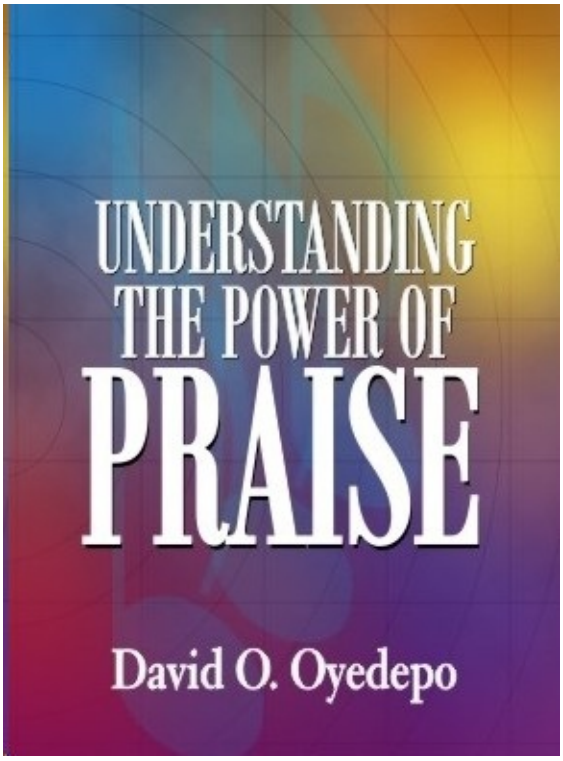
UNDERSTANDING THE POWER OF PRAISE

David O. Oyedepo


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Introduction

Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. Psalm 67:3

Praise is cardinal to the believer, because it is his cheapest access to the Most High God. It is also one of his surest access to the realm of the miraculous. Praise is also a preservative of the blessings of God. Blessings may come without it, but it takes praise to preserve the blessings. It is to one's blessings what salt is to meat – it keeps it from decaying.

In Malachi 2, the priests stood the risk of losing God's blessings, because they had ignored the ways of God.

And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart. Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it. Malachi 2:1–3

By not remembering to give God the glory due to Him, the priests stood to have dung spread on their faces, and you know that dung represents shame and reproach. This is precisely why I want to introduce you to a life style of praise, not a church agenda of praise, so that you will never experience shame or reproach.

The greatest obstacle facing you in life will never require more than praise to become a miracle. No obstacle can escape the touch of Jesus, and you invoke that touch by intense, hearty praise; not just with the lips, but praise coming from the depth of your soul!

Unfortunately, the power in praise has been ignored in the body of Christ. People think it is for those who don't know how to pray, but that is far from the truth. I have proved in my life that praise is much more effectual than the longest

fast any man can engage in. Also, although prayer (no matter how fervent) has it's place, it cannot compete with praise in potency. Praise makes things work cheaply!

There is a highway of praise. It’s a freeway – you just keep going on from triumph to triumph, victory to victory! Everything keeps going straight for you.

Concerning Jesus, the Bible says He was not ashamed to call us brethren. He’s the Lion of the tribe of Judah, so we belong to the tribe of Judah. Judah means praise (Genesis. 29:35). We belong therefore to the tribe of praise; so when we are out of praise, we are out of tune with our destiny.

You belong to the tribe of Judah, so triumph is your heritage (Genesis.49:8–12). When praise becomes your life style, triumph becomes your heritage; therefore, the son of wickedness will no longer be able to exact upon you (Psalm. 89:22).

Jacob pronounced these terrific blessings upon Judah in ***Genesis 49:8–9:***

> **Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father’s children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion’s whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?**

That is where a life style of praise takes you! There’s a degree of comfort and restful confidence that comes on those who live a praisefull life style.

Do you want to go up? Praise is the ladder to use! Just trigger off that Judaic nature inside you! You will be so restful. You will couch like a lion, and when you wake up, anything you find will be food for you.

Also, note that because you belong to the tribe of Judah, you're of the company of those that must be praised by others, by reason of your outstanding results and undeniable breakthroughs! That's your place in God, and it's time to take that place.

Nothing greases life like praise! When any system or engine lacks grease, it begins to make a cracking noise. That is how many lives in the body of Christ are today, because they lack the grease of praise.

It is time to train up in praise! Training leads to triumph. Every military formation draws strength and victory from training. If you're not trained, you're

not ready for triumph. Training is what begets triumph. As we train up in praise, through the things I'll be sharing with you in this book, you will begin to triumph in every phase of your life!

A man can praise his way out of penury into plenty, out of sickness into health, and out of smallness into greatness! Yet praise is one of the most neglected or ignored spiritual weapons in Christendom, and I think it’s purely as a result of ignorance.

God is saying, "It's time to understand the new syllabus." It's not what we are used to. God is restoring the tabernacle of David to the Church. If you look at the prophecy of Amos, it says, "Then shall the tabernacle of David be restored..." (Amos 9:11). There must be a restoration of the tabernacle of praise before Jesus will come. And that's the realm we're entering into now, the realm where nothing answers until praise is offered!

Praise is not focusing on happenings, it is focusing on God's faithfulness. It is focusing on the efficacy of Scriptures. It is focusing on the integrity of God and the insight that you have received. This is what makes praise endless!

I believe there is an encounter for you in this book! You will be introduced to a new way of living – a life style of praise!

Chapter 1:
Have You Praised Him?

There is this tradition with Christians, and which has been carried over into the charismatic circle. Every time someone has a problem, people ask, "Have you prayed?" But that's not a complete question. It is also common to hear someone tell you: "I have so and so problem, please pray along with me."

Everybody knows about prayer, so much so that even when their prayers are not being answered, they don't bother to find out why. Many have done everything in trying to solve their problems except the right thing.

But when Paul and Silas prayed (while in chains in the prison), and there seemed to be no response from heaven, they switched over to praise, and God intervened (Acts 16:25–26)!

Looking also at two outstanding events in the ministry of Jesus (the feeding of the five thousand and the raising of Lazarus from the dead), we see that they both answered to praise. Jesus showed us that whenever a problem will take God, then give it praise; because praise will always get God on the scene. Whatever appears difficult in your life is only waiting for your praise, to fall down flat like the wall of Jericho. So, have you praised Him?

When something stronger than you is fighting you, stop struggling; rather, just celebrate God from the depth of your heart. He will step in and all the devils will step out! Don't forget that God is ***"fearful in praises, doing wonders" (Exodus. 15:11).***

Do you want to see God step into your affairs? Then, praise Him! Somebody is reported as having low sperm count, which is why his wife is not pregnant. All he needs is God! Have you not read of the virgin who conceived in Luke 1? How did it happen?

> **And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. Luke 1:35**

"The power of the Highest" is all it takes! Look at ***Psalm 66:1–3:***

> **Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious. Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.**

When you praise God, the greatness of His power shatters the plan of the enemies. I do not mean the praise you do religiously in church. I mean praising Him from the depth of your heart, not mere singing songs for fun.

Praise is a mystery, because as you praise God, things are mysteriously handled from the "headquarters" of heaven, while you just watch the events unfold before you.

The greatest obstacle before you will not require more than praise to be converted to a miracle. Praise made one little boy's lunch to be enough to feed five thousand men! It brought Lazarus out of the grave, after he had been dead for four days! Even his beloved sister, Martha, said, "He stinketh", because decomposition had started taking its toll on his body.

But when God steps in, there is nothing decomposition can do. When He came to the graveside, He recomposed Lazarus' system, and he that was dead came forth from the grave, alive! (John.11:44.)

The wall of Jericho, the heaviest wall in its days (upon which six chariots could run side by side), "dissolved" in the hands of praise! The Bible says, ***"The wall fell down flat..." (Joshua. 6:20).***

In ***Jeremiah 32:27*** God asks:

> **Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?**

The Psalmist said, *"Let everything that has breath, praise the Lord" (**Psalm. 150:6**).* In other words, God is saying, "If there is still any breath in you, you can catch Me. Just praise Me and I will come down. I will flush the devil out for you, just give Me the remaining breath in you. Give it to Me in praise and I will come down to rescue you from the den of lions."

Friend, He's always there! Every time you're shut in and there seems to be no way out, just praise God. As you do, there will be an earthquake, the prison gates will be shattered, and you will walk out into liberty! May the tabernacle of David, which is praise, find a place in your heart, so that you can have pleasures forever more!

A praising and jumping saint is always pressure–free. I have passed through the highways of death many times, but my heart was never shaken. God's presence was too thick around me to allow fear in.

> **But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Psalm 22:3**

Praise is an invitation that God can never turn down. Every time praise rises up to God, He steps in. That thing which the devil thinks is enough reason for you not to praise God, let it be the very reason for which you are praising Him. For when He stretches forth His hand, who can turn it back?

It is time to celebrate God. It’s time to give Him a chance to handle that situation. You have cried enough, now praise Him! Come out of those things that make you shed private tears and praise Him.

You Were Created To Praise Him

This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise. Isaiah 43:21

The reason why many Christians are frustrated and miserable in life is because God's purpose for their lives is not being fulfilled. The purpose of every product is determined by the manufacturer. Until you know the purpose for which you were created, and keep to it, you can not live a fulfilled life.

Why did God make you? What did He create you for? When you discover and apply yourself to that purpose, you then begin to experience the best of God's plan for your life.

God has created you and me for a purpose, and it is clearly established in Scriptures. In ***1 Peter 2:9,*** we are told:

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that YE SHOULD SHOW FORTH THE PRAISES OF HIM WHO HATH CALLED YOU out of darkness into his marvellous light:

That is why no Christian is at his or her best without praise. You are never at your best as a child of God, if you don't live a life of praise.

God created you to show forth His praise. No wonder He called David a man after His heart. David lived up to God's purpose for creating him, that was why he won God's heart. When you are out of God's purpose, you become miserable; and because the purpose of God for your life is distorted, you can't have testimonies.

Until you give God what is due unto Him, don't expect what is due to you. That is why a praising Christian is an ever–shining, reigning and ruling person!

Praise Pleases God

I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs. Psalm 69:30–31

Faith is not as potent as praise. While faith draws on God's faithfulness, praise draws on God's personality. ***Hebrews 11:6*** says:

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

God is pleased, so He moves to honour faith. But when God is pleased with praise, He comes down in person. God's faithfulness is triggered off by faith, while praise compels His presence.

Now, let's consider this illustration. If the President of your country gives you a note to a place, when you get there, even with the note in your hand, the security men would still want you to first identify yourself. This is because anybody can present someone else's signature.

But can you see the President of your country in person and mistake him for someone else? Can any security man at the gate ask for his identity? His note was his word; yet, you were still required to identify yourself before you were let in. But when the President appears in person, the gates would be flung wide open! Even the gateman would be very happy to be the one on duty that day!

This shows that somebody's note does not have as much power as his presence. Likewise, with faith, you are bearing a heavenly note in your hand. But with praise, God is with you!

When God is pleased, exploits explode and you no longer live the ordinary life. Everything begins to answer to you in your business, career and Family. Miracles, signs and wonders begin to answer to you. It's time to mean business with God!

He said, ***"You shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."*** Learn to praise Him with all your heart. When you magnify

Him, He magnifies your destiny; when you praise Him, He raises you. God is about to do something in your life. Will you praise Him?

When God is pleased, anything can happen. Do you want to see something happen in your life, business and Family? All you need to do is just please Him with your praises.

There are some points to remember as you do so.

Acknowledge Him!

And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart. Malachi 2:1–2

Every act and favour of God need to be appreciated and acknowledged. When you take any act of God for granted, it becomes a curse. You will not suffer curses!

...This commandment is for you...

Acknowledging God is a commandment. If you do not lay it to heart to give glory to His name for every goodness and mercy you enjoy, He will send a curse upon you. In fact, He said, *"...**Yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.**"*

You do not acknowledge Him by mere words of the mouth. It is not even saying it simply because everybody else is saying it. You have to mean what you're saying from the depth of your heart. Every favour you do not appreciate God for depreciates, and every blessing whose source you don't acknowledge, disappears.

God is faithful and cannot deny Himself. When I think of all that He has done in my life and ministry, I am amazed. More so as I can't remember ever asking Him to do them. This moves me to quickly acknowledge that He alone is the One in charge! I can't raise even an ant (on my own), it's Him. It is purely by the hand of God. So we keep celebrating Him. Our song has always been, "See what the Lord has done!" That is why the devil has continually been frustrated in his bid to pull down the work.

Never take God's faithfulness for granted. When you do, you will be grounded! Always acknowledge that He did it all. Each time you see very strange acts, quickly acknowledge, "This is purely the hand of God!"

He said, *"...Lay it to heart."* Just as only hearty prayers get across to God, only hearty praises move Him. Announce to Him continually, "Lord, I recognise

that You are the One that has made the difference in my life."

For every little increase you see in your business, go into your room and sing praises to Him. That is my secret. I don't ask Him for anything. I just dance, dance and dance before Him! So, He just keeps dazing me with His blessings. Once I asked Him, "Won't You even let someone pray before You answer?" His reply was, "There are people that before they call, I answer, and while they are yet speaking, I perform."

When you can see and acknowledge Him for what He has done, you provoke Him to do more.

> **For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them. Psalm 44:3**

Our experience of terrific victories and triumphs in our ministry has been by reason of His favour. Kings bow to us, because of He that is in us.

Be Grateful!

In 1977, a younger one of mine was celebrating his birthday, and he said to me, "My brother, what gift do you have for me today?" I said, "Open to Deuteronomy 28:47. I want to leave you with something that will help you all the days of your life." He was actually expecting me to give him money. Let me show you the same thing now.

> **Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee. Deuteronomy 28:47–48**

You can never be fruitful except you are grateful. Every seed sown in ingratitude falls on the rock and has no future.

