

The Whole Heart

By Steve Pruitt

I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.

Psalm 9:1 ESV

I wish I had a dollar for every time my dad said, “Son, don’t half way do something. If you’re going to do something, do it right. Anything worth doing is worth doing right.” Though I understand the lesson dad was trying to teach me and agree in principle, I realize now that a lot of things would not get done if some trial and error were not involved. Sometimes you have to do it wrong first to get it right. As Steve Sjogren puts it; sometimes it’s ready, fire, aim.

My dad also used to tell me not to do anything half heartedly. “If you going to do it, son, give it all you’ve got.” I believe that is what the psalmist had in mind when he wrote, *I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds*. He determined not to be half-hearted in his worship; but rather to offer his thanks with everything that made him who he was.

The Hebrew word used for whole in Psalm 9:1 means all or every. The Hebrew word used for heart means the feelings, will and intellect. Yadah is the Hebrew word used for thanks which means to use or hold out the hand; physically, especially to revere or worship (with extended hands). It is a confession or thanksgiving.

In essence King David was saying; “With all of my mind, will and emotions I lift my hands in reverence and make my confession of thanksgiving; I will recount with celebration all the things that distinguishes you and sets you apart.” Or, “All the marvelous works that you (God) have done, no one else could have done. So with everything that is in me, holding nothing back, I will celebrate you with thanksgiving.”

Isn’t it easy to recognize when someone is not interested in performing a certain task. We might look at such a person and say, “His heart is just not into it.” We show our gratefulness to God and display his worth in our lives by being whole heartedly obedient to his word and direction. We put our gratefulness on display with outward expressions of thanksgiving during times of personal and corporate worship. One psalmist wrote, *Praise the LORD! I will praise (yadah) the LORD with my whole heart, In the assembly of the upright and in the congregation*. Psalm 111:1

Is it possible to measure the level of our gratefulness by the amount of effort we put into offering thanks to the Lord? Do our lives display our gratefulness and his worth by our whole hearted obedience?

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Scriptures for meditation:

Psalm 119:2, 10, 34, 58, 69

Psalm 138:1

Jeremiah 24:7