

## ☞ Principles of Praise

The Bible repeatedly says, "Praise the Lord." It is something we should do. We're going to spend the next few weeks in a short series focusing on the Principles of Praise. There's plenty for us to learn and to put into practice. Today, this will be basically an overview of what praise really means and how it is expressed.

## ☞ An Analysis of Praise

### Psalm 150

#### About Praise:

The virgin birth is mentioned twice in the Bible, justification is mentioned 70 times, sanctification 72 times, baptism is mentioned 80 times, and repentance 110 times. Compare this to thanksgiving being mentioned 135 times, singing 287 times, rejoicing 288 times and, finally, praise is mentioned 332 times in the Bible.

☞ **Praise = words that express admiration.** It is nearly synonymous with **thanksgiving**.

☞ Praise is **closely tied with music**: Psalm 100:2, 4 says, *Come before him with joyful songs; and, Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise.* Also, Psalm 95:2 says, *Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.*

These verses are saying that to approach God, we should come with music and praise.

The Book of Psalms (the book of music) is the longest book in the Bible. Music is mentioned over 800 times in the Bible.

### 1. ☞ **There is Purpose in Praise**

**Why praise?** Because it is a major part of **God's plan for people**:

Isaiah 43:7 & 21 say that *people were created for God's glory and formed to proclaim God's praise.*

☞ **1 Peter 2:9 says we are chosen to declare his praises.**

Psalm 33:1 states, *it is fitting for the upright to praise him.*

*Fulton Oursler tells of his old nurse, sitting at the kitchen table, saying, 'Much obliged, Lord, for my vittles.' 'Anna,' I asked, 'what's a vittle?' 'It's what I've got to eat and drink, that's vittles. 'But you'd get your vittles whether you thanked the Lord or not.' 'Sure, but it makes everything taste better to be thankful.'"*

☞ **Why praise?** Because there are some **great benefits**:

☞ **--Debbie McDaniel... Praise gets our focus off ourselves and back on God.** In our often "selfie" focused world, we need this constant reminder - life is not all about us. He desires our eyes be set firmly on Him, because that's where our true hope is found.

☞ **Praise brings us to a place of humility.** We remember our dependency on God as we acknowledge our need for Him. As we praise Him as King, we admit and recognize that we're not in control, but He is.

☞ **Praise leaves no room for complaining and negativity.** Sometimes even within our prayers, we can tend to complain about our problems. But through praise, we're focused on Him. We're reminded of what He has already done in our lives. We're reminded that He knows what concerns us, and is capable of taking care of all that burdens us.

☞ **Praise invites His presence.** God dwells close to us when we praise Him. He lives there. He looks for it. Our spirits are refreshed and renewed in His presence. We're strengthened by His peace and refueled by His joy.

☞ **It paves the way for God's power to be displayed.** Praise makes the enemy flee. Evil will not stick around if we're praising our God who will fight our battles for us. People's lives are affected and changed.

*God called John and Elaine Beekman to missionary work among the Ch'ol Indians of southern Mexico. They labored 25 years with other missionaries to translate the New Testament into the language of the Ch'ol Indians. What's interesting is that when the missionaries came, the Ch'ol Indians didn't sing. With the coming of the gospel, however, the believers in the tribe became known as "the singers". "They love to sing now because they have something to sing about."*

Praise is commanded for us, it is something God loves, he deserves the best we can give him & there are great benefits in praising God.

There is purpose in Praise.

## 2. ☞ **There is Power in Praise**

**What does praise accomplish?**

☞ **It attracts God's attention:**

Psalm 69:30-31 says that *God is pleased with praise more than with offerings.*

Psalm 68:4 in some translations says that *our praise prepares the way for God.*

Psalms 100:4 says we *enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise*

Psalm 22:3 - *God inhabits or sits enthroned on our praises.*

☞ **It is effective warfare:**

☞ Psalm 8:2 says that *praise from children is ordained to **silence the foe** and the avenger.*

☞ 1 Samuel 16:23 - *When David played his harp the **evil spirit would leave.***

2 Chronicles 20:21-30 – (King Jehoshaphat) *The singers were at the head of the army praising God. Then God defeated the enemy. There was so much plunder that it took three days to collect it all!*

☞ Isaiah 30:32 says that **God fights the enemy** to the music of tambourines and harps.

Notice it's not singing about warfare, but just simply praising God, and then God fights.

Acts 16:25 - *Paul and Silas were in jail praying and singing hymns to God. A violent earthquake hit, broke open all the prison doors and loosened everybody's chains. As a result, Paul and Silas were released and the jailer became a Christian!*

There is power in Praise.

**3. ☞ There are various Practices of Praise**

--Erwin W. Lutzer... *You don't learn to praise in a day, especially since you may have been complaining for years! New habits take time to develop. But you can begin today, and practice tomorrow, and the next day, until it becomes part of you.*

**When should we praise God?**

James 5:13 says *we should praise when we are happy.*

Psalm 42:5 says *we should praise him when we are not happy.*

Psalm 34:1 says *His praise will always be on my lips.*

☞ **Anytime & all the time!**

Notice, the scripture never says, "when the song moves me," or "when it's my favorite song."

**Where should we praise God?**

Psalm 22:22 says *in the congregation.*

Psalm 57:9 says *among the nations*.

Psalm 107:32 says *in the council of the elders*.

Psalm 148:1 says *in the heights above*.

Psalm 150:1 says *in his sanctuary and in his heavens*.