If you look at the book of Malachi, before God said, *"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse...",* He said, *"Lay it to heart."* It is one step after the other. In the kingdom of God, gratitude determines altitude. It is not strength or sweat, but gratitude. You never go higher than you lift Him. One of my sons in the ministry said, "You don't need to be strong to be a success, you just need to be smart." It's smartness to be grateful, so go ahead and be grateful!

Let me help you to see some abundance around you. You have probably never been on admission in the hospital for a year or more now. You probably have never required medical aid to sleep. You sleep on your own bed, eat your own food and wear your own clothes. You know of course that it is not so with several other people. So be grateful for it!

When you refuse to see His hand, you frustrate Him and compel Him to stop blessing you. Look back and see what you were and where you were before you gave your life to Christ. Shouldn't you be grateful to Him?

Let's praise Him for the abundance of all things! When you become blinded to His doings in your life, life remains colourless. Ingratitude is spiritual blindness. God is a sweet God. May you never miss that sweetness the remaining days of your life. Just be grateful and there is no way you can end your journey in the pit!

Every mountain before you can be leveled. All you need is to maintain a high frequency of praise and a sense of gratitude.

Don't Complain

Every one who complains ends up a convict, but every singing and jumping saint stays on top as a celebrity.

This testimony will thrill you: "I'm a fish farmer. God re–directed my steps back to a farm facility at Ipaja and gave me a ministry to feed the hungry through the dissemination of fish protein. I asked God, 'How do I start?' And He answered, 'Start by breeding cat fishes. But then, rehearse with ornamental fishes.'

We got a set of broodstock and suddenly, someone came and stole them all. However, five pieces were left behind. This was in November. Not feeling bad at all (rather, we praised God), we started working with the five pieces, and by February, we had almost 25,000 of those fishes through reproduction!

My staff said to me, 'Sir, how are we going to sell all these fishes, since they are not the ones people want now?' I said, 'We have a God of miracles. Since we pay our tithes, AGIP, offering, parental obligations and so on, God will daze us.' Confidently, we waited.

Then one day, we saw a white man on our facility, somebody brought him. He is the sixth in the ornamental fish world (I've read of him in American magazines). He came for aquatic plants, but the Holy Spirit had directed our steps to put a sample of the fish in a glass and he saw it and said, 'You breed this kind of fish here?' I said, 'Yes.' He asked, 'What kind of drugs do you give them?' I said, 'We don't use drugs here.' He said the ones he gets from Singapore must be given drugs within 48 hours of being put in a glass tank, otherwise, they would die. He then decided to take some samples with him to Germany.

He went with about 20 pieces and behold, he came back about 15 days later to say we should give him 1,500 pieces! By the grace of God, today, even though the fishes have not been sold in Nigeria, they are now in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Germany!

The interesting thing about it is that the man pays cash up front! And since we started business with him (about three months ago), someone else has taken samples to Singapore."

Adediran, M.

They stole his fish, but not his heart; so he just gave glory to God, and the God of multiplication came, multiplied the fish, and brought someone to take them out to Europe!

Here is another testimony from a sister in church:

"I used to be a crying baby before I joined Winners' Chapel. On Friday, when I was about leaving the office, I received a letter which said I should report in Abuja within the next two weeks.

I was slightly afraid, because I knew that if I had to report in Abuja, then my Family would be flushed out of the apartment we had just moved into last December. I was a little worried and at a point, I said, ‘God is not a God of confusion’. I told myself that He just gave me this apartment, so He can't send me out of it.

After the Sunday praise worship service here, I found myself praising God, thanking Him that at least I was only transferred and not dismissed or terminated. And at that instance, God intervened!

When I got to the office on Monday, I went to my boss' office, to have him sign some letters that I would take to Abuja. My boss said, ‘Fatuashe, so you want to go on transfer to Abuja and you didn't let me know? Anyway, I've phoned the person that signed that Staff Order, that you're not reporting in Abuja. Since I have an appointment there on Wednesday, I will personally take the Staff Order to Abuja.’

That was exactly what he did and came back yesterday. Now, I don't have to go on transfer to Abuja anymore!"

Fatuashe, K.

She said,"I found myself praising God, that I was only transferred and not dismissed or terminated." And God intervened in her case! No matter how legitimate your reasons, *"Neither murmur ye.."* is a commandment (***1Corinthians. 10:10***). No reason is acceptable to God for complaining.

When you complain to man, you get their sympathy, but when you complain to God, you incur His anger! And if God catches you complaining, He cancels all the favours He had lined up for you, and also takes away the ones He had earlier given.

Friend, there is everything to praise Him for. Everyone who lives in complaint lives in defeat; but he who lives in praise, lives in victory. Make your choice!

Give Him Thanks!

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: Psalm 92:1

You do not know what you are missing when you are not giving thanks to God and praising Him. God inhabits the praises of His people. And the Bible says it is a good thing to give thanks to Him. That means, it's a bad thing to be unthankful.

If you are thoughtful, you will discover that there's always something to thank God for.

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. 1 Thessalonians 5:18

The will of God is that no matter where you are now, you should give thanks to Him, and by so doing, you will obtain the promise. Even for the miracles you see in other people's lives, genuinely give Him thanks. Don't let anything pass without a thanksgiving response from you to Him.

We have never looked for food to eat in my home and nothing good finishes there. What is at work? Thanksgiving! Nothing ever finishes in the hands of a thanksgiver, everything just keeps multiplying.

Look at this story in ***Luke 17:12–19:***

And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

After every act of God, He waits on the other side for an acknowledgement from you. This shows that God keeps record of your activities. Every act of His that is not acknowledged disqualifies you from receiving further blessings.

Perfection is obtainable through praise. The other nine lepers were cleansed, but only the one that returned to give thanks was made whole.

Our ministry has never had any form of crisis since its inception fifteen years ago. We have neither had a misunderstanding to settle among us nor a breakaway; only years of colourful, hitch–free operation, all by the mystery of thanksgiving. The month of July is set apart annually for thanksgiving and praises in all our churches worldwide. So, God just keeps showering us with favours of all kinds! We return like that leper continually, to give Him thanks, because He is worthy!

You have enjoyed all manner of deliverances, favours, liftings and promotions, so give Him thanks. At every point in your life, learn to say, "Thank You, Jesus." At every turn of event, learn to say, "Praise the Lord." By doing this, you are getting yourself set for a change. I see amazing changes coming your way!

The force of thanksgiving was what lifted Lazarus out of the grave, where he had been dead and stinking for four days. It was by the same mystery that five loaves and two fishes multiplied to feed five thousand men, with twelve baskets–full gathered as left overs! We are seeing such manifestations also in our days.

A sister shared this testimony sometime ago in church: "I went out on Thursday and my car stopped in the middle of the road. I tried to start it, but it wouldn't start. Some people who were standing by asked, 'Madam should we give you a push?' I said ‘no’. I remembered it was our month of praise and started praising God in the car.

I didn't come out to open the bonnet, because I didn't know what to do. But as I sang praises, I started the car again and it responded, just like that!

Also, somebody had collected some goods from me and I hadn't heard from her. In fact, she gave me the impression that everything was settled and that she had finished selling them.

But on Friday night, my husband came home, bringing almost all the goods back. I looked at them and wasn't discouraged. Somehow, I just had this peace. I

said, 'It's my month of praise, God will be glorified.' I spread the goods out on the table, thanked God and went to sleep.

I woke up the following day and had a leading to go somewhere. And lo and behold, when I got to the place, just by giving praise, I sold more than all what the lady claimed to have sold in four months! I sold them at just one place, one day and at once!"

Nelson, P.

First Peter 3:13 says:

> **And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?**

The Psalmist tells us that it is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord. So giving thanks also grants you access to the hurt–free zone of life.

Lift Your Hands To Him

No matter what valley you are trapped in, praise will raise you out of it.

> **Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. Habakkuk 3:17–19**

The cheapest way out of every pit is to raise your hands up in praise to God, then will He pull you out with those raised hands.

There is a proverb that says, "It is a child that lifts up his hands that the adult carries or picks up." Every climbing is done with your hands, so also is every lifting only made possible with your hands lifted up. Until your hands are lifted up to Him in acknowledgement of His faithfulness and grace, you remain grounded.

> **They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed. Psalm 34:5**

If you can't see the abundance of His grace, you have frustrated it and don't expect any more of it. But when you lift up your hands, you provoke Him to do it again and again.

Look at this testimony: "I had a lot of financial problems, having to take care of three children alone. So during the Breakthrough Explosion, I said to God, 'At this Breakthrough Explosion, I want You to meet my needs.' I came here on Thursday, saddled with a lot of burdens. There was nothing for the children to eat in the morning. I told them to drink gari and go to school, that they shouldn't worry, that our God is alive and was going to surprise us.

That afternoon, I came to the service, full of joy, and all that the Bishop said that day was directed at me. He said, 'When your burdens are too much, you overbug God and you are overwhelmed by your problems. Why don't you leave

everything to God and rather begin to intercede for others.' I went home that day filled with joy.

At the end of the Bishop's teaching yesterday, he prophesied, saying, 'Somebody will come and look for you.' When I got home, I still drank gari with joy and began to sing and praise God. I didn't know what came upon me. Then suddenly, someone that had been owing me some amount of money came in and said, 'Madam, you are so full of joy. I have come to pay the 2,000 naira I was owing you.'

This morning also, someone visited me and gave me some amount of money – 2,500 naira all together!"

Egboka, A.

Friend, if your hands are not lifted up to God in praise and thanksgiving, you might die in the pit. Praise is your only way to keep staying at the top.

> **Praise ye the Lord. Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people. Psalm 113:1,7–8**

He won't raise you until you praise Him. He makes the barren woman that praises Him to keep house. Every time you raise your hands in praise, God raises you up.

This testimony will also thrill you: "I started fellowshipping here on February 26, 1997. Before I came here, I was in a business that did not glorify God. I came here in the heat of the holiness message, and one day, the Bishop while preaching said, ‘Leave that business, leave it!’ But I said in my heart, ‘Bishop, you are a preacher. This is Lagos, and you don't understand what these things are all about.’ Immediately I finished saying that, he said, ‘You don't have to tell me this is Lagos. God created Lagos and He knows that this is Lagos.’

I came for the WOFBI June special course and at the end of it, I knew I couldn't go back to that business any more. The Lord then spoke to my heart,

about going into petroleum or kerosine business. With the little money I had, I rented an office and bought a tank. But there was no money for the supply. I needed about 60,000 naira for the first supply.

At the Hosanna Night on Friday, the Bishop said, ‘Look at that thing that is bothering you and praise God for it.’ So, I looked at the 60,000 naira and praised God for it. On Monday, somebody walked into my office and gave me 60,000 naira!"

Obba, C.

The more you praise God, the more He raises you. Remember, God has defined the purpose of your creation. Until you accept, adapt and identify with it, you will never be at your best.

I can now ask you when you are stranded, "Have you praised Him?" When you have prayed and the angel He has sent with the answer still has not come (remember Daniel's 21–day's ordeal), you can invite Him to step in in person. To invite Him, just praise Him in the dance! Make a joyful noise to the Lord in praise!

You have cried to God enough over that business, that child, that sickness, that husband, that wife. Now praise Him! You have fasted until you almost lost your intestines. Now switch on the praise knob! Relax and give Him what turns Him on.

It is wisdom to praise Him. From today, as you celebrate God at home, at work, on the road, in the air, in every place, blessings will be your portion forever! May your life be testimony–packed from this hour!

There shall be no more regrets on your path, in Jesus' name!

Chapter 2:
Prayer And Praise

Every prayer requires angelic involvement for it to be fulfilled. For instance, when Peter was in prison in Acts 12, the Bible records that *"prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."* In response to that prayer, God sent an angel down with the answer:

> **And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.**
>
> **And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. Acts 12:7–10**

Also in the book of Daniel, we find three instances where angels were sent down from heaven with answers to the prayer of saints.

> **Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days. Daniel 10:12–14**

And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. Daniel 9:3,21–22

Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: Daniel 6:19–22

God responded to all Daniel's prayers by dispatching angels to go and deliver the answers. But though angels excel in strength, they are limited in power. There is no omnipotent angel, God is the only omnipotent being.

Whereas angels attend to prayer, God personally attends to praise (Psalm. 22:3). Every prayer requires some form of angelic intervention for the answer to be delivered. Prayers are made to God, but the answers are passed down through angels.

See The Difference....

Praise is superior to prayer. How do I know? Whereas angels attend to prayers, God personally attends to praises; and that makes the difference. When God attends to anything, you can be sure of who wins. Every time God rises in your favour, the victory is won. Praise is what makes God rise from His holy habitation; it is what triggers off the intervention of the Omnipotent God. And when God steps in, every devil bows out.

> **Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. Psalm 68:1–2**

Remember the story of Paul and Silas in prison in ***Acts 16***? They were bound and thrust into the inner prison. But **verse 25** says:

> **And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.**

Paul and Silas prayed, but the angel probably wasn't getting across. Paul must have said to Silas, "Let's change our style." So they switched over to singing praises; and the Almighty, who no prince of Persia can withstand, stepped into the prison. See what happened next:

> **And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. Acts 16:26**

When they switched to praise, God came down in person! How do I know? The Bible records that there was a great earthquake; and ***Psalm 114:7*** says, ***"Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob."*** God stepped in in person, and ***" immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed."*** Paul and Silas walked out of the prison in dignity and the case was closed!

See also the praising giant's (David) experience in Psalm 18:

> **I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies. In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears. Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. Psalm 18:3, 6–7**

An angel can be waylaid, stranded or stopped on the way, but who can stop the Almighty? There is a continuous conflict in the heavenlies, between God's angels and Satan's angels. That is why angels can be stopped. But God can't be stopped. No force can stand in His way. That is why nothing can stand the power coming forth from your praises.

Now, what is that problem, issue, cross–road, and frustrating condition facing you right now? You don't have to die in that prison house. Calculate an "earthquake", that will bring an everlasting breakthrough your way!

