





LET ALL GOD'S PEOPLE  
praise the Lord

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© August 2015



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## Introduction

We don't know a lot about heaven. I think that this is partly because it is so wonderful that human words can't express it. I knew someone who died and went to heaven, and then the Lord allowed him to come back. His wife wanted him to tell her about what he had experienced there. He kept saying to her that he couldn't describe it because there was no way that he could put it in words. It was that wonderful. We don't know a lot about heaven from the Word of God, but what we do know is wonderful. One thing we know is that heaven will be full of praise. It will be full of praise for God and for the Lamb that was slain-Jesus. Revelations 5:11-12 tells us this, "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever. In Revelations 19: 1, 5 -6 we read, "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God. Verse 5-6 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." When you read these verses, all I can say is that if something doesn't stir inside of you lifting up your heart and

mind to praise the Lord then something is wrong with you. AMEN. How powerful is our God. The world will praise Him. We see through this how important praise is to God. He brings about our praise because He is so mighty, holy, righteous, wonderful, everlasting, perfect, and we could go on and on from there.

Deuteronomy 10:21 says, “He is thy praise, and he is thy God...”. Psalm 33:1 says, “Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.” We need to praise the Lord because He is our God. It is comely, it is right, for us to praise Him. The more we get to know Him, the closer we grow to Him, and the more we praise Him. He is that wonderful. The key to understanding praise is to realize that God delights in our praises. God deserves our praise. He IS our praise. He is our God. He is the ONE we should worship and praise. Throughout history people have worshipped. They worship all kinds of stupid things. They have worshipped the sun, the moon, idols that they carved out of wood, or shaped out of metal. They have worshipped all kinds of junk. People are created with a desire to worship something. We as Christians are blessed because we know the ONE TRUE GOD. We know Him. He brings us salvation. He comes inside of us and creates something wonderful out of something not so great so that we are able to praise Him. He sent His Son to die so that we can fellowship with Him and walk with Him, and worship Him in a way that is up close and personal. He delights in our praise that much. The Bible tells us that He delights in our praise. He delights in our worship. He inhabits our praises.

God is worthy of our praise, and delights in our praise. How much do you praise Him? How do you praise Him-with all your heart, and mind? How much victory do you have in your life? There is a direct relationship with your praise and worship, and with the victory that you have. No praise and worship, little victory.



Worship and praise is a key to finding victory in our lives. But in order to worship and praise the Lord for real, we can't do it for us. We can't say, "I need more victory in my life, so I have to praise the Lord more." We can't praise Him for ourselves to benefit. We have to praise Him because of Him. That is how praise works. It is my prayer that through this book you come to an understanding of just what praise really is, and how to unlock the power of praise in your life. I pray though that most of all you come into a relationship of praise with God. Praise is a key to unlock a deeper relationship with God. Through this book, I believe that you will come to that deeper walk with God through the power of praise. We will talk about our great our God is, how He delights in our praise, ways that we can praise Him, how praise unlocks the power of God in our churches, how yielding and obeying Him is praise, how having faith and trust in Him is praise, and much more. Read on to discover more about praise.

Note: Any time that you study a topic, you need to get out your Bible and research that topic. If you have a good concordance that thoroughly lists all the scriptures that use a certain word, get it out, and research the Word praise. If you don't have a concordance, and can get on the internet, there is one that is available at our website [www.nlcm.net](http://www.nlcm.net). Get out a Bible and read all the verses that have the word praise in them. I can tell you about these verses, but it won't benefit you like it will if you read them. I can tell you about how praise lifts you up, and gives you victory over the battle, but if you get out your Bible and read these praise scriptures, you will find out for yourself.

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Chapter 1  
Who he Is

Let's talk about who God is. To talk about why we should praise Him, we need to first talk about why He deserves our praise. To do that we need to be able to see Him for what He is. We talk about how wonderful and powerful and mighty He is, but do we know just how big He is? Let's take time to look through the scripture at what the Bible says that God is. Most of this is actually taken from what God said about Himself. I got these scriptures by taking a Strong's Concordance and searching through all the scriptures that had the Word "God" in them. That was an undertaking. But talk about a huge blessing. If you want a powerful blessing try that. We say this a lot, "God is totally awesome". That is what you would call an understatement. Let's read some scriptures that talk about God. Please look these up. I am not going to write out the entire scriptures, just the references. It won't do you any good if you just read those, and you don't read the scriptures. Remember, you will only get out of this book as much as the effort that you put into it. If you want a huge blessing put a huge effort into the study that you do while you read this. If you want a trickle, put a minimum effort.

I have used a lot of scriptures from the Old Testament. Do your own research in the New Testament. It is important to do research. I have mentioned before how it is important when you read a book to research the scriptures. That way you make sure that what you are reading lines up with God's Word. Make sure that what people tell you is the same. Many people are deceived because they only listen to what is told them, and never check it out with God's Word, or Spirit.

Genesis 17:1  
God is Almighty

Leviticus 19:2  
God is holy

Genesis 46:3  
God of our fathers

Leviticus 26:45  
He is Lord

Exodus 3:14  
Is the great I AM

Deuteronomy 5:9  
He is a jealous God

Deuteronomy 30:7  
He will curse your  
enemies

II Chronicles 13:12  
He is our captain

II Samuel 22:31  
He is perfect

Nehemiah 9:17  
He is our pardon

Psalms 18:2  
He is strength

Nehemiah 9:32  
He is mighty

Psalms 18:28  
He is light

Psalms 19:1  
The Heavens will declare Him

Psalms 42:11  
He is hope

Do a research project on your own. Research *God Is* in the New Testament.

When we praise God and honor Him, we are able to obey Him. When we obey Him, our whole life is changed. We are able to make right decisions. We are able to act when He says act so that our world reflects His order even when the enemy is crashing in trying to tear it all apart. We can do this because we are able to trust Him, and we act in faith. Because we praise Him, trust and obey Him, we are able to make a difference in the lives of everyone around us.

Praising Him puts Him as the rightful Lord of our lives. We submit to Him. We yield to Him. Because of this, we can obey Him. Too few Christians really know what it means to be able to hear the voice of God, submit to Him, and obey Him. They can't let go of their own self-will enough to yield to Him. If we don't, we can't obey Him. We need to be willing to admit that He is Lord of all. He is also our Lord, and yield to that, then we will never know what it means to obey the Lord and the peace, joy, and sense of purpose that can bring. We will talk more later about the power of obedience and how it relates to praise.

When we think of the wonders on earth, the high mountains, the seas, the creatures He's made, the wonders of our own human bodies, how we were created in all the intricate details that makes our bodies work, we see how great He is. When we think of the wonders in the universe, the heavens and the earth, we think of how big, mighty, and powerful He is. He made all those. He is so big that eternity sits inside of His mind.

That is how He can see all of time at a single instance. We can't even understand today. We are so small, but His love for us is so great. We are not even a speck of dust in the total scheme of things, but His love is such that He set His

own Son to die for us so that we could spend eternity with Him and inherit His wonderful blessings. What do we do with that love? We often use it as an excuse to do our own thing. We often use His love as an excuse to openly sin against His Word. We use it as a reason to do our own will instead of His will. We worship the creature instead of the creator. We lift up ourselves and worship our own selves. All of us in our own eyes can become like little Gods and we are taught to submit to no one, including God Himself. We think that because of His love, we can get by with this. All of this really separates us from His love. What makes all this so bad? The foundations of all this started because of His great love for us. He created it all for us. How bad can we get? How sad all this is.

Human beings as a whole are a mess. No wonder God tells us that our best is just like filthy rags in His sight. Still He loves us, and He lifts us up. Still He offers us the miracles that we can find when we praise Him and honor Him, and we lift Him up and obey Him. All this really should make us praise Him even more.

When you next see a rainbow and you remember His promise that He made thousands of years ago that He still has kept through time, praise Him. When you read His Word and you get a glimpse of His timelessness, praise Him. When He moves in your life and crooked places are made straight, and mountains are made low, praise Him. When you find out that the Great Physician has moved for you praise Him. Don't just praise Him for what He has done for you, but praise Him for who He is. Honor Him.

The greatest praise comes when you are in the middle of the battle and you praise Him. When you see the trial, and still you praise Him. When you are weeping in the night because your world seems to be falling apart and you praise Him. You praise Him because He is worthy of that praise.

You praise Him because He is awesome in spite of it all. You praise Him because of who He is. That kind of praise touches the heart of God. In the chapter coming up, we will talk about how to praise your way to victory in spite of the battle.

## Praising Your WaY to Victory

We read in Second Chronicles 20 a key to understanding the power of praise. Read this section of scripture. The Moabites and the Ammonites had gathered against Judah. Jehoshaphat was king at the time. Verse 3 says that he feared and he sought the Lord. “And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.” There is a key here that shows how to face your battles. He didn’t spend a lot of time being afraid. He immediately sought the Lord. Then he proclaims a fast. We won’t get into a discussion about this much now, but that is also a key to overcoming the enemy. Then in verse 4, Judah gathered together. This is another key to overcoming the enemy. It is coming together in one mind and accord.

