

God is Worthy of Praise

January 1

Bible Study Guide 5

Bible Background • [Psalm 33:1–9](#)

Printed Text • [Psalm 33:1–9](#) Devotional Reading • Psalm 146

Aim for Change

By the end of this lesson, we will: EXPLORE God as the Creator of all things; APPRECIATE His provisions and goodness; and COMMIT to making praise of God a major focus in our lives.

In Focus

Ajani and Eric, two recent college graduates, were walking through the city streets. They stopped in a coffee shop and stood in line behind a man who was unkempt and filthy. Eric shook his head and whispered to Ajani, “See, that’s why we are blessed. We are educated, hard-working, and will never end up on the streets like this lazy bum.” Ajani turned to his friend and asked, “Do you really think his situation is a result of laziness?” Indignantly, Eric responded, “Yes, this dude is lazy and probably on the streets because he refuses to work.” Later on that evening, the two young men went to their local church Bible study. Seated in the back of the church was the unkempt gentleman. Eric leaned over to Ajani and both turned to watch the man walk to the front of the church and take the microphone. To their surprise, he was a Christian and former Wall Street investor who had lost his job. He began to tell his story about how he quickly rose to the top and enjoyed many of the finer things in life. He also told about how he just as quickly fell to the bottom. The pastor had invited him to speak to the congregation about praising God through good and hard times.

In this life, many believe that what sustains them comes from their own efforts, education, significant accomplishments, and hard work. We must remember that God is the ultimate Creator and sustainer of life. In what areas do you see God’s sustaining power?

Keep in Mind

“By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth” ([Psalm 33:6](#)).

Words You Should Know

A. **Rejoice** ([Psalm 33:1](#)) *ranan* (Heb.)—To shout for joy, to cry out; a cause to sing with triumph and gladness.

B. **Righteousness** (v. 5) *tsedakah* (Heb.)—Honesty, justice, community loyalty.

Teacher Preparation

Unifying Principle—Word and Works. People of faith know that life and the things that sustain it come from a gracious, just, steadfast, and loving God, not by our own methods and works. In the final analysis, who are we? We are God’s creation, and He is the Creator of all things.

- A. Read the Focal Verses and meditate on all of Psalm 33 to become familiar with the context of this lesson.
- B. Read the Daily Bible Readings as part of your daily devotions. Ask God to reveal eternal truths to your heart concerning this week’s lesson.
- C. Review the information in The People, Places, and Times; Background; and In Depth to gain further insight for the lesson.

O—Open the Lesson

- A. Open with prayer using the Aim for Change objectives.
- B. Summarize the In Focus story and discuss the importance of praising God, our Creator.
- C. Discuss how people of faith understand that God is the object of worship.

P—Present the Scriptures

- A. Have volunteers read the Focal Verses.
- B. Use The People, Places, and Times; Background; At-A-Glance outline; In Depth; and More Light on the Text to clarify the verses.

E—Explore the Meaning

- A. Review and discuss Search the Scriptures, the Discuss the Meaning questions, and the Lesson in Our Society section.
- B. Ask students to share the most significant point they learned and how to use that point this week.

N—Next Steps for Application

- A. Complete the Make It Happen, Follow the Spirit, and Remember Your Thoughts sections.
- B. Remind students to read the Daily Bible Readings in preparation for next week’s lesson.
- C. Close in prayer, thanking God for His presence in our lives.

Worship Guide

For the Superintendent or Teacher

Theme: God is Worthy of Praise

Song: “To God Be the Glory”

Devotional Reading: Psalm 146

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Praise, Worship, and Trust
([Psalm 146:1-4](#))

TUESDAY

Those Whose Help Is the Lord
([Psalm 146:5-10](#))

WEDNESDAY

The Limits of National Power
([Psalm 33:10-17](#))

THURSDAY

Hope in God's Steadfast Love
([Psalm 33:18-22](#))

FRIDAY

Creation a Witness to God's Plan
([Romans 1:16-20](#))

SATURDAY

Doing Justice and Kindness with Humility
([Micah 6:6-8](#))

SUNDAY

Hymn of God's Greatness and Goodness
([Psalm 33:1-9](#))

KJV

[Psalm 33:1](#) Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.

2 Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.

3 Sing unto him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise.

4 For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth.

5 He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.

6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.

8 Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.

9 For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.

NLT

Psalm 33:1 Let the godly sing for joy to the LORD; it is fitting for the pure to praise him.

