

Gospel Truth

Biblical Instruction and Encouragement for the Mission Field Worldwide.

THE POWER OF PRAISE

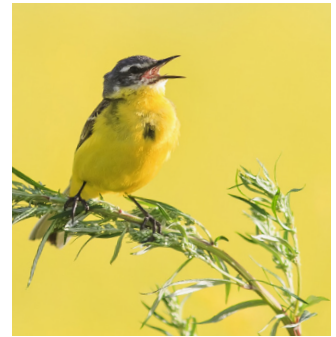
Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, bowed down before the Lord in fasting and prayer. As related in 2 Chronicles 20, a great multitude of Judah’s enemies was gathering to come against Jehoshaphat in battle. In fear, knowing his people were incapable in their own strength of overcoming the enemy, he cried out to God. “O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?... We have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.” The Lord responded: “Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God’s.... Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD.”

The next morning, with faith and confidence in God’s word, Jehoshaphat appointed singers that went before the army praising the beauty of holiness. “Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever.” When they began to sing and praise, the Lord placed ambushments against the enemy and they were slain. God gave a wonderful victory to His people. Rather than murmur in fear and despair because of their dire circumstances, they placed their faith and confidence in God and sang and gave praise to the Lord.

There is great power in praise! The enemy is defeated when God is exalted with honor and adoration. Many a spiritual battle has been won when God’s people have lifted their hearts and mouths in praise. Praise to God through exclamation, testimony, and song opens the gates to the very presence of God, for God inhabits praise (Psalm 22:3). When the Goliaths and walls of Jericho are before you, it is time to praise God and acknowledge His power and strength. Remember the children of Israel marching around the wall of Jericho in silence for six days. On the seventh day they marched around seven times. On the seventh and final time, at the command of the Lord, the people shouted with a great shout when the priests blew the trumpets, for the Lord had given them the city. When they shouted, the walls of Jericho fell down flat and they took the city (Joshua 6:16-20). Praise be to God! Sometimes people can barely get out a quiet word of thanks to God and then they wonder why the walls in their lives remain. A true shout of spiritual merit is that which wells up from within because of the Spirit of God. The Lord is great, and greatly to be praised.

Praise to the Lord, through faith in God, during the darkest night will bring about change. Praise helps an individual refocus on God rather than on the weakness of self and the physical realities of the battle. It brings one’s attention back to

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“Praise to God through exclamation, testimony, and song opens the gates to the very presence of God, for God inhabits praise.”

The Power of Praise

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WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT...

Word of God

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

Relationship of Love

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

Repentance

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

New Birth

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;
Eph. 2:1, 5-6

Freedom From Sin

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

Infilling of the Holy Spirit

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

Holiness

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;
Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

Kingdom of God

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

The Church

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col 1:18

Unity

John 17:20-23; Gal 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

Ordinances

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;
1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

Divine Healing

Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

Sanctity of Marriage

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;
1 Cor. 7:10-11

Outward Appearance

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

End of Time

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;
Matt 25:31-46

Pacifism

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

Worship

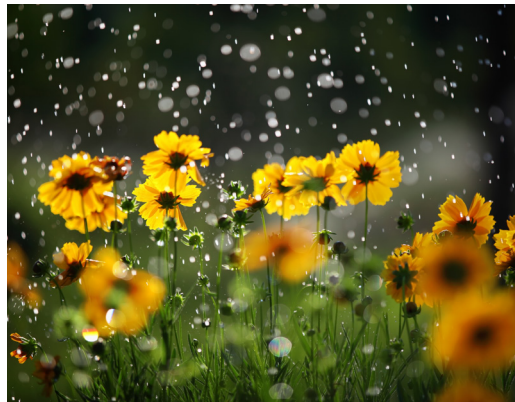
John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

Great Commission

Mark 16:15

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the One who is able to do all things. In times of discouragement and stress, praise to God opens a gateway to Heaven whereby the spirit is renewed and refreshed.



