

The Hallelujah Factor pt.1
Psalm 145:1-3

Is there something you do EVERY DAY that you plan on doing forever and ever?

- Eat, sleep, breath – YES, YES, YES

EX: we exaggerate and say, “I could do this every day, or I could do this forever” but we rarely mean it.

There is one factor or practice or ingredient of the spiritual life that is given prominence in scripture – something we should do every day and will do forever and ever:

Praise and thanksgiving.

There are various words used to express that practice...

Years ago, Jack Taylor wrote a book that was impactful for me when I read it – The Hallelujah Factor. He explains that while there are many factors that go into our spiritual lives, one that is often overlooked is what he calls the Hallelujah Factor.

It was NOT OVERLOOKED in the piety of the OT.

The practice of praise and an appreciation of praise was front and center. Psalm 22:3 says that “God is enthroned or inhabits the praises of His people.”

C.S. Lewis noted that praise is the completion of enjoyment. If there is something that we really love or find beautiful or amazing, our enjoyment bubbles up in praise. He wrote about how he found the command to praise God to be a stumbling block because God Himself commanded it. It seemed so unseemly for God to tell people to praise Him. We don't really like people like that.

Lewis came to understand that the praise of God and even the command to praise Him is the correct, adequate, or appropriate response to Who God is. If we rightly know Him, the appropriate response is to praise Him. He is praiseworthy. If we don't express our appreciation of God through praise, then WE are missing out.

Lewis “I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise... (p. 75) “

Our lives ring out with praise. Just listen to yourself or others during the course of the day and you'll hear praise of a favorite food, song, scenic view, show, movie, child, friend, restaurant, sports team, singer, bargain store, recipe, podcast, poem, DIY guru, mechanic, book, etc.

“I had not noticed either that just as men spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it: ‘Isn't that lovely? Wasn't it glorious? Don't you think that magnificent?’

The Psalmists in telling everyone to praise God are doing what all men do when they speak of what they care about.

In praising God, who is supremely Valuable, we are doing what we can't help doing, about everything else we value.

I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. When we discover something that is good, beautiful and true, we want to tell others about it. We find great delight in expressing our appreciation and praise for those things that are worthy of our attention. “The worthier the object, the more intense this delight would be. If it were possible for a created soul to fully ‘appreciate’, that is to love and delight in, the worthiest object of all, and simultaneously at every moment to give this delight perfect expression, then that soul would be in supreme beatitude (blessedness or happiness). (Lewis – Reflections on the Psalms ch 9)

The Westminster catechism says that man's chief end is ‘to glorify God and enjoy Him forever’. But we shall

then know that these are the same thing. Fully to enjoy is to glorify. In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him.

EX: This reality came home to me in a very clear way in 1990. I was reading *Desiring God*, by John Piper, and the introduction quotes some of the same thoughts from CS Lewis. At the end of the introduction, Piper tweaked the WCFSC #1 by saying...

The chief end of man is to glorify God BY enjoying Him forever.

I was at a conference in Holland with about 500 pastors and worship leaders from 20 different countries and those folks ENJOYED WORSHIP AND PRAISE.

Going into the evening gathering was electric. You could tell that the people were glad to be going to a place of praise and worship.

PSALM 122:1 "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

Lewis...

In this life, we are only tuning our instruments for the heavenly symphony, AND IT IS PRACTICE or tuning up – at times it may sound good and not so great at other times. But even our sacrifice of praise can be delightful to those who can in some measure anticipate the fullness in heavenly joy.

There is something unique about the practice of praise. Private praise and prayer are two things we do for God alone. **Private praise and prayer have God alone as their object and audience.**

EX: Everything else has an element of public recognition. Someone else will know if we are doing it – service, giving, preaching, teaching, nursery, children's or youth ministry, serving in the background, evangelism, ...etc. Unless it is some act of service done totally in secret, someone else will know that you did it.

NOT SO WITH PRIVATE PRAYER and PRAISE.

It is the HIDDEN FACTOR OF THE Christian LIFE.

EX: I believe it was Jonathan Edwards who pointed out that **"If we do all the other practices of the spiritual life but ignore private prayer, then our spiritual life is for show because we ignore the one thing that is done for God alone."**

Jesus commends private prayer and praise in... Matt 6:6ff

6 But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

7 "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. 8 So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

9 "Pray, then, in this way:

**'Our Father who is in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.**

The focus is on the secret private practice with Praise coming at as the first area of petition:

Hallowed be Your Name is an expression and invitation to Praise God.

That should not surprise us since Christ the Eternal Son dwelt with the Father for eternity and praise is the operative language of Heaven.

Romans 1:25 and 9:5 tell us that God is 'blessed' forever. The word used is the root word for 'eulogy' – i.e. to speak well of. The Triune God who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ is Himself BLESSED FOREVER.

When we praise God, we are engaging in an Eternal Exercise that has eternal value.

The RETURN ON INVESTMENT from praise is eternal and has spiritual, emotional, and mental health benefits NOW.

Ps 147:1

Praise the Lord!

For it is good to sing praises to our God;

For it is pleasant and praise is becoming.

Praise looks good on you - It is suitable / beautiful

EX: "The clothes make the man or woman." Don't you feel better when you look better?

UGA MEN'S GLEE CLUB - I liked concerts because we wore Tuxedos.

Praise is the Tuxedo of Prayer

GIVEN THAT, Praise is one of the most worthwhile endeavors on earth - during good times and hard times.

Our practice, or lack thereof, of Private Praise will enhance or diminish our engagement in Public Praise. It is hard to appreciate and benefit from something in public that you have little experience of in private.

