

MORE THAN A SONG

STUDY NO. 8

We learnt in the last study that God the Father is one of the persons of the Trinity and as such He has likes and preferences. We cannot explain why (like most of God's things) but the **praise** and **worship** that his children offer Him is pleasing to Him. These two please Him so much that the Bible says that He lives in the midst of the praises of His people (**Psalm 22:3**).

Knowing that the Father likes something, should be a good enough reason for us to do it. This should be our motivation because of the love we have for Him. Nonetheless this is not something we achieve ourselves but it is something that comes because "*He first loved us*" (**1 John 4:19**).

This is so important and it cannot be overlooked. Let's start with praise.

Praise

According to the dictionary, to praise is to "uplift or celebrate with words". We have so much to praise God for as His works are endless. Furthermore, most of his works are for our benefit, so praise is very much related to thanksgiving (**Psalm 100:4**).

God loves us, He worries for us and He wants us to know it. This should produce in us a thankful heart which translates into praise and celebration we offer to Him with joy (**Philippians 4:4**).

Reading **Psalm 150:6** we reach the conclusion that, to praise is (tick appropriately):

- A commandment
- An option
- A suggestion

Directed to

- Believers
- All human beings, from the worst sinner to the holiest
- Those separated from sin

The praise that God's children offer Him is known in the Bible as "Highest Praise".

Praise can be expressed in many different ways. According to the Scriptures the different ways in which we can praise the Lord are:

Psalm 9:1 "*I will praise you Lord, with my whole heart. I will tell of your marvellous deeds.*"

I will tell of his marvellous works and mighty deeds and so we will praise through our words.

Psalm 95:1 "*come let us sing to the Lord. Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.*"

Proclaiming, which means shouting or talking out loud.

Psalm 104:33 "*I will sing to the Lord for as long as I live. I will sing praise to my God while I have my being*"

Singing. This is the most common form of praise. Related forms of praise are:

Psalms (words that are sung from the Bible, especially the Psalms); hymns (compositions that proclaim Jesus as Lord)

Psalm 150:4 ...*"praise Him with dance"...*

Dancing. This is a symbol of a higher truth, that all our life: body, soul and spirit are sold out for God in response to his love.

Psalm 134:2 *"Lift your hands in the sanctuary and bless the Lord"*

Lifting our hands this is a symbol of our dependence or victory in the Lord.

Psalm 98:5-6 *"make music to the Lord with the harp and the sound of singing, with trumpets and the sound of horn. Shout joyfully before the Lord, the King."*

Using musical instruments usually accompanied by singing but not necessarily.

Romans 12:1 *"I beseech you, therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God which is your reasonable service."*

1Cor 6:20 *"For you were bought at a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."*

With our body and spirit, this means with our whole life.

The Scriptures also indicates multiple reasons or motives to praise Him.

Revelation 5:12

Jesus, the Lamb of God is worthy to receive power riches and wisdom; strength, honour, glory and blessing. In our own words, this means that

(Isaiah 43:21. Ephesians 1:11-12.)

We were created to praise Him.

Psalm 67:5-7 *"May the peoples praise you, o God; may all the peoples praise you. Then the land will yield its harvest, and God, our God, will bless us. God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth will fear him"*. When we praise God, He blesses us.

(2Chronicles 20:12, 22; Acts 16:25-26)

When we raise our praise to God, he shows His justice. Surely praise is something that our enemy, Satan, cannot stand that is why he is always trying to steal it from God. He wants to be praised instead of God (**Matthew 4:8-10**). This is why we believe that praise is a powerful weapon against Satan. If we persevere praising and singing, God will manifest and his enemies will flee (**Psalm 68:1**). In those moments when we feel we are in a spiritual war, let our praise to the Lord be heard!

(Hebrews 13:15, Romans 12:1)

It is a sacrifice that is pleasing to God. In many occasions, this concept is related to surrender and denial to our own self and so we can conclude saying that I must praise regardless of how hard it might be at times.

Praise and the Holy Spirit

Colossians 3:16 and **Ephesians 5:19** mention “spiritual singing” and this is quite likely to be associated with what we also call praise in the spirit:

A moment in which the musicians play a melody and each participant in the service put their own words to that melody. In other words, they are original songs, either prepared or inspired by the Holy Spirit.

In **1 Corinthians 14:14-15** we find the expression “singing with the spirit”. This praise is the one we give to God by speaking in tongues, which is the language given by God together with the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Worship

If we refer back to the dictionary, we can read that to worship is “to love in extreme” and also to “revere and honour God with a religious service”. The Hebrew words for worship are “segad” and “shachah” which mean to “bow down”. The Greek word, generally translated as worship is “proskuneo” and it refers to “kiss the hand, give honour and reverence”.

