

Praising the Lord: A Part of Worship That Can Transform Your Life

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Have you felt the joy of praising the Lord?

Praise is a form of worship that is most meaningful when we focus not only on what God has done for us, but on who He is. Worshipping by offering praise can bring us peace, strength and a joyful connection with God.

Elder Patrick Kearon taught that, “To attend is to be present at, but to worship is to intentionally praise and adore our God in a way that transforms us!” Praise is a bold declaration of God’s goodness and greatness. It is more than a quick “thank you;” it changes us. Praise is heart-felt and full of rejoicing and gladness, and can happen in our hearts, in our homes, in our cars, and in our congregations, and it can even be fun!

The Joyful Praise of Palm Sunday

But wait, is a bold declaration of praise appropriate? In Luke 19, we read that on Palm Sunday during the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem: “The whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen.” The Pharisees thought that this praise was improper and told Jesus to silence his disciples. But the Savior replied, “if [my disciples] keep quiet, the stones will cry out.” Can you picture a pile of rocks shouting out their joy in Jesus, the Son of God while He walked by? Think of the beauty of the rocks, the valleys, the clouds, the insects, and all creation exclaiming praises to their Creator!

The Lord’s Prayer begins and ends with praises to God. Worship through praising God IS of God, and is a fitting and beautiful manifestation of a heart overflowing with gratitude in Christ. Jesus did not stop the people from praising Him on that first Palm Sunday and does not stop believers today.

Why Praise Matters

Initially, C.S. Lewis found God’s command to praise Him unsettling. Did God really need our praise? Isn’t that self-serving of Him? Then Lewis realized that praise was a natural expression of joy in the Lord. In other words, God commands me to praise Him not for His sake, but for my sake.

Praise is more than counting our blessings; it is speaking the truth about who God is: He is Mercy, He is Truth, He is Rescue, He is Safety, He is Love. Acknowledging and

expressing these truths in grateful worship brings His Spirit in abundance! When I praise, I am filled with awe. My thoughts are higher and holier.

Praise draws me closer to Him, fills me with joy, and anchors my heart in gratitude. It is worshipful. President Russell M. Nelson echoed this idea when he said: “This Easter season, let us worship and praise Him for the peace, hope, light, and truth He brings to us.”

When Should We Praise God?

In short, always. Scripture is full of encouragement to praise the Lord at all times and in all circumstances. Here are just a few moments when praise is especially powerful:

- **When life is good:** “Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise” (James 5:13).
- **When life is hard:** “At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and the other prisoners were listening to them (Acts 16:25 NIV). “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord” (see Job 1:20–21).
- **All day long:** “I did praise him all the day long. ” (1 Nephi 18:16)
- **With others:** “I will thank you in the great congregation” (Psalm 35:18).
- **By ourselves:** “I will sing praises to you among the nations” (Psalm 108:3)
- **Every day:** “Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever” (Psalm 145:2).

What Can We Praise Him For?

Reasons to praise the Lord are plentiful. The list is endless because His goodness is literally endless. Dwight L. Moody taught: “If a man just stops to think what he has to praise God for, he will find there is enough to keep him singing praises for a week.” Here's a start:

- **For who He is:** “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised... his greatness is unsearchable” (Psalm 145:3).
- **For His mercy and love:** “His mercy endures forever” (Psalm 118:1-3,29).
- **For Jesus Christ:** “Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57).
- **For His commandments:** “I will praise you with an upright heart when I learn your righteous law” (Psalm 119:7 NIV).

- **For His creations:** “You made heaven and earth and preserve all of them” (Nehemiah 9:6).
- **For personal deliverance:** “I sought the Lord and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears” (Psalm 34:4).

What Does Praise Look Like?

Praise can be quiet or loud, solemn or exuberant. The scriptures offer dozens of examples:

- **Through words:** “I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth” (Psalm 34:1).
- **Through music and dance:** “Praise him with trumpet sound... with tambourine and dance... with loud clashing cymbals!” (Psalm 150).
- **Through obedience and sacrifice:** “Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1).
- **Through sharing His workings in our lives:** “Make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted” (Isaiah 12:4).

Who should praise God?

Simply put, all of us. Praising the Lord is not reserved only for the eloquent or graceful. The scriptures clearly proclaim who will praise the Lord. Here is a brief list:

- **Everyone:** “Let all flesh bless His holy name for ever and ever.” (Psalm 145:21)
- **To each other:** “One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts” (Psalm 145:4)
- **All His Works:** “All thy works shall praise thee” (Psalm 145:10)
- **All Creation:** “Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord” (Psalm 150:6)

How Can I Praise God?

Ways to praise the Lord vary widely. You don’t need to be a musician or theologian to praise the Lord. You just need to be willing. Here are a few ways to begin:

- **Sincerely speak praises out loud.** For example: “Heavenly Father, I praise You for Your mercy and Your faithfulness, Your goodness.”

- **Sing hymns or songs** on how great God is and focus on feeling the truth of the lyrics in your heart.
- **Begin your prayers with heartfelt praise** before asking for anything.
- **Write down attributes of God** and acknowledge the goodness of each one.
- **Praise Him with your life.** Serve, love, forgive, obey and acknowledge your actions as your praise to Him.

Praising the Lord is joyful. It shifts our focus from worry to worship. When and how can you and I intentionally praise God, not only for what He's done but for who He is? We might just find that our peace and perspective are lifted in the process.

“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!” (Psalm 150:6)