

Defining the Words

The Bible continually admonishes believers to pray, thank, praise and worship God, and that such should be an integral part of daily life, and not reserved for Church Services alone.

The words *praise* and *worship* are often used together, but although they complement each other, they are slightly different. Praise is often an expression of approval and acknowledgement of a person's character.

So when we praise God, it is in recognition and appreciation of what He has done for us. Biblical examples of praise include both angels and humans singing, dancing, and playing musical instruments.

Worship, on the other hand, is an expression of adoration and reverence. The term in both the Hebrew and Greek language expresses the idea of lowering oneself, like a slave to its master. In other words, it emphasizes humbleness.

The worshipper acknowledges God from the heart as superior in every way and above all, and himself as only a part of His Creation. Another factor that distinguishes worship from praise is that it moves a person to action, to where he willingly presents himself as a living sacrifice to God daily and submits to His Lordship.

It's Not an Option

Some agree it is nice to praise God and to be thankful to Him, but they look at it as being optional. As stated above, this is not the picture given in the Word.

Giving praise and thanks is a necessity, a direct command. The Bible actually states that God created man for that very purpose:

The people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praises.

(Isaiah 43:21)

And in the New Testament, the Apostle Peter says the same thing:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

(1Peter 2:9)

Some people find it hard to imagine that God desires man's thanks and praise in return for His goodness. But would you not desire the same? Remember that man is made in God's image.

It is interesting that in the Old Testament a lack of thanks and praise to God was considered a serious sin, deserving a curse. In Deuteronomy, we read:

Because you did not serve the Lord your God joyfully and with gladness of heart for the abundance of everything, therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and lack of everything. He will put an iron yoke on your neck until he has destroyed you.

(Deuteronomy 28:47-49)

In the New Testament Jesus showed His displeasure of heart over the nine lepers that never bothered to return and thank Him for the mighty work He had done for them.

Not by My Own Strength

Having established these significant biblical truths, we will move on to address the question of *how*. There are a few important passages in the Bible on the subject and they all say the same thing: Everything offered to God must be done under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit! Concerning praise and worship we read:

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him.

(John 4:23-24)

And the Apostle Paul states in his Letter to the Ephesians:

For it is we who are the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God, and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh.

(Philippians 3:3-4)

To worship in spirit, or in the Spirit of God, simply means worship inspired and guided by Him. There is no true and acceptable praise and worship except that which the Holy Spirit prompts and directs.

This is an important truth that many Christians fail to see. The flesh seeks to intrude in every sphere of life. But that which the flesh prompts is an abomination to God!

This does not mean that a person is not sincere and honest in his worship. It simply means that he has not submitted himself to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the matter.

It is potentially possible for the believer's every word, decision and action to be done in Christ, if he will just learn to depend and yield. The same is true for prayer. Paul says in Ephesians:

Pray in the Spirit at all times, in every prayer and supplication.

(Ephesians 6:18)

The Bible says we do not know how we are to pray, that is, what to pray for or how to ask for it. Therefore, rushing into God's presence and asking for what we believe to be the right thing, or asking for something that another person asks us to pray for, is not the correct way to pray.

Rather, we should look to the Holy Spirit to guide our utterance, because the prayer He inspires is always "*according to the will of God,*" and that is the prayer that will surely get an answer:

And this is the boldness that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask,

we know that we have obtained the request made of him.

(1John 5:14)

Of course, it would be impossible to be guided by the Spirit in this way unless we have the infilling. Paul writes:

Be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms, and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Ephesians 5:18-21)

In Acts chapter two, we read that it was only after the Disciples had been filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost that they began to praise and speak of the wonderful works of God.

But note, this is not a one-time event. We read further on in the Book of Acts that when the Disciples were concerned about the threats from the religious establishment, they prayed for more boldness and power.

And after they had prayed the place where they were gathered was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit once again. It is the believer's privilege, and his necessity, to receive a fresh infilling every day!