

PRAISING GOD / *Luke 2:38*

The Bible speaks often of people praising God and encourages continual praise. What does it mean to praise God? Why should we do it? How should we do it? The Bible gives us answers to those questions.

Verse

I will thank you, Lord, with all
my heart;
I will tell of all the marvelous
things you have done.
I will be filled with joy because
of you.
I will sing praises to your name,
O Most High. *Psalms 9:1-2*

Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD, I tell myself.
I will praise the LORD as long
as I live.
I will sing praises to my God
even with my dying breath.
Psalms 146:1-2

Praise the LORD, I tell myself,
and never forget the good
things he does for me.
Psalms 103:2

God saved you by his special
favor when you believed. And
you can't take credit for this;
it is a gift from God.
Salvation is not a reward for
the good things we have done,
so none of us can boast about it.
Ephesians 2:8-9

With Jesus' help, let us continually
offer our sacrifice of praise
to God by proclaiming the glory
of his name. *Hebrews 13:15*

Explanation

Praise is giving thanks to God for who he is. Praise is saying thank you for each aspect of his divine nature and for all the marvelous works that God has done. One's inward attitude becomes outward expression. When people praise God, they expand their awareness of who he is.

Praise is focusing one's heart on God. The last five psalms (146–150) are filled with praise. Each begins and ends with "Praise the Lord!" What does praise do? (1) Praise takes people's minds off their problems and shortcomings and focuses them on God. (2) Praise leads from individual meditation to corporate worship. (3) Praise causes believers to consider and appreciate God's character. (4) Praise lifts one's perspective from the earthly to the heavenly.

Praise is thanking God for his many gracious gifts. It is easy to complain about life, but there is much for which to praise God—he forgives sins, heals diseases, redeems from death, crowns with love and compassion, satisfies desires, and gives righteousness and justice. Believers receive all of these without deserving any of them. No matter how difficult your life's journey, you can always count your blessings—past, present, and future.

Praise is thanking God for salvation. When someone gives you a gift, do you say, "That's very nice—now how much do I owe you?" No, the appropriate response to a gift is "Thank you." Yet, often Christians, even after they have been given the gift of salvation, feel obligated to try to work their way to God. Because salvation and even faith are gifts, believers should respond with gratitude, praise, and joy.

Praise is a spiritual offering. Jewish Christians, because of their witness to the Messiah, no longer worshiped with other Jews. So praise and acts of service became their sacrifices—ones they could offer anywhere, anytime. The prophet Hosea wrote, "Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips" (Hosea 14:2). A "sacrifice of praise" today would include thanking Christ for his sacrifice on the cross and telling others about it. Acts of kindness and sharing are particularly pleasing to God, even when they go unnoticed.