

## 25. Exalting God

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## I. Instructions

We exalt God by doing such things as glorifying, honoring, praising and thanking him. Exalting God is a very common theme in the Bible and should also be a prominent part of our lives. In fact the Bible tells us to praise and thank God constantly. The significance of exalting God is underlined by the first answer of the Westminster Shorter Catechism which says: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever."

### Glorify and Honor God

#### Give glorify to God . . .

[PAUL, TO THE ROMAN CHURCH:] Then you will all be joined together, and you will *give glory to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*. ROMANS 15:6 NCV™

#### . . . and honor God

[DAVID, TO GOD:] *I will honor your name continually!* PSALMS 86:12B

#### Glorify and honor God by praise and thanksgiving

[DANIEL:] Then *I gave praise to the Most High God; I gave honor and glory to him who lives forever*. God's rule is forever, and his kingdom continues for all time. DANIEL 4:34B NCV™

[DAVID:] I will praise God in a song and will *honor him by giving thanks*. PSALMS 69:30 NCV™

#### Glorify and honor God by how you live

So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, *do everything for the glory of God*. 1 CORINTHIANS 10:31

Whoever mistreats the poor insults their Maker, but *whoever is kind to the needy honors God*. PROVERBS 14:31 NCV™

God's people are identified with him and so their lives are in a sense a reflection on God. Thus they should seek to do everything in a way that will bring glory and honor to God.

## What God Does for His People

### God's salvation through Christ and the associated blessings, . . .

[ZECHARIAH, SPEAKING OF THE SALVATION THAT WOULD COME THROUGH JESUS:] *Praise the Lord, the God of Israel! He has come to save his people.* <sup>69</sup>*Our God has given us a mighty Savior from the family of David his servant.* LUKE 1:68–69 CEV

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ, God has given us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly world.* EPHESIANS 1:3 NCV™

The phrase "in the heavenly world" may be indicating that the blessings are ones that we will experience in the afterlife. Alternatively, the phrase is possibly emphasizing the heavenly and eternal dimension of spiritual blessings that we have now.

### . . . in which one should rejoice

[PETER, TO BELIEVERS:] You have not seen him, but you love him. You do not see him now but *you believe in him, and so you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, <sup>9</sup>because you are attaining the goal of your faith – the salvation of your souls.* 1 PETER 1:8–9

### God's deliverance from difficulties, . . .

[DAVID:] *I will thank you, LORD, because you are good.* <sup>7</sup>*You have saved me from all my troubles, and I have seen my enemies defeated.* PSALMS 54:6B–7 NCV™

### . . . in which one should rejoice

At that time they [God's people at the end of the age] will say, "Look, here is our God! We waited for him and he delivered us. Here is the LORD! We waited for him. *Let's rejoice and celebrate his deliverance!*" ISAIAH 25:9

Remember the persecuted

### God's love and faithfulness

[DAVID, TO GOD:] *I will give you thanks before the nations, O Master! I will sing praises to you before foreigners!* <sup>10</sup>*For your loyal love extends beyond the sky, and your faithfulness reaches the clouds.*

PSALMS 57:9–10

### God's mercy

People who are not Jewish *praise God for his mercy* as well.

ROMANS 15:9A GW

This has in view what God has done for all people through Christ.

## What God Does in the World

### God's creative work

*"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, since you created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created!"* REVELATION 4:11

### God's provision of water and food

*Offer to the LORD a song of thanks! Sing praises to our God to the accompaniment of a harp!* <sup>8</sup>*He covers the sky with clouds, provides the earth with rain, and causes grass to grow on the hillsides.* <sup>9</sup>*He gives food to the animals, and to the young ravens when they chirp.*

PSALMS 147:7–9

### God's reign

[JOHN, DESCRIBING A VISION:] Then I heard what sounded like the voice of a vast throng, like the roar of many waters and like loud crashes of thunder. They were *shouting: "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the All-Powerful, reigns!"* REVELATION 19:6

"Hallelujah" is a call to praise God, often used itself as an expression of praise to God.

