Lesson Overview

Biblical Passage
Psalm 103:1–12

Supporting Passages
Deuteronomy 5:6–15, 6:5

Memory Verse
Psalm 103:1–2

Biblical Truth
Our hearts are to overflow with praise to God in response to His great love for us.

Context
So you say that you love God. But how do you demonstrate that love? What does Scripture say about how we are to reciprocate the all-encompassing love shown to us by God? In the third lesson, students learned that loving God and loving others is our response to God’s great love. In the third and fourth lessons, students will learn how it looks to love God. Scripture is clear: One of the primary ways in which we show God our love is through worship. We know from Scripture that David had a clear understanding of who God is. David grasped the vastness of God’s love, and out of the overflow of his heart came Psalm 103. David demonstrated his thankfulness and joy through sincere worship of the Lord. Our hearts should mirror David’s. This lesson will help students understand how their worship is a response to God’s great love.

Learning Goals
• Explore Goal: Students will learn that praising God in response to His great love should be their lifestyle.
• Transform Goal: Students will personally and uniquely express their praise to God.

Prayer Suggestions
As you prepare to teach this lesson, pray for your students.
• Pray that students will know how worship is to be lived out so that others may know God.
• Pray that students will become living examples of worship.
• Pray that students will display their love for God as well as His love for others through their actions.

Biblical Commentary

Investigation
The life of the worshiper among the Hebrew people was not inclined to be a superficial act or event-driven. The people of Israel were bound to the laws of God, which had their foundation in the Shema (Deut. 6:4–5). To love God with all of your heart, soul, and strength was driven by more than just a worship event, as we sometimes stress today. Instead, worship then was meant to be a lifestyle. The whole of Deuteronomy 6 called followers in that period to make the worship of God the focus and practice of their lives as they bound it to their arms and wrote it across their foreheads and doorposts. In other words, their love of God was to be primary above all else. It was so important that they were commanded to teach their children from an early age right up through adulthood—literally all day long. This meant that in order to make such an impression, they would have to be living out worshipful lives. It would have to be constantly on their minds, filling up their entire being. From out of this context of worship as a lifestyle, David wrote the 103rd Psalm.

Importance
This passage of Scripture is important for students because it teaches that God is the very essence of love. He cares for His people in ways that we cannot comprehend or always see. But we must never forget who He is and that He is worthy of our praise and worship.

This passage also teaches the Essential Truth that People are God’s Treasure.

Interpretation
Psalm 103:1–2 David, the psalmist, had only one agenda in this particular psalm: to praise God from his innermost
being—his soul. David wanted to worship God regardless of whether he had an occasion to do so. In fact, he declared that any occasion is a good occasion to praise and worship God because the attributes and “benefits” of God can always be listed. From a Jewish perspective, David was expected and commanded to worship God—not just in one mere event, but with his very life. Every day was cause to worship God because the people of God are named as His worshipers. Their lives are to project His greatness. Their devotion and adoration are to be known under every circumstance. This is worship.

Psalm 103:3–5 David listed the “benefits” of God, beginning with redemption. True, even if God had not been willing to redeem His people, He would still be worthy of our praise and worship because of who He is. Yet this was the beginning point because it met humanity in the midst of its mess. Sin had separated people from God. Had it not been for God’s love and mercy, there would be no redemption, and we would not be here to offer Him praise.

It is only the one worthy of worship who forgives, heals, redeems, crowns, satisfies, and renews. All of these are attributes of redemption, and we can only receive this redemption from God alone.

It is likely that in verse 3 the psalmist used “heals all your diseases” in reference to sin. To be sin-sick requires healing and restoration. God’s forgiveness provides the necessary cure.

God is the God of the covenant. And although His people betrayed Him and broke His covenant, God never broke His part of the agreement. Instead, he always sought to reach them in order to bring them back into relationship with Him. This was done through His forgiveness and renewal.

Psalm 103:6 Righteousness and justice go hand in hand. God is righteous and will not tolerate injustice. His righteousness seeks out those who are oppressed in any form. In this case, it may be those who are oppressed by sin, whether it is their own sin or the oppression of those who sin against them. Either way, God will provide justice so that ultimately the situation will be made right.