Every time people go to seek the Lord, they do so only in prayer. But the Bible says, "And your heart shall live that seek God in praise after this order."

Angels intervene when you pray.

> **And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. Revelation 5:7–8**

Angels store up prayers. When we pray, the Father transfers it to the angelic department for action. But when you praise Him, He does not contact any angel, for He inhabits the praises of His people.

Praise is superior to prayer! We have seen that every mind–boggling miracle that took place in the Bible was in direct response to praise. Jesus lifted His eyes to heaven and gave thanks, and there was enough food from five loaves of bread and two small fishes to feed five thousand men! All He said was, "Father, I thank

you", not, "Father, multiply this bread and fish."

Praise is God's hotline anytime! You can pray amiss, but you can never praise amiss!

Make Your Choice

Jesus said something about prayer that is very revealing.

> **Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? Matthew 26:53**

Angels will always respond to prayer, at the command of the Father. That is why they are called ministering spirits, sent to minister for us who shall be heirs of salvation (Hebrew. 1:14). The Bible says they hearken to the voice of His command.

Angels attend to prayer, while God personally attends to praise. Make your choice! The hottest prayer will only bring angels down, but every acceptable praise brings God down!

It's time to praise God down into every tight issue of your life. When you begin to sing and praise God, He sets ambushment against your enemies (2 Chronicles. 20:22–25). It is praise that makes your battle change hands. God will always take over your battles when you praise Him.

We have too many prayer warriors, it is time to raise praise warriors! You have prayed and fasted enough. Now discover the power in praise, because when you are full of praises, you have more victories.

Chapter 3:
Praise Warfare

Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord. Psalm 149:6–9

There is no situation in your life that will take more than praise to bow. This is because praise brings God into any situation, and whatever cannot stop God cannot stop it. Why? When you pray, God answers; but when you praise, He steps in, in all His glory, might, power and awesomeness.

If you want to secure God's company in the midst of any conflict, just release yourself to praise, and He will be there in person. When God comes on the spot, every devil gives way!

Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. Sing unto God, sing praises to his name... Psalm 68:1–2, 4

Whatever will take God only calls for praise. That is praise–warfare. When praise is in place, His presence is compelled, for He inhabits the praises of His people (Psalm. 22:3).

In praise–warfare, you don't get emotionally excited. Rather, you look at the mountains before you and bring them down with praise.

Praise is a God–given weapon in your hands, with which to humiliate Satan. It is the price to pay in order to transfer any battle from your hand to God's hand. When you enter into the realm of high praise, none of your enemies is safe any more. When you switch over to praise–warfare, there will be a crashing down of every wall of Jericho in your life.

So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. Joshua 6:20

Praise–warfare disarms your enemies, such as sickness, poverty, lack, failure, etc. When you give thanks and sing praises unto His name, ***Psalm 92:11*** becomes a reality in your life:

Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies, and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me.

Praise will grant you access into the hurt–free zone of life, because God's presence automatically dispels evil. His eyes are too pure to behold evil, so evil can't be present where God is present. He dwells in the light that no man can approach unto (1Timothy.6:16). This is what makes praise a superior weapon of warfare in the conflicts of life.

You remember, when the evil spirit came upon Saul, every time David began to play on the instrument, the evil spirit departed from him.

And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.
1 Samuel 16:23

Evil spirits can't survive the presence of praise. The enemies can't survive a praise–filled atmosphere, because it is God's natural habitat.

"Target–Praise" Warfare

In the days of Jehoshaphat, it was "target–praise" warfare that brought them the great victory over the children of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, who came against them.

And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever. And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.

> **For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another. And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped. 2 Chronicles 20:21–24**

That is "target–praise" warfare! When God stretched forth His hand, no man can stop it or turn it back. He sits upon the circles of the earth, doing what He pleases.

Friend, whatever God has not planted, but which is growing in your life, Family, business, finance, children, etc, can be uprooted by the invocation of praise. From today, as you "praise at" whatever "tares" the enemy has sown in your life, God will step in and uproot them by Himself.

Somebody says, "I should be married by now." Praise Him for that state, and you'll soon be married. Another says, "I should have a job by now." Praise Him and the job will be yours.

A brother got a job this way. He needed a job, and when he couldn't get one, he began to sell malt drinks for somebody. He would collect some quantity from the person, which he sold by carrying it about in the market on his shoulder. He was in church one day, and I told the congregation to get back home and genuinely thank and praise the Lord for His goodness unto us. He got home that night and danced around the cartons of malt drink, thanking God for His

faithfulness.

The following day, he went out on his usual business in the market and a man walked up to him and asked him where he got the drinks he was selling from. He told the man, who then asked him if he wanted a job. This man took him to his office and gave him a job as a manager in the same company that produces the drink he was selling on his shoulder!

There is no shut prison door that praise cannot shatter!

Here is another testimony: "My wife and I began worshipping here on July 12, 1996. Before we came here, my wife was terribly sick. She was poisoned in 1992, and this kept disturbing her in the tummy. We've been to so many hospitals and I've spent over half a million naira, without any cure.

When the Breakthrough Explosion started, we shifted to praises; and now, my wife is perfectly delivered! She's here with me now.

Also my father–in–law was struck with stroke. We were informed about it last week and we went to see him in the hospital. He was helpless; he could neither move nor talk. When he talked, you could hardly hear him; his speech was not normal. I told the doctor to discharge him, that I wanted to take him home. After a long argument, the doctor succumbed and released him to me. I took him home and started to pray and to praise God wonderfully in the room. I also anointed him with the oil. Behold, he's perfectly healed now!"

Odogwu, B.

No one can stop God when He comes on the scene; so it is wisdom to switch Him on. He is Almighty and Omnipotent! Praise is one of the most potent weapons in spiritual warfare; though it appears very cheap, it brings the Almighty on the scene. When He takes over your battles, you become a relaxed winner.

be "Dance–Full"

One day in 1989, the Holy Ghost came upon me very heavily, and I told all the women who desired the fruit of the womb and had been labeled "barren", "The Lord just spoke to me not to pray for any of you, but that you should just dance your "dancest" before Him."

Months later , one of the four women who came out that day testified (when she brought her baby for dedication in church), saying, "When I heard that prophetic utterance, I said, ‘This is the chance I have long waited for.’" So she came up and danced before the Lord and she became pregnant that same month! Her case was medically closed and she was almost gone past the child–bearing age, but God broke through all that to give her a miracle!

Psalm 149:1–5 makes us understand that praise does not stop at singing only, but involves much more. **Verse 3** says:

> **Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.**

Immediately that is done, see what follows after in verse 4:

> **For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.**

When we praise Him in the dance, our beauty emerges.

Another woman shares her testimony: "Exactly a year ago, the Bishop declared July as our month of praise. He also declared it as our month of release, because the Lagos church was seven years old then.

We were here for the Breakthrough Night on July 26. I had been looking for the fruit of the womb and whenever my period came, it came with pains. That night, the pains came again, but I said to it, ‘You have come for your destruction.’ That night, the Bishop said we were going to praise and dance, so I determined within myself that the pains were going that night.

I was sitting outside that day and as we began to praise and dance, singing praises to God, the man next to me said, ‘Madam, are you a soldier?’ I said, ‘No.

I know what I'm doing. I want to contact something here tonight.' The pains disappeared that night and I came out to share the testimony.

Then the Spirit of the Lord declared through my mouth that I was pregnant that night. The Bishop also came up and said, 'That lady that came up here, I tell you, she is pregnant already.' And lo and behold, I became pregnant and delivered two wonderful baby boys!"

Lawal, M.

Whatever is contrary to beauty can be danced off your life! As you dance, God's vengeance will come upon every ugly situation in your life. A brother's money that had been impounded in Switzerland for six years was mysteriously released. How did it happen?

This is his story: "I came here with my wife on July 21, 1996, and attended the Business Fellowship on Monday 22. Before then, in 1990, my money amounting to $30,000 had been impounded in Switzerland.

I was given a contract to supply spare parts. I went to Switzerland to buy the parts and paid the money in travellers' cheques. I returned home, but after one month, I still hadn't received the goods. Then, I received a message from my customers in Switzerland, telling me that $8,000 out of the money I paid in was bad and because of that, they had impounded all the money. It was a terrible thing for me!

I went to Switzerland and spent one month there, trying to explain things to them; yet nothing happened. The managing director of the company said because some of the money were bad, they could not release anything to me. I spent a lot of money in sending fax messages, letters and telephone calls, but the money was still not released.

While rounding up the Business Fellowship that day, the Bishop prayed earnestly from his heart for all businessmen. I was there with all the documents relating to that money. It was July, the month of praise, and the Bishop had asked us to dance our best and wipe off the sweat on our faces with our business documents, indicating that we would never sweat over our businesses any more.

That was it! The money was released the very next day! How do I know it

was released on 23rd? The letter telling me of its release was dated 23rd July and I got it in August.

You can imagine the difference in the exchange rate of 1990 and that of 1996, when the money was released! Thank God I was not owing the bank, I would have been in a terrible mess. You can imagine my bumper harvest now!"

Odogwu, B.

Whatever force is holding down any of your redemptive rights will bow as you praise God in a dance. David danced with all his might before the Lord and everything that mocked Him (including his wife) came under God's judgement (2 Samuel. 6:14–23). Everything mocking you today will come under heaven's judgement as you too dance with all your might before Him.

I call it warfare dance! Your victory is sure. Do you know you can dance your way into your long–awaited covenant marriage, career and peace in the home?

A woman said in her testimony that when the excruciating pains she usually experienced during her monthly menstrual circle came again, she said to it,"You came at the wrong time!" She came to church and during the praise session, danced "like a drunkard". Something on her inside said to the things on the outside, "Keep quiet, I'm operating on a strange key for sweatless victory this time around." And she got it! She was simply bringing the Word of God to bear on the situation.

> **Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord. Psalm 149:6–9**

That war in your home, body, office and finance are issues that praise–warfare can handle. From today, wherever you turn, you will have reasons not only to sing, but to dance before the Lord, in Jesus' name!

Chapter 4:
Make Praise Happen!

Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.| Psalm 67:3

You are the one to make praise happen. The word "let" implies this. Do you want a way out of that difficult situation? Then, you have to let praise happen! Let gladness happen (verse 4)! This is because if you had lost anything at all, He is the reason why you did not lose everything.

In the early days of our ministry, whenever my car broke down, I would say, "Thank God, it is the car that broke down, not me." The Psalmist said:

I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. Psalm 69:30

"I will praise..." It is a conscious act of the will, not something you just stumble into.

You don't wait for joy to come, you make it happen. Many have been waiting for gladness to come in their lives all this while, and have died under depression. **Verse 4** says, *"O let the nations be glad and sing for joy."* That is to say, "Gladden and lighten your environment."

When you are so blessed, that it is only one kind of food you have to eat daily in your house, just remember that the children of Israel ate one kind of food for forty years in the wilderness! Yet the Bible tells us that there was none feeble among them. So, you should praise Him that at least you have not had to eat that particular kind of food for forty years.

In the early days of the ministry also, we used to live in a house that had only one toilet facility, which was what all the members of the church used as well. But I remembered that the "Son of man" (Jesus) had no place to lay His head when He was going about His mission on the earth, so I rejoiced that at least I had somewhere to lay my head.

You are the one to generate joy around you. You don't programme sorrow by spreading bad news and expect joy to surround you.

> **Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord. Psalm 150:6**

Why? He is the One that has allowed the breath to remain. Paul and Silas knew this, that was why they could still praise Him, even in their bounds. They were grateful for the fact that they still had life in them.

Make praise happen! It begins with being joyful. When you are intoxicated with joy, it explodes in praises.

Generate Joy

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Psalm 100:1–2

One of the greatest assets to fulfilment in life is joy. When you are joyless, you are helpless. That explains why downcast people are always going down, because it takes a boosted morale to make a definite and outstanding mark in life. Some people are always unhappy and they can't even explain why they are that way. They sag and wonder, "Why is every other person laughing? Or are they deceiving themselves, considering the economic situation in Nigeria? Can't they see what is going on all around?" What they are carrying is too heavy for them. But the joyful man is ever winning, because of the limitless benefits of redemption he has access to.

It takes a glad heart to give acceptable praise to God. It's not just the singing that registers your praise in heaven, it is worshipping and celebrating God from a heart full of joy that provokes Him to come down in the midst of your praises.

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Ephesians 5:19

Without God you can do nothing and without joy, you can't have Him; so you must give yourself what it takes to maintain a heart full of joy.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:10–11

The coming of Christ was proclaimed as the coming of joy to the world. So when Jesus steps into any life, that life becomes an embodiment of good tidings and great joy, because He is heaven's greatest deposit of joy. Christ is the genuine fountain of joy to mankind. That is why the happiest people in the world are believers. I strongly believe that if anyone cannot find joy in Christ, he can never find it anywhere else.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. Galatians 5:22

That means through redemption in Christ, your spirit takes on new life; and when you are baptised in the Holy Ghost, your regenerated spirit is endowed with the ability to bear fruits, one of which is joy. The Bible calls it, *"Joy unspeakable full of glory",* because there may be no physical reason around you for it, but it is there all the same, just oozing out from your spirit.

So, if joy is not flowing in your heart, it means a part of your heritage in Christ is missing. You must consciously generate joy, in order to enjoy all the benefits of redemption.

Sorrow and broken–heartedness thrive on the past, concentrating on failures, mishaps, missed opportunities, insults and assaults. But a life of joy on the contrary focuses on the future. It is full of expectation for a bright and better tomorrow. Many people expect good things, but very few believe that it will come to pass. Fewer still, focus on their expectations, so they are dragged back by the past and stranded by the things of the present.

