

“Singing Out Loud”

I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; before the “gods” I will sing your praise. I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name.”

We all think . . . deep down (come on, even you have to admit it), that we are ‘American Idols.’ Whether we sing opera in the shower, country on our tractor, rap in the basement, or old rock songs on our walk; we all want to believe that we are the next, best American Idol. In fact, I would bet that all of us have at one time even toyed with the idea that maybe, really, we are going to audition for Idol. DON’T. Come back to your senses. I am not that good a singer. Say it . . . “I AM NOT THAT GOOD A SINGER.”

Yet, do you want to be a star singer. Do you want to impress someone? Do you want to be heard and really feel good about it? Sing to God. That’s what David says in Psalm 138. Too many “idols” sing to bring attention to themselves. Isn’t that, anyway, what it is all about? Don’t idols want to make themselves idols so that they become rich and famous? Ever wonder if David was a singer? He was a warrior – that we know. He was a man who shed blood – that we know. He could write songs – that we know. He probably had a pretty commanding voice – but that we don’t know. Ever wonder if David had a voice that fit the songs he wrote? He wrote such wonderful praise songs to his Lord. But we don’t know whether he had a voice that would command the attention of hundreds at Carnegie Hall. We don’t know if he could have the crowd rocking at the Grand Olde Opry. And we don’t know if he could stir the hearts with a wonderful rendition of the Star Spangled Banner at the Major League Baseball game down the street.

But we do know this. He was a man after God’s own heart. He loved his Lord. He had a heart for his God who protected him. He had a heart for his God who gave him all he had, including forgiveness for the horrible sins that he had committed – of adultery and murder and lousy parenting and, at times, lousy governing. David had no fear to sing praises to the God of forgiveness and salvation before ‘gods’ and ‘idols’ of other countries and empires. He served that God with all the heart and soul he could put into it. And, though he stumbled at times, he drove himself to his knees in repentance and gave God the one sacrifice he knew God wanted from him – a humble and contrite heart. And that’s why God could say to us who read David’s praises all these years later that he was a man after God’s own heart.

So you are not an Idol. So you can’t stir a crowd with your wonderful voice. Doesn’t matter. You can stir God with your repentant heart. It’s all about praising God and not ourselves. It’s all about bowing down in humble love and thanks to the One who created us – made us with the loving hand of a Master Potter, died for us on the cross, rose for us to assure us that we, too; would rise from our graves and live with Him forever. And it’s about doing this with a heart that places God first – that seeks God’s guidance in all decisions of life, that repents to that same God when we stumble in trying to keep His commandments, and then realizing that this is the greatest joy we can have in a world that doesn’t always have such joy.

Do you sing with your family? Do you share some of the wonderful hymns from the hymnbook around your dinner table or before tearing into the Christmas presents or the Thanksgiving turkey? One of the greatest thoughts and traditions that has always stayed with me is the demand of my mom, now in heaven for the last of my 13 years, who requested and got, her wish before the Thanksgiving meal of singing the hymn “*Now Thank We All Our God.*”

When David said ‘*with all my heart,*’ (v. 1), we really get an idea of what God loves from us. David, who had the very heart of God, who was moved to write some of the most beautiful praises to that same God, sang with all his heart.

How privileged we are to be able to praise our God. We remember each day that he is our Creator, our Savior, and our Preserver. We, too, are privileged to praise His name – “the name that is above every other name,” and at whose name “every knee should bow . . . and every tongue confess that (He) is Lord to the glory of God the Father.” Try making your own family choir around your dinner table or as a family before every one goes to bed. It may not make “Idol,” but the beauty it will mean to our gracious God goes beyond any earthly beauty.

Some Questions For Discussion:

- 1. What does “praising God with all your heart” mean to you and your family?**
- 2. In our daily lives, how do we ‘bow down’ toward God’s temple?**
- 3. Share some examples of God’s love and faithfulness to your family.**

Prayer: Almighty Father, we thank you that you have given us voices to sing our praises to you. Let us never be at a loss to think of the wonderful ways you have shown your love to us. By our sides each day, let our lives be “songs of praise” to you. Amen.