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PRAISE AND WORSHIP

(All of us engage in praise and worship. So, why do we sing? Is it because everybody else is singing and we join the crowd, or is there a better reason to be involved in praise and worship. This lesson is designed to teach us the basics of Praise and Worship as revealed in the Word of God. Topics dealt with include what Praise is, what Worship is and the purpose for Congregational Worship).

Understanding Praise and Worship

What is Praise?

Psalm 100:1-5

Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands! Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing. Know that the Lord, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations.

Psalm 150: 1-6

Praise the Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty firmament! Praise Him for His mighty acts; praise Him according to His excellent greatness! Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; praise Him with the lute and harp! Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! Praise Him with loud cymbals; praise Him with clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!

'Praise' in the dictionary = 'to commend; to applaud; to express approval or admiration of; to extol in words or in song; to magnify; to glorify.'

Praise is the verbal expression of adoration, thanksgiving, rejoicing and celebration of who God is, for what God has done and for what He will do. It engages our total person—spirit, soul and body toward God. Praise is exuberant in nature.

Giving God praise is based on who God is and what He has done, not our feelings: often we must will and determine to praise God, even when we do not feel like it.

Habakkuk 3:17, 18

Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls—yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.



Why should we Praise?

- God is worthy of our praise

Psalm 48:1

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in His holy mountain.

Revelation 4:11

"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."

- We were created to praise Him

Jeremiah 13:11

For as the sash clings to the waist of a man, so I have caused the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah to cling to Me,' says the Lord, 'that they may become My people, for renown, for praise, and for glory; but they would not hear.'

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Isaiah 43:21

This people I have formed for Myself; they shall declare My praise.

- We are commanded in His Word to do so

Psalm 81:1-4

Sing aloud to God our strength; make a joyful shout to the God of Jacob. Raise a song and strike the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the lute. Blow the trumpet at the time of the New Moon, at the full moon, on our solemn feast day. For this is a statute for Israel, a law of the God of Jacob.

Psalm 149, 150

Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise in the assembly of saints. Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise His name with the dance; let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp. For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation. Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the nations, and punishments on the peoples; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute on them the written judgment—this honor have all His saints. Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty firmament! Praise Him for His mighty acts; praise Him according to His excellent greatness! Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; praise Him with the lute and harp! Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! Praise Him with loud cymbals; praise Him with clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!

- God is enthroned in our praises

Psalm 22:3

But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel.

- There is power in praise

2 Chronicles 20:21,22

And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the Lord, for His mercy endures forever." Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.

You and I were designed to praise God, to give Him thanks and celebrate all that He has done.

When we praise God, we are creating a place of Habitation for God. His Presence comes in. He comes to dwell among us.

Praise is Dynamite. As you celebrate God, something starts shaking here on earth. There is power in Praise.

Let us stop complaining about our circumstances. Praise is the way for us to cause our circumstances to change.

Acts 16:25-34

But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

- It is a good thing to praise

Psalm 92:1

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High.

Psalm 135:3

Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing praises to His name, for it is pleasant.

When should we Praise?

- At all times

Psalm 34:1

I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

Psalm 70:4

Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; and let those who love Your salvation say continually, "Let God be magnified!"

Hebrews 13:15

Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

Even when we face a problem, we must choose to tell God that in spite of it being tough, we will praise Him because He is Almighty and Powerful and thus we will declare His greatness.

(All day)

Psalm 113:1-3

Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the Lord, Praise the name of the Lord! Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore! From the rising of the sun to its going down, the Lord's name is to be praised.

- Forever

Psalm 52:9

I will praise You forever, because You have done it; and in the presence of Your saints I will wait on Your name, for it is good.

How do we express Praise to God?

A few ways mentioned in Scripture:

Singing

Psalm 47:6

Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!

Praising God should be a way of life, just as normal as breathing, blinking or any reflexive action!

We praise Him anywhere and everywhere, by ourselves and also along with others.

Psalm 100:4

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.

Ephesians 5:19

Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

Revelation 5:9

And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by your blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

Shouting (Making a joyful noise)

Psalm 47:1

Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph!

Psalm 66:1

Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth!

Clapping of hands (Applauding God)

Psalm 47:1

Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph!

Lifting up of our hands

Psalm 134:2

Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord.

1 Timothy 2:8

I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

- A sign of surrender
- 'Reaching out to our Father God'
- Symbolically receiving everything God is doing in our lives

Playing of musical instruments

2 Chronicles 5:13,14

Indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying: "For He is good, for His mercy endures forever, that the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.