Paul said, ***"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians. 3:14).*** It is only by focusing on the future that you are guaranteed a continuous flow of joy. Jesus despised the shame of the cross, because He focused His mind on the joy of the future that was set before Him.

So, bury your past failures. It is irreparable. There is nothing you can do about it. The only way to prove that you are not a failure is to joyfully put your best into the present, in order to arrive at that successful future that you dream of. Joy will give you the endurance to ignore the negative forces around you and reach out for that glorious future.

Encourage Yourself

And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. 1 Samuel 30:6

David found himself in a very tight situation here. His men wanted to stone him after they discovered that their wives and children had been carried away by their enemies from the camp. David had no one to turn to, but to encourage himself in the Lord, who delivered him and helped him retrieve all that the enemy had taken.

You are perfectly in charge when you give joy its rightful place. You must get to a point in life, where even Satan himself knows that your heart cannot be broken. Enough of people encouraging you every day! Nothing works better than self-encouragement, because some people in the name of the encouragement are only taunting you. So learn to encourage yourself in the Lord.

There are certain principles that have helped me to always stay joyful. They are:

- God is always right.
- God is ever faithful.
- If God can't do it, then no one else can. If God cannot, no one else should try. He is the end of human search.

If you have these always at the back of your mind, you are sure to overcome everything that tries to break your heart. Are you looking up to God for a job? Why not rejoice over the fact that you are a candidate for a job, that you are even medically fit to work.

Are you looking up to God for a marriage partner? Why don't you thank God that you are fit to be considered for marriage, that you are not locked up in an asylum or a leprosarium as a leper. It's a thing of joy that you are even worthy to be married. Is it a child you want? Praise God that you are married and are now a candidate for motherhood. Look for reasons to rejoice and you will see God

perfecting everything you are looking up to Him for.

Jesus, the joy of the whole world, lives on your inside, you have no excuse to be a joyless Christian. You should be the one encouraging those around you. May be somebody stole your goods. Thank God you are not the one who stole the goods. Between "That is the thief", and "That is the man whose goods were stolen", which would you like to be addressed as? So, praise God you are the one whose goods were stolen, and not the thief.

What if your car caught fire? Thank God you are not the one that caught fire. Would you rather prefer to be the one that caught fire? One of my precious daughters came crying to me one day, to say her father had died. I said, "I thank God it was your father that died. Who should have died first? You or your father? Even if the man had a choice while he was alive, he would choose to die before you, so rejoice."

Hannah wanted a child from God, but as long as she went about looking sorrowful, God did not answer her. She even called herself a ***"woman of a sorrowful spirit" (1 Samuel. 1:15).*** But one day, she made room for joy in her heart. The Bible says she ate and her countenance was no more sad (1 Samuel. 1:18); then God visited her.

God does not visit the sorrowful. He only visits those who know how to please Him, in spite of their circumstances. Joseph was a self–encouraged prisoner. He was so full of joy, that he went about encouraging other prisoners and interpreting their dreams for them. He was the only prisoner who never knew the meaning of depression. See how he marched out from the prison to the palace! That is what joy can do.

Joseph was too full of joy to fail. Joyful people never fail, because they always see a future that keeps them excited. That is what living is all about. Everything that ties you down in depression, sorrow of heart or broken–heartedness, I curse them now, in Jesus' name!

Guard Your Joy

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. John 15:11

Jesus wants you to enjoy fullness of joy, and He wants that joy to remain in you. In John 16:22, He said, **"…Your heart shall rejoice and your joy no man taketh from you."**

You have a responsibility to steer clear of joy breakers: people who carry tales of woes and tragedies, who don't see any good in anything around them. They have no testimonies of the past, the present or the future. Don't relate with them, don't walk with them, don't even bid them goodbye; just avoid them. Joy breakers are destiny destroyers, you don't need such people around you.

To guard your joy, you need to avoid listening to evil tidings, as much as possible, as nothing breaks the heart like evil tidings. How much you protect your heart against such words or thoughts determine the success of your praise life.

When your spirit is broken, your entire countenance goes down and your life starts crawling (Proverbs. 18:14). That is why the Bible says, ***"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Proverbs. 4:23.)***

If you over–expose yourself to heart–breaking news, you stop life from delivering its goodness to you. If you enjoy telling or hearing bad news, you cannot maintain joy, the requirement for acceptable praise. This is because until you are making melody in your heart, God is not impressed with your singing.

It is impossible for a spring to bring forth both bitter and sweet waters at the same time. So, it is impossible for your heart to retain bad news and still remain joyful. There is enough good news in Christ to keep you rejoicing all the days of your life. So, cultivate a life style of sharing the Word of God and testimonies, to shield your heart from evil tidings.

Don't become a trash can for bad news, because every word you hear is a seed and sooner or later, your life will begin to react to it. I am so busy telling my testimonies, that I can't remember my trials. I am convinced that no matter how terrible any incident may be, God's faithfulness is still in place; so I don't talk problems, I only talk promises.

There will never be a time in your life when everything is not working. There must be at least one good thing in your life at any given point in time, so celebrate that one thing and you will find all the others falling into place. Life can be very fulfilling.

Keep Company With Praising People

Another way to continually make praise happen around you, is by keeping company with praising people.

> **Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. Psalm 1:1–3**

To maintain a life style of praise, you need to keep company with praising people. There is no way you can maintain a praisefull life if you keep company with a depressed soul. If you keep company with those who keep looking backward and always talk about a brighter yesterday, you too will join them in talking and thinking the same way.

Everybody's destiny is influenced by the company he keeps. You can't walk with those who do not give thanks and be thankful. Neither can you walk with those who don't praise or who are mockers and be full of praise. God said:

> **Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. 1 Corinthians 15:33**

The praise manner is corruptible; all you need do is to walk with somebody who is never grateful. This is because it's easier for someone who is on the floor to pull down the person at the top. If you do not choose the company you keep, you may lose your destiny. Someone rightly said, "The relationship you keep either makes or breaks you. It never leaves any man neutral."

Know that wherever your testimony is not received is not a safe place for you to be. God will not ask anyone to stand with you on the day of judgement; we shall all appear before Him one by one. So why must you sell off your birthright by keeping company with someone who will not be present when you are being condemned. God has lifted you out of the pit, don't join your hand again to that of someone in the pit, for he can pull you back there very fast.

It is better to be alone than to be unequally yoked together with someone

who you don't agree with on an issue. The Bible says, *"Iron sharpeneth iron..." **(Proverbs. 27:17)***. You shouldn't keep company with anyone who is not sharpening you. If he is not making your life brighter, he is going to destroy you eventually. Rather, look out for a relationship that sharpens your life. That way, you won't fail in life. ***Matthew 7:6*** says:

> **Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.**

You can't be in a relationship without sharing; you share your heart with whoever you are in a relationship with. If you both are not thinking and seeing things the same way, you only end up destroying your destiny when you share your secrets with him.

> **He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. Proverbs 13:20**

Any friend who leaves your spirit–man down after every visit, has taken something precious from you. Don't let anybody take you out of your inheritance. Choose who your friends are, for it is the only way to maintain a life style of high praise. If you still keep the friends you had before you were born again, you will go back to your old life style.

Chapter 5:
Sources Of Joy

There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. Psalm 46:4

Joy is the springboard for praise. You can sing without actually praising, but it takes joy to genuinely praise God. An understanding of what the fountain of joy is and how to flow in it, will deliver to you what it takes to remain on the praise frequency, no matter your situation.

Praise, like laughter, is an outburst of joy and Psalm 46:4 makes it clear that God has made provisions for a fountain of endless joy in the midst of His tabernacle. That tabernacle is you and I, because ***2 Corinthians 6:16*** says:

…Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

What then brings about joy?

The Holy Spirit

In ***John 7:38–39,*** Jesus said:

> **He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive…**

So, the Holy Spirit is God's great provision for a life of endless joy. He is the river in the midst of the tabernacle, releasing forces of joy which keep you rejoicing in spite of circumstances or situations around you. He intoxicates with joy.

The Bible likens the different dimensions of the Holy Ghost encounters in the life of a man to increasing levels of the river of life, until it becomes waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over (Ezekiel. 47:1–5). That reveals to you what the flow of joy in a man's life is like. It takes being drunk in the Holy Ghost to flow in the fountain of joy, as He represents the river of joy that flows in the midst of the tabernacle. The outpouring of the Spirit of God, among other things, has an intoxicating effect on the saint.

In Acts 2, when the Holy Ghost came upon the disciples in the upper room, they spoke in other tongues, declaring the mysteries and wonderful works of God. Some people thought they were drunken with wine, but Peter answered them, saying:

> **For these are not drunken, as ye suppose...But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: Acts 2:15–17**

That intoxicating fountain of joy was what was at work in Paul and Silas when they were thrown into the prison. Though they were bound hand and foot, they began singing praises aloud to God, until He came down in an earthquake and their chains were broken.

Romans 14:17 also says:

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

True joy is guaranteed only by the Holy Ghost. He is also called the oil of gladness in Psalm 45:7 and Isaiah 61:3. I see that fresh oil coming upon you from now on, to make you glad all the days of your life.

The Holy Ghost gives the believer a refreshing that cannot be dammed, by helping him to see the goodness of God, even in very adverse situations. He is to the believer a reservoir of joy. That is why the Bible says:

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Ephesians 5:18–20

Being drunk with the Spirit generates a special order of joy which springs up endless melodies in your heart. The Bible says "wine maketh merry", that is exactly how the Holy Spirit injects the oil of gladness into your life and intoxicates you with joy.

Life can be very exciting, if only you will allow the Holy Spirit carry out His sweetening ministry in your life. He will always open your eyes to see the humourous side of every situation you are faced with.

Note that the fountain of joy is the Holy Spirit, but He has streams which are like tributaries or offshoots of a river. They also are forces through which the Spirit generates joy in the life of the believer.

Celebrate The Word

I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil. Psalm 119:162

One of the great streams of the river of joy is the Word of God. The Holy Spirit releases and sustains joy in the life of the believer by helping him make discoveries in the Word of God, which keep him rejoicing all the time.

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 1Corinthians 2:9–10

The Bible also says:

Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And there was great joy in that city. Acts 8:5,8

The Holy Spirit is the only One authorised and licensed to unfold the secrets of God. Jesus said in ***John 16:12–13:***

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.

What the Holy Spirit does is to open your eyes to the things that are freely yours in Christ Jesus, causing you to overlook your present situation, and instead keep rejoicing over what is set before you.

Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments. Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments. My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly. I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways are before thee. Psalm 119:164–168

The Word of life is the greatest stimulant for unending praise. God's Word is the energy required for a life of praise. Just catch it, celebrate it, and you are on your way up!

"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." That is why those who are hooked up to the Word are not edgy or easily provoked, but are balanced in their approach to the things of life. They are not controlled or ruled by what they see. Rather, they are ruled by what is written, what they have seen in the Word of God. In every situation they can see God saying, "I have a way out for you." So they keep celebrating the ways of God, before it becomes "flesh".

Your affection for the Word of God is what determines the quality of your praise. This is because you praise Him, not for happenings in your life, but for what is written. Your confidence in the Word will command rest in your life; and rest is what provokes praise.

Long before I got married, I knew from the Word of God that I would have a hitch–free married life. I celebrated it then and it is so now. I knew my tomorrow was bright, not because I was a seer, but because I had seen in the Word of God what the future held for me as a covenant child, and that kept me rejoicing.

I was restful about prosperity, because His Word told me it existed; it was available, obtainable, and is my heritage. So I kept celebrating it after I found it. I was celebrating the Word of prosperity that I found long before it was "made flesh" in my life (John.1:14). As you celebrate the Word, it becomes flesh; and when it becomes flesh, you can see His glory.

> **In God will I praise his word: in the Lord will I praise his word. Psalm 56:10**

This was the secret behind David's ever joyful and praisefull life; everything he found in Scriptures was as real to him as the day. You give thanks over what is seen, whereas praise is rooted in what is written. It is an exceeding love for His testimonies that provokes exceeding praise from you.

> **Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart... Jeremiah 15:16**

Your affinity for the Word enhances the quality of your praise life. Watch every celebrating Christian, revelation and affection for the Word of life are the reasons behind his celebration. Revelation plus Affection equals Celebration. You just love Him. You trust Him and His Word. You know that what He says is what He does, so you can count on Him.

David's greatness can be equated with the quality of his praise. He was such a praising giant that till today, he has a name in heaven. Not only that, God also put a key in Jesus' hand called "the key of David"! God's Word was the secret behind his life of praise.

The reason why many are too offended to praise God is because they lack revelations in His Word. Insight in the Word naturally stimulates praise. To enjoy all that God has for you, you need to look away from problems and look up to Him. Look at His Word, believe and celebrate it; then will it become flesh, and all eyes shall see His glory upon your life. When God's Word becomes the joy and rejoicing of your heart, your life will never be praise–dry; it will ever remain praise–full.

Let us celebrate His Word, for it is the cheapest way to make it become flesh. Just celebrate God, for it is the cheapest way to get the best out of heaven. Every Bible–believing Christian will always have a reason to praise and celebrate Jesus.

Do not let any news from any source disturb you. Anything outside the Word of God has no future or life in it. Don't be worried about that doctor's report, which says you cannot be pregnant. You will have your own child as you celebrate God's Word which has promised that you will be a "joyful mother of children." His Word is settled in heaven forever!

So, whenever you sit with the Word, consciously invite the Holy Spirit to teach you and reveal to you the deep things of God, because the more Word you acquire, the more joy you experience. And as you go through the Scriptures with Him, some verses will stand out like the voice of God saying to you, "That battle is over! It doesn’t matter how late it seems, I’m always on time! That problem is a promise in disguise, don’t be moved, I am in charge!" That is bound to keep you jumping.

Relate with every discovery you make in the Word as reality, and nothing can stop your joy once your heart is established on the integrity of the Word and the faithfulness of God.