“In times of discouragement ...
praise to God opens a gateway
to Heaven whereby the spirit
is renewed and refreshed.”

like defeat, they found victory in spirit through magnifying God in praise. In persecution and suffering, Jesus was still worthy to be exalted as Lord of lords and King of kings. The night was dark but the joy of the Lord was their strength. As they sang those wonderful songs of praise and victory, there was a great earthquake and the prison began to shake. The prison doors swung open and everyone's bands fell off. Deliverance had come though the avenue of praise.

Child of God, lift up your head and give God praise. Trust not in the things which are seen but in the One who has all power in heaven and in earth. No matter the darkness, no matter how high the walls, no matter how steep the mountain or how low the valley, no matter how hot the fire or how severe the trial, look to Jesus and praise Him. Praise Him for salvation. Praise Him for His mercy. Praise Him for His goodness and His love. The power of God works through praise in spite of the storm. Praise to God paves the way for a greater manifestation of God's power. In spite of feeling, lift up the Lord with sincere gratitude and praise. Sing and shout the praises of the Lord and the enemy will be defeated. Praise the Lord! ■

In Acts 16:22-26, Paul and Silas were unjustly beaten with many stripes, thrown into the inner prison, and their feet were placed in stocks. If anyone had the right to complain and be bitter, it was these men. The seeming result of their desire to share the gospel and work for God was darkness, blood, dirt, captivity, and pain. At midnight, when they could have cried tears of regret and loneliness, they began to pray and sing praises to God. These were not prayers of self-pity but of thanksgiving and victory as indicated by their song. In what looked

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Editorial



Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.
— Psalm 63:3

The topic this quarter deals with the subject of praise. While it is a command, giving God praise is a privilege and an honor. God has done so much for us, how can we not return and exalt Him with the fruit of our mouth? Our hearts should be full of praise even in times of difficulty, and our lips should praise the Lord.

There are many more scriptures on this subject than there was room to mention in this issue. It is interesting with so much taught on praise, that many holiness people still view it as a preference, although they cling doggedly to doctrines that are taught in just two or three places. No truth should be minimized, but we should pay special attention to a doctrine that is so fundamentally taught in the Bible.

Some of the richest times of praise I have experienced have been between just the Lord and me in the privacy of my office or driving down the road. However, I have been tempted to stifle that praise in collective worship. Let us stand against the design of the enemy who is trying to put a muffler on our praise to the Lord. The saints have a wonderful heritage of praise and thanksgiving. Many of the songs of God's people are songs of praise and adoration to the Lord. It is right and it is fitting for God to be praised with a heartfelt, Spirit-led exclamation.

There are congregations which were once vibrant and full of vitality with a spirit of praise that are now quiet and dull. God wants His people to be on fire in pursuit of His will. The verbal expression is far less important than the life lived, but we are commanded to have an outward expression of an inward experience. There will be times of quiet reverence but there should also be times of much rejoicing. Too many are beginning to fall short of the Bible standard in living a life of praise. Praising God does not start in a church service but in the personal life of communion with the Lord.

True praise is not a coerced or constrained demonstration but a freewill act of the heart. The Lord wants us to create by His Spirit an environment and atmosphere that is conducive to praise.

May we seek God to be faithful in praise, for as God is exalted, we are blessed in our own spirits.

Michael W. Smith

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LIFT UP HOLY HANDS

I will lift up my hands in thy name. — Psalm 63:4

It has been a long practice of God's people from the Old to the New Testament to lift their hands in supplication and praise to the Lord. In prayer, it shows a humility and neediness to the giver of all things and the hands are extended as a show of entreaty and request from the Lord. In praise, it is a show of honor and homage to our Savior and Heavenly Father.

When the songs of Zion are being sung, lifted hands in the air signify praise and honor to the Lord. It can be a sign of affirmation or signify a prayer of neediness and desire for more of what is being sung or spoken.



Bible Study Guide

Subject: Praise

Scripture Reading: *Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing....Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. —Psalm 100:1-2, 4*

Definition: Giving praise is the act of expressing approval, admiration, or commendation. It is worship through word or song that glorifies and honors.

