

Understanding the
POWER OF PRAISE



*Experiencing God's power
through praise*



FRANCIS WEST

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THE
POWER OF PRAISE**

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About the Author



FRANCIS WEST IS AN itinerate Minister, former Pastor and Business owner. He has written more than five books and several booklets. Francis lives in Murphy N.C with his wife Anna. They are blessed with two adorable children.

Chapter 1: What Is Praise?

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

PRAISE IS CLOSELY LINKED to prayer; it is one of the ways in which spirituality is expressed. To understand its power, you need to know what praise means.

So what is praise?

Praise means to commend, to applaud or magnify. The act of commending God is to entrust ourselves into His care. As Christians we should always recommend others around us do exactly the same. Praising God isn't an option, it is a necessity. Throughout the book of Psalms, we constantly see or hear how David expressed his confidence in God knowing well that He will prove Himself worthy.

“Oh Lord my God, in Thee do I put my trust: save me from them that persecute me, and deliver me” – Psalm 7:1

“Preserve me, Oh God: for in Thee do I put my trust” – Psalm 20:7

Praise can also mean to show approval for God and His personality. For you to ever approve of anything, be it product or a person, you must have either used the product or have had a relationship with that person prior to that time. For you to praise God by expressing approval of him, then you must have had a relationship with him.

This is the point where most Christians who want to praise God miss it. A strong relationship is needed before gratitude can be showed. Expressing approval to God basically involves reciting the wonder of who he is until it begins to make sense to people around you.

Perhaps one of the most popular scriptures that express a strong approval of God is Psalm 23. David approves of God as the most faithful and caring Shepherd anyone can possibly have.

Another facet of Praise involves glorification. The glorification process identifies and accentuates the most admirable qualities of God. This form of praise is quite popular in the scriptures where God's qualities such as his faithfulness, his righteousness, his goodness and his mercifulness are recognized.

*“O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsel of old are faithfulness and truth” –
Isaiah 25:1*

“Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” – James 1:17

For Christians, praise to God is an expression of worship, adoration and glorification of the Lord. When we give praise to God, we humble ourselves and focus our attention on the Lord with love, worship and thanksgiving.

Another form in which praise can manifest is in making boasts. Everyday humans make their boast in a variety of things.

“Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.”—Psalm 20:7

A lot of us, even Christians, have sometimes find ourselves boasting in our own ability. It is natural instinct to do just that. We appreciate all the cheers and applause that we can get to help us feel bigger than we actually are. That is the beginning of our sinful nature. It takes the Holy Spirit to humble us and bring us to submission.

One of the major ways to submit to God is to praise him and make your boast in his faithfulness. Praise is boasting in God and in the power of his word. When we praise God, we are basically expressing confidence in his power, in his grace and in his ability to change us. We make boasts in God because of all the things he had done in the past, those wonders he had wrought through our hands. David was praising God and making boast in him when he told Saul that by the help of the Lord, he had been able to kill a bear and a lion.

“David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the Lord be with thee.”

God works miracles through praise. We plead his intervention through prayers having faith in His grace, but we invoke divine intervention through praise; pleading may take time, but invocation is instantaneous. Praise is celebrating God for who He is. By so doing we invoke His intervention in our issues.

*“It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High,² proclaiming your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night”—
Psalm 92:1-2*

Praise shows the kindness and loyalty of God to us. His intervention is invoked by celebrating the faithfulness, efficacy and reliability of God's word. We can make things happen through praise.

It is celebrating God for who He is and what is written concerning you; regardless of your current situation. By celebrating God for who He is, He turns around what is happening to be in your favor.

“In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.” - Psalm 56:4

“In God will I praise his word: in the Lord will I praise his word.”- Psalm 56:10

By praising God, you celebrate the power of the scriptures and the infallibility of God's counsel. It is telling God that you believe in what He has said even if it is yet to manifest in the physical realm. It is celebrating the integrity of God's word and that is what will provoke His intervention in your affairs. Therefore henceforth, don't just praise God for what has happened; rather, praise Him to make things happen.

Have You Praised Him?

WHEN YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED some blessings, it is easy to praise God when things seem better for you. Singing, dancing and celebrating what's good is easy.

But God deserves praise, even if your situation does not seem to have changed, when your prayers seem to have not been answered, when things seem to be falling apart.

Most Christians have this tradition, each time someone has a problem, we ask them “Have you told God about it in prayers?” It is common to hear someone talk about his/her problems and plead that you join them in prayers.

When we pray and haven't received answers for our prayers, we sometimes give up. Beloved, when you are face a battle that seems so hard and you don't seem to know where to start from, start with praise. Continue praising and never give up praising God.

“And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. ²⁶ 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”. - Act 16: 25-26

Paul and Silas' story is a great example. The local Philippians authorities beat them and threw them in jail because they had cast out an evil spirit from a young girl. In addition to the trauma of severe beating, they were attached to stocks that clamped their arms and legs in an immobile position, causing cramps and circulation loss.

However, despite the pains in their bodies and the disheartening atmosphere, Paul and Silas didn't give up or feel like things were crumbling. Instead, they prayed and sang praises to God.

Whatever seems difficult in your life is just waiting for your praise to God for it to fall down like Jericho's wall. So have you praised God?

When faced with situations that feel like the world is crashing on you, stop struggling; rather just give praises to God from your heart. He will intervene in your situation and turn it around for good.