☞ Suffice it to say, we should praise God pretty much **everywhere**. But note how most of these references are public places and with others.

### **How should we praise God?**

☞ Psalm 86:12 says *I will praise you... **with all my heart***.

☞ Psalm 26:7 says **out loud**.

☞ Psalm 134:2 mentions **with lifted hands**.

Cf. 1 Timothy 2:8...I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer

### **9 reasons why I raise my hands during worship**

#### **By Nate Beaird**

*A while ago my wife, Niki, and I were sitting with a group of friends from church, all from various church backgrounds. A question was raised by one of our group: "I've been meaning to ask you guys, Why do some people lift their hands during the songs?" It's a fair question.*

*There are some very theological and even historical reasons why people raise their hands. In the Psalms, David writes about lifting hands to the Lord's holy sanctuary and as an offering. The act of lifting hands towards someone is also described as a blessing, as a form of worship, and as a form of surrender. There are many reasons why raising a hand is significant even apart from worship.*

#### ☞ **1. Reaching for help**

*Have you ever pushed someone into a pool? What was their first reaction? Probably hands flailing, grasping for something, anything that would protect them from their current experience. We don't think about what we are doing; it is hard-wired into our being to reach out for help. Sometimes life throws me a surprise push into the pool, and in the middle of my experience I to reach out for the Lord.*

#### ☞ **2. Excitement**

*Have you ever cheered your favorite team on to a last minute victory? I know some can get very wound up in that situation. Sometimes during worship I simply want to praise God, not only for winning but also ensuring that I will win through his Son, Jesus Christ.*

#### ☞ **3. Sadness**

We have all needed a hug at some point in our lives. There is something about that connection with a loved one that comforts us because we get the sense that we don't have to be strong and hold it together in that moment. I've been so crushed that only reaching out to the Lord would do, and in that moment I understood He cared for me.

☞ **4. Hey you!**

Sometimes I feel like God is looking at a sea of faces, and I need Him to see me. Sometimes I raise my hands as if to say, "Hey, I'm right here and I need you!"

☞ **5. Surrender**

Raising your hands in surrender can mean you are cornered and out of options. In my life I've done a pretty great job at getting cornered, running out of options. When I run my life my own way, it always happens. It's not that I'm completely clueless about how to live and make decisions; it's just that I'm making decisions and choices without all the information. God, on the other hand always has all the information, so sometimes when I raise my hands during worship, I'm surrendering my life back to Him.

☞ **6. I know the answer**

We all knew what to do in school when we knew the answer: we raised our hands and the teacher would call on us. I don't always know how to find the "x" in an equation, but here's something I do know: the Lord is for me and not against me. Sometimes when I'm worshipping, I want to raise my hands to Him and praise Him because the answer is so sure in my Spirit.

☞ **7. I will go**

I want to volunteer for the Lord's service. Sometimes when I worship, I raise my hands as if to say, "I'll go, Lord. Send me. Use my gifts and resources to do whatever you need to do."

☞ **8. Trust jump**

Sometimes even though I'm willing to go where God wants me to, I need to work on the trust part. I "stand on the step" after the Lord has asked me to jump. I want to – I mean, I volunteered, right? But I stand on the step with my knees bent and arms out, judging the distance. So at times when I lift my hands in worship, I am going through this "trust jump" with God. Regardless of my abilities He always catches me and He will do the rest.

☞ **9. Receiving**

Sometimes when I worship, I am asking for more. I'm asking God to show me and my family His glory, to touch us with His Spirit. I'm asking for healing, for wisdom, for direction, for forgiveness.

I've noticed that every one of my reasons for raising my hands during worship circles around relationships. Our context with God is – wait for it – a relationship. Thus we can draw parallels in how we extend our hands in other relationships in our daily lives to reasons we raise our hands during worship. Worship is more than just reading words on a screen and singing three fast songs and then three slow songs. It's a time to connect with Him.

The next time someone asks me why I raise my hands during worship I know what I will say: I simply want to connect.

☞ Psalm 150 includes *with instruments and dancing*.

☞ Psalm 95:1-7 mentions *singing, shouting, thanksgiving, music, & kneeling*.

**Let's look at some key Hebrew words for praise:**

☞ **Zamar** is found in Psalm 21:13 and means *to play an instrument*.

☞ **Halal** is found in Psalm 22:22 and means *to celebrate*.

☞ **Tehillah** is found in Psalm 22:25 and means *public adoration and thanksgiving*.

☞ **Towdah** is found in Psalm 26:7 and means *to give thanks beforehand*.

☞ **Barak** is found in Psalm 26:12 and means *to kneel*.

☞ **Yadah** is found in Psalm 57:9 and means *to hold out the hand*.

☞ **Shabach** is found in Psalm 117:1 and means *to be loud & boast*.

There are various expressions of praise. It starts from the inside and works its way out to effect the whole body from time to time.

There is no ranking of better or worse in these forms of praise. These are simply different ways to praise. Many places in the world (like Africa) wouldn't really consider it praise if there wasn't some shouting and dancing. On the other hand, Quakers highly esteem total silence. These are neither right nor wrong; they're simply preferences. So, there are many ways to praise the Lord.

There are various practices of Praise.

☞ **God deserves our praise. We were created to praise him. There is Purpose in Praise.**

**Praise invites God's presence and defeats the enemy. There is Power in Praise.**

**We should praise God all the time, everywhere and in a variety of ways. There are various Practices of Praise.**

Psalm 86:12 - we should join the psalmist and say *I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever.*