

Welcome to Digital Discipleship, a weekly video teaching from Pastor Shawn and a downloadable weekly devotional guide. We pray that you will grow stronger in your walk with Jesus as you lean into these teachings and devotions.

DIGITAL DISCIPLESHIP – LESSON 6

Prayer as Praise and Thanksgiving

Day 1

Renew the Mind

Introduction

1. We introduced the concept of prayer in the SMORP acronym.
Scripture – Refers to reading and memorizing Scripture
Message – Refers to anything the Lord may be saying to you
Obedience – Refers to obeying what God instructs you to do
Repentance – Refers to sin the Holy Spirit requires you to confess and repent of
Prayer – Refers to your prayers to God
2. Happy is the one who desires to master prayer and finds himself, like the early disciples, offering one of the grandest of all prayers: “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1).
3. In the following 12 verses Luke packaged four messages about prayer, delivered by Jesus, which we’ll refer to in this lesson, as well as subsequent lessons.
 - a. Prayer message 1: A pattern for prayer (“The Lord’s Prayer”) (11:2-4).
 - b. Prayer message 2: A parable about a friend who has a need (11:5-8).
 - c. Prayer message 3: Poem 1 – Ask and you will receive (11:9-10).
 - d. Prayer message 4: Poem 2 – If your son asks for a fish (11:11-13).
4. Let’s begin with the first message, often termed (incorrectly) “The Lord’s Prayer.”
5. If you really want to see how Jesus prayed, go to **John 17**!
6. What Jesus offered here was a pattern for how His disciples (we included) could pray.
7. **Luke 11:2-4 (NIV)** *He [Jesus] said to them, "When you pray, say: "'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. ³ Give us each day our daily bread. ⁴ Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.'"*
8. There are six key parts to this pattern prayer:
 - a. Pray for God’s name to be hallowed
 - b. Pray for God’s Kingdom to come
 - c. Pray for God’s will to be done on earth
 - d. Pray for our daily needs
 - e. Pray for daily forgiveness
 - f. Pray for protection in trials
9. For the sake of this lesson, we’ll only explore the first part: “**Father, hallowed be your name.**”
10. So, what does the phrase, “Father, hallowed be your name,” mean?
11. The word, “Father,” denotes an intimacy that we can have with God in prayer.
12. However, unless this misleads us to think that God is at our level, Jesus adds “hallowed be your name.”
13. We are to approach God with a recognition that He is holy – that is – set apart and unique. There is none like Him and no one has the authority He possesses.
14. However, this phrase goes well beyond personal recognition.

15. We also are to pray that God's uniqueness and glory will also be recognized by others, through us.
16. Seeing the opposite of this first may help us grasp what we're getting at.
17. **Ezekiel 36:20-21 (NIV)** *And wherever they went among the nations they profaned my holy name, for it was said of them, 'These are the LORD's people, and yet they had to leave his land.'* ²¹ I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone. (compare Romans 2:24)
18. Due to their behavior, God's enemies were blaspheming or profaning His holy name.
19. The motivations, words and actions of believers and the Church are to be such that God's name is not profaned or blasphemed but commended, praised and glorified!
20. That's what Jesus was getting at when He said: **Matthew 5:16 (NIV)** ... *let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*
21. The Apostle Paul's praying fell right in line with Jesus' injunction to pray that God's name be hallowed (glorified, magnified, extolled). He prayed ...
22. **Ephesians 3:21 (NIV)** ... to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.
23. Of course, Jesus isn't telling us to simply recite the phrase, "hallowed, be your name," in our prayers, though there is nothing wrong if we do include it in our prayers!
24. Our point is that He was saying that we should pray about God's name being hallowed.
25. What are some ways in which we could be praying about that?
26. **First: we are asking God to keep us from dishonoring the name by which we are called**
 - a. In this we are asking that God would enable us to glorify Him in all we do for His own glory.
 - b. **1 Corinthians 10:31 (NIV)** *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*
 - c. We pray to God to further His praise; NOT to gratify selfish concerns.
 - d. That's the point of what James says ...
 - e. **James 4:3 (NIV)** *When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*
27. **Second: we ask that God be glorified among the nations as He is glorified among us**
 - a. Abraham provides an example of proper praying that keeps God's honor at the forefront ...
 - b. **Genesis 18:24-25 (NIV)** *What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it?* ²⁵ *Far be it from you to do such a thing--to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?*"
 - c. And see Daniel's example ...
 - d. **Daniel 9:17 (NIV)** *Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, O Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary.*
 - e. It is a request that faith in God would spread throughout the world and that more and more people would honor God, calling on His name.
28. **Third: it means that we manifest our gratitude to God, thereby extolling who He is**
 - a. Few things hide His glory more than our ingratitude!
 - b. Remember, ten lepers were healed, but only one returned to give God glory.
 - c. So, to hallow God's name is not merely to live righteous lives, but to have a heart of grateful joy toward God!
29. This desire for His glory is the controlling thought of the entire Lord's prayer.
30. And we will now explore the place that gratitude, thanksgiving and praise play in glorifying God.
31. While praise centers on who God is, thanksgiving focuses on what God has done.
32. Of course, at some point in practice, the two always end up coming together, for God reveals who He is precisely by what He does!
33. **Psalms 106:1-2 (ESV)** *Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!* ² *Who can utter the mighty deeds of the LORD, or declare all his praise?*
34. Scripture exhorts us to offer praise prayers to God.
35. **Psalms 146:1-2 (NIV)** *Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. ² I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.*