Characteristics of Praise

FOR PRAISE TO BE PRAISE and produce results, it is necessary that it possess some major ingredients. All of these ingredients of praise are what makes it a sweet smelling savor acceptable to God in Heaven. Some of these characteristics are:

1. Praise puts God as the most important factor

God is the most important characteristic of praise. Our praise is to God only. Without God as the main aim of praising, you have missed the most important reason for going into praise and worship. Praise takes away attention from us and turns it humbly towards God. It is quite easy to allow yourself get absorbed in self-appreciation and glorification, but any genuine praise is one that helps you instead to focus on God and remember that is the reason for everything Good in your life. Praise allows us to focus on God and his majesty, proclaiming our absolute dependence on him.

This element of praise is the part that facilitates us to brag about God instead of our own abilities or in the idols of this world. It is celebrating and appreciating the relationship he has with us. Many congregants do not do this; instead, they see the praise and worship session as preliminaries that we have to go through to reach the important stuff in the church service. There is no need to praise God if he is not the central focus of the session. Because of this, the praise becomes bland and unappealing to God and the rewards are never reaped.

1. Praise is Conscious Act

For you to praise God effectively, then you have to make a conscious decision to do that. Praise is an act that is totally dependent on your will. No matter how Holy Ghost filled you are, you will never be forced to praise God. Praise is not based on your feelings or your emotions.

You don't have to be in a good mood or to feel great before you can praise. In fact, praising God in the down times is one of the surest ways to attract God's ability to change the situation. At this point you are telling him that you are confident in him, because once he takes charge everything will get better. However, don't wait till you are against the wall before you praise God.

It doesn't matter what it is that you are going through at the moment, but you should not allow that hinder you from living a praiseful life. The test of man's character is in the midst of his toughest times. Right now is precisely the most appropriate time to praise God. Embrace and live a praise filled lifestyle. Remember that lifestyles are built by conscious efforts. One doesn't begin to live lavishly without planning and putting things in place to live lavishly. So it is with praise.

God has knowledge of whatever it is you are going through at any point in time. All he needs from you is to create an enabling environment for him to act. Just like the children of Israel praising and running around The Wall of Jericho might have been a bad idea, making a conscious effort to praise God during your trials might not seem sensible. God uses the most foolish things to confound the wise.

1. Praise Manifests as a Result of Our Relationship with God

When humans praise each other, it can sometimes be hypocritical and the recipients of these praises might never be able to read the hypocrisy. But God is as a discernor of our thoughts and intentions. He understands when your praise had become hypocritical and void of real emotions. It is only praise that manifests as a result of a close relationship with God that is acceptable.

People who are compelled to praise God do so because they have found him to be altogether lovely and full of grace. They can stop thinking about his majesty and the next thing they find themselves singing praises to God. They have gotten close enough to him to understand his true nature and all there is to him.

It is impossible to brag about someone you don't know or have never experienced. It is most certain that such bragging will end up being either

insincere or false. Imagine being asked to describe your best friend and give reasons why the friendship has lasted so long. You will find yourselves slipping out words and words of appreciation, so heartfelt and true. This only happens because of a strong understanding of their nature.

Praise can only be genuine once there is a relationship with God. Once you have been able to establish this relationship, praise will proceed from your heart no matter what is happening in your life at any point.

The Sacrifice of Praise

APART FROM BEING AN act of man's will, praise is also a sacrifice to God. Many times in the scriptures where praise appears, the word 'will' also appears with it.

"The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an inhabitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him". - Exodus 15:2

"I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me". - Psalm 13:6

The usage of 'will' in these scriptures can mean two things, either to indicate an event that will be performed in the future or to speak as one making a conscious choice. It is this choice to praise God that makes it a sacrifice. The sacrifice of praise is propelled by your will irrespective of your emotions.

"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." - Hebrews 13:15

Praise becomes a sacrifice once you offer it to God even when everything around seems like he doesn't deserve to be praise. You just lost a family member, you praise. You just lost a friend, you praise. You just failed a professional exam, you praise. This is the kind of 'praiseful' sacrifice that moves God to action. It provokes him to act.

When Christian hear the word sacrifice during a sermon, the first thing that comes to their minds are lambs, sheep, or a large chunk of their money in the bank. All these things can be a sacrifice to God in their own rights, but don't let your faith get restricted to those alone.

Your time can be a sacrifice. Your energy can be a sacrifice. Your talent can be a sacrifice. Likewise your voice can be a sacrifice of praise. You might

not have anything else to bring to him, but God is always happy with your sacrifice of praise.

Paul described it in Hebrews as ‘the fruits of our lips’. Fruit represents harvest and any harvest requires hard work to manifest itself. In the same vein, praise can sometimes take effort. You might not understand the effort that will be required of you get yourself pass to through the failures, the setbacks, the disappointments and all of that to start praising God.

The devil himself doesn’t want you to praise so he will put everything in place to make sure that you are down. He has a garment of mourning and sadness he likes to cloak over insensitive believers. This is why you have to be on the lookout and put on the garment of praise at all times.

Make it a conscious effort to appreciate God and tell him how faithful He is. It takes grace to see past the negatives in your life that God has not handled and look towards the positives he has worked on. Take time to praise God is laying down your pride on the altar and slaughtering it.

The sacrifice of praise is never hypocritical. You can deceive man with an outward display of worship and raised hands, but God searches the spirit of man. Our inner most intentions are open to him.

