

Give To God What Is Due To God

'None of you shall appear before Me empty-handed' (Exodus 23:15; 34:20). This scripture says we are not to come into the presence of the Lord without an offering. What is the most important thing we can offer to God? The thing He desires most is ourselves. He doesn't need our money. God is not short of cash. God wants us; ourselves and specifically our physical bodies.

There are a few things we can give to God and receive blessing as we give them. Most of us only think of what we can receive from God – not what we can give to Him. We do not realise how much we have that we can give to God that is not financial. 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20:35). There is a blessing in receiving but there is a greater blessing in giving. That is true, not only in giving to people, it is true in our relationship with God. God expects us to not only receive from Him, He expects us to give to Him what we have whenever we come to Him. If we come to Him without anything to give Him, we are not meeting His requirements.

When we are confronted with this requirement of God – that we should always have something to give Him whenever we come to Him, the first thing we usually think about is money or material possessions. It is true that God expects us to offer finances, and honouring the Lord with our wealth and the first of our produce is scriptural (Proverbs 3:9 & 10), but in addition to money, there are other very important things that we should give to God. God requires us to offer spiritual sacrifices when we come to Him, because we are a priesthood and it is the responsibility of priests to offer spiritual sacrifices. So what can we give that is due to God? What are some things we can offer to God that are not financial or material offerings, but Spiritual offerings? The following are the gifts and sacrifices that are acceptable to God.

Glory and worship: 'Give the Lord the glory due to His name; bring an offering and come into His courts. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness' (Psalm 96:8 & 9).

Glory, [spiritual] strength, worship and holiness: 'Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Give to the Lord the glory due to His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness' (Psalm 29:1 & 2).

Praise, thanks and glory: 'Let us constantly offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, which is the fruit of the lips that thankfully acknowledges and glorifies His name' (Hebrews 13:15).

All holy Spiritual sacrifices: 'Come, and like living stones, be built into a spiritual house, for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, that are holy and acceptable to God through Christ Jesus our Lord' (1 Peter 2:5).

Thanksgiving: 'Offer to God the sacrifice of thanksgiving' (Psalm 50:14). 'Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving' (Psalm 95:2).

Thanksgiving and praise: 'Enter His gates with thanksgiving and enter His courts with praise' (Psalm 100:4).

Worship: 'The man bowed his head and worshipped the Lord' (Genesis 24:26).

Thanksgiving is related to God's goodness. When we thank God, we thank Him for His goodness to us – for His answers to our prayers and for the thoughtful things He does that we don't even ask for. We can also think of people who are good to us. When God does good things for us, like healing us for example, He expects us to say 'thanks' and He notices who says thanks, and who don't thank Him (Luke 17:12 to 19).

Praise relates to God's greatness. When we praise God we are thinking of His greatness – His creative power; the fact He controls the earth, the solar system, the universe and also the tiniest atom. We can think of great leaders, great men and great women who have done great things for mankind. But only God is great in the area of power. 'Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised' (Psalm 48:1). 'Praise Him for His mighty acts. Praise Him for His excellent greatness' (Psalm 150:2).

Worship is related to God's holiness (Psalm 29:2; 96:9). Holiness is in a class by itself. It is one of God's attributes that we have nothing with which we can equate. We have no corresponding standard to holiness except God Himself. Because holiness is in a class by itself, so also worship is in a class by itself. There are many forms of worship, but by far the most accepted form of worship, is worship using our bodies; bowing our heads, singing, lying face down, kneeling, raising our hands etc.

Thanksgiving and praise are utterances of our mouths, the fruit of our lips (Hebrews 13:15), but worship is an attitude. In heaven, praise and worship can be understood by reading Isaiah 6:1 to 3. 'I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and the skirts of His train filled the temple. Above Him stood the seraphim; each had six wings. With two wings, each seraphim covered his own face; with two wings, each covered his own feet and with two wings, each flew. And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is filled with His glory!"

In that picture of heaven, we see worship, praise and service. Worship is the attitude. The seraphim who covered their faces and feet, were showing their worship. Praise was expressed in spoken words, just like we do. Their service was expressed by their flying. They used four wings for worship and two wings for service; so worship is twice as important as service. Worship should always come before service. The scriptures put them in that order. 'Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only' (Deuteronomy 6:13; Matthew 4:10; Luke 4:8). In line with these scriptures, church services should always have praise and worship first – before anything else takes place in the service.

Exodus 23:15; 34:20; 'None of you shall appear before Me empty-handed'. By coming to the Lord with our hands, hearts and mouths full of gifts for Him, we are fulfilling our obligation and meeting His requirements.

Amen and God bless you.

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