EX: a musical concert or recital. If there is no private practice, the public experience will be difficult or awkward.

If you are uneasy with private praise, corporate worship may feel awkward and uncomfortable.

How do we develop the Hallelujah Factor in our own lives? (Jack Taylor is helpful)**

THE PSALMS are a great place to start. They instruct us and guide us in the practice of praise. They will push us out of our comfort zone when we begin to see how Biblical praise is active and demonstrative. Praise is NOT A SPECTATOR ACTIVITY. It is designed to incorporate our whole person.

In this short series we're going to learn about praise, and I hope that we will take what we learn from scripture and apply it in our own private or family worship.

One thing that we see is that praise comes in various forms. It is VOCAL, AUDIBLE, AND VISIBLE

VOCAL - Speak, sing, shout are some of the vocal ways in which praise is described.

Audible - clapping, the sound of the trumpet, harp, lyre, flute, cymbals, stringed instruments, etc

VISIBLE - kneeling, bowing, lifting of hands, dancing

(I may have lost some of you on that part, if not before. Hold on and don't tune out yet.)

PRAISE IS ADORATION OF God IS THAT vocal, audible, and visible (any or even all at once) - Jack Taylor

** The best way to develop these patterns of praise is to do so PRIVATELY first.

EX: I don't know your habit, but the first step may be to become VOCAL in your private time of praise and prayer. Get alone and go for it.

EX: One way I learned French was to get a simple book, get alone and read it out loud so I could get used to hearing myself speak French. You may need to do that as you learn the practice and vocabulary of prayer and praise.

LET'S START WITH AN EXAMPLE - Psalm 145

PSALM 145 gives the 'every day and forever and ever' response of the pious OT saint.

A Psalm of Praise, of David.

Individual Expression of Praise- Private VOCAL praise -

1 I will extol You, my God, O King,

And I will bless Your name forever and ever.

2 Every day I will bless You,

And I will praise Your name forever and ever.

3 Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised,
And His greatness is unsearchable.

Why do I say it is vocal?

Have you ever extolled anyone or anything by remaining in your head?

Do you praise or highly praise someone only in your thoughts?

NOTICE the individual expression and engagement in Praise

“I” is used four times in v. 1-2

** Is this your personal practice? Do you get as praise oriented toward God in private as you get toward other things in public?

WHAT THINGS? I DON'T KNOW, but someone does.

“I'm just not that kind of person.” REALLY????

Those who know you have seen you get excited and praise things. WHAT gets your praise meter running? Is it someone or something you are proud of? IS there something you find beautiful and praise worthy?

If we are going to take the Kingship of God seriously, then in some way we must bow our will to Him in Praise. Part of that will be praising Him in a manner that He commands in His Word.

IS PRAISE A REGULAR PART OF YOUR PRAYER LIFE?

OR does praise seem foreign or awkward to you? Or even “embarrassing”?

EX: 2 Sam 6; 1 Chron 15:29 When the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David dancing and celebrating; and she despised him in her heart.

She held David in contempt because of his display of worship.....and it did not go well with her.

Beware of looking down on those who don't express praise the way you do – be they more or less visibly expressive than you in corporate worship. God alone knows the heart.

EX: I have been guilty of that in both directions – “those wild charismatics; it's just a show” OR “Those frozen Presbyterians; they're just bound up.”

The VOCABULARY OF PRAISE v. 1-3

Psalm of **PRAISE** – ‘te hil law’ laudation; a hymn/ praise Used 57 times from Exodus to Zeph – usually translated “praise.”

from the root of “halal” primitive root; to be clear or to shine; hence to make a show; to boast; and thus to be (clamorously) foolish; to rave; to celebrate.

Extol – ‘rum’ - to rise or raise; to bring up, exalt, extol

I will **BLESS** ... ‘barak’ – to kneel, to bless God as an act of adoration

v. 2 I will **PRAISE** Thy name – halal – to shine, to make a show, to boast and thus to be clamorously foolish; to rave, celebrate.

Those are VOCAL and to some degree visible.

This is the root of Hallelujah – Praise Yahweh.

We see in these few verses that God -Yahweh is GREAT AND WORTHY OF PRAISE. This is no small matter in scripture. It shouldn't be a small matter in our own lives, i.e. limited to 90 minutes on Sunday morning.

This topic and these verses are meant for PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

Use this Psalm or others to broaden your experience of praise. Be willing to stretch your comfort zone-

Do yourself a favor and LEAD YOUR DEVOTIONAL TIME WITH PRAISE

God doesn't "NEED" YOUR PRAISE. He is eternal and was doing just fine before He created us.

WE NEED to give Him praise:

It puts all things into a proper perspective

It is good for our souls

It is pleasant and fitting as those who know the riches of His grace in Christ.

We can lift up worship to God as we Praise Him...

Vocally, with biblical vocabulary of Praise - Pick a Psalm and pray it back to God Psalms 145-150 are very Praise oriented.- Sing, exalt, shout, let praise ring out in your prayer life.

Audibly - listen to praise music or the Word on tape or sermons, etc.

Visibly - this may be the most challenging, but don't knock it til you try it: Incorporate some sort of visible action into your private worship - bow, kneel, raise a hand, dance

Let us guide and shape our worship according to the descriptions given in the Word of God.

1 I will extol You, my God, O King,

And I will bless Your name forever and ever.

2 Every day I will bless You,

And I will praise Your name forever and ever.

3 Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised,

And His greatness is unsearchable.

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