Worship
The Heart of Worship • Message 1
Bryan Jones
January 18, 2026

Prayer Points for Prayer Time

- **Pray that you worship God not just with words, but with your lives and choices.**
- **Ask God to help you praise Him in good times and hard times, trusting His faithfulness.**
- **Ask God to remind you to see His goodness and faithfulness in every part of your life.**

Scripture Reading:
The one thing I ask of the LORD— the thing I seek most— is to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, delighting in the LORD's perfections and meditating in his Temple. For he will conceal me there when troubles come; he will hide me in his sanctuary. He will place me out of reach on a high rock. Then I will hold my head high above my enemies who surround me. At his sanctuary I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy, singing and praising the LORD with music.
Psalm 27:4-6 (NLT)

A. Introduction
(Psalm 103:1-2)

Did you ever think that music or worship is the language of the soul?

Okay, what's one of your favorite songs, or a song that means something to you? Anyone? (only listen to worship music)

We listen to music at campfires, in the car, with friends, because music stirs us… because music is the language of the soul. That's why we call certain music "soul music."

In many ways, worship is the language of the soul.

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,
Psalm 103:1-2 (ESV)

For some people, worship is a place where you can get lost in the presence of God. It is a place where your soul cries out, and you find freedom. I had a student one time say to me, *Can we just worship all the time and not do many sermons*? and I said, *No, because I like my job*…

For others, it's a bit uncomfortable. You wonder why someone is raising their hands or swaying back and forth. Kind of looks like they're stretching or hyped up on Mountain Dew.

Two dangers in worship:

Emotionalism. Where you try to guilt and shame people into worshiping a particular way. When worship becomes a show.

Cold Heart. Where you just don't engage. You aren't moved at all by the worship. You stand watching what happens on stage. You sing the lyrics, but they have no life in your soul. Worship for you becomes as ritualistic as brushing your teeth or getting ready in the morning.

That's why Jesus calls us to worship in Spirit and in truth… with our hearts and with our minds, with emotion and thought.

Now, today, week 1, I want to teach you the seven Old Testament words for praise. I heard my old boss give this talk, and I thought it was powerful. Whenever the Bible mentions the word *praise* in the Old Testament, it is almost always one of seven words in the Hebrew language. I want to show you these words because I think it will give you a biblical picture of what praise and worship are all about…

So, the reason this is important when it comes to worship is that most of us are influenced by our traditions and upbringing… but I want this… the word of God… to shape our worship.

Today, I want to look at these seven Hebrew words so that we can have a biblical framework for worship.

B. Seven Hebrew Words

1. **<u>YADAH.</u>**
   To revere or worship with extended hands. To hold out the hands.

May the peoples praise (yadah) you, God; may all the peoples praise (yadah) you.
Psalm 67:3 (NIV)

About six to eight years ago, my wife and I were away for a few days, and Tristan, our oldest, wasn't with us; my in-laws were watching him. When we got home, we decided to do a little test. We said, *Let's stand apart and see which one of us Tristan runs to*… We are emotionally healthy, I promise. We go inside, and how many of you think Tristan ran to Steph? How many think Tristan ran to me? Tristan ran right by Steph with his arms extended, reaching out to me. And Steph says to me something like, *You cheated*… Now, in fairness, we've done this test several more times, and I've yet to win again.

But when people raise their hands, it's their way to say, *I choose you, God. I want you more than anything else. I reach out to you as a way of saying I want you more than health, success, money, revenge, and my selfishness. I'm running past that and choosing you.*

Sometimes raising their hands is their way of saying, *I'm reaching out to you. I need you. I want you.*

2. <u>HALAL.</u>
To boast. To rave. To shine. To celebrate. To be loudly foolish.
Some definitions even have "to act mad before the Lord."

Let them praise (halal) his name with dancing and make music to him with timbrel and harp.
Psalm 149:3 (NIV)

The entire book of Psalms culminates with this word, **halal**. *Psalm 150:6*

Let everything that has breath praise (halal) the Lord! Praise (halal) the Lord!
Psalm 150:6 (ESV)

This is the most repeated word in the Old Testament. In fact, it's mentioned 99 times. What's interesting is that 24 times it's translated as Hallelujah.

Hallel - u - jah
Praise Us God

Hallel= praise
u=let us (plural, worship isn't just for you, it encourages us. It's the days I watch you that build me up.)
jah=God

Jahweh/Yahweh is the name God uses to distinguish himself from other Gods. He is personal. He is powerful.

So, Hallelujah means to praise God, who is unlike all other Gods!

3. **ZAMAR.**
   To make music. To celebrate in song and music.
   To touch the strings or parts of a musical instrument.

