

Day One: Worship is Not an Event; It's a Lifestyle

Author: Brent Colley

Event - an occurrence that is sharply localized at a single point in space and instance of time.

Lifestyle - the habits, attitudes, tastes, moral standards, economic level, etc. that together constitute the mode of living of an individual or group

"Worship is not an event; it is a lifestyle" became my philosophy for ministry in early 2002. Long story short, the church I was serving was having difficulties, and my ministry was coming to an end there. Mandy's dad was diagnosed with pancreatitis and spent over 6 months in the hospital. The final straw was when I was diagnosed with testicular cancer. In these dark months, God placed a dear brother in my life. He told me that I would come through this like gold. I remember thinking, how arrogant of him to say that to me. I did not have the ability to see that God was refining my life. I continued to go to church but was miserable Sunday after Sunday. I did not obtain any satisfaction from the services. Even worse, God seemed to be silent.

I shared all these things with Bro. Allen. I could not get hold of the circumstances. He replied with a life changing statement, "Worship is not an event; it's a lifestyle." The ax fell. I had been throwing the world's biggest pity party Monday through Saturday, and then I expected to go to "worship" and showers of blessings to fall. In my hour of discouragement, I had completely lost my focus. I'm thankful to say that now I have regained perspective. Now, I wish I could say that I am perfect and I walk in sunshine all week long and heaven comes down every day in my life. I can't say that, but now I live with the perspective that I do not have to wait till Sunday to get it all straightened out. I'm going to walk and talk with Jesus, and Sunday I'm going to celebrate what He has allowed me to experience all week long.

Where are you when it comes to worship? Is Sunday the first and last time God crosses your mind? I hope it is simply the first day of seven you offer totally to Jesus. If you allow your happiness to depend on your happenings, you will spend life totally discontented. However, if you will recognize that every second of our existence is a gift and our circumstances are ultimately for our good, worshipping God will be your lifestyle.

Day Two: Hallelujah or Halal Yahn

Author: Shelly Hollis

What do people say when they are in the throes of worship? "Hallelujah" comes to mind. This led me to use an online concordance to find some places where hallelujah is used in scripture. Guess what? It's not - not in the KJV anyway. Although the literal word is not in the KJV, the meaning is most definitely there! It is used a few times in some other translations such as NASB and NIV in the book of Revelation.

Hallelujah is derived from two Hebrew words: *halal* and *Yahn*. *Halal* literally means praise and *Yahn* is a shortened version of Jehovah. Put them together and you have praise Jehovah or praise the LORD. Jehovah is

translated LORD in most of our Bibles. Aren't you just blessed now that you know all that? Sorry - I do love to investigate words!

I love to hear people speak a "hallelujah" over a song or a message. They are literally speaking a word of whole-hearted praise to Jehovah, the great I AM! The very last Psalm (150) begins and ends with the phrase "Praise the LORD." This Psalm is thought to be written to move the Levitical priests to perform their duties (M. Henry commentary); however, it should move us to whole-hearted praise. It should not take a stick of dynamite to persuade us to praise God. This Psalm gives us plenty of reasons to extol Him.

Psalm 150 pulls out all the stops when it comes to praising God! The phrase, "Praise the LORD" is used no less than 13 times in this six-versed Psalm. It commands us to praise God in His sanctuary and in His firmament. The Psalmists tells us to praise Jehovah for two very great reasons: for His mighty deeds and His excellent greatness. He also tells us to praise Him with a multitude of instruments: the trumpet, harp, lyre, tambourine, stringed instruments, cymbals, and pipe! The Psalm ends with, "Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!" I love that this sentence ends with an exclamation point!

What a privilege it is to be able to say or sing hallelujah in our services, in our private worship, and in our songs. Every time you sing it or say it from this day forward, be aware that you are literally praising Jehovah! Utter it with the same intensity as the Psalmist did in this passage, and let's pull out all the stops in our whole-hearted praise to God - HALLELUJAH!