Psalm 103:7–10 A tremendous benefit often taken for granted is the fact that God condescended to humanity in order to reveal Himself. He certainly did not have to, but He chose to. David declared that God had revealed Himself and His heart (His ways) to Moses. His Law revealed His nature and His character. Although the people themselves had not known God as intimately as Moses had, God still revealed to them His deeds (His mighty acts), proclaiming who He is and His love and salvation for them. Through this revelation of Himself, His people ascertained that He is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love, and that He would not punish them in the way that they deserved. For however great our sin might be, God’s grace and mercy are far greater.

Psalm 103:11–12 Only God knows how far any distance truly measures, whether it refers to the extent of the heavens or the separation between east and west. In our minds, it is infinite. But this displays the extent that God will go to forgive us and separate our sins from us. When He declares that He has forgiven us, it is done. Why would we ever choose to conjure up old memories of sin when God has put them behind us and virtually put them beyond His own memory? David captured the nature of God’s forgiveness in these verses. The word so seems so small and yet so enormous in the context of David’s writing because it measures the extent that God has traveled for us. In John 3:16, Christ Himself revealed that “God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son.” David knew the extent of God’s love through His own relationship with Him. He knew how serious that it is to transgress, but he also learned through his own transgressions that God has the ability and the willingness to provide salvation and remove sin from anyone’s life.

Implications

David understood from the perspective of being a Jew (one of God’s chosen people) that loving God was to be from his heart and soul. In other words, it was to be a part of His very being—his life. He knew that loving God is worship and that worship is not an event, but a lifestyle. If we say that we love God, it should be apparent in the way we live and in the way we reveal God to others. Has this become apparent in your life? Is worship a Sunday-only event for you or a lifestyle through which you reveal God to others?

Students often think that worship is just something we do when we come together with other believers. Do they misunderstand what a life of worshiping God truly is because we fail to demonstrate worshipful lives before them? How can we help students rediscover what the true worship of God truly looks like?

Teaching Plan: Connect Activities

All activity sheets are at the end of this printable lesson
Review Questions: Answering Love

(5–8 minutes, easy set-up)

Download to access the “Review Questions” activity sheet. Print one copy for your own use.

After greeting students, use the review questions to test what they can recall from the previous lesson as well as to provide context for today’s lesson.

Drama: How We Worship

(5–10 minutes, easy set-up)

Download the drama script. Prior to the session, enlist three students to enact the drama. Give each cast member a script ahead of time, and ask the cast to be ready to perform it. Optional: Provide candy prizes.

After the drama has been performed, say: What an amazing expression of worship and how it has come down to us through the years! Today we will discover just what goes into the making of our worship of God, and how it reflects in our lives.

Reverb Media Option: A Full Heart

(5 minutes, Reverb Media Pass required)

If your church has purchased the Reverb Media Pass or the Reverb DVD, preview and arrange to show the “A Full Heart” video. (If your church has not purchased the Reverb Media Pass, you can purchase this single video through the “Media” tab.)

Show the “A Full Heart” video to your students. Ask: What is the difference between a deflated balloon and an inflated balloon? (Students will likely answer, “air.”) Say: That’s right. The difference in the two is what’s inside. Explain that today your students will continue to learn about God’s love for us and our love for Him. Say: Today we will learn that the difference in our hearts and the hearts of those who do not have a relationship with God is all about what’s inside. What is your heart full of? What should your heart be full of? We’ll find out today.

Especially for Younger Students: My Cup Fluffeth Over

(10 minutes, moderate set-up)

Provide small Styrofoam cups and several bags of jumbo marshmallows.

Divide students into groups of four or five each, giving each group a Styrofoam cup and a bowl of marshmallows. Instruct students to think of the blessings and benefits they have received in their lives and to place one marshmallow into the cup for every one they can think of. Students cannot duplicate what someone else in their group has said. Note that most will fill up their cups and find that they are full to the point of spilling over the edge of the cup. Afterward, ask students: If this is what your cup looks like with the blessings and benefits that you receive in life, where do you think they come from? Allow students to respond. Then explain that today they will consider all the things that God has done for them as a way of discovering reasons to praise Him.

