

COURSE: Spiritual Exercises

LESSON #6: WORSHIP

Part 2: Flourishing through Worship

This is Part 2 of this multi-part current lesson we are studying together on the spiritual exercise of WORSHIP.

If you haven't watched [Part 1 on The Call To Worship](#), I would encourage you to do that.

You can find both the Lesson Notes and the link to the YouTube video [here](#):

<https://daveparksblog.com/2021/03/20/worship-part-1-the-call-to-worship/>

This Part 2 of WORSHIP will come from Psalm 92. If you don't have your Bible open in front of you, I encourage you to do that now. Our lesson content and comments will come from the words of Psalm 92.

The theme of Psalm 92 and the title of this lesson is **Flourishing through Worship**.

When anything is flourishing, that means it is thriving, doing well.

- If a business is flourishing, it is booming, growing, and prospering.
- If your health is flourishing, you are healthy, full of strength and energy, and free from the afflictions and ravages of sickness and disease. *I realize that many of you are not flourishing in your physical health. I am going to be specifically and personally addressing you in the hopes that I can encourage you to continue to give yourself to the worship of God. Please stay with me through the course of this lesson. I want to encourage you especially to continue in your fellowship with God and your worship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Please don't allow your chronic afflictions and weaknesses discourage you from seeking and worshipping God. You can and will flourish spiritually through your worship of God, and I pray that you will.*

- If a plant is flourishing, it is growing, strong, and abundantly bearing the fruit that it bears. *I'm going to give you a heads-up about this Psalm 92: those who are unceasing in their worship of God are said to flourish in this way. Verses 12-14 promise "The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the LORD; they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green..."* We'll talk more about what that means when we get to it.
- *In fact, if you want to know what flourishing through worship is and what it looks like, it is announced to us in the very opening words of the whole Book of The Psalms in chapter 1, verse 3: "He is like a tree planted by the streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither."*

So, let's read Psalm 92 together:

**It is good to give thanks to the LORD,
to sing praises to your Name, O Most High;
²to declare your steadfast love in the morning,
and your faithfulness by night,
³to the music of the lute and the harp,
to the melody of the lyre.
⁴For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work;
at the works of your hands I sing for joy.
⁵How great are your works, O LORD!
Your thoughts are very deep!
⁶The stupid man cannot know;
the fool cannot understand this:
⁷that though the wicked sprout like grass
and all evildoers flourish,
they are doomed to destruction forever;
⁸ but you, O LORD, are on high forever.
⁹For behold, your enemies, O LORD,
for behold, your enemies shall perish;
all evildoers shall be scattered.
¹⁰But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox;
you have poured over me fresh oil.**

- ¹¹ My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies;
my ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants.**
- ¹² The righteous flourish like the palm tree
and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.**
- ¹³ They are planted in the house of the LORD;
they flourish in the courts of our God.**
- ¹⁴ They still bear fruit in old age;
they are ever full of sap and green,**
- ¹⁵ to declare that the LORD is upright;
He is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.**

So, let's develop our theme of **Flourishing through Worship**.

A PSALM. A SONG FOR THE SABBATH

Let's begin with those ancient words that are at the head of the Psalm: **A Psalm. A Song for the Sabbath**. We call those words a superscription because they are written over the psalm or at the head, the beginning of the psalm. These words are ancient words. They are not added by the editors of whatever edition of the Bible you are reading from. They are as old as the oldest manuscripts and copies of the Scriptures we have.

And so, what these words tell us is that when the psalmist wrote this psalm and delivered it to the leaders of their ancient worship services, he was telling them what he wanted them to do with the psalm. This was his purpose for giving it. This psalm contains the lessons he wanted the worshipers to sing, and learn, and take home with them.

So, what did the psalmist want them to do with this psalm? He wanted the leaders of their worship to sing this as a song for the Sabbath Day. The Sabbath Day was their designated day for worshiping the LORD. And since the worshipers didn't have their own copies of the Scriptures or their own hymnals, the psalmist wanted them to learn the Scriptures by singing them and remembering them.

And so, this **Psalm or Song for the Sabbath Day** was not only to be sung and offered to God on the Sabbath Day as an exercise and expression of their formal and corporate worship of the LORD, but as they sang it, they were to learn it, remember it, practice it, and live it out in the whole of their lives from then on.

“It is GOOD ... to WORSHIP!”

