

SEPTEMBER STUDY

Praise Him for Who He Is



Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness

Four times in Psalm 107:8 the writer makes that statement.

What exactly is praise?

Webster's Dictionary defines praise as "an express approval of something; to glorify God; a commendation." Other words are often used as synonyms or in parallel with praise and they help define the meaning—such as bless, extol, exalt, glorify, and magnify. *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary* explains praise as "an act of worship or acknowledgment by which the deeds of another are recognized or extolled. The praise of man toward God is the means by which we express our joy to the Lord. We are to praise God both for who He is (adoration) and for what He has done (thanksgiving)."

The spoken word, a musical instrument, a song, a raised hand, and even daily living can be praise. One saying goes, "Your words ring hollow when actions don't follow." True praise for God comes from a clean heart and a clear conscience. You will find more praise in the book of Psalms than in any other. David appears

to have been the main contributor to the Psalter (73); others were written by men such as Asaph, Moses, Solomon, and others.

The 150 psalms are much more than beautiful literary compositions. The greatest benefit to the seeker of truth from the book of Psalms is not in its construction but the timeless and uplifting truths it offers to people of every nation and age.

The Psalms show an awareness of God's presence in people's everyday lives. God was not just a doctrinal issue to people, but someone interested in everything they did.

Emphasized throughout the Psalms is man's duty to serve and obey God. Man must do more than just praise and talk about God; he must obey God's law. Too many people want to go to church on Sunday, sing hymns and praise God, and then walk out the door and live their lives according to their own dictates. It is wonderful to be stirred by singing beautiful hymns, but what really matters

is to be moved to live a certain way—God’s way!

Recorded throughout the book of Psalms are messages of encouragement, instruction, inspiration, truth, and solutions to the greatest issues facing humanity. This unique book cares for the needs of the human heart and mind. The Psalms are loved by so many because they capture the real emotion of people facing real situations. It gives many of us comfort

something they have done, not who they are. We often praise our favorite singer, sports figure, preacher, political figure, doctor, or lawyer. Often, there may be a reason to be grateful to these people. But, who gave them their skills, abilities, and knowledge? We must remember, too, that celebrities, heroes, politicians, actors, etc., are human just as we are. They make mistakes and often ruin their lives with alcohol,

Praise comes from a Latin word meaning value or price.

to know we are not alone in our struggles and reactions to life.

The Psalms are not merely poems but songs. More than one third addressed are to the director of music. Some psalms exhort the worshiper to sing (Psalm 96:1; 98:1; 95:1) while others denote the musical instrument to use (Psalm 92:3; 98:5-6). Songs of praise range from personal (as in daily devotional time), (these are more or less spontaneous outbursts of thanksgiving)—to corporate hymns for worship services.

Praise comes from a Latin word meaning value or price. Thus to give praise to God is to proclaim His merit or worth.

The Bible recognizes that men and women may also be the objects of praise, but it is praise for

drugs, and sexual immorality. God should be the primary recipient of our praise.

The Vessels of Praise

Who should show forth His praise? According to Psalm 103:20 and Revelation 5:11, His whole creation praises Him, from the angels of Heaven to those lower existences that are unconscious or even inanimate. The psalmist of 148 urges the celestial (verses 1-3), terrestrial (verses 7-10), and rational creatures (verses 11-13) to praise their Creator (*Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*). The entire world is directed to glorify God.

How can nature fulfill its obligation to praise? The stormy wind fulfills God’s command by simply being a stormy wind. The cre-

ation and the creature praise in their very being and doing, by existing and filling their designed place. Psalm 148:5 says, "Let them praise the name of the LORD; for He commanded, and they were created." In the same way, we can praise Him by fulfilling our created purpose. We are the work of His hands; He made us.

Reflective Questions

Is God receiving the praise He deserves by fulfilling His desire in your life?

How is God using you as His vessel?

The Value of Praise

What are some reasons for praising God? Psalm 147 declares, "Praise ye the LORD; for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely (or beautiful)." Throughout the rest of the psalm, the psalmist describes reasons for singing God's praise. Psalm 148:13 concludes, "Praise the name of the

LORD; for His name alone is excellent; His glory is above the earth and heaven."

He is sovereign, Lord of the whole creation. No power, government, or political regime can overrule the God we serve. Nations and rulers rise and fall, but God remains on the throne forever.

We should praise God because of His glory, grace, greatness, goodness, majesty, and mercy. The Bible makes it clear praise is a duty as well as a natural impulse and a delight. To fail in this duty is to withhold from God the glory that belongs to Him. It is to be forgetful of His mercies and unthankful for His kindness. We should earnestly cultivate the habit of praise. We can do this by meditating on His works and ways, by recounting His benefits, especially the fact that God made a way of escape from the penalty of sin by sending His Son Jesus.

Reflective Questions

What are your thoughts when you read, “praise is beautiful”?

In Psalm 147, what reasons are given for praising God?

List some of the reasons you praise God.

The Vow of Praise

When should we praise Him? Again, many people think praising God is for Sunday morning in the worship service, and He should receive praise then. However, is that the only time? Psalm 118:24 declares, “This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.” Is the writer

talking about a specific day? It could refer to a specific day, like this day—or a specific time. It could refer to days when everything is good—health, finances, and family. It could also mean those days when things are not so good, when we struggle with health issues, financial problems,

and family difficulties. When difficulties arise, are we to quit praising God? In the midst of those times, He is still the sovereign God we praised during the good times. Every day we arise and face a new morning is a day the LORD made and we should rejoice in it.

The prophet Habakkuk said he would rejoice in the Lord in the good and bad times (Habakkuk 3:17-19).

Our praise can never be exhausted. The writer of Psalm 113 affirms that praise is to be from sunup to sundown—not just for morning, but all day, every day. Hebrews 13:15 exhorts us to praise God continually.

When days are good, the sky is blue, and thanksgiving flows easily, give God your praise. When the night is long, and you aren't sure the sun is coming up, remember the places and ways in which God has been with you and the promises God has made. Give God your praise—He is worthy!

Reflective Questions

When do you praise the Lord?

When difficulties arise, how do you praise the Lord?

In what ways can you improve praising the Lord?

About the writer: Judy Delong has been a member of Tom's Creek Free Will Baptist Church in Nippa, Kentucky, for 44 years. She serves on her local WAC mission action committee, as East Kentucky District's study chairman, and as a member-at-large for Kentucky WAC. Judy has been married to Teddy for over 50 years and they have three sons, eight grandchildren, and one great grandson. Judy loves to sing, read, study God's word, and speak to ladies' groups.