

The Joy of Worshipping God

There is so much more to worshipping God than singing a song printed in a book or shown on a screen. There is joy in worshipping God.

I love the Lord. I am thankful for all He has done in my life and am humbled by all He uses me for. I was reminded of this the other morning as I was singing. Most days I wake up with a song in my heart. Sometimes these songs I wake with are old choruses I learned as a new Christian in church services and other times they are new songs. In either case, they do something in my heart; they allow my joy and adoration for all God has been, is, and will be to be expressed.

Most who know me know I enjoy singing, whistling, and humming. I have often been asked what tune I had just been whistling and I couldn't say because I didn't realize I was whistling. It was an outpouring of inner joy. That is an element of worship.

If we are going to talk about the joy of worshipping, we must first define worship. The word worship is both a noun and a verb. As a noun, it is defined as the feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for a deity. As a verb, it is defined as showing reverence and adoration for a deity. Dictionary definitions are all well and good, but what is worship as the bible defines it?

Most church groups refer to worship as Psalm 100:1-5 puts it which says:

Psalms 100:1-5

(1) A psalm. For giving grateful praise. Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. (2) Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. (3) Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. (4) Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. (5) For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

That psalm brings back memories of several choruses I learned as a new Christian; wow! This psalm also gives us context and how broad worship really is. Many church groups settle on verse 4 that says to enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. This is where most organized church services start their time together with music and singing. The one thing people shop around for a church group to belong to more than any other is the style of music during services.

There is value in worship in this context. Our hearts can really be opened and our guard let down when we are safe and secure with like-minded believers singing together of their love and adoration for God and all He is and does. This can prepare our hearts for the Holy Spirit to do a real work in us. It helps us get our attitude right so we can draw closer to God. Singing songs about God together takes our minds off of our problems and situations and helps us fix our full attention on Him. It helps the Holy Spirit drive our emotions. We must be careful that it is the Holy Spirit driving our emotions and not our emotions driving the Holy Spirit. That brings us back to the song in our hearts.

These songs and times of singing are more than just when we come together once or twice a week. They are whenever we enter His courts. Whenever we meet with God. The Apostle Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18:



1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

(16) Rejoice always, (17) pray continually, (18) give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

The words and songs of praise should be coming from us all the time. It is not reserved for starting a church group gathering.

Anybody can sing a song. Anyone can sing a song of gladness about God. That is praise. Praise is happy. Praise acknowledges what God has done in your life, whether you have accepted His salvation for you or not and, whether you are a member of God's family or not. This doesn't come from the heart, this comes from the mind out of our memories and knowledge. Most people know the chorus of Amazing Grace but that doesn't mean they have personally accepted that amazing grace the song is about.

Worship comes from the heart. It is an outpouring of not only what God has done in your life, but why He has done it. Worship differs from praise in that to truly worship you have to have communion with God. You must have a relationship with Him. Jesus teaches us in John 4:23-24:

John 4:23-24

(23) **Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. (24) God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."**

Jesus points out that true worshippers will worship God in spirit and truth. This is more than singing about God, it is singing to God. This is more than telling about what God has done in your life, it is telling others about who God is and what He does in everyone's life. Jesus is telling us what Paul is telling us. We will and should worship at all times. It is not reserved for church group gatherings. You can sing when you're alone, you can sing when you are with a small group. It can be on Sunday morning and Wednesday night and it can be on Friday evening out with friends having fun.

When we worship in spirit and truth, we are proclaiming all that God is and all that He has done for all of creation. It is speaking and singing of his glory and love. It is looking to him with hearts full of gladness and eyes wide in wonder of all we see. This is what produces that song in our hearts. This is what causes us to bow down in reverence and raise our hands in adoration. It is what makes us cry out, "Abba! Father!" fully knowing He hears us and reaches out to us.

There is more to worship than singing though. We worship God by showing awe when we see all He has created. I truly enjoy nature. I love going camping out in the forest or being out on the river in my kayak. I enjoy waking in the forest hearing the birds chirping and singing. I am in awe every time I look up at the night sky and I see all the stars that God has put in place. The similarity and individuality of each tree in a forest has always fascinated me and knowing that it is God who has created all of this astounds me.

Part of the joy of worshipping God is acknowledging and celebrating creation and using the talents He has given us to create something ourselves. In Genesis, it says that God created man in His own image. I believe this means God's character has been impressed upon us and that includes creativity. God has given us all talents in which we can create.



Our creativity comes in many forms. Some of us create art in the form of painting, sculpture, or music. Some of us create in the form of the written or spoken word. There are some whose creativity is shown through developing business processes or ways to lead and inspire people. Some creativity is displayed in ways to solve different problems or invent new things to improve life. All of these, and many more, are being creative and part of having the character of God impressed upon us as He created us in His image.

When we use the gifts and talents God has given us and give Him the glory, we are worshipping Him and joy wells up in our hearts. Giving God thanks and gratitude for who He made us to be, and giving Him all the glory for what we accomplish brings a joy to our heart that is unmatched by anything the world can do.

That joy that is in our hearts pours out. It shows in our face and it shows in our actions. That is the joy of the Lord and that is what drives our emotions and spirit. That is where the song in my heart comes from each morning when I wake up, and God wants to give you a song in your heart, a sculpture in your hand, a word in your mouth, or a new idea in your mind. As you turn to God and worship Him in spirit and truth, you become a true worshipper. We are in that time that Jesus spoke of to the Samaritan woman. Let the joy of worshipping God in spirit and truth pour forth from you. In doing that, you will worship God and you will be a witness to the joy of being a member of the family of God and counted with the redeemed of Christ.