I will praise (yadah) you with the harp for your faithfulness, my God; I will sing praise (zamar)to you with the lyre, Holy One of Israel. My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise (zamar) to you— I whom you have delivered.
Psalm 71:22-23 (NIV)

Let me encourage you, parents, that if you have younger kids, when they wake up each morning for school, play worship music. We used to listen to the news each morning, and now Steph has started playing worship music, and our kids are now singing things like, *We sing Christ and Christ crucified*….

Let me ask you this: at what name does the enemy have to flee? Jesus. So, guess what happens when you start playing worship music… enemies start to flee…

Also, it stirs you… I was working on installing a back seat in a golf cart, and the first day, I was listening to '90s rock. Listen, I was born in the '80s, but I'm a child of the '90s. I think it's the best generation… but I'm listening to '90s music, and I'm having trouble getting this bolt in, and I'm getting angry tightening it. I'm getting angry and talking back to this bolt. Then, the next day, I'm listening to worship music, and nothing is working; I'm literally singing things like… *You are worthy of it all; this bolt isn't worthy of it all, but you are worthy of it all.*

Remember Saul? What happened? Spirits were tormenting him… they played music. Here is my point: music has spirits in it, so be wise about what you fill your mind with. I listen to other genres of music, but I listen to a whole lot of worship music.

4. **TEHILLAH.**
   A hymn. A song of praise. A new song. A spontaneous song.

…his praise (tehillah) shall continually be in my mouth.
Psalms 34:1b (ESV)

Sounds like a certain word, doesn't it? Let's not shout out Tehillah during our worship services, as some might think, *What kind of church is this?* … or some of you might go, *I want to come to church more often!*

Worship is continually of the heart.

Alright, if you're married, I want you to look at each other. Do you realize that one of you married up?
This means one of you lost, and the other won... point to who won in your marriage, real quick.

Let me show you how I know I married up… (show wedding pic)… look at that hair.

And some of you really did marry up, and you're amazed… and as amazing as it is that your spouse chose you… You know what's absolutely earth-shattering to me? A holy God chose us. Don't take that for granted…

It's so easy to get familiar with or take for granted what we have. Whether it is your spouse, your kids, your job, or your home… And if you're a Christian, even God.

When we sing an old song, it's so easy to just sing the lyrics and forget about what we're singing. But it's possible to sing an old song in a new way. To never get used to what you're singing. To think about what you are declaring. To sing with fresh eyes a song of praise. A new song. Spontaneous in your heart.

5. **<u>TOWDAH.</u>**
   An extension of the hand. Thanksgiving. A sacrifice of praise.
   Thanksgivings for things not yet received.

In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid…. I will render praises (towdah) to You,
Psalm 56:11-12 (NKJV)

I love this word. It's praise to God for what you haven't received.

Worship doesn't follow Breakthrough; it makes room for it….

Some of you are waiting to worship until the anxiety breaks, or the marriage is fixed, or the child is healed, or the pain is gone… but worship is something we do in the middle. Why?

Because worship reminds God who He is, it reminds you who He is! You start to declare these over your life…

In 2 Chronicles 20, there are armies marching against Jehoshaphat and the people of God. They are afraid, and they feel like they are going to be wiped out. Listen to what God says to them.

"You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the LORD will give you, Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the LORD will be with you."
2 Chronicles 20:17 (NIV)

Then, listen to what happens: they march out with their worship team and start singing to God.
Listen to this…

As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated.
2 Chronicles 20:22 (NIV)

Here is my point: some of you have enemies that are camped out against you… anger, fear, worry, addictions, bitterness, lack of joy, lack of purpose… it seems like these things might take you out….

But wait for it… as you praise, as you *towdah*… God defeats those enemies in your life. He starts to transform you and replace those with trust, faith, and joy.

Worship doesn't follow Breakthrough; it makes room for it….

6. <u>BARAK.</u>
To kneel. To bless God. To praise. To salute. To thank.

Sing to the LORD, praise [barak] his name; proclaim his salvation day after day.
Psalm 96:2 (NIV)

Notice the word *salute.* It means to honor. Do we have any men or women who have served in the army?
Can we just say, *Thank you!* Reboot… an amazing ministry. We honor them.

Think about this… when we worship, we are saluting God. But let me ask you this: how many times have you thanked God for what He's done… in Luke 17, ten lepers are healed… only one comes back… we want to thank God each week… before we ever get anything out of the message… let's be people who show up ready to bless.

What if you came in here thinking, *How can I barak God? How can I bless him with my worship?*
Your worship is a blessing to God.

7. <u>SHABACH</u>.
To address in a loud tone. To shout. To commend, glory, and triumph.

Praise (halah) the LORD, all you nations. Praise (shabach) him, all you people of the earth.
Psalm 117:1 (NLT)

A united anthem of God's people and an anthem becomes a holy roar.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFQeWPQzc_M

Before you think, *Well, this isn't my personality*; these are commands, not suggestions. It doesn't say, *Praise the Lord if you have an outgoing personality.* We have to be aware that our comfort cannot be more important than His commands.