Actions Speak So Loud

by Mark Cole

Years ago, I learned that the old proverb, 'actions speak louder than words,' was true. If people hear you saying or singing one thing, but your actions speak another thing, they tend to believe your actions rather than your words.

I am in love with the Creator of the universe. He has given me a full and abundant life. He has given me health, forgiven everything I ever did wrong, answered my prayers for a great wife and family and has given me an awesome purpose in life. He supplies my daily needs and is my closest friend. He gives me wisdom, peace and love on a daily basis. And on top of that, I know He is always with me.

So, when I worship God in a private or public setting, I want my actions to match my words. I want the people who I lead in worship, to know, beyond a shadow of doubt, that I love the Lord with all my heart, soul, mind and strength. I do not want to do actions for action's sake. I want to do the worship actions of the Bible because they reflect the passion of my heart!

I read the Psalms daily. Throughout the Psalms there are action words. Years ago, I decided that I wanted my life to line up with God's Word. I did not want to live my life according to how I think it should be lived. I want to follow a higher wisdom than mine. My desire is to live my life and to worship God according to God's pattern and standards.

God created me. God designed me. And I have found that His ways are superior to my ways. So when I worship, I try to worship according to the Biblical pattern, not according to my personal taste or traditions.



Here are a number of the actions of worship that I have discovered in the Bible.

1. Singing

God loves singing. In the book of Zephaniah it says that "God rejoices over you with joyful singing." Singing is mentioned throughout the Bible. One of the Psalmists said it this way "I will sing to the Lord as long as I live. I will praise my God to my last breath!"

Another Psalmist tells us to "come into His presence with singing!" In the New Testament, Paul tells us to "sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God." Singing is one of the staple actions of worship.

2. Playing Instruments

I love to play instruments. I play around twelve of them. So I love that the Bible says playing instruments is an action of worship. Psalm 150 is the most famous of the psalms on this subject.

In that famous Psalm it talks about praising God with string instruments. horns, drums, percussion and wind instruments. In fact, it says, if you have breathe, you should praise the Lord!

3. Lifting Of Hands

I love what the prophet, Jeremiah, wrote: "Let us lift our hearts and hands to God in heaven." There is something about lifting our hands in worship to God that is very spiritual.

I love it when my grandkids come to me with their hands lifted toward me. It means they want me to lift them up and give them a hug. I also love it when I am at a great football game and my favorite team scores. The whole crowd jumps to its feet, lifts their hands and shouts. Lifting our hands seems to be a very natural human response.

There is something about lifting our hands that God loves. Many great men of the Bible, like David, Solomon, Ezra, Moses, Paul and Peter, all lifted their hands in worship and adoration to God.

4. Clapping

Clapping is another natural human response. We clap in approval at a great musical or sporting event. We clap in time with music. I love to clap intricate rhythms to entertain myself.

The Psalms puts it succinctly, 'Come, everyone! Clap your hands!'

5. Shouting

I have found that people naturally shout in sporting events, in fun times and in other exciting human endeavors. But, somehow they think they shouldn't shout in church.

I serve a God whose majesty and power is unparalleled. He made the sun, moon and stars. He created this wonderful planet that I so enjoy visiting and exploring. He is interested and involved in the details of my life. Jesus said that even the hairs on my head are numbered. Let me tell you, I think that God is more than worthy of me shouting His praise.

Do you know that there is even shouting in heaven? It says in Revelations that all the angels and elders declared in a loud voice (shouting)… "Worthy is the Lamb who was slaughtered—to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing."

There are certain times when we should get excited about God, excited about what He is doing. So excited about what He has done, that the only natural human response should be to shout! I do not believe that God wants us to be inhibited when it comes to our praise to Him. Jesus said that if we don't praise Him, even the "rocks and stones will cry out!"

6. Dancing

Dancing is another one of those human responses that many people aren't comfortable with in church. To tell you the truth, I'm a musician with good sense of rhythm but I am not a good dancer. Fortunately, God still loves it when I express my joy before Him with dancing.

David was uninhibited when it came to expressing his joy in dancing. Even when he became king, his joy overflowed into dancing.

Women seem to be freer in expressing themselves in dance then men. Frankly, I feel a little awkward when I dance. But, as Solomon said, there is "a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance."

7. Bowing Down

Bowing down in worship seems to be more of an accepted Eastern practice than a Western one. Personally, I have only used bowing down in a corporate setting a few times. In my private worship I have used it more often.

Sometimes, when God makes His Presence known in an awesome way, the only acceptable way to worship Him is bowing down. He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. When you become aware that you are in the presence of the Creator of the Universe, it only seems appropriate to get down on your knees and bow before Him.

The Psalmist said it this way, 'Come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord our maker, for He is our God.'

8. Standing

I love it when congregations stand and worship God. They sing better, they are more attentive and they are more involved. I am not saying that you can't worship God when you are sitting, it's just that people sing, clap, lift their hands and praise God with more enthusiasm when they stand.

I love this glimpse that John had of worship in heaven: (Revelations 7:9-10 NLT)

I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, **standing** in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands. And they were shouting with a great roar, "Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!"

I love that picture. This huge multi-ethnic crowd is standing and shouting their praise to God in heaven. How cool is that!

9. Giving

Years ago I memorized the twelfth chapter of the book of Romans. In the first verse it says:

Dear brothers and sisters, I urge you to give your bodies to God because of all that He has done for you. Let your lives be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind He will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship Him.

I believe that giving your whole life to God is the most powerful way to worship Him. God loves it when you trust Him enough to lay down your goals and desires and offer your life to Him.

Can you trust God enough to give Him your goals, your finances, your dreams? Can you trust Him enough to die to your own ambitions and let Him live through you? Can you trust Him to do a better job with your life than you can? I do.

Question: Do you struggle with any of these actions of worship? Can you add to this list?

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The article above and many additional insights may be found on Mark's blog at http://markcole.ca/

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