Day Three: Be Anxious for Nothing

Author: Myra Carter

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7)

I have been teaching about these verses on Wednesday nights for the last couple of weeks. I have been amazed by the number of kids who are worried and the things they share that concern them. I have so enjoyed teaching these kids that God can be trusted and that He cares so much for them. I know that you are not kids, but I do want to remind you that one of the greatest ways we can show Christ to the world is by living our lives by these verses (Taking the pressures and strains of life and really trusting God to see us through). You may be thinking, "That's easy for a kid to do. They don't have real problems." But, that verse is not just for kids, it's for each of God's children. We must learn to lay everything down at His feet and trust Him with ALL our daily needs, whatever they may be.

Maybe you are struggling today with something, or maybe you are living this morning in the sweet peace that only God can provide. Whichever spot that you find yourself in today, please remember that you have an opportunity to show the world that God is a wonderful Savior. Really trusting God to see us through will subdue the pressures and strains of life.

Day Four: My God

Author: Jason Moore

"Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful." (Psalm 147:1)

It is very much within each of us to want to repay our debts. Whether it is a financial obligation or the reciprocation of the kind gesture of a friend matters little as we seek to pay back what we owe. Yet, when it comes to our benevolent Savior there is no way to repay. We have no way of making reparations for the bountiful blessings we have received by His hand. So, where we cannot pay, we can praise!

The Psalmist says that it is good to sing praises to our God. Notice the word "our" in that sentence. It brings forth the idea of the intimate, personal relationship we have with the God of heaven. He is my God and is worthy to be praised. Therefore, it is good for me to sing praises to Him. Have you ever stopped to think about Almighty God actually enjoying hearing you sing to Him? Our Lord actually wants to hear our praises. But for them to be pleasing to Him, our praise must be heartfelt and fully devoted.

When it is whole-hearted praise and worship it becomes pleasant and beautiful. But, just like anything else, half-hearted attempts destroy the beauty. Just as a half-hearted spouse will destroy the beauty of a marriage, so too does the uncommitted worshiper destroy the beauty of praise. You have the awesome privilege of praising the One whom you can never repay and, in so doing, you make something beautiful. But only if you are willing to give it your whole heart! I encourage you to read the rest of this glorious Psalm. Read for yourself the innumerable reasons why the Lord is worthy of our praise. Hallelujah!

Day Five: Worship Where You Are

Author: Pamela Storz

"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23-24)

This week I was wondering, "How do folks worship when they can't sing?"

I don't mean that in the way you think - as choir members, becoming one harmonious (hopefully) voice of adoration is our highest form of praise and worship to our Father. But what if we were physically unable to sing? Would our worship be limited and halfhearted? God does not acknowledge halfhearted worship! I've been watching people this week and have observed several forms of worship. I've discovered you don't have to sing well, loudly, or at all.

I know a very bright and charismatic young man who participates in a Christ-centered community program each

week. He has cerebral palsy and adeptly motors around in a wheelchair driven by his mouth. He communicates by speaking slowly, painfully, and phonetically. Yet, he worships wholeheartedly and intently each Thursday evening. You can see the worship sparkling in his eyes!

At a nursing home, a sweet soul, so crippled by arthritis and macular degeneration that she is unable to hold or see a hymnal, closes her eyes and whispers the words of worship to the Father as we sing. Her heart is full of worship for the Father!

Missionary friends who have the opportunity to serve in Cuba (how awesome is that?!) wrote in an e-mail today; "What if your church building was only 6 feet wide, 30 feet long, with no roof or floor and jammed in the space between your house and your neighbor's privacy wall?" Their services must be kept quiet or the authorities become involved; but they find the reason and the means to worship!

Each time I look out from the choir loft at my extraordinary, Godly husband, I am filled with gratitude. He has one hand raised in worship because, in his words, "If I raise both of them I'll go flying up toward Heaven. Something has to keep my feet on the ground." We cannot minimize the role of emotions in worship!

I've come to the conclusion that singing is not a pre-requisite to worship, especially if one is unable to sing. I believe that in these verses Jesus is saying that we are to worship Him wherever we are, however we're able - mentally, raised hands, whispers, whatever our vehicle! You don't have to be a soprano, alto, tenor, or bass. You don't have to be in a church building. Worship happens in the hearts of those who know Him and love him. Worship happens whenever we give glory and honor and praise to our Father. Wherever we show His worth, He is worshipped. No matter what, we are to worship with all of our hearts, wherever we are.

Lord, You are good and Your mercy endureth forever.
People from every nation and tribe, From generation to generation
We worship You-Hallelujah, Hallelujah!