Don’t wait for things to align before you begin to praise God. It is when things are wrong that God is most watchful, checking if you will fail him by complaining childishly.

Continue praising God even when things don’t go right after you have started praising. Never give up. Don’t allow the devil and his baggage of evil thoughts take control over your mindset. Remember that he is still in the process of changing your life. He is working out something for your favor and your sacrifice of praise will never go down to the ground unrewarded.

Expressing Faith through Praise

PRAISE CANNOT EXIST in your heart without you expressing it. Nothing works that way. You can appreciate somebody without actually showing your appreciation to them. Faith in God is one of the highest forms of expressing faith in him and his word. You are showing your agreement with God and his will. It your faith that helps you to hang on to God's promises even when everything around you points towards the contrary.

Possessing an attitude of faith even when you are going through hard times is a core of sacrificial praise because it is strengthened by this assurance that God can change the situation at any time. The attitude that clings to God even when it seems like all hope is gone because of the understanding it has of God and his actions is a fundamental expression of faith.

Consider children who are only happy with the parents once there is surplus in the house but turn a dark side once the family begins to go through financial insecurity. A good child is one that believes and appreciates his/her parents at times whether they have provided or not. Any parent having such a grateful child will always be eager to ensure that all the child's need are met, no matter the condition of their accounts.

God in some ways acts like our earthly parents. Constantly praising him is to attract him to your situation. His eyes are always searching through and fro the earth looking for who to bless and your praises are the white flags you can use to attract his attention.

A king walking past the city street does not throw gold coins at complaining citizens. He is patiently waiting to get to that part of town where the citizens will sing his praises and thank him for being their king even if there is famine in the land. God does not care about the situation at hand. All he wants is your praise.

Chapter 2: The Wholesome Benefits of Praise

THERE ARE A LOT OF benefits attached to praise God. Once a believer humbles himself and get down into the process of adoring God and all of his holiness, God's attention is attracted to the particular individuals.

The benefits of being a child of God are numerous, but one cannot possess them until the weapon of praise is employed. The devil is one stingy enemy and he will do everything in his power to hinder you from having the life you are supposed to have in Christ.

Praising God isn't only for him. There are benefits for us when we praise. Here are some of the numerous benefits attached to praise

1. Praising God helps you to fulfill your primary purpose as a human being created by God

One of the major reasons God created us is to show forth his praise. If there is one thing God cannot give himself, it is praise. You don't see a King praising himself after a battle. It would look as absurd as possible; there have to people designated for that. To this end, God decided to give us mouths and songs to sing his praises so he can bask in the sweet smelling savor of them.

After Jesus performed a miracle in the temple, the crowd began praising God. The Pharisees rebuked them. Jesus replied them with this.

“And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out”. – Luke 19:40

God is not a time waster. If the people He has created to praise him will not do so, he will create alternatives. If you decide not to praise him, he will create a mouth in other places and receive him praises.

2 Praise endows us with the Spirit of Humility

The place of praise is a place of remembering our dependence on God. Praise is acknowledging our need for him. Once you set out to offer praises to God, you are recognizing that he is in control of every situation in your life, that you are nothing more than a leaf in his presence. He is above all. That is why the Psalmist said

Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. – Psalm 95:2-3

I will give you thanks in the great congregation: I will praise you among much people. – Psalm 35:18

3 Praise can revitalize the spiritual atmosphere

Any avid ‘praiser’ can explain to you what praising God can do to any environment. There is a kind of holy joy and anointing of peace that flows once people begin to praise God. As we have established before, you don’t have to be in a good mood to praise God. You can start from the bad mood to begin to praise. In fact, this is one of the best moments to begin to praise God. Notice how your heavy heart becomes lighter and how you begin to experience a kind of joy unspeakable. It is only praises that can bring such joy. Unfortunately, even prayers cannot bestow such a joy.

4 Praise can give you victory over the enemy

Praise is a weapon of warfare. Only a few Christians are aware of this fact, and the devil loves it and wants it to remain this way. Most of the time when we are faced with situations beyond our control, we resort to prayers. That is a good option but praise is a better and faster option. Prayer brings the battle Angels down while praise brings God himself into the situation. Praise is a direct phone call to God while Prayers might merely be an email that might take time to be seen.

Evil cannot stand a praise-filled environment which has been charged with the Holy Ghost. Whatever cloud of darkness hovers atop a location is pushed off when we begin to praise God. Remember Jehoshaphat and his army that God granted victory simply because they obeyed him and praised?

As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah and they were defeated. – 2 Chron. 20:22

5 Praise helps you get rid of any form of complaining and negativity in your life

Sometimes even with all the prayers we pray, we might still find ourselves complaining about some things in our lives. The prayer altar is an agonizing altar. Sometimes the devil can put doubt in your heart and remind you of all the times that God did not seemingly answer your prayer on time. And most of the time he is usually successful with this act.

When we engage the weapon of Praise, we focus more on God and his Goodwill for us. Praise removes any form of self-centeredness from our lives, no longer allowing us to focus on ourselves and our struggles. You are reminded constantly about God's love for you and that he is capable of taking care of whatever it is that burdens you.

Bless the Lord, O my soul and forget not all his benefits, who forgive all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy. – Psalm 103:2-4

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. – Heb 13:15

6 Praise opens room for abundant blessings

God has a lot in store for us as his children. He is ever ready to bless us and he will never withhold these blessings from us if become humble enough to offer him all the praise. Praise opens the gateway for God's blessings to flow towards us. God is more eager to release his blessing to a praiseful Christian than to a Christian who is always complaining and grumbling about the situations in his life.