In verse 6, Jehoshaphat speaks to the Lord about their situation. He didn’t start out by crying the blues. He didn’t begin his conversation with God by telling God how bad the situation was, by telling Him how big the enemy was. He started by telling God how big He is. “And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?” He not only praised God for how mighty He is, but he also reminded Him of His promises that He had made. He reminded Him of His Word. After Jehoshaphat told God how big he was, then in a few sentences, he told the Lord their problem and asked for His help.

Now keep in mind that the enemy had them surrounded, and was coming in to wipe them out.

Keep in mind, too, that they were greatly outnumbered, and there was no hope for them, but God. Verse 12 says, “O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.” Their eyes weren’t on the enemy. Their eyes were on God. That is the beginning of praise. Praise starts when you look over top of the enemy into the face of God. Praise starts when you recognize God’s power and wonder in spite of the enemy.

Judah looked to God, and praised Him. God showed up. The scripture says that God inhabits our praise. God doesn’t inhabit our grumbling and complaining. God doesn’t inhabit our fear and panic. He inhabits our praise. If you want God to show up, praise Him. Verse 14 says, “...came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation...” The Spirit of the Lord came into their midst. God anointed Jahaziel, a Levite, out of the tribe of the priests. He spoke and said words that have echoed down through time to encourage hundreds of thousands of thousands of people, “Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, 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.” Then God made them an amazing promise in verse 17. They weren’t even going to have to fight. God promised that He would fight for them. What a promise. When they heard that they “fell before the Lord worshiping the Lord”. Then they “stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high.”

Praise had opened a promise. God gave them instructions, and a promise followed their obedience. Some people never get to the promise because they don’t listen to instructions, and they don’t obey God. They are too full of themselves to obey. They are too full of fear and gloom to even look to God. Obedience and praise go hand in hand.



We will talk later about how our obedience is one way that we can praise the Lord.

Faith unlocks our praise as well. In verse 20 we read “...Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.” They had to believe. At this point in time, they had no other option. They knew God enough to know what He could do. They believed in His Words. They believed in the words of His prophet. Faith unlocks praise and it unlocks our obedience. They believed, so they carried out the instructions God gave them. They believed so they were able to praise the Lord instead of giving in to fear and despair. Their faith unlocked all this.

Verse 21 and 22 tell us the battle plan. “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.” Verses 23 through 25 tell the outcome of the people’s praise. “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. And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much.”

Praise is powerful. When we praise the Lord in the power of His anointing, the enemy sets an ambush against himself. When we praise the Lord, it encourages us to the point that we can rise up, and obey Him. It causes us to see hope and have faith that we can overcome. It opens the door for the supernatural to happen.

So what is the opposite of praise, and what is the outcome of that. The opposite of praise is fear, doubt, unbelief, negative thinking, depression, worry, and so many other things. All those things strangle the life out of us so that we can't obey God, so that we can't get to His promises, so that we can't reach His victory. They are like grave clothes that wrap us up, sapping the victory away from us. The outcome of all those things is defeat. That is why the enemy uses those things as some of his tools. He knows that if we get wrapped up in fear, doubt, unbelief, and those other things, then we won't obey God. So he sends those little devils along to wrap you up in these feelings. He oppresses you with them. It isn't a chemical unbalance. It isn't psychological problems like the world says. It is the devil binding you. How do you get free from them? Fill up yourself with God's Word, and praise Him any way. Praise him until the anointing falls and His presence comes. Praise Him until those chains are broken. You don't have to put up with these things. Praise your way free. Then watch the Lord fight your battles. Praise unlocks the victory. You read what it did for Jehoshaphat. Put this to practice and watch it work in your life as well.

## Chapter 3 Bigger Than Ourselves

In the Old Testament Bible days (and throughout history, even in some countries today) there have been kings, dictators, leaders who required those in their country to worship them as gods. One example is Nebuchadnezzar. Research him in a concordance. His is a wonderful story of someone who God humbled. The people in these countries were not only to worship these leaders, but they were to obey and submit to them. They had to do the will of the king or die.

I was able to be in Romania and Russia helping to start Christian schools not long after the “fall of communism”. I caught a glimpse of what it was like to live during communism under the rule of dictators. The dictator who had ruled Romania was cruel. He was a ruler who demanded service and worship. One example of his sick cruelty was that he demanded that they build him a marble palace. It was the most expensive building project in the history of mankind. It took 700 architects and 20,000 workers over 6 years to build it. Workers worked 24 hour shifts 7 days a week. It had over 1,000 rooms. It was 12 stories high, and had at least 8 stories underground. Now he built this using workers in his country who were made to come work on it. They had to leave their job and work on his palace. The bad thing was, they were not paid for time spent laboring on his project. This project was so expensive, that the people in their country starved while they were building it. Many died lifting the huge marble blocks. When the palace was done, this dictator decided that all the buildings, houses, apartments, churches, around his palace had to be torn down and rebuilt facing the palace. Hundreds of people were left homeless because of this demand. He ruled as god. They had to obey. This is only one example of such rulers.

Now God isn't that way. He is not like those rulers, even though He is God, not someone pretending to be God. God is all-powerful. He controls it all. He is lifted up above it all. Rulers through history have bowed to His control whether they acknowledged Him or not. He is able to do that. He even used old Nebuchadnezzar for His glory. But when it comes to His people, He is not a dictator. He is not a ruler that forces His people to do what He wants them to do. He gives us our free will to choose who we will serve. When we choose to serve Him, and we choose to obey Him, we will reap blessings that He sends to us because of our obedience, but He will never force us to do this. We have to yield to Him. The more we praise Him, the more we will yield to Him. The more we love Him, the more we will yield to Him. That love and praise, and that yielding to Him will change our lives. But He never forces us to do His will. We have to yield to serve Him. We have to yield to Him to worship and praise Him. We do this because we want to, because we choose to, not because He makes us.

We serve and praise Him because we yield to Him. Praise helps us to focus on something bigger than ourselves. All too often we become like God in our own minds. We are full of ourselves. We are full of our way, our thinking, and our will. We don't want to give away any of that. We are spoiled. We want to be the center of attention. We want the focus to be on us. We want it when we want it, and how we want it. We don't want to yield to anybody. We don't want to be told what to do, or how to do it. All that is what makes us human beings. Put all this together, and it can only spell disaster, and broken messed up lives, and failure. But we can't even see it. We often carry this load into serving God.

Isaiah 55:8 and 9 say, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

God is way, way, way above us in everything. We can't see how big He is mostly because we have lifted ourselves up so high. He made us. He created us. That is how far above us He is. Yet we have trouble honoring Him. We have trouble praising Him. We have trouble recognizing Him as Lord for real. We can't yield and obey Him. We have trouble making Him be number one and yielding to Him. Praise puts us where we belong-at His feet lifting Him up as Lord in our lives. That is where He belongs, because He is God.

You can't really praise someone until you yield to them. You can't have a real relationship with someone that isn't one sided unless you yield to them. You can't love someone for real unless you yield to them. In other words, if you are totally spoiled to get your own way, you can't have relationships with other people that are very deep or meaningful at all. Love says that you have to yield. It works the same way with God. Yielding brings about a deeper love. When you praise God, praise brings about yielding.

We mentioned earlier how in today's world, we do something that the Bible warns would come in the last days. We worship ourselves. Romans 1:20-25 says this. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for

ever. Amen.” Now I know that this is talking about idol worshipping mostly. It says that they made an image and worshipped it. It also talks about something that is happening today, men worshipping creatures (animals). Today we don’t think about it as worshipping animals, but we do something that is close. People are so animal crazy. I see people who don’t have money to feed their children, but they spend hundreds on their pets. People treat their animals like their children. There is something that isn’t balanced about this. I think that this verse bears that out. It also bears out that man is a creature. When we refuse to yield and submit to God, aren’t worshipping ourselves above Him?

The main point I want to bring out here is this section of scripture, “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools”. They knew God, but they didn’t worship Him. They didn’t praise Him. Because of that, all the things that happened that were mentioned in this section of scripture took place. After this section of scripture, we read many other things that happened because man didn’t worship God. Read this section of scripture please. I am not writing it all out here. Then we read in verse 32, “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.” When you read this scripture, it bears out that men stopped worshipping God, and worshipped themselves. They became like God. They did their own thing, their own way, made excuses for their failures, and they did not worship God. This is surely a picture of what is going in today, not in the world, but in the church world.

Where does all this start? It starts when we fail to recognize that God is God of all. He is Lord of all. He is our creator. He is worthy of our worship and praise. We are not God.

He is. Our rightful place is submitting to His will. Our ways are not holy. His is. Verse 21 in the above scripture said that they glorified Him not as God. They failed to lift Him up in His rightful place as Lord of all. They failed to submit or yield to Him. They failed to worship Him because they worshipped themselves more. They wanted their way, not God's. Today, we see ourselves as little gods. We profess to be wise, but we have become fools. Wow, this scripture is such a picture of today's church world. Notice, I didn't say a picture of the world, but I said a picture of today's church world.

