

STUDY GUIDE

FOUR SESSIONS

**CHRIS TOMLIN
DARREN WHITEHEAD**

HOLY ROAR

A black silhouette of a crowd of people with their hands raised in the air, positioned at the bottom of the page.

7 WORDS THAT WILL CHANGE THE WAY YOU WORSHIP

HOLY ROAR

SEVEN WORDS THAT WILL CHANGE
THE WAY YOU WORSHIP

STUDY GUIDE | 4 SESSIONS

CHRIS TOMLIN *and* DARREN WHITEHEAD
with BETH GRAYBILL



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Holy Roar Study Guide

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ISBN 978-0-310-09871-3

First Printing December 2018 / Printed in the United States of America

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INTRODUCTION

A few years ago, a woman went on vacation with her family to a well-known theme park. One evening, they all decided to take a break from the heat and long lines and watch a stage version of the infamous movie-turned-musical *The Lion King*. Like everyone else around them, the family was enamored with the costumes and props, as well as the singing, acting, and dancing.

Near the end of the musical, when the new Lion King appeared on stage in celebration, the sold-out audience erupted in applause. Everyone stood to their feet, hands raised, dancing and singing along with the cast of characters in celebration of this beautiful story. At that moment, with her arms raised high, the woman heard a faint whisper: *“So you can raise your hands for the Lion King, but you can’t raise your hands for the King of Kings?”*

As the crowd continued to cheer, the woman sat back down in her seat. You see, she had grown up in a well-meaning church, where the preference during worship was for the people in the pews to hold on to their hymnals instead of raising their hands in celebration. *“Lift your voice, not your hands”* was the subtle message the woman had heard and seen modelled by her fellow church-goers. Any sort

of praise celebration was meant to be *personal* and *internal* . . . anything else was just too distracting to her fellow worshippers.

Perhaps you can relate. If you have spent your early years influenced by this mentality of praise, it can lead to you feeling uncomfortable with outward displays of emotion and enthusiasm. And, certainly, there are times when you *should* be silent, listening and reflecting on a message and expressing your praise in a quiet manner. As the apostle Paul instructed his churches, “Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way” (1 Corinthians 14:40).

But when we explore the Bible—and especially the worship practices in the Old Testament—we also find people offering enthusiastic praises of passion to God. This should lead us to conclude there *are* times when God wants us to outwardly express the celebration we feel in our hearts as we consider his greatness and express our praise to him. As King Solomon wrote, “There is a time for everything . . . a time to weep *and a time to laugh*, a time to mourn *and a time to dance*” (Ecclesiastes 3:1,4, emphasis added).

In the book of Psalms, there are seven primary Hebrew words translated into English as *praise*. Each of these words—*halal*, *shabach*, *yadah*, *barak*, *tehillah*, *zamar*, and *towdah*—have distinct, important, and praise-altering implications. This study is an attempt to share the depth of meaning found in those seven words as we explore them together.

We pray this study, and the accompanying book of the same name, become a resource to help you better understand just what it means when the Bible says, “Praise the Lord!” We hope it changes the way you worship and gives you “permission” to join in the practices of the praise. We pray it urges you to join in and become a part of the *holy roar* of God’s people.

Are you ready? Let’s jump in.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The *Holy Roar* video study is designed to be experienced in a group setting such as a Bible study, Sunday school class, or any small group gathering. Our hope is that you walk away from this study feeling complete freedom to express your praise to God—regardless of your background, church setting, or personality preferences.

Each session of this study begins with a brief welcome section and opening questions to get you thinking about the topic. You will then watch a video message with Darren Whitehead and Chris Tomlin and engage in some directed small-group discussion. You will close each session with a time of reflection, response, and worship as a group.

During the week, maximize the impact of the study by engaging in the between-sessions personal studies that have been provided. Treat each personal study section like a devotional and use them in whatever way works best for your schedule. Note that these are not

required, but they will be beneficial to you. Beginning in session two, you will also be given the opportunity to share any thoughts, questions, or takeaways you have from your personal study.

