

Worship Notes (from Psalm 92)

PS 92:12 The righteous will flourish like a palm tree,
they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon;

PS 92:13 planted in the house of the LORD,
they will flourish in the courts of our God.

PS 92:14 They will still bear fruit in old age,
they will stay fresh and green,

PS 92:15 proclaiming, "The LORD is upright;
he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him."

Palm trees are the only trees that actually get MORE productive and more fruitful as they get older. The only limit to its fruit-bearing potential is its age. It should be true for us as Christians—getting more and more fruitful through the years. Was I more fruitful 5 years ago than I am today?

In no other area is it true that we can continue to get more and more advanced: not intellectually, not aesthetically, not physically, athletically, etc.

Why does God command praise? He does not have a self-esteem problem; He doesn't need to be stroked by us. The fact is that WE need to be giving thanks and praise. Want to have a great and full day? Make it a grateful day. It's a real key for us, to be worshipers.

1. Worship delights our Father. No He doesn't need it, but he delights in it. It's like a dad whose kids are gathered around at the dinner table, and one of them whispers something kind in his ear, or turns and kisses him on the cheek—'just because!' It delights the father. The Greek word "pros-kuneo" literally means 'to turn towards + to kiss.' That's translated Worship.
Sometimes we can feel distant from God, like there's some void between us and him. In those times, rather than wondering where God is and trying to find him, just plant yourself in praise and let him find you! (John 4:23)
It also delights him because when we're in praise, we're fulfilling the very purpose for our creation. We're doing what we're made to do, and He delights in seeing it. There are 3 major reasons the church exists: A) Edification. B) Evangelization. C) Exaltation. It's all about him being exalted.
2. Worship develops our Family. Within the church there are lots of flavors, styles, theologies, philosophies; how can we come together and celebrate in unity? In praise. At the foot of the cross we can put aside our differences and celebrate the common bond we have in Him.
II Chron. 5—the dedication of the temple—it says the people sang in ONE VOICE to the Lord. Totally unified. And what happened? The glory came down. In corporate worship we are to lose our little personal identity, and delight in the unity of the family.

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3. Worship defeats our foe. II Chron. 20. Jehoshaphat story. It's a physical picture of a spiritual truth: worship to satan is like fingernails on a blackboard. He just can't stand to be around it.
4. Worship declares our faith. People say the world is turned off by a church worshipping. Not so! The world is longing for reality. They're tired of elevator music and MTV; they want the real thing. **They're not looking for culturally relevant; they want spiritually transcendent!** Like in Acts 2—there were 120 people worshipping the Lord, and 3000 were saved that day. It's the power of praise.
5. Worship dethrones our flesh. Psalm 115: 1-8. YOU BECOME LIKE whatever you worship. If you worship Britney Spears / Michael Jordan / Shaquille O'Neal—you'll start to become like them; dress like them, talk like them, play basketball like them—tongue hanging out and everything. Principle is: Who we spend time with is who we'll find ourselves becoming more like. Look at Mary in John 12: she poured the costly oil on Jesus, but Judas criticized her.
6. Worship CAN also destroy our first love. People can subtly begin to worship worship. Amazingly, worship can become an idol. In Rev. 5 we see the greatest explosion of praise in the Bible, but look why: Because they saw the lamb who was slain. The WHY behind it wasn't cool modulation, or fancy modulation. They just saw Jesus. The key isn't to work on worship; the key is to get to know Jesus better; worship will just follow. To catch a glimpse of Jesus' love will make you a worshiper. You won't have to be told to be expressive—you won't be able to help it. There's lots of instruction on HOW TO WORSHIP. But, we need to understand the nature of Worship. It's like a dating relationship. Months and months go by before holding hands, then the arm around her, then finally the escalation of oscillation—the first kiss! More and more time goes by, then finally they say, "I DO." At that point they can then fully and wholeheartedly express themselves to one another in true beauty. Principle: The more commitment there is, the more expression there will be. The problem is: We want people to be whole-heartedly expressive in worship when there's no deep commitment under the surface. It's just not logical to express affection when there's no commitment; imagine me kissing all over Megan before we ever started dating—it'd be ridiculous. I never would've married her...
We need to watch out for manipulation, but also for Duplication. Look at Mat. 15: the Canaanite woman cried out to Jesus, "Son of David," using Jewish terminology. She's not being real; she's just using the lingo, the church words. Jesus walks on by. Finally she says, LORD HELP! And He does. Still today we try to imitate other godly people's worship—how they raise their hands or intonate their voice. We've got to be real, and truly worship God.

And as we do, we will become like the psalmist said, like a flourishing palm tree, growing more and more fruitful and productive as the years go by. Amen.