Summary: God is worthy of praise and adoration. It is not only the duty but also the privilege of His people to exalt Him at all times with praise in word and in song. True praise is not of the flesh but flows from the spirit and from a life of holiness. There is power in praise and it opens the gates to the presence and blessings of God.

I. Praise Commanded

- A. Revelation 19:4-7 All ye servants.
- B. Romans 15:9-11 A call to rejoice and praise.
- C. Psalms 117:1-2 All people and nations.
- D. 1 Chronicles 16:23-36 Greatly to be praised.
- E. Hebrews 13:15 The sacrifice of praise.

II. Sing and Give Thanks

- A. Psalm 9:11 Sing praises.
- B. Psalms 107:1-2 Let the redeemed say so.
- C. Ephesians 5:19-20 Sing and give thanks.

III. Reasons to Praise

- A. Luke 10:19-20 Names written in Heaven.
- B. 1 Samuel 4:5-6 Presence of God.
- C. Psalm 29:2 Glory due His name.
- D. Joel 2:26 God's provision.
- E. Psalms 147:1 Pleasant and comely.

IV. When and Where

- A. Philippians 4:4 Rejoice always.
- B. Psalm 35:28 All the day long.
- C. 1 Peter 4:12-13 In trials, suffering, and persecution. (Luke 6:22-23).
- D. Psalm 149:1 In the congregation of saints.
- E. Psalm 150:1-2 Throughout the earth.

V. Examples of Praise

- A. Luke 18:42-43 Blind man healed.
- B. Acts 3:8-9 Lame man healed.
- C. Luke 19:35-40 Disciples rejoiced.
- D. Luke 23:44-49 Roman centurion.

VI. Praise of Zion

- A. Isaiah 60:18 Gates called praise.
- B. Psalm 137:1-4 Captivity hinders praise.
- C. Isaiah 35:8-10 Highway of holiness.
- D. Isaiah 61:3 Garment of praise.
- E. 1 Peter 2:9 Show forth praises.
- F. Isaiah 12:3-6 Cry out and shout.

VII. How to Praise & Worship

- A. John 4:21-24 In spirit and in truth.
- B. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19 Quench not.
- C. Hebrews 12:28 Reverence and godly fear.
- D. 1 Peter 4:10-11 Jesus is to be praised.
- E. Joel 2:26-27 Praise and be not ashamed.
- F. 1 Corinthians 14:40 Decently and in order.

VIII. True Praise vs False Praise

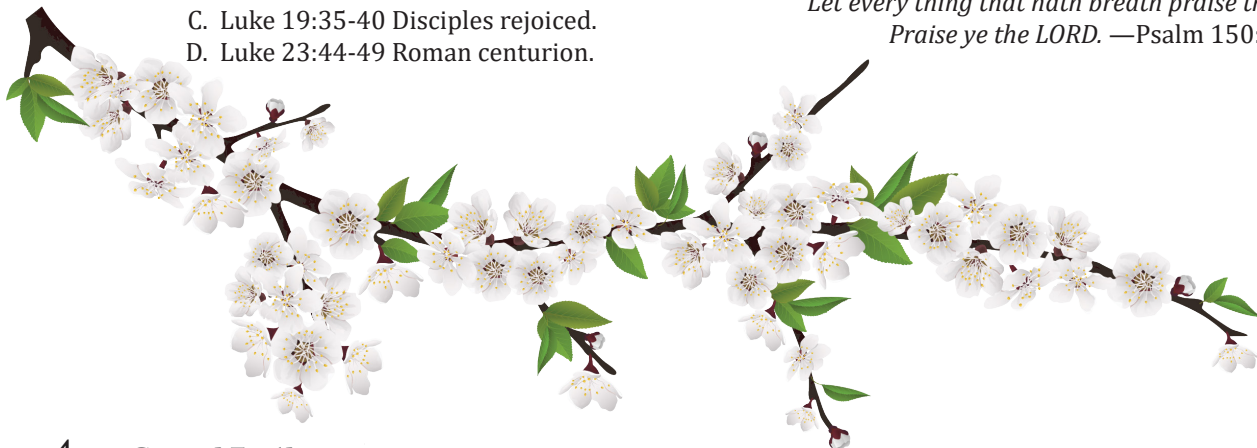
- A. Isaiah 29:13 Heart is far from God.
- B. Isaiah 42:8-10 God's glory not given to another.
- C. Psalm 138:1 With whole heart.
- D. Philippians 3:3 Not of the flesh.