Genesis 4:21

His brother's name was Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the harp and flute.

Ezekiel 28:13

You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created.

1 Samuel 16:16-23

Let our master now command your servants, who are before you, to seek out a man who is a skillful player on the harp. And it shall be that he will play it with his hand when the distressing spirit from God is upon you, and you shall be well." So Saul said to his servants, "Provide me now a man who can play well, and bring him to me." Then one of the servants answered and said, "Look, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person; and the Lord is with him." Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, "Send me your son David, who is with the sheep." And Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine, and a young goat, and sent them by his son David to Saul. So David came to Saul and stood before him. And he loved him greatly, and he became

his armorbearer. Then Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Please let David stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight." And so it was, whenever the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David would take a harp and play it with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him.

2 Kings 3:15-16

"But now bring me a musician." Then it happened, when the musician played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him. And he said, "Thus says the Lord: 'Make this valley full of ditches.'

Revelation 5:8

Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

Revelation 14:2

And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps.

Psalms 33:2,3

Praise the Lord with the harp; make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings. Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully with a shout of joy.

Psalms 150:5

Praise Him with loud cymbals; praise Him with clashing cymbals.

- We need to be careful not to become too dependent on music/instruments. We should be able to praise God even without music.

Standing

- A sign of respect.

2 Chronicles 5:12

And the Levites who were the singers, all those of Asaph and Heman and Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, stood at the east end of the altar, clothed in white linen, having cymbals, stringed instruments and harps, and with them one hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets.

2 Chronicles 7:6

And the priests attended to their services; the Levites also with instruments of the music of the Lord, which King David had made to praise the Lord, saying, "For His mercy endures forever," whenever David offered praise by their ministry. The priests sounded trumpets opposite them, while all Israel stood.

2 Chronicles 29:26

The Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets.

Psalms 135:2

You who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God,

Revelation 4:9-11

Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."

Singing in the Spirit (in tongues)

Acts 2:11

Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.

Acts 10:46

For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

Dancing

Zephaniah 3:17

The Lord your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.

Psalm 149:2,3

Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise His name with the dance; let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp.

2 Samuel 6:14

Then David danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was wearing a linen ephod.

- Dancing is a celebration of God.
- If we will remove our physical restraints and be simple enough to dance before the Lord with all that is within us, we will find that our spiritual restraints will crumble as well and God will have greater freedom to move among us.
- Caution: We are not judging others who do not feel comfortable with dancing; they should not feel threatened or excluded.
- Some churches have dance ministry/troupes which minister during worship.
- Different people, across different cultures have different ways of expressing their Praise and Worship to God.

..David was dancing before the Lord with all his might."



What happens when we Praise?

God inhabits our praise

The very presence of God invades our circumstances and situations. If we want to attract God on purpose, we must start praising Him for He inhabits our praises.

Psalm 22:3

But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel.

Praise causes divine deliverance

As we begin to praise God in the midst of troubled situations, God brings forth deliverance for His people.

2 Chronicles 20:22

Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.

Praise stops the enemy

Psalm 8:2

Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants you have ordained strength, because of Your enemies, that You may silence the enemy and the avenger.

Praise is a weapon of warfare.

As we praise God, we are binding up the enemy and executing the written judgment against the enemy.

Praise is powerful, because that is when things begin to happen in the realm of the spirit.

Praise executes God's written judgment on the enemy

Psalm 149:5-9

Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the nations, and punishments on the peoples; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute on them the written judgment—this honor have all His saints. Praise the Lord!

Praise is an expression of our faith in God

Romans 4:21

And being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

While 'praise' is exuberant and a celebration, and is at the outer court, 'worship' is intimate and very reverential because in 'worship' we are at God's throne bowing down. We are called to 'worship' God in as much as we are called to 'praise' God. In our Christian lives, intimacy with God is what births a fruitful life.

Worship

Psalm 95:6,7

Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.

Revelation 4:10, 11

The twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."

Worship (dictionary definition): intense love or admiration, a service showing reverence; to express reverence, to have a sense of awe, to bow low to.

Worship is the expression of reverential awe, of fearful adoration, of God's overwhelming greatness and so on. In worship, we are usually full of reverence, and we may kneel, bow and so on.

Real worship defies definition. It is the communion with God experienced by His loved ones. True worship is bowing our hearts and lives before the Lord and acknowledging His supreme Lordship, even in negative circumstances or complete emotional turmoil.