Each person in the group should have his or her own copy of this study guide. You are also encouraged to have a copy of the *Holy Roar* book, as reading the book alongside the curriculum will provide you with deeper insights and make the journey more meaningful. See the “For Next Week” section at the end of each between-sessions section for the chapters in the book that correspond to material you and your group will be discussing.

Keep in mind the video teachings, discussion questions, and activities are simply meant to help you engage with the material you will be covering each week. As you go through this study, be open for what God is saying to you and how you feel He is leading you to apply what you are discovering. As you do this, your life will become a living expression of praise to God.

Note: If you are a group leader, there are additional resources provided in the back of this guide to help you lead your group members through the study.

one

THE SHOUT OF PRAISE

The most valuable thing the psalms do for me is to express the same delight in God which made David dance. . . . [They] stand out as something astonishingly robust, virile, and spontaneous; something we may regard with an innocent envy and may hope to be infected by as we read.

C.S. Lewis, *Reflections
on the Psalms*

הָלַל

HALAL

haw-lal': To boast. To rave. To shine.
To celebrate. To be clamorously foolish.

*Let them praise [halal] his name with dancing
and make music to him with timbrel and harp.*

Psalm 149:3

שָׁבַח

SHABACH

shaw-bakh': To address in a loud tone.
To shout. To commend, glory, and triumph.

*One generation shall praise [shabach]
Your works to another, and shall
declare Your mighty acts.*

Psalm 145:4 NKJV

WELCOME

Picture this—you're standing in the middle of five million people the moment the Chicago Cubs win the World Series. For the past century, dedicated fans have been saying hopeful prayers for their team as they watched them play at Wrigley Field, or listened to their games on the radio, or watched on their television sets as they gathered around the dinner table. But all seemingly to no avail . . . until the Cubs make this eleventh appearance in the World Series in 2016. Finally, after 108 long, long, long years of waiting, the Cubs have claimed the pennant!

Whether you're a baseball fan or not, you can imagine what it would be like to stand in the middle of that crowd, with people yelling, cheering, and even crying tears of joy. Hands are lifted. Towels and T-shirts are waved high in the air. People share hugs and high-fives and give shouts of joy—all in the name of celebration. Perhaps you've experienced something similar during a raucous concert, a sporting event, or some kind of gathering. No matter where you've experienced it, you know that when you're in the middle of *that* kind of celebration, you can't help but feel the excitement and energy pulse through your veins.

Or maybe you've experienced this type of celebration at a wedding. You know the one . . . that reception where it seemed the entire guest list was out there on the dance floor. Maybe your preference was to stay on the edge of the dance floor, where you felt a bit more comfortable—gently swaying back and forth to the beat. Or maybe you were the one out there, with all eyes on you (and your dance moves) at center stage. Either way, there was just something about this collective celebration of movement that just drew you in. There was something that made you want to celebrate with *others* and have crazy fun *together*.

When you experience moments like this, it's easy to see that the God of the universe made each of us to praise him with abandon, like foolish but fun-loving children, together in unity. God wants our full and free expression of praise—and his desire for our praise isn't contingent on our personalities, our feelings, or our comfort zones. In fact, God doesn't just *desire* our worship but also *requires* our worship. And as we see in the book of Psalms and other places in the Bible, that worship often takes the form of exuberant shouts of praise!

SHARE

Welcome to the first session of *Holy Roar*. If you or any of your fellow group members do not know one another, take a few minutes to introduce yourselves. Then, to get things started, discuss one of the following questions:

- Have you ever been to an event where there was a lot of loud celebration—a concert, a sporting event, a musical or show? If so, what was it like?

—or—

- What does the phrase “shout of praise” mean to your church family? How is it expressed in your weekly worship?

WATCH

Play the video segment for session one. As you watch, use the following outline to record any thoughts or concepts that stand out to you.

Notes

There are seven Hebrew words translated as *praise* in the book of Psalms . . .

The Hebrew word *halal* means _____.
_____. It is where we get the word
_____.

*Let them praise [halal] his name with
dancing and make music to him with
timbrel and harp (Psalm 149:3).*

*Let everything that has breath praise
[halal] the LORD! (Psalm 150:6).*

The essence of *halal* is . . .

Another aspect of the word *halal* is . . .

