

## ARE Praise AND Warship A FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN?

John 4:23: (NASB) But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.



Christian praise and worship. As with many things subject to interpretation, you will find different applications of these things within the Christian community. For some, praise and worship are expressed in music. This *drives* their gatherings and feeds positive emotions towards God. For others, praise and worship include music and inspiration and *play a significant role in* their gatherings as a focusing element for being open to God's word. Others still have praise and worship in a

smaller role. So, who is right? Does it matter? Are praise and worship two parts of the same thing, or are they entirely different? How do I know if I am paying enough attention to praising God and living a life that expresses an attitude of worship?

Christians frequently use the words "praise" and "worship," but do they know what they really mean? Are we praising and worshiping the way God wants us to? Is there a formula or checklist we can use to do the right thing? The words are often used interchangeably, but are they the same? We praise God, but why? Does it make Him happy? Is it to make us feel better? Do we praise Him because we are supposed to?

First, let's understand what worship is. Here is the first use of the word in the New Testament:





<u>Matthew 2:2, 7-8</u>: (NASB) <sup>2</sup>Where is he who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw his star in the east and have come to worship <4352> him. <sup>7</sup>Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared. <sup>8</sup>And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, Go and search carefully for the child; and when you have found him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship <4352> him.

What did the magi do to worship the child? They physically bowed before him, they gave gifts, and they would speak of this miracle to everyone with whom they came in contact.

**Worship:** Strongs #4352 *proskuneo*; to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand; to fawn or crouch to, i.e. (literally or figuratively) prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to, adore)

To fawn or crouch - a fawn's (baby deer) head is down low because it is still weak. This low posture is the sense we get from the word worship.

The magi wanted to honor Jesus because they knew he was the Messiah.





#### Jesus' first mention of worship is while being tempted by Satan:

<u>Luke 4:5-8</u>: (NASB) <sup>5</sup>And he led him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. <sup>6</sup>And the devil said to him, I will give you all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. <sup>7</sup>Therefore if you worship <4352> before me, it shall all be yours. <sup>8</sup>Jesus answered him, It is written, You shall worship <4352> the Lord your God and serve Him only.

#### Jesus is quoting here from Deuteronomy:

<u>Deuteronomy 6:13-14</u>: (NASB) <sup>13</sup>You shall *fear* <3372> only the LORD your God; and you shall worship <5647> Him and swear by His name. <sup>14</sup>You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you.

Fear: Strongs #3372 yare'; to fear; morally, to revere; causatively to frighten

**Worship:** Strongs #5647 'abad; to work (in any sense); by implication, to serve, till, (causatively) enslave, etc.

Worship, meaning: in service of, doing something to show loyalty

(Note: Jesus might also have been quoting from <u>Deuteronomy 10:20</u>.)



#### Observations about worship in the New Testament so far:

- The magi worshipped Jesus, rightfully so.
- Satan wanted Jesus to worship him, wrongfully so.
- Jesus said to only worship God, rightfully so.

## Worship of God was clearly set in order as a top life priority in the Ten Commandments:

Exodus 20:3-5: (NASB) <sup>3</sup>You shall have no other gods before Me. <sup>4</sup>You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. <sup>5</sup>You shall not worship <7812> them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God...

Their *primary responsibility* was to worship God alone. It was certainly a privilege but also an obligation. Everything else was secondary. God first, God foremost; everything else follows.

**Worship:** Strongs #7812 *shachah*; to depress, i.e. prostrate (especially reflexively, in homage to royalty or God)

Depress - when something is depressed, it is made low. When someone is depressed, their emotions are low. Depressing a sponge makes it lower. The idea is to be "made low" before God.

## WORSHIP

TOWARDS GOD IN THE BIBLE

ALL ABOUT BEING A HUMBLE SUBJECT.

It encompasses the act of bowing fully in subservience and includes the lifestyle that supports the meaning of that action.

Worship is a major commitment as we get to know God. Once we submit to Him, we can then learn about Him.



## Worship is widely spoken of in the Old Testament. What were Jesus' teachings about worship?

Ancient history gives us graphic depictions of what worship meant by the expectations that kings had of their loyal subjects. It may be surprising to learn that Jesus didn't speak to his disciples even once about proper worship. Though he didn't speak about it directly, he did teach us what it means.

Jesus' only direct teaching regarding worship was his encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well. First, we need to be reminded of the bitter rivalry between Jews and Samaritans at that time:

(Source: McClintock and Strong's) The establishment of a separate worship made the breach existing between the Jews and Samaritans irreparable. From this time malcontent Jews resorted to Samaria; and the very name of either people became odious to the other. About the year B.C. 129, John Hyrcanus, high priest of the Jews, destroyed the city of the Samaritans.

If one touched the garment of the other, they would immediately dunk into a body of water to clean themselves.