So how does this Psalm or Song for the Sabbath Day begin? It begins by announcing the theme of **flourishing through worship**. The theme of **Flourishing through Worship** is introduced in the word “GOOD.” You will flourish with GOOD as you unceasingly worship the LORD. You will flourish from your worship of the LORD.

The psalmist begins by announcing **“It is GOOD to worship!”**

“It is GOOD to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to Your Name, O Most High!”

Now, by announcing that it is GOOD to worship God, the psalmist is making two points:

1. **It is GOOD to worship God because it is the proper and fitting thing we should do.** Worshiping God is GOOD because it is the right thing to do. It is what we should and must do because worshiping God is the GOOD, the best response we should give God ... because GOD IS GOOD! God Himself is the summation and consummation of all that is GOOD. How many times do we read especially in the Psalms **“for the LORD is GOOD!”** In fact, in Psalm 119.68, we read: **“You are GOOD and do GOOD...”** So since God is Himself GOOD, and since everything He does to us and for us is GOOD, then it is a GOOD thing to recognize and confess His Goodness through our worship of Him.
2. **But I think the psalmist wants us to learn something else: the worship of God is GOOD FOR YOU!** In other words, your worship of God will also return

GOOD back to you! GOOD will come back to you through your very worshipping of God. The LORD will make you flourish through the very exercise of your worship! HOW? Through your very worship of the GOOD God, you will receive more of HIM! I say again, this is where the theme of **Flourishing through Worship** is announced and introduced. And it is developed throughout the remainder of this psalm ... as the psalmist promises from God how the righteous will flourish through the exercise of their worship.

Next, the psalmist gives us three instructions or directions that we can do in our worship that will yield flourishing to us:

1 - There are two ways that we express our worship to God:

1. **“it is good to give thanks to the LORD...”** Giving thanks to the LORD is our expression of recognizing that God is GOOD, and that He is the Giver of all the good things that we have and enjoy.
2. **“to sing praises to your Name, O Most High...”** In this expression of worship, we sing our praises to Him.
 - Notice here also that our attention and worship is turned from addressing Him in the third person – “to the LORD” – to addressing Him directly and personally in the second person: “to *your* Name, O Most High.”
 - And when we call Him **“O Most High,”** we are confessing His Deity, His Majesty, His Supreme Glory – and that He is Most Highly-Exalted of all and over all. The psalmist will repeat this confession of God’s O Most High-ness in verse 8: **“but you, O LORD, are on high forever.”**

2 - Also, when we worship God, we worship Him at all times of every day.

“to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night.” This is why I have said that this Psalm or Song of the Sabbath Day is not just for the Sabbath Day of worship, not just in the service of worship itself; but by singing it and learning it

on the day of worship, we are also learning to take it home with us so we can continue our unceasing worship of the LORD **every morning and every night** of every day.

- And what we are thinking about and meditating on every morning and every night of every day is God’s Goodnesses: **“your steadfast love”** and **“your faithfulness.”**
- *Regardless of what we are experiencing or going through, regardless of how we feel in our physical bodies, or what afflictions we may be suffering, or even what mood or frame of mind we may be in mentally, we just know that God is GOOD all the time ... and He is making all things work together for GOOD to us through our unceasing worship of Him.*

3 – And then, the third instruction for our worship is: when we worship God, we must employ every instrument and faculty of our being to worship Him.

“to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre...” OK, I know that not all of us are so gifted and talented that we can play musical instruments. Some of you are, and some of you can. And we appreciate your service in music, and you minister to us immensely when you do. But, even if you can’t play any musical instrument, you can employ the most beautiful instrument that God has given to all of us: and that is, your voice! Even if you can’t carry a note in the proverbial bucket or pitch a single note on key, God loves to hear the sound of your voice as you worship Him! When you voice your worship and praises to God, He just loves to hear you. Whether you are in the congregated assembly or worshiping alone and in private at home, use every instrument and faculty of your being to give your praises to our GOOD God. “Tune my heart to sing Thy praise!” If your heart is in tune and on key, your song of praise will be beautiful and pleasing to the LORD!

And when you worship God in this way, He will receive it, smile, and say: “That is GOOD – that is VERY GOOD!” And He will say it to your soul in a way that you will

know it. And God will send His pleasure right back to you and will make your heart and soul flourish.

He will return your worship of Him back to you in the flourishing of your joy!