I will celebrate [halal] before the LORD. I will become even more undignified than this . . .
(2 Samuel 6:21–22).

The Hebrew word *shabach* means _____.
_____. It involves the idea of God's people coming together to . . .

One generation shall commend [shabach] your works to another (Psalm 145:4 ESV).

Every time the body of Christ gathers together, what they are celebrating is . . .

How Great is Our God—why this is an anthem of praise . . .

*LORD my God, you are very great; you are clothed
with splendor and majesty. The LORD wraps himself
in light as with a garment; he stretches out the
heavens like a tent and lays the beams of his
upper chambers on their waters (Psalm 104:1–3).*

“You’re the name above all names”—*shabach* happens when
people . . .

DISCUSS

Take a few minutes with your group members to discuss what you just watched and explore these concepts in Scripture.

1. What are a few key points that stood out to you from this session?
2. Think about the stories Darren told of the Jewish wedding and the Chicago Cubs winning the World Series after a 108-year drought. What are some other ways people celebrate *halal* and *shabach* as a culture outside of church?
3. Read aloud Psalm 104. What are some reasons King David lists in these verses for praising the Lord? Which of these stand out to you?

RESPOND

Close out today's session by briefly reviewing the outline for the video teaching and any notes you took. In the space below, write down the most significant point you took away from the session and why it is meaningful for you. If there's time, share your answer with the group.

WORSHIP

Consider worshipping together as you close out your group discussion. Play "How Great Is Our God" on your streaming device, or ask someone in your group if they would be willing to play it on a musical instrument. Focus on the words of the song and think about the ways in which they capture the essence of *halal* and *shabach*. Close by spending a few minutes in prayer together.

How Great Is Our God

The splendor of a King, clothed in majesty
Let all the Earth rejoice
All the Earth rejoice

He wraps himself in light
And darkness tries to hide
And trembles at His voice
Trembles at His voice

How great is our God, sing with me
How great is our God, and all will see
How great, how great is our God

Age to age He stands
And time is in His hands
Beginning and the end

The Godhead Three in One
Father Spirit Son
The Lion and the Lamb
The Lion and the Lamb

How great is our God, sing with me
How great is our God, and all will see
How great, how great is our God

Name above all names
Worthy of our praise
My heart will sing
How great is our God

You're the name above all names
You are worthy of our praise
And my heart will sing
How great is our God

How great is our God, sing with me
How great is our God, and all will see
How great, how great is our God

How great is our God, sing with me
How great is our God, and all will see
How great, how great is our God

The whole world sings, the whole world sings
How great is our God
How great is our God
How great, how great is our God

Songwriters: Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves, and Ed Cash.
From the album *Arriving*.

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one

BETWEEN-SESSIONS PERSONAL STUDY

Reflect on the content you've covered this week in *Holy Roar* by engaging in any or all of the following between-sessions activities. The time you invest will be well spent, so let God use it to draw you closer to him. At your next meeting, share with your group any key points or insights that stood out to you as you spent this time with the Lord.

DAY ONE: HALAL THROUGH THE EYES OF THE ISRAELITES

Seek

■ Read Leviticus chapters 23 and 25. The author of these passages in the Old Testament uses the word *halal* to describe the way people might celebrate a festival. What kind of festivals does the Lord direct his people to celebrate throughout these two chapters?

■ Which one stands out the most to you? Why?

■ What can we learn from the ancient Israelites regarding the way they celebrated special moments and seasons during their time?

■ What are the special moments in your life that are cause for celebration?

■ What are the special moments in your church community that are cause for celebration?

Reflect

■ Think about the story Chris told of writing the song “How Great Is Our God” and his experience with the Watoto Children’s Choir from Uganda. Is there praise you long to give to God today? In what ways has God been a “great God” in your life?

■ Is there a particular song or anthem that speaks to you as you offer your praise to God? Write down a few words of the song that come to mind.

Take time to pray today. Ask God to open your eyes, your heart, and your mind to the opportunities for celebration around you. And as you celebrate those special moments and special people, may you also offer a praise of celebration to God for his goodness in your life.