7 Praise ushers us into the presence of God

He inhabits the praises of His people. – Psalm 22:3

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and bless his name! – Psalm 100:4

God is selective of the people who come into his presence. He is a God that takes pleasure in a joyful environment and he will do everything in his power to keep it that way. Any seeker who wants to enter into the presence of God is scrutinized thoroughly for any signs of doubt, sinfulness or murmur. These three things are major turn offs in the sight of God. He is more attracted to the praises of his children.

From Psalm 100, we can see that it is the praise that allows you enter into his courts. The court here signifies intimacy with God. Meaning it is praise that gives you intimacy with God. Once you lack a praiseful and thankful heart, you can never attain constant and exclusive access to the things of God. Take it this way: Praise is your keys to God's inner most bedroom; without it, you are shut out.

8 Praise gives us a refreshing and renewal of our Spirit man

There is a kind of strength that our spirit man needs that only praise can provide. Praise is like a spiritual workout that leaves you more energized than ever. We are strengthened by the peace of the Holy Spirit and refueled by His joy. When we possess a heart of praise, we discover that God doesn't only change the situation at hand; he also works to change our heart in the process.

In His presence, there is fullness of joy – Psalm 16:11

The joy of the Lord is like medicine to any broken Spirit, no matter how much damage has been done to it.

9 Praise prepares the atmosphere for God to move and miracles to happen

Nothing can ever happen in the house of God except if his children first praise him. This is why it is always important to embark on a session of praise and worship before fully plunging into prayers. God is activated once praises are released. Remember Paul and Silas who had been locked in a

cell to be beheaded the next day. They did not sit there and despair over the situation; instead they took the battle to God with their praises.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everybody's bonds were unfastened. – Acts 16:25-26

Every day you are given a choice to either live over the stress of life by constantly handing everything over to God, or you can stay absorbed in stress and worry. God desires that we give him our whole heart and all of it. He longs for us to know his power which can only be manifested once we begin to praise him.

Chapter 3: The Right Time to Offer Up Praises

IT HAS BECOME A STAPLE in Christianity that we are to praise up when our hearts are joyful or when we are experiencing a down time. It is easy to fall into a trap of thinking that there isn't any other time to offer praises to God. But God is worthy of your praise day and night, every day of the year no matter how that day looks. Praise should be continuous process. That is the reason the Psalmist proclaimed in the scriptures saying

I will extol the Lord at all times; His praises will continually be on my lips.
— Palm 34:1

Praise should be an everyday thing, a part of your life. No matter what is happening to your life, no matter you having a down time or a low moment. All of your focus should be on God.

Paul and Silas were going through one of their worst moments in life. They had been thrown in jail after commanding the evil spirit out of the girl who had been following them around and proclaiming them as servants of God. The owners of the girl had been angered by the loss that would have been for their business so they sought to have the two men thrown into prison.

You see how God works. He watched as his servants who he had just used to cast out an evil spirit from a young innocent girl were thrown into prison and he did nothing to help them out. Most of us would have been enraged at God's unfaithfulness if we had found ourselves in such a situation.

Paul and Silas showed us an example of what a good Christian would do in that situation. They did not complain about the darkness they had been literally thrown. Instead they spent the night praying and singing praises to the Lord. They did this irrespective of the prisoners around who could hear them.

And God proved himself to be ever faithful by appearing in the midst of their praises. Suddenly there was an earthquake that shook the foundations

of the prison and soon the shackles were broken, the door opened and all the prisoners escaped.

All these happened because these men of God decided not to throw a pity party because of their predicament. This story is enough evidence for us to know that these are men that praise God at all time, be it the good time or the bad time.

Look beyond what you are feeling now, look beyond your fears and circumstances and look towards God. Remember all of God's faithfulness and all the times he has come through for you. Doing these will allow you to continually trust in God.

Praise God When Nothing Is Happening

IT IS OFTEN HARD TO remember when there is nothing in particular to draw your attention to him. On such days you might have no worries to lay at his feet or no great testimonies to thank him for. Things are just mundane, in between moments that are neither here nor there. This is one time when the devil is sure to act.

He knows that you are distracted at the moment so he will begin to sow seeds of sorrow and murmuring in your heart. He will stand aside patiently and wait for these seeds to manifest themselves in your heart. You have to be smarter than him having this fact at the back of your hands. Plant the seed of thankfulness and praise in your heart before he arrives.

Don't have a specific time to praise God. And praising God in this sense does not necessarily mean that singing out loud. You should cultivate the habit of bringing forth praise from your heart even when no one is watching. Even in the midst of all the hustle and bustle of life, learn to place your focus your will and emotions on God. This will be the only way that you will be able to praise him when nothing bright is happening your life.

David praised God no matter what had happened in his life, even when he messed up he was still appreciating God and talking to God about the situation at hand. He never picked out a special reason for him to thank God. He did it all the same even when life seemed boring.

Develop the habit of carrying God along as you go about your day. It can be as short as saying, 'Thank you Lord' but that's enough as long as it comes from your heart.

