

## **FRAMED BY PRAISE: Living a Life of Divine Adoration**

For those of us who have spent time in choirs, bands, or congregational singing, we know there is a moment before the music truly begins. It is quiet, often unnoticed, but absolutely essential. The pitch is given. The key is established. Breath is taken. And in that brief moment, everyone orients themselves to something outside of themselves so that what follows can be shared, unified, and true. And if that starting note is wrong, it doesn't matter how beautifully the hymn is sung afterward. Even if every note is technically correct, something feels off. The music never quite settles. The voices never quite blend. The problem isn't effort—it's orientation. Everything that follows is shaped by how the song began.

Prayer works much the same way. Praise is the pitch that sets the key. When prayer begins with praise, everything that follows—confession, petition, thanksgiving—falls into proper harmony. Our hearts are oriented toward God before we speak about ourselves. But when praise is missing, prayer easily drifts out of tune. It turns inward. It becomes reactive, anxious, or transactional, not because God has changed, but because our starting point has. To put it simply, our prayers—and ultimately our lives—must be framed by praise.

Praise is one of the most familiar words in the Christian vocabulary, and yet one of the most easily misunderstood. We often treat praise as a response to what God has done, something we offer after prayers are answered or when circumstances feel favorable. But praise is not the decoration of prayer; it is the tonal center that orders it.

In *The Hour That Changes the World*, Dr. Dick Eastman reminds us that praise is meant to both begin and end our prayers, framing everything in between with divine adoration. Praise is not an add-on—it is both the foundation and the culmination. And when praise becomes more than a moment - when it becomes a way of life - it reshapes how we approach God, how we interpret our circumstances, and how we live each day. Today, I want to challenge us to consider praise not as an occasional expression, but as a daily posture of the heart that anchors our lives in who God is.

So, what is praise? To put it simply, praise is the outward expression of adoration, thanksgiving, and awe for God's nature, power, and mighty works. To break it down even further, adoration is deep, heartfelt reverence for God's worthiness. To praise and adore the Lord means we are acknowledging that God is *God*. This seems straightforward enough – to show adoration for the Lord is to turn away from oneself and toward our Father. This is precisely why Eastman asserts that praise must begin our prayers – and it is absolutely essential. Praising the Lord isn't a warm-up, it is an act of realigning our hearts. In Matthew 6, Jesus laid down the groundwork for prayer to His disciples in what we know today as the Lord's Prayer. This prayer begins with the phrase “Our Father in heaven, *hallowed* be your name...” Hallowed comes from the Greek root *hagiazo*, meaning “to revere or sanctify.” Sanctify, in turn, means “to set apart.” Jesus began His prayer with praise of the Father – the only way to put God in His rightful place. To praise the Lord means we acknowledge his sovereignty and power at the onset of our prayer – we make it about Him and not about ourselves and what we

think we need. If this is the way Jesus instructed us to begin our prayer time, I think we can follow suit.

By extension, if we begin our prayer time with praise and adoration, it isn't that much further of a step to incorporate it in our daily lives. In fact, Scripture makes it clear that praise is not meant to rise and fall with our circumstances. If praise is only offered when life is good, then it becomes conditional - and God is worthy of more than conditional devotion. A lifestyle of praise is formed through daily gratitude and intentional focus. Left unchecked, our hearts naturally drift toward taking God's gifts for granted, as though the Lord is a prayer vending machine. But when we consistently fix our thoughts on who God is and what He has done - both the great works of salvation and the quiet mercies of daily life - praise becomes our default posture rather than an occasional response.

This kind of praise reshapes our perspective. When praise fills our hearts, frustration gives way to faith, and circumstances lose their power to define our outlook. Living for the glory of God in all things—our words, our actions, our attitudes—means that even ordinary moments can become acts of worship. Praise is no longer confined to prayer or song; it becomes woven into the fabric of everyday life.

Most importantly, praise builds spiritual resilience. When praise is practiced daily, it prepares us for seasons when blessings feel distant and prayers seem unanswered. Listen to the words of the prophet Habakkuk (3:17-18): *“Though the fig tree does not blossom, and there is no fruit on the vines; though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food; though the sheep disappear from the pen and there are no cattle in the stalls, I will rejoice in the Lord. I will rejoice in the God of my deliverance.”*

Habakkuk's praise is not rooted in abundance, comfort, or visible blessing—it is rooted in trust. This is what daily praise prepares us for. When blessings seem absent and circumstances collapse, praise should not disappear - it should rise. We learn to rejoice not because life is easy, but because God is faithful. Praise becomes an automatic response, trained into the soul long before hardship arrives. And when praise grounds our prayer beyond circumstances, it also reminds us that faithful worship is not expressed in only one way.

In his book, Dr. Eastman reminds us that praise is not simply one part of prayer - it is the framework of prayer. Praise begins prayer because it rightly orders our hearts toward God, and praise ends prayer because it returns us to Him once again. In between, our requests, confessions, and intercessions are held in proper alignment by divine adoration. This understanding helps us see why praise can look different from person to person without losing its integrity. When worship is rightly ordered - when it begins with God and ends with God - expression is secondary to direction.

Psalm 150 gives us a vivid picture of this truth. The psalm calls for praise expressed through breath, sound, movement, and celebration, yet it never wavers in its focus: *"Praise the Lord."* The expressions are many, but the object of praise is one. Rightly ordered worship allows for diversity of expression while keeping unity of purpose. Jesus reinforces this when He tells the Samaritan woman in John 4 (23-24) that the Father seeks those who worship "in spirit and in truth." Worship is not confined to a single style or posture, but it is also not self-defined. Spirit without truth becomes

disordered; truth without spirit becomes lifeless. Praise that frames prayer keeps worship rooted in both - alive, reverent, and God-centered.