Apply

Pick a special occasion or moment to celebrate today. Is there a season when God provided for you or came through in ways only he can do? Just like the journey of the Israelites, there are many moments to celebrate if you're willing to pause and reflect back over God's goodness in your life. Write a note of praise, make a special meal, create something that reminds you of that time, sing, or dance in celebration. Celebrate in whatever way seems most natural to you.

DAY TWO: HALAL THROUGH THE EYES OF KING DAVID

Seek

■ Read Psalm 22:22–26, Psalm 69:30–36, and Psalm 109:30–31. These verses were written by King David in first person but were often sung corporately in ancient Israel. What stands out to you in each of these psalms? Why?

■ Imagine a gathering where people are singing your words of prayer and praise to God. What specific prayers or praises would they be singing?

■ Consider your community. What specific prayers or praises would you want to sing on behalf of your friends, family, co-workers, students, neighbors, and others?

■ How would you describe your preferred style of prayer and praise?

■ How would others describe your preferred style of prayer and praise? If there's a difference between your answers for these two questions, why do you think this is the case?

Reflect

■ During the teaching this week, Chris mentioned how the song “How Great Is Our God” for him has become an anthem of prayer and praise. What are some songs that you would consider an “anthem of corporate praise”? Why do those songs resonate with you?

■ What is the power of simply declaring the greatness of God? When are some times in your life when you found that this was your prayer?

Take time to pray today. Ask God to remind you of moments when you have been impacted by corporate prayer and praise. Sit for a few moments with those memories. Consider what you were thinking, feeling, and experiencing in those moments. Thank God for the gift of those corporate worship experiences and praise God for his presence in your life.

Apply

If you could pray or praise on behalf of someone close to you, what would you say or sing? Write down your prayer or praise on behalf of that person and share it with them in a text, email, or a personal note. Also reach out to a close friend or trusted family member to share a specific prayer or praise for your own life. Ask them to pray with you and for you.

DAY THREE: *HALAL AND SHABACH* IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Seek

■ There are many passages in the Old Testament that speak of praising God and celebrating his festivals, but there are also numerous stories of praising God in the New Testament. Read Luke 15:11–32 and Acts 3:1–10. What stands out to you in these two stories?

■ What did praise and celebration look like in the story of the Lost Son?

■ What would you be feeling or thinking if you returned home after running away and received this kind of celebration?

■ What did praise and celebration look like in the story of the lame beggar healed in the temple?

■ What would you be feeling or thinking if you were healed after a lifetime of not being able to walk?

■ When there are good things to celebrate in your own life, how do you stay mindful of honoring God with your praise and worship?

■ Is there a recent celebration in your life where you neglected to give God praise? If so, name it and take a moment to offer words or songs of praise to God right now.

Reflect

■ During the teaching this week, Chris mentioned there are moments for everything—for kneeling, being quiet, lifting your hands . . . and moments “where it’s just a full shout out to God in celebration to God.” How do you react to the idea of this type of worship? When was the last time (if ever) that you expressed a “holy roar” to God in praise?

■ Think about situations where people feel the freedom to be *loud* and *clamorously foolish* (such as a sporting event, a concert, or some other type of public celebration). What are the marks of that kind of celebration? What is it about the environment that makes it comfortable to celebrate in those ways?

Take time to pray today. Ask God to give you more freedom in the way you praise and celebrate. Ask him to show you what moves you to want to yell and cheer. Thank God for those moments of unsubdued praise and commit to worshiping him in the same way.

Apply

The next time you are at a concert, a sporting event, or are enjoying a rowdy game where you lift your voice and your hands in celebration, stop and consider celebrating God in that moment as well. As you become mindful of giving “thanks in all circumstances” (1 Thessalonians 5:18), you will carry the holy expressions of *halal* and *shabach* with you everywhere you go.

DAY FOUR: *SHABACH* IN THE WILDERNESS

Seek

■ Read Psalm 63. David penned this song when he was a fugitive from the jealous King Saul and was hiding in the wilderness. What stands out to you in this passage?

■ Imagine that you are in David's situation. You have been anointed as the next king of Israel (see 1 Samuel 16:1–13) but are now running for your life and hiding out in caves. What would you be tempted to think about God given these circumstances? What did David think about God?

