

A BIBLICAL STUDY ON PRAISE

LESSON THREE: PRAISE HOW TO'S

by Sandy Harber

"I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvelous works. I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High." Psalms 9:1-2

The Bible is the Christian's How To Manual for everything. It contains Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth. Anything you need to know about navigating life in this world can be found within the pages of His Book. That includes information on praising God.

We praise God because He is worthy of honor and glory on the basis of Who He is and what He has done (Psalm 145:3; 107:8). The various methods that can be used to praise the Lord are revealed in the word "praise" itself. We are at a disadvantage with the English language, which designates one term for the activity of honoring God: praise. The Hebrew language employs 12 different words, and the Greek 9, which describe the various activities and attitudes that demonstrate the honor and esteem in which God is held. Let's look at some examples.

Music is generally the first place that people go to when they think of praise. Most, if not all, churches open their Sunday Morning Worship service with singing accompanied by musical instruments. The congregation raising their voices together in praise sets the tone for communal worship (Hebrews 2:12; Psalm 106:48; 149:1). This isn't surprising since many Hebrew and Greek words that are translated "praise" mean "to sing," "a hymn," or "to play a stringed instrument." Singing praise to the Lord can, and should, be a solitary activity, as well. Paul encourages Christians to sing hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs in their hearts to the Lord (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). The attitude of thanksgiving is mentioned in both passages (Col. 3:15; Eph. 5:20). The idea of a thanksgiving sacrifice or thank offering is the basis for several "praise" words (Psalm 106:1; 136:1-3).

You can praise God with your lips - praying, speaking, or singing - words that show your awe and wonder, thanksgiving, and/or joy regarding the Person and work of the Lord. Praise may be directed to God Himself (Psalm 108:3-4) when you tell Him why He is worthy of your adoration. Praise of God may be directed to others when you testify of His goodness to and care of you (Psalm 145:21).

You can praise God with your body. David danced before the Lord (II Sam. 6:14) and the Psalmist encourages us to joyfully "praise his name in the dance" (Psalm 149:3). Raise your hands in praise (Psalm 134:2). This action may be part of a joyous celebration (like Jesus' entry into Jerusalem) or a natural reaction to a lively spiritual tune. Some people lift up holy hands to show their agreement with the words of a song or sermon (I Tim. 2:8). Praise may take the form of kneeling before the Lord (Psalm 95:6).

Primarily, praise involves the heart (Psalm 86:12; 138:1). It comes from recognition of Who God is (Psalm 145:3) coupled with an attitude of thanksgiving (Psalm 118:1). The result is joy that overflows so that it must burst forth in some tangible way - quite often, song (Psalm 95:1-2). We feel compelled to glorify God (Psalm 86:12).

Read one or more of these praise psalms: Psalm 136, 147, 148, 150. Start your own personal praise celebration.

"I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations." Psalm 108:3