2 Praise the LORD with melodies on the lyre; make music for him on the ten-stringed harp.

3 Sing a new song of praise to him; play skillfully on the harp, and sing with joy.

4 For the word of the LORD holds true, and we can trust everything he does.]

5 He loves whatever is just and good; the unfailing love of the LORD fills the earth.

6 The LORD merely spoke, and the heavens were created. He breathed the word, and all the stars were born.

7 He assigned the sea its boundaries and locked the oceans in vast reservoirs.

8 Let the whole world fear the LORD, and let everyone stand in awe of him.

9 For when he spoke, the world began! It appeared at his command.

The People, Places, and Times

Lord. The word “Lord” in English Bibles is the rendering of the Hebrew *adonai* (**ah-doe-NIGH**) or the Greek *kurios* (**CURE-ee-os**). The Hebrew personal name for God, Yahweh, is usually translated “LORD” because God’s actual name is not to be pronounced and ‘adonai is read instead of Yahweh. God’s rule and authority as Lord rests ultimately upon His creation and ownership of all things and people ([Psalm 24:1–2](#)). His total supremacy over nature is emphasized by His being called the Lord over earthquakes, wind, and fire ([1 Kings 19:10–14](#)), stars ([Isaiah 40:26](#)), beasts and sea monsters (Job 40–41), and primeval chaos ([Psalm 74:12–14](#), [89:8–10](#)). The prophets indicated that God is Lord or King of history because He directs the affairs of humans and nations ([1 Kings 19:15–18](#); [Isaiah 10:5–9](#); [Amos 9:7](#)), and He is the Lord of universal morality (Ezekiel 25–32; [Amos 1:3–2:16](#)). But He is especially the Lord of Israel; His express will represents their civil and religious constitution and demands absolute obedience ([Deuteronomy 27:8–9](#)). Israel continued to hope for the future, when a triumphant Day of the Lord would right its wrongs, punish its oppressors, and restore its glory.

Background

At the center of the Bible is the book of Psalms. This book contains an assortment of songs and prayers that express the very heart and soul of humanity. Within the book we find a diversity of human experiences. The writers pour their hearts out to God. The psalmists confess their sins, doubts, and fears, and they ask God for assistance in times of trouble. The writers praise and worship the Lord. In the Psalms, we find individuals crying out to God, exposing their vulnerabilities and fragile hearts. Because of the authors’ honesty, people throughout history have come to the book of Psalms again and again for comfort during times of struggle and distress. Additionally, through the psalmists’ writings, people in search of hope and comfort discover how to rise from the depths of despair to new heights of joy and praise. Throughout the book of Psalms, people are reassured that the power of God’s everlasting love and forgiveness fuels their desire to march forward along this heavenward journey. Psalm 33 reiterates the theme that since God is the Creator, Lord, Savior, and Deliverer, He alone is worthy of our trust and praise. Because God is dependable and faithful, we can rejoice, sing, and give Him thanks that no living creation deserves. The psalmists help us discover a less superficial way to communicate with God, one that guides us to a deeper and genuine relationship with our Lord.

In Depth

1. Rejoice in Praise ([Psalm 33:1–3](#))

This passage of Scripture illustrates how praise is the appropriate response to acknowledge our dependence on God. Praise is essentially offering ourselves to God, including our musical gifts. The first two verses suggest what is important about praise is more the motive and goal than the means. Instrumentation is appropriate, as is the human voice singing or shouting. The motive for praise is recognizing God’s reign, and the goal is to offer oneself and one’s best gifts to the source of their existence. The singing of a “new song” is also associated elsewhere with the celebration of God’s reign ([Psalm 96:1](#), [98:1](#)).

2. Reasons for Praise (vv. 4–5)

As is typical in the songs of praise, the invitation is followed by reasons for praise. God’s “word” and “work” are manifestations of His own self. God is elsewhere described as “upright,” which suggests that His people derive their identity from Him; in other words, our “godliness” is only a reflection of the characteristic of God, not deriving from our own fleshly goodness. In verse 5, we see the goal of God’s speaking and acting in terms associated elsewhere with His character and rule: His righteousness and justice is manifested in His steadfast love for humankind. We must remember human beings are a creation made by a creative genius, God Almighty.

3. Reverence in Praise (vv. 6–9)

God is all-powerful and deserving of our reverence. Our society rarely thinks of personal or political achievements in terms of God’s will. We tend to think our successes are a result of our hard work, not any wisdom greater than our own. In fact, we think nations are saved by their great armies and security is achieved through war. Humans fail to recognize the limitations of our mortal capabilities: our limited resources, power, wisdom, and virtue. We forget that God rules the world and we do not. Instead of praising God, our first inclination is to congratulate ourselves on our successes. Humility puts us in position to trust in God rather than human power, virtue, and wisdom. In light of God’s sovereignty, the things and people that seem so obviously powerful—politicians, armies, and weapons—are exposed as mere illusions. The real power behind the universe, human history, and personal existence is the steadfast love of God, which fills the earth and is revealed ultimately by His forgiveness of sin.