■ Have you ever had your own “desert wilderness” season? How hard or easy was it for you to praise God in the middle of that season?

■ If you are in the middle of that season right now, what praise do you need to cry out to God? What questions do you have for God? Remember that God is big enough to handle *all* of your disappointment, anger, frustration, *and* praise at the same time.

Reflect

■ Listen to or read through the lyrics of the song “How Great Is Our God” with your “desert wilderness” season in mind. What is it like for you to experience the words of this song with that difficult season in mind? What thoughts, questions or images are stirring for you?

- What words or phrases in this song stand out to you in a new way?

Take time to pray today. Ask God to give you freedom in the way you praise and celebrate. Ask him to show you what moves you to want to yell and cheer and be wild and crazy. Thank God for those moments of unsubdued praise and commit to worshiping him in the same way.

Apply

Pick an anthem of praise you can sing for a wilderness season you are facing. What song best describes your challenges or inspires you toward hope and praise? If this exercise brings comfort or healing to your soul, go back to past wilderness seasons and consider which anthem would have described that particular time in your life.

DAY FIVE: A HOLY ROAR

Seek

- Read Psalm 104 and 145. Consider all of the reasons listed in these two psalms to give *shabach* praise to God. Which reasons stand out to you? Pick a few and write them down here.

■ In Psalm 104:34, the author writes, “May my meditation be pleasing to [God], as I rejoice in the Lord.” What does your “meditation” look like? (*Praying, singing, reading, silence, solitude?*) Why do you think this is pleasing to God?

■ In Psalm 145:4, the author writes, “One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.” How have you been told of God’s works and mighty acts by the older generations around you?

■ How are you telling the younger generation about God’s works and mighty acts? Considering the way our culture has changed over the years, how is the way you’re telling the younger generation about God different than the way you were told?

Reflect

■ Select a few verses from Psalm 104 or 145 that speak about the greatness of God. What is one situation you are currently facing that you will commit to trusting completely to him?

■ How does reflecting on these passages that speak of God's greatness help you to believe that he is willing and able to handle those situations?

Take time to pray today. Ask God to give you new perspective on ways to express *halal* and *shabach* even when life is difficult. Thank God for creating you with an innate desire to praise, to cheer, and to be loud and joyful in celebration.

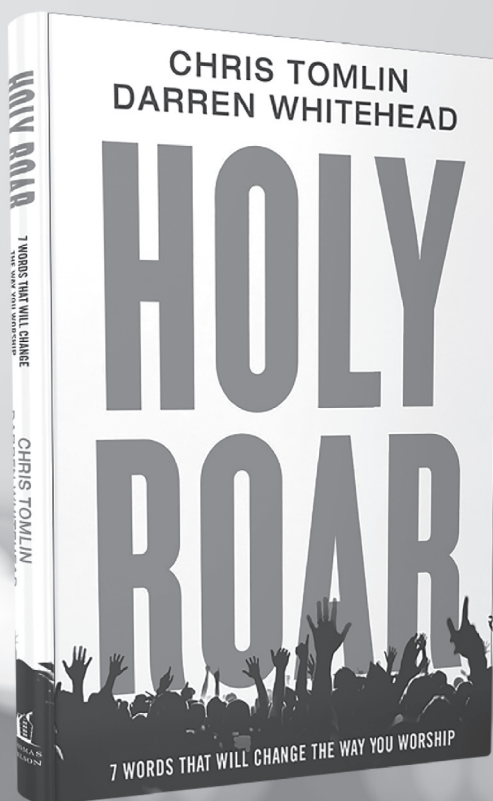
Apply

Put *halal* and *shabach* into action this week. Perhaps you don't feel comfortable doing this for the first time at church . . . but that doesn't mean you can't worship this way in your car (remember Darren's car story?), or in your dorm room, or in your living room, or in your office, or in the great outdoors. It's okay if you need to practice these expressions of praise in private so that you feel the freedom to praise and celebrate in public!

FOR NEXT WEEK

Use the space below to write down any key points or questions that you want to bring to the next group meeting. Review the content from chapters 2 and 7 in *Holy Roar* that were covered this week, and for the next session, read chapters 1 and 5.

ALSO AVAILABLE FROM
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