36. One can hardly read the Psalms without being deeply impressed that we are to praise the Lord.
37. The word “praise” is used 137 times and the word “praises” another 27 times.
38. In fact, Psalm 150 ends the entire collection of psalms with a grand climax of 13 rapid praise lines, reminiscent of the ending at a fireworks show!
39. **Psalm 150:1-6 (NIV)** *Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. ² Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. ³ Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, ⁴ praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, ⁵ praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. ⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.*

Reflecting and Reviewing

1. Write down something that stood out to you, from the reading you just completed.
2. Why is calling the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples, “the Lord’s prayer,” a bit misleading?
3. What are the six main parts to the pattern prayer Jesus taught his disciples in Luke 11?
4. What three things does the phrase, “hallowed be your name,” mean?

Life Application

1. How much time do you give to your daily devotions? And how much of this time is for prayer?
2. However long that you’ve walked with Jesus, think about this question – **Has your prayer life grown, or declined over the years?** What impacts how much you pray?
3. Spend a few minutes in prayer and ask Jesus – “Jesus, teach me how to pray.” Listen in prayer for His response to this desire/request.
4. **NOTE:** If you want to watch/listen to Pastor Shawn’s series on the Lord’s Prayer you can watch or listen to it here – **PRAY FIRST 2020:** <https://subsplash.com/mainstreetchurch/media/ms/+3b99ffp>

Day 2

Renew the Mind

Why we should praise God – Reasons 1 & 2

1. Because He is a great God who is worthy of our praise

- a. **Psalm 96:2-5 (NIV)** *Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. ³ Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples. ⁴ For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods. ⁵ For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens.* (also Psalms 18:3; 29:1-2; 48:1; 47:2; 145:3)
- b. In Psalm 95 the psalmist cites several reasons why the Lord is worthy of praise
 - The Lord is worthy of praise because of His marvelous deeds among all people.
 - He is worthy because He is not just an idol, like all other gods; He is real and above all other gods.
 - He made the heavens.
 - A few verses down it says that the Lord reigns over the earth, that the earth is established and cannot be moved by anyone else.
 - The psalmist also says that the Lord will rule with equity, righteousness and truth.
 - All creation (other than the rebellious) are jubilant about His rule and reign!
- c. Psalm 103 lists more reasons why the Lord is worthy of great praise!
- d. **Psalm 103:1-5, 8-13 (NIV)** *Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. ² Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits-- ³ who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, ⁴ who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, ⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's ... ⁸ The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. ⁹ He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; ¹⁰ he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.*
 - He forgives all our sins.
 - He heals our diseases.
 - He redeems our life from the pit.
 - He crowns our life with love and compassion.
 - He satisfies our desires with good things, so that our youth is renewed like the eagles.
 - He is slow to anger.
- e. Thank you, Lord! We praise you LORD!

