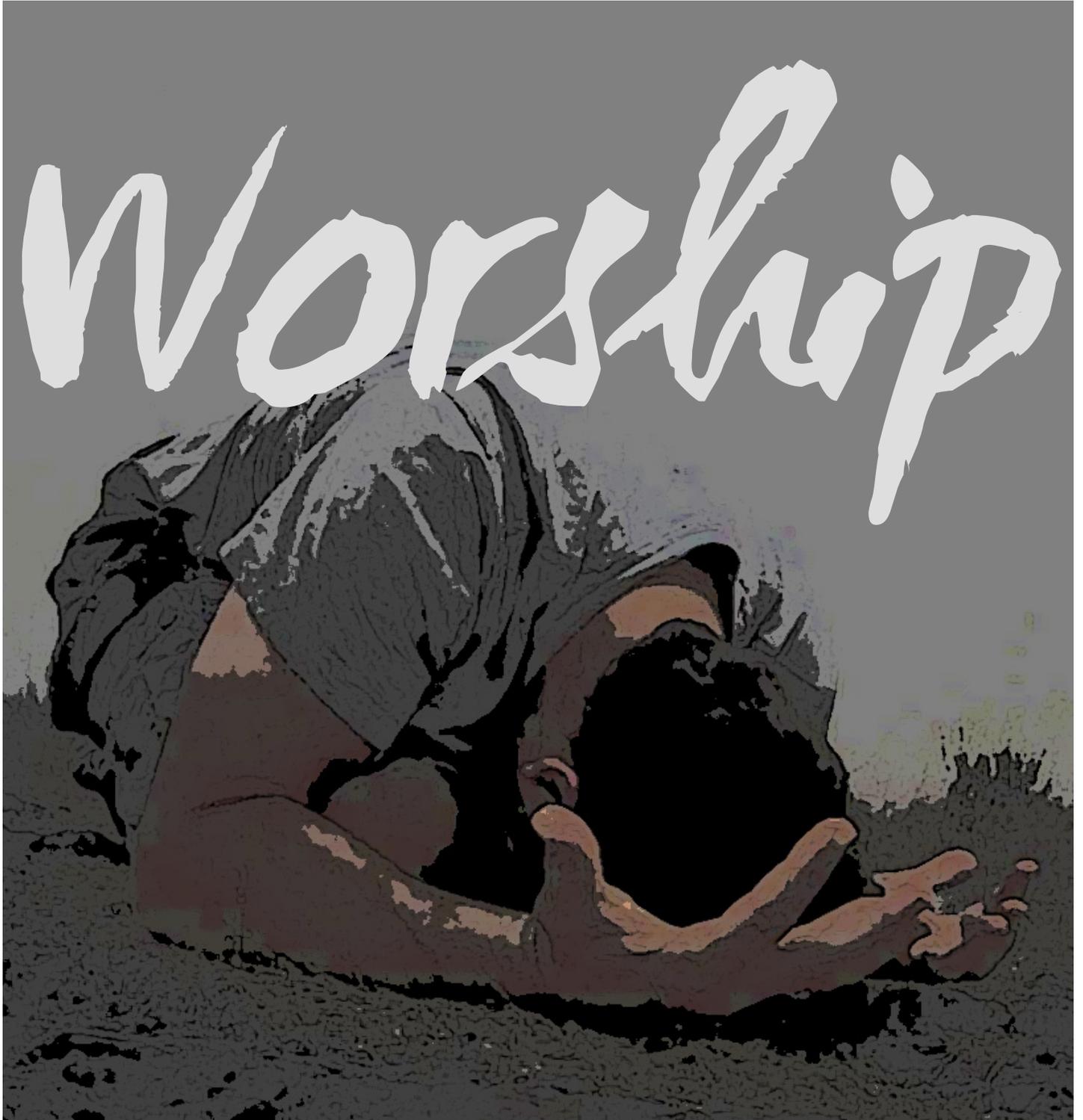


Reflections by the Pond

THE WRITINGS OF DAVID S LAMPEL



There is no one, correct way to worship except to worship honestly.

