

Approaching God through Daily Praise and Worship

A Presbyterian minister of Old Scotland, of the serious and orthodox type, had an elderly woman in his congregation who was in the habit of saying, "Praise the Lord!" and "Amen!" when anything truthful and encouraging was said. This behavior greatly disturbed the minister.

So one New Year's Day he went to see her and said, "Betty, you holler out, 'Praise the Lord' just when I get to the best part of my sermon and it interrupts my train of thoughts." I will make a bargain with you; if you will stop doing it all this year, I will give you a couple of wool blankets."

Now Betty was poor, and the offer of the blankets sounded good; so she did her best to earn them.

Sunday after Sunday when her minister preached she kept quiet. But one day a guest minister came to preach who was bubbling over with joy. As he preached on the forgiveness of sin and all the blessings that follow the believer in Christ, the vision of those blankets began to fade and fade, and the joys of salvation grew brighter and brighter. It was when Betty could stand it no longer she jumped up and hollered out, "*Blankets or no blankets, Hallelujah! Thank You Jesus!*"

In Psalms 100:4, the writer says

Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands! 2 Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before His presence with singing. 3 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. 4 Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, [And] into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, [and] bless His name. 5 For the LORD [is] good; His mercy [is] everlasting, And His truth [endures] to all generations.

Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands! Serve the LORD with gladness - Do you come to church with excitement in your heart?

Come before His presence with singing. Have you prepared your heart for worship? Do you read sections of Scripture in preparation for worship? Do you turn on Gospel music while you are preparing for church?

Know that the LORD He is God – God is God alone; there is none like Him! He is our omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, immutable Lord! Paul says in 1 Timothy 1:17, "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, [be] honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

He is our Creator—we didn't make ourselves. We belong to Him. The New Testament says that we are "*bought with a price.*"

We are His sheep. Sheep are stupid; they easily wander off, forgetting their way back—they will eat anything—even poison; they have been known to fall over a cliff while grazing for food. They have no natural defenses against predators.

Considering that we are stupid sheep and how God puts up with us and searches for us and saves us and provides for us and understands us and protects us and disciplines us and blesses us and leads us and loves us, the psalmist says in verse 4, *“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name!”*

Why should we do this? Verse 5 gives us the reason: *“For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations.”*

Because we are so undeserving and God is so good we are to enter into the assembly of God’s people with thanksgiving and praise! So right now, right where you are, just start shouting out something you are thankful to God for. Now turn those thanksgivings into the direction of God and thank and praise Him directly.

In Psalm 100:4, God reminds us to come before Him with a sense of awe, praise, and reverence.

When do God’s people praise the Lord?

God’s people praised the Lord often

Psalm 119:164 - Seven times a day I praise Thee, Because of Thy righteous ordinances.

God’s people praised the Lord when He protected them

2 Sam 22:47-51 – “The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God, the Rock, my Savior! He is the God who avenges me, who puts the nations under me, who sets me free from my enemies. You exalted me above my foes; from violent men you rescued me. Therefore I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations; I will sing praises to your name. He gives his king great victories; he shows unflinching kindness to his anointed, to David and his descendants forever.”

Psalm 9:1-4 – “I will give thanks to the LORD with all my heart; I will tell of all Thy wonders. I will be glad and exult in Thee; I will sing praise to Thy name, O Most High. When my enemies turn back, They stumble and perish before Thee. For Thou hast maintained my just cause; Thou dost sit on the throne judging righteously.”

God’s people praised the Lord when He provided for them

Psa 22:22 I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you.

Psa 22:23 You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!

Psa 22:24 For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.

Psa 22:25 From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly; before those who fear you will I fulfill my vows.

Psa 22:26 The poor will eat and be satisfied; they who seek the LORD will praise him-- may your hearts live forever!

God’s people praised the Lord in public

Psalm 35:18 I will give you thanks in the great assembly; among throngs of people I will praise you.

God's people praised the Lord when they were depressed.

Psalm 42 – “As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, “Where is your God?” These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs of praise, a multitude keeping festival. Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my

God's people praised the Lord when He was their Advocate, Vindicator and Defense

Psa 43:1 Vindicate me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation; rescue me from deceitful and wicked men.

Psa 43:2 You are God my stronghold. Why have you rejected me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?

Psa 43:3 Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell.

Psa 43:4 Then will I go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God.

Psa 43:5 Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.God.”

I could go on and give you more examples of when, how and why God's people offered up praise and thanksgiving to Him. The truth of the matter is that we are supposed to praise God and offer up thanks to His Name.

Isaiah 43:21 lets us know that praise is one of the reasons we were created. In this verse God says, *"This people I have formed for Myself; they shall declare My praise."*

In a New Testament passage we are told, *"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you..."* Hebrews 13:15 confirms this truth: *"Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise - the fruit of lips that confess his name."*

What is the difference between praise and thanksgiving?