Why is there such a problem with sin in the world? Why is homosexuality on the rise? There are two sicknesses that are plaguing the world today. One is physical. There are very few families who haven't been scarred by the effects of cancer and other life threatening diseases. The other is not a physical sickness, but it is sin. Its effects are even more deadly than cancer. Teen pregnancy is at an all time high. The family as a social structure is falling apart. Addiction is at an all time rise. Young people aren't even sure if they are a male or a female.

Sin kills and steals from families in a way that is more devastating than cancer. The price that is paid from this sickness is eternal. Why is all this happening? It is happening because when we knew God we "glorified him not as God, neither were thankful" and we failed to worship Him. Remember, in all these verses in Romans, this section of scripture isn't talking about the world, but it is talking about the church. It isn't the world that isn't praising the Lord. Why should they? It is the church.

What a picture of today's church. We don't worship God in our churches any more. The Bible gives us keys to how we should worship. We'll talk more about this later, but I want to mention it here. Philippians 3:3 says, "For we are the

circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” John 4:24 says, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” We see two keys of worship here in these scriptures. The first verse says that we can’t have confidence in our flesh and worship God. The second verse says that we have to worship Him in spirit and in truth. We have to worship God in truth. The church world today doesn’t want the truth. They want a watered down version that will let them get by with their sin. They want the compromised version. They want the flesh and not the Spirit. They want to do their own thing, not God’s own thing. They don’t want to yield to God’s Spirit so that God is lifted up as Lord. You can’t worship God in the flesh. That is why God’s Spirit doesn’t move in churches today. Sad to say, most churches have no idea of what it means to have God’s Spirit move in their midst saving souls, delivering people from bondages, setting captives free, setting minds and hearts free, strengthening them. That is what the church is supposed to be like. Instead, we are too busy compromising. Serving God and yielding to Him isn’t a priority.

Not only do we fail to worship Him, we shut out His Spirit out of our midst. More often than not, we have a ritual service and God is nowhere around. We don’t seek His face for real. We don’t seek the presence of His Spirit. Long ago we stopped inviting Him to come. When the Spirit of God comes, there will be conviction. When conviction comes it will be guaranteed to make us uncomfortable. We were not willing to stop our compromise and sin, so we didn’t want to be made uncomfortable. We wanted to draw people, so we didn’t want to make them uncomfortable. But without God’s Spirit there, what do we have to give them that is worth having? Because of all this, we decided that we didn’t want God’s presence in our midst. What is church without God? We worshipped the creature more than the Creator.



We lifted ourselves up as God. We failed to preach and teach God's Word because it made people uncomfortable. We became what II Timothy 4:3-4 says we would do. "Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." We became the very thing that God told us to turn away from.

Sad to say, when we shut out God's Spirit from our midst we cut off our lifeline. It is the Spirit of God that gives us power to overcome, strength to make it in today's world, power to overcome our own flesh, healing of hearts and bodies, and so much more. The gifts of the Spirit come when God's Spirit is lifted up in our midst and in our lives. When we shut out God's Spirit, we don't have these gifts in our midst. We may fool ourselves into thinking that we do, but how could we? There is nothing like being caught up in the presence of God's Spirit. In His presence is great joy, and life. The Bible tells us that He will inhabit our praise. Maybe that is why we stopped praising Him. We didn't want His presence.

It is the power of God's Spirit that enables us to be a light to the world. Flesh can't do that. Without God's Spirit we are trying to shine as a light without any fuel to burn. Without it, the church has become something that the world mocks. We aren't a light. We are a mockery. Even sinners see this. We don't lift up Jesus as Lord so that He can draw all men to Him, we mock Him and drive the sinners away. We can't keep sin out of our own midst. Like the children of Israel under Joshua at Ai, we can't win the battle because of the sin in our own camp. We are not a city set on the hill lighting the way. We aren't a lighthouse warning others to avoid the cliffs of sin. We are filled with far too much darkness to do that. We have a drawing power, but it is

deadly. I see churches that are growing by leaps and bounds. I know that the presence of God is not there. I know that because they aren't preaching, and teaching the truth of God's Word. I know that that they are teaching that sin is fine, that we are free to be our own moral agents, that we are to decide on our own what is right, that we can have a relationship with God that is our own relationship, and no one should tell us what that should be. This is the end time doctrine from the end time church. There will be a world church that is rising up. It is a church that speaks these lies. It has a drawing power that even is deceiving those who have been in church hearing the truth all their lives. It is a lie, and that lie is deadly. Eternally deadly. Hell will be full of people who allow themselves to be deceived by that lie. You will serve God in Spirit and in the full truth of His Word, or you won't serve Him at all. There isn't but one way or the other. Broad is the way to destruction. If people are flocking to it, more than likely it isn't the truth, and God is not anywhere in it.

Nowhere is all this more evident than in our children and young people. They are one generation removed from us, further into this lie than we are. They do not even know God for real. They have no clue about the truth of His Word. We got the idea that as parents, we shouldn't give them any absolutes. We thought we shouldn't teach them what is right and wrong. We didn't want to hamper their creativity. We taught them about God, but not the whole truth, because we wanted them to make their own decisions as to whether they wanted to serve Him or not. We felt like we shouldn't tell them what they ought to do because they needed to decide on their own. (Sounds like an excuse not to have to deal with teaching them morals, because you are too busy doing your own thing instead of being a parent.) Somehow they were supposed to find out all this on their own. I think, too, that we didn't teach them, because we ourselves had gotten so messed up that we didn't know the truth ourselves.

Our kids are a mess because of this. They are into everything. They have no guidelines because we failed to give them any. They have no restrictions, because we failed to set them. They have no teaching to guide them, because we failed to instruct them. They are so far removed from God's Word and His Spirit that they don't know them for real. They are desperately grabbing on to anything that they can to hold them up, but they grab onto people and things that only sink them further down. Church, these are not only your children, but they are the church of tomorrow. They are our future. What hope is there for tomorrow unless we return to the truth and to God's Spirit?

It is time, church, to get back to the Word of God. It is time to welcome God's Spirit into our midst, and into our lives. It is time to honor and praise Him, to lift Him up as Lord instead of worshipping our own self wills. It is time to praise the Lord.

Now let's look back to the beginning of this chapter again. Remember when we talked about the rulers and dictators, and how they demanded that the people obey them. We talked about how God isn't that way. Then we talked about how people face judgment because they fail to yield to God. Am I giving you some kind of double talk? What is the difference in those dictators, and a God that demands a way of life from us telling us that if we don't do so, then we face judgment? Pay attention to this, because people today get this so mixed up and messed up. Jesus came to give a life that is abundant. We can have a life that is full of peace and joy because we fellowship with God. We can have blessings in our lives. We can have peace of mind, which is something few people even know what it is. God paid a price to open this up for us. He sent His own Son, Jesus, to die so that we can inherit not only these blessings now, but eternally. We can have all these things if we walk in the path that the Lord has made for us. Broad is the way to

destruction, and narrow is the way to eternal life. Narrow is the way to all these blessed things we just mentioned. When I was little, we lived next door to my grandfather. My Dad would sometimes go there after dark. We had to walk through a ½ acre cow pasture to get there. Daddy would carry the light. He would say, “Step where the light is. Stay on the path.” Now there were several reasons why this was important. We usually were barefooted, and there were thistles, nettles, briars, and all kinds of things in the field. Also, the cows were usually in the field, and they left behind all kinds of things to remember them by. I was always hard headed, so I would try to run ahead. That didn’t work out so well. If we didn’t stay in the path and walk in the light, then we got hurt feet, and we stepped in a lot of manure.

My Dad carried the light because he was bigger, older, and he knew what he was doing, and where he was going. We were all really small then. We were too small to make this trip on our own. I think of this when I think about why we face judgment when we fail to obey God and walk in His ways. He knows what He is doing. He is much bigger and wiser than we are. Whether or not we want to admit it, we are very, very small. He is our heavenly Daddy. He loves us, and if we let Him, He will keep us. We need someone to hold the light and to guide us. If we don’t stay on the path not only will we get sore feet, we will also get sore heads, and a lot of drama and trauma going on in our lives. If we don’t stay in the light and on the path, and listen to Him leading us, we will wind up in mess after mess that will eventually cost us our eternal souls. We also will step in a lot of manure. Who needs that? God guides us. He doesn’t drive us. He offers us a better way, a brighter path. He doesn’t demand that we go there. He knows the best way to take. If we will only yield to Him.

There are many ways to worship God. We will be discussing them in the chapters coming up. How important is it to

worship Him? I believe that this chapter has helped you to see that it is very important indeed.

Chapter 4  
Number one

When you got up this morning, what did you think about first thing? When you had a moment of time during your workday, what was the topic of your thoughts? When you took a moment to chat with your friends, what did you talk about? When you got off work, what were you excited about getting to do? When you spent time with your family, what was the main topic of conversation? After supper, what did you do? What dominated your thoughts and time then? When you wound down, and finally had some down time, what was the last thing that you thought about? What took up your time and your energy the most during your day? (Now, if you just read these questions, and don't stop and think about them, this little exercise won't help you a bit. Read them and answer them honestly. It would actually be good to get out a piece of paper and write down the answers to each of these questions. I have a point to all this. In just a minute you will see.)

