

# I Will Magnify God With Thanksgiving

by John Piper

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*To magnify God is to make His greatness appear as great as it really is, by acknowledging and displaying that He is the giver and benefactor.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 34:3, Psalm 40:16, Psalm 48:1, Psalm 51:17, Psalm 77:11, Psalm 103:1, Romans 1:20, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Ephesians 1:18, 1 Peter 5:5

**Topics:** "Thanksgiving", "Glorifying God"

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## Description

John Piper preaches on the importance of magnifying God with thanksgiving, emphasizing that true children of God long to glorify Him and His Son Jesus Christ. He highlights the significance of gratitude in magnifying God, as it acknowledges Him as the giver and benefactor, contrasting those who magnify God with those who magnify themselves. Piper urges listeners to have a broken and contrite heart, recognizing their need for God's mercy and grace, which leads to genuine thanksgiving and the magnification of God's greatness.

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## Transcript

Psalm 69:30-32

I Will Magnify God with Thanksgiving

I will praise the name of God with a song

I will magnify Him with thanksgiving.

This will please the Lord more than an ox

or a bull with horns and hoofs.

Let the oppressed see it and be glad;

You who seek God let your hearts revive! (Psalm 69:30-32)

"I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify Him with thanksgiving." It is a mark of all the true children of God that they long to magnify the God of their salvation.

May all who seek Thee rejoice and be glad in Thee.

May those who love Thy salvation say continually,

"Great is the Lord!" (Psalm 40:16)

O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together. (Psalm 34:3)

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. (Psalm 48:1)

This was the heart cry of every Old Testament saint. And now it is the longing of every true Christian. "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10: 31). That is, do everything so that God might be magnified. If you have met the living Son of God, Jesus Christ and have joined yourself to Him in faith, then does not your heart say with Paul, "It is my eager expectation and hope that I shall not at all be ashamed but that with full courage now as always Christ will be magnified in my body whether by life or by death." Therefore, I say it is the mark of all God's true children that they long to magnify the God of their salvation and his Son Jesus Christ.

Let us pray.

Gracious and all-knowing God and Father of our Lord Jesus, discerner of every heart, before whom we are all laid bare, we confess the weakness of our longing to magnify You. And we acknowledge that not everyone here has this longing. Some here are still outside the eternal family, more eager that they themselves or other things be magnified more than you. O God, I pray that in these next moments you would so speak as to awaken a longing in all of us to magnify you. Beget saving faith that loves to do all things to your glory. Lord, the heart of stone is impregnable by me or any man. But you have promised to take out the heart of stone and put in the heart of flesh, to turn hardness into tender joy. Almighty God, may nothing in anyone's mind stop you this morning from performing this radical surgery to make us new--that we might all leave this place magnifying you with thanksgiving. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

David said, "I will magnify God with Thanksgiving." The word "magnify" can be used in two different senses. It can mean: make something appear greater than it is, as with a microscope or a magnifying glass. Or it can mean, make something that may seem small or insignificant appear to be as great as it really is. This is what our great telescopes help us begin to do with the magnificent universe which once upon a time spilled over from the brim of God's glory. So there are two kinds of magnifying: microscope magnifying and telescope magnifying. The one makes a small thing look bigger than it is. The other makes a big thing begin to look as big as it really is.

When David says, "I will magnify God with thanksgiving," he does not mean: "I will make a small God look bigger than He is. He means: "I will make a big God begin to look as big as He really is." We are not called to be microscopes, but telescopes. Christians are not called to be con-men who magnify their product out of all proportion to reality when they know the competitor's product is far superior. There is nothing and nobody superior to God. And so the calling of those who love God is to make his greatness begin to look as great as it really is. The whole duty of the Christian can be summed up in this: feel, think and act in a way that will make God look as great as He really is. Be a telescope for the world of the infinite starry wealth of the glory of God.

That God is great in every way that greatness is to be valued should be obvious to everyone. As the apostle says,

Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible nature, namely his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So men are without excuse for, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or give him thanks (Romans 1:20,21).

It ought to be obvious. But it isn't, due to the sinful insensitivity and forgetfulness of our hearts. Many of God's greatest attributes and most awesome and loving deeds pass in one ear and out the other without causing the slightest ripple of emotion within our hearts. Seeing we do not see, and hearing we do not hear. When our hearts are in such a condition we need to beg God (like Paul did) to open the eyes of our hearts that we might know (that is, really know and feel) the hope to which He has called us, and what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe. . . . (Ephesians 1:18, 19).

But even when God graciously removes the scales from our eyes so we can be moved by his greatness, we are still prone to straightway forget what we have seen.

Haven't you all had experiences like I have in which you feel the goodness and faithfulness of God so intensely that you leap in the air and shout and hug your kids or hug somebody and say, "O God, how could I ever doubt you after this? How could I ever again despair of your help?" And then some short time later you find yourself doing just that--discouraged, and feeling no confidence in the goodness and greatness of God. Why? Because we are so prone to forget the evidences of God's goodness which we ourselves have experienced, not to mention the evidences in Scripture.

Isn't that why David preaches to himself:

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits (Psalm 103:1,2).

Soul, do not forget what God has done for you. Instead, soul, do what Asaph does in Psalm 77:11.

I will call to mind the deeds of the Lord; Yea I will remember Thy wonders of old. I will meditate on all Thy work. And muse on Thy mighty deeds. Thy way, O God, is holy. What God is great like our God?

We are called to be telescopes: people who make the greatness of God seem as great as it really is. This is what it means for a Christian to magnify God. But you can't magnify what you haven't seen or what you quickly forget. Therefore, our first task is to see and to remember the greatness and goodness of God. So we pray to God, "Open the eyes of my heart," and we preach to our souls, "Soul, forget not all His benefits!"