Praise to God is what we offer in acknowledgement of God's excellent being. Thanksgiving describes our heart-attitude toward what God has done.

Praise is offered to God for who He is. Psalm 18:3 says *"I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy of praise..."* Thanksgiving is an expression of our gratitude to God for His blessings bestowed.

A couple of weeks ago we learned that both praise and thanksgiving are the primary ways we give daily adoration and worship to God. Praise and thanksgiving flow out from a love relationship. Psalm 50:23 - *"He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me..."*

We also looked at Psalm 65:1 where David writes a song with the words, *"Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion: and unto Thee shall the vow be performed."*

It seems that David wrote these words either as a song of praise to God for something wonderful that He did in David's life or David's anticipation of an answer to a prayer that he, in earnest, had made.

This should be our attitude when it comes to our prayers. Like David we should say, *"Praise waiteth for Thee, O God in Zion: and unto Thee shall the vow be performed."*

Steps to a Meaningful Time of Praise

As we begin our prayers we should always have something to thank God for. We should always have something to praise God for.

Alexander Whyte, the Scottish preacher, always began his prayers with an expression of gratitude. At church on a cold and miserable day, his parishioners wondered what he would say when he opened his mouth to pray. He prayed, *"We thank Thee, O Lord, that it is not always like this."*

Thank God for the mundane, everyday, commonplace things of this life—the things we tend to take for granted.

- The beauty of His creation – The psalmist said, *"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?"* (Psalm 8:3-4)
- Air, water - Job 12:10 says that God *"has in His hand is the life of every living thing, And the breath of all mankind."*
- Food, clothing and shelter
- Health; the maintenance of our bodies (in spite of the fact that we sometimes abuse them)

Thank God for His spiritual blessings

- Salvation – Salvation is of the Lord (Psalm 37:39; Jonah 2:9) Titus 3:5 says, *"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy..."*
- Sanctification – God sets us apart; *He* makes us holy—*He* grows us! (1 Peter 1:15; 2 Peter 3:18)
- Love, grace and mercy
Heaven and the believer's inheritance - Ephesians 1:3 says, *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ..."*
- His coming Kingdom – Jesus gives the model prayer to His disciples in Matthew 6:9-13 and says to them, *"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven..."*

As you incorporate praise and thanksgiving in your prayer time, you can praise God for the everyday, commonplace things of life; praise Him for His spiritual blessings and thirdly, thank and praise God for His works.

Thank God for His works

- Speaking the worlds into existence - Hebrews 11:3 says, *"By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible."*

- His redemptive plan – “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)
- The inspiration of Scripture – “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- The preservation of the Bible – Jesus says Matthew 5:18 - “For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.”

Incorporate praise and thanksgiving in your prayer time—this is the first and most important of the five basic types of prayer. Praise God for the everyday, commonplace things of life! Praise Him for His spiritual blessings! Praise God for His works!

Spend time praising God for who He is and what He is like (His attributes or characteristics).

- Praise God for His holiness, mercy, and justice (2 Chronicles 20:21, Psalm 99:3-4).
- Praise God for His grace (Ephesians 1:6).
- Praise Him for His goodness (Psalm 135:3).
- Praise God for His kindness (Psalm 117).
- Praise God for His salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Meditate on each of God’s characteristics and praise Him for what they mean to your life.

Meditate on the meaning of His *biblical names*.

Old Testament Scriptures

ELOHIM: Elohim occurs 2,570 times in the OT and refers to God as Creator, Preserver, Transcendent, Mighty and Strong. Gen. 17:7, 6:18, 9:15, 50:24; I Kings 8:23; Jer. 31:33; Isa. 40:1.

EL SHADDAI: God Almighty or "God All Sufficient." 48 times in the OT. Gen. 17:1, 2. (Gen. 31:29, 49:24, 25; Prov. 3:27; Micah 2:1; Isa. 60:15, 16, 66:10-13; Ruth 1:20, 21.

ADONAI: Lord in our English Bibles (Capitol letter 'L', lower case, 'ord') "Master" or "Lord" 300 times in the OT always plural when referring to God, when sing. the reference is to a human lord. Gen. 15:2. (Ex. 4:10; Judges 6:15; 2 Sam. 7:18-20; Ps. 8, 114:7, 135:5, 141:8, 109:21-28).

JEHOVAH: LORD in our English Bibles (all capitals). Yahweh is the covenant name of God. Occurs 6823 times in the OT. God is "The Self-Existent One," He tells Moses through the burning bush, "I AM WHO I AM" or "I WILL BE WHO I WILL BE" (Exodus 3)

In the Old Testament Scriptures we find hyphenated forms of the word Jehovah:

JEHOVAH-JIREH: "The Lord will Provide." Gen. 22:14. From "**jireh**" ("to see" or "to provide," or to "foresee" as a prophet.) God always provides, adequate when the times come.