In fact, that is exactly what the psalmist says next, verse 4: **“For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy!”** Do you see this? In your worship, you are meditating on the GOODNESS of God and the GOODNESS of all His works. Isn't that what the psalmist is saying? **“For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy!”** What are you thinking about when you worship God? What about God are you worshipping? You are worshipping God for who He is and what He has done: **“your work...the work of your hands.”** You are contemplating, confessing, and celebrating God's GOODNESSES in His creation, in His redemption in Christ and His Gospel, and in His providences – all the ways He loves you, saves you, and provides for you, and supplies all your needs! And, as you contemplate, confess, and celebrate the GOODNESS of God, He feeds His love, and grace, and favor back into your soul. He makes you to know *“This God is my God. He has done all His works on my behalf. He is giving Himself to me and for me!”* And this worship fills you with gladness and joy! Your worship of God is making your gladness and joy flourish! You are already flourishing! God is making you flourish and giving you His flourishing through your worship of Him. And your joy will continue to increase as you continue to worship.

Your flourishing is limitless because God's greatness that we are worshipping is beyond our comprehension!

Read verse 5: **“How great are your works, O LORD! Your thoughts are very deep! You cannot and never will exhaust or plumb the depths of God’s steadfast love and His faithfulness that you are worshiping.**

I’m thinking here of Paul’s outburst of worship in Romans 11.33:

“Oh, the depths of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways!”

Or again, his worship in prayer for the Ephesians [and for us!] in Ephesians 3.16-19:

“...that according to the riches of His glory He may grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being,¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

God’s works of creation, redemption, and providences – which we are worshiping – are vast, awe-inspiring, all-inclusive of everything He has done ... and we can’t even begin to wrap our minds around them all or grasp them with our understanding. Just contemplating, confessing, and celebrating the greatness of God and all His works is beyond our range and capabilities to take them all in. But God thrills us with flourishing as we worship what we do know about Him, and seek more of Him, and immerse ourselves in His worship!

But, here’s yet another way God makes us flourish through our worship of Him: and that is, He gives us vision to see, and insight to understand, and the capacity to receive and experience the flourishing that He gives!

Verse 6 will begin a contrast between the temporary and fleeting ‘flourishing’ that those who do not worship God seek and think they enjoy ... versus the true, lasting, soul-satisfying flourishing that God gives back to those who worship Him.

After the psalmist has already said in verse 5, **“How great are your works, O LORD! Your thoughts are very deep!”** ... you can supply the word ‘however’ before verse 6: **[However...but] The stupid man cannot know; the fool cannot understand this:**

Now before we go on, we have to ask ourselves, “What in the world does he mean by calling those who do not recognize and worship God ‘stupid’? Can we even use that word to refer to anyone? What does he mean by ‘stupid’ and ‘fool’?” Well, be sure of this, the psalmist is not referring to anyone’s IQ or intellectual deficiency. That is not what in view here. What the psalmist is referring to is the spiritual perception and perspective that those who do not worship God have of God. He is simply saying that they are ‘void of good sense.’ They don’t know GOOD when they see it. They think evil is good. Their values, thinking, and perception of what is good, and their perspective on what is good and what is not is distorted and perverted by their sinful nature and unbelief.

Since we’re talking here in this psalm about God being GOOD and the worship of God being GOOD and GOOD for our flourishing – *those who do not worship God do not recognize or confess that*. They do not seek God. They put no value on God. They do not love or worship God. Psalm 10.4 indicts those who do not worship God:

**“In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek Him; all his thoughts are,
‘There is no God.’”**

Do you see that? Yes, you do, if you worship God. But the wicked do not. We know that God is GOOD, and that our worship of God is GOOD and GOOD for us. God is making you flourish with understanding by showing you that difference.

You know how we sometimes say, “*You don’t know what’s good for you*”? That means that whatever this person is seeking or doing will only ruin them. What they think is good for them will fail them and harm them and destroy them.