Rejoice in Hope

Hope is another stream in the fountain of joy. It is a product of the Word of God, which is revealed by the Holy Spirit. It stabilizes the heart and imparts joy in the inner man.

> **For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. Job 14:7–9**

Abraham can be described as an old root in the ground. His case looked like He would have to live with childlessness all his life, but God's Word, like the scent of water, kept his hope alive till the promise became a reality.

> **Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. Romans 4:18**

Even against all odds, that scent of water – the Word of God kept Abraham's hope alive.

So many people mocked me in the early days of our ministry, especially for preaching prosperity. One particular friend made me the topic of his preaching one day at a meeting we both attended. He invited me to sit in front and then went on to preach about me – my dress, car, everything, and everybody knew he was talking about me. How I got home after that meeting that day, I don't know.

But no matter what my critics did, they could not take the Word of God from me. They could not stop my hope, and therefore could not stop me from rejoicing. My rejoicing then, even when there seemed to be nothing, has put a testimony on my lips today.

You can't be hopeful without being joyful. You are only downcast when you become hopeless. Hope sparks off joy, it releases a new life on your inside that keeps you singing even when people think it is crazy to sing. The Bible says:

> **Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame,**

and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:2

Jesus could see a tomorrow ahead, so nothing in the present could cast Him down. He saw beyond the cross to the crown and beyond the grave to the throne. You can't see a bright tomorrow and not be excited today. You can't see a glorious tomorrow and not be a celebrating, jumping Christian today. It is only people who can't see anything in their future that are downcast.

You have a glorious tomorrow, which Satan is upset about; that is why he wants to puncture your hope, so you can join him in his upset state. Refuse to be upset! As long as God is for you, you have a future and a hope. You should keep celebrating that hope!

For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. Ecclesiastes 9:4

We are joined to Christ, who lives for evermore. As long as you remain grafted in Him, there cannot be any hopeless case around you. It doesn't matter how anybody else views your case, you can always tell yourself, "As long as I am in Christ and Christ is in me, my future is colourful, my tomorrow is bright." The Psalmist said:

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God. Psalm 42:11

Until you put your hope in God and praise Him, you are not entitled to His help. Hope is the mother of faith. If there is no hope, then there is nothing faith can substantiate, because faith is the substance of things hoped for (Hebrew. 11:1).

Praise fertilizes your hope and keeps it going strong. That is why I can't imagine you dance on any issue with vibrant hope in the Word of God and not receive the answer you desire.

You are born into a kingdom of hope, you can't afford to live a hopeless life. God has guaranteed you a colourful future, but He has left you with the

responsibility of dancing your way into it.

Hope kept Joseph excited even in prison. He was too sure that his dreams would come to pass, so even though he was unjustly locked up, he still had the hope that some day, some how, God would bring him out and he would rule over his brothers that sold him into slavery. His hope of getting to the throne was unshaken; and when it became a reality, his testimony was, *"God has made me to forget all my toils" (**Genesis. 41:51**).*

It doesn't matter where you are today, God has marked out a colourful future for you. Don't sell off to sorrow, don't give in to broken–heartedness. Everything that looks like a downward trend today is an upward thrust in disguise. That situation that looks like a stumbling block today is only a stepping stone to your next phase of glory.

> **For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Habakkuk 2:3**

Don't let any devil tell you that God has forgotten what He promised you. No, He is not unrighteous to forget! Just hold on, at the end it shall speak. Even if it tarries, wait for it. And while you wait, celebrate your hope.

A man was wrongly retired from service sometime ago and some of his colleagues kept mocking him, saying, "You were always disturbing us with your prayers, didn't God show you that you were going to be retired?" He didn't mind them, but kept attending services and praising God. And two years later, he was recalled and given back his job! The same people who were mocking him came back to congratulate him. *"…At the end it shall speak."* People were mocking him, but God was making him.

> **For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast... Hebrews 6:13,18,19**

God has given you His Word and cannot withdraw it. But hope is the anchor

of the soul and is what guarantees our inheritance at the end of the day. When hope is lost, you keep drifting through life and can become a victim of the storms. But the Bible says, "Christ in you is the hope of glory." (Colossians. 1:27.) He is the living Word of God.

As you keep celebrating your discoveries in the Word of God, hope is released, which further strengthens your joy and makes your praise acceptable. I see you going higher and higher, as you keep rejoicing in hope.

Praise With Faith

Another stream of the fountain of joy is faith, also a product of the Word of God (Romans. 10:17). Faith triggers off joy. It stirs a man up on the inside to begin rejoicing and praising God as one who has already received what he hoped for. That is why faith is called the evidence of things not seen (Hebrew. 11:1).

Every man that is strong in faith is naturally strong in praise, because as far as he is concerned, his case is settled with God and is not subject to any debate from the devil.

The celebration of the Word of God was what earned Abraham the name, "Father of faith." He had this dialogue with God in ***Genesis 15:3–6:***

> **And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord...**

Abraham believed in the Lord, that even after many years had passed without his having seen the promised heir, the Bible records that:

> **He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; Romans 4:20**

This is the kind of assurance that made apostle Paul, in the midst of a shipwreck, to say:

> **Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Acts 27:25**

Just like hope is the anchor of the soul, faith is the assurance of the soul. It tells you, "No matter the storm, you can be sure of what God has promised." It gives you the assurance of a colourful future.

That is why the Bible says that Abraham was fully persuaded that what God

had promised, He was able also to perform.

> **That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 1 Peter 1:7–8**

Joy is the evidence of faith. A man of faith is joyful, even before the Word spoken becomes a reality, because he knows that his rejoicing now is what will make the promise come to pass. That is why the most joyful people on the earth are people of faith.

A man of faith talks of his tomorrow with assurance and demonstrates his confidence by being joyful. You can't be sure and still stagger at the Word. You can't be sure and not be joyful. Faith sparks off joy unspeakable, full of glory inside you. The type that even when nobody around you can see the reason for your joy, it's just there, oozing forth from you.

The strength of your faith is expressed through the strength of your joy; Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God (Romans.4:20). When you believe the Word of God, you will keep on celebrating it until it manifests.

> **The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men. Joel 1:12**

Many people have wilderness experiences because their joy is withered away. Joy withers when faith is absent and once that happens, everything begins to fail.

From this day, the joy of the Lord will never wither away from your life! With the Holy Spirit, who is the fountain of joy, enabling you to understand the Word, which establishes your hope and ignites your faith, you are sure to explode in joy and to walk upon your high places in life. As long as you are in praise, your throne is sure, and as long as your joy is intact, your praise can't run dry. I see you entering the realm of joy unspeakable, full of glory.

Chapter 6:
Is Any Merry?

You can sing without actually praising God. Many people sing for different reasons and with different motives in their hearts, which make their songs of no effect. It's not just enough to sing praises, you must also know what it takes to make your praise acceptable. The Bible says:

...Is any merry? let him sing... James 5:13

If you are not merry, you are not qualified to praise God. "Is any merry?" This is the only condition under which you are permitted to praise, and it is the only time your praise will be acceptable. When your praises are acceptable, your life becomes colourful.

God sees you jumping and singing, but He is asking, "Is he really praising Me?" God is concerned about what goes on on your inside. He is looking on the inside to reward every man according to his ways. What you become in the kingdom is basically a function of what goes on on your inside.

The state of your heart in praise is what determines the response from God. When you praise Him with all your heart, your praise is acceptable. Many people praise, but their hearts are not really there.

When I am praising Him, I am lost in Him. I sing many songs (especially in my dialect) when I am recounting His goodness, faithfulness and blessings onto me. He has never offended me; rather, He has done all things well.

And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:13

...Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Colossians 3:16

Your heart must always sing songs of praise, celebrating the grace of God.

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Ephesians 5:19

If you want to see supernatural responses to your praise, just make sure your heart is in it. Every time you praise Him from your heart, you compel His presence. And when He comes, He does "fearful" things, because He is "fearful in praises, doing wonders."

Is any merry? let him sing... Merriment is a fundamental requirement for acceptable praise. Praise is for only the merry–hearted, as not every song is acceptable in heaven. Only songs emanating from a merry heart are acceptable to God.

All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast. Proverbs 15:15

If there is no joy in your heart, your song is a noise unto God. But when there is gladness of heart, your song ascends the throne of God as a sweet–smelling savour, commanding divine attention at all times.

Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel. Isaiah 30:29

The fearful acts of God are provoked in praise, that is why the enemy does his best to stop you from engaging in it. Without God you can do nothing and without praise, He is not permitted to show up, for He dwells in the midst of praises. You must therefore know how to create and maintain an atmosphere of praise, to guarantee God's presence with you always.

Don't Allow Sorrow

Sorrow is an enemy of praise, and whatsoever stops your praise is an enemy of your destiny. Praises in the mouth of an unhappy man are like songs in the mouth of a pig; it's a nuisance in the ears of God. Sorrow does not only break the spirit, it also blocks your access to God.

> **A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones. Proverbs 17:22**

Many ailments people suffer today are as a result of brokenness of heart. I don't give room to that in my life; rather, I am continually excited, satisfied and fulfilled. That way, sorrow of heart can't get to me; it is driven far away from my habitation.

There are two basic causes of sorrow in people's lives:

Hopelessness

Hopelessness is a major source of sorrow. When you become hopeless on any issue, sorrow is the reward you get, it is the prize for hopelessness. Every time you come to the end of the road on any issue (according to your own assessment), sorrow takes over.

But listen to this: it is foolishness to be hopeless as a Christian! See what the Word of God says concerning you:

> **For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. Ecclesiastes 9:4**

As long as the Vine is alive, there is hope for the "branches". Jesus said:

> **I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. John 15:5**

He is the Vine and you are the branches. If you are in Him, the devil cannot make you hopeless. You also have this assurance from God in the book of Jeremiah:

> **I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for. Jeremiah 29:11 (GNB)**

Recently, we were thrilled in church by the testimony of a marriage that was restored after fifty years of separation! God re–united the couple. The devil cannot close your case, as long as you remain connected to the Vine! That is why I said it is foolishness for a Christian to be hopeless.

Hear me again: the devil cannot close your case, unless you do so yourself! When the Bible says, "Give no place to the devil", it means the devil does not have the power to force himself upon you, except by your permission. The Bible warns that *"...Whoso breaketh an hedge, a serpent shall bite him..." **(Ecclesiastes. 10:8)***. That is, until the hedge is broken, the serpent has no access. Until you call your case closed, it remains open in your favour. So

maintain your hope in God on all issues.

See what ***Isaiah 51:11*** says:

> **Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.**

That's an assurance that no matter where you are today, there is a return programme for you, to where you should be. That's why you should have hope. He brought you out, to bring you in; not to break you.

Haven't you heard that *"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof" (**Ecclesiastes. 7:8**)*? So your tomorrow is better than your today. Have you not heard also, that "The path of the just is like a shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs. 4:18)? So the devil cannot stop your tomorrow from being brighter and better than your today. You cannot be oppressed until you are depressed.

Whenever you are worried or sorrowful, ask yourself, "Who has ever got a solution through sorrow?" You can't praise Him with burdens. Until the burdens are dealt with, your praise is not acceptable. The question you then need to ask is: "How do I make myself joyful under such circumstances?" Here is the Psalmist's prescription:

> **Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Psalm 103:1–3**

To remain joyful under sorrowful circumstances, you need to constantly celebrate His redemptive benefits in your life. This way, you will be able to deal with sorrow and burdens that want to cast you down. So, come out of your shell of depression!

Praise is God's natural habitat; whereas the devil naturally inhabits sorrow. So, give the devil no place in your life by giving in to sorrow. The enemy won't take you for a ride any more!

Following Other gods

The second source of sorrow in people's lives is following after other gods. Any other god you have besides the Almighty God will definitely add sorrow to your life, for it is the blessing of the Lord alone that maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it. Haven't you heard? *"Thou shalt have no other god before me."* That is God speaking in ***Exodus 20:3.***

One of such gods is the god of gold.

> **For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. 1 Timothy 6:10–11**

When money becomes your god, sorrow becomes your heritage. This is because that thing called money is never enough. When money becomes your source of joy and excitement, you never have stable joy. It waxes strong today, and wanes tomorrow.

Money compels spending, so every time it reduces, one's joy drops. When it rises, a fake and ephemeral joy rises inside the man. And when he keeps having such high and low temperature constantly, God's promise of long life is cut short.

Let us consider other enemies of praise.

Don't Be Offended

Offence is the natural tendency in the hour of difficulty and pressure. It is a negative reaction to unpleasant conditions. Unfortunately, it's a reaction against your helper, thereby rendering you completely helpless. The offended man says, "Why me? Where is God now? Is His Word still there? Can anyone really count on Him?"

The answer to all offences is patience. In the parable of the sower, Jesus said:

> **But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. Luke 8:15**

No matter how good your heart is, patience is needed to enjoy the fullness of God's plan for your life. You get offended easily, that's why it looks as if things are not working for you.

If the devil tells you, "If God were going to lift you, He should have done it by now." Tell him, "God is never late. He created the entire would in six days, so whatever deadline is before me now is too much for Him to perfect all that concerns me." Be determined, like Job, to wait till the time of your change comes from the Lord, for there is no shame to them that wait for God (Isaiah. 49:23).

John, a man of great destiny, died in prison because of offences. Jesus told us that of all born of women, there was none as great as John the Baptist. Prophets of old spoke about his great coming, but offence killed him. John sent a message to Jesus from the prison, asking:

... Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? ***Matthew 11:3***
That was like doubting Jesus' mission on earth and pointing an accusing finger at Him.

> **Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. Matthew 11:4–6**

That was a comprehensive diagnosis of John's problem – *"Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."* That is, "Cursed is he who is offended in me!" John was offended and ended up being beheaded! You will not be beheaded!