JEHOVAH-ROPHE: "The Lord Who Heals" Ex. 15:22-26. From "**rophe**" ("to heal"); implies spiritual, emotional as well as physical healing. (Jer. 30:17, 3:22; Isa. 61:1) God heals body, soul and spirit; all levels of man's being.

JEHOVAH-NISSI: "The Lord Our Banner." Ex. 17:15. God is on the battlefield for us—He is our rallying point. See Psa. 4:6.

JEHOVAH-M'KADDESH: "The Lord Who Sanctifies" Lev. 20:8. "To make whole, set apart for holiness."

JEHOVAH-SHALOM: "The Lord Our Peace" Judges 6:24. Shalom means that kind of peace that results from being a whole person in right relationship to God and to one's fellow man.

JEHOVAH ELOHIM: "LORD God" Gen. 2:4; Judges 5:3; Isa. 17:6; Zeph. 2:9; Psa. 59:5, etc.

JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU: "The Lord Our Righteousness" Jer. 23:5, 6, 33:16.

JEHOVAH-ROHI: "The Lord Our Shepherd" Psa. 23, from "ro'eh" (to pasture).

JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH: "The Lord is There" (Ezek. 48:35).

JEHOVAH-SABAOTH: "The Lord of Hosts" The commander of the angelic host and the armies of God. Isa. 1:24; Psa. 46:7, 11; 2 Kings 3:9-12; Jer. 11:20 (NT: Rom. 9:29; James 5:24, Rev. 19:11-16).

New Testament Scriptures

KURIOS: "Lord" Found some 600 times in the NT.

I AM: Jesus upset his generation especially when He said, "Before Abraham was, I AM," John 8:58. Jesus is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. He said, "I AM the Light of the world," "I AM the bread of life," "I AM living water," "I AM the Resurrection and the Life," "I AM the Way, Truth and the Life." HE IS GOD!

JESUS: The name "Jesus" comes from the Hebrew name "Joshua" (Y'shua) or "Je-Hoshua" meaning JEHOVAH IS SALVATION.

CHRIST: The work "Christ" is the equivalent to the Hebrew 'Messiah' (Meshiach), "The Anointed One."

Other NT Titles for Jesus: You can praise Jesus who is: The Shepherd of the Sheep; Master; King of kings; Lord of lords; Bishop and Guardian of our Souls; Daystar, Deliverer, Advocate, Second Adam, Ancient of Days, Branch, Chief Cornerstone, Immanuel, First Born, Head of the Body, Physician, Rock, Root of Jesse, Stone, Potentate; Chief Apostle; Great High Priest; Pioneer and Perfecter of our Faith (or Author and Finisher); Lamb of God; Lamb Slain before the Foundation of the World; Lord God Almighty.

LOGOS: "The Word of God" John 1; Rev. 19:13.

SOPHIA: "The Wisdom of God," referring to Christ, refers back to Proverbs (I Cor. 1,2)

Which of God's names do you relate to the most? Which of the names of God describe what God is doing at this particular time in your life? Praise Him using those descriptive titles and names!

When we take time to meditate on whom God is and all He has done for us, praise becomes natural and spontaneous.

Conclusion

God wants your heartfelt praise and worship above everything else.

If you will give regular time to significant praise, God will revolutionize your relationship with Him!

If we neglect praise, prayer becomes more like a dry ritual than a warm personal relationship. Learn that you cannot praise only when you “feel” like it. Never forget, the deepest praise and worship is based on a choice, not a feeling.

Your daily time with God is a relationship and should always contain an element of spontaneity and variation. The goal is to allow the Holy Spirit to direct each time you meet with God.

Praise and worship is the first of the five basic types of prayer and like nothing else, praise and worship prepares your heart for dynamic prayer.

Ask God to give you a deeper and purer time of worshiping Him. Ask Him to increase the depth of your praise and worship.

A closing illustration...

A little singing bird was perched on a limb of a tree. The boy had the stone all ready to throw, but the bird began to sing.

Slowly the stone was dropped, and the bird was able to fly to freedom. A man asked the boy, "Why didn't you stone him?" The boy answered, "Couldn't “...” cause how he sang."

What is the lesson for us; it ought to be clear: Let us praise God!

The enemy of our soul is ready to "shoot" his arrows of doubt or fear into our hearts. But as an unknown author penned: *"The trial may be fiery, the march may seem long; let the glory in your soul sing His praise. The devil will flee. He does not like songs of praise."*

One of the greatest ways to invoke God's manifest presence is to give Him genuine praise and worship. Psalms 22:3 says, *"God inhabits the praises of His people."*