It is a sorrowful thing to lie to God—and where worse than during His worship? There are those who restrain the outpouring of the Spirit, because to do else would be to cut against the traditions of the local assembly. Then there are those who manufacture ecstasies, because to fail to produce in that regard would be an admission that a spirit was not in residence. Both transgress against the instructions of Jesus. Both are dishonest.

What does it profit us to lie to God—and if our untruth is not directed to God, then what is the motive for our actions in worship? To whom is the worship being directed if not to Him?

Should we be so casual with a God so holy? Proper reverence does not forget His nearness to us—especially through His Son—our brother, Jesus Christ. The very purpose for which God sacrificed His Son was so that we would be able to draw near to Him, intimately.

But He is still God, a most holy God, and, to paraphrase A. W. Tozer, when we fail to worship Him honestly, we are most certainly worshiping ourselves. ✕



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Up Words

An expert on the Jewish Law once asked Jesus, “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” The Lord’s answer was direct and simple.

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.”

Matthew 22:36-38 NIV



There are many important aspects to the Christian life. Evangelism is important. *Koinonia* (fellowship) is important. The preaching of the word, study, intercessory prayer are all important, indeed necessary aspects of life in Christ.

But Jesus explained to the religious leader that there is one thing more important than anything else; none of the others are even possible without first loving the Lord our God.

How do we do that? How do we love God? He is invisible to us. In John 4 Jesus says that God is spirit-kind, yet we are flesh-kind. How can we love someone so unlike us?

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The Bible says that we love God vertically and horizontally.

Our vertical love for God is manifested in worship and praise. We love Him by telling Him we do, by singing out His goodness—by verbally proclaiming His greatness:

I will bless the LORD at all times;
His praise shall continually be in my
mouth.

My soul will make its boast in the LORD;
The humble will hear it and rejoice.

O magnify the LORD with me,
And let us exalt His name together.
Psalm 34:1-3

In corporate worship we come together and make the presence of the Lord larger in our minds and hearts by proclaiming who He is. In this we remind ourselves of His majesty. Day after day we struggle through life, spending our time with activities in which it is easy to forget that God is greater than anything taking place down here. It is easy to forget.

So He created worship.

From You comes my praise in the
great assembly.

Psalm 22:25

In worship we remind ourselves that God is God, and we remember His countless attributes—among which, His omnipotence, His grace, His wisdom, and His own love for us.

So worship is a time to re-connect with our God. But, as David says in Psalm 34:1, it is also a time to bless Him—which means to adore Him. As one would look deeply into the eyes of a wife, a husband, a child, or a betrothed, we look deeply into the holiness of God and cry out, “I love You!”

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The necessary emphasis on corporate worship in this context should not overshadow the fundamental need for every individual to be a consistent worshiper of God in his or her daily life.

Humans are creatures of habit, and the best habit to establish is the one that keeps us in constant, adoring communion with our affectionate Father. Sunday worship should not be a solitary nodule, an isolated verdant hill in the desert of our self-centeredness, but rather the crowning peak of an ever-ascending mountain of praise. Daily praise is the rehearsal that energizes the formal performance of our Sunday worship.

Does the word “performance” offend? The audience for Sunday morning worship is not the congregation, but God. Does the choir or song leader rehearse to impress the pastor, the deacons, or the membership in the pews? Does the soloist hope to garner

*Our tongue is our
glory, and it ought
to reveal the glory
of God. What a
blessed mouthful
is God’s praise!
How sweet, how
purifying, how per-
fuming!*

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

praise for herself from the audience? If so, it is an effort that will ultimately be consumed.

Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

1 Corinthians 3:12-15

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Over the centuries the paradigm of church worship has become distorted. The narcissism of the corporate body has created a theatre-like setting, in which those on the stage or platform are performing for (that is, attempting to please and impress) the audience in the pews. But this is nothing

more than hay and straw. The soloist sings to produce applause, the choir sings to produce approval and praise, and the preacher crescendos into his three points to produce a rousing chorus of "Amen!"