Especially for Older Students: Mood Praise

(10 minutes, easy set-up)

Place various colors of construction paper on the wall. Also provide markers.

Ask: Have you ever seen the application on your iPhone called “Mood Touch”? Share with students that in the 1970s, mood rings were very popular among teenagers. Explain that a mood ring has a liquid crystal that can display a different color based on the body temperature of the person wearing the ring. Explain further that the color of the ring is supposed to indicate the mood that the person is in.

Next, point out the sheets of construction paper that are taped to the wall. Draw a consensus from students on what moods the colors indicate. Write that mood at the top of each sheet of paper. Then place the markers on the floor next to the wall. Say: I want you to indicate the mood that you think best represents praising God, then write your name on that
paper. After students have completed this assignment, ask: Why does it matter what the occasion is or what our mood is when it comes to offering praise to God? Allow students to respond, then say: Today we'll look at a psalm that David wrote that tells us that it doesn't matter what day it is or what mood we might be in—any time is the right time to worship God.

Teaching Plan: Explore Activities

All activity sheets are at the end of this printable lesson

Key Study: Overflow

(10–15 minutes, moderate set up)

Download the Student Worksheet. Print a copy for each student. Also provide pens, three clear glasses, water, a bag of pebbles, paper, dry erase board, and marker.

Using the Old Testament Timeline, point out the period of Moses on the Canaanite World line through the period of King Solomon. Explain to students that the psalms (worship songs, hymns, and poems) were written over the centuries. David grasped the vastness of God’s love, and out of the overflow of his heart came Psalm 103. David demonstrated his thankfulness and joy through sincere worship of the Lord. Using the Ancient Israel map, point to the location of Jerusalem. Share with students that worship became localized in Jewish culture in Jerusalem, where the psalms were commonly used in Temple worship.

Divide students into three groups, giving each group a glass of water that is half to three-fourths full in addition to a handful of pebbles. Next, prompt students to name something for which they praise God. Also instruct students to drop one pebble into the water for each response. Allow five minutes for students to give as many responses as they can before the water begins to overflow. Then ask: Why do you praise God? What reasons did your group give for praising God? Why is praising God important? Say: Just as we saw the water overflow when we added the pebbles, thankfulness will overflow from our lives when we are filled with praise. Call on two volunteers to read Psalm 103:1–12. Explain that in the first two verses, David did just as they have done: He began to list all of the “benefits” that he had received from God—not because the occasion called for praise, but because he felt that any occasion was right for praising God.

Distribute pens and copies of the Student Worksheet at this time. Allow students to complete the worksheet individually. Afterward, allow time for students to share their responses. Then ask: In which areas was it easiest to include praise? In which areas was it most difficult? Why? Ask the students to give a one-word response to the word praise. Then ask: When is the right occasion to praise God? In youth worship? In a worship service with the rest of the church? Explain to students that praise is always essential to our lives as believers. Ask: Why would this be so important? (Possible answers: Because it causes us to remember that He is the Provider of all that is and all that we have; because it keeps us God-centered and not self-centered; because He is God and we are not; because we desire to reveal that He is love) Point to an Eight Essential Truths poster and share that God Is (If your church has not purchased any of the Eight Essential Truths bookmarks or posters, you can print a list from www.studentlifebiblestudy.com.) Explain that we praise God simply because He is God. Ask students to recall a time from the past week in which they praised God by their actions and/or their words. Say: God delights in the praises of His people. We are called to praise God at all times. He has done amazing things in our lives and has promised us a great future in Him. We have renewal, forgiveness, hope, a future, and all kinds of great things because of God. Therefore, we should make praise a central part of our lives.

Master Teacher Key Study: Vertical Worship

(10–15 minutes, easy set-up)

Download the Master Teacher Key Study. Print one copy for your own use. Download the Master Teacher Student Worksheet. Print a copy for each learner. Also provide pens.

