



Article Title— "Praise God!" — *What does it really mean?*

Article Category— Practical Christianity



Evangelicals often get caught up in the excitement of something called "Praise & Worship." What follows is not to cast aspersions on them or on the heartfelt sincerity of that practice, but to help equip them for scriptural praise and worship of Our Heavenly Father. He's clearly worthy of our praise and of our worship.

Here's the scoop—

Search the scriptures all you will and you'll never find a credible 1st-Century precedent for "Praise & Worship" services. Yes; the Old Testament documents times of celebration that included songs of praise to God, but there is no evidence that the Hebrew people ever lapsed into trance-like states. Only the heathens around them did that. So HOW can we genuinely praise God? You and I can praise Him as individuals and we can praise Him when we're surrounded by others who're also praising Him. But is that the same thing or something different?

It's the same and here's why: When you praise another person you proclaim or describe the admirable qualities of that person.

So what does the evangelical exclamation, "Praise God!" mean? It's a command—one of several worn-out *christianese* expressions that most believers have likely never examined. But many of the unbelievers who've heard it have examined it. That's among the reasons why so many of them have determined that we Christians are ignoramuses. And our objective is to win them over to Christianity? Gotta fix that, so here's some help...

To praise a student, you might tell others about that student's good grades. To praise a husband, a wife might tell her friends about how he always takes out the garbage, fixes things that get broken and helps her cook and do the dishes. (Hope my wife doesn't read this!) To praise an employee, an employer might tell other business people about how that employee comes to work early and does whatever needs to be done when it needs to be done without being told. The ultimate praise of an employee by an employer to his peers might be telling them things like, "I'm certain he could run the entire business with no problem at all if something were to happen to me."

So, then, how might we genuinely praise God? Same way! Well, two ways, really:

- (1) Tell others about God's wonderful works; e.g.: "...we do hear them speak in our languages the wonderful works of God." —Acts 2:11
- (2) Recite God's admirable attributes...in prayer to God; e.g.: "Many, O LORD my God, [are]<sup>^</sup> thy wonderful works [which]<sup>^</sup> thou hast done, and thy thoughts [which are]<sup>^</sup> to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: [if]<sup>^</sup> I would declare and speak of [them]<sup>^</sup>, they are more than can be numbered." —Psalm 40:5

<sup>^</sup> In the KJV, when a word or phrase appears either in *italics* or in square [brackets], that is to indicate that neither it nor any equivalent of it appears in the original manuscripts. The examples of that at Psalm 40:5, above, are of no great consequence, but you'll want to make a note in your KJV Bible, anyhow. Why?

There are multiple scriptures in which those *italics* or square [brackets] make a huge difference. Want examples? Read 1 Corinthians 14 in your KJV Bible and note the number of times the word "unknown" appears in either *italics* or square [brackets]. (This is the kind of thing that you just might want to share with your friends and family who likely don't know it.)

So! If you want to praise God, then PRAISE Him. *Really* praise Him—in spirit and in truth! He inhabits the genuine praises of His people, you know. Do you think He'd be inclined to draw near to those who just keep repeating that empty "Praise God!" cliché?

—T. C. Newsome

PS: To participate in sensible Bible discussions about things like this, join us at TC's Friends Club. Here's the hot link:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/136708110091989/>

I was a successful Bible teacher for a LOT of years—big sanctuary classes.  
I knew what my denomination believed and that's what I taught.  
Yes, I should've checked it out to make sure it was true.

So why didn't I do that? Well, maybe I didn't do that for the same reason that you haven't really checked out what your denomination teaches.

"In religion and politics, people's beliefs and convictions are in almost every case gotten at second hand, and without examination." —Samuel Clemens



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