Instead of the cloying, cloistered worship of ourselves, God desires to hear the symphony of disparate voices—voices united by our common love for Him—raised heavenward as a pleasing sacrifice of adoration. In this we all join, for that is why we are there. Those on the stage are not there to perform for the crowd, but to lead the crowd into more effective worship of the Father. The gold and silver of worship are the thoughts and words that flow upward to Him, unimpeded by our more selfish considerations.

Everything worth doing goes up.

And these moments of corporate praise have their beginning in the quiet solitude of the prayer closet, the intimate familiarity of the dinner table, the extravagant joy of an overflowing heart. We love Him on Sunday because we are in the habit of loving Him every other day of the week. ✕

Beginning: A Purity of Worship

True worship has more to do with intent than action. It has more to do with the condition of the heart, than the speed of the feet.

Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD?
And who may stand in His holy place?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart,

Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood
And has not sworn deceitfully.

Psalm 24:3-4



The common argument against the practice of entering worship in quiet reverence is that, in the body of Christ, our supportive, edifying fellowship—much of which often takes place during the fifteen to twenty minutes prior to the worship hour—is of equal importance.

Let us assume, for the moment, that the interactions taking place during this time are, indeed, true Christian *koinonia* fellowship, and not just chatting about the weather or yesterday's football game, or indulging idle gossip. We can then agree that these

are certainly important, biblically commanded moments for the body.

But fellowship is not more important than worship. It does not take priority.

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In our society, we honor those who "keep themselves busy," people with "many irons in the fire"—the ones with calendar pages filled for every time slot—and we generally do not honor those who do the opposite. So we honor the idea of "busyness."

Unfortunately we have transferred this

Do you quietly bow your head in reverence when you step into the average gospel church? I am not surprised if your answer is no. There is grief in my spirit when I go into the average church, for we have become

a generation rapidly losing all sense of divine sacredness in our worship. Many whom we have raised in our churches no longer think in terms of reverence—which seems to indicate they doubt that God's Presence is there.

A.W. Tozer

concept to the church, so that we honor the person who teaches Sunday School, sits on two committees, and coaches the church softball team—all, seemingly, at the same time. We hold in high regard the one who shows up on a Sunday morning ready to discuss this important matter with so-and-so, put out this fire over here, have coffee with the visitors, and huddle in a quick pow-wow with the members of one of the several committees on which he sits—all before the Call to Worship.

Is this person ready to worship his God?

In contrast, what do we think of the person who has been preparing to meet God since rising that morning, perhaps even the day before? The person who shows up intent on worship may not think to say “Good morning” to everyone he meets; the person who steps through the door with a

heart and soul bursting with praise for the Lord may not want to stop and discuss the weather. This person has a tight focus on the throne, on the altar upon which he is eager to lay his sacrifice. For this person the other people are secondary—not unimportant, just secondary—to God; the object of his adoration is his heavenly Father, not his pew mate.

Do you recognize yourself in either of these illustrations? You may be an usher, a deacon, the pastor, or just an anonymous parishioner sitting in the last pew, but no matter your responsibilities, are you ready to worship? If you have not done it before, I encourage you—no, I dare you—to begin preparing for Sunday morning worship on Saturday night. I challenge you to show up Sunday morning with a song already in your heart, and with eyes only for the God of heaven, and His Son, Jesus Christ. ✕

Sincerity

“Going to church” is not worship. Sipping coffee and saying “Hi, how are you?” to someone you haven’t seen in seven days is not worship. Attending Sunday School when you would rather have slept in is not worship. Swapping recipes or chatting about the weather while the offertory plays is not worship.



Worship is a deep, rich concept; to define it and describe its practice is almost to cheapen it. Worship can take place just about anywhere, and can involve activities and words that are rarely used on a Sunday morning. But no matter the time or location, true worship must always—always—involve at least this: Worship is adoration directed to God.

More than that, according to Jesus real worship must be conducted spiritually and truthfully. If not, it is simply pretend, play-acting.

[Jesus said,] “But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

John 4:23-24

How did we become so casual with God? Where did we pick up the idea that He really doesn’t mind that our worship services are filled with insincerity, inaccuracies,

glaring omissions, and a disorderliness better suited to the cheap seats at a baseball game?