IX. Power of Praise

- A. 2 Chronicles 20:20-22 Jehoshaphat.
- B. Joshua 6:16 Battle of Jericho.
- C. Acts 16:25 Paul and Silas.

Conclusion

*Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD.
Praise ye the LORD. —Psalm 150:6*





O Praise the Lord!

True praise to God is both a spirit and an action of worship. Praising God is neither a vain repetition of words nor merely a feeling; it is a conscious activity of obedience to the Lord where God is thanked, glorified, and exalted.

Praise Commanded

Praise is not just a suggestion but a command given approximately 250 times in the Bible. King David was a man of praise who had learned the secret of coming into the presence of God. "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name" (Psalm 100:4). The instruction to "serve the Lord with gladness" and to "come before his presence with singing" (Psalm 100:2) is more than just an Old Testament practice. God is honored and exalted by praise and adoration; such praise is the duty of mankind. Too many saints view praise as a choice or an option based upon personality type. In Revelation 19:5, 7 "A voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye His servants....Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him." Romans 15:10-11 further reinforces this command for ALL people to praise the Lord and laud Him.

God is Worthy of Praise

"O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD" (Psalm 117:1-2). 1 Chronicles 16:23-36 beautifully illustrates the greatness and worthiness of the Lord to be praised. He is the creator of the universe and has all power, honor, and glory. He is good and His mercy endureth for ever. He is the God of our salvation. Verse 29 instructs: "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

Sacrifice of Praise

People express themselves differently, but praise is a sacrifice that God still requires in the dispensation of grace. "By him therefore let us

offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Hebrews 13:15). If there is praise and thanksgiving in the heart, it should come out of the mouth as an offering to the Lord. It may be difficult to praise verbally, but living for God is not always about what is easy. Verbal praise from the heart is required, and it brings a wonderful blessing.

Verbal Praise

Part of praise is the verbal exaltation of God: "Praise the Lord! Hallelujah! Glory to God!" "O give thanks unto the Lord....Let the redeemed of the Lord say so" (Psalm 107:1-2). Praise is also given in song. "Sing praises to the Lord" (Psalm 9:11). Ephesians 5:19-20 instructs the people of God to sing and give thanks always for all things unto God.

Reasons to Praise God

There are many reasons to praise the Lord. Praise should not be dependent upon circumstances, for God is still God even in the difficult times of life; and He is worthy of praise. Jesus told the disciples to rejoice because their "names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:19-20). Praise the Lord for His provision and His care (Joel 2:26). The children of Israel "shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again" (1 Samuel 4:5-6) when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into their camp. So it should still be today when the presence of the Lord is in the midst of His people. There is rejoicing and praise. What a wonderful experience it is to be with the saints, praising God in word and in song under the rich anointing of the Holy Spirit. "It is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely" (Psalm 147:1).

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"If there is praise and thanksgiving in the heart, it should come out of the mouth as an offering to the Lord."

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The absence of praise on a regular basis among professing saints should be a warning sign, for God inhabits praise.

When to Praise

God's people should rejoice in the Lord always (Philippians 4:4) and have ready praise for the Lord all the day long (Psalm 35:28). Rejoicing is not only for the good times but during times of fiery trial, suffering, and persecution (1 Peter 4:12-13). It is amazing the change of attitude and spirit that can occur during difficult times when glory and praise is given to God. Praise is not just an activity to be exercised during worship service, but it should be a regular part of daily life. God is to be praised in the congregation (Psalm 149:1) and in the sanctuary of His creation (Psalm 150:1-2). True praise is an expression of love and worship to the Lord from a pure heart.

