

Why does God command us to praise Him?

When was the last time you praised something or someone? What or who was it? How did you go about doing it? And why did you do it?

I'm sure all this was done willingly. Nobody told you to. I hope nobody forced you to either. Praise, if forced, is not genuine, and it isn't worth much. And praise is usually a result of something you enjoy.

There was a well know philosopher named C.S. Lewis, the author of the Narnia series, who wrote a book called "A Word about Praise". In this book, he mentions that the world is full of praise, praising of various things like weather, wines, dishes, actors, motors, horses, colleges, countries, historical personages, children, flowers, mountains, and so on. The most important part of praise though, was this section from his book:

I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed.

So praise, in other words, is the evidence of enjoying something. If you enjoy something, you'll praise it, and you'll want others to join in your praises.

In the Bible we see a lot of praise. Most of the praise is directed at God. Let me read some of it:

Psalm 7:17

*¹⁷ I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness
and will sing **praise** to the name of the LORD Most High.*

Psalm 9:1-2

*¹ I will **praise** you, O LORD, with all my heart;
I will tell of all your wonders.*

*² I will be glad and rejoice in you;
I will sing **praise** to your name, O Most High.*

Psalm 16:7

*⁷ I will **praise** the LORD, who counsels me;
even at night my heart instructs me.*

Psalm 18:3

³ *I call to the LORD, who is worthy of **praise**,
and I am saved from my enemies.*

There are certainly a lot more praises directed at God found in the Bible. However, there is also something peculiar about praising God. If read carefully, you'll also notice that praise is commanded.

Three separate verses from the book of Ephesians read:

Ephesians 1:5-6, 12, 14

⁵**he predestined us** to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶**to the praise of his glorious grace**, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

¹²*in order that **we**, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be **for the praise of his glory**.*

¹⁴*who [The Holy Spirit] is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—**to the praise of his glory**.*

So how does God commanding us to praise Him make any sense? I'll have to review the first devo regarding what God's commandments means.

In the first devo, I mentioned the passage in **Romans 3:20** saying:

²⁰*Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.*

This quoted passage of the Bible tells you the purpose of God's law. You cannot obey them. God knows us and our inability to keep ourselves out of trouble. Let me re-read that passage and continue for two more verses.

²⁰*Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.*

²¹*But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²²This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.*

So let me summarize what God's commandments are. They are not something we can achieve, because God tells us so! God's commandments are not standards for us to attain, but for God to attain, in our lives. The last verse tells us exact how God will accomplish this:

²²*This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.*

God's commandments are the effects of His work in our lives. It's up to him, not us.

So let's get back to the subject of praise. When God commands us to praise Him, He's not threatening us, or demanding it from us. Rather, He is telling us that we don't know how to enjoy something that is worth enjoying! So what's so special about God that we should bother to enjoy? It comes down to two words; eternal life. I don't need to explain why life is better than death. It is obvious that all of you here are alive. I can tell you from personal experience that it's much better looking ahead focusing on life than on death.

Of all the things that you can enjoy in this life, nothing but one can escape the effects of death, and this one thing you can enjoy that is greater than death, is God. This God is all about enjoyment, because He sent His son, to die on the cross on our behalf, so we can receive and enjoy the gift of life, and not just plain life, but eternal life.

John 3:16

¹⁶"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.