The Lord asks little of us; it's really not difficult to worship Him properly. All He asks is honesty, sincerity, truth. All He asks is that we mean what we say or sing.

Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

1 Corinthians 5:8

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Worship and praise are often associated with music. That connection is not necessary, but it is helpful. Anything that smooths the way for heart-felt adoration of God—anything that facilitates our expression of holy love—is a welcome component to the service.

Yet nowhere do we see any more flagrant examples of insincerity in worship than in the singing of our hymns and choruses.

From decades ago, when every Sunday morning found me smack in the middle of the front row of the choir loft, I can easily recall the menu of faces arranged before me in the pews. As the congregation would stand to sing the hymn introduced by eight bars from the organist, there would be

- the older gentleman glowering with lips snapped shut, vise-like, irritated that “we never sing the old songs anymore”;
- the woman sluggishly mouthing the words almost a beat behind the rest, eyes glazed over, as if in a state of utter catatonia;
- the teenage girl trying to keep her attention on the singing, while next to her, her visiting boyfriend keeps his attention on her;
- the studious gentleman in the front row, carefully weighing every word in each stanza printed in the book before him;

- the young mother in the back row not even trying to sing, while struggling with the unruly child at her side;

- the venerable saint, face uplifted and nodding in rhythm, singing at full volume in a key two steps lower than the one being played.

All God's saints, but only some being truthful in their worship.

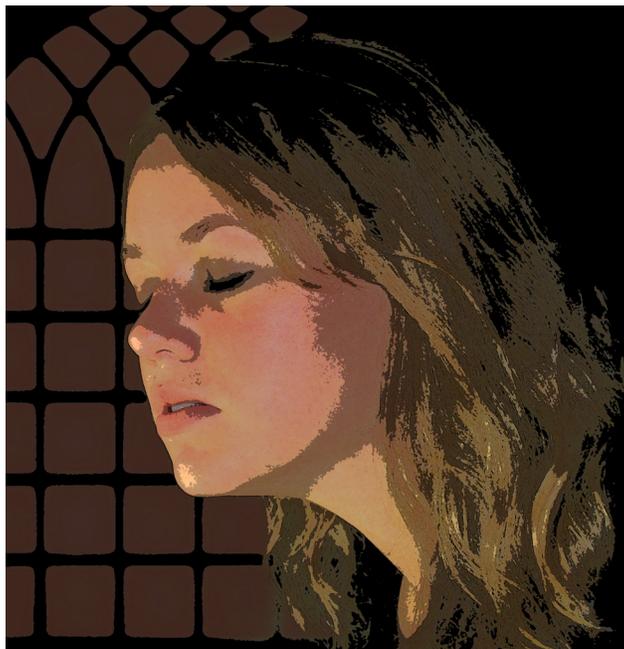
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It is the responsibility of the song leader to choose songs biblically sound, but it is the responsibility of each member of the congregation and choir to agree with the words being sung.

Every word an individual speaks or sings during a worship service should be uttered as if that person were standing in a court of law with one hand resting atop the Bible. After all, in a worship service, God, the righteous Judge, is the audience, and what good does it do to lie to Him?

When the words being sung are “I give my all to Him,” is that true? Have you really turned it all over to Him, or is that at least the desire of your heart? When the line is “Jesus is Lord!” is He? Is Jesus really the Lord of your life, or do you at least want Him to be?

Our goal should be one of honesty before the Lord. When we sing to Him our worship and praise, or when we stand and testify in song to His goodness and grace, we should make every effort to mean, to understand, and to check against the authority of Scripture every word spoken or sung. ✕

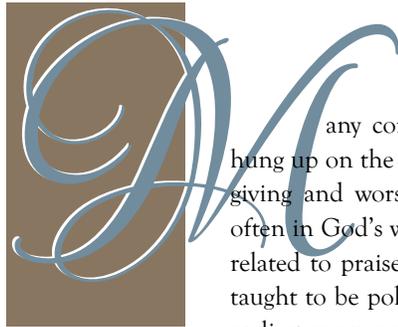


Without the heart it is no worship; it is a stage play; an acting a part without being that person really which is acted by us: a hypocrite, in the notion of the word, is a stage-player... We may be truly said to worship God, though we (lack) perfection; but we cannot be said to worship Him, if we (lack) sincerity.