Jesus asks a woman from Samaria for a drink of water from the well. He mentions worship/worshipers nine times! This was a focused discussion. He explains that the *living* water he has can truly quench human (spiritual) thirst. When she asks him for this water, Jesus reveals her life history regarding having had five husbands and living with a man who is not her husband.

#### We drop in on the story:

John 4:19-26: (NASB) <sup>19</sup>The woman said to him, Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup>Our fathers worshiped <4352> in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship <4352>. <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to her, Woman, believe me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship <4352> the Father. <sup>22</sup>You worship <4352> what you do not know; we worship <4352> what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup>But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers <4353> will worship <4352> the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers <4352>. <sup>24</sup>God is spirit, and those who worship <4352> Him must worship <4352> in spirit and truth. <sup>25</sup>The woman said to him, I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ); when that one comes, he will declare all things to us. <sup>26</sup>Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am he.

One of the things Samaritans and Jews were at odds about was the method and place of worship. She says to Jesus they worship in the mountain, but the Jews worship in Jerusalem. Jesus explained that a time would come when none of that would be relevant. God would look for His followers to worship Him *in spirit and in truth* - God's spirit and the truth of His plan.

There will no more be specific place of worship, and it is remarkable that he first explains this to a Samaritan woman, of all people. The symbol for "truth" in Scripture is water. He explained how worship would work - with spiritual, living water. Worship would not be a place; it would be a way of life.



#### Jesus' teaching on worshiping God:

People can worship God in ignorance, though their worship does not connect them to God.

People can worship God with knowledge, and yet they can still lack in their connection to God.

Christians MUST worship God differently -

IN SPIRIT - with God's power at work in their lives, and IN TRUTH - with an understanding of God's purposes.



We just read what Jesus told the woman about ignorant worship: You worship what you do not know.

#### Another example of ignorant worship:

Acts 17:22-24: (NASB) <sup>22</sup>So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. <sup>23</sup>For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore what you worship <2151> in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. <sup>24</sup>The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;

**Worship:** Strongs #2151 *eusebeo* to be pious, i.e. (towards God) to worship, or (towards parents) to respect (support)

To paraphrase, Paul is saying to the Athenians: I know you are trying to be spiritual, and I appreciate that. You are being pious towards this Unknown God. But you are not fully worshiping because you do not understand what you are doing. Let me give you a clue: This Unknown God does not dwell in temples. I can help you because I can help you understand the truth.

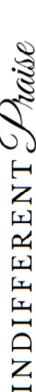
It was no longer about the place of worship. It was now about a condition of mind and heart and having God working with us.

We are developing the thinking of what makes real, solid, life-changing worship. There is a big part of it that has to do with truth and the spirit of God working within us. Worship is not so much an activity as it is a way of life.

Although Jesus told the Samaritan woman we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews, we know many Jews were simply going through the motions and were not faithful. Their worship was not connected.

#### An example of knowledgeable yet unconnected worship:

Matthew 23:23-24: (NASB) <sup>23</sup>Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. <sup>24</sup>You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a came!!





He was telling the Pharisees that despite their knowledge, they were not guiding the people appropriately, so their worship was in vain. They were not focusing on the right things. Their lifestyle towards God was tainted because they brought into it their own thinking, their own power, their own position so others could look at them for spiritual guidance. Shame on them for guiding Israel down the wrong path.

It is a little early because we will get into praise soon, but in a little preview, this unconnected worship is similar to what we might call "indifferent praise." Here are some practical examples:

- 1. We are singing a hymn with our congregation expressing glory to God and not thinking of God at all, not considering the sentiment of the words. We instead are thinking about our extensive Things to Do List. This is not going to connect us to God.
- 2. We offer thanks for our food at mealtime and then complain that the vegetables are overcooked. We were not really thankful for that food, were we?
- 3. We are called upon to pray, but our mind is not on the prayer as much as we are wondering what impression this prayer will make on those around us.

We cannot expect the Lord to hear our praise when we are uttering an expression that is not heartfelt. Even the most faithful Christian can lose focus and just go through the motions.

Examine the idea of bowing low before God and living in a place of worship. How do we express this every day?

# WORSHIP CAN BE SHALLOW AND EMPTY WITHOUT A VITAL ATTACHMENT TO GOD. It can make us feel good but does not

enhance a true connection to God.

The Old Testament worship was earthly-focused. The New Testament worship

is spiritually-focused. Jesus said to the Samaritan woman that it would no longer be about the physical place of worshiping; rather, it would be about the dedication of the individual.

This can be unsettling. It should make us wonder what we might say, do and think that limits our worship of God.

How do we avoid shallow worship and find the right and most genuine way to truly worship God?

Sometimes shallow or empty worship comes from our natural positioning in life. As with the pagan worshiping of an unknown god, we can also have some desire to worship God but never change our position to pursue that worship.





We would like to introduce several personal audio clips from Valaree, a CQ contributor. She is a dedicated Christian who really connected with this subject. We first asked her what worship means to her.

