

Thoughts About Worship

Question: “What is the difference between Praise and Worship? Aren’t they the same?”

Answer: Understanding the difference between praise and worship can bring a new depth to the way we honor the Lord. Throughout the Bible, the commands to "praise the Lord" are too numerous to mention. Angels and the heavenly hosts are commanded to praise the Lord ([Psalm 89:5](#); [103:20](#); [148:2](#)). All inhabitants of the earth are instructed to praise the Lord ([Psalm 138:4](#); [Romans 15:11](#)). We can praise Him with singing ([Isaiah 12:5](#); [Psalm 9:11](#)), with shouting ([Psalm 33:1](#); [98:4](#)), with the dance ([Psalm 150:4](#)), and with musical instruments ([1 Chronicles 13:8](#); [Psalm 108:2](#); [150:3-5](#)).

Worship, comes from a different place within our spirits. Worship should be reserved for God alone ([Luke 4:8](#)). Worship is the art of losing self in the adoration of another. Praise can be a part of worship, but worship goes beyond praise. Praise is easy; worship is not. Worship gets to the heart of who we are. To truly worship God, we must let go of our self-worship. We must be willing to humble ourselves before God, surrender every part of our lives to His control, and adore Him for who He is, not just what He has done. Worship is a lifestyle, not just an occasional activity. Jesus said the Father is seeking those who will worship Him "in spirit and in truth" ([John 4:23](#)).

What’s the first thing you think of when you hear the word “worship”?

Unfortunately, for most people that have been raised in a church, the word has become synonymous with singing or meeting together for a service. I have realized that I am not concerned about what we are singing as much as I am concerned about what we are seeing. I realize that people worship at different levels. If you have not seen the One you worship, then you will always struggle in your response.

Revelation 5:11-13

I love that this scripture gives us a picture of what worship is like. They are not just singing a song they were taught, but they are describing the One that they are looking at. It’s also a great description of what we should give in response to His greatness. Things like power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory and praise. That pretty much means He deserves everything we have.

I had an encounter with God at the age of 26 that changed me forever. God became more than a history book. He was no longer a God that seemed so distant and unresponsive. The God of the universe revealed Himself and everything inside of me changed. Worship was no longer something I could just do, but it was something I had to become.

The daily activity of my life, reveals the worth of the God that I serve. This is why it is so important to be a person of character when proclaiming to be a Christian. The world is watching us and they determine who God is by the actions of His followers. We are the representatives of God on the earth. What do we want people to believe about Him? How much is His image worth to us?

When we choose to love instead of hate, to be patient instead of reacting, to be joyful in times of trials, or to be strong in the face of fear, then our response is an act of worship. Our response reveals His worth.

In Scripture, praise is usually presented as boisterous, joyful, and uninhibited. God invites praise of all kinds from His creation. Jesus said that if people don't praise God, even the "stones will cry out" ([Luke 19:40](#)). The tone changes when the Bible mentions worship. We read verses like; "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" ([Psalm 96:9](#)). And, "Come let us worship and bow down" ([Psalm 95:6](#)). Often, worship is coupled with the act of bowing or kneeling, which shows humility and contrition ([2 Chronicles 29:28](#); [Hebrews 11:21](#); [Revelation 19:10](#)). It is through true worship that we invite the Holy Spirit to speak to us, convict us, and comfort us. Through worship, we realign our priorities with God's and acknowledge Him once more as the rightful Lord of our lives.

Just as praise is intertwined with thanksgiving, worship is intertwined with surrender. It is impossible to worship God and anything else at the same time ([Luke 4:8](#)). The physical acts often associated with worship—bowing, kneeling, lifting hands—help to create the necessary attitude of humility required for real worship.

Worship is an attitude of the heart. A person can go through the outward motions and not be worshipping ([Psalm 51:16-17](#); [Matthew 6:5-6](#)). God sees the heart, and He desires and deserves sincere, heartfelt praise *and* worship.