But suppose that we have seen and do remember the greatness of God's power (Psalm 147:5; Revelation 11:17; Nahum 1:3); and wisdom (Romans 11:33; Proverbs 3:19) and mercy (Psalm 57:10; 103:11), what sort of response will magnify Him best? What must the human telescope do in order to cause God to appear as great as He really is?

Our text in Psalm 69:30 answers: "I will magnify God with thanksgiving." When we give thanks to him from our hearts, God is magnified. Gratitude glorifies God.

Why does it? The answer is simple: Givers are more glorious than receivers. Benefactors are more glorious than beneficiaries. When we thank God we acknowledge and display that He is the giver, He is

the benefactor. We pay him a high compliment. When my sons are angry at each other they do not say, "Thank you," very easily. "Karsten, tell Benjamin Thank you." So he mumbles, "Thank you." "Benjamin, say, 'You're welcome.'" So he mumbles, "You're welcome." And we all do this. Why? Isn't it because saying "thank you," is a compliment; it magnifies people: You did a good thing for me; I'm indebted to you. But when you are angry at somebody you hate to pay them a compliment; you want to belittle them not magnify them; you hate to think of them as your benefactor.

Therefore, when gratitude springs up in the human heart toward God, he is magnified as the wealthy source of our blessing. He is acknowledged as giver and benefactor and therefore as glorious. But when gratitude does not spring up in our hearts at God's great goodness to us, it probably means that we don't want to pay Him a compliment, we don't want to magnify Him as our benefactor.

And there is a very good reason that human beings by nature do not want to magnify God with thanksgiving or glorify Him as their benefactor. The reason is that it detracts from their own glory, and all people by nature love their own glory more than the glory of God.

In Psalm 35:27 David says, "Let those who desire my vindication shout for joy and be glad, and say forever more, 'The Lord be magnified!'" And he contrasts this group of people who love to magnify the Lord with another group in verse 26, "Let them be clothed with shame and dishonor who magnify themselves against me." There are only two groups of people in the world whose differences from each other are of any eternal significance: those who love to magnify God and those who love to magnify themselves. At the root of all ingratitude is the love of one's own greatness. For genuine gratitude admits that we are beneficiaries of an unearned bequest; we are cripples leaning on the cross shaped crutch of Jesus Christ; we are paralytics living minute by minute in the iron lung of God's mercy; we are children asleep in heaven's stroller. Natural man hates to think of himself in these images: unworthy beneficiary, cripple, paralytic, child. They rob him of all his glory by giving it all to God. Therefore, while a man loves his own glory, and prizes his self-sufficiency and hates to think of himself as sin-sick and helpless, he will never feel any genuine gratitude to the true God and so will never magnify God, but only himself.

There is an interesting connection between our text (Ps. 69:30-32) and Psalm 50 and 51 which bears this out. The text goes on, "I will magnify God with thanksgiving. This will please the Lord more than an ox or a bull with horns and hoofs." Why is that? Why does the offering of some expensive animal please God less than offering genuine thanks? Psalm 50:9-14 suggests an answer:

I will accept no bull from your house nor he-goat from your folds, for every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the air, and all that moves in the field is mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you for the world and all that is in it is mine. Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving. And pay your vows to the most high.

One of the reasons God was not pleased with the offering of an ox or bull or goat was that the giver often thought that his gift was enriching God, was supplying some deficiency in God. But what seems like an act of love among men--meeting someone's needs--is an insult to God. "Every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills." You can't give me a bull or an ox! They are already mine.

Here is man's self-exaltation again. Even in the practice of religion he finds a way to preserve his status as giver, as self-sufficient benefactor. In the very act of worship he belittles God by refusing to assume the part of a receiver, an undeserving and helpless beneficiary of mercy.

As an antidote to this arrogance in worship, God prescribes the opposite: "Offer to God a sacrifice of thanks! Acknowledge God as the giver and accept the lowly status of receiver. This is what magnifies God. That's why the last verse of Psalm 50 (23) says, "He who brings thanksgiving as his sacrifice honors me." So when David says in Psalm 51:17, "The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise," he is simply describing the only sort of heart from which the sacrifice of genuine thanksgiving can flow. Until the stiffness of man's arrogant neck is broken and the hardness of his self-sufficient heart is softened he will never be able to offer genuine thanks to the true God and therefore will not magnify God but only himself.

The last verse of our text (v. 32) says, "Let the oppressed see it and be glad; you who seek God let your hearts revive."

Even though the words we have spoken so far have been bad news for those intent on maintaining their pride, their love for their own glory and their commitment to their own self-sufficiency, they are not bad news to the oppressed. To those who have come to the end of their rope, who have fallen exhausted from pulling at their own bootstraps, our text is good news.

What are God's demands? What does an all-sufficient God, who owns and controls all things demand from the creature he has made? His demand is great, but it is not that we be great, but that we cease to be great in our own eyes and become small that He might appear great. "The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit. A broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." "It is not the well who need a physician but those who are sick." Jesus has nothing to do for those who insist they are well. He demands something great: that we admit we are not great. This is bad news to the arrogant, but words of honey to the oppressed who have given up their charade of self-sufficiency and are seeking God.

For by such He will be found; and He will pour into their empty hearts such a love as they have never known. And there will arise freely and joyfully a sense of gratitude so genuine and so visible that God will be greatly magnified as the merciful Giver of everything we have and are.

I beseech you all by the mercies of God, "Clothe yourselves all of you with humility . . . for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that in due time He may exalt you" (1 Peter 5:5-6).

O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together (Psalm 34:3).

I will praise the name of God with a song. I will magnify Him with thanksgiving (69:30).

Bless the Lord, O my soul and all that is in me, bless his holy name!

Bless the Lord, O my soul and forget not all his benefits (103:1,2).

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