#### (1) Worship in spirit, Valaree

• To me, to worship the Lord in spirit, to worship God in spirit means that we connect during the process with God on a spiritual level. It isn't about rituals; it isn't about being in a particular church building or even about music. Worship is about my wholehearted love and adoration for God and what He's done for me. Where music and meditation and being in a beautiful church building or even on mountains can all contribute to that spiritual connection with God, of really expressing adoration for Him, those things aren't necessary, but they can be helpful.



How do we get ourselves to CONNECTED AND WORTHY WORSHIP? Let's look at a specific example of the first Gentile convert. Cornelius was a great example of one whose desire for God remained unanswered for a long time.



Cornelius is a Roman centurion who is not allowed to become Jewish. But he loves the Jewish people and faith. He does all he can to support them.



He becomes drawn to Christ through the work of the Apostle Peter. What were Cornelius' worthy efforts?



Acts 10:1-4: (NASB) ¹Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion...²a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually. ³About the ninth hour of the day he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had just come in and said to him, Cornelius! ⁴And fixing his gaze on him and being much alarmed, he said, What is it, Lord? And he said to him, Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God.



The prayers Cornelius had offered up *ascended as a memorial*, awaiting the right time for a Gentile to be a part of this movement. Now those prayers would be answered. The time had finally come for the door to godly worship to open. Enter the Apostle Peter! Peter is given a vision to meet with Cornelius.



Acts 10:25-26: (NASB) <sup>25</sup>When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell at his feet and worshiped him. <sup>26</sup>But Peter raised him up, saying, Stand up; I too am just a man.

Peter shows humility of character. He was there as a messenger for the One to be worshipped. This was a powerful statement from a Jew talking to a Gentile. Cornelius wants so badly to be pleasing to God. He was already living a life of worship; he just did not understand how it worked.



To live a CONNECTED life of worship, listen and learn:

Acts 10:34-35: (NASB) <sup>34</sup>Opening his mouth, Peter said: I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, <sup>35</sup>but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.

It took a vision from heaven for Peter to understand the magnitude of what was about to happen. He did not hesitate to welcome Cornelius, even though Gentiles had not previously been accepted. Cornelius was listening and learning to find out how to live a life of connected worship.



<u>Acts 10:44</u>: (NASB) While Peter was still speaking these words, the holy spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.

The spirit comes. Peter told the household the truth and they are now in a better place to worship God in a connected way.

New Testament worship is selfless, sacrificial service. There are few bells and whistles, but in their place is the presence of God before us. Christian worship is not fancy or dramatic. It is consistent, selfless sacrifice and service. Are we bowing low? How are we living low? It is not about a place; it is about spirit and truth.



Let's have Valaree finish her definition of worship. She previously said it was not about rituals and reiterated what Jesus said about how it was not required to be in a specific location.

#### (1)) Worship in truth, Valaree

• The second part of that definition of worship that Jesus gives us in John, where he says that we need to worship God in truth, is one that really requires a good amount of soul searching. I think I have to make sure that when I am in that time of worship that I am wanting to commune with God out of a pure heart. I'm not doing it to check it off of my To Do List so I can get on with my day, or I'm not doing it with a lot of flash at church to be seen, or if I had a beautiful singing voice, to make sure that those around me heard.

Her comment about the pure heart directly relates to being connected. *Coming without a pure heart is called hypocrisy*. Sometimes we come before God because we know we are supposed to. What if we just do not feel like it? Should we not do it? No, go before God anyway and tell Him you are not feeling it. There is a difference between faking it and acknowledging it. Part of living a life of worship is understanding our own human ups and downs. We believe worship is a lifetime experience, not an event. We live a life of worship, of bowing down before God.

Paul shows us how to grow into this life of worship based in spirit and in truth. We will use the analogy of a seed.



Christian worship is **PLANTED** with the (figurative) act of bowing low in subservience:

Romans 12:1: (NASB) Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

Presenting ourselves as a living sacrifice is that "bowing" part. Now we must *live* the loyalty we have expressed. We present our bodies and then "bow" because we are now "on the altar." (The problem with a living Christian sacrifice is we keep trying to crawl off the altar.) We have been "planted" and give our lives in sacrifice. When God accepts it, it is time for the next

step...

Christian worship GERMINATES when we take action and transform from mere seed to a growing plant:

Romans 12:2: (NASB) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Here is where *worshiping in spirit* reaches deep. We have to be transformed into Christlikeness, which means less of self and more of Christ, until someday we can say none of self and all of Christ. This is not an overnight process; it involves a lifelong transformation.







## Christian worship SPROUTS when in our action we embrace the humility we need to see clearly:

Romans 12:3: (NASB) For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

Humility is required to not only have our transformation take hold, but for it to really grow into something. We can be working at transforming our character, but without humility in practice, we will not be able to truly sprout.

