

PRACTICES *Worship (Lifting Up the LORD's Name) through Singing*

In today's message, Andrew said that lifting up the Name in a purposeful and honoring way in right worship is the antidote to the third commandment. While the commandment says don't take the LORD's name in vain; the positive virtue behind the commandment is that we ARE to use the name of our LORD in the pursuit of right worship, that lifts up the Name of the LORD Jesus in a purposeful and honoring way. So lifting up the LORD's Name through singing is our practice for this week.

(the following comes from Bridgetown Church in Portland, OR)

No matter who you are, there's something in or around you that you can recognize to be wrong. Be it a specific situation in your personal life (words you shared or should have shared with a loved one, a relative dying from cancer, an addiction to pornography, etc) or a larger issue around you in the world (kids without enough to eat, rape as a weapon of war, political unrest, etc), everyone has the ability to deeply feel something that's out of place or wrong. Or maybe it's not overtly wrong; maybe it's something that you just want to be different (wanting a better housing situation, feeling stuck in the routines of motherhood, feeling anxious about a job interview). Big or small, we know that God sees us and cares about our situation.

One expression for all of this ache and desire that we see in the Scripture is singing. The Psalms are an ancient prayer book of sorts. But it wasn't just a book of prayers. It was a book of prayer meant to be sung. Why? Because worship changes us, it moves God, and it changes situations. Lifting our voices in song can change our hearts and minds about God. It can also change our perspective on the world around us and on our own personal lives. Augustine said that the one who sings prays twice. Whether in your room alone, in your car on the way to work, in a living room with friends, or at church on a Sunday – there is something uniquely intimate and powerful about singing our prayers. And one of the most amazing things about singing as prayer is that it not only changes perspective, but it can actually move God to change the world around us.

For a communal Practice in addition to our Sunday morning gathered worship (for your Home Group or other gathering), there are a few options. Feel free to practice worship through singing as a community. If someone likes to lead worship or is musically gifted, using that gift can be a huge blessing to a community. And God might want to create a unique culture of worship with your community. But if that sounds

totally scary to you and your community, then make it a point to sit together the coming Sunday and worship together.

That being said, we recognize that this might be a practice you want to start on your own. So, very practically and on a personal level, your Practice this week is to start singing prayers to God. It's really simple:

1. Pick a Date/Time: Get out your calendar or journal, and set a *time* and *place* to pray that is quiet and distraction free. For most, the mornings are a good time – maybe it's on your way to work or on a walk at lunch time or when the kids are down for their nap. Try for 3 days this week. Though it would be awesome to do it everyday.
2. Prepare: If you are musically inclined, look up some chords to a favorite worship song. If you aren't, don't worry! God loves your voice (even if the people in front of you at church may not)! Make a playlist or pick out an album or play something instrumental.
3. Sing: Play the music (your own instrument or something to sing along to) and sing to God. You can sing along with the songs or make up your own words. In these moments, you could even sing through your own prayer lists or think of a person or situation that you want God to target with His goodness and Kingdom. Sing over these desires and present your requests to God through song.

Discussion Questions

1. How do you feel about singing as prayer?
2. Any thoughts, creative ideas, or feedback on this week's practice?
3. What time and place works best for you to do this practice?

this Practice description was adapted from the following:

<https://practicingtheway.org/pray/week-five>