Stephen Charnock

Three Little Words

The lyrics of a song written in the 1930s said that those three little words were “I Love You.”



Many contemporary Christians get hung up on the difference between thanksgiving and worship. Thanksgiving, which often in God’s word is combined with and related to praise, 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.

Worship, however, can be more of a challenge. How do we worship an invisible God for being something we cannot see? And how do we separate our worship from our thanksgiving/praise? Where do we begin?

We begin with those three little words: “I love You.” Notice the period at the end; 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 or praise—a worthy and holy enterprise, but not worship. Worship isn’t loving God because He has done something nice in our lives; true worship (worth-ship) is loving God *simply because He is God, and because He is worthy.*

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That is the beginning and pristine 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 illustrates the contrast between worship and thanksgiving/praise.

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And all that is within me, bless His
holy name.

Psalm 103:1

In verse one, David is worshiping God. Here he expresses the beauty of pure wor-

ship: *With every part of me, I adore every part of you.* Worshiping God’s name is synonymous with worshiping the entirety of His character or nature. In verse two, however, he is expressing praise and thanksgiving.

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And forget none of His benefits;

Psalm 103:2

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, of course, is meant to diminish thanksgiving. It is good to thank the Lord for what He has done. 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 car, or thank the check-out clerk for returning the proper change.

But we *worship* only God.

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Why should we care how these three terms—worship, praise, and thanksgiving—differ from one another? Because the Lord is a God of order. Read the Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy) and you will read the detailed, at times meticulous Law of Yahweh who wishes the best—spiritual and physical best—for His people. Read the apostle Paul in his New Testament epistles, how he instructs church members in well-ordered worship and conduct. Our God wants us to understand His precepts and terminology, for none of it is accidental. When we come before Him we are to be neither ignorant nor robotic; for

our good and to be obedient to Him, we are to be knowledgeable in our Lord's ways. As Charles Haddon Spurgeon wrote in his venerable *The Treasury of David*, "Half-hearted, ill-conceived, unintelligent praises are not such as we should render to our loving Lord." To that end, let us consider the sometimes subtle differences between these three terms as they are used in God's word. We discover all three in 1 Chronicles 16, on the occasion of King David moving the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem and installing it in its own tabernacle.

Thanksgiving, Giving Thanks

Listen carefully to how King David uses the phrase "give thanks."

Oh **give thanks** to the LORD, call upon
His name;
Make known His **deeds** among the
peoples...
O **give thanks** to the LORD, for He is
good;
For His lovingkindness is everlasting.
Then say, "Save us, O God of our
salvation,
And gather us and deliver us from
the nations,
To **give thanks** to Your holy name,
And glory in Your praise."
1 Chronicles 16:8, 34-35 (emphasis added)

The expression of thanksgiving to God is invariably for something He has already done, or will do for His people. We thank Him for answering our prayers, for being a loving, attentive Father, for showering us with His blessings.

Praise

While at times (and certainly in our contemporary vernacular) praise is sometimes synonymous with worship, it is more often used in a slightly different manner in God's word. It is often closer to thanksgiving than worship; in fact many passages use the two terms together, as in this passage from Ezra.

Now when the builders had laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise

the LORD according to the directions of King David of Israel. They sang, **praising and giving thanks to the LORD**, saying, "For He is good, for His lovingkindness is upon Israel forever." And all the people shouted with a great shout when they **praised the LORD because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.**

Ezra 3:10-11 (emphasis added)

As here, praise often covers a middle ground, falling somewhere between thanksgiving and worship. We might say it is a brighter, more joy-filled form of worship—that is, worship tinged with joyful thanksgiving—which is reflected in the Hebrew word for praise, *halal*:

a primitive root; to be clear (origin of sound, but usually of color); to shine; hence to make a show, to boast; and thus to be (clamorously) foolish; to rave; causative 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.

Strong's Greek & Hebrew Dictionary



Notice how in the 1 Chronicles passage the Lord is praised in the context of a recitation of what He has done for Israel.