### God's word

[DAVID:] *In God, whose word I praise, in the LORD, whose word I praise,* <sup>11</sup>*in God I trust; I shall not be afraid.* PSALMS 56:10–11A ESV

## Do Not Dishonor God

### Do not dishonor God by your actions

[AGUR:] *But if I am poor, I might steal and bring disgrace on my God.*

PROVERBS 30:9B GNT

By ungodly actions God's people can bring dishonor to God. This is particularly so when the actions are known to others, as it publicly reflects badly on God as the one to whom his people belong.

### Do not blaspheme God

*You must not blaspheme God ...* EXODUS 22:28A

Blaspheming God is to speak – or act – in a way that detracts from the honor of God.

### Do not treat God with contempt

*The LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to trust me in spite of all the miraculous signs I have done among them? ..."* <sup>23</sup>*None of those who treat me with contempt will see it!* NUMBERS 14:11, 23 GW

To treat God with contempt is demeaning and dishonoring to God. Note that v. 23 refers to not seeing the promised land.

## Praise and Thank God

### Praise God constantly

Through him [Jesus Christ] then *let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God*, that is, the fruit of our lips, acknowledging his name. HEBREWS 13:15

[DAVID:] *I will praise the LORD at all times; my mouth will continually praise him.* PSALMS 34:1

### Give thanks to God always

Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>*give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16–18 ESV

## How to Give Praise and Thanks (I): General

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### In righteousness

*Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright.*

PSALMS 33:1 ESV

For our praise and thanksgiving to be valid and acceptable to God, we must strive to live lives that are “righteous” and “upright”.

### Wholeheartedly

[DAVID:] *I will thank the LORD with all my heart!* PSALMS 9:1A

### Through prayer

In the same way that he [Daniel] had always done, *he knelt down in prayer three times a day, giving thanks to God.* DANIEL 6:10B CEV

### Through singing

*Sing praises to God. Sing praises.* PSALMS 47:6A NCV™

## How to Give Praise and Thanks (II): Rejoicing

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To rejoice is to be glad or joyful. By focusing on God, his promises and the wonderful things he has done, we cannot help but be filled with joy – and so we rejoice. This is typically done in conjunction with praising and thanking God.

### Rejoice when giving praise and thanks to God

*Sing to God! Sing praises to his name! Exalt the one who rides on the clouds! For the LORD is his name! Rejoice before him!* PSALMS 68:4

*You godly ones, rejoice in the LORD! Give thanks to his holy name.* PSALMS 97:12

### Moreover, rejoice in God always

[ETHAN, SPEAKING TO GOD OF WORSHIPERS:] *They rejoice in your name all day long, and are vindicated by your justice.* PSALMS 89:16

[PAUL:] *Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say, rejoice!* PHILIPPIANS 4:4

## II. Reasons to Exalt God

Not only does the Bible tell us to persistently exalt God, it is bulging with good reasons for doing so. Generally speaking, these compelling reasons or things for which to exalt God, concern what God is like and what he does.

### Aspects of God's Being

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#### God's glory

*“Praise the glory of the LORD in heaven above!”* EZEKIEL 3:12B GNT

#### God's greatness

*Praise him for his surpassing greatness!* PSALMS 150:2B

#### God's power

*Praise him for his mighty acts!* PSALMS 150:2A

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *Now to him who by the power that is working within us is able to do far beyond all that we ask or think, <sup>21</sup>to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.* EPHESIANS 3:20–21

#### God's wisdom and knowledge

*Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how fathomless his ways! <sup>34</sup>For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor? ... <sup>36</sup>... To him be glory forever! Amen.* ROMANS 11:33–34, 36B

### Aspects of God's Character

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#### God's holiness

*Praise the LORD our God! Worship on his holy hill, for the LORD our God is holy!* PSALMS 99:9

God's holiness – in which he is set apart from all others in his purity and righteousness – should evoke awe, praise and worship.