Now I want to ask you one more thing. When you think back through all those answers, what was the thing that you spent time on, talked about, thought about the most? Now I want you to think about this and be honest. What or who is number one in your life? Now go from that to answer this question. What or who are you worshipping? What or who are you praising? Wow. That is a thought.

The Bible talks a lot about idol worship. Back through the Old and New Testament days, people frequently got caught up in worshipping false gods. They would make statues of gold, or even wood, and bow down and worship these idols. Some of these were cruel gods. The religion around those gods demanded cruel sacrifices. One of them demanded that they even sacrifice their children on an altar. It was a cruel

bondage to serve these false gods. Still God's people would forsake the one true God and follow after them. Their life, their families and home, even their nation would pay the price.

Today we read in the Bible about serving idols and we think to ourselves how crazy that was to do that. We question how these people could be nuts enough to worship a little statue, and pay such a hard price to that false god. I have a question for you. When you asked the questions that you asked yourself earlier, you found out that most of your time and conversation centered around one certain person or thing. Then you came to the conclusion that this person or thing is number one in your life. Isn't that just as nuts as serving a little statue? Who or what are you serving, in your life? Who or what are you worshipping?

In my teaching job, I talk to a lot of people in a day's time, young and old. I talk to parents, grandparents, young people, who come into my office to talk about their problems. I've learned to narrow down the causes of most of their problems, their bondages, and the things that have them all tied up in knots. The person or thing that they put first above God is the thing that brings about bondage in their life, keeping them bound where they cannot find victory and peace. If they don't change this, that thing eventually costs them their freedom and peace by binding them in chains of sorrow, defeat, depression, anxiety, and fear. Sad to say, not only does it eventually destroy their lives, but it also destroys their eternal soul. Not only do they pay, but also so do their family, their children, and others that they love. Their lives are also destroyed and often, because of the bad choices that these people made, their families' eternal souls are destroyed as well. These idols are cruel idols that demand a huge sacrifice, and they continue to serve them mindlessly.

Often in cartoons, you see one of the characters set up a trap for another one by painting a tunnel on the face of a solid rock cliff. Then he gets the other character sidetracked somehow. He puts up detour signs to get his prey off the real road. He leads the clueless character right into the rock, and that unsuspecting character that has been detoured smashes into the solid rock splattering himself flat. That is how the devil does. We don't start out getting into things that can destroy us. We don't say to ourselves, "Now I know that this is bad. I know the price that I will have to eventually pay and how everyone around me will be destroyed, but I am going to do it anyway." We are trapped because the enemy paints a picture on the front of the trap that he has set to make it look harmless. Then he starts getting us sidetracked a little bit at a time. He knows that if he does it all at once, we will see his trap. So he sets a breadcrumb trail up so that we get led a little further and further from God. Then the tunnel is suddenly there. Everything looks cool, that is until we smash into the wall, and the devil has us wrapped up in bondage, and he steals everything away that matters. How do we get that way, and how do we avoid starting down that road, down that detour that he sets up for us? We get that way because we are not focused on God, because the priority of our life is something other than serving Him. If we are focused on the Lord, and on His Word, when the devil tries to distract and detour us, the Holy Ghost will draw us back. If God is number one in our lives, there won't be a detour because our commitment will pull us back on the right road. If we are yielding to Him, and listening and obeying Him, instead of smashing into the rock wall, we will just be led around it. We won't lose everything, because in Him, we are winners.

Think now about the things or people that you listed as priority in your life? Have you known others who were destroyed by these things? The worst mistake we can make is to say this. "I know that some people have been destroyed



by this, but that won't happen to me." Please forgive me for being blunt, but there is only one way to say this. It is just stupid to get wrapped up in something that has destroyed others. Why go there? That is like taking a little poison every day because, "just a little won't hurt". It builds up in your system, and eventually kills you. Or does it make sense to you to play with a rattlesnake every day, because sometimes it doesn't bite? Doesn't it make sense to leave potentially deadly things alone? If you can't, then you have already have a problem, and this idol will eventually be a cruel master over you.

I am not saying that you have to just think about God all the time, and do nothing but read the Bible and go to church. I am not saying that it is bad to spend time with your family and put a focus on them. I am not saying that you are to quit your job and just sit around thinking about God. I am saying that when we worship and praise something, it is a priority in our heart and in our life. When we worship and praise God, we love Him. There is room in our heart and life for Him. When we have a moment, we breathe a prayer to say how much we love Him, and thank Him. When we talk to our friends, they know that we love Him because He comes up in our conversation often. Our families know what it means to serve Him, because they see our dedication and love for Him. They know Whom we serve. They don't have to guess. We aren't saying one thing, then doing another. Our love for the Lord shows. It reflects in our attitudes toward them. It reflects in our dedication and our love shown to them. Because we spend time yielding and listening to Him, we have a life that is filled with His peace. Our life isn't a jumble full of chaos. It has His order. Our priorities are in line.

Love is a key to worship. We worship what we love, and what we love, we worship. That sounds like double talk, but it is so true. The things that that we make priority in our

lives, the things that we worship are the things that we love. Vice versa, the things that we love the most in our life are the things that we wind up worshipping. The only way to really worship God, and make Him number one in your life, is to fall in love with Him, and to let Him love you. When you do that, everything else will fall in line in its right priority. You will delight in Him, and you will know without a doubt that He delights in you. This love will make Him number one. All this can only come about when we are able to love and trust Him. Coming up in the next chapter, we will talk about God's love for you, and how you can find out just how big it is. Getting hold of this will change your life. It will definitely change who or what you worship.

When we fall in love with God with all our heart, it will be easier to put Him as number one in our life. When we let him love us, and we open our heart to that wonderful love that He has, then it will be easier to put Him as number one in our life. Read on to see how we can become wrapped up in love.

Chapter 5  
Tell my people

The reason why I wrote this book is simple. The Lord spoke to me and told me this. “Tell My people that they can be free from blame and guilt and praise Me.” Praise starts with fellowship. There is a major problem with other gods in other religions. These people can’t fellowship with their god. Not real fellowship. There is no deeper, personal relationship than the one that comes when God’s Spirit comes into our hearts to live. No other religion claims this. No other religion claims that their god sent his son to die, and be resurrected, because of love. Love is a basis of Christianity. Other people who serve other gods cannot claim this love. God created us to fellowship with Him. People who serve other gods cannot really lay claim to this love and fellowship. They can worship their god. They can do what they think that their god is telling them to do. They can go by what others tell them their god is like, and what they tell them he wants them to do. But they can’t fellowship with their god. They can’t communicate or have a relationship with that god based on and founded in love. Their god cannot come into their heart and live. They cannot have that closeness of that kind of relationship. (I could add here that one reason why they can’t is that their god isn’t real, but that isn’t where I am going at this time.)

You see, no one can tell me that my God isn’t real. I walk and talk with Him every day. I don’t have to guess what He is like. I fellowship every day with Him. When I wake up each morning, I talk with Him. I hear His voice guiding me through the day. I feel the presence of His Spirit. I feel His Spirit inside me helping me to be the person that I need to be. He isn’t some animal guide. He isn’t some obtuse power in the universe. He isn’t a cruel god whose main goal is war and destruction. He isn’t a god that stands back and

watches his people be destroyed, doing nothing to deliver them. He isn't an empty god that leaves us empty inside, really wondering why we are here and why we are alive. He isn't a god that leaves us depressed and cast down. He isn't all those things, because He is real, and true, His Word is true, and He is love. He loves and fellowships with His people who serve Him. He isn't a blob in the universe. He created us to fellowship with Him. He is very active in leading His people away from harm if they will only hear His voice and obey Him. He is a God of love that fills with His Spirit and with His love. He fills us with His strength, and His wisdom, His faith, and all His fruits so that we can overcome and be victorious in our lives. He loves us so much that He sent His son to die for us, to forgive us of our sin, so that we could have a right and true relationship with Him. He loves us enough to make a way where He can come inside of our hearts to live, changing us from the inside out. He loves us enough to continue an eternal relationship with us that starts when we open our heart, yield to Him, and accept His love, His way. He loves us enough to lead us into a way that works, and out of our own stupid, stubborn ways that only lead us to destruction.

That is the main thing that separates our God and the false gods of other religions. He is love. I heard a Moslem's testimony. He said that what caused him to convert to Christianity was God's love. His god, the Moslem god, was a god of hate and sacrifice. When he saw our God's love, it drew Him out of that hatred. We don't serve a god that leaves us empty and lost. We serve One that draws us to Himself by His great love. We serve One who draws us to Himself, One who sacrificed His Son for us, not one that demands a sacrifice. The only sacrifice that He demands is that we let Him love us, and we let Him keep us. He asks that we obey Him and yield to Him so that He can lead us out of harm and into green pastures.