2. Because praise is a befitting sacrifice to give to the Lord

- a. There are a variety of sacrifices we can offer to God, all of which are acceptable and pleasing to Him.
- b. One is a broken and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17); another is doing what is upright and just (Proverbs 21:3); obedience (1 Samuel 15:22) is another; offering our bodies as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1); and giving (Philippians 4:18).
- c. Of course, these offerings are not independent of each other, as we can bring an offering to be used for someone in need and still continue in disobedience.
- d. Which is exactly what Samuel was getting at when he said ...
- e. **1 Samuel 15:22 (NIV)** *Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.*
- f. A sixth offering that the Scripture speaks much about is the sacrifice or offering of praise.
- g. Because of WHO He is and WHAT He has done, God prescribes that we offer our praises as a sacrifice to Him!
- h. **Psalm 50:14 (ESV)** *Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High*
- i. And again ...
- j. **Psalm 50:23 (ESV)** *The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me; to one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God!*
- k. Thanksgiving played such an important role in the New Testament, that one writer described it as basically a synonym for the Christian life!

- l. **Hebrews 13:15 (NIV)** *Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise--the fruit of lips that confess his name.*
- m. As part of his definition of the sin of mankind in Romans 1 Paul says ...
- n. **Romans 1:21 (NIV)** *For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.*
- o. The verb translated “glorified” (edoxasan) means to give God the glory due to Him.
- p. In the first part of the verse Paul clearly has in mind the total devotion of a life of obedient service and worship.
- q. Thanksgiving, in the second half of the verse, is one aspect of this glorification of God.
- r. Men and women, experiencing God’s good provision in every area of life, ought to have recognized their debt to his generosity, and to have recognized Him as the source of all the good things they enjoyed (James 1:17).
- s. This is the duty of all people.
- t. Upon entering a village one day, Jesus encountered ten lepers who cried to Him for mercy (Luke 17:11-19).
- u. Jesus told them to go and show themselves to the priest.
- v. As they went, they were cleansed.
- w. One of them turned back and fell on his face before Jesus to offer loud praise and thanksgiving.
- x. This one was a Samaritan – the others evidently were Jews.
- y. Jesus then asked, “Weren’t there ten cleansed? Where then are the other nine. Has only this foreigner returned to give thanks?!”
- z. How disrespectful and ungrateful for us to receive from the Lord, but to neglect in giving whole-hearted thanks to God!
- aa. Paul’s introductions, blessings and his outbursts of praise are an invitation to join in glorifying God for who He is and what He has done for us!

Reflecting and Reviewing

1. Write down something that stood out to you, from the reading you just completed.
2. What two reasons for praising God are given in this lesson today?
3. What does Psalm 103 say that we can praise God for?

Life Application

1. Would you say that your life is full of thanksgiving and praise? If you feel that you fall short in this, spend some time in confession, saying sorry to your Father for ingratitude.
2. Read 1 Chronicles 17:16-27. Record what you observe about how David praises, especially his praise and thanksgiving.

Day 3

Renew the Mind

Why we should praise God – Reasons 3 & 4

3. Because through praise we come into and experience God's presence

- a. While offering thanksgiving to God for His goodness to us would be worthwhile in itself, God has designed that in it there is benefit for us as well, thereby revealing just how good He really is!
- b. We are called to come into His presence.
- c. **Psalm 27:8 (ESV)** *You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you, "Your face, LORD, do I seek."* (also, Psalm 105:4).
- d. A key way that we do this is by bringing Him a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving!
- e. **Psalm 100:4 (NIV)** Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.
- f. When we bring our offering to the 'gates' of His dwelling, He doesn't just tell us to drop off our sacrifices there at closed gates so that He can collect them later – NO!
- g. Instead He tells us that when we come to His gates with sacrifices of praise for Him (draw near – James 4:8), that the gates OPEN up and we come right into His presence!
- h. There we experience His presence!
- i. In the Hearing God lessons, we emphasized the importance of hearing God's voice or words, which, among other things, gives us LIFE. So true.
- j. HOWEVER, His presence does the same!
- k. **Psalm 16:11 (NIV)** *You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.* (also Ps 21:6)
- l. **Come into God's presence through thanksgiving, adoration and worship, and you will experience Him in such a way that you will be filled with LIFE!**