What I mean by “specific” worship is uncluttered, unadulterated adoration directed personally to God, either spoken or sung. For example, when we, in our prayer closet, pray “I love You, Lord,” or “I worship Your holiness,” we are worshipping specifically.

There is, by my definition, a second, less-specific form of worship. When our heart is right, when our intentions are pure and dedicated to the Lord, our worship can take the form of service in His name. For example, if we show up on church work day and spend the afternoon out in the hot sun painting the south wall of the building, and do it for the sole reason of our love for the Lord, that can be a form of less-specific worship.

Sing to the LORD, all the earth;
Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day.

Tell of His glory among the nations,
His wonderful deeds among all the peoples.

For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;

He also is to be feared above all gods.

For all the gods of the peoples are idols,

But the LORD made the heavens.

1 Chronicles 16:23-26 (emphasis added)

The old “Doxology,” with which most protestants grew up, is a perfect example of praise, but not specific worship: “Praise God from whom all blessings flow.” When we sing that we are praising Him for something He has done and will do for us—a good and worthy habit—but it is not specific worship.

Worship

So what sets worship apart from the other two? In true specific worship there is no mention of recompense, no this-for-that. It is not gratitude, thanksgiving, entreaty, or even praise for something the Lord has done. Worship has only one purpose: *to exalt God for who and what He is*. Here is some of the specific worship in the 1 Chronicles passage.

Splendor and majesty are before Him,
Strength and joy are in His place.

Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,

Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name;

Bring an offering, and come before Him;

Worship the LORD in holy array.

1 Chronicles 16:27-29

One of the best ways to worship God is to call out His eternal attributes, as David does here: Splendor, majesty, strength, joy, glory, holiness. Not one of these has anything to do with us; they are all about the Lord God upon His throne. Let’s pick out one—strength—and use it to illustrate the difference between the three forms of communion.

Thanksgiving: “Thank You, my God, for giving me strength yesterday.”

Praise: “I praise You for being strong in my life.”

Worship: “My God and my Lord, I bow before Your sovereign strength and power!”

True, specific worship is perhaps the most unselfish thing we can do, for except for the joy we experience being in His presence, we expect nothing in return. We worship God because He is, in Himself, worthy to receive it. If He did absolutely nothing for us, He would still be worthy of our worship.

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Understand, while it is true that worship is the highest form of communion with our God, it is not the only form. Thanksgiving, praise, entreaty, confession—all and more we are called to in His word. We are called to witness, to testify to others of His grace and condescension. We are called to memorialize the Lord’s sacrifice on our behalf, and tell others what He has done.

But we are also called to know what we are doing, and why. ✠

A Longing After God

I want deliberately to encourage this mighty longing after God. The lack of it has brought us to our present low estate. The stiff and wooden quality about our religious lives is a result of our lack of holy desire. Complacency is a deadly foe of all spiritual growth. Acute desire must be present or there will be no manifestation of Christ to His people. He waits to be wanted. Too bad that with many of us He waits so long, so very long, in vain.