Our praise comes out of God's love for us, and out of our love for Him. True praise starts from the heart. When we think of who He is and how mighty and wonderful He is, that is the beginning of our praise. But the deepest praise comes out of our relationship with God. The deepest praise comes when we think of His love and our heart fills with love for Him. It comes when we think of how He has kept us through the storms, and we praise Him. When we think of how we would have died if He hadn't healed us, or how he kept us away from the trap the enemy set, or how He miraculously heard our prayers for our loved one, and we praise Him, that is a deep praise. When we think of how He came through in a situation and helped us to overcome, we praise Him. Most of all when we feel His wonderful love, wrapping us up in His perfect care from the inside of us out, and we know how special we are in that love, that brings out that deepest praise. Praise comes from love. True and powerful praise works with love, His love for us, and our love for Him. You can't separate love and praise. Love is the key that empowers our praise. Praise comes from our relationship with God.

Let's go back to the thought concerning why I wrote this book, back to the statement that God gave me. "Tell My people that they can be free from blame and guilt and praise Me." When He told me this, I knew how important this was to God. He began to show me what all this means. One of the enemy's (satan's) main jobs is to separate us from God's love. He uses all kinds of things to do this. He uses the sins of our past. He uses all our imperfections, making us concentrate on them instead of on the perfection that God is working in us. He causes us to be hurt so that we draw back in a shell and hide away from love-God's love and the love of others around us. He causes us to doubt God's nature. We begin to wonder how that He could love us, because we think that we are unlovable. He beats us up for our failures so that we think that we are beyond God's help, and His

love. His job is to separate us from God's love and His fellowship. His job is to cause us to stop praising God because He hates hearing God's praise.

What does all this have to do with praise? Think back to the beginning of this chapter to our discussion about the power of God's love. God's love has a wonderful power to give us life, to renew us, to pick us up when we are broken and make us new. His love has the power to change us and to change our lives. It reaches out through us to change the lives of all we come into contact with if they will only let it. Praise keeps us under the umbrella of that love. When we praise Him, we bask in the light of that love. Praise draws us close to Him. Praise fills us with our love for Him, and His love for us. Praise is a key that unlocks God's love. It also unlocks His presence.

Praise causes us to stop looking at our problems, and ourselves and causes us to focus on our hope to overcome. It causes us to focus on a mighty God instead of on our mortality. It draws us to look up instead of looking inward at all our imperfections. Instead of seeing imperfection, our eyes are drawn to looking at His perfection. It stops that self-destruct cycle that the enemy so often gets us caught in. Praise stops our own downward spiral of guilt, and causes us instead to be lifted up to heaven's glory. God doesn't want us to be separated from Him by guilt, and by our putting ourselves down. He wants us to be free to love Him, and to receive His love. He wants us to be free to draw close to Him, and praise Him.

How can we avoid getting separated from God's love? Praise God. Fellowship with Him, and let Him love you. After all, that is why He created us. When we fail to spend time with Him, we fail to do the main thing that we were created to do. When we fail to praise Him, and allow things to separate us so that we feel we can no longer do this, we fail to do that thing that we were created to do. His love is

like a huge ladder that helps us to climb above it all, so that we can reach heaven, and praise Him with the angels. Praise the Lord. Read His Word. His Word will open up His love to you. In those times when you feel like the lowest of the low, read about how He Jesus, throughout the New Testament, reached out to the lowest of the low, and set them up on high. Reading God's Word will cause you to be lifted out of yourself, and into His love, and from there, into His praise.

## Chapter 6

### The Power of Praise

We will face battles. If you are doing something for the Lord, you will face the enemy. If you are trying to live for God, you will face an accuser, one who accuses the brethren day and night. One of the tricks that the devil uses is to make us think that we are not special to God, and that this is why we are facing a battle. He tries to make us think that we are just losers, and everybody else has God's favor but us, and that is why we have this trial. The Bible, throughout its pages, talks about people who went through trials. God mightily used these people. In Hebrews chapter 11, we read about what has often been called God's Hall of Faith. Take time to read this. Paul had been touched by the faith and examples of these people or he wouldn't have chosen them to write about. They had touched God, or He wouldn't have led Paul to write about them. Think on this thought for a minute. Were those people worthless? Had these people lost God's favor? Were they cast out of God's love? Or were they having battles because God was using them, and because of that, the enemy was against them? Were they having battles because they were losers, or because God was making mighty winners out of them? Every one of them learned the power of God's love in a mighty way because of the battles. They learned the power of His might to keep them. Every one of them learned that the greater the battle, the greater the victory. They learned how the battle could be a force that draws us closer to God and to His throne. They learned how even the devil has to tremble at the presence of the Lord. Most of all, they learned the power of praise. How do we know this? Because we read how they overcame. If they had not praised the Lord through the battle, they would have given up long before victory. Because of the victory they had in spite of the battle, thousands of years later, we study their examples, and we are encouraged and blessed.



How does praise help us to overcome? We have touched on this earlier in this book several times, but let's spend more time on that subject. The key is found in this scripture in Psalm 22:3, "But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." God inhabits our praise. He delights in our praise. We actually minister to the Lord by praising Him. Do you remember when I asked you to research the word praise by looking it up in a concordance and reading all the scriptures that use that word? Did you do that? If you didn't, then please do it now. If you don't have a good concordance, I would suggest a Strong's Concordance. You can find these on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). They are really expensive in bookstores, but cheaper online. You can buy it used on Amazon. Or, as I mentioned earlier, we have a concordance on our website at [www.nlcm.net](http://www.nlcm.net). Now, before you go on reading this book without doing this exercise, let me caution you. You will reap a tremendous benefit, and a huge understanding about the power of praise if you do this. **SO PLEASE STOP HERE AND RESEARCH PRAISE.**

If you did this exercise, then you will understand what I am going to say. When you started out reading about the praise of God, did your heart start stirring in you? When I got down to the praises in Psalms, I was rejoicing with David. God is so wonderful. We can't praise Him enough. When you read about how His people through time have praised Him, it stirs your heart. By the time I was just a little way down the list, I was rejoicing in the Holy Ghost. God had inhabited my praise. His Spirit blessed me. Praise encourages our heart, strengthens our faith in the battle, stops the enemy from being able to fill us with depression, doom, and gloom, and it opens a pipeline for God's Spirit to flow. Praise will cause us to triumph in the battle. Also, the Word of God says that God will inhabit our praise. When we praise Him, His Spirit will come and bless us.

Let's look at some times in the scripture where God used praise to push back the enemy. The praise of God's people was the only fighting that they did. They won the war by praising God. Let's read about the battle of Jericho in Joshua 6. Now, just like I said earlier, you won't get a thing out of this if you don't read it. Remember, these people that the children of Israel faced in the battle here were the same ones that had been so huge to them when they had come to the Promised Land the first time. Remember, this enemy was so huge that it scared them back into the desert after going through all they had gone through to cross it. This time they didn't run in fear. Let's read how they overcame.

God gave Joshua some peculiar instructions on how they were to fight this battle. They were to march, and they were to praise. The walls of the city fell, and the children of Israel were victorious. They were victorious without even having to fight. The keys: they were obedient, and they praised God. Now I am sure that there were several of them who were doubtful as to what in the world was going on. Still they obeyed, and still they shouted. And they found their victory.

Let's remember another time when praise won the battle. We read earlier in this book about Jehoshaphat and his battle in II Chronicles chapter 20. As a recap, Jehoshaphat was king of Judah. The enemy gathered against him with a great multitude. Judah was so outnumbered that there was not way that they could win if they had fought against them. But God had a plan. He told them to appoint singers and to praise the Lord, and praise the beauty of holiness. When they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set an ambush against them, and they destroyed one another. Judah won that battle without having to fight. That is the power of praise.

Now we don't have a physical enemy that faces us with weapons, and armor, but we have a spiritual enemy that is

more deadly than a physical enemy, because this enemy has the power to destroy our soul. We face a spiritual warfare. Some of the deadliest weapons that this enemy uses against us are: fear, unbelief, doubt, worry, stress, anxiety, and more. All these are tools that he uses to cause us to lose the battles of life, and the battles that he brings against us. God gives us a defense against these weapons. Praise. We praise Him because He delights in our praise. We praise Him because it is the right thing to do, because He deserves our praise. We praise Him because He inhabits our praise. We also praise Him because the act of praise will bring us out of the valley of defeat onto the mountaintop of God's victory. When we praise Him, when our mind and our heart is filled with thoughts of greatness, it is hard for the enemy to overcome us with fear, unbelief, doubt, worry, stress, anxiety, and all those other things the enemy uses against us. When we praise Him, we are lifted above these things. When Israel was marching around Jericho, their thoughts and words became of victory, not of defeat. When Judah was singing a mighty, loud praise to the Lord, their thoughts and words became that of victory, not of defeat. The end result was victory.

I am reminded of a missionary group who lived in a country where Christians were under heavy persecution. We think that we have battles, but when we stop and consider what most Christians in most countries of the world go through on a day-to-day basis, we are reminded that we may not have as bad a battle as we think. The enemy surrounded this group. There was no wall around their settlement. They began to praise God. They didn't give into fear, and doubt, but they started praising the Lord. For days, they could see the lights of the enemy on the hills around them. For days, they praised the Lord. Then the noise and lights of the enemy started to get to them. They allowed fear to come in. Fear began to hinder their praise. Then one night, the thing that they feared happened. The enemy came in. The missionaries asked the

enemy what had happened as to why they hadn't come on in the first day, why they had waited so long to attack. The enemy answered them. "We were stopped by the wall around your settlement. Then a hole came in the wall. It got bigger, and we were able to come through." Remember, there had been no wall around the settlement. Their praise had created a physical wall that kept out the enemy until fear stopped their praise. Then the enemy was able to come through. What a lesson. Praise stops fear. Praise keeps out the enemy. It may not create a physical wall, but it creates a spiritual wall that holds out our spiritual enemies.