4. Because we experience the joy of the Lord and peace through praise

- a. We see an example of this in something Paul said.
- b. **Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV)** *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* ⁷ *And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*
- c. When we are anxious because of the challenges of this life, Paul predictably reminds us to turn to God with our requests by prayer and petition.
- d. However, he surprises us by including the manner in which we are to make such requests – with thanksgiving!
- e. And the context reveals that there is benefit attached to the one praying – peace!
- f. Not only is there peace in His presence, but the Psalmist tells us there is also fullness of joy!
- g. **Psalm 16:11 (NIV)** *You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.* (also Psalms 16:7-9; 21:6)
- h. And not just peace and joy, but also hope!
- i. Which is why Paul could say what He said ...
- j. **Romans 15:13 (NIV)** *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*
- k. Once in His presence, anxiety, worry and stress HAVE TO GO! Why?
- l. Because there is NO anxiety, NO worry and NO stress in God's throne room! NONE!
- m. And the reason for that is because He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!
- n. No one can overturn His will or thwart His plans – NO ONE! NOTHING! NONE!
- o. And so, we are urged to pray with thanksgiving in all circumstances.
- p. **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NIV)** *Be joyful always; ¹⁷pray continually; ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.* Also: Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 3:15, 17; 4:2
- q. When we're overwhelmed with crippling anxiety over circumstances that threaten to drown us, we're urged to present our requests with thanksgiving!

- r. And God promises that our hearts and minds will be filled with God's peace! And anxiety and worry will be replaced with joy! Great joy! And Hope!
- s. This is what the Psalmist meant when He said, "*he restores my soul*" (Psalm 23:2)! He really does!

Reflecting and Reviewing

1. Write down something that stood out to you, from the reading you just completed.
2. What two reasons for praising God are given in this lesson today?
3. Why does being in God's presence help us experience peace, joy and hope?

Life Application

1. Write down something that you are anxious about right now. Spend some time in thanksgiving – e.g. "*Father, I praise You for having a plan for this thing that I'm anxious about . . .*" I also praise Him for who He is – e.g. "*God, I am thankful that You are Gracious, Merciful, Gentle, Sovereign, All Powerful, Loving, Perfectly Wise.*" Stay in this position of praise – it takes practice, especially if we are used to focusing on our challenges.
2. Now bring the petition/anxiety to God. Practice stating it, rather than dwelling on it. Then read Nahum 1:7 and 1 Peter 5:7. Finish this prayer time by thanking Him for caring for you!

Day 4

Renew the Mind

Why we should praise God – Reasons 5 & 6

5. Because praise increases our faith to pray expectantly

- a. See how this all works!
- b. When we turn to wholehearted praise and thanksgiving, we enter the presence of the Lord – we really experience Him (Psalm 95:2-3).
- c. In His presence we experience fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11) and peace (Romans 15:13; Philippians 4:6-7).
- d. These emotions in turn give us strength.
- e. **Nehemiah 8:10 (NIV)** *Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.*
- f. Jeremiah linked hope with strength as well.
- g. **Lamentations 3:18 (NKJV)** *My strength and my hope Have perished from the LORD.* (also 2 Corinthians 3:12)
- h. The wise man said as much ...
- i. **Proverbs 13:12 (NIV)** *Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.*
- j. When we experience hope and joy and peace in His presence, our strength is renewed.
- k. That's what Isaiah was getting at when He penned these famous words ...
- l. **Isaiah 40:30-31 (NIV)** *Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall;³¹ but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.*
- m. And Paul shows us the result of such strength, saying that we even become bold.
- n. **2 Corinthians 3:12 (NIV)** *Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold.*
- o. When we are filled with hope, we acquire the faith needed to pray faith-filled prayers.
- p. **Colossians 1:5 (NIV)** ... the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel. (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 11:1)
- q. We are energized spiritually to pray fervently with great expectancy!

6. Because praise is a spiritual weapon against the dark forces of evil

- a. The Bible has much to say about praise defeating and driving back the powers of darkness.
- b. **Example 1: Jehoshaphat and his enemies**
 - 2 Chronicles 20 recounts the story of Jehoshaphat, who was facing the invading forces of Moabites, Ammonites and Meunites.
 - Judah assembled to seek the help of the Lord in prayer.
 - In prayer, Jehoshaphat says to the Lord that they are helpless against such a great horde, and that all their eyes are on Him (the Lord)!
 - The Lord responded, exhorting them not to be afraid.
 - Then the Lord added that they were to go out against their enemy, but that the Lord would fight the battle for them.
 - Instead of sending out soldiers with swords and spears against them, look what happened ...
 - **2 Chronicles 20:21-22 (NIV)** *After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: "Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever." ²² As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated.*
 - All the armies were completely destroyed by the Lord and they left behind a great spoil for Israel to take.
 - What had happened? As Israel's prayer warriors raised their voices to God in praise, angels were sent to defeat a physical foe.
 - The physical enemy was defeated because unseen enemies were scattered by the power of praise!
- c. **Example 2: David and his harp**
 - King Saul was plagued by an evil spirit, which haunted him because he had given the devil a foothold into his life.

