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DECEMBER 1983

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

PRAISE, BLESS, WORSHIP. COURTSHIP OF THE BRIDE.

If I have told you earthly things and you believe not, how shall I tell you heavenly things? (John 3:12) Jesus used many earthly examples to illustrate heavenly truth, for example: fishing, care of sheep, sowing of seed, etc. New Jerusalem is described as a BRIDE adorned for her husband (Rev. 21:6). The church is spoken of as a BRIDE (Eph. 6:20). The Song of Solomon is presented in terms that any BRIDE or groom would understand.

The wooing of an earthly BRIDE is given as an example of the wooing of the heavenly BRIDE.

As we engage in singing and music we cross the bridge named MUSIC from SOUL to SPIRIT (MONARCH., Nov. 1983). As we move from PRAISING to BLESSING and then finally to WORSHIPING, we progress through a time tested sequence of COURTSHIP.

PRAISE, BLESS, WORSHIP

These three words are used interchangeably by most Christians, but they shouldn't be. In the Bible each has a very specific and separate meaning. Many churches will have major changes after these old ideas are understood, I think.

PRAISE means use your HAND.

BLESS means bend your KNEE.

WORSHIP means lie down PROSTRATE.

PRAISE

PRAISE, STRONG'S CONCORDANCE says that PRAISE is from the Hebrew word YADAH, meaning, TO USE THE HAND, or to HOLD OUT THE HAND. Here are three scripture examples of PRAISE.

"I will SING PRAISE to the name of the LORD ELYON" (Psalm 7:17).

"PRAISE the LORD with harp" (Psalm 33:2).

"PRAISE the LORD with trumpet, psaltry, harp, timbrel, dance, stringed instruments, organs, loud cymbals, high cymbals, breath (Psalm 150)

The HAND is involved in PRAISE, especially in playing musical instruments. It has also been suggested that the HAND was used to keep time by clapping while singing or dancing. The HAND was used in all forms of Bible PRAISE. That is not surprising because the English word PRAISE comes from a Hebrew word meaning HAND.

PRAISE involves the use of the HAND and the bending of the WRIST. HAND and WRIST are synonymous in many ancient languages.

Michelangelo's famous painting of GOD reaching down and man reaching up to TOUCH each other with their HANDS is an excellent example of PRAISE,

The practice of raising the arms and HANDS in PRAISE to GOD (to TOUCH GOD) in some churches is perfectly in order with the etymology of the word PRAISE.

PRAISE often involves singing and dancing, usually with musical instruments.

It is also possible to PRAISE on a musical instrument without the normal singing.

To PRAISE means to TOUCH (in love) with the HAND.

BLESS

BLESS is from the Hebrew word BARAK, meaning, TO BEND THE KNEE, TO KNEEL. The transfer of a BLESSING traditionally takes place while a person is KNEELING. The person of lowest authority does the KNEELING. For instance, when a king performs a Knighting ceremony, the one being knighted KNEELS before the king to receive the BLESSING. Similarly, we KNEEL before GOD in that part of the service called the BLESSING on special KNEELERS in Roman Catholic, Episcopalian and certain other churches. In those cases the person receiving the BLESSING does the KNEELING.

When a young man KNEELS before his intended bride to "pop the question" it is because he expects to receive a BLESSING from the woman.

BLESSING is a determined act of the mind or will to commit and dedicate something, which you own - to the use and ownership or service of someone else. It implies a continuing relationship. To accept such a BLESSING implies the acceptance of the BLESSER.

The meaning of the word BLESS is very close to the word GIVE (or GIFT). JESUS connected all of the thoughts together when He said, "Leave your GIFT at the altar" (Matt- 5:24). An altar is a place to kneel, a place to GIVE and receive BLESSING. With that in mind, the practice of bringing your tithes and GIFTS to the altar may be more in keeping with Biblical patterns and etymology of the words than is the practice of having ushers take up the offering.

Here are two scripture examples of give BLESSING to GOD. "I will BLESS the LORD at all times" (Psalm 34:1) and "BLESS the LORD O my soul" (Psalm 103:1).

Here are two scripture examples of receiving a BLESSING from GOD. "GOD be merciful to us and BLESS us" (Psalm 67:1) and "The LORD shall BLESS thee out of Zion" (Psalm 128:5).

The practice of bending the KNEE in giving and receiving BLESSING in some churches is perfectly in order with the etymology of the word BLESS.

To BLESS means to COMMIT (in love) while KNEELING.

WORSHIP

WORSHIP is from the Hebrew word SHACHAH, meaning TO PROSTRATE ONESELF, TO FALL DOWN FLAT.

