

Three Things We Can Give to God



Thanksgiving, Praise, and Worship (Part 1)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you some of the Keys to Successful Living that God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry.

Today I'm going to talk to you about three things that we can give to God and about the blessings we receive as we do this.

But first, let me say "Thank you" to those of you who have been writing to me. Before I finish this talk we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It encourages me greatly to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you. So please take time to write to me, even if it's only a brief note.

Now to return to my theme: "Three Things We Can Give to God." To appreciate what I'm going to say, you may need to make a mental adjustment. So often in our relationship with God, we think only in terms of what we can receive from God. We do not realize how much we have to give to God.

In Acts 20:35, Paul is speaking to a group of Christian leaders and he exhorts them to "remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, `It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" In these words, Jesus Himself gives us a key to obtaining the greatest possible blessing. There is a blessing in receiving, but there is an even greater blessing in giving. And this is true not only in our relationship with our fellow men, it's true also in our relationship with God. We are blessed when we receive from God, but we are even more blessed when we give to God.

Actually, God Himself has ordained that whenever His people come before Him, they shall come not merely to receive from Him but also to give to Him.

Under the Mosaic Covenant, God said to Israel in Exodus 23:15:

> "None shall appear before Me empty handed."

Again, God says to His people more generally in Psalm 96:8:

> "Bring an offering and come into His courts."

So we see that God always wants us to have something to give to Him whenever we come to Him. If we come to Him without anything to give Him, we are not meeting His requirements.

When we're confronted with this requirement of God, that we shall always have something to give Him whenever we come before Him, the first thing that we usually think about is money or material possessions. Now it is true that God does require us to offer to Him from our finances and material possessions. This requirement is clearly stated in Proverbs 3:9-10, where it says this:

> "Honor the Lord from your wealth, And from the first of all your produce; So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine."

So, honoring the Lord from our wealth and the first of all our produce is clearly bringing to Him offerings from our finances and material possessions. However, in addition to money and material possessions there are various other extremely important things that we can give to God. In my talk today I'm going to speak about some of these things; that is, things other than money and material possessions that we are asked by God to give to Him.

I'm going to read several passages of Scripture, first from the Old Testament and then from the New Testament, all of which speak about things that God asks us to give Him. And notice in every case the things are not money or material possessions. I'll start at Psalm 29:1-2:

> "Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

Here we are asked to give to the Lord "glory" and "strength." Obviously, these are not material things. They're not money or other material possessions of ours. And yet God says we're to give Him "glory" and "strength." There's one key word there that indicates how we can do this. "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." So, when we are worshiping God, we are giving to Him things that are not material.

And then in the New Testament, in 1 Peter 2:5, Peter is writing to Christians and he says:

> "You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

Here, as Christians, we are told that we are a priesthood, and that as priests we are to offer to God. But Peter says that the specific offerings we are to bring are not material but spiritual sacrifices. So we see that God requires spiritual sacrifices from us when we come to Him because we're a priesthood, and it's the responsibility of priests to offer sacrifices.

And then again in Hebrews 13:15, the writer says:

> "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips that confess His name."

Here again the writer is speaking about a sacrifice that God asks us to bring to Him. But it's not material. It's not a beast. It's not money. It's a sacrifice of praise. This is one of the spiritual sacrifices that Peter had in mind when he spoke about offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God.

So we're going to look now more specifically at the kind of spiritual sacrifices that God asks us to give to Him. Here are three specific spiritual gifts or sacrifices that we can give to God: thanksgiving, praise and worship. Let me say those once more: thanksgiving, praise and worship. I need to explain briefly how these are related, how they differ, and what they have in common.

Let me suggest to you that you can think of them in terms of the colors of the rainbow. We know that there are seven colors in the rainbow, all of which are distinct. And yet each shades into the color next to it. So they're distinct and yet they shade off into one another. I believe that's true of the things that we're talking about: thanksgiving, praise and worship. They're distinct and yet they shade off into one another. Let me offer you a very simple way to think of them as distinct, something that will help you to see a distinction between them. And I'm not offering this as an absolute law, but just as a helpful suggestion.

Thanksgiving relates to God's goodness.

Praise relates to God's greatness.

Worship relates to God's holiness.

Essentially, when we thank God we thank Him for HIs goodness, the good things He does. Specifically good things He's done for us. When we praise God, we're thinking of His greatness. One of the psalms says, "Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised." It's God's greatness that provokes praise. But worship is related to holiness.

Now holiness, of all the attributes of God, is in a class by itself. It's one of the things that apply to God for which we have no real corresponding standard on the human level. When we think of goodness, we can think of human beings who are, to a certain extent, good. Likewise, when we think of greatness, we can think of great men and great women. But when we think of holiness we have no standard of reference, really, except God Himself. So holiness is in a class by itself. And that places worship also in a class by itself because worship relates to God's holiness.

Now, thanksgiving and praise are primarily utterances of our mouths, but worship is primarily an attitude. I'll go into this more fully in later talks, let me just lay the principle here: thanksgiving and praise are primarily utterances of our mouths; worship is primarily an attitude.

Now I want to take a picture of worship and praise from the heavenly level and show you how it is in heaven. This picture is found in Isaiah 6:1-4. Isaiah says:

> "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above Him were seraphs, each with six wings: with two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty. The whole earth is full of His glory.' At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke."

There in that vivid and beautiful description we see a picture of three things: worship, praise and service. Worship is the attitude. The seraphs covered both their faces and their feet with their wings. That covering up of faces and feet is worship. Praise was expressed in spoken words, the words they uttered. Service was expressed by their flying.

Now notice the following proportions: They used four wings for worship; two for service. In other words, worship is twice as important as service. Secondly, worship comes before service. The Scripture says, "Worship the Lord, your God, and serve Him only."

Well, our time is up for today but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow, and for the rest of this week, I'll be dealing specifically with the first of the three things that we can offer to God; that is, thanksgiving.

Radio Program

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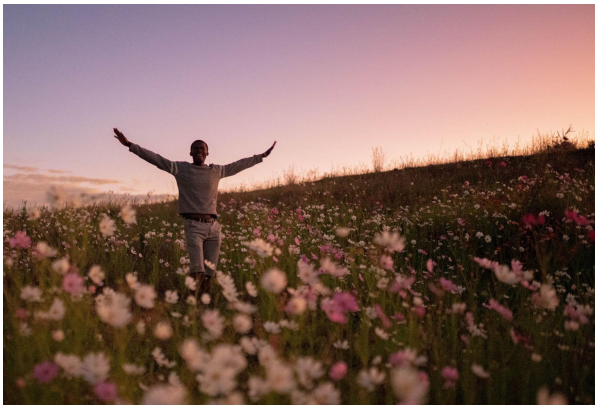

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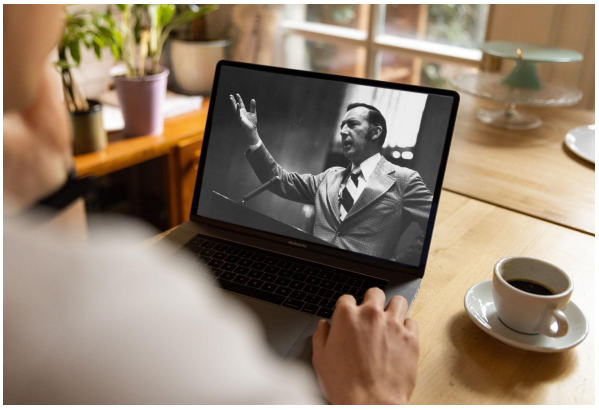

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