John 4:23, 24

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

In spirit—from our heart, our inner-most being

In truth—in sincerity

What happens when we worship

- Worship births intimacy—it is in this place of intimacy that I am renewed, refreshed and fruitfulness is birthed.
- Worship brings transformation—we become "like unto" what we worship.

Congregational Worship

While we must learn to truly 'praise' and 'worship' God on our own, by ourselves, the Word of God emphasizes the importance of God's people coming together as a congregation to praise and worship. It is an integral part of our walk with God, our lifestyle.

For, when we worship God as a congregation, there is a vertical dimension.

The Vertical Aspect

We are to minister to God

- To bless and glorify God, which is our primary purpose in worship, not to get something for ourselves. The question is not whether the worship service blessed me but whether it blessed God. We must minister to the Lord not with the ulterior motive of receiving a blessing but rather with the motive of blessing Him, whether He blesses us or not.

We worship to experience the presence of God

- The main difference between a church service and a meeting of a social organization is the Presence of God.

Psalm 22:3

But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel.

To provide the atmosphere for the expression of the gifts of the Holy Spirit

- God waits till we are ready to receive His Word (the prophetic word).

The Horizontal Aspect

To enhance the sense of unity within a body.

Though we are all from different cultures, backgrounds, tastes and languages, when we worship God together there is a sense of unity amongst us.

Psalm 133

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing—life forevermore.

Psalm 86:11

Teach me Your way, O Lord; I will walk in Your truth; unite my heart to fear Your name.

- All believers have this one thing in common: they love the Lord Jesus Christ and can express their mutual faith together in song.
- Can cause the increase of brotherly love between believers.

To minister to one another

To teach and reinforce spiritual truth

Ephesians 5:19

Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

- Hymns and songs are mostly Scripture put in music.

To provide believers the opportunity to profess their faith before others and to declare the glories of God before unbelievers.

Psalm 108:3

I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples, and I will sing praises to You among the nations.

Hosea 6:11

Also, O Judah, a harvest is appointed for you, when I return the captives of My people.

To provide the atmosphere for the preaching of the Word

Hosea 10:11

Ephraim is a trained heifer that loves to thresh grain; but I harnessed her fair neck, I will make Ephraim pull a plow. Judah shall plow; Jacob shall break his clods."

Psalm 65:9,10

You visit the earth and water it, You greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; You provide their grain, for so You have prepared it. You water its ridges abundantly, You settle its furrows; You make it soft with showers, You bless its growth.

The Inward Aspect

To release God's people in an uninhibited expression of their heart

To provide a verbal expression of the feelings of our hearts

To inspire a greater commitment to a life of worship

The essence of worship is our humility.

Hindering Attitudes in Praise and Worship

Pride

Pride is the greatest hindrance in worship. Sometimes we are more concerned about the opinions of others than we are about the Lord's opinion. Never do anything because others are looking at you, and never refrain from anything because others are looking at you.

Irreverence

Irreverence is when we do not revere God's nature but expect His blessings to be showered on us, without any sacrifice, investment of prayer or humble repentance on our part.

'Spectatorism'

Sometimes congregations tend to 'watch' the worship team than to be 'participants' in worship themselves. We are all commanded to worship.

Romans 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

PRAISE AND WORSHIP SERVICE IN PROGRESS...



1 Corinthians 3:16

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

1 Peter 2:5,6

You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."

Revelation 1:6

And has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

'Sentimentalism'

Sentimentalism is when the music and emotion means more to the worshipper than the message of the song. Here, we become more connected to the music but not necessarily with God and hence the purpose of 'worshipping' is lost.

Paying 'mere lip service'

Merely singing the song but not worshipping from the heart is paying 'lip service' to God.

God would prefer that we keep our mouths shut rather than singing without meaning.

Amos 5:21-23

"I hate, I despise your feast days, and I do not savor your sacred assemblies. though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them, nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings. Take away from Me the noise of your songs, for I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments.

We have never done it this way before

Sometimes, there is the fear of change. Our God is a creative God and can work in so many different ways.

KEY MEMORY VERSES

Psalms 100:4

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.

Ephesians 5:19

Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

John 4:23, 24

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Let us give God all the praise and worship He is worthy of.

Let us do it with all our heart—in private and when we come together as a congregation.

Make 'Praise' and 'Worship' a lifestyle—a way of life.

APPLICATION

1. How do you like to express your praise to God? Would you like to add on more ways of praising Him, after understanding this lesson?

2. What are the effects of Praise unto God?

3. Examine your attitude toward Praise and Worship. List down hindrances that prevent you from praising and worshipping God in spirit and in truth.
