

# Giving God Thanksgiving, Praise and Worship

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## Distinction between thanksgiving, praise and worship:

Many Christians use the words thanksgiving, praise and worship interchangeably. But in Scripture, these words have different meanings and are used for different purposes.

**Thanksgiving** relates to God's deeds, what He has done.

**Praise** relates to God's character, who He is.

**Worship** relates directly to God's holiness.

## The meaning and purpose of thanksgiving

### Old and New Testament

Thanksgiving is a New Testament term. Praise is an Old Testament word. The New Testament Scriptures (in the Greek language) regularly speak of thanksgiving that can be done in one's heart and in private.

There appears to be no term meaning "thank-you" in Biblical Hebrew language. Many of our translations carry the word "thanks" or "thanksgiving," but these words are used in an explanatory sense. In the Old Testament culture, the word used in place of thanks is "praise."

In New Testament Greek, the word for "thanks" is the word *charis*. This is the root word which "charismatic" comes from, and is related to the word for "grace". In other words, thanksgiving is an appropriate response to God's grace in our lives.

## Notes on giving thanks to God

### Jesus gave thanks before great miracles.

Jesus feeds the four thousand.

Mt 15:36 and He took the seven loaves and the fish; and giving thanks, He broke them and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples *gave them* to the people. (Mk 8:6)

Jesus feeds the five thousand

Jn 6:11 Jesus then took the loaves, and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise, also of the fish as much as they wanted. (Jn 6:1-14; 23)

Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead (Jn11:1-46)

Jn 11:41-43 So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. 42 I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me." 43 When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth."

### The response of Jesus to the one healed of leprosy.

Lk 17:16-19 and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan. 17 Then Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they? 18 Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?" 19 And He said to him, "Stand up and go; your faith has made you well." (Lk 17:11-19)

"your faith has made you well"; literally "saved" (sozo) you.

### The communion table is to be received with thanksgiving.

Mt 26:27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave *it* to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; (Mk 14:23; Lk 22:17-19; 1Cor 11:24)

**Failure to give thanks will darken your heart.**

Rom 1:21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

**The giving of thanks to God comes before freedom.**

Rom 7:25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

2Cor 2:14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. (1Cor 15:57)

**Thanksgiving is a fruit of the Spirit.**

Eph 5:17-19 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;

**Give thanks for all things.**

Eph 5:20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;

**Give thanks in everything**

Phil 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

1Thes 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

**Give thanks in whatever you do.**

Col 3:17 Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

**Pray with thanksgiving**

Col 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of* thanksgiving;

1Tim 2:1 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, (1Tim 2:1-4)

**All of Paul's prayers on behalf of believers began with thanks.**

Rom 1:8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, (Eph1:15; Phil 1:3; Col 1:3; 1Thes 1:2; 3:9; 2Thes 1:3; 2:13; 2Tim 1:3)

**The sacrifice of praise is to give thanks.**

Heb 13:15 Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.

**The giving of thanks is the continuous activity of heaven.**

Rev 7:12 "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, *be* to our God forever and ever. Amen." (Rev 4:9; 11:17)

## The meaning and purpose of praise

Praise relates to God's character, who He is.

To understand this let's look at Psalms and specifically the Psalms of David.

They can be divided into two groups as follows:

| <b>Psalms of descriptive praise</b>          | <b>Psalms of declarative praise</b>              |
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| Emphasis is on exulting the person of God.   | Emphasis is on what God has done for His people. |
| They declare who He is, His attributes, etc. | They declare the glory of God                    |
| They relate directly to His essence.         | They relate directly to the giving of thanks.    |

The book of Psalms is the most read book of the Bible by Christians. We find that they express our own thoughts and feelings of sorrow, joy, etc. as we experience life.

**Praise according to Webster's Dictionary means**, "the act of glorifying or extolling God". Praise means speaking well of, extolling, or magnifying the virtues of someone.

Praise occurs when we tell someone else about God's goodness; Thanksgiving occurs when we whisper a prayer of thanks to God. Praise must always be vocal, it is never silent; Thanksgiving can be silent, in your heart.