Jesus said it is impossible for offence not to come, but woe unto him by whom it will come (Matthew.11:6; 18:7). John was offended and his great destiny was shattered.

But here was Paul and Silas. Just like John, they were equally locked up in prison. Besides, they were also beaten, humiliated and bound in stocks. But because they refused to be offended, they ended up being dignified! They prayed, sang praises aloud unto God, and the prisoners heard them. They must have been mocked, but God loosed them, and made them! We are still talking about their testimony today. Make up your mind never to be offended in God.

If you hurt God, who will help you? If you despise Him, who will lift you? If you raise your shoulders up in pride against Him, who else can do for you what He can?

Many are stranded today because they are offended. Every offended man ends up being beheaded. God is not your equal. Your vote is not what made Him God. He has been before you ever were. He is your Creator. That is why ***Isaiah 45:9*** says, ***"Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!"***

Things are working for me, because I refuse to be offended. No matter how great your destiny, it will be terminated (without any help from the devil) by reason of offence. You have been stranded long enough, now give your destiny motion!

And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. Luke 7:23

I have made my choice to remain eternally happy with God and never to look for a fault in Him. I choose to trust in His goodwill and love forever.

When you are offended, your defences are broken down, and the serpents can bite. God's mighty hand departed from John, and a little girl said, "For the prize of dancing, I want the head of John." And they brought it for her on a platter!

Refuse to be offended, if you do not want to die in prison. In the midnight of your struggles, don't give in to offences, or you may never be out of them.

Rather, like Paul and Silas, engage in seemingly "foolish" praise, and sing your way out of prison.

Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? Woe unto him that saith unto his father,

> **What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth? Isaiah 45:9–10**

Every time you are offended in God, you destroy your destiny. ***Job 9:4*** says, *"He is wise in heart and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?"* No one hardens himself against God and not pay for it.

Only praise can bring you out of that tight corner you are in. For having ever queried God before, now tell Him, "Lord, I'm sorry. I celebrate You now, and will celebrate You forever." Do you know what the Bible says?

> **Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee. Deuteronomy 28:47–48**

How can people have abundance and not serve God with joy? It is because they are blind to the abundance of God around them. They do not see their good health, the free sleep they enjoy, the house they live in, their children who have never needed to be taken to the hospital and the good name they have in the community as abundance.

When you are not offended in God, you are entitled to blessings. As you free yourself from every foolish anger against God, go and enjoy His blessings, in Jesus' name! You can't afford to be beheaded, so turn from offences!

I discovered what Job's problem was – he always justified himself against God. That was why God removed his defences. Many are justifying themselves against God by saying, "Lord, I pay my tithe. Everything You commanded, I have done. You're the only One who hasn't done Your own part."

Rejoice evermore! God is always right. Be delivered from all offences, in Jesus' name!

> **Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. Psalm 119:165**

The love of the Word of God delivers from offences. Always find solace in His Word, no matter the situation you are confronted with. If you have lost anything, He is the reason why you have not lost everything. So praise Him!

Don't Be Covetous!

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. Luke 12:15

Another obstacle to a life of praise is covetousness. Nothing is ever enough for the covetous. People are running helter–skelter daily, because they are under the plague of covetousness. Oh yes, it is a plague which wipes smiles off its victim's face. The worth of a man is not in what he possesses.

But what is the cure for covetousness?

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. 1 Timothy 6:6–8

Contentment is the answer to covetousness. The Holy Spirit makes us understand that everybody has what it takes to be contented. He said, *"And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content."* Note that it says, "having food", not "foods"; "and raiment", not "raiments." Godliness with contentment is great gain. That means contentment is your open door to great gains in life. Why? With contentment, you maintain a praisefull life style, which would bring you outstanding liftings.

Covetousness is a plague! Its end is always bitter for its victim. But there is no plague to them that wait for the Lord (Lamentations.3:25–26). It is my opinion that all robbers and thieves are victims of covetousness; they are greedy and are never satisfied, like the horseleach (Proverbs. 30:15–16). I've seen quite a lot of people injure themselves through covetousness. Many homes are broken today by it.

For me, I believe that what I don't have, I don't need and it's not safe for me to desire it. I believe that the reason you do not have a car now is because it is not safe for you to have one now. When it is safe for you, He won't deprive you of it, for no good thing would He withhold from them that walk uprightly.

Hear this again: covetousness is an enemy of praise; whereas contentment is

the gateway for the attainment to greater heights.

Let Go Of The Past

The habit of looking back at past failures is an enemy of praise. You can't live a life of praise until you let go of the negative past.

For instance, if you are driving a car forward, and rather than facing your front, you concentrate on looking backward, you know of course that you are heading for a ghastly motor accident.

Lay all the troubles of the past to rest! If you have lost anything, He is the reason why you have not lost everything. You can't praise Him with burdens. Looking at your negative past all the time will make things negative in your life. Let them go! The Bible says anyone who puts his hand on the plough and looks back, is not worthy of the kingdom (Luke. 9:62). That means he is not fit for the blessings of the kingdom.

It is impossible to live a life of praise when you are attached to your negative past. ***Isaiah 43:18*** says:

> **Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.**

If you do not let the past be past, you may pass on with it! God says, instead:

> **Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. Isaiah 43:19**

It means, if you must know the things God is about to do, let go of the negative past and remove it from your mind and heart. We are definitely in the days of new things. So, would you let go of the past now? Apostle Paul has this to say about the past:

> **Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:13–14**

He means to say, "I forget the past, I press towards the future." Looking backward makes you a failure in the faith. You have gone around that mountain long enough, now go forward! Remember Lot's wife? As they were leaving Sodom and Gomorrah, she looked backward, and turned to a pillar of salt (Genesis.19:26), a statue of no value.

Let all those troubles of the past rest. The only thing to be remembered in your past should be testimonies. If they are not testimonies, God commands, *"Remember not..."* I declare every bitterness planted by the irreparable past dead in your life today, in Jesus' name! Every depression caused by the irreparable past is broken right now! There is joy before you today and no man shall take it from you, in Jesus' name. Say with me,"I am free from the weight of the negative past!"

High–Mindedness

Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child. Psalm 131:1–2

Highmindedness is one of the greatest enemies of praise. It is a condition where an individual sees everything as below his expectation. He sees himself as too much for where he is and hardly appreciates the acts of God in his life. As a matter of fact, God is too slow for him.

This is nothing but a device of the enemy to turn one against God, by portraying Him as unfaithful and slow. The Bible says that in the last days, men shall be high–minded, lovers of pleasures and of self more than lovers of God (2 Timothy.3:2–5). They are never satisfied and they celebrate their qualifications and expertise at the expense of their relationship with God. At the end of the day, God leaves them to themselves. But ***1 Timothy 6:17*** says:

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy

Life is in phases! Until you accept the reality of that statement, you may be phased out. You must appreciate the fact that you are where you are now, by the faithfulness of God. So, whatever you possess is not as a result of your expertise, but the hand of God upon your life.

There is nothing wrong with having a dream for your future, but the timings of its fulfilment must be left in the hands of God.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us–ward... 2 Peter 3:9

That is why I believe I could not have been anywhere better than where I am now, because I am in the hands of a faithful God and no one could have handled my life better than Him.

Jesus said in ***Matthew 18:4,*** *"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."* In ***Matthew 21:16*** He also said, *"… Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"*

It takes being "child–like" minded to flow in perfect praise. Every little child believes absolutely in his mother. So, believe God, that where you are now is your best estate, and as you celebrate His faithfulness in your life, you will find yourself in the next phase He has prepared for you.

The Spirit Of Heaviness

This is another enemy of praise. It is not a state of the mind, neither is it an attitude. It is a spirit – a force in the realm of the unseen. Its' victim is not down because of any negative thing that has happened to him; he is depressed most times without even knowing why! He wonders what life is all about.

I believe that was the spirit that came upon Elijah when he fled from Jezebel. He said, *"… It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." (**1 Kings 19:4**.)*

Until the spirit of heaviness goes, praise, which is your guarantee to the high places in life, cannot flow. ***But Isaiah 61:1,3*** says:

> **The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to… appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness...**

Even though heaviness is a spirit, the Spirit of God is superior to it. Paul said:

> **For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Ephesians 6:12**

It is one of the devil's acts of spiritual wickedness to put the spirit of heaviness upon a man, so that even in the midst of high praises he does not have a release to praise God. The devil knows that until you praise, you remain a victim of life.

But you fight that spirit of heaviness by casting it out in the name of Jesus, because He said, *"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils…" (**Mark. 16:17**).*

Joy is your birthright and you maintain it by letting the Word of God dwell richly in your heart, till there is no room for the devil. So, you can rise up and say to that spirit of heaviness, "This is the day the Lord has made, I must rejoice and be glad in it! Therefore in the name of Jesus Christ, you spirit of heaviness, loose your grip from me and get off my abode", and you will be free.

Now that God has delivered you from every sorrow and weight, He will also keep you free forever! Go and stay happy! Go and stay merry! Sorrow shall no longer find a place in your heart forevermore!

I curse everything that brings sorrow on your path! Go on celebrating forever, in Jesus' precious name!

Chapter 7:
When You Praise Him...

Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him. Psalm 67:3–7

Praising God, like every other Scriptural principle is designed to profit those who comply with it. When you engage in ceaseless praises, you position yourself permanently for God's blessings.

Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Exodus 15:11

It is a good thing to give thanks and to sing praises to the Lord. As we do, He in turn does fearful things for us. Praise is a divine secret for all–round profiting in the kingdom. A good understanding of its benefits will keep you on the praise track all the days of your life.

First, let's consider Judah. His name means praise and here is the heritage his father blessed him with:

Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: His eyes shall be red with wine and his teeth white with milk. Genesis 49:9–12

"From the prey...thou art gone up..." That means a praisefull Christian will never be a captive, but always a conqueror. His enemies will be his prey and he will have them under total subjection.

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah...That is talking about enthronement. Every praising saint ends up being enthroned by God.
...Nor a lawgiver from between his feet...That means authority!

...He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: Affluence! That's being in command of wealth and riches.

His eyes shall be red with wine and his teeth white with milk. That is unction – the anointing and comfort! Supernaturally comfortable! Money can't buy any of these benefits, neither can fasting; only praise can.

What other things happen when you praise?

God's Presence Is Guaranteed

Praise commands and guarantees divine presence.

> **But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.**

God inhabits the praises of His people, and that is the ultimate in victory. His presence is our greatest spiritual asset as believers, and praise is the price you pay to get it. God's presence is our guarantee for maximum security against all the woes of life.

> **What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? Romans 8:31**

No opposition or obstacle can withstand His presence. God's presence mocks barriers and puts you above circumstances; it confers on you more honour and dignity than any earthly status can, so that doors open before you just like they would before Him.

Without God you can do nothing; and if you don't know how to secure His presence, you will end up as nothing. Moses knew this secret, so when he and the children of Israel were on their way to Canaan from Egypt, he said to God, *"If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence" (**Exodus. 33:15**).*

Until they murmured against Him in the wilderness, the children of Israel carried His presence. The Bible records their majestic journey through the wilderness this way:

> **When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language; Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion. The sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven back. The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs. What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back? Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs? Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob; Which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters. *Psalm 114:1–8***

God's presence leveled every mountain. The Red Sea could not stand either. Praise gives you the ultimate victory that God's presence guarantees.

How do you get into God's presence? It is very simple. Three gates lead to His house – the main gate (that brings you into the outer court), the middle gate (which brings you into the holy place) and the final gate (that brings you into the holiest of all, into the presence of the Almighty Himself).

> **Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. Psalm 100:4**

Thanksgiving gives birth to praise and praise stimulates worship. Praise instantly brings down the presence of God. Paul and Silas brought Him down into the prison! Many are still oppressed today because they have not yet discovered this key.

God's presence makes the difference any day! It will make a genius out of a dullard. Watch the life of every complainer, he is always frustrated. But mark any weakling, who is ever leaping, jumping and praising God, he keeps going up!

Why? No wall of Jericho can stand God's presence. When the Israelites made that long blast with a great shout, the great God came down and the wall of Jericho fell down flat! The wall didn't just fall, it was utterly crushed! And the Bible said,*"... So that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him..." (Joshua. 6:20).* No obstacle can stand in the way of praise.

> **And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. John 8:29**

> **Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.**

Nothing is more pleasing to God than praises. Unfortunately, however, many think it's too simple to be real, because man naturally doesn't place much value on anything that doesn't cost him a price. So, many miss out on the immeasurable virtues in praise, because they would rather do something more

rigorous and tasking to get across to God. But you can fast for more than forty days without seeing God; but you can't praise Him in truth and in deed for only one day and still miss Him.

His presence makes crooked things straight; so I see every crookedness that the enemy has planted on your life, Family, destiny, business and career fall down flat now, in Jesus' name!

God Takes Over Your battles

And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another. 2 Chronicles 20:22–23

Whatever can't stand God can't stand praise. That is why the greatest battles in your life will always bow to praise. When you become "a lion of praise," you cannot be stopped! When you become valiant in praise, you become more than a conqueror in life.

You may not have might against your enemies, like the children of Israel before their enemies (2 Chronicles.20:12), but you can invoke the might and omnipotence of God against them through praise. No matter how great your enemies, you can put an end to their oppressions and harassment now, by handing over the battle to the Lord.

And all Judah stood before the Lord...Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah... came the Spirit of the Lord...And he said, Hearken ye...Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you.

And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord, worshipping the Lord. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever.

And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.

2 Chronicles 20:13–22

That is how to hand over your battles to God – praise Him! As you praise Him with a loud voice, He sets ambushment against your enemies. Whenever you are confronted with something that appears stronger than you, praise Him! Stir God up in praise, and none of your enemies will escape. Not only that, your fear and your dread will come upon all your enemies.

