

ARMED FOR WAR Discipleship Course

SECTION 5 – Intimacy With God

Lesson 16 - Rightly Approaching God Part 2

You don't come to God your way; we come to God His way.

You don't get saved your way; you get saved His way. You don't get saved in the name of Buddha. You don't get saved because you did some little dance or praise. You get saved when you make Jesus Christ the legal right of authority over your life. You don't pray your way; you pray His way. You pray in the name of Jesus. Go ahead and try to pray in the name of Steve. It isn't going to work. Go ahead and try in the name of Mickey Mouse. It isn't going to work. You pray in the name of Jesus. He told us how to get saved, He told us how to pray, and He told us how to approach His presence.

Malachi 1:6-8 “ *A son honors his father,*

And a servant his master.

If then I am the Father,

Where is My honor?

And if I am a Master,

Where is My reverence?

Says the LORD of hosts

To you priests who despise My name.

Yet you say, ‘In what way have we despised Your name?’

7 “ You offer defiled food on My altar,

But say,

‘ In what way have we defiled You?’

By saying,

‘ The table of the LORD is contemptible.’

8 And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice,

Is it not evil?

And when you offer the lame and sick,

Is it not evil?

Offer it then to your governor!

Would he be pleased with you?

Would he accept you favorably?”

Says the LORD of hosts.

God is saying, “If I’m a Father, where’s My honor? If I’m a Master, where is My reverence? You are bringing Me a lame, unacceptable sacrifice.” And the Lord spoke to me and He said, “But this is how My people are doing today. They don’t honor Me and they don’t reverence Me.”

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We say, “Well, Brother Steve, we don’t bring animal sacrifices.” No, we bring a sacrifice of praise. There is nothing that enters us more into the deep intimate throne-room presence of God than our worship and our praise of Him. It opens the door.

In what two ways can we bring an acceptable sacrifice to God? (Psalm 100:4)

We come before Him with worship and with praise. We enter His gates, the Bible says, with thanksgiving. We enter His courts with praise.

God is not just coming up with flippant words here church. The gates and then the courts, and then the inner courts, and then the holy place, and then the holy of holies. He says, “Do you want to get to where My manifested presence is, which is in the holy of holies? You want to get there? You are going to have to come through the gates first. You are going to have to come through the courts first. And you can’t get through the gates without thanksgiving. And you can’t get through the gates without praise.” We worship God His way, not our way.

1 Chronicles 16:23 *Sing to the LORD, all the earth;
Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.*

The Bible tells us to sing to get into His presence. You have to do it His way.

Psalms 32:11 *Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous;
And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!*

Psalms 47:1 *Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples!
Shout to God with the voice of triumph!*

God is telling us this is how we are to come before Him. He is telling us what He likes.

God instructed us not to bring Him a lame sacrifice. The Bible says we bring a sacrifice of praise. (Hebrews 13:15) But often we bring a lame sacrifice. A lame lamb is what we are bringing. What do I mean by that? God says clap. The Bible says sing unto the Lord, to shout unto God. It says lift up holy hands. It says praise the Lord with a dance. Then Jesus says, “If any man loves Me he will obey My command.” (John 14:23)

The Bible says in the Book of Deuteronomy to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and your strength. (Deuteronomy 6:5) To love God with all your strength, according to Jesus’ definition, means that you are going to obey God with all your strength. Obey Him in the area of worship. So then we are going to sing with all of our strength. We are going to clap with all of our strength. We are going to shout with all of our strength. We are going to lift up hands with all of our strength. We are going to dance with all of our strength. But when we come in Sunday after Sunday and we sit there offering God less than what He has commanded us to bring thinking He will be pleased that we simply showed up, God is not pleased. He asks, “Would you

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offer that to somebody you want to impress? Would you offer that to a government authority; to the President?”

When you go before the president you are going to give him your best. When you go before famous people you are going to give them your best. But we go before God Sunday after Sunday after Sunday and we give Him this lame, half-baked so called sacrifice that is not a real sacrifice of praise. We sing a few songs. We do a few motions. Maybe we move a little bit. Five or ten percent of us in our fired-up churches might even hop a little bit. There is only a small percent that are passionately going after God. The rest are just sitting back and being predominately spectators and then we are wondering why we are not having the outbreak of revival; why are we not having the outbreak of the manifested presence of God.

God says to go ahead, bring that kind of gift to your governor and see if he will receive you.

Malachi 1:9-10 “ *But now entreat God’s favor,*

That He may be gracious to us.

While this is being done by your hands,

Will He accept you favorably?”

Says the LORD of hosts.

“ *Who is there even among you who would shut the doors,*

So that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain?

I have no pleasure in you,”

Says the LORD of hosts,

You claim to be honoring God, and yet you shout more for your sports team than you do for Him. You get more excited about a sale at Macy’s than you do for Him. You get more excited about a movie coming out. You will stand in line for two hours to see the latest movie, but you can’t even honor Him by showing up to church on time ready to praise, ready to worship. You arrive fifteen minutes late, and then you leave fifteen minutes early. You can’t even honor Him with your tithe. And you think He will accept you favorably?

This may sound too harsh, but I am telling you it is why the church is still sick. I’m telling you why we’re dying of cancer all over the churches. I’m telling you why there isn’t revival. I’m telling you why the sin in the church is as much as outside the church. I’m telling you why the

same percentage of kids in the church are doing drugs and drinking alcohol. Their parents are not serving God, are not worshiping God, are not honoring God. And God can’t put His favor on those who dishonor Him.

