

PRAISE & WORSHIP 4



Introduction

The Bible tells us to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. This means that our worship is to be expressed with our physical bodies. In our last study we learnt how we can use our hands to praise the Lord, but let us continue by looking at how we can praise the Lord with our posture or our feet. How are we to use our bodies? Let's look at a verse in 1 Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 *'Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.'*

Everything we do is to glorify God, including what we do with our bodies. God wants us to use our bodies to praise him.

4. HOW DO WE PRAISE?

C. Our Posture

?? What are some of the ways in which we can use our posture to praise the Lord? Discuss.

A. Standing

Before we knew Jesus the Bible says it was like we were in a pit of miry clay, but God has saved us and lifted us up so that we are standing on a rock! That rock is Jesus Christ. We can come freely into God's presence – we don't need to crawl or cringe, but we can stand before him with confidence. In the book of Revelation the Apostle John had a vision of God's people in heaven.

Revelation 7:9 *'After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, **standing** before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.'*

These are all the men and women from every race and tongue who died during the tribulation because they loved Jesus. They were wearing white robes. We have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus and can now stand before him.

Standing is the usual position we use in praise. Yes we can sit down and praise, and even lie down, but the usual posture is to stand. When we stand we can move the rest of our body freely and we can even sing better.

Most of all standing is a sign of respect for the one we are worshipping. In many places it is courtesy to rise and stand when someone of importance comes into the room. How much more should we stand when we come into the presence of the greatest One of all!

B. Dancing

The Bible speaks about dancing as a way to express our praise to the Lord. Look at these verses:-

Psalm 149:3 *'Let them praise his name with dancing, and make music to him with tambourine and harp.'*

Psalm 150:4 *'Praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute.'*

We need to understand that the word 'dance' means to skip or leap around. It is very different to dancing in the world. First of all, our motives are different. Dancing in the world is to give us pleasure. Many forms of dancing arouses people sexually and attracts people of the opposite sex. Some dancing uses the positions of the gods worshipped in that culture or are actions that call on the spirits. However when we dance to the Lord our motive is to give him pleasure, and it should be an expression of joy for what God has done, to bring him glory.

Let's look at an example from the life of King David, who was the greatest musician and worshipper in Israel. When David brought the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem he danced with joy.

2 Samuel 6:14-15 *'David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the Lord with all his might, while he and the entire house of Israel brought up the Ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of trumpets.'*

We are told that David was wearing a linen ephod, which was the tunic the priests wore. He had taken off his kingly robes and danced with all his might. How did David's wife react?

2 Samuel 6:16 *'And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, she despised him in her heart.'*

Michal, King David's wife, thought he looked foolish and that it wasn't proper for a king to behave like this. Perhaps at times we have thought like Michal when people have danced before the Lord.

?? Why do you think many Christians are offended with the idea of dancing to the Lord?

Sometimes Christians are afraid of what others will think if they dance before the Lord, but just as David took off his kingly robes, perhaps we need to take off our pride. We need to lay aside our fear so we can freely express our love to God. Just as David wore the robe of a priest, we are all called to be priests to the Lord.

C. Kneeling, Bowing and Prostrating

Look at the following verses to see other ways we can use our bodies to praise the Lord.

Psalm 95:6-7 *'Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.'*

2 Chronicles 20:18 *'Jehoshaphat bowed with his face to the ground, and all the people of Judah and Jerusalem fell down in worship before the Lord.'*

Revelation 7:11 *'All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshipped God.'*

These are just some of the verses that show us that we can express our worship by kneeling, bowing and prostrating. There are many others, but each time these actions are linked to worship. In fact the word worship literally means, 'to bow down'.

?? What do you think is the significance of bowing down? Discuss.

This is a way we show respect and reverence – we are humbling ourselves before the other person. In the book of Daniel, King Nebuchadnezzar demanded that all the people bow down and worship his image. In the last days the Antichrist will do the same. But God is the only one worthy of our worship, and we are to humble ourselves and bow down to him alone.

Kneeling and bowing is common in other religions and is part of the ritual in some churches. Bowing is found in the Word of God, but we need to realize that we cannot earn God's favor by doing this. This is an act of submission and reverence that must come from our hearts. There are times when the holy presence of God is so strong, that the only response is to kneel or bow before him.

Conclusion

We have learnt many ways of expressing our praise to God. Praise is something we are commanded to do. It is an outward expression which draws us closer to God and into true worship. Jesus said, 'the Father is seeking worshippers.' Let's learn to praise so we can become worshippers.