1; Luke 24:53; Eph. 5:18,20*) We may even praise God continually by magnifying Him in our thoughts and actions. (*Psalm 35:27*) While we are alive, our purpose is to praise God and if we refuse, God will still receive praise even if it's from the rocks! (*Luke 19:40; Psalm 146:1-3; 45:17; 70:4; 71:6; 119:164*) **Spiritually, praise is what brings us to the focused presence of God.**

It's like we pass through the “Outer Courts” and enter into the very “Throne Room” of God because of praise. (*Psalm 22:3 & 100*) Praise can be done in all kinds of places even though the temptation is to keep it confined to a church service. Here are three distinct places referenced in the Bible, where a person can praise God:

- Praise in the HOME “*Let them sing for joy on their beds!*” *Psalm 149:5*
- Praise in the CHURCH “*In the midst of the assembly I will praise you!*” *Psalm 22:22; 100:2; 111:1*
- Praise in front of UNBELIEVERS “*Many will see it and fear and will trust in the Lord.*” *Psalm 40:3; Acts 2:46,47.*

HOW DO WE PRAISE?

The Bible teaches a believer how to keep away from error and remain pure. This balance is accomplished by allowing the Bible to set the standards for life and doctrine. With this in mind, consciously put aside any personal preferences in praise and allow the Bible to teach what it is that God prefers. (*Psalms 119:9,11*) If you have never praised God with shouting then you should give it a go! Sometimes you will need to act in obedience even before you “FEEL” the emotion of praise. So, here is a list of some specific actions in praise. This is not a religious list of “ALLOWED” actions for praise this list is meant to inspire all kinds of praise appropriate for all kinds of situations:

Praise with our MOUTH:

- **Singing:** “O come let us sing unto the Lord.” *Psalm 95:1*
- **Praying:** “...To pray, lifting up Holy Hands...” *1 Timothy 2:8*
- **Shouting:** “My lips will shout for joy when I sing praises to you...”
Psalms 71:23; Matt 21:9
- **Praising:** “The fruit of our lips” *Hebrews 13:15*

Praise with our HANDS:

- **Clapping:** “O clap your hands all ye people.” *Psalm 47:1*
- **Lifting up hands:** “Lift up your hands in the sanctuary...” *Psalm 134:2*
- **Playing Instruments:** “Trumpet...Harp...Cymbals...” *Psalm 150; 33:3*

Praise with our WHOLE BODY:

- **Standing:** “Bless the Lord...You servants who stand...” *Psalm 134:1*
- **Bowing & Kneeling:**
“Oh come let us worship and bow down; let us kneel...” *Psalm 95:6*
- **Dancing & Leaping:** “Let them praise His name with dance...” *Psalm 149:3; 150:4*
and *Acts 3:8*

Victory is often experienced because we have chosen to give God “ADVANCE” Praise for a much-needed victory.

Read the story of King Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20:17-26

Praise requires an attitude of GRATITUDE. Develop this attitude by:

- ◆ Listing all that God has already done.
- ◆ Focus on WHO GOD IS RIGHT NOW.
- ◆ Affirm that you surrender your will to God's will.

7 HEBREW WORDS USED FOR PRAISE IN THE BIBLE

“TODAH” = To extend hands in thanksgiving.

“YADAH” = To worship with extended hands.

“HALLAL” = To boast, to rave, to celebrate.

“ZAMAR” = To pluck the strings.

“BARAK” = To kneel, to bless.

“TEHILLAH” - To sing your boast or praise.

“SHABACH” = To address in a loud tone, to shout.

GOING BEYOND PRAISE...TO WORSHIP

Thanks and praise come mostly from our mind and emotions. This is why it is the prescribed way to ENTER into God's presence. (*Psalms 100:4*) But worship is something more than praise. It is what we do after we enter His presence. Worship is something that results from our spirit cooperating with the Holy Spirit. As God's presence begins to move in Praise, we respond with Worship. The word worship means “Giving God His Worth” and it means to “Make God Weighty”. If this seems vague and mysterious, that is because worship doesn't just happen because we say so. Worship starts with God's spirit and must be pursued by us with fresh sacrifice. This sacrifice means that people can give up before genuine worship has even started. Over time the truth of worship can be forgotten or devalued by believers. **One promise to the Body of Christ is that God is restoring TRUE WORSHIP. See Acts 15:16; 1 Peter 2:9.** King David was a true worshiper of God, called a “Man after Gods Heart.” If there is a restoration of worship as it was exemplified in the tabernacle of David, what would that involve?

A restoring of worship will involve these significant principles:

- Worship is a “Priestly” function that is meant for every believer. 2 Chronicles 29:11; Revelation 1:6
- We are required to pursue worship with a sacrifice. 1 Peter 2:5
 - A sacrifice involving our “whole” self. Romans 12:1
 - A sacrifice that includes our possessions. Philippians 4:18; Hebrews 13:16
 - A sacrifice that involves our words. Hebrews 13:15
 - A sacrifice that involves brokenness and humility. This is a flexibility and a yielding to God's will. Psalm 51:17.
 - A sacrifice with a sincere heart. God emphasizes the “inner” condition of the heart over the “outward” appearance of the person. Matthew 15:8; Hebrews 10:22

NOT EVERYONE WILL CHOOSE TO MAKE THE SACRIFICE NECESSARY FOR WORSHIP, WILL YOU?

WHAT CAN YOU LEARN FROM THESE TWO EXAMPLES OF WORSHIP:

Example One: “**The Undignified King**”

(*2 Samuel 6:12-23 David danced before the Ark of the Lord.*) Why was David wearing the priestly “ephod” and unconcerned about the opinion of others? What was the response of His wife?

Example Two: “**The Extravagant Gift**”

(*Luke 7:36-47 A woman with a sinful past makes a public spectacle of her love in the presence of religious people.*) Why were the tears of this woman enough to wash the feet of Jesus? What is learned from the contrast between the Pharisee and this woman?

THE MANY BENEFITS OF WORSHIP

There are many aspects to worship which enrich a believers life and encourage the pursuit of God.

1. God's authority is recognized over your life and He is enthroned in your praise. Psalm 22:3
2. Worship is the way we communicate love to God. Psalm 141:2
3. Worship brings the presence of God and along with that comes REFRESHING! 2 Chronicles 5:13
4. We fulfill our purpose of Giving Glory to God through Praise and Worship. Psalm 33:1; 50:23
5. Worship is a sign for believers that God is moving in your midst. Jeremiah 33:11
6. We are transformed into God's image by worship. Psalms 115:8, 106:19-20; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Romans 1:21-23
7. God promised to meet with us and speak to us when we offer sacrifices unto the Lord. Exodus 29:41-42