Where to Praise: In the Sanctuary or In the Closet

YOUR PRAISING SHOULD never be dependent on location. You don't have to arrive at a mountain top to be able to access God's throne better. You don't have to be in the midst of praise and worship session in church in order to ascend into the presence of God through praise. You are to have a praise heart where ever you find yourself. The apostle Paul puts his admonishment this way

Speak to one another with Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. – Ephesians 5:19-20

In your car, in the toilet, at work, everywhere you go, God is every present and he is ready to receive your praise and release his blessings. If God was so concerned about the situation of the place in which the praise was being offered, then he would never have answered Paul and Silas once they asked for his help in that dungeon. Once your heart is pure and clean for the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit, then you will be able to connect to God no matter the location you find yourself.

You don't need a praise/worship leader to burst into tongues and begin to magnify the name of the Lord. Of course, the Praise leader is an important as ever in the House of God, but he/she should not determine when and how you offer praises to the Lord. If you have maintained a pure connection to God all the while, then you won't need anyone to tell how great God is before you can be stirred up in the Spirit. You will always be eager and ready to go into the presence of God just like David said,

I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. – Psalm 122:1

David was continuously joyful in the things of the Lord. Once the doors to the house of the Lord came open, he was always eager to go in. It is the same David that confessed to praying three times and praising God seven times in the same day. He was always getting himself prepared in the private to meet with the brethren in the sanctuary of the Lord.

In essence, we are all supposed to be worship leaders in our own little ways, because we are temple of the Lord. We are supposed to sanctify this temple for and make it holy so that any praise that proceeds from it will be an acceptable praise.

You cannot get anything great from the public praise and worship session when you have not developed your spirit man in the secret place. It is the praise that you offer to God in the private place that give you the authority to praise him in the public place. David had the spiritual strength to deal with Goliath because he had watched God work on his behalf so it was no problem to believe that God would hand over Goliath's head to him.

The problem with Christians these days is that they pray before they go into a challenge when the right thing to do is to offer praises in anticipation for the victory. Most of the time when they experience defeat, they come back to God murmuring and complaining about what they have just experienced.

Their praise offering is simply tied to the outcome of the battle. This is simply a hypocritical praise and God is sure aware of it before it lands at his footsteps, supposing it is acceptable enough to come into his dwelling place.

Our lives would quite different if we cultivate the habit of offering up praises to God in the face of any challenge no matter how intimidating. You are simply making God aware of the confidence you are putting in him. Fill your life with the good news of the worship songs playing from your car instead of the devastating stories emanating from the radio. Give the Holy Spirit a place in your life by offering him quality praise from the heart. He is ever ready to help you out with any situation, but it is your praise level that determines his response in any situation.

The Direct or Indirect Form of Praise

PRAISE CAN SURPRISINGLY come in two forms which can either be offered directly to God or indirectly to him. The direct form of praise is the one that we are most conversant with as Christians. In this kind of praise, we may find ourselves speaking and singing his praises directly to him.

However, not all of our praises can be direct. Sometimes God expects us to praise him indirectly by commending and expressing approval of him to others around us. One way in which we can do this is to spread our testimonies about what God has done. No matter how little or how insignificant it may look at the moment, always know that God is glad when we take out time to tell others about his goodness. This way he receives praise, glory and honor and this is an indirect form of praise.

It is easier to tell people about your problems so they can look at them and sympathize with you. Doing that is simply saying, 'I have a God that I don't trust. And look at it; he hasn't even been faithful enough to receive any of my praises.'

Constantly complaining about the situation in your life is a quick way to build doubt in other Christians and make the non-believers strengthen the hold on their belief that God isn't a good God. This will make you no different from the Children of Israel who failed to recognize all of the good things that God had been doing for them all the while.

Once they faced a problem, they forgot God's faithfulness and focused on their misfortunes. They wanted to go back to Egypt, the land of their slavery, a place God had just delivered them from.

Note that there is nothing bad in your life that will last forever. God is constantly working on your case and those tough times are necessary hurdles you will have to scale to enter the mountain of your breakthrough.

This doesn't mean that God placed problems in your life to teach you something. No, God is a good God and His will is for us to be happy. Once

you are faced with challenges, know that God is not blind. He sees everything and he knows everything. He is working on it.

David was one man that knew how to live a never-ending praise life. No wonder the scriptures refer to him as a man after God's heart. He understood God. He had a contagious attitude towards God and he made sure everyone around him partook in the praise once it was time. That was why he wrote in psalms

I will extol the Lord at all times; His praise will always be on my lips. My soul will boast in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice. Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt His name together. I sought the Lord and He answered me; He delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to Him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. The poor man called, and the Lord heard him; He saved him out of his troubles. – Psalm 34: 1-6

It was so obvious that David was most comfortable being in the presence of God. He was always ready to talk about anything that had to do with God. That would be a great thing for the modern day Christian to adopt into his/her life.

Once you see another believer, don't be quick and eager to spill the beans about your son's ailing health or to dish out the latest gossip in your local church. Instead talk about the faithfulness of God, share your testimonies with each other.

Once you do that, you will definitely attract more of God's faithfulness into your life. He will become excited to show up on your behalf because he will be sure that everybody around you will soon hear about his faithfulness.

Sing of God's Fresh Manifestations in Your Life

Sing to him a new song; play skillfully and shout for Joy – Psalm 33:3

Praise the Lord. Sing to the Lord a new song, His praise in the assembly of the saints. – Psalm 149:1

NEW SONG HERE DOES not necessarily mean that you go into a studio everyday and churn out new gospel vibes for the brethren. What David meant by singing a new song unto God everyday is that we should be able to see the new things God is doing in our lives and talk about them. Never forget the things of the old, but don't ignore the new that he is doing.