When I write a book, I have to pay a price for writing it most of the time. That seems like an odd thing to say, but listen up. I wrote a book about healing. I started it, and then came to a place where I couldn't write any more. Talk about writer's block, when God stops leading me what to write, I can't write at all. Then I went through a time of physical problems, and won the victory, and God's healing came. Then God told me, "Now write about healing." He has done this sort of thing on many of the books that I have written. He won't let you get by with writing things that you haven't experienced. Matter of fact, even if I have experienced what I am writing about, often He gives me a fresh lesson on it. When I was working on this book, I had a battle with fear. I was facing something that could have turned out really bad for me, if God hadn't intervened. In the middle of this, I started having attacks of fear. I can't explain it any other way. I would start feeling fear, and anxiety for no reason. I knew that everything was going to be OK. I had prayed through for several days, and felt God's peace. I knew that the situation was in God's hands, but I kept having this fear attack. I was reminded of the story that I told in the last paragraph. I knew that the enemy was trying to create "holes" in my spiritual wall so that the enemy could slip through. I started praising the Lord. Every time that I would fear this fear, I would start praising. I did this so much that

eventually it was like a reflex action that came automatically. I won the battle. God came through. The enemy was defeated. There is power in praise.

If you give into fear and doubt, then not only will the enemy be victorious but also your reactions, and actions that you take will not be sound. When you react out of fear, you will do things that will cause you to be destroyed. Once I went through a bad financial time. Fear started controlling me. I made some bad actions because of that fear. I wasn't thinking clearly. God wasn't in charge of my thoughts and actions, but that fear was. I had to pay a price for my bad choices. But I overcame, and started being led by the Lord. I was able to come through this time with victory. Don't let fear control your life. When you face an enemy, praise the Lord. Praise God because He is worthy. Praise Him because it is the right thing to do, because He deserves our praise, and praise Him because it is the key to help you overcome. Praise Him because that praise will lead you to victory.

When we get so consumed with worry, doubt, and fear, they become our gods instead of God. They control us. We spend more time thinking their thoughts instead of God's. They take over our mind instead of God. They possess us in place of the peace of God's Spirit. Worry, doubt, fear, anxiety are all bondages of the enemy. We allow the enemy to control us. Americans take most of the tranquilizers that are manufactured in the world. Bishop Goad and our ministering team travel. I remember our ministering team being in a church. Before the service, I was listening to conversations of different people in the congregation. They were talking about which medication had worked best for them. Now I am not talking about health medicine for physical conditions that they had. I mean pills for anxiety, stress, depression, and all that. Instead of talking about anticipating what God was going to do in the service, or having their mind on praying or praising the Lord before the

service, they were discussing their pills. That was the first time I noticed this sickness taking over churches. I have heard this same thing through the years. Church, no wonder the world doesn't come in. Why should it? It can get pills. We need to go back to the place where the church has victory, and it again becomes a light to the world. How much greater would this church have been if instead of discussing their medications before the service, they would have praised the Lord in their discussions, testifying of His greatness, and lifting Him up in their midst. How much greater would the victory be in that particular body of Christ if they had come in with their minds on Him, glorifying Him in their midst. How much greater would their outreach be if, as they lifted up the Lord, and He anointed them. Praise the Lord, and His Spirit will move. Praise the Lord, and that light will return to your church. The Bible says that God will inhabit our praises. If you want to loose the power of God's anointing in your midst, praise Him. Praise Him when you come into His sanctuary, even in your conversations. Praise Him as you fellowship with one another, talking about how He moved for you during your week. Praise Him in song, and in the service. Praise Him for who He is. Praise Him because He honors praise, because He delights in your praise. He will inhabit His praise. His Spirit will begin to anoint. He will do a mighty work in your midst. That is the power of praise. Most of all, though, praise Him seven days a week, not just one. That is the key to unlock victory and an anointing in your own life. It will change who you are, and how you think. It will bring victory to your soul. More important than all that, you will gain God's notice. He delights in our praise. Praising Him causes Him to delight in you. He will come and inhabit our praise.

There are many ways to praise the Lord. In the chapters coming up, we will talk about several. One way is to praise Him by yielding to His will and obeying Him. We talked earlier about the importance of yielding. Next we will talk

about how yielding and obeying God is a way to praise the Lord. Also, we praise Him by submitting to Him, and allowing Him to work in us. Both of these involve yielding. More about this is coming up.

## Chapter 7

## Praise him by yielding and obeying

I am blessed to work in a job that I cannot do. I am blessed to be able to work in a job requires me to do many times over that which I can do in my own strength. I am blessed to be able to work in a job where I am constantly required to make decisions that shape people's lives and their eternal souls, where there is little room for error. I am blessed to be able to work in a job where, if I make too many mistakes in leading them, colleges will be thrown to the government lions in the countries where they operate. Every day I face circumstances that are way beyond my flesh's abilities. You might read this paragraph and say, "Wow, I wouldn't consider that a blessing." Hear me out a minute. I haven't lost my mind (or maybe I could say I have, wait and see and you be the judge). When the Lord first told me to help start a Christian school, I told Him that I couldn't. I wasn't able to do that. He told me this in a voice so strong that I have never forgotten it even though this was nearly 30 years ago. "I made the heavens and the earth. How dare you tell me that you are not able to do that which I have appointed you to do." Needless to say, I have not told Him that again. This was my first experience with being able to do something that God told me to do, regardless of my physical, flesh's ability to do it. I learned that in the flesh, I can't do anything, but if I step out of the flesh, and yield my flesh to the Lord, I can do whatever He anoints and appoints me to do. He will give me the gifts, talents, abilities, that I need to be able to do what He requires me to do. After all, He made the heaven and earth, He can sure give enable me to do what He has for me to do. Regardless of what I think I can do. Regardless of what I feel like. All I have to do is to obey. He has asked me many times to do things way beyond my understanding. I have yielded to His Spirit, and let Him guide me, and together we accomplished a miracle. I only had to learn to



yield. I only had to learn to obey. My job has taught me much, because every day, I have to yield, every day I have to obey to be able to do my everyday duties. Every day I have to rely on Him, and not on my own flesh. I am being conditioned to obey in a supernatural way. I have an understanding that few have of what it means to walk in the Spirit, because I have had to do so to survive. Now hear me out. I am definitely not saying this to puff myself out, to make myself sound important, or brag on me. I am saying all this to say that I am full of weaknesses, full of flesh, just like everybody else. Sometimes I am a mess. But when I kick into walking in the Spirit, God and I can get things done, and move mountains.

Bear with me a moment while I give you another example. One of my many weaknesses that I have in the flesh is my memory. I have some physical conditions that cause my memory not to work right. People are amazed when they see all that I accomplish in a day's time. I am a teacher, a high school counselor and director, (we have over 140 students a year in a school program) college director over our own college, and I oversee 60 some colleges around the world doing all transcripts and degrees for each one plus advising each college. Now I am not saying this to brag on myself, but to tell you what you can do if you yield and obey. In the night, God will hold "board meetings" with me. He will show me details of things that I need to take care of for that day. He shows me who needs what help, and how to help them. He tells me how I am to handle circumstances that will come up that day, and how to take care of it. The Holy Ghost will pray through me binding the enemy, interceding for those who need prayer. I don't miss many details because I am yielding and obeying. Now I can make messes when I get too busy doing my thing instead of God's thing. Then I have to have another "board meeting" on how to fix things. I have learned not to get in such a hurry that I don't take time to hear His voice. It is a matter of survival.

People read what I do and they say I am very special, very talented. They are far from the truth. I am able to do what I do because I am so very, very, very **not** special and **not** talented. All the gifts and talents I have is what God gave me. I also have many handicaps. That is exactly why I am able to do what I do. I am not able to write a book. My memory is so bad that I can't remember from chapter to chapter what I have written. I have written some books that are over 20 chapters long. I try to use a lot of scriptures in my books, because my words are OK, but God's Word will change lives. Sometimes I'll use over a hundred scriptures in a book. Several times I have written down all the scriptures that I used in a book after it was completed to be sure that I did not use the same scriptures several times, repeating them over and over. I found that I didn't use any more than once unless I stated that this was one that needed to be repeated. (Just a note added here: I wrote 2/3 of this book while sick with Lyme disease, caused by a tick bite. I was home for a week so sick that I could hardly function. God did well.)