- However, every time that David would worship and praise the Lord with his harp, that evil spirit had to leave.
 - **1 Samuel 16:23 (NIV)** *Whenever the spirit from God came upon Saul, David would take his harp and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.*
- d. Praise isn't merely a nice way to begin a meeting.
 - e. It's not a warm-up or filler until everyone arrives for the main part of the service – the message. NO!
 - f. Of course, if praise is just something we do mechanically, it is meaningless.
 - g. But biblical praise drives back the powers of darkness, releases the angels of God to do battle on our behalf and brings God's awesome presence into each situation.
 - h. **Psalm 149:5-6 (NIV)** *Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds. ⁶ May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands . . .*
 - i. Worship and teaching are not an end in themselves – they are a means to an end!
 - j. We can battle against the spiritual forces of evil through worship.
 - k. **Psalm 149:7-9 (NIV)** *... to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, ⁸ to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron, ⁹ to carry out the sentence written against them. This is the glory of all his saints. Praise the LORD.*
 - l. By worship and proclamation of the Word of God, we bring judgment on the rulers of darkness, binding them with chains!
 - m. Here's another example ...
 - n. **Psalm 8:2 (NIV)** *From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.*
 - o. Worship and teaching are spiritual warfare, defeating the enemy and releasing forces of light into the world to establish God's kingdom.
 - p. We don't exist to have big, happy churches; we are to drive back the forces of darkness.
 - q. And one way is to offer genuine praise and worship to the Lord.

Reflecting and Reviewing

1. Write down something that stood out to you, from the reading you just completed.
2. What two reasons for praising God are given in this lesson today?
3. Why does being in God's presence increase our faith for prayer?
4. What are two biblical examples of praise being used for spiritual warfare?

Life Application

1. We're seeing in this lesson that our praise of God is so important! Take a look at your life and schedule – how can you better include this in your devotions and even family life? What needs to be changed or dropped?
2. Read over the verses that were shared today. Circle, highlight or underline words or phrases that the Holy Spirit highlights for you.

Day 5

Renew the Mind

How we should praise God

1. With our whole heart

- a. **Psalm 9:1 (NIV)** *I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonders.* (also Psalms 86:12; 111:1; 119:10)
- b. True praise and thanksgiving are motivated by whole-heartedness – that is what God seeks!
- c. **Psalm 111:1 (NIV)** *Praise the LORD. I will extol the LORD with all my heart in the council of the upright and in the assembly.*
- d. How appropriate for the One who is our very life.

2. We may speak, shout or sing the praise prayer

- a. We may speak prayer praises to God, certainly.
- b. But the Psalms reveal other prominent features of praise prayer: one is singing.
- c. **Psalm 147:1 (NIV)** *Praise the LORD. How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise him!*
- d. But another striking (for Western peoples) feature is shouting.
- e. We can understand this in the context of a sports stadium! But, when it comes to our great God, some would recoil at the idea of shouting out to Him!
- f. Yet, see what the psalmist says ...
- g. **Psalm 33:3 (NIV)** *Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy.* (Ps. 47:1; 65:13; 81:1)
- h. It results in loud or enthusiastic singing as well!
- i. **Psalm 47:1b (ESV)** *Shout to God with loud songs of joy!*
- j. And even clapping!
- k. **Psalm 47:1 (ESV)** *Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!*