So, here’s the contrast of flourishing between those who do not worship God and those who do. Let’s pick up verse 6 again and connect it with verse 7: **“The stupid man cannot know; the fool cannot understand this [*cannot understand what?*] that though the wicked sprout like grass and all evildoers flourish, they are doomed to destruction forever...”** THAT is what they cannot know or understand. They are seeking their own ‘flourishing’ in their own pride, self-desires, self-will, in their own earthly prosperity, and accomplishments, and pleasures. They think they are flourishing. But what they do not know and cannot know and will not recognize and accept is that *though* they seem to be flourishing and appear outwardly to be flourishing in their own ways, **“they are doomed to destruction forever.”**

The psalmist goes on to say [verse 8]: **“but you, O LORD, are on high forever.”** Do you see the same “forever” in verses 7 and 8? The wicked are **“doomed to destruction ‘forever,’ but you, O LORD are on high ‘forever.’”** This same LORD who is **“on high forever”** is the same **“O Most High”** that we worship [see verse 1]. Our LORD reigns in holy Majesty and sovereign LORDship forever. *“You, O LORD, are the One who judges and determines the forever flourishing and ends of all people.”*

Then again in verse 9, the psalmist picks back up and repeats what he saw from his worship of God in verse 7: **“For behold, your enemies, O LORD, for behold, your enemies shall perish; all evildoers shall be scattered.”** [This is what they cannot know and cannot understand...]

I just want to repeat and re-emphasize here that **God will give you this flourishing of wisdom and insight to see the GOODNESS of worshiping Him ... through your worshiping!** In other words, the LORD will give you personal reassurances of the riches of your inheritance in Him. And that reassurance will make you flourish with hope and joy.

Asaph in Psalm 73: another illustration...

Let me give you another psalmist's testimony of how God gives you the flourishing of your wisdom through your worship. Go with me to Psalm 73. The author of this psalm is one of David's chief leaders of worship, Asaph. In Psalm 73, Asaph begins by confessing that **"Truly God is GOOD to Israel, to those who are pure in heart."** *But this confession comes only after he had been worshiping God in spirit and in truth. God made his understanding of what true flourishing is to flourish through his worship of God! He didn't go to worship that day with this same flourishing of hope and joy.*

As Asaph tells us in the verses that follow, he was in a deep depression of doubt about the worthwhileness of his continued worship of the LORD. He had begun questioning the good and benefit of his worship. Why? Because he began to look around at the apparent 'flourishing' of those who were not worshiping God. He began to envy them. It looked to him like everything they touched turned to gold. They appeared to be prospering in their sin and wickedness. They gave no thought to God. In fact, they defied God and scoffed at God – and at Asaph for worshiping God. They didn't give their lives and hearts to worshiping God. Asaph had.

In Psalm 73.13-14, he even began questioning whether he had wasted his life by worshiping God: **"All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence. For all the day long I have been stricken and rebuked every morning."** Then God radically changed his perception and perspective on what true flourishing is.

And how did this radical change in his perception and perspective come about? It came about through worship!

Psalm 73.16-19

But when I thought how to understand this,

it seemed to me a wearisome task,

¹⁷ until I went into the sanctuary of God;

then I discerned their end.

¹⁸ Truly you set them in slippery places;

you make them fall to ruin.

¹⁹ How they are destroyed in a moment,

swept away utterly by terrors!

How does God give us flourishing through worship?

Now, we're coming to the home stretch. I hope you have hung in with me this far. Please stay with me for the rest of the story ... because in verse 10 on through the rest of this psalm, the psalmist is going to give us the other side of the contrast he began in verse 6: the contrast between the apparent, temporary, fleeting flourishing of those who do not worship God ... versus the true, lasting, soul-satisfying flourishing of those who do unceasingly worship God.

In verses 6-9, the psalmist describes the temporary, fleeting flourishing of the wicked with their inevitable and inescapable 'forever' doom and destruction. Then, in verse 10, he begins with "**But...in stark contrast to those who don't worship You...**" Now, he will give us the promises and assurances that God will give us true, lasting, and soul-satisfying flourishing through our unceasing worship of Him.

How does the LORD give us unceasing flourishing through our unceasing worship?

In what ways does the LORD make us flourish through our worshiping of Him?

Here's how...