If we come before His presence the proper way we will have His favor. There is so much sin in the church because we haven’t learned to honor God and we are in delusion to think that because we have a lot of money, and because we have big buildings, and because we have big crowds that we have the favor of God. But God says we have been offering Him a lame sacrifice. We have been offering Him nothing that costs us anything.

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How are we to approach God if we want His favor?

If we want His favor we must honor Him, we must reverence Him. We must come and worship Him with all our heart, all our mind, all our soul, and all our strength, and He will open up the floodgates of heaven for us.

When we refuse to worship God His way we are publicly dishonoring Him.

Psalm 150:1-6 *Praise the LORD!*

Praise God in His sanctuary;

Praise Him in His mighty firmament!

2 *Praise Him for His mighty acts;*

Praise Him according to His excellent greatness!

3 *Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet;*

Praise Him with the lute and harp!

4 *Praise Him with the timbrel and dance;*

Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes!

5 *Praise Him with loud cymbals;*

Praise Him with clashing cymbals!

6 *Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.*

Praise the LORD!

1 Samuel 15:22 *So Samuel said:*

“Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,

As in obeying the voice of the LORD?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,

And to heed than the fat of rams.”

He is looking for your obedience. We must praise Him with everything. Praise Him with all that you got. Praise Him with all of your might. Sing, dance, shout, act clamorously foolish. One of the main words of praising means to act clamorously foolish. That word clamorously means to shout loudly or make a great noise. It means we are going to rave about God all the time. You're going to shout.

God knows how He made us. It's easy for your mind to drift when you are praising with little effort. But when you get yourself fully wrapped up in it, it is hard to think of anything other than Him when you are shouting to Him. Maybe that's why God wants you to shout.

Think about it this way. If you had any bit of wisdom when you are being intimate and romantic with your wife, you find out the things that she likes. And, if you are smart, you are gonna do the things that she likes because that makes her happy, and then she wants to do things that you like and it makes you happy. And it's a very happy experience. But if you just go in to that type

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of intimacy and do what you like, she isn't going to like it. She will resent it. She will begin to have a headache every other day. She's not gonna want it. Do you understand? Because you are busy doing what you want. If you want to touch her, you want to get close to her, you want to be intimate with her, you want to get what you want, then you better do what she wants, what she likes, what gets her attention.

Well how much more so with God? We need to learn how to romance the throne of God, how to get close to Him, and to find out what He likes. He likes shouting. He likes clapping. He likes dancing. He likes people being clamorously foolish. He likes people leaping and spinning under violent emotion. He likes singing. He likes all those things. Yes, He also does like it when you get on your knees.

He said there is a right way to approach Him. We enter His gates with thanksgiving. Do you want to come before God right? Then start with this one simple thing; thank Him. Thank Him for everything. Thank Him in everything. Start thanking Him. Do you know how often we come just griping? We come to prayer time griping. We come to church griping and complaining, griping in our hearts. We are not truly grateful. We're dissatisfied. We are complaining. That is arrogance and that's pride. He wants true gratefulness.

What is one of the great keys of how to always be grateful?

[One of the great keys of how to always be grateful is the revelation that the only thing we deserve is an eternity in hell.](#)

We think we deserve so much, but we deserve nothing but to burn in hell. That's all I deserve. That's all any of us deserve. It's by the grace of God and the mercy of God that we get anything else. If you will keep that attitude, that the only thing you deserve is an eternity in hell, everything else is a blessing. You become grateful for everything, grateful in everything.

God is touched when we are truly grateful. He wants to open the treasuries of heaven. He wants to open up His secrets. He wants to open up His abundance when we are truly grateful to Him.

If we want to get to the Holy of Holies we must first enter His courts with praise. We have to praise Him His way. Stop going in there with this lame sacrifice. Lift up holy hands. Dance before Him. Shout, sing, make a joyful noise. Sing a new song unto God with all of your heart, all of your mind, all of your soul, all of your strength. Don't bring God a lame sacrifice. Bring Him a great sacrifice. Bring Him something that costs you something.

When the crowd is focused on worshipping God and exuberant in their worship and passionate about going after Him you know how strong His presence gets. You know how powerful it is. You know how many miracles break out. And you also know when you have people barely move and you can't get them to move, you know how dead the service is. Why? Because they are dishonoring God. The reason the presence of God falls when people passionately go after

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Him is because they are honoring Him in their praise. They are bringing Him a sacrifice that is worthy of Him. It's obedience. It's a sacrifice of praise. If you want to approach God you better approach God His way.

We have to approach God His way, not our way.

We have to worship His way, not our way.

Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and see if He will lift you up. If He wants me to raise my hands, I'm going to raise my hands. If He wants me to dance, I'm going to dance. He told me to shout, I'm going to shout. He told me to get on my knees, I'm going to get on my knees. I'm going to obey Him, I'm going to follow Him, I'm going to passionately worship Him. I'm going to sing to the Lord with all of my might. I'm going to go after Him because it honors Him. Do you want to get close to God? You must come His way.

For Further Study:

Hebrews 9:24 *For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us*

Hebrews 10:1 *For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.*

Matthew 15:8 *These people draw near to Me with their mouth,
And honor Me with their lips,
But their heart is far from Me.*