Tozer



W. Tozer's remarks about "longing after God" are relevant to a discussion of our spiritual preparation for worship.

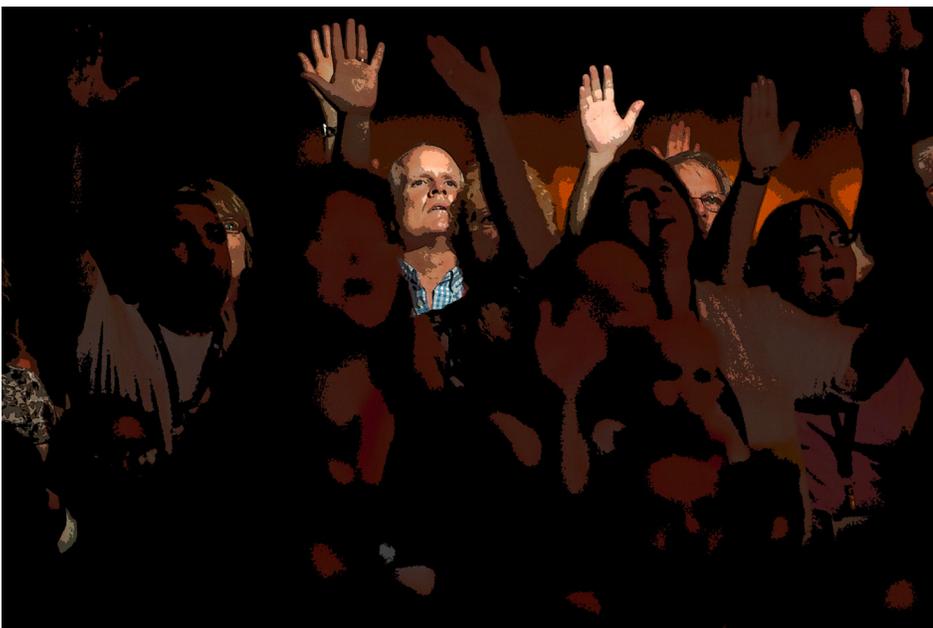
For that should be the genesis and driving energy of our preparation: we must actively pursue Him, seek His face, welcome His touch. The evangelical church has fallen into this damnable complacency as regards our God! Oh, that He would periodically pick us up by the ankles and give our bodies a good snap to jolt us back into a sensible, fulfilling relationship with Him.

We—those of us comprising the church—

speak so glibly about our "personal relationship" with God in Christ, yet we have delegated our personal responsibilities to others. Those who have truly come to worship—and especially those who have come to lead in worship—must come to *do* something, not to watch or listen to others do it for them. ✠

How tragic that we in this dark day have had our seeking done for us by our teachers. Everything is made to center upon the initial act of "accepting" Christ (a term, incidentally, which is not found in the Bible) and we are not expected thereafter to crave any further revelation of God to our souls. We have been snared in the coils of a spurious logic which insists that if we have found Him, we need no more seek Him. This is set before us as the last word in orthodoxy, and it is taken for granted that no Bible-taught Christian ever believed otherwise. Thus the whole testimony of the worshiping, seeking, singing church on that subject is crisply set aside. The experiential heart-theology of a grand army of fragrant saints is rejected in favor of a smug interpretation of Scripture which would certainly have sounded strange to an Augustine, a Rutherford or a Brainerd.

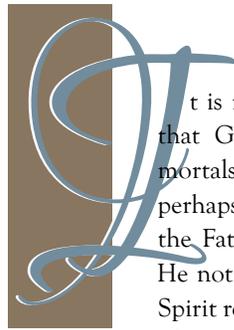
Tozer



On Being Complete

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

Luke 4:8

t is not an easy concept to understand, that God desires something from mere mortals. It makes Him sound incomplete, perhaps even egotistical. Nevertheless, God the Father wants people to worship Him. He not only wants it, He seeks it out. His Spirit roams the earth searching for people who are willing to worship Him. Once again, to the Samaritan woman Jesus said,

"But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers."

John 4:23

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What does a perfect, complete and holy God gain from people worshipping Him? Can we even know? Is it even possible to imagine what our worship contributes to an omnipotent Deity?

Somehow—in ways we may never comprehend until the day we at last stand in His presence—God is pleased with our worship of Him. More than that, He actively seeks it out. The shepherd searches diligently for every lost lamb. He does so for its own protection. The shepherd may gain some comfort by the lamb's presence, some companionship over the late-night hours, but mostly he searches the lamb out and gathers it into his fold for its own good.

Yet You are holy,
O You who are enthroned upon [or
inhabit] the praises of Israel.

Psalms 22:3

God lives in our praise of Him. In the process of worshipping and praising His name we move closer to Him. He desires our worship, but He also desires us. Notice that the passage in the Gospel of John does not say that the Father seeks worship; Jesus says that the Father is not seeking as much the act of

worship as He is the *person who worships*.

God the Father desires a relationship with those who call upon His name. More than that, as the verse says, He desires an honest, truthful relationship. He wants to spend time with those who truly and honestly love Him.

