The Joy Of Worship

Bible Background • PSALM 84
Printed Text • PSALM 84 | Devotional Reading • 2 CHRONICLES 29:25–30

Aim for Change
By the end of this lesson, we will DISCOVER why the psalmist expressed joy in worship, FEEL the joy of worship, and PROCLAIM the living presence of God throughout creation.

In Focus
“Make a left turn up here,” Mardelle told the driver. It had been nearly 40 years since she had been back to the family home in South Carolina. After college, she got married to Theodore, who soon became a Foreign Service Officer for the U.S. State Department.

Over their life together, Theodore had been given multiple postings outside the United States, all over Africa, Central America, and South America. They had only a few short years together after Theodore retired and passed away, Mardelle decided to return to her hometown and live in her parents’ house. She found herself wide-eyed on the way from the airport, taking in all the ways the neighborhoods had changed. But she was happy to see the things that were still standing, unchanged by time—the fountain in the square across from city hall, the restaurant where Theodore had proposed to her, the middle school where she first developed her love of French, which served her well in several of the places they had stayed.

And now, a warm, joyful feeling washed over Mardelle as she heard leaves crunching under the tires as the car made the turn onto the path leading to her family’s house. Ahead, she could see the gabled roof, the bay window at the front, and the wide wraparound porch. Mardelle breathed a word of thanks to God for all that had led to this moment, and a happy welcome home.

*Where have you felt most at home? Have you ever had that feeling during worship?*
KJV Psalm 84:1 How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!
2 My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.
3 Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God.
4 Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.
5 Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them.
6 Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.
7 They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.
8 O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.
9 Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.
10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.
11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.
12 O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

NLT Psalm 84 For the choir director: A psalm of the descendants of Korah, to be accompanied by a stringed instrument.
1 How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of Heaven’s Armies.
2 I long, yes, I faint with longing to enter the courts of the LORD. With my whole being, body and soul, I will shout joyfully to the living God.
3 Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow builds her nest and raises her young at a place near your altar, O LORD of Heaven’s Armies, my King and my God!
4 What joy for those who can live in your house, always singing your praises. Interlude
5 What joy for those whose strength comes from the LORD, who have set their minds on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.
6 When they walk through the Valley of Weeping, it will become a place of refreshing springs. The autumn rains will clothe it with blessings.
7 They will continue to grow stronger, and each of them will appear before God in Jerusalem.
8 O LORD God of Heaven’s Armies, hear my prayer. Listen, O God of Jacob. Interlude
9 O God, look with favor upon the king, our shield! Show favor to the one you have anointed.
10 A single day in your courts is better than a thousand anywhere else! I would rather be a gatekeeper in the house of my God than live the good life in the homes of the wicked.
11 For the LORD God is our sun and our shield. He gives us grace and glory. The LORD will withhold no good thing from those who do what is right.
12 O LORD of Heaven’s Armies, what joy for those who trust in you.

People, Places, and Times
Korah. The sons of Korah (who wrote this psalm and others) were the remnant left after their ancestor was destroyed for rebellion against Moses. The rebellion of Korah angered the Lord, and He caused the Earth to open and consume Korah and those that rebelled with him (Numbers 16:1–33). Then fire was sent to consume 250 men. The children of Korah, however, survived the judgment of God (Numbers 26:9–11). This remnant and their descendants proved faithful to God and are listed among their fellow Levites in various positions at the Tabernacle and Temple, often as singers or instrumentalists (1 Chronicles 6, 23–26).
Background
The sons of Korah were porters (1 Chronicles 9:17) and musicians (2 Chronicles 20:19) for the priests. These positions meant that they dwelt in God’s house. This physical closeness to God’s house prompted their love and desire of God in ways that others may not have felt. The sons of Korah long for the Lord’s house because they long for the presence of the Lord. Those who can live in God’s house should always respond in praise because nothing is better than being in God’s presence. There is joy experienced in worship in God’s presence, and the benefits of joyfully worshiping God are immeasurable.

