

Why Does God Tells Us to Praise Him?

Is He Insecure?

Is God a Moral Monster—part 1

April 8, 2018

DAY 1: What is pride?

1. The atheist, Richard Dawkins said, “God is obsessed with his own superiority over rival gods.”
2. I was talking to an agnostic about a year ago and he asked, “Seth, why does God insist on people praising Him? This seems small of God. Is He that insecure? Does He need the praise of everyone to feel good about Himself?”

3. Is God “proud?” We should stop and define both “pride” and “humility.”

4. “Pride” is an inflated view of oneself. Pride takes more credit than credit due. It thinks itself better than it really is.

5. What then is “humility?” Humility is an honest assessment of ourselves, which includes both our strengths and weaknesses. Below each of the verses, jot down what strikes you about humility:

Romans 12:3 (RSV) For by the grace given to me I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned him.

1 Corinthians 4:7 (RSV) For who sees anything different in you? What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?

6. Which brings us back to the question about God. Does He think more of Himself than He should, and that’s warranted?

Exodus 34:6 (RSV) The LORD passed before him, and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,

DAY 2: Worshipping God's benefits

2 Samuel 22:31 (RSV) This God -- his way is perfect; the promise of the LORD proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.

1. Because God is a perfect being, how He thinks about Himself is exactly right. In this sense, God is not proud. true view of Himself.

2. Since He is perfect in every way, He is worthy of worship. He is deserving of worship.

3. But it is easy for man to misconceive “worship” as megalomania on God’s part. Actually, though God is worthy of worship, He tells us to worship Him FOR OUR GOOD! He does NOT need worship.

Deuteronomy 4:39 Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other.

⁴⁰ Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the LORD your God gives you for all time.

4. In reality, every human being worships something or someone. That worship has an effect on our lives. It affects:

- a. Our heart,
- b. What we value,
- c. What we believe will bring us joy,
- d. Purpose,
- e. Goals
- f. Thinking, and
- g. Our emotional state.

5. Centering our hearts on anything else except God will eventually come around to bite us, really hard.

Jeremiah 2:5 This is what the LORD says: "What fault did your fathers find in me, that they strayed so far from me? They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves.

6. Worshipping God has the power to keep our hearts centered, and that has a very useful and satisfying effect!

Proverbs 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

DAY 3: Is there a biology of belief? Is there a rationality of belief?

1. Some strident atheists try to explain the preponderance of religion all around the world, through all the millennium.

a. Some point to a “religion gene,” that, for them, sadly predisposes people toward religion. To these folks, the “religion gene” is like a computer virus. Or some look at this as being “hard-wired” toward religion,

b. Some point to the gullibility of human nature. “People will be anything and everything, even myths.” Richard Dawkins calls this “the God delusion.”

2. Ironically, God’s design of life and human nature includes a type of “hard-wiring.”

Jeremiah 31:31 (RSV) "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah,

³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD.

³³ But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

³⁴ And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

3. What strikes you about Jeremiah 31:33?

4. While some atheists talk about the “*biology* of belief” what they cannot see is the **rationality** of belief. To align yourself with the design of something is rational.

5. What if we were designed to relate to God? If that was true, then the most rational thing you can do is direct your life toward Him.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 God has placed eternity in our hearts.

6. There is something about our nature that knows that there is transcendence in the universe, that this life is not all there is, that there is meaning to the world. We sense it, hunger for it, and search for it.

7. That “forces” us to look up, since we intuitively know that to “create our own meaning” to life is delusional. It simply isn’t enough to satisfy the heart.

DAY 4: Aligning ourselves with God. Getting in touch with reality.

1. If God exists, and He has indeed placed eternity in our hearts, then the most natural thing to do would be to align ourselves with Him. This is just getting in touch with reality.

2. The bible tells us that everybody *values* something *supremely*. It may be God, another god, an idol, a person, a career, being right, fitness, money, vacations, love, something. Something will always sit at the most important person or thing in your heart, and you will naturally build your life around whatever is central to you. Now that process has a name. The bible calls it worship.

3. Why does God tell us to worship Him? For similar reasons parents insist their children not run out into the street or become enamored with strangers. When children live within the boundaries of life's reality, there is not only safety, but real life and joy can occur.

Proverbs 12:11 (NIV) He who works his land will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment.

*Exodus 20:1 And God spoke all these words: ² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ³ **"You shall have no other gods before me.***

⁴ "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments.

4. Ultimately, when God is not central in our hearts and lives, we remove ourselves from the very One we most need to meet the challenges of life, and to find real life. Because He loves us, He will not allow us to continue away from Him without making every effort to capture our attention and cause us to rethink what we're doing. (v. 5)

5. Ultimately, when God is central in our hearts and lives, He desires to pour out His blessings to us. (v. 6). Here are a few...

- a. The life of God has the opportunity to enliven us and our relationships.
- b. We know our life has ultimate meaning, since we have become part of His Larger Story.
- c. We are able to see our life from an eternal perspective. It allows us to give people and things their proper value.
- d. We have the power to overcome our faulty human nature and become people that reflect Jesus.

6. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 5: The injunction to praise God

1. When it comes to praise, in the vast majority of times it is people calling out their family, friend, or nation to praise God.

2. Praise is a spontaneous, joy and gratitude-driven exercise.

3. Praise is the place where we enjoy God, His presence and His activity in our lives.

4. After the Hebrews were delivered out of Egyptian slavery, crossed the Red Sea on dry land, and watched the destruction of the Egyptian army, Moses penned and sang this song of praise to God.

Exodus 15:2 The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.

5. David wrote a psalm of praise after God's deliverance of David from his enemies.

2 Samuel 22:4 I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies.

6. We started the week wondering about God's receiving praise. To bring this full-circle, let's close with a passage that highlights both the humility of God, and the rightfulness of giving praise to Him:

Philippians 2:5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

7. How is the humility of deity seen in these verses?

8. How is the rightness of giving Him praise seen in these verses?