

**PRAYER: AWE & INTIMACY**  
**Discussion Guide 2, Week of Jan. 20**

**For Small Groups:** Did you set an alarm to Pray Daily last week? If you did, share about your experience.

**AWE: PRAISE SERMON SUMMARY**

**I. Praise, not want, is the foundation of prayer.**

*You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you;  
I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you,  
in a dry and parched land where there is no water.  
I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.  
Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.  
I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.  
I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. (Psalm 63:1-5)*

**II. Praise is the expression of love for God Himself, and a right understanding of who God is.**

**III. Praise includes noticing God in your world, feeling gratitude, and expressing it to God.**

Sometimes it works in the opposite order: we praise God because He is worthy even when we don't feel it, and then notice God's goodness and feel grateful.

Some instructions for praise, from 1 Chronicles 16:8-36:

- vs. 8 Give praise to the Lord*
- vs. 9 Sing to Him*
- vs. 11 Look to the Lord and His Strength*
- vs. 12 Remember the wonders He has done*
- vs. 24 Declare his glory among the nations*
- vs. 29 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name*
- vs. 29 Worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness*
- vs. 34 Give thanks to the Lord for He is good*
- vs. 35 Cry out "save us, God our Savior"*
- vs. 36 Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting.*

**QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION**

1. Share something you recently felt gratitude or joy about. How do you usually respond to that feeling: enjoy it, keep it to yourself, tell someone, journal, praise God, etc.?

2. Talk about how to praise God. How do you already praise God? What questions or struggles do you have? How do the ideas in 1 Chronicles 16 help you? (See Sermon Summary, above)
  
3. Do you think your family background affects how you experience joy, gratitude, and the inclination to praise God? How might your past experiences make praise easy, awkward, or difficult to express for you?

4. In *Reflections on the Psalms*, C.S. Lewis says:

*"I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed. It is frustrating to have discovered a new author and not to be able to tell anyone how good he is; to come suddenly, at the turn of the road, upon some mountain valley of unexpected grandeur and then to have to keep silent because the people with you care for it no more than for a tin can in the ditch; to hear a good joke and find no one to share it with."*

Discuss Lewis' perspective on praise. Do you think joy is incomplete when we don't express it? How does praise affect us in bigger ways, more than in our prayer life?

5. Our challenge this week is to Praise Daily, to include praise in your daily prayer time. Share about what you hope for your prayer time this week.
  
6. Close with reading Psalm 150 together. Then pray together for a few minutes, praising God with short, sentence prayers. Consider this a practice session; don't let discomfort or embarrassment prevent you from praising God. Praise Him because He is worthy of praise!