Think: According to **Matthew 2:11** and **1 Corinthians 14:25** which are the position we should take to worship?

To bow down or to prostrate

This is a spiritual and natural position. Even though the physical posture is important, it is not exclusive, as there are many people who cannot bow down for physical reasons, or there are moments in which this is not appropriate.

A condition to worship

We read in **Psalms 96:9** “Worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness”. What is the requirement to be able to worship? Holiness. This means to be pure, as far apart from sin as possible. This is why worship is purely reserved for his children and more specifically for those that are living in purity. God does not receive worship without holiness, so to worship we need to be living in a very close relationship with Him. We can never get to a place of intimacy with God if we are not purified from our sins because God does not tolerate evil.

Jesus poured his blood to give us the privilege to reach this place of holiness where He and the Father are and worship (**Hebrews 10:19-22**).

Revelation 1:6 reveals to us that, through Jesus Christ, every Christian can be a priest for God, becoming a link between serving God and the people. A priest can introduce the people of God to God and God to the people. We must put God first in our lives and worship is an expression of this. When we offer our love to God in this way He draws us closer to Him and fills us with blessings.

To worship God it's not just to sing songs. In fact, as disciples of Jesus, everything we do (our work, leisure time, studies, family life, etc.) should be worship to God. True worship to God involves giving 100% of our lives to Him. It involves being available and obedient to Him.

In your understanding, what is “the glory of God”? (Tick appropriately)

- Fame, splendour and magnificence of God.

- The supernatural power of God
- God's angels.

Worship to God is a way of living that brings glory to God.

Importance given by God to worship:

John 4:23-24 *“Yet a time is coming and it has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth”.*

Think: According to this passage, what is God seeking?

True worshippers that worship in spirit and in truth.

The Father himself is on this search. Do you think worship is important to Him?

Worship is a priority in heaven. Whenever we see an image of God in the Bible, we see that worship is taking place (**Isaiah 6:1-5, Revelation 4:6-11, Ezekiel 47:1-12**) Worship gives room to God's dominium.

What does “in spirit and in truth” mean? (Could be a variety of answers)

Extension

The Tabernacle, Praise and Worship.

The tabernacle of Moses is a model of the relationship between man and God. This is a topic with many complex details that do not concern the present study but we wanted to make a brief reference to it:

1. When we didn't believe we were outside the Tabernacle.
2. We came into the external court by responding to God's invitation and coming to **the altar of sacrifice** (where our sins are forgiven) and then we move to the **Bronze Basin** (where we are washed and cleansed). This is the place where the praise that is pleasing to God begins.
3. Forgiven, washed and cleansed (new born Christians) we can now enter the Holy Place as God's priests. We go to the **Altar of incense** (to offer our prayers and praise) and we burn the incense prepared by the priests. We can go to the **table of the bread** that has been prepared and cooked by men (to read and eat God's word). We can see that the **Golden Lamp stand** is burning with the olive oil that has been prepared and given by men (to have communion and to walk in God's light).
4. Then we can enter beyond the Veil, which has been broken, into the **Holiest of Holies** where everything is supernatural. Here God's presence is manifest above the **Ark of Testimony**. The Ark contains the Stones Tablets with the Law (God gives us authority and His life) and a jar of manna (God always give us his hidden supernatural provision). In this place we rest with God and we sit at his feet. Here is where He ministers us and we worship Him. Because we are God's priests in Jesus

(1Peter 2:9), we can draw near God with freedom and confidence **(Ephesians 3:12, Hebrews 10:19-22)**

There might be many symbolisms and words that are not familiar with the reader of the study, but it is only necessary to understand that God is calling us to develop a more intimate relationship with Him, to be in a closer place with Him and this requires holiness. He doesn't want us to stay in the courts not even in the Holy Place, He wants an even deeper, more intimate relationship. He wants us to enter the Holiest of Holies. How deep are we in our relationship with the Lord?

Reflection

Are you grateful for all the things God does for you? Should you be grateful? Why?

In which ways do you praise and worship God?

Which types of praise have you never practiced? Would you consider practising them? When?

Remember

As disciples of Jesus, we now have something to rejoice in and to sing about.

- We must praise God in every moment **(Psalm 34:1; 145:2)** and in all circumstances **(Hebrews 13:15)**
- Our praise and worship is an offering that is birthed in a pure heart **(Psalm 119:7)** and it has to be offered whole heartedly **(Psalm 138:1)**
- We do not offer praise and worship to please men but to please God.
- We must worship God in spirit and in truth because these are the worshippers our heavenly Father is looking for **(John 4:23-24)**