Selfish worship wants God's blessings for selfish reasons, like material gain or success in business. It is about what God can do for us. It is like the Parable of the Pharisee

and the Tax Collector (<u>Luke 18:9-14</u>) where the Pharisee prayed: Thank you, Lord, that I am not like that tax collector over there. This was a pompous prayer.

## Christian worship MATURES when we see how we can be a contributory part of the body of Christ:

Romans 12:4-5: (NASB) <sup>4</sup>For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, <sup>5</sup>so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Worshiping in truth is knowing God's plan and finding your part in it. We need to be "spiritually harvestable" for God, being faithful unto death in Revelation 2:10. It is about committing ourselves to worship every day in our daily activities.



### **Christian WORSHIP**

IS A WAY OF LIFE.

Our acts of worship are a direct outgrowth of our dedicated service and loyalty.

The stronger the loyalty, the deeper the worship.

The journey is the worship. It is the loyalty, the giving of ourselves, the charity we give, the study we engage in, the fellowship, the co-laboring, the self-denial. It is our following through on our commitment, which is to do God's will and not our own. *Like the verse says, we are to be faithful unto death*. Worship is an expression of who we are in Christ. This is worshiping God!

Is there a difference between worshiping God and honoring God? Perhaps worshiping is a sense of commitment that says, "I offer myself to you in complete service." To honor God is the result of giving our lives to worship on a daily basis. Sometimes we get tired, but we get to worship God today! Get to work!



To be a footstep follower of Jesus is to be a living example of worshiping God. What a breathtaking privilege.

With all this said about worship, how and where do we incorporate praise into the life of a Christian?



Now that we have established worship as a way of life, we can see praise for what it is: a vital expression that bubbles up and over at the greatness of God. Praise can be exhibited in a wide variety of ways and is often closely associated with worship.

Genuine godly praise is an outgrowth of a life of worship.

We asked Val what praise meant to her. Most of us do not think of praising under adversity...



• I think when I am giving my true praise to God it has to do with me counting my blessings for the day, for the hour, whatever it might be, and really realizing that everything that I have, every talent I might possess are all gifts from God. It puts me in a frame of mind to try and be just constantly looking for something to praise God for. I can praise God even in the midst of sadness or tragedy. Praise doesn't always have to accompany a picture-perfect kind of day. That you can be in the trenches of something very sad or very trying, but you can still be in a mindset of being thankful and praising God in the midst of it.

We all sometimes get very emotional, which is not bad - God created us with emotions. During rough times, we WANT to be able to say, "This must be God's will - all things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose, Romans 8:28." Great, but during something difficult we may think, "This is not how I am feeling right now." Deep down we know it is true, but sometimes we have to go through the feelings, take a breath and then go back and latch onto the Scriptures. We KNOW they are true. This can be difficult in the moment, but we learn that our trials are praise-worthy because we gain experience, then endurance, then spiritual maturity and then inner peace.

The praise may not be evident, right in front of us, but we must find it because it is there.

#### Singing is a common powerful method of praise:

Psalms 66:1-4: (Young's Literal Translation) 1...Shout ye to God, all the earth. 2Praise ye the honour of His name, make ye honourable His praise. 3Say to God, How fearful are Thy works, by the abundance of Thy strength, Thine enemies feign obedience to Thee. 4All the earth do bow <7812> to Thee, they sing praise to Thee, they praise Thy name. Selah.

Thine enemies feign obedience to Thee - other translations say: Your enemies cringe before His mighty power. We get the sense that God is over all things and praiseworthy.



Let's go back to the New Testament. Jesus and the apostles did not directly instruct followers about worship, but they did teach about a life of service and sacrifice.

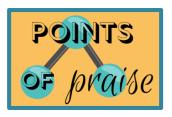
#### Notice the worship mindset as the basis for our praise:

Colossians 3:15-17: (NASB) <sup>15</sup>Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. <sup>16</sup>Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup>Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts - we have to start with a life of worship. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you - this is worship. Paul told them to (paraphrased): Let the enthusiasm of the melodies that bring praise to God flow out of you as teaching tools for your brothers and sisters.

Paul was a powerful contributor to the church, and yet he spent his entire life bowed down low and worshiping daily in his heart and mind before God and Christ. He did the will of God no matter what. Christ was his head.

Teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and songs, it is enthusiastic and inspirational!



Praise can be with words, music or both. It can be rehearsed inwardly or spoken and sung outwardly. Praise needs expression be it silently in one's own heart or shared.

We all have different personalities and therefore praise differently. Various cultures have their own style of praising. Praise flows from individuals in unique ways. We want to be God-focused and let our praise come out of a life of spiritual worship.

Many Christians, when praising, praying and worshiping lift their hands up toward heaven. Is this scriptural? Yes, but only within the context of prayer.