This has direct implications for how we view one another in worship. When praise is anchored in God's character rather than personal preference, we are freed from judging expressions that differ from our own. Scripture reminds us that God looks at the heart, not outward appearance. Some praise Him aloud with "amens," others quietly. Some through song, others through dance, or obedience and perseverance. The question is not whether worship looks "right," but whether it is faithfully directed toward the Lord. Many paths, one ascent. Paul echoes this in Colossians 3:16–17, where praise, gratitude, and daily living are woven together. When the word of Christ dwells richly among us, and when everything we do is done in the name of the Lord Jesus, worship becomes rightly ordered - and our lives become an expression of praise.

Psalm 148 widens the lens even further. All of creation is called to praise God - heaven and earth, the powerful and the humble, the seen and the unseen. Praise is larger than individual style and deeper than personal taste. When praise is rightly ordered toward God, expression is freed from comparison and judgment - but praise is never meant to remain vague or silent. Scripture and prayer both call us not only to hold praise in our hearts, but to give it voice. Praise is not only a posture we carry, but a gift we actively offer that was not meant to stay hidden. Praise is meant to be *given*. It is meant to be voiced.

Praise in Scripture is rarely silent. While God certainly knows the posture of our hearts, the Bible repeatedly calls God's people to **give voice** to their adoration. Praise

is something spoken, sung, and declared - truth about God released from within us and offered back to Him. In the New Testament, one of the most common Greek words translated as praise meant “to speak approval, to commend, or to celebrate openly.” Praise, biblically speaking, is not merely something we feel - it is something we express. It is faith given a voice.

Another important word Scripture uses is *eulogeō*, which means “to bless” or “to speak well of.” This is where we get our English word “**eulogy**.” A eulogy is spoken at the end of someone’s life - it names who they were, recalls what they did, and honors their character. In much the same way, when we praise God, we are offering Him a living eulogy - not because God is gone, but because He is worthy of being spoken of rightly and reverently.

That connection is powerful. Praise is not flattery or filler; it is testimony. When we praise God, we speak well of Him. We name His faithfulness. We recall His mercy. We declare His goodness out loud. And in doing so, our words shape our hearts. Speaking praise aloud reinforces truth within us, especially when circumstances are trying to tell a different story. This is why praise belongs at the **beginning** of prayer. Before we speak about what is broken, we speak about who God is. Before we name our fears, we name His holiness and steadfast love. Voiced praise reorders prayer. It reminds us that prayer does not begin with our voice describing our problems, but with our voice declaring God’s greatness.

And praise also belongs at the end of prayer. When answers are still unfolding and outcomes remain uncertain, praise becomes our declaration of trust. Ending prayer

with praise is an act of faith - it says, "I still speak well of You, God, even here." In that sense, praise becomes both confession and confidence. Voiced praise, then, is not about volume or performance. It is about alignment. When we give praise a voice, we allow truth to take precedence over circumstance, and faith to rise above fear.

Praise is one of the few things Scripture presents not merely as something God receives, but as something that pleases Him. God does not need our strength, our effort, or our accomplishments. He is not enriched by our success or diminished by our lack. But Scripture tells us that praise - offered freely and sincerely - is precious to Him. Praise is meaningful because it cannot be substituted. It cannot be outsourced. It cannot be given on our behalf. Praise must come from a heart that recognizes God's worth and chooses to honor Him. That is why it is such a prized offering - not because it fills a need in God, but because it reveals rightly ordered love in us.

Psalm 69:30-31 says that "*I will praise God's name with song; I will magnify him with thanks. This will please the Lord more than oxen, more than bulls with horns and hooves.*" We are reminded that praise is not secondary to devotion - it is central. Even the most meaningful sacrifices fall short if the heart is not oriented toward God. Praise, offered from gratitude and trust, becomes an act of worship that God delights in. This understanding reshapes how we see prayer and daily life. Praise is no longer filler at the beginning or a formality at the end - it is the most valuable thing we bring before God. When praise becomes our daily offering, it keeps our hearts rightly aligned. We come before God not empty-handed, but with what He desires most: sincere adoration. This is how praise sustains a life of faith. Long after words fail and circumstances change

(and they will!), praise remains something we can always offer - because God is always worthy.

As we bring this together, we return to a simple but shaping truth: praise is not something we fit into our lives - it is what rightly orders them. Praise begins our prayer because it turns our hearts toward who God is before we speak of ourselves. Praise ends our prayer because it declares trust, even when answers are still unfolding. And when praise frames both the beginning and the end, it inevitably reshapes everything in between. When this happens, praise then becomes our lifestyle.

When praise is practiced daily—spoken, remembered, and lived—it trains our hearts to respond to God before circumstances define us. It gives us words when life is full and faith when life is thin. It keeps our worship centered on God rather than preference, and it frees us to extend grace to one another when worship looks different, so long as it remains rightly ordered toward Him. And ultimately, this is why we praise God. We do not praise Him to change His heart toward us, but because He is worthy—always. Praise is not a transaction; it is a declaration. It names reality as God defines it, not as life presents it. Praise is the one offering we always have to bring, in every season, because God's character does not change.

When praise becomes our voice, our posture, and our daily offering, we discover that no matter what the moment brings, we are never empty-handed before the Lord. The key has already been set. The pitch has already been given. And no matter the circumstance or outcome, we can always sing what is true: God is faithful, God is worthy, and God deserves our praise.