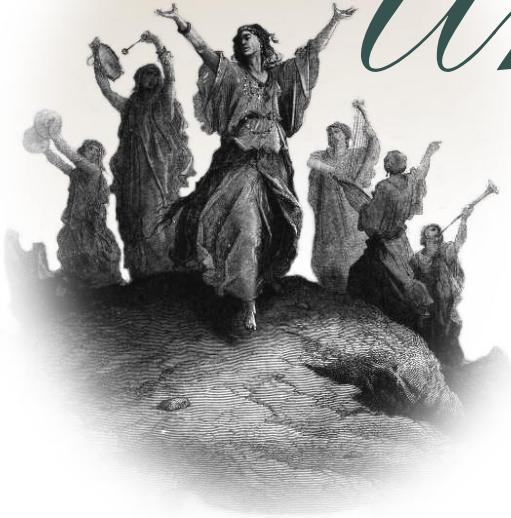


# In Unison



The trumpeters and  
singers joined in unison,  
as with one voice, to  
give praise and thanks  
to the Lord.

2 Chronicles 5:13

## Three Little Words

*T*  
*The lyrics of a song popular  
several decades back said that  
those “three little words” were “I  
Love You.”*

Many contemporary Christians get hung up on the difference between *thanksgiving* and *praise*, or worship. Thanksgiving comes easily to a people taught to be polite and grateful. From our earliest years we are trained to say “thank you” when given something nice. So when God does something nice for us, we are comfortable and immediate with our thank-you.

Praise, however, can be a muddier affair. How do we worship an invisible God for being something we cannot see? And how do we separate our praise from our thanksgiving? Where do we begin?

We begin with those three little words: “I love You.” Notice the period after the three words; notice that this is not the beginning of a longer statement, but the entirety of the statement. It is not “I love You because...” If that were the beginning of the statement, we would be slipping back into the neighborhood of thanksgiving—a worthy enterprise, but not praise. Worship is not loving God because He has done something nice in our lives. True worship is loving God simply because He is God.

### The Essence of Worship

That is the beginning—and essence—of worship: “I love You.” Worship, at its most fundamental level, is nothing more or less than our telling God that we love Him.

Psalm 103 shows us the contrast between worship and thanksgiving.

Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name.  
Psalm 103:1 nasb

In verse 1, David is worshiping God. Here he expresses the beauty of pure worship: *With every part of me, I adore every part of you.* Praising God’s

name is synonymous with praising the entirety of His character.

In verse 2, however, he is expressing thanksgiving.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits; Psalm 103:2 nasb

While the word “bless” (literally, to kneel down in adoration) is the action expressed in both, the motive behind each is different. Here his adoration is based on a heart of thanksgiving—for the good things the Lord has done in his life—and the remaining verses in the psalm itemize some of those benefits.

None of this is meant to diminish thanksgiving. It is good to thank the Lord for His goodness. But the distinction should be made. Sometimes thanksgiving is nothing more than good manners. We thank God for His blessings—but we also thank our friends for a gift, thank the salesman for a good deal on a new stereo, and thank the check-out clerk for returning the proper change.

But we *worship* only God. If we are to lead the worshiping body of Christ, we must lead it with understanding—knowing not only *what* we do, but *why*.

“Many are our faculties, emotions, and capacities, but God has given them all to us, and they ought all to join in chorus to His praise. Half-hearted, ill-conceived, unintelligent praises are not such as we should render to our loving Lord.”  
(C.H. Spurgeon on Psalm 103:1 in *The Treasury of David*.)

  
*To far, for the purpose of this discussion, we have been using the words “praise” and “worship” interchangeably. But the words do have different meanings in Scripture.*

### Praise

Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; **praise** him in his mighty heavens. Psalm 150:1

Hebrew *halal*, haw-lal'; a prim. root; to be clear (orig. of sound, but usually of color); to shine; hence to make a show, to boast; and thus to be (clamorously) foolish; to rave; causat. to celebrate; also to stultify:- (make) boast (self),

celebrate, commend, (deal, make), fool (-ish, -ly), glory, give [light], be (make, feign self) mad (against), give in marriage, [sing, be worthy of] praise, rage, renowned, shine.

### Worship

“God is spirit, and his worshipers must **worship** in spirit and in truth.”

John 4:24

Greek *proskuneo*, pros-koo-neh'-o; from Grk 4314 and a prob. der. of Grk 2965 (mean. to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand); to fawn or crouch to, i.e. (lit. or fig.) prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to, adore):-worship.

These definitions seem to correspond with my personal use of the words. To me, praise is brighter than worship—more joyous, freely spoken, even louder. Praise is delivered with a big grin on one's face. Worship, on the other hand, is more reverent than praise, quieter, performed with a heart of respect and awe. One does not grin while worshiping—indeed, one very often weeps from the sheer overwhelming presence of the Lord.

The important point, however, is not the difference between the two words, but that we do both. Semantics should never become an obstacle to our approaching God—whether it be with an attitude of praise or worship. We may call it whatever we choose—so long as we do it.

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“Praise is the act of verbalized worship or adoration that declares or acknowledges God for Who He is. Thanksgiving, on the other hand, is the act of offering specific thanks to God for things He has done for us or others.”

(Dick Eastman, *A Celebration of Praise: Exciting Prospects for Extraordinary Praise* (Baker, 1984), p13)

## Praise/Worship

For the director of music. According to gittith. A psalm of David. O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. Psalm 8:1

For the director of music. A psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Psalm 19:1

Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is he, this King of glory? The Lord Almighty—he is the King of glory. Selah Psalm 24:8-10

A psalm of David. Ascribe to the Lord, O mighty ones, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness. Psalm 29:1-2

Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him. Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.

Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy. Psalm 33:1-3

God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the Lord amid the sounding of trumpets. Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne. The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham, for the kings of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted. Psalm 47:5-9

## Thanksgiving

So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me." John 11:41

Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name. I Chron. 29:13

The trumpeters and singers joined in unison, as with one voice, to give praise and thanks to the Lord. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, they raised their voices in praise

to the Lord and sang: "He is good; his love endures forever." 2 Chron. 5:13a

"I thank and praise you, O God of my fathers: You have given me wisdom and power; you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king." Daniel 2:23

"But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from the Lord." Jonah 2:9

We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. 2 Thes. 1:3

## Hymns and Choruses

Crown Him with Many Crowns (*Bridges*)  
Crown Him the Son of God  
Before the worlds began,  
And ye, who tread where He hath trod,  
Crown Him the Son of man.

O Jesus, King Most Wonderful (*Bernard*)  
O Jesus, King most wonderful!  
Thou Conqueror renowned!  
Thou Sweetness most ineffable,  
In Whom all joys are found.

O Lord of Heaven and Earth and Sea (*Wordsworth*)  
O Lord of heav'n and earth and sea,  
To Thee all praise and glory be;  
How shall we show our love to Thee,  
Who givest all?

Great God, We Sing That Mighty Hand (*Doddrige*)  
Great God we sing that mighty hand  
By which supported still we stand;  
The opening year Thy mercy shows;  
That mercy crowns it till it close.



# In Unison

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