Look at this testimony: "I was here on Wednesday for the miracle praise service. When the Bishop said we should praise with our might, that we must praise God ‘in the dance’, I praised and knew that was the only praise I had really given God since I was born.

On Tuesday night (the day before), thieves had visited our compound. They went to another flat and stole some things there. When I got back home, the other tenants said there was a need to raise the fence in front of my flat. I said to them, 'Well, you can do that, but all I know is that the Bishop of the church I attend has already said no tragedy is going to befall any church member. So God is my security.'

The thieves returned that Wednesday night. But the most amazing thing about it all was that they only went to the other five flats! The only one that came to my flat, unknown to us, was cut in the leg! It was when we woke up in the morning that we saw blood in front of my flat.

When I returned from work in the evening, my wife told me that they caught the four thieves, and that the thigh of one of them was cut; as if a knife was used to cut the flesh. The thief had bandaged it and when he was asked, ‘Where did you get this wound from?’ he said, ‘I went to that flat where they pasted "I'm a Winner" sticker’. That was where his thigh got ripped!’"

Ajomale, A.

Truly, God takes over your battles when you praise Him! As you give God mighty praises, He releases His Almightiness and Omnipotence into the camp of your enemies and tears down their thrones! Fill your life and home with the cloud of heaven by the high praises of God. Invoke His presence and He will

step in and take over your battles; and when God takes over, then you can afford to take your rest.

Dance against every operation of armed robbers, assassins and everything that tampers with your destiny. Praise Him, so He can sweep your life clean of every evil that is against your well–being.

> **Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord. Psalm 149: 6–9**

Praise is a very effective tool in battle; it is a weapon of vengeance. When you are in high praises, all you are doing is provoking God's high vengeance. Whatever is against your destiny in God goes down flat today! All the days of your life, no one shall face you to do you evil! Wherever you are, the safety seal of heaven will be upon your forehead, in the name of Jesus!

Diverse Miracles take Place!

He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. Psalm 103:7

When you let praise happen, God makes known His ways to you, giving you direction. Most of the time, He speaks to you in the heat of praise; then His acts (diverse miracles) take place!

We were busy praising God in a service recently, and the lump on a little girl's head disappeared! That is the act of God. At another time, we were in a miracle service and I challenged the people, saying, "You have miracle hands!" A lady received that, and in the heat of the praise session, she danced her way to the children's church, where her daughter was, laid her hands on her and the lumps behind her ears vanished! The ways of God exploded inside her and she took steps, because she was on the highways of God!

A teenage boy came to church in the painful throes of blood cancer. While the high praises of God was going on, he could not sit still any longer. He asked his parents to help him get up. With great and painful effort, he began to dance, and that was it! All the devils that wanted to destroy his life were destroyed and he was made whole! He was up on the platform that same day to testify of his healing.

When God steps in (as you praise Him), every negative thing steps out. A lady gave a testimony of how she and her children got home one night from service, and had nothing to eat. So she served everyone water and they just sang praises to God, drank the water and went to bed. The following morning, someone knocked on their door and gave her 4,000 naira!

Friend, your surest access to miracles is knowing what to do to have them. Praise is a common factor in working all manner of miracles.

Pride Is Destroyed

Pride is a trap of the enemy; it has destroyed many destinies. Most unusual liftings lead to pride; but the answer to pride is praise. If you must escape the trap of pride, then you must understand the mystery of praise. A personal life style of continuous praise is able to destroy the poison of pride.

There was a man called Ahithophel. He was David's counsellor. When he gave counsel, it was like hearing from God. But he saw this as a personal achievement and became puffed up. So, when his counsel was rejected, he hanged himself (2 Samuel.17:23). He was cut down because of pride.

Remember also the story of the rich fool? He said, ***"I have made enough wealth, I will pull down these barns, I will build bigger ones, and I will say to my soul..." (Luke. 12:16–19)***. He was too full of himself, thinking that his rich harvest was as a result of his expertise. But God said to him in **verse 20:**

> **...Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?**

Pride cut him down! There is a need to be careful here. Many of us will be entering into positions of authority, as God begins to glorify the Church. But let's remember Nebuchadnezzar, so we would not fall into the same pit he fell into in Daniel 4:30. King Herod was also a victim of pride (Acts 12:21–23).

The end–time Church will enjoy God's supernatural liftings, that it will take an understanding of the mystery of praise not to become a victim of pride. We are in the age of gifts and callings, in the age of amazing divine deposits in the lives of men. So we need to exercise caution, in order not to be destroyed. We must know how to always return all the glory back to God.

Every good thing you have ever seen in your life is not by merit, but by His grace. You'll agree with me that if a young man becomes a millionaire at the age of 23, he will need the Holy Spirit to still be worshipping God at 40! Let's be very careful, because pride is able to turn blessings to curses overnight. Remember God says:

> **And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do**

not lay it to heart. Malachi 2:1–2

When glory shifts from God to self, destruction is on the way. Now that glory has come to the Church, let us learn how to direct the glory back to its owner. If an angel could fall to pride, you had better watch it. There is no anointing that pride cannot destroy. There is no empire that pride cannot devastate. Praise is the answer to pride.

Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord. Jeremiah 9:23–24

Watch what the sons of God will be doing in the realm of academics this endtime. The story of Ben Carson thrills me. He is a young black neuro–surgeon, who led a team of 77 doctors to perform a 20–hour operation that separated a set of siamese twins joined at the skull. Ben Carson was a dullard in high school, but God's hand touched him, and such great wisdom came upon him. He is a celebrity all over America today, but he acknowledges God as His source.

This end–time, we must watch these three areas where God has purposed to lift His people – wisdom, might (prominence) and riches. He demands that you recognize Him as the source. He commands: *"... Lay it to heart to give glory unto My name..."*

Paul the apostle, a man of such great heights in ministry, said, *"I am what I am by the grace of God."* Jesus also in His time acknowledged God. He said, *"I can of mine own self do nothing..."*So, every grace in your life must be acknowledged, or it will be converted to grass. Return every credit that man has given you back to God, for it belongs to Him.

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 1:26–31

So, whatever you are now is the making of His mighty hand and lovingkindness. It is neither by might nor by power, but by His Spirit. Therefore, let us give all the glory back to Him.

Preserved Blessing

I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him. **Ecclesiastes 3:14**

The blessings some people enjoy are not sustained for ever because they do not know how to preserve them. Praise is the secret for preserving our blessings. God said in ***Malachi 2:2:***

> **If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.**

Psalm 50:23 also says, *"Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me..."* Giving glory to God is the covenant device for the preservation of blessings. God expects you to give Him glory for His hand on your life; when you don't, He is compelled to curse that blessing or withdraw it. When you hit a jackpot in business or you are singled out among a thousand people for honour, don't kiss your hand and congratulate yourself as an intelligent, energetic and unbeatable guy. Give God the glory, because without Him you can do nothing.

Some people lay it "to mouth" to praise God, instead of laying it to heart. They sing because everybody is singing, but in their hearts they say, "What has God done? Is this all He can do?" See how God reacts to ingratitude in ***Deuteronomy 28:47–48:***

> **Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things. Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.**

So, when you don't acknowledge and glorify Him for His hand upon your life, you are calling for a fight that you can't handle, because God Himself will send devourers to devour the blessings.

Stop losing ground to the devil. Each time you acknowledge God for a

blessing, you have committed Him to preserve that blessing and to open new doors to you. Don’t pose to be the one behind the blessings or success you enjoy, because if God withdraws His hand, the whole world will know how worthless you are. Rather, glory in God (Jeremiah. 9:23–24).

You Rise

When you are praisefull, you enjoy being raised. God designed praise for your supernatural lifting, but how much light you have on it determines how much raise you enjoy by it. No Christian will ever be at his best without an understanding of praise.

> **It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Psalm 92:1,12**

"...He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon", that talks about you being outstanding. The cedar tree grows far above all other trees.

In **verse 14,** God says you will not only be outstanding for a season, but you will also bring forth fruit in old age! That means you will keep producing results, until when you leave this earth.

> **Praise ye the Lord. Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people. Psalm 113:1,7–8**

When you praise the Lord, you become outstanding and remain resourceful. As long as you stay committed to His praises, He too will be committed to raising you. David was a praise giant and he reigned for forty colourful years as king. His enemies couldn't get him and all Israel loved and followed him. He was a praise–crazy king!

> **And David danced before the Lord with all his might...And David said unto Michal, It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel: therefore will I play before the Lord. And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour. 2 Samuel 6:14,21–22**

No wonder his life was summarized this way:

Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. And the time that he reigned over Israel was forty years; seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem. And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour: and Solomon his son reigned in his stead. 1 Chronicles 29:26–28

He was praising God seven times a day (Psalm. 119:164), so God had no choice, but to lift him seven times a day! His praise outweighed his prayers, which he did only three times a day (Psalm. 55:17). No wonder he enjoyed very strange liftings from God. In 1 Chronicles 29, what he gave for the building of the temple is estimated in present day value as 567 million dollars worth of gold! This is apart from the building materials he also gave. God raised him and blessed him with so much wealth.

Let us praise this God from the depth of our hearts! When you are praising God, you are exalting Him, and He will in turn exalt you; if you honour Him, He will honour you. Until you give God His place, your place is not secured. That is why every praising saint is a rising and flourishing saint.

When you praise God, you cheer Him up to prove Himself again and again in your life. It is just the same way the clapping of hands by fans at a football match get the players excited to do more valiantly. You will grow higher as your praises rise higher and higher to Him.

It's a good thing to acknowledge God and give Him thanks for His good hand upon your life. To take God for granted is to be grounded! Only those who praise Him enjoy His liftings.

Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. Habakkuk 3:17–19

High praises are the highways of God to the high places of life. Forget about what is not working, look on Him and exalt Him, then He will take you to your high places in life. When you get into the realm of praise, heaven steps in in your

favour. When you praise Him in the morning, afternoon and night, He has no choice but to raise you.

You Enter Into Your Inheritance

After the death of Joshua, the children of Israel were to enter *"every man unto his inheritance" (**Joshua. 24:28**)*. To do this, they enquired of the Lord: *...Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? And the Lord said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand. **Judges 1:1–2***

Your surest access into your inheritance in God is praise. Judah means praise. Judah cannot but have breakthroughs, because the Lord of breakthrough lives inside him; that's why God said he should lead the people to war.

> **When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language; Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion. Psalm 114:1–2**

When Judah appears, the Red Sea gives way, the mountains skip like rams, the hills skip like young lambs and Jordan is driven back! Anytime Judah appears, the final whistle is blown, because he has won!

In Genesis 49:3–12, we see Jacob pronouncing prophetic blessings upon his sons. Reuben, Simeon and Levi were the first three sons bore to him by Leah. They were born under strife, contention and all manner of evil works. But Judah came in the season of praise, hence Jacob could pronounce these blessings upon him:

> **Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Genesis 49:8**

Praise makes you a man of exploits. So much so that even when you are dead, men still gather around to bless you. You can't praise God and lose your place on the earth. It's impossible! Three thousand years after David's death, he is still being celebrated in Jerusalem today. In 1997, Israel celebrated the 3,000th year that David named Jerusalem the city of David, the city of the great king.

Since you belong to the tribe of Judah, triumph is your heritage.

> **And Judah went up; and the Lord delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand: and they slew of them in Bezek ten**

thousand men. Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it, and smitten it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire. And the Lord was with Judah; and he drave out the inhabitants of the mountain... Judges 1:4,8,19

When praise becomes your life style, triumph becomes your heritage, and you are able to enter into your inheritance.

It Provokes Harvest

Praise provokes the release of your harvest. Even when you are a cheerful and consistent giver, you still need praise to turn your seed into harvest.
Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.
God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.
Psalm 67:5–7

When you praise God, His blessings upon your life become inexhaustible. No matter what you do in the kingdom of God, until you have praised Him, you cannot be fruitful. Behind every prosperous life is the mystery of praise. This is because praise effectively waters the seeds you sow – your services and offerings in the kingdom.

David was a mighty seed sower and was also a praising king. As a result, he became a mighty man on the earth! The more you praise Him, the more meaningful your life becomes! The quality of your life is determined by the quality of your praise. Let's give it to Him!

I'd like you to know this: God owes you nothing, for He has done all things well. Rather, you owe Him praise. And as you praise Him, you won't need to struggle for your needs to be met any more; they will be met of their own accord.

> **In the year of this jubile ye shall return every man unto his possession. Leviticus 25:13**

"Ye shall return every man onto his possession." This can only be possible in praise. Jesus died for your release. He was made poor, so that we through His poverty might be rich. He came to enrich us, not to make us poor. He came as our supplier and provider; and He has done all things well. That is why He said, *"It is finished!"*

So, from now on, as you praise Him, you won't be found wherever evil is mentioned, but only in places where pleasure is found – godly pleasure, heavensent pleasure, all–round comfort and rest!

You Are In Power

As you praise God, you provoke the release of unction from Him.

> **Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel. And the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones. Isaiah 30:29–30**

Unction that helps you appreciate the voice of God is released unto you as you are engulfed in praise. As you act in obedience to His voice, divine guidance comes your way, thereby provoking His acts.

When you are not in praise, you are not in God. The moment God is not for you, He can't help you. When you are in praise, you are in power, and therefore in God. You are not just in power, but in unlimited power! I fondly say, "To be praisefull is to be ‘win–full’!"

> **It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: To show forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night, Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound. For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands. But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil. Psalm 92:1–4,10**

Praise brings down the power of God into a man’s life, because it provokes the release of fresh oil which endues with power. Nothing forces your enemy to surrender like power. ***Psalm 66:3*** says, *"…Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee."*

When you engage in genuine praise, you are anointed with fresh oil and endowed with power; that is when you begin to see your desires upon your enemies (Psalm. 92:11).

If through the praises of David the evil spirit that tormented Saul was cast

out, it means evil spirit cannot attempt David himself. So, when you are in praise, no devil can interfere with the issues of your life, because praise puts you in command over your enemies.

