

Study 20 - Creating an Atmosphere to Bring His Presence

“Then God said, “Whoever offers praise glorifies [God].” (Psalm 50:23)

Introduction

When people are not worshipping God in spirit and truth on a continual basis, they are unable to create the environment to bring His presence. We must learn how to invite a spiritual atmosphere of worship for the glory to manifest and for miracles, signs, and wonders to take place. In doing so, we will be what the Bible calls “true worshippers” (John 4:23)—something that cannot be accomplished by just singing well. True worshippers are those who have had a revelation of genuine worship.

Through praise and worship, we welcome our Lord and King into our midst. If we want to produce truly deep and heartfelt worship, we often need to first ascend in vibrant, loud, and powerful praise. Then, it is important to discern when the spirit of praise has receded to allow the spirit of worship to lead. Our praise and worship should be carried out in accordance with the One whom we desire to please—God Himself. That is the only way to follow the leading of the Spirit and avoid getting lost in our human efforts. In this study, we will explore aspects of praise, so that we may begin to gain an understanding of how to create an atmosphere to bring God’s presence. Then, in the next study, we will investigate the topic of worship.

Study Questions

Part I: The Lord Deserves Our Praise and Worship

1. What is God worthy to receive, and why? (Revelation 4:11)

2. Psalm 24, which describes “gates” and “everlasting doors” being lifted up to allow the “King of glory” entrance (see verses 7, 9), may be considered a metaphor for how we are to welcome God into our midst through praise. How is the King of glory described? (Verse 8b)

3. (a) Where did David say the holy God is “enthroned”? (Psalm 22:3b)

(b) When a person offers praise to God, what does he do? (Psalm 50:23a)

A hard spiritual atmosphere may be the result of poor praise and worship.

4. (a) In what manner are we to praise the Lord, as David did? (Psalm 138:1a)

(b) When is an appropriate time to praise the Lord? (Psalm 113:3a; 34:1)

KEY DEFINITIONS: Praise is an exuberant, clamorous, enthusiastic expression that often includes many words and a physical display. Worship involves fewer words—at times, no words are needed at all and there is total silence, because it has more to do with inwardly pouring out our hearts before God and asking Him to manifest His sovereign presence.

Part II: Expressions of Praise

5. Praise to the Lord may be expressed in various ways. List two of these ways. (Psalm 66:1a, 2a)

6. (a) What types of songs did the apostle Paul encourage the New Testament believers to “speak” to one another? (Ephesians 5:19a)

(b) How can we praise the Lord in a quiet way, by ourselves? (Verse 19b)

7. Name two additional forms of praise. (Psalm 47:1a; 134:2a)

Worship will be as deep and profound as praise is high, exuberant, and powerful.

8. What is another way by which we can praise the name of the Lord? (Psalm 149:3a)

9. List various musical instruments used in biblical times for praising the Lord. (Psalm 150:3b-4; 1 Chronicles 15:16b)

Part III: Praise God Through Proclamation

10. (a) As we sing to the Lord, what is to be the content of our praises? (Psalm 105:2b)

(b) In addition to the above, what are we to remember when praising God? Complete the following: Psalm 105:5b: “His wonders, and _____.”

(c) When we seek the Lord, what should our hearts do? (Verse 3b)

Praise is the declaration of the great and powerful works of God.

11. (a) Which of God’s “great wonders” on behalf of the Israelites are recounted throughout Psalm 136, a psalm of thanksgiving and praise? (Verses 5-25)

(b) To what did the psalmist attribute all this help from God? (Verse 1b and others throughout)

12. (a) To review, what did David say he would meditate on? (Psalm 145:5)

(b) What will God’s saints speak of as they bless Him? (Psalm 145:11)

(c) What is the nature of God’s kingdom? (Verse 13)

Part IV: Praise God Through Sacrifice

1. (a) What did the writer of Hebrews say we are to continually offer through Jesus Christ? Complete the following:

Hebrews 13:15a: "Therefore by Him let us continually offer _____ to God..."

(b) How is this praise offered? Complete the following:

Verse 15b: "... that is, _____, _____ to His name."

If we want to live at the forefront of what God is saying and doing, the sacrifice of praise should become an intrinsic part of our lifestyle.

REFLECTIONS ON THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE

The Greek word for "sacrifice" in Hebrews 13:15 is *thysia*, which actually refers to a victim—a killing. Every sacrifice implies death. In the case of a sacrifice of praise, the victim for the sacrifice is the flesh, or the ego. Praising God always requires a sacrifice because it is something that goes beyond our strength, convenience, desire, and comfort. To praise God, we must kill something ungodly within us, such as apathy, pride, selfishness, worry, fear, bad thoughts, or anything else that keeps us from wholeheartedly expressing His greatness. Our sacrifice releases a movement of the Holy Spirit, who comes to our aid. Then, when the spirit of praise comes, praising ceases to be a sacrifice, as it was in the beginning. By this time, no one has to force us to praise God; our praise becomes spontaneous.

14. What does the Spirit of the Lord give us in exchange for our spirit of heaviness? (Isaiah 61:3a)

15. Summarize, in your own words, the difficult situation Paul and Silas were in when they offered sacrifices of praise. (Acts 16:22b–24 NIV)

16. What happened after they prayed and sang hymns to God? (Acts 16:26 NIV)

17. Significantly, what was the spiritual outcome for the jailer and his family, to whom Paul and Silas proclaimed the gospel? (Acts 16:34b, 33b NIV)

Our priority should be to seek God's glory; then, the signs will follow us.

18. How did Jesus instruct His disciples to respond when they were reviled, persecuted, or falsely accused of evil for the sake of His name? (Matthew 5:12a)

19. In every circumstance of our lives, what manner of glory are we to give to the Lord? (1 Chronicles 16:29a)

Conclusion

When a spiritual atmosphere does not exist for God's presence or glory to manifest, it is a great obstacle to seeing a demonstration of His supernatural power. When I try to minister in such an atmosphere, it is

difficult for me to preach the Word because the hearts of the people are not sensitive to receive it. If the spiritual atmosphere is hard, the glory does not descend, and, consequently, few healings and miracles take place. This is why we must learn to enter into God's presence through both praise and worship, because they work hand in hand. Whether we are worshipping alone or alongside other people, our approach should always be this: praise until the spirit of worship comes, and worship until God's glory descends. This is the key to personal and corporate transformation.

Prayer of Activation

Father of glory, we offer You the sacrifice of praise and the glory due Your name! We remember the marvellous works You have done: Your wonders and the judgments of Your mouth. You are great and greatly to be praised! We praise You in all the circumstances of our lives, and we exalt Your holy name. Pour out Your Spirit in signs and wonders, so that others may believe in Your Son Jesus Christ and receive Your salvation, healing, and deliverance. In Jesus' name, amen.

Action Steps

- ▽ Read the following Scripture verses aloud as you praise God daily, allowing them to instruct you in how to praise Him: Revelation 4:11; Psalm 24:7–10; 105:1–5; 138:1–2. After you finish reading these Scriptures, enter into heartfelt gratitude and thanks for all that God has done for you personally, acknowledging His glorious attributes and ways.
- ▽ Sing praises to the Lord when you undergo any difficult circumstance in your life. Remember the example of Paul and Silas in prison as you sing songs of God's love, power, and grace, and as you release the situation to Him to work in and through.