

The **Bible** Unpacked

Comprehensive Study Series

The Bible's teaching presented
for Bible students

Paul Mallison

The Bible UnpackedTM

Comprehensive Study Series

The Bible's teaching presented
for Bible students

25. Exalting God

Paul Mallison

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A Quick Word

This series of studies aims to present a compilation of the Bible's teachings in a clear and readable order. There are 40 booklets in the series, based on the 40 chapters of the book *The Bible Unpacked - Comprehensive Edition*. Each booklet has two sections, which can be used for two or more studies.

See *Topics in This Series* towards the end of this booklet for a full listing of all the topics. Note that studying booklets alternatively from the two major sections (*What to Know* and *What to Do*) would add variety.

The material contains Bible verses. Before the verses are headings, which reflect what the verses say – in particular the parts of the verses in *italics*. The verses are sometimes followed by a comment.

The verses often have a brief introduction. Usually these state who is speaking and often who they are speaking to. Apart from God and Jesus Christ, the main speakers are:

- Moses – who led the Israelites and taught them God's laws;
- David – Israel's greatest king who wrote many of the psalms, most of which are essentially prayers;
- Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and other prophets – who spoke to the people of Israel on God's behalf; and
- Paul, Peter, John and other leaders of the early church – who spoke to various groups and wrote letters to believers.

Much care has been taken in order to correctly interpret the verses. Nevertheless, if you encounter a verse that is used to teach something that is contrary to or goes beyond your understanding, assess its use by doing such things as: reading the passage it is from; and considering how its teaching fits in with Scripture as a whole (e.g. interpret OT teaching in the light of NT teaching).

For more information on *The Bible Unpacked* and free downloads, go to the website: www.thebibleunpacked.net.

Suggestions for Study Groups

Preliminary matters:

- Beforehand the leader should: check the context of any verses they are not familiar with; and review the questions. If need be, they should compose questions more applicable to the group.
- Each person should have a Bible, for things such as checking a verse's context. It would also be helpful to have Bible commentaries on hand.
- Pray before beginning the study. Ask God for help in understanding the meaning of the verses and to affect your lives through them. Also pray together at the end.

Doing the study:

- Ideally, read the material and answer the questions prior to the meeting. Then share answers and discuss any issues arising from the material in the meeting.
- Alternatively, read the material and answer the questions in the meeting – reading either aloud as a group or individually (prior to sharing answers). If reading as a group, **try having one person read the headings, another read the verses and another read the comments.** Additionally, a fourth person could read the Bible references.

General or concluding questions:

If time permits, conclude with one or more of the following questions:

- What is something that you either: **did not know** before; gained **greater insight** into; or **needed reminding** of?
- What verse would be helpful to memorize and bear in mind during the next week?
- In taking the verses seriously, is there anything you should change in:
 - (a) how you relate to God and/or to other people; or
 - (b) any other area of your life (e.g. attitudes, values or behavior)?

If so, are there any specific steps you could take to do this?

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."

a) Glorify and Honor God

Glorify God, giving glory to him . . .

Ps 22:23 All who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, *glorify him!* Stand in awe of him, all you descendants of Israel.

GW

ISA 24:15 [ISAIAH:] Therefore in the east *give glory to the LORD*; in the coastlands of the sea, *give glory to the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.* ESV

. . . and honor God

ISA 26:13 LORD, our God, other masters besides you have ruled us, but *we honor only you.* NCV™

Glorify and honor God by thanksgiving and praise

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

DAN 4:34B [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. NCV™

Glorify and honor God by how you live . . .

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

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 to God.

. . . This includes doing good deeds and godly work

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

JOHN 15:8 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] *By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.* ESV

Here "fruit" appears to refer to – or at least be applicable to – the product of work done for God's kingdom. By bearing such good

“fruit” we bring glory to God, showing ourselves to be disciples of the One sent by him.

Not glorifying and honoring God has detrimental outcomes

ROM 1:21 For *although they* [wicked people] *knew God, they did not glorify him as God or give him thanks, but they became futile in their thoughts and their senseless hearts were darkened.* NET

MAL 2:2A *If you do not listen and take seriously the need to honor my name,” says the LORD who rules over all, “I will send judgment on you and turn your blessings into curses ...* NET

Explain what is meant by the phrase “glorify God”, as if you were talking to a new believer.

What things do you do to glorify and honor God? What could you do more of?

What steps could you take in order to better follow the instruction to do everything for the glory of God (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:31)?

b) Do Not Dishonor God

Do not blaspheme God

EX 22:28 *You must not blaspheme God or curse the ruler of your people.* NET

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

Do not by your actions bring disgrace on God . . .

PROV 30:9B [AGUR:] *But if I am poor, I might steal and bring disgrace on my God.* GNT

By ungodly actions God's people can bring disgrace on God, dishonoring him. This is particularly so when the actions are known to other people, as it publicly reflects badly on God (cf. Ezek 36:19–20) as the one to whom his people belong.

. . . Rather, live a life worthy of God

1THES 2:12 [PAUL, TO THE THESSALONIAN BELIEVERS:] *We comforted and encouraged you, urging you to live in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into his kingdom and glory.* ISV

Do not show disrespect for things of God

LEV 22:2B, 15 [GOD, TO MOSES:] *I am the LORD God, and I demand that you honor my holy name by showing proper respect for the offerings brought to me by the people of Israel ... ¹⁵I warn you not to treat lightly the offerings that are brought by the people of Israel.* CEV

Additionally, do not treat God with contempt . . .

NUM 14:11, 23 *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? ... ²³None of those who treat me with contempt will see it!"* GW

To treat God with contempt – or to scoff at God (as per the following subsection) – is demeaning and dishonoring to God. Note that v. 23 refers to not seeing the promised land.

. . . and so do not scoff at God

2CHR 36:16 But they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD rose against his people, until there was no remedy. ESV

Note: We must treat God as holy

ISA 8:13 But the LORD of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. ESV

What are some ways that believers today are prone to dishonor God? What about yourself?

What measures can we take to help ensure that we do not unintentionally blaspheme or dishonor God?

In what way/s is your life worthy of God? How can you make it more worthy of God?

c) Praise and Thank God

Praise God

Ps 146:1 *Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul!* NET

Calls for all things everywhere to praise God

Ps 103:22 *Praise the LORD, all that he has made, in all the regions of his kingdom! Praise the LORD, O my soul!* NET

Ps 150:6 *Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!* NET

Praise God constantly . . .

HEB 13:15 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. NET

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

. . . and praise God forever

Ps 145:1–2 [DAVID, TO GOD:] *I praise your greatness, my God the King; I will praise you forever and ever. ²I will praise you every day; I will praise you forever and ever.* NCV™

Give thanks to God . . .

Ps 100:4 *Enter the temple gates with thanksgiving, go into its courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise him.* GNT

As with praising God, thanking God for things exalts him (the subject of this chapter) for by doing so we attribute praiseworthy things to him.

. . . Give thanks to God always

EPH 5:20 *Always give thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* NCV™

1THES 5:16–18 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.* ESV

Blessings of giving praise and thanks to God

Ps 89:15–16A [ETHAN, TO GOD:] *Blessed are the people who know how to praise you. They walk in the light of your presence, O LORD.* ¹⁶*They find joy in your name all day long.* GW

Ps 50:14–15 *Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High,* ¹⁵*and call upon me* [God] *in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.* ESV

Explain what it means to “praise God”.

How does praising and thanking God affect you?

What could you do to help enable yourself to consistently praise and give thanks to God?

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

In righteousness

Ps 33:1 *Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright.* ESV

For our praise and thanksgiving to be valid and acceptable to God, it is critical that we be “righteous” and “upright”, striving to live righteous lives.

Wholeheartedly

Ps 9:1 [DAVID:] *I will thank the LORD with all my heart! I will tell about all your amazing deeds!* NET

Through prayer

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

In singing, . . .

Ps 47:6–7 *Sing praises to God. Sing praises. Sing praises to our King. Sing praises.* ⁷*God is King of all the earth, so sing a song of praise to him.* NCV™

Ps 28:7 [DAVID:] The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I received help. My heart exalts, and *I give thanks to him with my song.* ISV

. . . along with making music

2CHR 5:13A *The singers were accompanied in perfect harmony by trumpets, cymbals, and other instruments, as they praised the LORD, singing: “Praise the LORD, because he is good, And his love is eternal.”*

GNT

With dancing

Ps 149:3 *Let them praise his name with dancing! Let them sing praises to him to the accompaniment of the tambourine and harp!*

NET

With lifting up of hands

Ps 134:2 *Lift your hands toward the sanctuary and praise the LORD!*

NET

Loudly and with shouts

2CHR 20:19 Then some Levites, from the Kohathites and Korahites, got up and *loudly praised the LORD God of Israel.* NET

EZRA 3:11 And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, “For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel.” And *all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the LORD*, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. ESV

By making offerings

Ps 107:22 *Let them present thank offerings*, and loudly proclaim what he has done! NET

The OT practices of making formal offerings as expressions of thanksgiving, are paralleled by the giving of our resources to God and his work as an expression of our thankfulness for his goodness.

Note: Give praise and thanks to God with and among other people

Ps 34:3 *Magnify the LORD with me! Let’s praise his name together!* NET

Ps 35:18 [DAVID, TO GOD:] *Then I will give you thanks in the great assembly; I will praise you before a large crowd of people!* NET

As well as doing so by ourselves, we should also give praise and thanks to God with and among other people. Note that the things spoken of in the preceding subsections are applicable to praising and thanking God both individually and with others.

What is involved in giving praise and thanksgiving to God "wholeheartedly"? How do we do this?

How often do you sing songs of praise and thanksgiving to God (either aloud or in your mind)? What proportion of the music that you listen to or sing is made up of songs of praise and thanksgiving?

Are any of the ways mentioned of giving praise and thanksgiving to God not your "cup of tea"? What do you think may be the merits of using such a way/s?

Pray for persecuted Christians

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

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

Rejoice in God . . .

Ps 32:11 *Rejoice in the LORD and be happy, you who are godly! Shout for joy, all you who are morally upright!* NET

PHIL 3:1A [PAUL:] Finally, my brothers and sisters, *rejoice in the Lord!* NET

Note that rather than meaning rejoice in or because of the Lord (Jesus), here “rejoice in the Lord” (cf. 4:4 ⇓) probably more specifically means rejoice “in your union with the Lord” (GNT).

. . . Rejoice in God always

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

PHIL 4:4 *Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I say, rejoice!* NET

Notably, rejoice when giving praise and thanks to God . . .

Ps 68:4 *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!* NET

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

. . . As such, be glad and joyful when praising and thanking God

2CHR 29:30B *So they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshiped.* NKJV

COL 1:11B–12 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *And with joy give thanks to the Father, who has made you fit to have your share of what God has reserved for his people in the kingdom of light.* GNT

Joy should characterize singing and shouting to God

1CHR 15:16 David told the leaders of the Levites to appoint some of their relatives as musicians; they were to play various instruments, including stringed instruments and cymbals, and to *sing loudly and joyfully*. NET

Ps 33:3 Sing a new song to him, play the harp with skill, and *shout for joy!* GNT

Note: Delight in God and in things of God

Ps 37:4 *Delight yourself in the LORD*, and he will give you the desires of your heart. ESV

Ps 119:47 [A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] *I will find delight in your commands, which I love.* NET

How does one "rejoice"? What does it mean?

What is one thing you could do to help you rejoice in God more consistently?

How does one delight in God, and in things of God?

Pray for persecuted Christians

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.

a) Aspects of God's Being

God's glory

EZEK 3:12B *"Praise the glory of the LORD in heaven above!"* GNT

God's eternity

1TIM 1:17 *Now to the eternal king, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever! Amen.* NET

God's greatness

DEUT 32:3B *Praise God because he is great!* NCV™

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

God's power

PS 21:13 *Be exalted, O LORD, in your strength! We will sing and praise your power.* ESV

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

God's wisdom and knowledge

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

God's "name"

PS 29:2A *Give to the LORD the glory his name deserves.* GW

Note that references to God's "name" are synonymous with God himself, inclusive of all that he is and signifies.

What is "the glorious splendor" (Ps 145:5) of God's majesty?

What do you know or have experienced of God's power, which you could praise and thank God for?

Choose a verse - either from the text or another which you recall - that particularly inspires you to praise God. Explain why it does.

Pray for persecuted Christians

b) Aspects of God's Character

God's holiness

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

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

God's love, . . .

Ps 63:3 [DAVID, TO GOD:] *Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.* ESV

Ps 107:8 *Let them give thanks to the LORD for his loyal love, and for the amazing things he has done for people!* NET

. . . along with God's faithfulness

Ps 57:9–10 [DAVID, TO GOD:] *I will give you thanks before the nations, O Master! I will sing praises to you before foreigners! ¹⁰For your loyal love extends beyond the sky, and your faithfulness reaches the clouds.*

NET

God's righteousness . . .

Ps 7:17 *I will give thanks to the LORD for his righteousness. I will make music to praise the name of the LORD Most High.* GW

. . . and God's justice

DAN 4:37 *Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, for all his deeds are right and his ways are just. He is able to bring down those who live in pride.* NET

God's mercy

ROM 15:9A *People who are not Jewish praise God for his mercy as well.* GW

2COR 1:3 *Praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! The Father is a merciful God, who always gives us comfort.* CEV

God's goodness

Ps 136:1 *Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his loyal love endures.* NET

Why may David have said that God's "love is better than life" (Ps 63:3)? (You could look up Psalm 63 to see the context.) What reason/s have you to identify with David's words?

Why should you praise God for: (a) his righteousness; and (b) his mercy?

Is there an aspect of God's being (as per the previous section) or his character that you often overlook in praising him? If so, make a mental note of it.

c) What God Does in the World

God's deeds in general

Ps 72:18 *The LORD God, the God of Israel, deserves praise! He alone accomplishes amazing things!* NET

Ps 86:8–10 None can compare to you among the gods, O Lord! Your exploits are incomparable! ⁹All the nations, whom you created, will come and worship you, O Lord. They will honor your name. ¹⁰For you are great and do amazing things. You alone are God. NET

God's creative work

REV 4:11 “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!” NET

God's provision of water and food

Ps 147:7–9 Offer to the LORD a song of thanks! Sing praises to our God to the accompaniment of a harp! ⁸He covers the sky with clouds, provides the earth with rain, and causes grass to grow on the hillsides. ⁹He gives food to the animals, and to the young ravens when they chirp. NET

MARK 8:7 They [the disciples] also had a few small fish. After giving thanks for these, he [Jesus] told them to serve these as well. NET

God's reign

1CHR 29:11–13 [DAVID:] O LORD, you are great, mighty, majestic, magnificent, glorious, and sovereign over all the sky and earth! You have dominion and exalt yourself as the ruler of all. ¹²You are the source of wealth and honor; you rule over all. You possess strength and might to magnify and give strength to all. ¹³Now, our God, we give thanks to you and praise your majestic name! NET

REV 19:6 [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!” NET

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

God’s word . . .

Ps 56:10–11A [DAVID:] In *God, whose word I praise, in the LORD, whose word I praise,* ¹in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. ESV

. . . and the spreading of the gospel

ACTS 21:19–20A When Paul had greeted them, *he began to explain in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.* ²⁰*When they heard this, they praised God.* NET

God’s judgments

REV 14:7 He [an angel] declared in a loud voice: “Fear God and *give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has arrived,* and worship the one who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water!” NET

REV 19:1–2A [JOHN:] After these things I heard what sounded like the loud voice of a vast throng in heaven, saying, “*Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,* ²*because his judgments are true and just.*” NET

How regularly do you thank God for his provision of food? When you do (e.g. in saying grace), is it often a somewhat mindless ritual? Is there anything you could do or change to help ensure your thanksgiving to God for his provision of food is both regular and wholehearted?

What things are there about God's word that you particularly value, and inspire you to praise God?

Why glorify and praise God for his judgments?

Pray for persecuted Christians

d) What God Does for His People

God's great deeds for his people

DEUT 10:21 [MOSES, TO THE ISRAELITES:] *He is your praise. He is your God, who has done for you these great and terrifying things that your eyes have seen.* ESV

JOEL 2:20–21, 26 [JOEL:] *He has done great things!* ²¹Land, do not be afraid. *Be glad and rejoice. The LORD has done great things! ...* ²⁶*You will have plenty to eat, and you will be full. You will praise the name of the LORD your God, who has performed miracles for you. My people will never be ashamed again.* GW

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

LUKE 1:68–69 *Praise the Lord, the God of Israel! He has come to save his people.* ⁶⁹*Our God has given us a mighty Savior from the family of David his servant.* CEV

EPH 1:3 [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.* 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 we should rejoice

1PET 1:8–9 [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,* ⁹*because you are attaining the goal of your faith – the salvation of your souls.* NET

God's deliverance from difficulties, . . .

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

. . . in which we should rejoice

ISA 25:9 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!*" NET

God's strength for his people

Ps 68:35 You are awe-inspiring, O God, as you emerge from your holy temple! *It is the God of Israel who gives the people power and strength. God deserves praise!* NET

Further things that God does for his people

Ps 16:7 [DAVID:] *I will praise the LORD who guides me; yes, during the night I reflect and learn.* NET

Ps 103:2-5 [DAVID:] *Praise the LORD, O my soul! Do not forget all his kind deeds! ³He is the one who forgives all your sins, who heals all your diseases, ⁴who delivers your life from the Pit, who crowns you with his loyal love and compassion, ⁵who satisfies your life with good things, so your youth is renewed like an eagle's.* NET

What is something that God has done for you recently that you could praise and/or thank him for?

How often do you rejoice over God's salvation through Jesus Christ?
What other reasons has God given you to rejoice?

Make a list (to refer to in your prayer times) of points for which to praise God, including concepts and even verses from this and the previous sections.

Pray for persecuted Christians

e) Epilogue: God's Vast Blessing of His People

The previous section spoke of some of the wonderful things that God does or has done for his people – in the context of exalting God. This section emphasizes the vastness of God's blessing of his people. The verses in this section generally do not explicitly speak of exalting God because of his vast blessings, but obviously they are readily applicable and adaptable to doing so.

God and Jesus Christ greatly bless their people

MAL 3:10 “Bring the entire tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house. So, put me to the test in this right now,” says the LORD of the Heavenly Armies, “and *see if I won't throw open the windows of heaven for you and pour out on you blessing without measure.* ISV

ROM 10:12 For there is no distinction between the Jew and the Greek, for *the same Lord is Lord of all, who richly blesses all who call on him.* NET

God does many great things for his people . . .

JUDG 2:7 The people worshiped the LORD throughout Joshua's lifetime and as long as the elderly men who outlived him remained alive. These men had witnessed *all the great things the LORD had done for Israel.* NET

. . . and God blesses his people in many ways

MARK 10:29–30 Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, there is no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the gospel ³⁰who will not receive in this age a hundred times as much – homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, fields, all with persecutions – and in the age to come, eternal life.” NET

The “houses” and “lands” promised in this present age (v. 30) are quite unlikely to be speaking of accumulated property. More likely the promises in v. 30 have in view what Christians have within the community of believers. There God's people have many new intimate

relationships and a share in all that belongs to the fellowship of believers.

God's people lack no good thing . . .

Ps 34:9–10 Remain loyal to the LORD, you chosen people of his, for *his loyal followers lack nothing!* ¹⁰Even young lions sometimes lack food and are hungry, but *those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.* NET

God's people lack nothing of any real consequence.

. . . Ultimately, God gives his people all things

1COR 3:21–23 [PAUL, TO THE CORINTHIAN BELIEVERS:] So then, no more boasting about mere mortals! *For everything belongs to you, ²²whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future. Everything belongs to you, ²³and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.* NET

Paul may well have in mind here that all things belong to God's people because of their relationship with Jesus Christ (v. 23). In this relationship they share in all that belongs to Christ, to whom God has given everything. This reality will be more tangible in the life to come.

Note: God gives his people blessings that last

ROM 11:29 *For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable.* NET

HEB 10:34 [THE WRITER, TO BELIEVERS:] For in fact you shared the sufferings of those in prison, and you accepted the confiscation of your belongings with joy, because *you knew that you certainly had a better and lasting possession.* NET

The "better and lasting possession" presumably has primarily in view our salvation.

How has God blessed you?

Do you believe that you “lack no good thing” (Ps 34:10)? How might bearing this in mind affect you?

In what sense does God give his people all things (cf. Rom 8:32; 1Cor 3:21-23)?

Pray for persecuted Christians

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Over 200 million Christians in at least 60 countries are denied basic human rights solely because of their faith. (Source: World Evangelical Alliance) Every year many Christians are killed because of their faith.

Through prayer, encouragement and practical assistance we can assist and fellowship with persecuted Christians in their suffering. You can play a vital part in this through contacting one of the organizations listed below. Most produce regular news/prayer letters.

Barnabas Fund – www.barnabasfund.org

It provides material and spiritual support based on locally identified needs.

Christian Faith and Freedom – www.cffreedom.org

It advocates on behalf of and aids persecuted Christians.

Christian Solidarity International – www.csi-int.org

CSI works to defend religious liberty and help persecuted Christians.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide – www.csw.org.uk

It advocates for freedom of religion and justice for persecuted believers.

Open Doors – sb.od.org; www.opendoors.org.au

It equips believers for persecution and maintaining a witness to the Gospel.

Religious Liberty Commission – www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/rlc

RLC defends and aids persecuted Christians. See also www.idop.org.

Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin – rlprayerbulletin.blogspot.com.au

It provides weekly bulletins. Send a blank email to join-rlpb@hub.xc.org.

The Bible League – www.bibleleague.org/persecuted; www.bibleleague.com

It supplies Bibles to persecuted Christians and also provides training.

Voice of the Martyrs – www.persecution.com; www.persecution.com.au

VOM helps persecuted Christians spread the gospel. It also gives material aid.

World Watch Monitor – www.worldwatchmonitor.org

It reports the story of Christians under pressure for their faith.

Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth, anything you did for even the least of my people here, you also did for me.' Matthew 25:40 NCV

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