Fresh oil commands fresh victories. While David was dancing and praising the Lord with all his might, Michal (his wife) looked at him and despised him. And because God does fearful things in praises, even though she was his wife, Michal was struck with barrenness! Nothing can stand in the way of praise. As you praise Him therefore, everything that mocks your destiny in God will be made to pay for it.

When you praise Him, unction multiplies, and manifests in revelation and power, bringing about God's numerous acts. My oil can never be stale, because I celebrate Him day and night. As a result, the new oil keeps dropping upon me. I can't understand the strength I enjoy nor the way He works with me; but I see His hand in my life all the time.

From now on, as you praise God, His fearful acts will take place in your life and His new oil will drop on you, causing you to walk in power!

You're Decked With Beautiful Garments!

Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints. Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp. For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation. Psalm 149:1–4

Praise beautifies! When you praise God, He beautifies you. Praise delivers beautiful garments to the saints of God, that is why the Bible talks about *"the garment of praise" (**Isaiah. 61:3**)*. May that beautiful garment be visible upon your life from now! As you celebrate Jesus, may He make you a covenant celebrity!

You Enjoy Protection

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: Psalm 92:1

And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? 1 Peter 3:13

Praise guarantees protection. Nobody can harm you when you are in praise, because followers of good can't be touched. When you are in praise, you are supernaturally protected, as praise takes you into the secret place of God, where no devil can get to.

After David's victory over Goliath, Saul became envious of him. One day, while David was playing music to relieve Saul of the evil spirit that was tormenting him, he tried to pin David to the wall with the javelin in his hand, but David escaped from his presence twice (1 Samuel. 18:9–12). As long as David was in praise, he was supernaturally protected.

Praise is, therefore, a protective device available to all saints. David said in ***Psalm 23:4,*** *"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."*

Praise is able to arrest all your enemies and put them under your feet, because God's presence, which is invoked in praise, becomes your weapon of defence and offence. The enemy is not your problem; if you are in praise, you will disarm him, no matter how fierce his attack may be.

As you praise God, see Him as your covering, shield of protection, rock, refuge and the God who neither sleeps nor slumbers, to ensure your safety. That is the way to maintain a comprehensive insurance of supernatural protection. As you give Him quality praise, may your life begin to enjoy the things that attend to praise! As the rainfall of praise begins to fall on the field of your destiny, may it cause your destiny to germinate and bring forth fruits, in Jesus' precious name!

Your Mentality Is Charged

God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.

> **Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding. Psalm 47:5–7**

The emphasis here is on the word, "understanding." I discovered from Scriptures that the wisest men were men given to praise, revealing that praise has the power to charge your mentality for greater results.

Solomon, one of the wisest men that lived, was a man of great inspiration. His soul was fired up, and as a result, the Bible says, *"And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five." (**1Kings. 4:32**.)* That means each song delivered two proverbs to him.

When you are in praise, you tap into heavenly inspiration for heavenly insight. God enlarges your understanding and gives you new ideas with which you excel in all your endeavours.

Every genius is a product of inspiration. There is a changing up in their mental region that helps them to be smarter than their peers.

> **Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel. And the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of his arm... Isaiah 30:29–30**

The only wise God, who is also the all–knowing God, causes His glorious voice to be heard concerning any issue at hand, when you approach Him with a song. He speaks a word into your spirit–man, and gives you inspiration, which enhances your intelligence and mental prowess. ***Job 32:8*** says:

> **But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.**

You can sing your way up; you can sing your way into the solutions for those

long standing questions in your life. That is why the Psalmist said, *"sing ye praises with understanding."* That means you should praise with expectation and focus your mind on receiving direction and instructions.

God's ways are higher than our ways. His ways are channelled through the mind, but it takes praise to get on that channel. So, to be mindless is to be worthless. So, charge up your mentality with praise, and your mind will keep operating at a level that will make the world to mind you.

Another very wise man in Scriptures is apostle Paul. In ***2 Peter 3:15–16,*** apostle Peter, talking about the weight of wisdom that was operational in Paul, said:

> **...Even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.**

Paul was a man of depth, who operated in a strange realm of wisdom. He wrote more than half of the New Testament books. But he tells us the secret of this great wisdom:

> **What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. 1 Corinthians 14:15**

That was his secret – singing praises, both in the spirit and in his understanding. So, let your thinking time also be your singing time, because it connects you for a divine enlargement of your mental faculty. Let your planning season be a joyful singing season also, for that is when you will receive divine insight on what to do and how best to get results in your endeavours.

I see God visiting you with His wisdom as you begin to sing and praise Him. He will show you how to multiply that money in your hand. He will show you how to expand your business, and take you to higher places in no time.

We can't overlook the place of inspiration in a man's life. It is the fire of the soul that generates excellence. Every man of wisdom is a man of inspiration; which can be connected through praise. No wonder many scientists and

inventors were Bible–believing Christians, who were ever joyful, singing praises to God.

I see you swimming in that level of divine inspiration from henceforth. As you engage in effectual and hearty praise, exalting the King of heaven, worshipping and bowing before Him, the light you need to dissolve every concern in your business, career, Family or ministry will dawn upon you from heaven. Remain excited and you will never be stranded any more!

Chapter 8:
You Need Grace For Praise

Every benefit we receive from God is by grace; and you can't see grace and not praise Him. But there is something that stops the flow of God's grace to you – Sin!

> **What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? Romans 6:1**

Paul's quick response to this question was, *"God forbid."* The grace of God is made available, to help you out of sin. You need to be free from sin for your praise to be acceptable to God, because the praise of "the wicked" (sinner) is noise in the ears of God. The Bible tells us in Psalm 7:11 that God is angry with the wicked every day. Praising someone who is angry with you gets him even more angry.

Now that you have encountered a great insight on praise, to enjoy the benefits it carries, you must first deal with every enmity between you and God. The same God that responds to prayer is the same One that responds to praise. If when you hide iniquity in your heart, He does not hear your prayers, will He now celebrate you in praise?

The Bible describes God thus:

> **Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity... Habakkuk 1:13**

This attribute of God is what provoked the Psalmist to ask:

> **Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. Psalm 15:1–3**

Righteousness is your gateway to enjoying any benefit from God. Since He won't behold iniquity, your praises to Him in iniquity won't be acceptable before Him. He couldn't even behold His only begotten Son on the cross when He bore the sins of the whole world upon Himself, how then would He listen to you when you praise Him in sin?

Every grace of God thrives on righteousness. Praise provides an access into the presence and blessings of God; but it is righteousness that secures it. Every blessing from God requires righteousness to be released. Similarly, every principle of God produces on the platform of righteousness, which is God's foundation (2 Timothy 2:19).

Jesus came to this earth, full of unction and wonders; and His cardinal mission was contained in His name – to save His people from their sins (Matthew.1:21). Redemption is principally the healing of the sin–sickness. So, the price for righteousness has been fully paid. Every slavery to sin now is by the individual's choice.

The reason why God will punish any Christian that continues in sin is because it is his choice to sin. Jesus already fully paid the price for sin, hence the Bible tells us:

> **For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. Romans 6:14**

If you were helpless against sin, it would be wicked for God to punish you for what you are not capable of controlling. But the victory over sin was accomplished two thousand years ago on Calvary! So, if you are in adultery today, it is because you choose to remain in it. You are not helpless against sin. It is your choice to steal, that is why you stole.

I would like you to see the subject of sin as a choice. Only then can you exercise dominion over it. Every sin you commit after you have accepted Christ is purely by choice. Satan is not to be blamed and neither is the circumstance you find yourself. James said:

> **Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. James 1:13–15**

So look at that thing that is trying to lure you away from your Father's house and say to it, "I have the final say, Satan shut up!"

New birth turns your helplessness into helpfulness. It makes you a man of choice. New creation makes you a creature of choice. You have escaped the kingdom of darkness and are now resident in the kingdom of His own dear Son (Colossians. 1:13), the kingdom of choice, where everything that happens to you is by your choice (Deuteronomy. 30:19).

As long as you live in sin, your praise has no access to God. The melody therein is nothing but a croaking noise in the ears of God. But when you sign in for righteousness, your praise will deliver amazing results to you any day!

The foundation of God for prosperity is, "Depart from iniquity" (2 Timothy.2:19).

> **He that covereth his sins shall not prosper... Proverbs 28:13**

The foundation of God for answered prayers is, "Depart from iniquity."

> **If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: Psalm 66:18**

The foundation of God for peace is, "Depart from iniquity."

> **There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. Isaiah 57:21**

The foundation of God for success is, "Depart from iniquity."

> **Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. Psalm 1:1–3**

The foundation of God for every form of grace available to us in redemption is the same – "Depart from iniquity." I curse whatever it is that is deceiving you and making you think that you are helpless against sin and that deadly habit, in Jesus' name!

The moment Jesus said, "It is finished" on the cross, sin lost its dominion over humanity. So, when a man gives his life to Christ, sin becomes helpless, and he becomes a man of authority, walking in absolute dominion over sin!

Every sin is a choice, every habit is a choice. May you make the right choice! When your choice is made, Satan is finished. Make the right choice, and you'll live the right life.

You need grace to praise God acceptably. You cannot see grace and not praise. But you cannot see grace, if you continue in sin. And the less grace you see, the less praise you can offer, and afflictions soon takes over.

Grace is the stimulant for praise; and sin is the enemy of grace. So, if you must continue in praise, then you must continually embrace righteousness.

You won't miss God anymore! I see sin loose its grip off your destiny! You won't suffer afflictions in life any more!

Chapter 9:
Now, Turn To The Stronghold Of Praise!

Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even today do I declare that I will render double unto thee; Zechariah 9:12

Praise is one of our strongholds in redemption.

Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding. Psalm 47:6–7

"Sing praises with understanding." With all you have learnt about praise, I believe you can do this easily now. I see God baptising you with the spirit of praise, so that it will never depart from you forever!

Now that you know why God should be praised, I believe you will no longer relegate it to a mere church programme, something you do to warm you up for the preacher's message, something to make you feel good or just a religious obligation.

With the tabernacle of David now a part of you, God will always abide with you; and as a result, every sea before you will flee! Make praise happen around you all the time. As for me, I have made my choice to stay on top everyday. Remember, praising God is not just having fun, but obeying a heavenly commandment (Malachi. 2:1–4). Praise makes you a lion that cannot be stopped in spiritual combats. May God release you as a lion of praise to your generation!

God is inside praise, so everything that bows to God will bow to praise. When faced with any conflict of life, destroy the obstacles by switching to praise; and watch all the walls of Jericho (hedging you in) brought down!

In a situation where you do not know what else to do, just sing praises unto the Lord, fixing your eyes on Him. Then you will not need to fight any more, because He will step down, and all your enemies will be scattered!

Every destiny is perfected in praise. You were created to praise God; so you

will not command attention on the earth until you step into that purpose. How much energy you put into life does not matter. Until God's purpose is allowed to have its way, your best never emerges. You are created as an instrument of praise unto God, and He will always attend to you when that purpose is in place in your life.

As you begin to give God what is due unto Him, He will in turn deliver to you what is due to you. Things begin to take shape in your life as the power of God begins to answer to you in praise.

There is no weeping, sickness and lack in heaven. What praise does is to put you in the heavenly places, where you will not see sorrow any more in your life. It is time to enter into everything that praise has to offer. It is time to move from the superficial to the deep things of God. When you begin to praise Him, to the point of trembling on your inside, with tears running down your checks in adoration and love, then you have got it!

> **But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. John 4:23–24**

We are now in that hour, where only heartfelt worship is what will grant anyone access to God. Programme yourself for a life style of worship, praise and thanksgiving to God from the depth of your heart.

To stay in praise is to stay in God as your sanctuary. Those who praise God do not know pressures, because praise guarantees God's presence; it eliminates all pressures and establishes all kinds of pleasures.

Praise is the cheapest way to live. It has nothing to do with melody or instruments; but the melody of your heart. When you are filled with joy, you just discover that you have the right melody with which to praise Him. No one else may understand you, but the God of praise understands what you are saying.

Praise is it! You always enjoy dramatic triumphs in praise, because God is there. You also execute judgement, wrought vengeance and eradicate mourning. It is an end–time preserve and mystery (Isaiah. 61:1–3), which delivers into our hands end–time victories.

I'd like you, therefore, to put on the garment of praise. You have prayed

enough, now praise Him! Don't you know that God doesn't hear your prayers until you give Him thanks (Philippians 4:6)? Many have prayed and everyone except God has heard them. Praise will bring anything that is dead back to life. All you need do is to say, "Father, I thank You!"

I have stopped knowing how things happen; I only see them happen. "Father, I thank You!" is my life style; I don't have any prayer request and have not sent any to Him for many years now. I just give Him praise and it works!

You can become a memorial on the earth, if only you will let God become your focus. You don't need anything more than God, and God's presence is secured in praise. If you can catch up with God, you will fortify yourself against the fiery darts of the wicked.

Whatever Jesus died for and you are yet to experience, you are returning to it from now! He died for your peace, so it is time for you to live a trouble–free life. He was bruised, so you can enjoy sound health; so it is time for you to forget that sickness still exists. He died for your enthronement (He was given a crown of mockery, so you can wear a crown of glory); so it is time for you to be delivered from every form of slavery!

Now ask God to show you how to stay in praise. Until you stop questioning God, you don't have your answers. Begin to thank Him for whatever used to make you question Him in the past. He is worthy! There is none like Him! He is fearful in praises, doing wonders! Do you want to see His wonders? Then engage in praise! Praise always get things done better and faster. It works anywhere, anytime and anyday!

As you begin to live a life style of praise, the honour that God has packaged for you will begin to reflect in your life! Now put on your garment of praise, go and celebrate life! It's a new day!

Welcome to a world of triumph – the world of PRAISE!!!

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