Pass out pens and copies of the Master Teacher Student Worksheet. Then use the Master Teacher Key Study to teach Psalm 103:1–12.
Especially for Younger Students: Post a Praise
(5–10 minutes, moderate set up)
Set up in an area around a load-bearing post, or just provide a wooden beam, or simply use a wall. Provide sticky note pads, pens, dry erase board, and marker.

Say: We all have a reason to be thankful to God. One way that praise to God can become a more integral part of our lives is when we share with others what we are grateful for. Direct students to sit around the post (or in a semicircle facing the wall). Place several sticky note pads and pencils around the post. Point to the post and say: This is a praise post. Instruct students to write a word of praise to God and stick it to the post, voicing that praise aloud as they attach it. (Perform an example if necessary). Afterward, ask: Why do you think that it is important to share our praises? What are we communicating to God when we praise Him?

Instruct students to look back at Psalm 103:2–5. Explain that David was a shepherd who became a powerful king. Explain further that God led David from a simple shepherd’s life to becoming the leader of His people, and in response David expressed praise to God for many of His characteristics. Lead students to list some of the benefits that David recognized about God. Write these on the dry erase board as students call them out. (Possible answers: Forgiver, Healer, Redeemer, Restorer of Youth, Provider; He acknowledged that God crowns life with love and compassion.) Point out that by recalling all of these qualities of God, David was able to maintain a strong sense of the nearness of God. Help students understand that our praise is an act of worship. Say: We may worship God at church with other believers or at other times throughout the week. When we praise God, we are worshiping Him. Praise focuses our hearts and minds on God. When we are focused on God, we grow closer to Him.

Especially for Older Students: God (I AM) Is
(10 minutes, easy set-up)
Place a large piece of butcher paper on the wall. Write on it in large print: “GOD IS.”

Refer to the Eight Essential Truths poster, pointing out the truth that God Is. Then prompt a volunteer to read Exodus 3:13–14. Ask: What is the question that Moses asked God in this verse? (Answer: What should I tell people when they ask, “What is His name?”) After responses, ask: Who is God? But don’t call for students to respond just yet. Instead, enlist a volunteer to read Psalm 103:2–7. Prompt students to go to the paper on the wall and write graffiti-style a description of who God is based on the verses that were just read. After students have had an opportunity to write their descriptions, read a few from the paper. Explain that when God responded to Moses about who He is, He said, “I AM that I AM.” Say: We know from the translation from Hebrew into English that this means, “I continue being who I AM.” In other words, He is and will always be. Share that the implications of this mean that God is with us, alive, and active. He is also the Provider, which essentially says, “I AM all that you will ever need.” Say: This God is worthy of our praise.

Teaching Plan: Transform Activities
All activity sheets are at the end of this printable lesson

Deeper Discussion
(5–8 minutes, easy set-up)
Allow students a few minutes to talk about what it means for them to praise God. Ask: As you think of worship, in what ways have you experienced the presence of God this week? After responses, say: Maybe if you experienced His presence, you wanted to respond to Him in some way. Ask: What does it mean to praise God from your “inmost being”? After responses, say: But sometimes our worship is anything but real and authentic, so what is the difference between giving God “lip service” and truly praising Him wholeheartedly? Observe that a lot of times we equate worship with a service. Ask: How can we respond to God in praise outside of a worship service?

Especially for Younger Students: A Keen Memory
(5–10 minutes, easy set-up)
Provide students with a box of colored paper clips. On a dry erase board write: green=forgiveness, blue=salvation, red=healing, white=good things, yellow=strength.

Spread the paper clips on a smooth surface. Share with students the significance of the color of each paper clip, providing examples of each from life. Then prompt students to choose a paper clip for each color. Encourage them to find a quiet place and offer private praise. Instruct them to connect the paper clips as they pray, making a chain to carry with them to remember the benefits of God so that they can offer praise at later times.

Tell students that no one can remember things that have not happened. Explain that if there are students who have not experienced the salvation of God (represented by the blue paper clip), they can do so today. Be prepared to share with students who may need to know about salvation through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Especially for Older Students: Journey of Praise

(10–12 minutes, moderate set-up)
Utilize additional space in a hallway, gym, or outdoor setting that is close to the classroom. Provide index cards and pens. Also provide the following: empty picture frames, a set Lord’s Supper table with one tray of bread wafers and one tray with some cups filled with grape juice, a large mixing bowl and wooden spoon, and a small desk and chair. Last, provide a roll of tape, some worshipful music, and a CD/digital music player.