The "lifting up of holy hands" is a well-documented scriptural posture of prayer. (See Bonus Material for more):

1 Timothy 2:8-10: (NASB) <sup>8</sup>Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension. <sup>9</sup>Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments, <sup>10</sup>but rather by means of good works, as is proper for women making a claim to godliness.

(Source: Albert Barnes Notes on the Whole Bible) Lifting up holy hands: To lift up the hands denotes supplication, as it was a common attitude of prayer to spread abroad the hands towards heaven... "Holy hands" here mean hands that are not defiled by sin, and that have not been employed for any purpose of iniquity.

<u>Lamentations 2:19</u>: (NASB) Arise, cry aloud in the night at the beginning of the night watches; pour out your heart like water before the presence of the Lord; lift up your hands to Him for the life of your little ones who are faint because of hunger at the head of every street.



We are to pour out our hearts like water before the presence of the Lord - be so thoroughly engaged in that prayer. Empty yourself, like pouring water out of a cup.



## Old Testament praise was far more demonstrative than what we have in the New Testament:

Psalms 150:3-6: (NASB) <sup>3</sup>Praise Him with trumpet sound; praise Him with harp and lyre. <sup>4</sup>Praise Him with timbrel and dancing; praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe. <sup>5</sup>Praise Him with loud cymbals; praise Him with resounding cymbals. <sup>6</sup>Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!

#### David danced mightily before God at the return of the ark of the covenant:

2 Samuel 6:14,16: (NASB) <sup>14</sup>And David was dancing before the LORD with all his might, and David was wearing a linen ephod. <sup>16</sup>Then it happened as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David that Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.

David's wife Michal looked at him with contempt and disgust, even though what David was doing was not wrong or disrespectful. She thought he was undignified in front of women. David is irritated and tells her what he did was for the glory of God, and that if he could give more glory by still further demeaning himself he would do so.

She died without having a child, and we do not hear about her with David again. Our lesson: We cannot discredit or critique some else's genuine act of praise just because we are not comfortable with it. It was acceptable for her not to join in the procession and dance, but it was not acceptable for her to discredit the value of what he was doing for the Lord.

There is a lot of debate online as to whether or not it is appropriate to have a church band as part of praise and worship - should musical instruments be used? Answers range from: because there is no mention of instruments in the New Testament, we should only sing acapella in church - not even an organ or piano. On the other side of the spectrum, silence from Jesus and the apostles on this topic means anything goes, and some megachurches have large stage productions of lights, a full band and choirs singing. Is there a right way to do it, and should we be judging those who see it differently than we do?

Why is it that in all of the New Testament, there is not one mention of a musical instrument in conjunction with praise? (There is a harp in Revelation.) We think the answer lies in what praise is supposed to bring us. Paul does not say to bring in the instruments or to leave them out. He just does not talk about them.

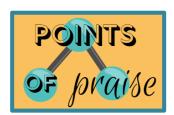
He is talking to Christians (at Corinth and Ephesus, for example) who were once very pagan. Paganism was full of rituals. Music was used to draw people into the rituals, designed to make human sensuality the doorway to spirituality. We think he does not mention instruments at all because he does not want the people to consciously bring forward the previous tradition that was sensual and not spiritual. Our praise is supposed to be spiritual. Can musical instruments contribute to that? Absolutely. Can they be so overdone that they detract



from that? Yes. So, we think Paul purposely does not mention music other than singing.

We should not be the "Praise Police." If we do not feel comfortable, we should not attend that service.

Conversely, we do not want to use our liberty as a stumbling block for others. "I am going to bring in a 17-piece band, and I don't care what you think!" That would not be the correct spiritual attitude. We should talk through such issues.



All praise from the days of the Jews under the Law or from the time of the call of the church is meant to glorify God's plan.

Praise is about God's plan and not MY emotion. If my emotion is built up in the praise, great, but that is not its purpose.

When we think about praise it becomes evident that it is meant for us to praise Him in all areas of our lives.

As Christians, what should our praise look like? How can we be sure our praise will bring God glory?

Because Christianity is made up of individuals who are endowed with varied levels of emotion, sensitivity, and outward expressiveness, this can be a difficult question to answer. Suffice it to say; we have several spiritually-grounded guidelines of Christian praise we can follow.

Val now gives us a really practical suggestion when it comes to praise so we need to all find our red chairs.





• I've noticed that I have a real problem quieting my mind, quieting all my thoughts about what I have to do in the day, who I need to take care of, what needs to be accomplished. My husband and I decided that we were going to make the red-flowered chair in our living room the meditation spot, and it just became known to the kids and to each other that whoever was sitting in the chair was having some good quiet time with the Lord, either praying or reading or meditating or what have you. It got to be just a really nice, safe, quiet spot that everyone in the house knew that if someone was sitting there that you just kind of left him alone until they got up and were ready to move on with the rest of their day. That was kind of a little discipline that worked really well for us.