God will enable you to do what He tells you to do, in spite of your weaknesses, in spite of your problems, in spite of you all together. You need only to yield and obey. How is this praising the Lord? How many times have you been blessed when someone obeyed the Lord reaching out to you? How many times have you praised Him for allowing them to do what they did, or by sending them your way? We praise the Lord when we yield and obey. We as ministers, pastors, and evangelists puff ourselves up so much. It is time that we climb off our pedestals, and say God I can't do this on my own. Not the way you want it done. God, I admit my weaknesses, and I give them to you. Be my strength. Then yield and obey. Which gives God more praise. The proud and haughty ministers strutting through their congregations, or the humble servants begging God to use them, and to help them do what He sends them to do. Which gives the most

glory to God, those people who boast in their own accomplishments, or those who are handicapped and every day function with God's grace by yielding and obeying Him. One of the most powerful ministers that I know touches lives everywhere he goes. God uses him in a tremendous way. He has reached people that I had tried to minister to and couldn't reach. If you meet him, or even see him in meetings, your life has been touched. He has that kind of impact. I meet people who know him everywhere I go. He has influenced people in states around us. After they say they know him, they will always next say how he influenced them. He is a talented singer, songwriter, and musician. He has a few handicaps. He developed a brain tumor when he was only 3. He still has that tumor. Doctors told him that he wouldn't live past 9. It caused him to have a stroke that left one of his arms paralyzed. He plays the drums like a professional drummer using his one hand because what he lacks physically, he makes up with "heart". He is also totally blind. He has traveled with his parents since he was very small. His Dad is a pastor, and his family sings in a gospel group. He recently preached his first sermon and did what we call here in the south "set the woods on fire". God anointed him and he preached like he had preached all his life. At the time that I am writing this he is only in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. God has made his greatest weaknesses to be his greatest strengths. He yielded and obeyed in his child like faith, and God has blessed him and used him in a mighty way for many years. He doesn't lift himself up, but He lifts up the one who day to day gives him life. He honors God just by walking out on the platform. He does what he does, not because he lifts himself up in his pride, but because he loves God. He brings praise to God wherever he goes. That is an example of how yielding and obeying and how our weaknesses bring glory to God

Here is a list of qualifications that God gives for His workmen to have. Thompson Chain Reference Bible refers

to it as being God's Tool Chest. We find it in I Corinthians 1:26-29, "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." I see so much pride and self-righteousness among those preachers and pastors in the pulpits, and singers, and musicians that I want to puke. I know that God wants to puke, too (if He could). Sorry for my bluntness, but this a sore spot with me. We let ourselves be so puffed up. One of the things that I have a sore spot with as well is those who use the title Reverend. The Bible says only One is reverend. I hate to say it, but we are far from reverend, not even close. We like the attention, the glamour, of being on the platform, or in the pulpit. It appeals to our flesh. We like the money given us as well. We can easily get so caught up in this that we become blinder than the boy I mentioned in the last paragraph. We become blinded and separated from God. Then what do we have to give to those who sit under us. As pastors, and ministers, teachers, and workers for the Lord, we have an awesome responsibility. God cares for His sheep with a perfect, righteous love. If we endanger them, we get His attention. If we take advantage of them, we get His righteous anger. He warns about this in His Word. If we fail to teach and preach the whole truth with His anointing, He warns against this as well. It is nothing to brag about or lift ourselves up. How can we brag about what God has done through us? It is an awesome responsibility given by God. We need to get real, and come down from our pedestals. We need to yield and obey, and give the glory and praise to God.

In a world where every where I go people are either caught up in a tail-spin of meaningless activity that seems to mean so much to them, or in a complacent attitude where nothing at all matters to them, it is hard to find those who are busy obeying God with all their hearts. This goes for those in the ministry as well. I see many that are doing something-anything-just to say they are doing something, but they are so far removed from God that they don't even know what He really wants them to do. It's little reason that the majority of God's people are full of complaints and doubt instead of the joy of God's victory. God's Word tells us in Joshua 1:8, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous and thou shalt have good success." How do we find prosperity? The scripture tells us plainly, lay up the Word of God in our heart and then obey it. How do we find health? By keeping the principles of the Word of God. III John verse 2 tells us, "Beloved I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." For the principles found in God's Word to work in our lives, we have to first find out what they are. We then have to yield and obey them. If the doctor gives us a prescription to cure our ills, and we never take the pills, how can they help us? We must obey God. It is my prayer that God uses this book somehow to release in you the power of obedience. The devil works overtime to keep us bound so that we can't obey God.

Many times we don't want to lay ourselves, or our flesh down to be able to yield and obey. We want our way. Our spoiled flesh wants its way. Here is a chapter from my book titled *Walking in the Spirit. I can tell you a story, and it won't be fiction, about one spoiled brat. This brat wanted everything his own way. He was so bad that he could not even see that he was bad at all, and that is pretty bad. Everything had to be just so. This brat couldn't go out of the*

way for anyone. He had a set direction in his mind and heart, and that was where he was going regardless of who needed what. He even only gave God the leftovers of his time, his thoughts, and his energies. He knew just what he wanted from life, and that was what he was going about getting. He couldn't even see that he needed to change. He wanted to be the center and everybody had to focus on him or he felt like he was left out. If things didn't go his way, if he wasn't in control, he really would get shook up inside. He was so afraid that he would get gobbled up by other people, or just by the battles of life that he constantly struggled to hold on to his identity. This made him have a contentious spirit, always battling with everybody around him and even with God, just to make a stand to be himself. He couldn't flow with anybody. He could only go in one direction, and that direction was his. What about love? Oh, forget that. You have to give to love and you can get hurt. He always shut himself up behind a brick wall so that no one could get to him. Even though he professed to serve God, it was not because he loved God, because when we can't love other people, we can't love and receive His love either. He served God because he was afraid not to. Not because he had committed himself to God and turned loose of himself in God's love. He always was headed in the wrong direction some how. When he tried to do things for people, they always blew up in his face somehow, because his motivations were all wrong. Finally he gave up really trying and just made an attempt on the outside to look good. Life became playing games with those around him. After all that is what a Christian life is, isn't it, doing what people expect a Christian to do?

Well, have you guessed who that spoiled brat is? Sound familiar? It is our own flesh. Admit it, did you find your flesh somewhere in that description. Our righteousness is, at its best filthy rags. We don't like to face ourselves at our worst, and we don't like to admit our faults. But if we want to walk in the Spirit, we have to understand our flesh.

*We have to see ourselves as we really are, and that is the number one incentive to give it up, and have it God's way. I used to get really upset when someone suggested that the best I could do was filthy rags. Then I understood that it was so. Who says? God says so in Isaiah 64:6, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." In the light of God's perfection, the best that we are, the best that we can give Him, on our own without Him, is just filthy rags. If we are really honest, there are probably more than a few of the characteristics of that spoiled brat in the above story that we can relate too. We are basically not much. There is no way that we can on our own become what we want to in God, no matter how hard we try. Paul faced this problem in Romans 7:18-25. Read this section of scripture. Here are some of the highlights. "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." We all know that feeling. God knew that. So He made a way. He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins so that we could be forgiven. But He didn't stop there. He then sent His Spirit to live in our hearts so that we can, through His being inside us, live victorious lives in and through Him. Galatians 2:22 says, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." We are able to overcome our flesh because Jesus is inside of us. We can overcome our flesh because of the faith of the Son of God, Who loves us. Notice it says His faith. Sometimes we don't even have the faith that we need to overcome. But if we learn to let His Spirit rule inside of us,*

*then we can have His faith. And believe me His faith is all we need.*

*So what will it be? What about that spoiled brat in you, old mister flesh? Who do you want to rule your life, him or Jesus? You have to make up your mind and not waver in it. You have to decide. Who will hang on the cross that you have at the center of your life, and your will? Will Jesus, or will that spoiled cross?*

That passage tells a lot of truth. As long as you let your flesh rule, you will never find out what it means to find total victory, and be used by the Lord to the extent that He can use you. If you don't yield your flesh, you will never find out what it means to be crucified in Christ so that He can live through you. Now let's continue.

*So you have decided to put that spoiled brat where he belongs and let the Spirit of God control your life. You have seen that the wages this flesh reaps are death. So what comes next? The first step comes when you realize that when you are saved, you have Jesus in you. You also have a flesh man which tries to override and control the Spirit of God in you. You have to realize that you are your own worse enemy, and you want to do something about it. Then you have to be willing to submit your flesh and let the Spirit of God control you and your life. (I Corinthians 9:27, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.") You have to be willing to submit yourself to God and commit yourself and your life to Him. You have to realize that old number one can't be number one any more. You have to recognize the problems this really brings into your life. You have to declare that from here on out Jesus is number one in your life above your own self, your own desires, and your own life. The first step in doing this is to fall in love for real with Jesus. Get close enough to Him so that He can touch your life, and you can see Him the way He*



*is. Every day I realize how wonderful it is to serve Him. I'll see Him working in the lives of the people around me, and in my circumstances, and again I am proud to serve such a wonderful God. Nothing can bring you into the kind of submission to give up yourself other than the love of God. I think that is the number one reason so many have such a hard time walking in the Spirit. They don't know His love for them. Deep down in our hearts, we are afraid to submit to God, because we really don't trust Him. We doubt that He will work in our behalf, and we doubt that He loves us enough to do so. No wonder we can't submit. We have lost that first love. Romans Chapter 8 is the chapter that is filled with teaching about walking in the Spirit, and the dangers of walking in the flesh. The chapter closes with one of the greatest passages of scriptures about God's love. Now would be a good time to reread that chapter. Verses 35-39 tells us, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