Place the assorted items in as many spots around the room as possible. Make sure to place index cards and pens at each station. (If this is too difficult, or if you don’t have space, tape some paper signs to the wall to represent the items listed.) Next, invite students to stand in the middle of the room. Say: You are about to go on a “Journey of Praise.” Point to each of the stations and explain the following: The picture frames represent the different relationships of life. The Lord’s Supper set-up represents the Church. The mixing bowl and spoon represents home. The desk and chair represent school. Tell students that they are to begin at any station they choose and move to each one until they have moved through all of them. Explain further that at each station they are to take an index card, write a praise to God for at least one of the benefits that comes from what the station represents, and use the tape to place it on display in creative fashion. Tell students that they are to spend only one or two minutes at each station.

Play the worshipful music as students progress through the course. Afterward, call students together in the middle of the room and ask a volunteer to read Psalm 103:2. Then say: Remember. Remember. Remember! Praise is remembering all that God has done for us. At each station on the Journey of Praise and in every moment that we praise God, we are saying, “God, I remember all that you have done for me and all the you are for me.” Praise is not just an activity or a worship service—it is a lifelong journey. Let your life be a journey of praise this week.

Creative Prayer

(5–7 minutes. easy set-up)
Instruct students to stand in a circle. Lead them to praise God for who He is and what He has done. Explain that to begin the first part of the prayer you will say, “God, you are . . .” Ask students to simply voice a single word of praise about one of God’s attributes. (Examples: His greatness, omnipotence, power, love, mercy, and graciousness) Allow students to pray multiple times throughout the course of the activity.

Once students have finished the first part of the prayer, say: Now we are going to thank God for specific things that he has done for us as individuals. Then, to begin the next part of the prayer, say: God, I praise you because you . . .”

Close the time by praying that students would learn what praise and worship are as a way of life.

Reverb Student Book Option: Prayer Posture

(5 minutes, Reverb student book required)
If your church has purchased the Reverb student book, preview the activity on page 111 titled “Prayer Posture.” If possible, provide a copy of the book to reference as you mention the activity to students.

Share with students that our love would be incomplete if we didn’t express it back to God. Explain that He’s made us to receive love and to give it back. Ask: Have you ever considered that maybe the way you express love to God is routine and lifeless? What can you do to offer praise to God and have it become a real expression of your gratitude? If you...
have a student book available, lead students to look at page 111. Explain that this is an activity that will provide them with creative and expressive means to help them think about how they worship. Encourage students to work through pages 106–111 in the student book during the coming week and consider how, when, and if they are worshiping God.
The Answer: The Motivating Love of God
Lesson 4, Prep Guide

Biblical Passage: Psalm 103:1–12

Biblical Truth: Our hearts are to overflow with praise to God in response to His great love for us.

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS
As you prepare to teach this lesson, pray for your students.

- Pray that students will know how worship is to be lived out so that others may know God.
- Pray that students will become living examples of worship.
- Pray that students will display their love for God as well as His love for others through their actions.

COMPLETE SUPPLY LIST

Connect . . .
- Review Questions: Answering Love—copy of the “Review Questions” activity sheet
- Drama: Soundtrack Life—Copies of the drama script; any necessary props
- Reverb Media Option: A Full Heart—Reverb Media Pass
- Especially for Younger Students: My Cup Fluffeth Over—small Styrofoam cups; bags of jumbo marshmallows
- Especially for Older Students: Mood Praise—construction paper (various colors); markers

Explore . . .
- Key Study: Overflow—copies of the Student Worksheet; pens; three clear glasses; water; bag of pebbles; paper; dry erase board; marker
- Master Teacher Key Study: Vertical Worship—copy of the Master Teacher Key Study; copy of the Master Teacher Student Worksheet; pens
- Especially for Younger Students: Post a Praise—sticky notes; pens; dry erase board; marker
- Especially for Older Students: God (I AM) Is—butcher paper; marker