### The best way to understand what praise means is to examine the words used for praise in the Old Testament.

- 1) **halel** = means simply "praise the Lord", or "praise Yah"; sometimes translated "hallelujah".
- 2) **halal** = means "to be boastful, to be exited, and to enjoy". The word connotes a tremendous explosion of enthusiasm in the act of praising.
- 3) **yadah** = means "to acknowledge in public". It is to give public acknowledgement of thanks to someone. It is telling others what God has done.
- 4) **barak** = simply means to bless. We bless the Lord by remembering all of the things He has given and done for us (Ps 103:1-2; 72:9-15).
- 5) **zamar** = means to touch the strings, and refers to praise that involves singing and instrumental worship (Ps 92:1; 150).
- 6) **shabach** = means to laud, to speak well of in a high and befitting way. It can also mean to address in a loud tone, to command triumph, ploy, to shout (Ps 63:3-4).
- 7) **towdah** = it has the distinct connotation of sacrifice as it relates to praise. It also involves the extension of the hands in adoration (Ps 50:23).
- 8) **tehilla** = means to sing (PS 22:3; 34:1; 40:23; 60:2). In 2Chr 20:22 when Israel began to sing and praise, God set an ambush against their enemy, which led to a great victory.
- 9) **ruah** = means to shout in joy (Ps 95:1; 100:1). (Ps).
- 10) **qara** = carries the idea of proclamation (Ps 116:17).
- 11) **nagard** = means to declare.
- 12) **rum** = means to extol.

## The meaning and purpose of worship

**Worship in English**, in the verb form means to pay homage or respect.

**Synonyms** that help us understand the meaning of the word are; adore, esteem, magnify, revere, venerate, exalt.

The **Hebrew** word is "shachah"; It is translated, to bow down, to do reverence, to prostrate, beseech humbly.

The **Greek** word most commonly used is "proskuneo". It is a combination of two separate words, "pros" which means towards, and "kuneo" which means to kiss.

**In Mt 4**, when the devil tried to tempt Jesus in the wilderness, he says, "All these kingdoms of the world will I give to you, if you bow down and worship me". Jesus responds by saying, "Go Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only'".

This illustrates that whatever we worship, we will ultimately end up serving. Man was created as a worshipping creature, it is part of our nature, of who we are. Consequently, it is our ultimate decision, since we can't change our nature.

Through the ages man has worshipped many things other than God. He has worshipped idols of statues, his physical desires, money and wealth, possessions, leaders and false religions.

Our nature demands that we worship something. Our choice is whether it will be God or something else.

**This is illustrated in Jn 4**, the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. She was trying to fill her thirst for God with her appetite for men and was left wanting. Jesus tells her, "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (Jn 4:23-24)

**Notice:**

**Truth** = means absolute openness and honesty before God, hiding nothing.

**Spirit** = "in spirit" refers to part of our personhood.

We are a tri-part being, body, soul and spirit (1Thes 5:23). Worshipping "in spirit" involves exposing our entire life to the searchlight of the Holy Spirit. Man's body relates to the world around him through the five senses.

Man's body is world-conscious.

Man's soul is self-conscious.

Man's spirit is God-conscious.

The only way to worship then is through the spirit. It is not the soul or the body that worships, but the spirit. Therefore, God has given us His Spirit;

Eph 5:17-20 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord 20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;

**For such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.**

It is exciting, even an amazing fact, that God is seeking for people to worship Him. The very truth that God can be worshipped provides an incredible opportunity for each one of us.

**Conclusion:**

Worship is a response to a relationship with God, but that relationship is very intimate, and it is very difficult for another person to describe exactly what it is. It does involve fellowship. It does involve personal revelation by God to the individual. But it basically is the outpouring of inner thoughts to God, often accompanied by emotional and expressive actions of the body.

No man can program himself for worship. It is an act of the will to thank God. It is an act of God's will to invite us into His presence in this act of worship. It is only when our relationship with God is consummated in worship that we truly feel that we are where He is, and He is where we are.

**Reference used:**

The Power of Praise and Worship, by Terry Law; (cp. 8; pg.121-141)