Verse 10: **“But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox; you have poured over me fresh oil.”** Let’s paraphrase these two metaphors this way: *“But You have made me to flourish with courage, strength, and confidence in You – like the horn of the wild ox. You have refreshed me and revived me, You have re-invigorated me with joy and desire for You with the anointing of Your Holy Spirit. You have given me a sense of my belonging to You. You have filled me with the joy of knowing that You have accepted my worship and that You are pleased with my worship!”* And also, by confessing that the LORD had **“exalted my horn like that of the wild ox,”** he was thanking and praising the LORD [see verse 1] that He had given him the assurance, and confidence, and the strength to push back victoriously even against those who were mocking him and ridiculing him for his commitment to unceasingly worship the LORD! *Some of you may need that flourishing of your courage and confidence in the LORD.*

In verse 11, he returns to reiterate what the LORD had shown him about the inevitable and inescapable end of those who do not worship God [see verses 7 and 9]: **“My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies; my ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants.”** He had seen and heard this contrast in their eventual ends through his worship. The seeming, apparent, temporary, and fleeting ‘flourishing’ of those who do not worship God quickly wilts away and dies – and they are destroyed forever. The true, soul-satisfying flourishing of the worshiper of God grows, thrives, and lives on forever!

Verses 12-14: **“The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like the cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the LORD; they flourish in the courts of our God. They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green...”**

Listen to all those ‘flourish’ words!

- **“flourish like the palm tree”** – the palm tree grows straight up, it is abundant with nourishing fruit – the palm date which is so rich in nutrients that it will sustain life for a long time even without any other foods ... and can continue to bear its fruit for a century, it is exceedingly resilient to wind and storm, it is an oasis tree and a most welcome sight to the weary traveler or sojourner.
- **“grow like the cedar in Lebanon”** – the cedars of Lebanon were legendary for their strength and durability.
- **“planted in the house of the LORD”** – your worship of the LORD will establish you and make you unmovable, give you deeply-planted roots of conviction and confidence in the LORD. When you are “planted” in the house of the LORD, you belong there. You are at home there. You grow and flourish there.
- **“flourish in the courts of our God”** – well, ‘flourish’ says it for itself: flourishing is thriving, being full of wellness, growth, vigor, and vitality.
- **“still bear fruit in old age”** – your flourishing will keep on growing, increasing, and bearing fruit as long as you do ... I want to say more about this here in a minute...
- **“ever full of sap and green”** – ALWAYS full of life and vitality! Your flourishing in worship will come back to you in unceasing abundant supply through you unceasing worship of the LORD!

Now, to you who are suffering your various weaknesses and afflictions – and maybe even discouraged in your worship ... to you who may even be homebound and can’t attend the worship services you so love and long for...

Do you even doubt that this flourishing promised here still belong to you and apply to you? Especially, what about that one that promises: **“They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green”**? You have given your life to the worship of the LORD and your service in His church. You love the services of worship, and all your life

you have been active and faithful and fruitful. But now, your body has grown weak and frail. You suffer from chronic afflictions. Your strength has been diminished and your activities are so limited. You feel like you are useless now. You think the times of your usefulness and fruit-bearing are over.

THAT’S NOT TRUE! THAT’S NOT WHAT THE LORD PROMISES HERE! He promises “They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green!”

Your old-age weakness may prevent you from being as active as you have been and used to be – but nothing prevents your worship of the LORD and your flourishing through that worship! Do you remember singing that verse of “How Firm a Foundation” that sings:

*“Even down to old age, all My people shall prove
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love.
And then, when gray hair shall their temples adorn
like lambs they shall still in My bosom be borne.”*

“So,” you ask: “What fruit can I still bear in my older-age years and in my present weakness?”

OK, now read that last verse of Psalm 92, verse 15: **“...to declare that the LORD is upright; He is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.”** This is a summary of the fruit you have borne and are still bearing by your life of unceasing worship of the LORD which you are still bearing.

By your unceasing worship of the LORD, God will give you unceasing flourishing:

...by feeding His own GOOD Presence back into your soul with His fullness of life and refreshment!

...by making your lifetime of worship and service to Him your living, lasting witness and personal testimony to His worthiness of our worship!

...and by inspiring all those who know you and see you to follow your example of life-long worship of the LORD!

Yes! even in your older-age and physical weaknesses and frailties, you are still bearing all these fruits!

And, as the LORD gives you unceasing flourishing through your unceasing worship of Him, your flourishing will declare that He is faithful to His children, He will be the source and supply of all the strength they need, and He will fulfill ALL His covenant word and promises!

You are singing, **[“He’s never failed me yet!”](#)**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_DIV-F_iMOw

HERE IS THE LINK TO THE YOUTUBE VIDEO FOR THIS LESSON:

<https://youtu.be/cvD5fAZRpjk>

HERE IS THE LINK TO THE BLOG POST AND LESSON NOTES:

<https://daveparksblog.com/2021/03/31/flourishing-through-worship-psalm-92/>