Transform . . .
- Deeper Discussion—No supplies needed
- Especially for Younger Students: A Keen Memory—colored paper clips; dry erase board; marker
- Especially for Older Students: Journey of Praise—index cards; pens; empty picture frames; tray; wafers; cups; grape juice; large mixing bowl; wooden spoon; small desk; chair; tape; worshipful music; CD/digital music player
- Creative Prayer—No supplies needed
- Reverb Student Book Option: Prayer Posture—Reverb student book
The Answer: The Motivating Love of God
Lesson 4, Review Questions

1. In Matthew 22, Jesus said that the second-greatest commandment is to love _____.
   a. your neighbor as yourself
   b. only your friends and family
   c. only those who deserve it
   d. potato chips

2. In Matthew 22, Jesus said that the first and greatest commandment is to love _____.
   a. doing righteous acts
   b. prayer and fasting
   c. the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, and mind
   d. other Christians

3. In Matthew 22, the Sadducees and Pharisees tried to _____ Jesus by asking Him difficult questions.
   a. praise
   b. increase their faith in
   c. discredit
   d. gain wisdom from

4. In Matthew 22, Jesus said that the Law and Prophets can be summarized by only _____ laws.
   a. 600
   b. 10
   c. 25
   d. 2

5. In Matthew 22, Jesus _____ the Sadducees with His knowledge of Scripture.
   a. attacked
   b. silenced
   c. complimented
   d. submitted to
1. In Matthew 22, Jesus said that the second-greatest commandment is to love ______. (Lesson 3)
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5. In Matthew 22, Jesus _____ the Sadducees with His knowledge of Scripture. (Lesson 3)
   a. attacked
   b. silenced
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   d. submitted to
How We Worship

Characters:
ONE
TWO
THREE

Props: none
Costumes: casual clothing

Creative Note: Worship has been a part of the Church since before it was considered the Church. This drama takes a look at all the different ways that Christians have worshipped over the centuries.

(ONE, TWO, and THREE enter and stand an equal distance apart from each other as they face the audience.)

ONE: It all started with a covenant.

TWO: “I am God Almighty. Walk before me and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you and may multiply you greatly.” Then Abram fell on his face.

THR: Sacrifice.

ONE: “When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar on top of the wood.”

TWO: “Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son.”

THR: “But the angel of the Lord called to him from Heaven and said—”

ALL: “Abraham! Abraham!”

ONE: And he said, “Here am I.” He said—

TWO: “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God.”

THR: A psalm.

ONE: I love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer.

TWO: My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge.

THR: My shield and the horn of my salvation. My stronghold.

ONE: A question.

TWO: Why, O Lord, do you stand far off?

THR: Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

ONE: Who shall dwell on your holy hill?

TWO: A hymn.

THR: Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.

ONE: I once was lost, but now I’m found—was blind, but now I see.

TWO: It’s an act.

THR: Falling on your face.

ONE: Standing in awe.

TWO: Kneeling in reverence.

THR: It’s a lifestyle.

ONE: Honoring Him with your attitude.

TWO: Adoring Him with your heart.

THR: Cherishing Him in your soul.

ONE: You can do it in school.

TWO: You can do it in your car.

THR: You can do it alone.

ONE: You can do it with a million people.

TWO: But, if you know God—
THR: If you fully grasp the magnitude of what He’s done for you—

ONE: Then you are moved to.

TWO: You want to.

THR: You need to.

ONE: Worship.

TWO: Worship is not just a song.

THR: It’s not just a poem or a program or an act of service.

ONE: It’s giving your heart to God.

TWO: Every day.

THR: “Sing to God, sing praises to His name; lift up a song to Him who rides through the deserts; His name is the Lord, exult before Him!”

ONE: “I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify Him with thanksgiving.”

TWO: “Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!”

THR: “Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live. In your name I will lift up my hands.”

ALL: We will worship you!

(The End)
What is praise? In the space below, write your best definition of the word praise.

