

Effects of Praise

Living a life of praise is not only the most enjoyable way to live, but it's also one of the most powerful ways to change your life. Praise isn't like the caboose that just follows what happens, but it's more like the engine of a train that makes things happen. Your faith isn't complete without praise. Colossians 2:7 says that you abound in faith with thanksgiving. No thanksgiving equals not abounding in faith.

Praise affects you, it affects the devil, and it affects God. It touches everything and every part of your life. Likewise, a lack of praise affects you in a negative way, turns the devil loose in your life, and doesn't bless God. *You have to get this area of your life right.*

Nearly everyone agrees that praise is good, but very few feel any responsibility to praise God when they don't feel like it. I don't know anyone who wakes up in the morning and plans on being depressed. They would like to be happy and praise God, but they don't feel they have any control over this. They think that praise is just a response to what happens and that if everything goes right, they will automatically do it. That is definitely not the case.

The Lord told His disciples the night before His crucifixion not to let their hearts be troubled (John 14:1). This wasn't a suggestion. It was a command. Yet most Christians today would think this was insensitive and unreasonable. They would say that Jesus wasn't being understanding and compassionate.

These disciples were about to see Jesus arrested and then flee in fear for their lives. They would see Jesus unjustly condemned and then crucified and buried. And He was telling them not to let their hearts be troubled! To the average person, that's unreasonable.

Jesus ended His discourse to His disciples that evening with a

promise that they would have trouble (John 16:33). Wow! What an understatement! Yet He said to be of good cheer. How was this possible? He said it was possible because He *had* overcome the world.

At the time Jesus said that, He hadn't been crucified, much less resurrected and seated at the Father's right hand. It was because of faith that the disciples were supposed to rejoice. He had promised that He would be resurrected and then reign, and if they were in faith, they would rejoice—and so would we.

We live in a negative world, a fallen world where it seems that the ungodly are getting more and more prominent. So much of what we hear is just negative, and we have to make a deliberate effort to be positive and counter the culture we live in. Praise is a great tool to help us achieve that.

If someone were to pass out, the first thing we'd do is check their pulse to see if their heart is still beating. In the same sense, checking our praise lives is how we check our spiritual pulse. If we don't live lives that are constantly giving thanksgiving and praise unto God, we are not spiritually healthy. Some people may take offense at that, thinking I just don't know their situations. But Paul said in Philippians 4:4—

Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

Paul didn't just say it once; he said it twice. He didn't want anyone thinking he had made a mistake or that there were exceptions to what he said. We are always supposed to be rejoicing in the Lord. It's a command, not a suggestion to do it if we feel like it.

Paul lived what he preached. When he was beaten and thrown in the deepest darkest part of the dungeon, he and Silas broke out in praise at midnight (Acts 16:22-26). They didn't just do this as spiritual warfare. They weren't praising God through gritted teeth, just to get out of their problem. When they

were set free, they didn't leave. They were actually praising God because they loved Him and were worshiping out of a pure heart. It so affected the other prisoners that none of them left either. Praise caused a revival.

We may not feel joyful, but Scripture tells us in Galatians 5:22 that the fruit of the Spirit is joy. If we have the Holy Spirit, we have joy. We may not feel that joy, but we can choose to lift our hands and speak forth praise to God by faith. Learning to praise God even when everything is going badly will change our hearts, make us much more effective, and cause our faith to abound.

I truly believe that my choice to praise God, even after getting the report that my son was dead, was one of the biggest factors in seeing him raised from the dead after nearly five hours. I didn't know what the outcome would be, but I started praising God with all of my heart and telling Him—and the devil—that regardless, I would not quit serving Him. It was at that moment that faith abounded in my heart, and I knew he would be raised from the dead. Thank You, Jesus!

We have to accept responsibility. We aren't just elevated animals, responding to stimuli. We are created in the image of God. We can choose to say that we are going to give thanks and rejoice in the Lord. But until we do, we are victims. We will never be victors until we quit being victims. We have to get rid of the excuses and just do what the Word of God says.

Philippians 4:6 says—

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Do you know what the Greek word for “nothing” in that verse means? It means *nothing*! It means there are no exceptions. Sure, you might have problems, but you don't have to worry about them. You don't have to be *careful* about them. You can

go to the Lord in prayer with thanksgiving and make your requests known to Him.

Jesus demonstrated the right way to bring our requests to God. He used what I call the "sandwich technique," where we sandwich our requests in between two slices of praise. We start with praise, and we end with praise. We can just look at how Jesus did it in the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13). He started by praising God: *"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."* And He finished by praising God: *"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever."* That's the way to do it.

Even in the Old Testament, believers were told to *"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name"* (Ps. 100:4). But the nation of Israel didn't always do this. In fact, the Lord said that because they did not serve the Lord with joyfulness and gladness for the abundance of all things, He was going to bring judgment upon them (Deut. 28:47-57). This shows that God holds us responsible for rejoicing, praising Him, and being thankful for all the good things He's given us.

We face a lot of tough circumstances in this life, and the world expects us to behave a certain way when problems come. But God told us to respond a different way—to not let our hearts be troubled. We get to choose (Deut. 30:19). We have the option of following Jesus' words and acting on the Word of God.

I have personally felt the benefit of rejoicing in the Lord. I have seen it destroy the devil. He cannot stand it. I really believe that God inhabits the praises of His people (Ps. 22:3). God is so pleased when we look beyond the natural and see things in the light of faith. That blesses God.

Praise is not the inevitable byproduct that comes when everything is going right in our lives; it is the driving

force. Praise will get our focus where it needs to be—on God. If we start praising God in the middle of our problems, our problems will shrink so much that we'll hardly remember to bring them to God! We'll be so busy praising Him and thanking Him for His blessings that our problems will be an afterthought. {eoa}

*March 23, 1968, was the day that **Andrew Wommack's** life changed forever. God showed him just what supernatural love was really about, and Andrew's theology transformed. God was a loving father that accepted him unconditionally and desired genuine fellowship with him. Ever since that day, Andrew has been taking the love of God as far and as deep as he can. He has written nearly forty books and hundreds of lessons. He began broadcasting the Gospel of grace and healing through his Gospel Truth television program and expanded in the digital age with his internet television network and his website, . In 1994, he founded Charis Bible College. What started as a vision in a small building has grown to more than fifty campuses around the world and thousands of students learning to walk in the power of God. In 2016, he established the Truth & Liberty Coalition, an organization dedicated to mobilizing the church to engage in public discourse. Andrew and his wife, Jamie, have been married for nearly fifty years.*

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