Satan emphasized the nature of the posture of WORSHIP when he said, "All these things will I give thee, if thou will FALL DOWN and WORSHIP me" (Matt. 4:9).

WORSHIP POSTURE

The posture of WORSHIP was again emphasized on the occasion of the meeting between JESUS and the woman at the well. The conversation went: Call thy husband. I have no husband. Thou hast had five husbands, and the one you have (with whom you PROSTRATE yourself) is not your husband. You are a prophet! Where should we WORSHIP?

The subject did not change to WORSHIP from married life, because to WORSHIP is to make love in a PROSTRATE posture.

Jesus injected the subject of using different partners in love making by reference to her five husbands. She then expanded the subject of using different partners by asking the question about the WORSHIP of GOD. She asked, Where?

WORSHIP GOD IN SPIRIT, NOT BODY

The answer that JESUS gave to the woman is one of the most precious new ideas in the New Testament. He said that the place of worship is not important. Everyone thought that it was. For instance, the Ethiopian Eunuch made a very costly and strenuous trip to Jerusalem (the Temple site) "for to WORSHIP" (Acts 8:27), as Moses had commanded. JESUS told the woman at the well that WORSHIP can occur quite properly in your own hometown! That revolutionary concept was never known before. If the Eunuch would have known that, he could have saved a lot of money and trouble.

To explain the new concept of WORSHIP, JESUS said that GOD is a SPIRIT, and WORSHIP of GOD is for the SPIRIT. GOD is omnipresent and that means that GOD is everywhere in the whole world all at once. WORSHIP of GOD can take place everywhere in the world, not just in Jerusalem where Moses and the Jews had thought.

Moses' law demanded that the castrated Eunuch be turned away from WORSHIPING GOD at the Temple in Jerusalem (Deut. 23:1), because he could not pass the physical test. Later, Philip brought the same good news to the Eunuch. WORSHIP of GOD is not

for the body, it is for the SPIRIT. Though the Eunuch could not perform procreative acts in his body, he certainly could in the SPIRIT (Acts 8:33, Isaiah 53:8, 56:3-S 54:1). The Eunuch returned to Ethiopia and procreated the COPTIC Church with millions of members.

To WORSHIP means to CREATE (in love) while PROSTRATE.

PROGRESSIVE LOVE

The acts of PRAISING, BLESSING and WORSHIPING are progressive acts of love making. One step naturally follows the other and nothing should be left out.

FIRST - PRAISE

First, to PRAISE involves reaching out to TOUCH the object of your attention with your HANDS, accompanied by words, which describe the desirable positive attributes of your partner. PRAISING-TOUCHING ranges from simply holding hands to a passionate kiss and embrace. The inclusion of musical instruments in PRAISE indicates that mood music is appropriate at this stage.

To PRAISE-TOUCH shows that you are there and that you care.

SECOND - BLESS

Second, to BLESS involves SOUL (mind) COMMITMENT and the transfer of a promise, gift or token while bending the KNEE (KNEELING). BLESSING-COMMITMENT ranges from a simple promise, or simple expression of desire for the future, all the way to a complex marriage contract. To BLESSCOMMIT shows that you intend to be dependable in the future and that you plan to care and provide for that which you plan to create. The church needs to become keenly aware of the importance of this step and restore it to service. Also, young men and women in our young adult society must return to commitment (marriage) before they continue on to the creative act of worship. There are far too many babies being born who are not cared for because there was no commitment before creation.

THIRD - WORSHIP

THIRD, to WORSHIP involves consummation of your love through a creative act while in a PROSTRATE position. In the body realm the creative act produces the new life of a baby. In the physical realm it could produce a new fence, house, job, raise, garden or a newly painted and decorated room. In the soul (mind) realm it might produce a new idea, thought, poem, song, speech, teaching, letter or book. And in the SPIRIT-GOD realm it will produce new SPIRITUAL LIFE.

It is notable that even in this age, Roman Catholic priests lie PROSTRATE, face down on the floor during their ordination ceremony.

UNFULFILLED

We have detected among many Christians a desire to WORSHIP GOD but we have also noticed an absence of knowledge of the steps leading to WORSHIP. WORSHIP will be most fulfilling when all the progressive acts are included.

There seems to be a tendency for many to want to receive a BLESSING from GOD such as healing or prosperity without first TOUCHING GOD through PRAISE.

There also seems to be a tendency to want to WORSHIP GOD without BLESSING Him by making the required mental and/or physical commitment of a GIFT or TOKEN.