What an easy, practical thing to set up in any home. For some, communion with God might entail going out for a long walk or run, contemplating Scripture or counting blessings. Val found that she would start her prayers at night and the next thing she knew it was morning. For decades now, she has written down her nightly prayers. After all this time, she has stacks of notebooks full of her evening prayers. This practice of quiet time and actively writing helps her focus on exactly what she wants to communicate with God. When she is done writing each evening, she puts down her pen and says out loud, "I love you Lord, amen..." Then she goes to sleep. These are just beautiful, practical suggestions. The idea is to live that life of worship in every way - to make it real. What an inspirational example!

Let's look at praise in the New Testament.

#### Our offerings to God should be praise-driven:

<u>Hebrews 13:15-16</u>: (NASB) <sup>15</sup>Through him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. <sup>16</sup>And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.



I didn't grow up learning about the Bible in studies the way the two of you did. I was raised in a Christian home and my dad was a choir director in the church we attended. Music was a major part of going to church for our family. In church there was the choir, the bells at Christmas, and so on. The church was beautiful, but it was really a performance. When the church service started, the choir would walk between the pews singing while the minister walked up behind them. We would sit up in the choir loft - I was uncomfortable with everyone staring at me through the whole service! When the service was finished, we walked back down the aisle singing, and it was very ceremonial. But, to me as a young person, it didn't feel like there was substance to it. The truth is I felt closer to God in Sunday school when the teacher read Bible stories than I did in the main church service. That is just my own experience.

It sounds like Jonathan was looking for how to live a life of worship, so that the praise was not empty for him. That is what we want to strive to do no matter where we are. How strong is our *life of worship* so that our praise might be full?



#### Our spiritual communication one with another should be praiseworthy:

<u>Ephesians 5:19-21</u>: (NASB) <sup>19</sup>speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; <sup>20</sup>always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; <sup>21</sup>and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

Do we do this when we speak to one another? If we need to vent, do we frame it in the context of a life of worship? It will mean something different if we do that. It will help us see all the sides of the problem.



Is there a time or place for inspirational music outside our church services? Yes. Music can inspire us and help us get us through the hurdles of life. Music helps center us and helps us express our praise.



#### Our rejoicing, when appropriate, should be outward:

<u>James 5:13</u>: (NASB) Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.

We asked Rick his opinion as to whether these activities count as praise, worship or both:

- Counting our blessings out loud? This is praise, the offering up to God what your life has produced for you.
- Being thankful for whatever the Lord permits to come your way today? When you engage in the action of thankfulness, you are engaging in the action of praise. Praise is an action that is stimulated by something.
- What about when Jonathan sings hymns while he works? This may be more worship than praise because it is keeping his mind set on God as he does his mundane work, but there is certainly praise attached to it.
- Reading a devotional book in the morning? This is worship, feeding your life, getting yourself into the position to motivate our actions during the day. This is a lifestyle habit.
- Listening to Christian Questions podcasts while cleaning out our closets? This is an action, so in that it is praise, but it is also worship doing mundane work with a spiritual attitude.
- Practicing a musical instrument for use in a church service or a Bible camp? This is part of worship, part of the activity of life, feeding it so that you can do it well. The actual playing of the hymn in the service is more praise.

Worship and praise are very intertwined, which is why we tend to use them interchangeably. Worship is not something you do as a service - it is how you live. The lifelong "bowing," staying humble, living your faith. Praise is the action that emerges from that life lived spiritually.

Is there a place in church for a devotional service with singing, poems and music? Is it appropriate? Jesus did not *tell* us to do this in the New Testament. However, there is reference to the disciples singing hymns (<u>Matthew 26:30</u>, <u>Mark 14:26</u> and other places) and singing one to another. Singing and devotional services help to connect us. We can never do enough praising God as long as it is coming from that worship-filled life and a humble heart. This is a fulfilling praise that transforms us.





#### Our responses to life's experiences should be based in a rejoicing attitude:

<u>1 Thessalonians 5:16-21</u>: (NASB) <sup>16</sup>Rejoice always; <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing; <sup>18</sup>in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit; <sup>20</sup>do not despise prophetic utterances. <sup>21</sup>But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; <sup>22</sup>abstain from every form of evil.

Pray without ceasing does not mean "say a prayer so long it lasts the rest of your life." It means we live in an attitude of prayer and worship constantly. This is a life-sustaining habit.



#### Our characters should, by their very expression, bring praise to God:

<u>Philippians 1:10-11</u>: (NASB) <sup>10</sup>so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; <sup>11</sup>having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

We all make mistakes, but our character should show forth godliness, and others should be able to see that and say there is something spiritual, something different about this person.