3. With corresponding postures

- a. There's another element to entering God's presence and that is our posture.
- b. **Psalm 95:6 (NIV)** *Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.*
- c. To physically bow and kneel are gestures of acknowledging greatness!
- d. It is also appropriate to raise our hands in praise to the Lord.
- e. **Psalm 134:2 (NIV)** *Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the LORD.*
- f. What does the lifting of the hands in praise signify? The psalmist tells us ...
- g. **Psalm 141:2 (NIV)** *May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.*
- h. The lifting of the hands is a gesture signifying that we are offering up an offering of praise that goes up like the incense of a sacrifice.
- i. And what about dancing?
- j. We are to rejoice in the Lord with abandonment – like little children.
- k. Sometimes our pride stands in the way – we don't think it is fitting for such sophisticated people.
- l. When David's wife, Michal, saw the King (David) "leaping and dancing before the Lord," she despised him in her heart (2 Samuel 6:16).
- m. And later the two got into a very heated argument over this (2 Samuel 6:20-23), and it appears that God judged her for it, as it ends by saying that she had no child until her death (v. 23).
- n. Significantly, these postures and gestures of the body remind the mind that God is a great God who is in charge.
- o. And when done out of a pure and full heart, just the act alone, apart from saying or singing anything, can at times usher us right into His presence!
- p. So, with our tongue we speak, sing and even shout forth praise to God.
- q. With our bodies we praise Him through kneeling, bowing and dancing – acknowledging through these actions who He is and who we are (or, who we are not!).

- r. And with our lifted hands we signify that we are consciously offering up our praise as an offering of love, adoration and humility to the One we really know to be worthy!
- s. When it comes out of a noble and loving heart, these gestures flow almost automatically.
- t. At other times, the intentional use of the gestures, leads the heart to the place of adoration.

4. **By adoring or praising Him for His attributes.**

- a. We may select an attribute of God, center our attention on it & begin to praise Him for it.
 - b. Or as we are reading and meditating on Scripture, we will come across an attribute of God as described in an event.
 - c. Either way, we can simply begin to praise God in prayer for that attribute.
 - d. For example, as you begin to read **Psalm 3** you discover that God is a Deliverer.
 - e. So, you ponder how He delivered people and people groups in the Scriptures.
 - f. Then perhaps you ponder how He has delivered His people in post-biblical history.
 - g. And then you move on to consider how God has delivered you in your own personal life.
 - h. As you do, you praise Him for that!
 - i. Of course, praise often moves into thanksgiving for personal deliverance; and from there perhaps even into some form of declaration of confidence in God.
- 5. Today, there is so much excellent praise and worship music available online, on You Tube, Spotify, Apple Music, etc. which you can use in your quiet time.
 - 6. Try it! It will transform your devotional time with the Lord! You'll never be the same!
 - 7. Without praise prayer, we will trigger spiritual starvation, because it is a KEY way in which to experience God's presence, love and joy – we'll remain cut off from the Vine, as Jesus put it (John 15).

Reflecting and Reviewing

- 1. Write down something that stood out to you, from the reading you just completed.
- 2. What four suggestions for how we should praise God are discussed today?
- 3. How can postures help us as we praise God?

Life Application

- 1. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you something that you can praise God for, with your whole heart. Once you receive something, write a prayer of praise to God. Let it flow from deep in your heart!
- 2. Write down a list of 8-10 things that God has done for you and/or your family. Then try praising God in a different posture than you would normally use. Remember – suggestions are in today's reading.
- 3. Choose an attribute of God (i.e., *unchangeable, holy, good, eternal, omnipotent, wise, gracious*, etc..). Spend some time praising God for:
 - a. how He has always been this attribute
 - b. for how He displayed this attribute in the Bible
 - c. for how He has displayed this attribute in the lives of others
 - d. for how He has displayed this attribute in your life. If you get stuck, remember to ask Jesus to help you pray! He will!

Day 6

Obedience

1. For this final day, we want to focus on OBEDIENCE, as we as disciples are to be doers of the Word (James 1:22-25). The Bible clearly teaches that obedience is a clear echo of our love for God (1 John 5:3).
2. It is also through obedience that we find blessing and our lives are built on a rock (Matthew 7:24-27).
3. Take this lesson and quickly scan the title and headings – do not re-read the entire lesson.
4. Humbly go before God and ask – **“what is one step of obedience that I can take as a result of this lesson?”**
5. Perhaps have a section in your journal where you record this step (and steps from future lessons). Or put it in the calendar on your phone. This shows God that we are both intending and committing to obey.
6. Write or speak out a prayer of commitment based on the step.