Learning and practicing these progressive acts may help you to receive what you want and need. The problem may have been yours, not GOD'S. GOD is not an unresponsive cold fish, GOD will respond warmly when YOU use the Biblical pattern of PRAISE, BLESS, WORSHIP.

SOUL or SPIRIT?

PRAISING and BLESSING involve the use of the mind (soul). The mind is used to think about the object of our affection. We think, rationalize, analyze, reckon, magnify, identify and describe our partner while we PRAISE and BLESS. But in the intense emotion of WORSHIP, thinking processes do not occur. We become lost in love.

When a man says that he WORSHIPS a certain woman, he means that he loves her intensely with all of his HEART. As far as he is concerned, nothing else matters.

The same goes for the WORSHIP of GOD. It also is an intense emotion in the HEART (SPIRIT) and nothing else matters.

Everyone who studies the function of the mind (SOUL) will tell you that no one can think clearly while they are emotional. Reckoning processes stop when emotion rules.

No one can WORSHIP while they are THINKING.

No one can THINK while they are WORSHIPING.

No one reads a book while loving someone.

The processes are incompatible.

PRIVATE or PUBLIC?

To WORSHIP is to love. WORSHIPERS give themselves to their partner completely. They WORSHIP with utter abandonment. They become oblivious to their surroundings. They go "out of their minds (SOULS)".

Therefore, WORSHIP should take place in an environment where the absence of the ability to think (in the mind (SOUL) realm) does NOT place the WORSHIPER in a position of jeopardy.

Also, if a person is called upon to use their reckoning (thinking) powers during the process of WORSHIP, the WORSHIP is ruined. To avoid problems, take the phone off the hook! In other words, go away from the crowd to a private place like a bedroom (prayer closet in the SPIRITUAL realm) and shut the door.

It is nearly impossible for a sensitive person to ignore the presence of a group (congregation) of people while standing in the midst.

PRAISING is a corporate (public) experience. In fact, the PRAISER often enjoys having some other person hear about the desirable attributes of the object of his attention.

BLESSING is more personal and private though it sometimes requires witnesses. You might say that BLESSING is like a family affair for very close friends.

WORSHIP is one to one, it is personal and private.

WORSHIP IN THE SONG SERVICE

No one has ever gone into the SPIRIT and out of their SOUL (MIND) while singing the first, third and fifth verses of a song. That's because you have to keep your mind on the mechanics of the song every second. Experience indicates that Christians do NOT get into the SPIRIT while songbooks are in their hands. They enter the emotional realm of the SPIRIT while they are singing simple repetitive Psalms by HEART (in SPIRIT). Love songs must be memorized and sung from the HEART (SPIRIT), or else they will not be effective.

PRAISE songs involve keeping time with the clapping of the hands or tapping of the feet. Raising and waving of the hands is also indicated. They describe the interaction of the PRAISERS with each other and with GOD.

BLESSING songs involve a request for something like healing. They also include a dedication of one's self to the service of GOD.

WORSHIP songs are slower and more intense. They describe the attributes of GOD and do not make reference to the needs or the attributes of the WORSHIPER.

It is best to sing a few PRAISE songs, which describe the condition of the congregation. Then sing a few BLESSING songs, which describe the interrelationship of the individual with GOD. Then sing a WORSHIP *song*, which refers to GOD only. After arriving at WORSHIP do not go back to a BLESSING or to a PRAISE song. It is a real let down if you do. It is all right to start another WORSHIP song, but don't go back.

POSTURE NOT BINDING

Some people might mistakenly think that it is necessary to assume all of the physical postures that we have described in order to receive the desired results in the SOUL (MIND) or in the SPIRIT (HEART). That is not so. The SOUL (MIND) can BLESS without the body KNEELING. The SPIRIT (HEART) can WORSHIP without the body lying PROSTRATE. But, the Holy Spirit directed that the Bible be written in parables and

metaphors using the posture and *position* of the body going through acts of *love* making in order to illustrate the various steps of loving GOD in the SPIRIT.

Many churches use the appropriate posture of the body while practicing PRAISING and BLESSING. Very few Christians assume the appropriate posture for WORSHIP, This is probably because of the intimate nature of the PROSTRATE position and the intimacy of the act of WORSHIP itself. *Social* custom also probably contributes to reluctance to PROSTRATE oneself. In Arab countries PROSTRATION during WORSHIP is not only socially acceptable, it is demanded.

PARABLES

The Bible is full of parables and metaphors that use stories from the natural realm to illustrate eternal SPIRITUAL truth and principle. And so we trust that there has been no offense at our using the same techniques to illustrate the very intimate and sensitive parts of this lesson.

This ministry does not exist apart from your BLESSINGS (gifts).