Our CQ contributor, Sebastian, gives us this beautiful example of praise:

"How Great Thou Art" (Verse 3)

And when I think of God, His Son not sparing Sent him to die, I scarce can take it in That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing He bled and died to take away my sin

Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee How great Thou art, how great Thou art Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee How great Thou art, how great Thou art

Does your soul sing with praise? Are you praising within your heart? Are you singing your heart out to God, either inside or out? Please do. This is how we better connect with God. We need to live that life of worship and sing our hearts out whether other people can hear us or not! This will cause a transformation by putting ourselves in His service and singing praises as a result.

#### Our calling should be a continual reminder of God's praiseworthy plan:

Ephesians 1:4-6: (NASB) <sup>4</sup>just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love <sup>5</sup>He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, <sup>6</sup>to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.



When we talk about the predestined establishment of the call of the faithful ones, that means that from before the time Adam was created, God had this in His heart and in His mind and in His plan. This is a God who is praiseworthy, who can see the future that works out for the benefit of every human being who has ever lived. Praise God!

## Our worship and praise summed up: It is all about God's plan and Jesus' sacrifice:

<u>Philippians 2:8-11</u>: (NASB) <sup>8</sup>Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup>For this reason also, God highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Let us never forget why we live this life of worship or why we engage in this praise. A life of worship is to serve loyally with the very essence of our being. Freely express the praises due our Father and our Lord Jesus. Express them quietly or outwardly, but express them wholeheartedly.

Live the life that is bowed before Christ every day, every moment. Live worship and let that praise come out of that life of humble service. Watch what happens to us and those around us as a result of living a life of worship!

Praise God because He is the Father. Praise Jesus because he is the ransom.

So, are praise and worship necessary to be a faithful Christian? For Jonathan and Rick (and Julie) and Christian Questions...

Think about it...!



Join us next week for our podcast on July 27, 2020 Ep. 1136: What Does it Mean to Take God's Name in Vain?

**Bonus Material and Study Questions** 

A few quotes that focus on worship and praise:

We are perishing for lack of wonder, not for lack of wonders. — G.K. Chesterton

The closer you get to the truth the clearer becomes the beauty, and the more you will find worship welling up within you. — N.T. Wright

The highest form of worship is the worship of unselfish Christian service. — Billy Graham

Work becomes worship when you dedicate it to God and perform it with an awareness of his presence. — Rick Warren



#### A little more on the Jewish/Samaritan rivalry:

**(Source:** McClintock & Strong's Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature) The establishment of a separate worship made the breach existing between the Jews and Samaritans irreparable. From this time malcontent Jews resorted to Samaria; and the very name of either people became odious to the other. About the year B.C. 129, John Hyrcanus, high priest of the Jews, destroyed the city of the Samaritans.

...their animosity became more intense than ever. The Samaritans are said to have done everything in their power to annoy the Jews. They would refuse hospitality to pilgrims on their road to Jerusalem, as in our Lord's case. They would even waylay them in their journey (Joseph. Ant. 20:6, 1); and many were compelled through fear to take the longer route by the east of Jordan.

<u>Luke 9:52-56</u>: (NASB) <sup>52</sup> and he (Jesus) sent messengers on ahead of him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for him. <sup>53</sup>But they did not receive him, because he was traveling toward Jerusalem. <sup>54</sup>When his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them? <sup>55</sup>But he turned and rebuked them, and said, You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; <sup>56</sup>for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went on to another village.

... "Thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil" was the mode in which the Jews expressed themselves when at a loss for a bitter reproach. Everything that a Samaritan had touched was as swine's flesh to them.

(Source: John Trapp Complete Commentary) For the Jews have no dealings...The Jews therefore hated the presence, the fire, the fashion, the books of a Samaritan. Neither was there any hatred lost on the Samaritan's part; for if he had but touched a Jew, he would have thrown himself into the next water, clothes and all; both of them equally sick of *a noli me tangere*. (Do not touch me.) (Epiphanius)

#### The full context of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well:

John 4:7-26: (NASB) <sup>7</sup>There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, Give me a drink. 8For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. 9Therefore the Samaritan woman said to him, How is it that you, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman? (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, Give me a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water. <sup>11</sup>She said to him, Sir, you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do you get that living water? <sup>12</sup>You are not greater than our father Jacob, are you, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself and his sons and his cattle? <sup>13</sup>Jesus answered and said to her, Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; <sup>14</sup>but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life. 15The woman said to him, Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty nor come all the way here to draw. <sup>16</sup>He said to her, Go, call your husband and come here. <sup>17</sup>The woman answered and said I have no husband. Jesus said to her, you have correctly said, I have no husband; <sup>18</sup> for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly. <sup>19</sup>The woman said to him, Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup>Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to her, Woman, believe me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. <sup>22</sup>You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup>But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. <sup>24</sup>God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. <sup>25</sup>The woman said to him, I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ); when that one comes, he will declare all things to us. <sup>26</sup>Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am he.



