

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1. WHAT IS PRAISE?

Praise our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard (Psalm 66:8).

“Cool shirt, man.”

“New haircut? It looks great.”

“I’m so proud of you.”

“Two goals in one game! That’s amazing.”

“Good work on your report. It deserves an A+.”



SING, DANCE, SHOUT

Has anyone ever said words like these to you? Didn't they make you feel good? Didn't you love hearing them? That's what praise is all about. Whether you're talking about a great soccer goal, a new outfit, or a kind act, you offer praise when you tell someone how much you like something about them. You praise them when you admire something they have done. You do it all the time.

In this book, you'll learn about praise as it relates to God. In praise, you tell God how much you love him and why. Praise focuses on who God is. You praise him for his character. He is faithful, just, loving, and holy. You tell him what an awesome God he is. You thank him for what he has done. He cares for you, provides for you, and loves you. He created you and knows everything about you. He knows what you're good at and what you struggle with. He knows the secrets in your heart. He is always on your side. Praise expresses your love and your gratitude for these things.

It's important to remember that praise is "expressed." It isn't silent. It's excited and proud. If you score a goal at your soccer game, you want your teammates to give you a high five, or shout your name and say, "Way to go!" What would their praise accomplish if they only sat and thought about what a great kick you made? You wouldn't know how they felt. Praise must be expressed to work.



WHAT IS PRAISE?

The Hebrew people were emotional and vocal in their praise to God. They sang, shouted, and lifted their hands. They played instruments and danced. They praised God when they saw his wonders and when they experienced his deliverance. They even praised when they were sad.

Praise doesn't depend on how you feel. The Old Testament worshippers understood that. They called it the sacrifice of praise. Their praise was an offering to God, an offering they made based on how wonderful God was and is and always will be.

God wants you to praise him. He wants you to praise when you feel good. He wants you to praise when you feel lousy. He wants you to praise when you wake up in the morning and when you go to bed at night and in between. He wants you to praise when you're alone and when you're with your friends and family.

You can praise anywhere. In your room or on your bike, at the playground or in the car. Some people have a special place where they like to spend time with God. It could be a chair in your room or in the shade beneath a tree. You might want to find a private place while you're working your way through the praise projects in the following chapters. Find a place where you can be alone with



SING, DANCE, SHOUT

God. Each praise project will give you a chance to experiment with the many ways people in the Bible expressed their praise to God. Get comfortable praising God in private, then move on to praising him with your family and friends.

Praise Project

Find a quiet place. Tell God that you want to learn to praise him. Ask him to help you. He will.

Read Psalm 66 in your Bible.

The first verse says this: Shout with joy to God, all the earth! Sing the glory of his name; make his praise glorious! Say to God, “How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you. All the earth bows down to you; they sing praises to you, they sing praise to your name.”

The psalm writer tells you exactly what to say to God. Try praising God with his words. Then see if you can find words of your own to praise God.