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Our heavenly Father desires our worship; that, in itself, is reason enough. We should find our joy in bringing joy to the One who has given us life, who sustains us and has promised us an eternity with Him.

But like the good shepherd wanting only the best for his sheep, the Father also wants us to worship Him because it is there—deep in the holy temple of praise and adoration—that we find Him. He knows what is good for us. He knows that what we really need, for our own good, is to spend time with Him.

God the Father knows that without that intimate, personal time of communion, it will be each of us—not Him—who will be incomplete. ✕

To admit the existence of a need in God is to admit incompleteness in the divine Being. Need is a creature-word and cannot be spoken of the Creator. God has a voluntary relation to everything He has made, but He has no necessary relation to anything outside of Himself. His interest in His creatures arises from His sovereign good pleasure, not from any need those creatures can supply nor from any completeness they can bring to Him who is complete in Himself.

Teach us, O God, that nothing is necessary to Thee. Were anything necessary to Thee that thing would be the measure of Thine imperfection: and how could we worship one who is imperfect? If nothing is necessary to Thee,

then no one is necessary, and if no one, then not we. Thou dost seek us though Thou dost not need us. We seek Thee because we need Thee, for in Thee we live and move and have our being. Amen.

Tozer

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has

known the mind of the Lord, or who became his counselor? Or who has first given to him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen. Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

Romans 11:33-12:1

Because He Deserves It

Shout joyfully to God, all the earth;
Sing the glory of His name;
Make His praise glorious.

Psalm 66:1-2



Why is it not all right to worship God and anyone else of our choosing? Why is it not all right for us to say: "Yes, I worship Jehovah God, but I also worship Buddha, the mighty oak, and my '57 Chevy"? Why should the God of heaven be so exclusive with our praise?

"But rather, you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim—for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God—"

Exodus 34:13-14

At the same time we might ask: Why is it so important to worship Him in the first place? What's the big deal?

"Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

Revelation 4:11

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The answer is the same to both questions: Why is it so important to worship Him? Because He is worthy. Why do we worship God alone? Because He alone is worthy.

The Father deserves our praise; He has it coming to Him. More than that, it is the Godhead alone that deserves this unique worship.

That they may know that You alone,
whose name is the LORD,
Are the Most High over all the earth.

Psalm 83:18

It is something of pristine eloquence and beauty to enter the sanctuary of the Lord—be it the sanctuary of the corporate church or the sanctuary of our heart—to kneel before Him in utter humility, and to bring honor and glory to the Father simply because He deserves it.

We are to carry no agendas to the altar—no hidden, ulterior motives. We are to enter into worship without thought of self; for the moment at least, our petitions are to remain stuffed into our back pocket.

We are to offer up our worship of Him for one reason only: He deserves it. God alone is worthy of our praise and adoration. And the words we offer are to bear no weight of self; they are to describe and proclaim only His holiness and worth-ship.

Worship is for the Lord and no one else. ✠

There is none great in the church but the Lord. Jesus is "the great Shepherd," he is "a Saviour, and a great one," our great God and Saviour, our great High Priest; his Father has divided him a portion with the great, and his name shall be great unto the ends of the earth. According to his nature should his worship be; it cannot be too constant, too laudatory, too earnest, too reverential, too sublime. There is none like the Lord, and there should be no praises like his praises.

C. H. Spurgeon

Vocabularies are formed by many minds over long periods and are capable of expressing whatever the mind is capable of entertaining. But when the heart, on its knees, moves into the awesome Presence and hears with fear and wonder things not lawful to utter, then the mind falls flat, and words, previously its faithful servants, become weak and incapable of telling what the heart hears and sees. In that awful moment the worshiper can only cry "Oh!" and that simple exclamation becomes more eloquent than learned speech and, I have no doubt, is dearer to God than any oratory.

We Christians should watch lest we lose the "Oh!" from our hearts. There is real danger these days that we shall fall victims to the prophets of poise and the purveyors of tranquility, and our Christianity be reduced to a mere evangelical humanism that is never disturbed about anything nor overcome by any "trances of thought and mountings of the mind."

When we become too glib in prayer we are most certainly talking to ourselves.

Tozer

