



THE PRAYER CLOSET

Encouraging & Equipping Believers in Prayer

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THE INCREDIBLE POWER OF PRAISE

In **Psalm 34:1**, the psalmist declares his commitment to praise God, "I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth." The psalmist is clear – he would bless God at all times. He would offer praise to God on a regular basis.

The psalmist's confession and commitment are a powerful example for every believer. Every believer needs this same confession and commitment. Your lips and life are to be filled with heartfelt and sincere praise to God.

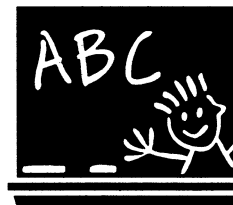
Are you regularly praising God? Can it be said of you that His praise is continually in your mouth? Your God is worthy of such a commitment, "For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen" (**Romans 11:36**). Your God deserves a lifestyle of praise, "Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever" (**Psalm 145:2**). Your God delights in and is pleased with praise, "Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful" (**Psalm 147:1**). Praise is pleasant and beautiful to God.

For these reasons, God desires that you develop a lifestyle of praise. He yearns for you to adore and honor Him. God desires to hear

and receive "your" praise. God loves you. He has saved you. You are precious to Him. He now wants you to adore and glorify Him as your God and your Father.

Singing hymns in a church during the worship service is a great way to praise God. Adoring Him as you listen to Christian music is another way to honor Him. Yet, your Father desires that you express personal praise to Him on a regular basis. He not only desires this; He is also worthy of this.

How can you develop a lifestyle of praise for God? This issue of *The Prayer Closet* will focus on how to grow in your ability to praise God. It will attempt to provide you with a biblical understanding of praise. It will also attempt help you to see how praise can fill every aspect of your life. And, it will offer practical suggestions for learning how to praise God.



The Facts About Praise

Developing a lifestyle of praise begins with understanding what the Bible teaches about praise. The Word of God declares four basis

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facts about praise. These are the “ABC’s” of praise from the Bible.

- *Praise is focusing on and adoring God’s character (Psalm 33:1; 71:8, 14; 145:2).* Praise is selfless. It’s all about God. The word “praise” in both the Old and New Testaments means “to prize highly, to value greatly.” It is making known to God why you value Him, why you cherish Him, and why you love Him. You fix your gaze on God and tell Him why He is unique, valuable, and worthy. Everything else is pushed to the side that You might contemplate, meditate on, and openly declare God’s greatness. Praise is expressing God’s value and worth.
- *God has saved you that you might praise Him (Psalm 118:28; 1 Peter 2:9).* God has saved you that you might live a lifestyle of praise. He has redeemed you that you might know Him and adore Him. This is the reason for your salvation, “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). You were called out of the darkness of sin into the light of salvation that you might proclaim His praises. He delivered you that you might honor and adore Him. Because you know Him, it is your privilege and responsibility to praise Him (Psalm 118:28).
- *You are to enter God’s presence with praise (Psalm 100:4).* The Word of God teaches that we are to approach God with praise. When we pray, we are to enter His presence with praise, “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name” (Psalm 100:4). When you pray, you are approaching the eternal and almighty God. Praising God is the way to enter the presence of the great and living God of time and eternity.
- *Praise is the pursuit of the believer’s life (Psalm 57:7, 104:33, 145:2, 146:2).* Praise is to be the pursuit of your life, “While I live I will praise the LORD; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being” (Psalm 146:2). You must have the commitment to

praise Him. As a child of God, you have the desire to praise Him. This is the natural result of your salvation. Yet, you now must be disciplined to learn how to praise Him. You must strive to grow in your ability to praise Him. Praising God is both a desire and a discipline. The believer needs a commitment to pursue praise.



The Incredible Power Of Praise

Praise is the believer’s adoration of God. It is honoring and exalting God because of who He is. It is focusing on His great character. In other words, it’s all about God. Praise is a soul-forgetting action.

Praise is beautiful to God (Psalm 147:1). He delights in and is blessed by our adoration of His character. Yet, praise has the power to transform our relationship to God. It will have a definite and life-changing impact on you. As you praise Him, it will make a difference in you.

The following are some ways that the incredible power of praise will transform you and your relationship to God:

- *It will set the tone for your praying (Psalm 100:4).* When you pray, you enter God’s presence. You are approaching the great and mighty God of heaven and earth. Praise prepares you for this amazing and supernatural encounter. It causes you to slow down and remember with whom you are speaking. It forces you to slow down and remember whom you are approaching. Too many times we rush into and out of God’s presence. We often practice what I call “grocery list” praying. We have our list, we rush into His presence, go through our list and rush out of His presence. Praise draws you back to focus on whom you are talking to and how amazing and awesome this time is.

➤ *It will build your faith (Matthew 21:22; James 5:15).*

Praise is a faith-strengthening exercise. When you praise Him, you fix your gaze on God. You focus is on His almighty power. You look at His glorious character. Praise turns your eyes solely to God. This can strengthen your faith. It reminds you of how glorious and great He is. It can enable you to trust God in the way that He desires. You weaken your faith when you look only at your circumstances and your resources. Yet, when you lift your eyes to God, it will strengthen and encourage your faith.

