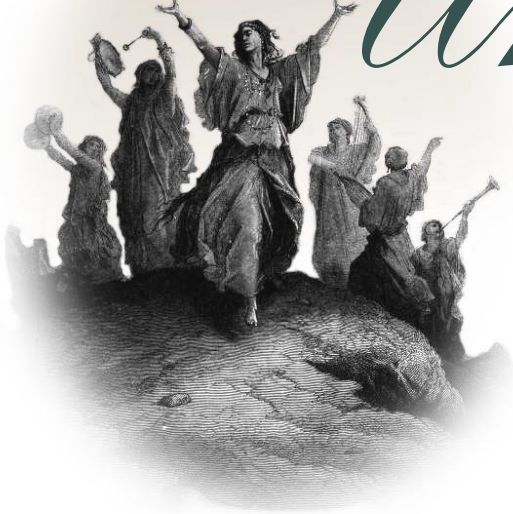


In Unison



The trumpeters and
singers joined in unison,
as with one voice, to
give praise and thanks
to the Lord.
2 Chronicles 5:13

To Be Like Him

The sacrifices of God are a broken
spirit, A broken and a contrite heart—
These, O God, You will not despise.
Psalm 51:14-17 nkjv

motivation of the One for whom the ser-
vice is rendered, is nothing more than
“striving after wind” (Ecclesiastes 2:26).
It is empty effort, offered for unholy rea-
sons.

Look to the example of Christ, the
epitome of excellence.

Who, being in very nature God, did
not consider equality with God some-
thing to be grasped, but made himself
nothing, taking the very nature of a
servant, being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a
man, he humbled himself and became
obedient to death—even death on a
cross! Philippians 2:6-8

There are those who denounce
excellence as nothing more than show-
ing off. But when we understand that
Biblical excellence can only exist in an
atmosphere of contrite humility before
God, we understand that when we strive
for holy excellence we are no more
“showing off” than was Jesus, when He
debased Himself to become the ultimate
servant and sacrifice for man.

The Source

All things begin with God—even
the service and worship we offer to Him.
We begin by approaching Him with hu-
mility and an open, broken heart. This
establishes our position in relation to His.
As we proclaim His lordship, we confess
our inability to live without Him; as we
magnify Him, we diminish ourselves; as
we establish His high and lofty plane, we
comprehend its contrast to our own.

For I know that nothing good dwells
in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wish-
ing is present in me, but the doing of
the good is not. Romans 7:18 nasb

Whatever beauty we offer up to
God, must have its origin in Him. It is
only through the blood of Christ and the
indwelling Spirit that we even gain ac-
cess to the throne; we are incapable of
manufacturing praise out of our flesh—
it must be God who energizes the wor-
ship process.

Likewise, striving for excellence in
our service devoid of the energizing

*We are called to serve and
worship our Lord with excellence—
the very best of which we are ca-
pable. We do this out of a sense of
obedience, indebtedness, and
thanksgiving. But how is this ac-
complished? How do we go about
actually offering excellence to God?*

Deliver me from the guilt of blood-
shed, O God, The God of my salva-
tion, And my tongue shall sing aloud
of Your righteousness. O Lord, open
my lips, And my mouth shall show
forth Your praise. For You do not de-
sire sacrifice, or else I would give it;
You do not delight in burnt offering.

How

do we do it? How do we prepare our heart and mind to honestly utter words of praise and adoration to our God?

Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.
For He is our God,
And we are the people of His pasture,
And the sheep of His hand.
Psalm 95:6-7a nkjv

The Hebrew word translated “worship” literally means to bow down in humility. The best physical attitude for worship is on one’s knees, because this immediately puts us in proper perspective to our God: He is above us; we approach Him in humble submission.

But even when it is not possible for us to worship on our knees, we can close our eyes and paint the picture of His throne in our mind. We can see, in our mind, ourselves prostrate before Him. How do we ensure that we mean the words we say in worship? When the throne of God fills the mind, and when we see ourselves in proper attitude before it, the words of praise will most certainly be genuinely humble.



“Humility is the one response I am still capable of making even when I am at my worst, even when I’m in the midst of struggle. It is an admission of my weakness and dependence. The Holy Spirit responds to this admission. He comes in and empowers me to respond to the current struggle in His favor.

“Humility sets the stage for the Holy Spirit’s direction and empowerment. Once our old natures have been subdued, reason and truth can have a voice. As we humble ourselves, God can quit resisting us and begin to hear us instead.

“Prayer and worship are the language of humility. It’s the language God responds to. Worship is also a part of our response, for to worship God is to offer our being to Him in acknowledgment of who He is. Pride and worship cannot exist together. Worship cleanses and prepares us for what comes next.” (Jim Petersen, *Lifestyle Discipleship: The Challenge of Following Jesus in Today’s World*, NavPress, 1994)



Scripture

Then King David went in and sat before the Lord, and he said:

"Who am I, O Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? And as if this were not enough in your sight, O Sovereign Lord, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant. Is this your usual way of dealing with man, O Sovereign Lord?"

2 Samuel 7:18-19

"What has happened to us is a result of our evil deeds and our great guilt, and yet, our God, you have punished us less than our sins have deserved and have given us a remnant like this." Ezra 9:13

A song of ascents. Of David.

My heart is not proud, O Lord, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me. Psalm 131:1-2

"Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty." Isaiah 6:5

I know, O Lord, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his

steps. Correct me, Lord, but only with justice—not in your anger, lest you reduce me to nothing.

Jeremiah 10:23-24

When Jesus had finished saying all this in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this, because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue." So Jesus went with them.

He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have

not found such great faith even in Israel." Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well. Luke 7:1-10

For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. 1 Corinthians 15:9-10

Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. 2 Corinthians 3:5

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:12-14

Hymns and Choruses

Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart (Crosby)

Teach me to love Thee as Thine angels love,
One holy passion filling all my frame:
The baptism of the heav'n-descended Dove—
My heart an altar and Thy love the flame.

Holy, Holy, Holy (Heber)

Holy, Holy, Holy! all the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea,
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Which wert and art and evermore shalt be.

To Thy Temple Holy (Runyan)

Not with ostentation, not with proud acclaim,
Come we, Lord and Master, to extol Thy name;
But with Christly spirit, humble and sincere,
Pleading but Thy merit, we Thy name revere.

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