Biblical Examples

There are patterns and examples of praise in the early church. When Jesus healed the blind man, the man glorified God and the people "gave praise unto God" (Luke 18:42-43). When the lame man was healed at the temple gate, he went leaping and praising (Acts 3:8-9). He was so happy for what God had done, he did not walk but leaped with joy. One of the most compelling stories of praise is when Jesus came riding into Jerusalem on a colt. "The whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen" (Luke 19:37). It was not just Peter or the vocal disciples who praised with a loud voice—they all rejoiced. The Pharisees rebuked them and Jesus responded in verse 40: "If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." Who will praise the Lord if God's people do not? Should God's people cower in fear of being branded wrongly? Are the stones crying out?

Zion Offers Praises

The walls of Zion (God's church) are salvation and the gates of Zion are praise (Isaiah 60:18). When people pass through the gates of praise, they are elevated above the problems of this life

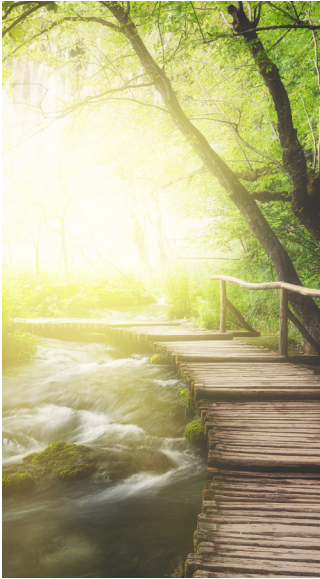
and ascend into the overwhelming splendor of Jesus Christ. They become one and part of the true glory of God. The enemy would like to stifle the praise of God's people. While in Babylonian captivity, the children of Israel hung their harps on the willow trees, wept, and would not sing the songs of Zion (Psalms 137:1-4). However, when they returned to Zion on that highway of holiness, they came with songs and everlasting joy. This should be the reality of God's people. The saints "should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

Spirit-Led Praise

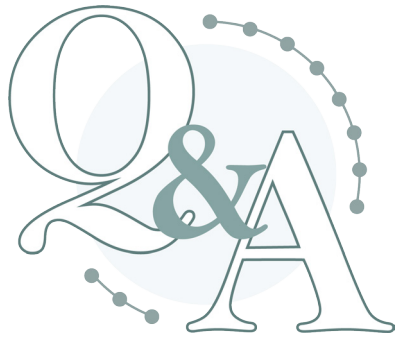
Jesus taught that "true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23). Acceptable praise is led by the Spirit and backed by a life of truth. When praise wells up within, "Quench not the spirit" (1 Thessalonians 5:19) but let the praises of God ring forth. Praise in collective worship service is not a fleshly display of uncontrolled emotion, for worship should be in reverence and godly fear (Hebrews 12:28). All things should be done "decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40), but there should be liberty to praise and not be ashamed (Joel 2:26-27). Christ is the object of true praise (1 Peter 4:10-11), and praise should never be about entertainment or a display of the flesh (Philippians 3:3).

Power in Acceptable Praise

Many worship God with their mouth but their hearts are far from Him (Isaiah 29:13). God rejects this type of praise for He seeks people to praise Him and love Him with all of their hearts. Just because many in Christian fellowships abuse what is termed "praise and worship," let us not allow the enemy to hijack or steal what rightfully belongs to God's people. There is great power in personal and collective praise and God is glorified and honored when His people exalt Him with their lives, their hearts, and their mouths. ■



"Praise is not just an activity to be exercised during worship service, but it should be a regular part of daily life."



Is it inconsistent to quote from the book of Psalms concerning praise and yet not use musical instruments in formal worship services?

King David, in spite of his many sins, was a man of worship and praise. The Psalms are full of his declarations of praise to God. He often inspired others to praise with not only song but to accompany it with instruments of music and even dance as in Psalm 150. David lived under the law of Moses and not under the truth of Jesus Christ. There are attributes and characteristics of David which are still commendable and inspirational even in this dispensation of grace.