➤ *It unleashes God's power into your life (Psalm 22:3).* The Word of God says in **Psalm 22:3**, "But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel." The word "enthroned" means to be powerfully present. When God's people praise Him, He reveals that He is in their midst with great power. God will show Himself strong in behalf of those who praise Him. God manifests His power through praise. In other words, when the praise goes up, the power comes down. As you adore God, you will experience His power.

➤ *It will keep your heart humble (James 4:6).* The Word of God says in **James 4:6**, "But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'" God pours out His grace on the individual who humbles himself before Him. How can a person maintain an attitude of humility before God? Praise will keep your heart humble. When you focus on God through praise, you begin to see how great and mighty God is. You begin to see in fresh and new ways how glorious and exalted He is. As this happens, it breaks your pride. You see your sinfulness in a new light. You realize how utterly dependent that you are on God. Praise not only opens your eyes to who God is; it also opens your eyes to who you are. It is a powerful antidote for pride and self-righteousness.

➤ *It can stir you to confess your sin (1 John 1:9).* Your holy Father desires that you confess your sin," If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins

and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Praise will lead you down the path of confession and repentance. As you praise Him, you are reminded of His perfection and His holiness. You focus on His greatness and His hatred of evil. This will stir and move your heart to come clean with the sin in your life.

➤ *It can increase your intimacy with God (Psalm 4:3).* Praise enables you to pursue intimacy with God. To praise God, you must grow in your understanding of His character and ways. As you practice praise, it will draw you into a greater intimacy with your God. Without praise, a believer's intimacy with God can stagnate.

➤ *It prepares you to listen to God (1 John 5:14).* Many times we come to God with our own agenda. We then ask Him to adopt it and bless it. Yet, God does not promise to bless our agenda, "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us" (1 John 5:14). The Word of God reveals that we must be submissive to God's will when we pray. How can you learn to be submissive and listen to God? Praise will prepare you to listen and submit to God. As you exalt God, you appreciate His wisdom. As you adore God, you cherish His love. As you magnify God, you come to a fresh understanding of His power and righteousness. This causes you to understand that God is wise, powerful, loving, and good. This in turn should stir you to adjust and yield to your Father.



The Hindrances To Powerful Praise

God has blessed you with the privilege of knowing Him. He has saved you and opened your eyes to His character that you might adore and honor Him. Praise is your privilege and pursuit.

Yet, there are some factors that can keep you from offering powerful praise to God. These can prevent you from giving God the adoration that He is worthy of and delights in. If you desire to exalt and honor God with praise, you must confront and deal with these hindrances. I call these hindrances "praise busters."

PRAISE BUSTER # 1:

A LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

One of the reasons that people fail to praise God is because they lack the knowledge of God's character. In order to praise God, you have to know His character. If you do not know who God is and what He is like, how can you honor and adore Him? The more you understand and know God's character, the more that you will praise Him. The depth and weight of your praise to God depends on your understanding of His character. The Word of God says in **Psalm 119:7**, "I will praise You with uprightness of heart, when I learn Your righteous judgments." The psalmist declares that there is an intimate connection between praise and knowing God's character. God has revealed Himself in the Word. As you grow in your understanding of His character in the Word, you will be able to grow and deepen your praise to God. If you lack understanding of His character, you will not be able to praise Him in deep and rich ways.

PRAISE BUSTER #2:

A SELF-CENTERED SPIRIT

The self-centered spirit believes that God exists for me. It is the belief that God has saved me to bless me and help me. If we are not careful, we can develop the tendency to see God as some kind of genie or an indulgent grandfather. God does love you; He wants to bless your life. God desires to help you with your burdens. Yet, your priority is God. When you pray, praise is central and crucial. A self-centered spirit will turn your prayer life into nothing more than requests with an occasional "thank You" thrown in for good measure. If you rush into God's presence, tell Him what's on your list, and then rush out of His presence, it will hinder you from offering powerful praise. Forsake the self-centered spirit that keeps one from offering adoration to your God. Learn to lose yourself in His praise (**Matthew 6:9-11**).

PRAISE BUSTER #3:

MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT PRAISE

One of the common hindrances to praise is misunderstanding about praise. Praise and thanksgiving are not the same thing. It is true that they have an intimate connection to each other in the Word. Their close relationship often makes it difficult to make a distinction between the two. They are similar in that they both consist in giving glory to God. Yet, the main distinction is this: giving of thanks focuses what God does while praise focuses on who God is. Praise is selfless; it has absolutely nothing to do with our needs or our wants, "Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. For He is God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand" (**Psalm 95:6-7**). There is no "me" in praise. It finds its delight in God Himself. It is being wholly consumed with God's character. Glorify God by giving thanks for the blessings that He grants in our lives. Yet, regardless of what God does for you, He is worthy of praise. God is, always has been, and always will be worthy to be praised simply because of His character.

PRAISE BUSTER #4:

A LACK OF COMMITMENT

The believer must be disciplined to learn how to praise God. One has to learn how to adore God. It is a pursuit, a growth process for the child of God, "I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being" (**Psalm 104:33**). Without a commitment to grow in this area, the believer will remain shallow in his adoration of God. It is great to have the desire to praise God. Yet, one must add the discipline to this desire.

PRAISE BUSTER #5:

WORLDLINESS

The Word of God says in **1 John 2:15**, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." When you are attracted to the world, you will lose your focus on how great a glorious God is. When you love the world, it is impossible for you to have loving adoration of God. Love for the world and adoration for God cannot peacefully coexist in the same heart; one