Every week, God does something great for you, no matter how insignificant it might look. It can come in form of journey mercies, good health for all your families or one of the kids winning an athletic competition in school. Keep saying these things as they happen. When you are talking about the good deeds of God, never forget to add all the necessary details.

It is these new songs everyday that can guarantee the ever dwelling presence of God in the life of a believer. The devil will try to make you keep shut about all of God's benefits, but don't allow him to succeed. Wake up each day with a purpose to find something new to praise God for, something new to talk to your friends about.

God is never tired of hearing you brag about him. If you are not into that business right now, then it simply means that you have no relationship with him yet. You can't work with the most high and not have the mountaintop experience. It is impossible. Times may not turn out to be good, to be the way you wish for them to be, but never hesitate to think about the beauty of his mercies.

Chapter 4: What Is The Best Way To Praise God?

THERE ARE MANY FORMS in which our praises can be released unto God. But there is one factor that is common to every form of praise which is that praise is always open. It is always expressed openly. Every expression of praise is always done outwardly.

Looking at the life of the Israelites, we can see that they were emotional, expressive people who never hid whatever it was that God had done for them. They were always open in exclaiming how they felt about God in every situation.

This is totally different from what is obtainable in modern day Christianity. These days, we are more prone to get soaked and be inactive during the praise and worship session and yet claim to be thankful, claiming that praises emanates from the heart. No matter how introverted a person is, the joy and thankfulness in their hearts will surely migrate into faces and actions one way or the other. Such a sunken behavior can never be classified as faith.

You have to understand what is implied here. This is not to say that your quiet hours of worship are in some way useless. They are not. You can praise God calmly and quietly, but there must be an evidenced indication that you are in the midst of praise and worship session.

Some of us have become so acclimatized with our egos that it has become so hard for us to let go of ourselves during a praise and worship session. We hold ourselves throughout the process and call it self-control. God himself has commanded for each of his children to praise him with reckless abandon.

Praise our God, O peoples, let the sound of His praise be heard. – Psalm 66:8

Many Christians believe that this scriptural verse simply refers to singing. The truth remains that there are other forms of praises that can be expressed and heard. Some of them include shouting to God, clapping holy hands, singing and praying in the Holy Spirit, and playing instruments.

Understand that there are various ways in which you can express gratitude to God. Just because you are not conversant with a particular form of praises does not mean that it should be excluded. It is better that you see understanding of each form of praise and being able to make adjustments to that which will comfort our comfort zone.

This does not mean that we should make our praise to be a public show. Praise is supposed to be genuine and authentic, full of originality. It should be a reflection of what is already inside your heart. If you have not fully grasped the theory of praise in your heart, then your outward praise will most certainly lack the passion and spice that is needed.

In essence, learn to praise God with a reckless abandon. Lay yourself bare before his throne. He is your father and you owe everything you are to him. Lose your self-consciousness once the praise session comes on. This is the kind of dedication that God is in search of.

Praise God with the whole of your being; praise him until you fall out of your comfort zone.

The Biblical Forms of Praise

EVERY FORM OF PRAISE that has been outlined in this book has its root in the bible. These forms of praise are expressions of ourselves that the Holy Spirit has documented for us to use in his manual. It is obvious that most faction or Pentecostal denominations in Christianity love to select the form of praises they will adopt while they ignore the others. Well, this has never been God's plan for his children. Some of such forms of praise range from the obvious ones to the more surprising ones.

Singing

THIS IS THE MOST POPULAR form of praise available to the modern day Christian. We have been blessed with countless inspirational songs that edify both the soul and the spirit and also glorify God. This form of praise is simply the go-to form for most Christians. Some scriptures that talk about singing to God in praises are

Sing to the Lord, you saints of His; praise His holy name. – Psalm 30:4

Sing for joy to God our strength; shout aloud to the God of Jacob. – Psalm 81:1

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord. – Ephesians 5:19

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. – Colossians 3:16

In the scriptures, singing was most definitely part of the public and private worship carried out by the saints. Singing was very important to the Israelites whenever they needed to celebrate after winning a battle or when God has showed himself might in their midst. Some of such examples include the wild celebrations that featured the popular song of Moses after the Red Sea swallowed the soldiers of Pharaoh. Another such example is the song of David after God delivered Israel from the hand of the Philistines.

Shouting

SHOUTING MIGHT NOT be as popular as singing in today's world, but God recommends that his children practice it. It goes closely together with singing. They are usual companions during praise. The both of them are used to express a variety of emotions such as exaltations, joy and rejoicing.

May those who delight in my vindication shout for Joy and gladness; may they always say, "The Lord be exalted, who delights in the well-being of His servants. – Psalm 35-27

*Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music.
- Psalm 98:4*

Joyful Noise

NOISE CAN COME IN VARIOUS forms, and funny enough, noise can be used to express joy. Even the scriptures recommend it.

Praise our God, O people, let the sound of His praise be heard. – Psalm 66:8

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. Sing unto the Lord with harp; with the harp and the voice of a psalm. With the trumpets and sounds of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King. – Psalm 98:4-6

God appreciates it when his children make joyful noises to him. It is an evidence of the joy that is bubbling their hearts. This is why he has instructed us in the bible to make a joyful noise unto him notwithstanding the situation. Make a joyful noise and shut the devil up.