At-A-Glance
1. The Tabernacle of Worship (Psalm 84:1–4)
2. The Valley of Baca (vv. 5–7)
3. Reverential Worship (vv. 8–9)
4. Joy in Worship (vv. 10–12)

In Depth
1. The Tabernacle of Worship (Psalm 84:1–4)
The Tabernacle was a sacred place where God manifested His presence and communicated His will. The physical Tabernacle of God is “amiable” or beloved because God dwells there (v. 1), and the psalmists’ souls long to unite with God. They so intently desire the courts of the Lord, that they are weakened. Their committed love for God is passionate, so their flesh cries out for God. There is an insatiable desire to dwell in the house of God, as a bird desires a nest (v. 3). The Tabernacle of God is an honored placed. Those who dwell in the presence of God should perpetually praise, worship, and adore God (v. 4).

How does your desire for the presence of God compare to the psalmists’?

2. The Valley of Baca (vv. 5–7)
Our definition of blessed should align with the Word of God. We are blessed only in God. The valley of Baca is the place of weeping or a valley of tears. Finding strength in God and having a heart fixed on God is the source of greatest blessing (v. 5) Even in sorrow and times of weeping, which we all experience in life, with God those places are made easier (v. 6). Faithful believers in God will experience the journey and grow from strength to strength (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:18). We all become stronger as we grow with God, never weaker (v. 7).

In your valley of tears, how did you keep your heart fixed on God?

3. Reverential Worship (vv. 8–9)
Recognizing God in all of His splendor should dictate how we approach Him. The reverence for God as the “LORD God of hosts” indicates the writers’ honor for God being Lord over heaven and earth’s armies. God is so vast, yet the psalmists approach God requesting attention to their prayer (v. 8). In the midst of His sovereign rule, they desire God’s ear to be attentive to them. They recognize God is their shield and protector (v. 9). We want God to look upon us when we call to Him. We must give humble attention to the majesty of God in the midst of our prayer requests. God is attracted to our reverential worship. How do you approach God in reverential worship?
4. Joy in Worship (vv. 10–12)
Any day in God’s presence is more precious than a thousand days anywhere else (v. 10). Time with God
should be the most dedicated and valued of all the time we have. No time on earth is more valuable. Our
time should not be more concentrated on temporal moments than moments with eternal significance.
The Lord our God is both our guiding light and our protector (v. 11). God gives us both grace and glory.
He guarantees that we have grace in difficult times and glory in times of success in Him (v. 11). As God’s
grace and glory is given to us, we are compelled to walk uprightly. And as we walk uprightly, God bestows
wonderful things upon us (v. 11). When we trust God, we are blessed and have everything we need (v.
12).

How have God’s grace and glory caused you to walk uprightly?

Search the Scriptures
How did your desire for God’s presence change at your conversion (Psalm 84:2)?
2. Differentiate the respect for God’s Tabernacle and Temple, and the respect for God’s house now (v. 4).

Discuss the Meaning
1. How does the reverential worship of the psalmist impact your thoughts of expressing worship
currently?
2. How do personal views of God impact how people embrace time spent in the sanctuary?

Liberating Lesson
Churches, worship settings, and liturgical styles are changing. By following what’s trending or what
might appeal to multiple generations, we can find ourselves compromising the tangible presence of God.
Worship is a lifestyle, though, and our lifestyle of worship should be reverential. Time spent with God
impacts our lives. Rationed time in God’s presence hinders the grace and glory we receive from dwelling
in God’s presence. When insatiability for God wanes, so does personal worship. We must revive our
 craving to worship God; it is the catalyst for revival in the global Church.

Application for Activation
Social Media. Family Gatherings. Work and domestic obligations. These often compete with time in the
presence of God. The psalmist longed to be in the house of the Lord; the absence of God’s presence
weakened them. Consider your time. Consider your ways. How much does your soul long for God’s
presence? Has your longing of worship grown cold? What actions must be taken to return to worship in
God’s presence?

Follow the Spirit
What God wants me to do:

_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Say It Correctly
Selah. SAY-lah.
Baca. baw-KAW.

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY
God Has Done Great Things
(Psalm 126)

TUESDAY
Joy Fulfilled in Love
(John 15:9–17)

WEDNESDAY
God's Joy is Your Strength
(Nehemiah 8:9–12)

THURSDAY
Joy Fulfilled in Christ's Sacrifice
(Philippians 2:1–11)

FRIDAY
Rejoice in the Lord Always
(Philippians 4:4–9)

SATURDAY
Fullness of Joy
(Psalm 16)

SUNDAY
How Lovely is God's Dwelling Place
(Psalm 84)