Write your name in the blank: ____________________________________________________________

Just as there is a definition of the word praise, there is also a definition of you. Every person is defined by his or her variety of interests, actions, and relationships. Answer the following questions to help determine what defines you:

1. What four or five things are most important to you?

2. What three or four organizations receive most of your time and attention?

3. What three or four people are most important in your life?

4. What actions or attitudes describe you best?

Now look back on your responses to each question. Where does praise for God fit into each area? Take a moment to think about how praise fits in or should fit in each area.
Lesson 4
Vertical Worship

Use this outline to share the Biblical Truth with students. The underlined words correspond to the blanks on the Master Teacher Student Worksheet.

Outline

Intro: What part should praise have in our lives?

Activities

1. We are to praise God with our whole being (Psalm 103:1).

   Description: The psalmist David understood the importance of praise. He recognized that praise was an important part of his life no matter what the circumstances.

   Illustration: The word narcissist is used to describe people who are in love with themselves. Hollywood is a narcissistic culture in that most stars think pretty highly of themselves. God is praiseworthy because of who He is and what He has done in our lives. That’s not narcissism. That’s love.

   Description: It is not enough to give God lip service. If we are to praise Him as He deserves, our praise should be sincere and wholehearted. Praise and worship are meant to be a lifestyle.

   Illustration: Bring two Hershey candy bars to class. Ask for two volunteers. Say: As a reward for volunteering, I want to give you something. Unwrap the first candy bar, break off a very small piece, and give it to the first student. Give the second candy bar in its entirety to the other student. Then point out to students that just as it was a much more satisfying experience for the volunteer who received the whole candy bar, true praise demands that we give all of ourselves to God, not just a small part.

   Application: God desires all of us. He doesn’t force us to give all of our praise to Him, but He is worthy of it nonetheless.

2. We are called to remember God’s goodness to us (Psalm 103:2).

   Description: Any occasion is an occasion to remember what God has done for us.

   Illustration: If we started to make a list of the things that our parents have done for us, it might take a while. But what if we started to make a list of the things that God has done? An old hymn says, “Count your blessings, name them one by one. Count your blessings, see what God has done.” Try this sometime soon—you’ll be surprised at how much you have to thank God for.

   Application: We are challenged to begin listing the benefits that we have from God. Any time is a good time to try it.
3. God’s true **character is seen** in all He does (Psalm 103:3–12).

**Conclusion:** God has the ability to transform our lives into instruments of worship and praise.

**Description:** It’s God’s nature to love and provide. He gives us good things and makes every provision for us because of who He is, not because of what we’ve done.

**Illustration:** Economic hard times came to even the richest of the rich in the economic recession that began in 2007 as billionaire Warren Buffett announced that he had lost a good chunk of change in the downturn of the stock market. This is a man who is known for his philanthropy, giving away millions and millions of dollars to benefit others. But even Warren Buffett’s character is not as giving and his pool of resources is not as great as God’s ability to give. God’s giving nature is one source of wealth that will never dry up.

**Application:** It really doesn’t matter what day it is, what the occasion might be, or how we might feel—God is always with us. He is giving and providing. He deserves to have our praise because of who He is.

**Description:** David wrote from a heart of gratitude and a lifestyle of praise and worship. He wasn’t expressing his praise just because he felt like it. Rather, he was expressing His praise because of the person whom God was transforming Him into.

**Application:** The beginning of worship and praise is at the heart of the individual who simply starts listing the benefits that he or she has received from God.
THE ANSWER: THE MOTIVATING LOVE OF GOD

LESSON FOUR VERTICAL WORSHIP

biblical passage: Psalm 103:1–12

memory verse: Psalm 103:1–2 Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

ANSWERING LOVE

1. We are to _______________ God with our whole _______________ (Psalm 103:1).

2. We are _______________ to remember God’s _______________ to us (Psalm 103:2).

3. God’s true _______________ is _______________ in all He does (Psalm 103:3–12).

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

• As you think of worship, in what ways have you experienced the presence of God this week?
• What does it mean to praise God from your “inmost being”?
• What is the difference between giving God “lip service” and truly praising Him wholeheartedly?
• How can we respond to God in praise outside of a worship service?