Laughter

OF COURSE, LAUGHTER can be used to praise God. These little things can easily be overlooked as insignificant, but they are very important. God does not joke with them. The scripture commands us to rejoice to the Lord with laughter. The Psalmist painted it this way

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them. – Psalm 126:1-3

Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing. – Job 8:21

God takes strange delight in seeing us smiling and laughing. Or why do you think he blessed us with those emotions? Take an example from Job, even in his entire predicament; he still made a point of duty to ask God to fill his mouth with laughter. A mouth filled with laughter by the Holy Spirit can never know sadness.

Thanksgiving

THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE are two words that can be used interchangeably with parallel constructions in the scriptures. Most time the scriptures makes mention of praise, it is always accompanied with thanksgiving.

With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the Lord: He is good, His love to Israel endures forever. – Ezra 3:11

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. – Ephesians 5:19-20

Enter His gates with thanksgiving and into His court with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name. – Psalms 100:4

It is obvious that giving thanks to God is a form of acceptable praise. This will only include you talking about all his goodness to you and how you are grateful to him for them. Incorporating thanksgiving into our praise will solidify the process and make it much more appealing to God.

Kneeling before God

*Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.
– Psalm 95:6*

KNEELING BEFORE GOD is one of the purest show of humility and adoration of his name. It shows that we have recognized God for who he is and his authority over us. Kneeling is acknowledging that He is our God and we are his humble servants.

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. – Philippians 2:10-11

Some people still practice the act of kneeling before God in prayer or worship, but in many other Christian denominations, the practice has been forgotten and left in the past. It is necessary that we imbibe this practice back into our Christian faith. This will revitalize and do much to restore the sense of reverence that we are sometimes missing during our services.

Clapping

CLAPPING IS SIMPLY a show of approval or appreciation. God himself is pleased when we clap unto him because he has ordained for us to do that. Those who omit clapping from their praise routine are doing that to their detriment. The Psalmist speaking said,

Clap your hands all you nation; shout to God with cries of joy – Psalm 47:1

Nobody ever begins to clap when they are sad. Clapping is a gesture that is given birth to only when we experience something of great joy. But clapping can also help to relieve the body and provide you with joy. Try this, the next time you feel sad or down, just begin to clap.

Clap and think happy thoughts and the sadness will disappear. Of course, it will sound and look foolish, and that is what the devil wants you to believe, but there is no harm in trying. Even as you read this, he will plant it in your heart not to try it. Rebuke him before he builds his stronghold in you.

Remember that if you will not clap your hands, God will create alternatives to you.

*Let the rivers clap their hands; let the mountains sing together for joy. –
Psalm 98:8*

*You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will
burst into song before you, and all the tress of the field will clap their
hands. – Isaiah 55:12*

It will be a curse when God overlooks you and ordains his praise on inanimate objects. Occupy your space in the army of ‘praisers’. Luckily for us, the recruitment is always ongoing.

Dancing

DANCING TO GOD IS ACTUALLY scriptural, no matter how some Christian folks may try to paint it to look like something wrong. It is scriptural. The book of Psalms admonishes us to praise the Lord in a dance.

Let them praise His name with dancing and make music to Him with tambourine and harp. – Psalm 149:3

Dancing can sometimes be the form of praise that can be used to effectively transmit our emotions to God. It is one sure channel to express the joy lurking in our hearts.

Praise Him with tambourine and dancing; praise Him with the strings and flute. – Psalm 150:4

It is necessary that we move our bodies and show our grateful emotions to God. But the thing is that any dance is offered unto God in form of praise must be offered decently and in order. God is a God of orderliness and the Holy Spirit frowns at anything that is disorderly and worldly. When praising God in a dance, when letting go of yourself in his presence, have it in mind that you are dancing to a holy God.

God appreciates it when he sees his children dancing to him. It is like a father seeing a child walk for the first time, or graduate from college or start up a thriving business. Our dancing praise pleases God and he is always happy and eager to watch us release ourselves in his presence.

Lifting Up hands

*I will praise You as long as I live, and in Your name I will lift up my hands.
– Psalm 63:4*

MANY OF US SING ABOUT lifting up holy hands, but we seldom do it. The scriptures have commanded us to lift up our hand in the sanctuary in worship and praise to God. The literal translation of lifting up hands is simply to mean surrendering to the authority of God.

God has commanded that we lift up our hands in honor of him. Once we fail to do this, we subscribe to the spirit of rebellion which is always uneager to obey God. And with that, his blessings can hardly follow back to us. Submit yourself to the desires of God.

*I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without
wrath and doubting. – 1 Timothy 2:8*

Making Music on Instruments

Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord. – Psalm 150:3-6

THE WHOLE OF THIS PSALM majorly talks about praising God with various instruments. God loves it when we make music to him with instruments. Remember David and his powerful harp which he used to bring peace upon Saul? But this does not mean that the instruments will now take the place of the sacrifice of thanksgiving and our voices raised in praise.

You need to understand God to be able to praise Him

THERE HAS TO BE A RELATIONSHIP with God before we can give him acceptable praise. God is in search of an intimate relationship with you so that your praises to him can be accepted by him. Once the devil has succeeded in cutting you off from God, then he has also succeeded in making your praise useless and unacceptable. It is just like a rebellious son coming home to praise his father despite all the wrong things he did the morning before leaving home. The father will ignore him until this son is first ready to ask for forgiveness.

