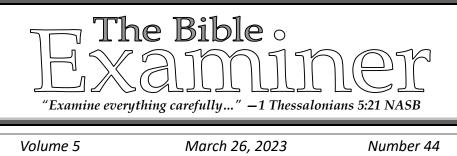


Hays Mill church of Christ

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Learning to Worship God

by Gary Henry

Thus, I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.
My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness,
And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.
When I remember You on my bed, I meditate
On You in the night watches.

—Psalm 63:4-6

If we are seeing God, we will want to reach the point at which we honestly enjoy the worship of God. Making the choice to engage in worship on set occasions is wise of course, and as far as Christians worshiping together is concerned, the New Testament certainly shows that the earliest followers of the Lord did that every week, Acts 20:7; Heb 10:25. To be spiritually mature, however, is not only to engage in acts of worship regularly but also to have the kind of character that delights in doing so, even when there is no special occasion.

The true joy of worship is a joy that must be learned. No doubt, there are people who find it easy to enjoy some of the superficial aspects of worship, but most of us will find that worship is an acquired taste. The regrettable modern tendency to turn worship into something that is naturally enjoyable, and even entertaining, should not blind us to the fact that true worship is the spiritual adoration of God, a thing that does not come naturally to carnallyminded people. We will not enjoy worship as God wants us to enjoy it until we have come around to His way of thinking.

As the above selection from Psalm 63 shows, David was a man whose highest happiness was the worship of God: "My mouth shall praise You with joyful lips." It's unlikely that David's arm had to be twisted to get him to the tabernacle at the various times prescribed in the Law of Moses. But those special times at the tabernacle would have meant so much to David because of what happened in his life every day and every night: "When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches"—and then we also will enjoy the exaltation of special worship.

We—or at least I—shall not be able to adore God on the highest occasions if we have learned no habit of doing so on the lowest. At best, our faith and reason will tell us that He is adorable, but we shall not have found Him so, not have "tasted and seen." [cf Psa 34:8] —C.S. Lewis

Yielding To God

by Gary Henry

For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell.

For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.

-Philippians 1:21-24

It takes reverence, as well as trust, to yield to the greater good of God's will. Not only does His wisdom know what is best, His love desires what is best. We can take it as a given that God will always do what is best in any set of circumstances. Unfortunately, the "circumstances" often involve decisions and requests on our part such that doing what is best requires God to chasten our demanding spirit, rather than give us blessings that He would otherwise be delighted to give.

There are two extremes in prayer. At one extreme, there is the person who sees God as an ill-

tempered tyrant who begrudges every request. This person needs to be encouraged to think of God as a Father who is benevolently inclined toward His creatures, Mt 7:11. But at the other extreme is the person who sees God as an indulgent deity who exists simply to grant our every wish. This person needs to be reminded to show reverence to God.

Traditionally, the prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 is referred to as "The Lord's Prayer," and it is certainly a prayer that reflects the Lords' deepest desire with respect to His Father: "Your kingdom come. Your will be done." There is, however, no prayer more characteristic of the Lords' own heart than His anguished cry in Gethsemane: "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will," Mt 26:39,42. As God's Son, He "learned obedience," Heb 5:8.

Unlike the Lord, we not only fail to yield submissively to God's will, but we often are so presumptuous as to ask for things that are in conflict with that will. We do not know how to pray as we ought. We need help even in knowing what to ask for. Here, then, is an opportunity for us to learn humility. We can defer to the Lord and pray for help in our praying. We can pray for Him to do whatever, in His wisdom, He sees best.

- Not what we wish, but what we need, Oh! Let our grace supply,
- The good unasked, in mercy grant; The ill, though asked, deny.

—James Merrick 📖

Pray for our meeting scheduled with Nick Woods, May 7-12!

Hazel's son-in-law, Shane Reed, is still being treated for leukemia, and is not doing well. Mike Beckman has results from his test, and has been referred to an oncologist. Joyce still deals with cancer, as well. The Pollard's newborn, Paige, is expected to be transported to Johns Hopkins in Baltimore when her condition stabilizes, but no date is set, yet. **Betty** cracked one of her vertebra again, but is going to try to let it heal on its own. Let's continue to pray for **Buddy**, **Carolyn**, and **Dot**.