

Praise for a Lifetime

I belong to a community choir – a non-audition group of people who just love to sing. We practice weekly and perform two concerts per year, comprised of a mix of sacred and secular music. One of my favorite songs from our recent spring concert is titled *All the Praise of a Lifetime* (Hart/McHugh/Elliot). I've had it stuck in my head ever since the concert, which is not a bad thing. The choral music is very dynamic, but the meaning is in the words (condensed here):

*Perfect and true are the works of our God. All he has done is amazing.
How can we hope to give praise that will tell all of his greatness and glory?
Praise him as Father and Counselor, King and far above all as our Savior.
Come with your song, with your dance, with your prayer, and honor our worthy creator.
Yet even eternity's endless hosannas will barely describe his majestic wonders.
All the praise of a lifetime is not enough. All the ways he is worthy are infinite.
With my head and my soul, my mind and hands and lips and life I give him worship.
Still the praise he is due remains the same, beyond the best that I can offer.*

It's not really so much about our human inadequacy as it is a celebration of God's infinite greatness. Even if we could do the impossible – to praise him with our whole beings all day every day – it would still be less than he deserves. Let's be clear, though; God doesn't need us to stroke his ego. We're talking about relationship here. God loves us as his dear children. He loves you so much that he sent his Son to save you (John 3:16), and so he naturally desires that you spend time with him, that you honor him as you would a loved and revered parent, one to whom you owe absolutely everything, for that's who he is.

We are invited to praise God because he is infinitely worthy, yes, but also for our own sakes. When we exalt the name of the Lord, it strengthens our relationship with him, and we ourselves are lifted up too. I know I feel uplifted and exhilarated when I sing songs like the one above! So are you ready to embark on a lifetime of praise? Then, as the lyrics suggest, *Come with your song, with your dance, with your prayer...* Praying your way through the book of Psalms would be a great beginning. Why not start now? ***Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together!*** (Psalm 34:3)

S. Johnson