## Several Scriptures that show the Old Testament application of "open hands":

Isaiah 1:13-16: (NASB) <sup>13</sup>Bring your worthless offerings no longer, Incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies— I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. <sup>14</sup>I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, they have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them. <sup>15</sup>So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood. <sup>16</sup>Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil,

Psalms 63:1-5: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; my soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. <sup>2</sup>Thus I have seen You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory. <sup>3</sup>Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips will praise You. <sup>4</sup>So I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. <sup>5</sup>My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth offers praises with joyful lips.

<u>Psalms 28:1-2</u>: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>To You, O LORD, I call; my rock, do not be deaf to me, for if You are silent to me, I will become like those who go down to the pit. <sup>2</sup>Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry to You for help, when I lift up my hands toward Your holy sanctuary.

<u>Psalms 143:1-6</u>: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Hear my prayer, O LORD, Give ear to my supplications! Answer me in Your faithfulness, in Your righteousness! <sup>2</sup>And do not enter into judgment with Your servant, for in Your sight no man living is righteous. <sup>3</sup>For the enemy has persecuted my soul; he has crushed my life to the ground; he has made me dwell in dark places, like those who have long been dead. <sup>4</sup>Therefore my spirit is overwhelmed within me; my heart is appalled within me. <sup>5</sup>I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your doings; I muse on the work of Your hands. <sup>6</sup>I stretch out my hands to You; my soul longs for You, as a parched land. Selah.

<u>Psalms 134:1-3</u>: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Behold, bless the LORD, all servants of the LORD, who serve by night in the house of the LORD! <sup>2</sup>Lift up your hands to the sanctuary and bless the LORD. <sup>3</sup>May the LORD bless you from Zion, He who made heaven and earth.

<u>Psalms 141:1-2</u>: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>O LORD, I call upon You; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call to You! <sup>2</sup>May my prayer be counted as incense before You; the lifting up of my hands as the evening offering.

<u>Psalms 68:30-32</u>: (NASB) <sup>30</sup>Rebuke the beasts in the reeds, the herd of bulls with the calves of the peoples, trampling under foot the pieces of silver; He has scattered the peoples who delight in war. <sup>31</sup>Envoys will come out of Egypt; Ethiopia will quickly stretch out her hands to God. <sup>32</sup>Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth, sing praises to the Lord, Selah.

Exodus 9:29: (NASB) <sup>29</sup>Moses said to him, As soon as I go out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the LORD; the thunder will cease and there will be hail no longer, that you may know that the earth is the LORD'S.

1 Kings 8:22-23: (NASB) <sup>22</sup>Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven. <sup>23</sup>He said, O LORD, the God of Israel, there is no God like You in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing lovingkindness to Your servants who walk before You with all their heart,

#### Worship and praise texts:

Revelation 4:8-11: (NASB) <sup>8</sup>And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, Holy, holy is the LORD God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come. <sup>9</sup>And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, <sup>10</sup>the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne,



saying, <sup>11</sup>Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.

#### Our testimony of God should express His grace and abundance:

<u>Psalms 66:16-20</u>: (NASB) <sup>16</sup>Come and hear, all who fear God, and I will tell of what He has done for my soul. <sup>17</sup>I cried to Him with my mouth, and He was extolled with my tongue. <sup>18</sup>If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear; <sup>19</sup>but certainly God has heard; He has given heed to the voice of my prayer. <sup>20</sup>Blessed be God, Who has not turned away my prayer nor His lovingkindness from me.





#### Ep. 1135: Are Praise and Worship Necessary to Be a Faithful Christian?

https://christianquestions.com/character/inspiration/1135-praise-worship/

See: **CQ**Rewind

- 1. What do the examples of worship in the Bible teach us about what worship looks like? (See Exodus 20:3-5, Deuteronomy 10:20, Matthew 2:2,7-8, Luke 4:5-8)
- 2. What did Jesus teach the Samaritan woman about worship? (See John 4:19-26)
- 3. What are the two incorrect types of worship? Why are they unacceptable? What are practical examples of each? (See Matthew 23:23-24, John 4:19-23, Acts 17:22-24)
- 4. What makes Christian worship different? What efforts did Cornelius make to worship God in a connected way? (See John 4:24-26, Acts 10:1-4,25-26,34-35,44)
- 5. What steps can we take to grow into a life of worship based "in spirit and in truth"? (See Romans 12:1-5)
- 6. How does praise relate to worship? What are some ways that we can praise even during difficult and trying times? (See Psalms 66:1-4, Colossians 3:15-17)
- 7. How did people in the Old Testament praise God? What should be the purpose of our praise? (See 2 Samuel 6:14,16, Psalms 150:3-6, Lamentations 2:19)
- 8. How can our offerings, communication, rejoicing, responses and characters bring praise to our Heavenly Father? (See Hebrews 13:15-16, Ephesians 5:19-21, James 5:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-21, Philippians 1:10-11)
- 9. How do you worship the Lord? What can you do to make your life a life of worship?
- 10. Why do you praise the Heavenly Father? What are some things you do to praise His name?