Is not inconsistent to quote from David or the early prophets to educate, inform, and inspire. If there is something that is contrary to New Testament teaching, we no longer follow that example. While David's praise is inspirational, as some of it aligns with New Testament teaching, some of his practices did not align with the teaching and practices of the saints in the New Testament.

While David offered sacrifices, tithed, worshiped with musical instruments, etc, the early New Testament church did not. They worshipped in spirit and in truth as opposed to the fleshly dictates and rituals of the law. There is no teaching in the New Testament advocating the use of musical instruments; and further, history indicates that the early morning church taught against their use in worship services as did many of the major reformers of the past.

For more information on the use of musical instruments in worship service see Issue 21 at: www.thegospeltruth.org

Is modern "praise and worship" an acceptable mode of worship to the Lord?

There are a number of issues contained in this question and I probably will not address them all; but I will share a few things to consider about the modern practices of "praise and worship." First, note that praise and worship in and of themselves are ordered of the Lord. However, true praise and worship is to be after the Spirit and not after the flesh. Too many churches have concerts and activities that are stimulants to the flesh and not advantageous to the spiritual well-being of the soul. If people can delight themselves in the fleshly use of multicolored lights, a talented band, and even dancing while singing songs of praise to God only to return home to lives of sin, the acceptability of such activities is highly questionable. It is not only possible but a fact that much of modern praise and worship is a mask for unrighteous living under the guise of Christianity.

The object of true worship is Christ Himself. Much of modern praise and worship exalts and magnifies the talents of man and the ability of the flesh. There is a stimulant and high that can occur from being in such services, but I have yet to see holiness as the long-term outcome. Music is not worship by itself, and if praise and worship is, in the words of one author, "a mood experience," then it probably is not true worship.

Acceptable worship is that which comes from a heart of love for God, and a heart of love is proven by obedience to God. Even in the time of Christ, there were those that drew nigh to Jesus with their mouth and honored Him with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him (Matthew 15:8).

Many modern practices of praise and worship are worldly and contrary to the simplicity of godly worship. While everyone has the right and privilege to praise, children of God should not be guilty of perpetuating or condoning practices that are not acceptable to the Lord. Unfortunately, modern praise and worship does not generally draw people into a closer relationship with the Lord.



"Acceptable worship is that which comes from a heart of love for God, and a heart of love is proven by obedience to God."



DID YOU KNOW?

Prior to the instruction concerning women's modesty and behavior in 1 Timothy 2:9 (which many individuals advocating holiness accept), Paul states to the men that: "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."



A Word
in Season

THE GARMENT OF PRAISE

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[The Lord hath given] *the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.*
—Isaiah 61:3

Jesus Christ came to bring good tidings to a sin-sick world. He brought spiritual healing and deliverance to souls bound for hell. Where there was mourning and sorrow, there is now joy and peace. Where there was a spirit of heaviness and oppression, Jesus offers a garment of praise.

It is a choice people make whether they will maintain a spirit of heaviness in sin or whether they will open their burdened heart and allow Jesus to give them rest and peace. The Lord desires to wrap His children in a garment of praise that will bring glory and honor to the Father.

It is important to remember that salvation does not deliver us from all the pain and heartache of the presence of sin in the world around us. Saved people can still suffer physical, emotional, and temporal problems. In the midst of those problems, the enemy would like to drown God's children with a spirit of heaviness where hope is lost and darkness remains. Jesus came to comfort those that mourn and to minister to those who are hurting.

When the spirit of heaviness begins to rest on your shoulders, look to the Lord and see His arms outstretched with a garment of praise. In the darkest of night in the middle of pain, the spirit of heaviness can be defeated with the spirit of praise. When things are crumbling around you, you can still praise the Lord for His salvation and love. When you praise Him, the clouds of despair have to roll back.

Praise is not always to the exclusion of tears, but even through the tears that life brings our hearts can still be lifted up in praise because of the presence of Jesus Christ. When you least feel like praising and giving thanks, make a choice to give praise in spite of the storm. Trade in the spirit of heaviness for the wonderful, liberating garment of praise. ■



HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD