

## Prayers of Praise

Psalms is a *hymnal* of sorts- a collection derived from at least seven different writers of various forms of Hebrew poetry that were typically utilized through rhythmic chanting or singing. But in essence if not in terms of origin, most of these *psalms* were **prayers**. They expressed the writer's *faith* and *trust* in God because of their understanding of *who* and *what* He is as "God," as well giving voice to their *fears*, *frustrations*, and *doubts* when they couldn't reconcile their concept of Him as "God" with the realities of their current circumstance(s).

But what fueled these psalms was the writers' **knowledge** of God. Their understanding of Jehovah as "God" beckoned them into **fellowship** with Him, which in turn produced **greater understanding** of His nature (cf. John 3:3 where seems to indicate the same) that then in turn overflowed to effervescing **praise**. Simply put, **knowledge** of God induced **fellowship** that produced greater **understanding** that then necessarily provoked **praise**. So where is all of the above heading? Good question!

**Have you ever prayed and DIDN'T ask God for anything?** No "*entreaties*" for yourself and no "*petitions*" for someone else (1Tim.2:1), just **praise**? Of course our benevolently kind heavenly "*Father*" wants us to *entreat* and *petition* Him, cf. Matt.7:7-11, but some of us pray like we're presenting "our list" to some sort of *celestial Santa Clause* "God." Additionally and unfortunately, "our list" is mostly if not entirely composed of *physical* things. Look back at the "model" prayer wherein Jesus taught His disciples to pray in Matt.6:9-13 and answer this question: How many *physical* things were included in this "model" prayer? One. And what was it? "*Daily bread*"- the basic sustenance needs for one day. All the rest of the prayer was *spiritual* in nature with the only other requests being that of "*forgiveness*" and *leadership*, vv.12-13. Could not the rest of this "model" prayer be categorized as **praise**? Now think about the makeup of our prayers. Is there any *praise* included at all? Are the requests we make more *physical* or *spiritual* in nature? Why are our prayers lacking in *praise* and filled with mostly requests that are *physical* in nature?

Let's go back to where we began for a possible answer: the **Psalms**. These *prayers*, often filled with and characterized by *praise*, stemmed from **knowledge of God** that lead to **fellowship with God** that generated greater **understanding of God** that produced abundant **praise of God**. Can we not "reverse engineer" this process to conclude that if **praise** is lacking (in our *prayers* or *lives*), then there is most likely a problem with our **knowledge** of, our **fellowship** with, and/or our **understanding** of God? Let's let just one of the psalms of praise serve as an example, Psalm 100:

*"Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth. Serve the LORD with gladness; Come before Him with joyful singing. Know that the LORD Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving And His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting And His faithfulness to all generations."*

**Knowledge → Fellowship → Understanding → PRAISE.** There is one more thing that can enhance this "process" of praise: **Practice**. If we're not accustomed to

*praising* God, **practice** will help. So, try writing out a prayer with nothing but *praise* of God in it. Take time over several days to add to other aspects, attributes, and actions of God for which He deserves our *praise*. No *entreaties*, no *petitions*, just *praise*. I think you'll find, once you really commit to this exercise, that your **knowledge** of God will be bolstered, your **fellowship** with God will be enhanced, your **understanding** of God will be increased, and your ability to **praise** Him will become a naturally overflowing spring that never runs dry. And oh by the way, as an additional benefit, our *thankfulness* to God will also be multiplied. Give it a try, and let's start *praising* God in *prayer* and song!

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