The more we submit ourselves to the leading of the Holy Spirit from the scriptures, the more we emulate the praise that is pictured in the scriptures. And once we have been able to understand this, we begin to understand the depth associated with the joy of the Lord, all the wonderful benefits that has been kept for us.

Chapter 5: The Seven Dimensions of Praise

EVERY PRAISE WE EVER offer to God as directed by the Psalmist follows a pattern or progression. And there are sacred Hebrew words that are used to represent each of the steps in each progression. There are seven of them, and they are used to reveal the essence of what God-attracting praise entails.

Todah

THE TODAH IS MENTIONED about 30 times in the Old Testament. It can be described as the first dimension of praise. The todah is an act of the human will and it literally means ‘an extension of the hands’.

In modern day Hebrew language, the todah is used as a regular word to mean ‘thanks’. In the book of Psalms it is used as a word to represent ‘praise’ or ‘thanksgiving’ or ‘giving thanks’. The todah might also refer to the concept of giving thank offerings that is presented in the tabernacle.

Todah causes us to engage in praise no matter what is happening in our lives at the moment. It is more likely seen as a sacrifice that reveals our willingness to be with God.

Yadah

YADAH IS THE SECOND dimension of praise and it has almost the same interpretation as todah. The literal meaning of yadah is to hold out the hand. In the scriptures it means to hold out the hands in worship. This is the dimension of praise where you now begin to take control of your body and mind. Your whole being becomes subdued to your will.

Just like with todah, yadah when used in the scriptures actually signifies 'praise' or 'thanks' or 'giving thanks'. Some scriptures where it can be found are Gen 29:35, 2 Sam 22:50, I Chron 16:4 and Neh 11:17. Yadah is mostly found in the scriptures where a group of individuals in a setting of public rituals and worship, renewing their relationship with God. It is rarely used to refer to individual worship.

Halal

IN THE SCRIPTURES, halal is translated to mean 'commend' (Gen 12:15) or 'boast' (Ps 10:3) or 'celebrate' (Is 38:18) or 'glory' (Ps 105:3) or 'sing praise' (2 Chron 23:13). In some instances in the bible, halal is written to mean insanity or foolishness. So it might suggest that this means a careless abandonment in praise.

The Halal is found about 160 times in the Bible, but the most common usage is in the praise of God. It is the root word of the Hebrew word 'Hallelujah' which is translated into 'Praise the Lord'.

Shabach

SHABACH IS THE FOURTH dimension of praise. It simply means to address in a loud voice. The words shabach loosely translates to in the scriptures are 'glory' or 'glorify' (1 Chron 16:35) 'Commend' (Ps 145:4) and 'extol' (Ps 117:1).

The shabach is a dimension of praise that pushes us to glorify God with a loud voice of triumph, like after a fight has just been won. It is necessary to allow the shabach dimension of praise take over our praise and worship session. It will bring a sense of urgency to our situation and God will be attracted to respond quickly to it.

Zamar

THE ZAMAR DIMENSION of praise is the dimension that is associated with the use of musical instruments. It means to touch the strings or parts of a musical instrument with the mind of playing it skillfully and creating music that will be accompanied by the voice. Zamar simply connotes a celebration with song and music.

Zamar can be translated into ‘sing’ (Ps 27:6, 30:4), ‘give praise’ (Ps 57:7) ‘sing praises’ (2 Sam 22:50) ‘Praise’ (Ps 21:13) and ‘psalms’ (1 Chron. 16:9).

The zamar dimension is an extension of your praise session, not the main thing. You don’t start by making music with instruments; the music has to come from the joy in your heart. It is the todah and yadah dimensions of praise that are most important to God because they are the true nature of praise. Or you can call them the dimension of undiluted praise.

The modern day Christian is more interested in the music than in the praise itself. God expects us to start with the thanksgiving. It is not that the music is not important, but it should not be allowed to overshadow the main thanksgiving. Be careful so that your praise life does not depend on whether gospel singers are able to put you in the praise mood or not. Be ready to praise God whether there are instruments or not.

Barak

THIS IS THE SIXTH DIMENSION of praise, and it simply means to kneel in worship or adoration. It can also mean to bless the name of the Lord as a form of adoration. This dimension of praise is the point when the Holy Spirit has come into the midst of the brethren and has begun filling the place. It is the beginning of God responding to the worship and praise that is being offered to him. A sensitive congregation at this point will pause and watch out for what God is about to do.

Often enough, we hardly ever get to this stage because we are too busy talking to God that we do not allow him talk back to us. This can cause us to miss the prophecy, the fresh tongues, the divine wisdom and all the encouragements he wants to give us.

Barrack is mostly translated to 'bless' (Gen. 9:26), 'congratulate' (1 Kings 1:47) and 'thank' (Deut. 24:13).

Tehillah

THIS IS THE FINAL DIMENSION of praise that there is. It is based on a root that means 'laudation'. It speaks of the praiseworthy characteristics of a person or thing. Tehillah dimension mostly reveals itself in form of hymns or spiritual songs that is given specifically to each believer. This is the point in praise and worship where the Holy Spirit takes over and begins to worship through us. Paul made a documentation of it by saying

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 5:19-20

Tehillah is the dimension of praise that God is absolutely willing to share with no one. It is for Him alone and it is his place of dwelling.

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