Search the Scriptures

1. In what ways do you see God’s righteousness and justice expressed today ([Psalm 33:5](#))?
2. How do believers demonstrate that they fear God (v. 8)?

Discuss the Meaning

Knowing God is the Creator of all things, how does this change our perspective regarding ourselves, our church, community, one another, and the world as a whole?

Lesson in Our Society

Our society places great emphasis on individualism, self-promotion, and achievement. We are bombarded by media frenzy that models self-entitlement. God desires that we do hard work, remain vigilant, strive for excellence, and acquire some level of success. However, we must remain humble and faithful. So how do we accomplish success without becoming arrogant and ungrateful? What do we need to do to ensure our focus remains centered on our Creator, who is our faithful provider?

Make It Happen

Start tomorrow morning and read Psalm 33. Get a notebook and write a sentence or two and respond to what you read. Make it like a love letter, with your response in words of worship. Think about all the things you are

thankful for God doing in your life. If you cannot think of anything, at least thank Him for saving you. Praise God and share your outcome with the class next week.

More Light on the Text

Psalm 33:1–9

1 Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.

The psalmist begins Psalm 33 with a command to rejoice in the Lord. Unlike in some other psalms, this command is not given to all of creation, but specifically to the righteous. The reason for this command is because praise is comely (Heb. *na'veh*, **nah-VEH**), or suitable for the upright (Heb. *yashar*, **yah-SHAR**). The word “upright” literally means to be straight. When used for people, it is used to describe those who are righteous and pleasing in the sight of God.

2 Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.

Next the psalmist points to the instruments and means of praise. The righteous are commanded to praise the Lord with the harp (*kinnor*, **keen-NOR**); the word in Hebrew literally means to twang. This instrument was possibly a zither with a large frame and gave tension to the strings when plucked. The next instrument mentioned is the psaltery, which was a lyre and shaped similar to a vase. They are also commanded to praise Him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings, which was an instrument similar to the lyre.

3 Sing unto him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise.


The people are to use their voices to sing a new song, inspired by the deliverance and mighty acts of God. They are also commanded to play skillfully and with a loud noise. The word “skillfully” (*yataw*, **yah-TAHV**) means to be good and pleasing. The sense used here is to play with high merriment and joy. This would also be accompanied by a loud noise (*teru'ah*, **teh-roo-AH**) or a shout of joy.

4 For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth.

Next, the psalmist shifts to point out the underlying reasons for praise. The Word of the Lord is right, which is the same word used to describe the character of those giving praise. He goes on to add that the Lord’s works are done in truth (Heb. *'emunah*, **eh-moo-NAH**). The word means more than just accuracy of facts; it means faithfulness. Everything He does is trustworthy and reliable.

5 He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.

Two things that the Lord loves is righteousness and judgment. Righteousness (*tsedaqah*, **tse-dah-KAH**) is adherence to a moral standard. Judgment (*mishpat*, **mish-PAHT**) is properly a verdict, here meaning justice or what is right and fair. Both are reasons for praising God, because He is morally pure and has the best in mind for humanity.

The entire earth is full of the goodness (*hesed*, **heh-sed**) or steadfast love of the Lord. This love is covenant love that is tied to God’s character and His promises. It is a love that is unending and not dependent on the other’s love. It is solely based on the covenant. Since the entire earth is in view here, the psalmist must not be referring to the covenant at Sinai, but the previous covenant with Noah, which was directed to the whole earth ([Genesis 9:1–17](#) ).

6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. 7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.

The description of the act of creation focuses on the means used. There was nothing and then the Lord spoke—a testimony to His creative power, and another reason to praise Him.

He also gathered the waters of the sea. This is a reference to either separating the waters from the dry land or possibly the Exodus. Either way, it shows that God is sovereign over His creation, including the watery depths. This is significant because in the ancient Near East, the sea was believed to be the home of powerful beings opposed to God and full of chaos. The psalmist refutes this belief; God is sovereign over it all.

8 Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. 9 For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.

The Lord should be feared on a universal level. He is not a territorial God resigned to one province. He should be feared (Heb. *yare'*, **yah-RAY**), or held in reverential awe. All the inhabitants of the world must stand in awe (Heb. *gur*, **GUR**) of Him. The first word for fear is common in the Old Testament to refer to fear, whether the object is a person ([Genesis 32:11](#)) or, more frequently, God ([Exodus 14:31](#)). The second word only occurs a few times, and here it is used for emphasis. By using two synonyms for fear in conjunction with two synonyms for the world, the psalmist describes the complete awe of God that all of creation should exhibit. This fear is a result of acknowledging the power of God in relation to His Word. When God speaks, it is done. Whatever He commands stands fast. If the Lord has this much power, then He is a God to be feared by the whole earth.

Say It Correctly

Comely. **KUM**-lee.

Psalterly. **SAL**-te-ree.