*We have to realize that we want God to control our life, then we have to realize that there is no way that we can do this on our own. There is absolutely no way for human nature to submit and allow God to control. Sorry, we aren't natured that way. We can't on our own put that spoiled brat where he belongs. So what is the answer? Do we just keep on doing our own thing, excusing our sins, until we face judgment? Have you tried to walk in the Spirit on your own? Have you tried to live a Christian life in the flesh? Have you failed? Then you know what I am saying. The only way that*

*we can walk in the Spirit is to allow God to crucify our flesh. We have to be willing to do it, and then He has to do that work in us. Believe me, He knows how to break the will of our flesh. He has been doing it for a long time. We can't break our own selves. This walk in God has to be a spiritual walk. It has to be in the supernatural, not natural. We have to believe in God to do His perfect work in and through us and trust in Him that He will do it. Galatians 2:20 ends with these words, "...And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." That's how we do it. In the chapters ahead we'll talk more about how God does this work in us, and our part.*

*The key word in the above scripture is faith. There are two parts to faith. We have to know that God is "...able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." (Ephesians 3:20) We also have to know that He will do it for us. The devil doesn't want you to find the power of that Spirit man inside of you. He binds us to keep us from looking at God's perfection, keeping our eyes on our own imperfection. Instead of looking at what God is perfecting in us, he causes us to focus on what God hasn't yet finished. We get out of focus and start centering on ourselves instead of focusing on God. This is walking in the flesh. This will all lead to our destruction and defeat. To overcome satan we have to walk in the Spirit, and not the flesh. We have to be centered and focused on God's Spirit in us. We have to lay down the flesh to let Jesus rise up in us and we will see that it doesn't matter who we are—God's Word and His love works.*

*I have been still convincing you that you have to put that spoiled brat where he belongs and letting you know that you can overcome through Christ in you. That is the beginning to walking in the Spirit. That isn't easy, like we said before. Our flesh definitely doesn't want to be put down. Our flesh wants to be comfortable. We don't want to give up our way. We want to be the center of attention. We*

*don't want to take a back seat and let anyone control our life, God or anyone else. We want to have things go the way we expect them to go without sudden changes. We have to come to the realization that when our flesh controls, this can only lead to defeat and failure. We have to realize that Jesus hung on that cross once already. Now it is our turn. When we do, God can start that work in our lives of bringing our flesh under subjection. Then we can start to understand what it means to walk in the Spirit. Let that spoiled brat in you be put where he belongs, in the prison of God's love.*

When we finally yield ourselves to God, we can really obey Him. Until we yield, we won't even truly hear the voice of the Lord leading us. There are many, many promises that are made to those who hear God's voice and obey. There are many promises made to those who obey His Word as well. We have read many of them already in this chapter. Let's read some more. Exodus 19:5, "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine." Deuteronomy 5:29 says, "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" The most far reaching is this one found in Matthew 7:21, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." We need to obey the Lord. Through our obedience, and our yielding to His Spirit, we can turn our world upside down.

I know that I spent a lot of time talking to pastors, evangelists, preachers, singers, and musicians in this chapter. What about those of you who aren't? Were you exempt from reading this? I hope that you figured out you weren't. Who are called to serve the Lord? All of His children. He gives us all things to do. He gives us all gifts and talents to serve Him. It may be the gift of helps, which I for one value

a lot. Without people around me who came in and volunteered to clean the school, to help me with paper work, to take care of the daily jobs, I wouldn't get done what I do. We all have people around us that we can reach. I will never forget a man that lived in an apartment under mine years ago. The Lord told me to go talk to him about his soul. He had been a mercenary soldier for most of his life, and he was a gruff old man. I put off going. I came home one day, and found out that he was in the hospital dying after suffering an acute heart attack. He was in a coma. Talk about praying. I knew that if he died, his blood would be on my hands because I failed to obey God. He came to. When he got home, he told me that in all his years as a soldier, he had never been afraid like he had been in the hospital. That was the first time that he had ever called on God. He gave his heart to the Lord. Yield and obey. God will send you to people you never dreamed would listen. Say what He wants said when He wants it said. It will change lives. Some of the people you will influence may be your children, your spouse, your coworkers, your neighbors, your friends, those around you that you love. Yield and obey. We are all called to do that. Reach out to the sinners and lost, but also reach out to your brothers and sisters in the Lord. How many times has your life been touched by someone's obedience? How many times have you been encouraged by someone's testimony? How many times have you been influenced by knowing that someone's prayer touched heaven for you? How many times has someone gave you a word from the Lord, and you knew that He knew where you were, and that everything would be fine if you just held on? How many times has your darkest day been lit by someone obeying the Lord? Be that person for others. Yield and obey. Let God be praised because of your obedience.

Another way that we praise the Lord is by letting others see Him in us. Some of the only Bible that many will ever read is what they see in our lives. Be a lighthouse on a hill.

Let God's Spirit shine through you to others. Let Him light their paths through your life. It may be that you don't do anything except live the life of Christ before them. Yield and obey and let that light shine through you.

Let's review. So how does obedience relate to praise? What was the most far-reaching praise the Israel made to the Lord in Old Testament days? Wasn't it their testimony? One such example is in Joshua's day. When they obeyed God, and He did miracles for them, and they took over the enemy, wasn't that a praise that rang throughout the known world, even from the lips of the heathen. When they obeyed the Lord, and He moved for them in a miraculous way, didn't even the enemy shake in fear. Wasn't that praise to the greatness of our God. When we obey the Lord, and He moves in a miraculous way, isn't that praise to His testimony? When we obey, and someone is blessed, healed, or even delivered, isn't that praise to the Lord? When we obey, and the enemy's plan that was ready to destroy us was stopped, isn't that praise to the Lord? Obey the Lord, and let His name be lifted up.

## Chapter 8

## Praise him by honoring his word

One of the greatest ways to praise God is to honor His Word. You see, it is a part of God. Jesus is the Word of God according to John 1. Deuteronomy 8:3 tells us, “And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. Job 23:12 says, “Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips, I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. Psalm 119:103 says, “How sweet are thy words unto my taste? Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” Jeremiah 15:16 says, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the job and rejoicing of mine heart; for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts.” The Word of God is our necessary food. It is needed to strengthen and sustain us. We have to understand fully the importance of preaching the Word of God to be effective ministers. Where would we be without God’s Word? How important is it? We also have to see the importance of taking in God’s Word and obeying it as those in the congregation. We are not exempt from this. One of the greatest failures as Christians that we can make is failing to take in God’s Word ourselves. We want it to be fed to us instead of feasting at God’s own table where He opens it to us through the power of His anointing. That makes us weak Christians, and it also weakens those over us who have to carry us.

If you have seen me, you will obviously know that I don’t eat good healthy things. I know that is one of my failures. I am overweight. I am not as healthy physically either because of this weakness. I am what I eat. We can take that over into the spiritual realm as well. We are what we eat

spiritually. We are what we take in to our spirits. If we feed on a daily diet of worldly associations, and fleshly conversations, TV, secular music, texting and Facebook, and all that kinds of nonsense, then will we be strong spiritually? If we feed on a diet of fellowshiping with the Lord, praise, reading the Word, fellowshiping with other Christians who lift us up, then we will be strong spiritually. We are eating the right things. (By the way, it is hard to do these things with a phone glued to the end of our arm.) The Bible talks about itself as being necessary food. Feast on it. Have you ever been to a food bar and just sat there with an empty plate? That is a lot like what we do when we fail to open our Bibles and read them. When we read the Word of God daily, we get our minds and hearts in the right gear. We clean out the world's trash that we collect on a daily basis. We get our life in order. The Word of God is very valuable for our daily lives. Most of all it is our guide.

When I was a young Christian I worked for a short time at a home for teens. One of the rules for counseling was that when we counseled them, we had to back up everything we told them with the Word of God. If we said something to help them, we had to give scripture for it. I remember thinking, how can I do that. Every answer for every problem people have isn't in the Bible. I thought to myself, every thing I need to tell these young people isn't in the Bible. Boy, was I wrong. The more I got into God's Word I found out that all the answers that we need are in there. All the counseling advice we need is in there. All we need is there. We can give our congregations all kinds of advice. We can tell them all kinds of opinions as to how they need to handle situations. We can offer them all kinds of superficial words. But the greatest thing that we can give them is God's Word. The same thing goes to the advice that we give our families, our neighbors, our co-workers, and our friends. We need to fill ourselves up with God's Word so that God's Word pours out to those around us, to those we love. To do that, we have

to study it. For real. I am the first person to tell you that Bible College is good. That is part of what we do. I can also tell you that a lot of colleges are about everything except God's Word, and that is sad. We have so many students who transfer to us from other Bible colleges, world over, who have been filled up with church history, denominationalism, church doctrine, but they are not filled up with the Word of God. If you have been to one of those colleges, then you need to get your Bible off the shelf and start reading. Don't just read it-study it. I have heard people tell me how many times they have read the Bible. But they don't know it. They haven't applied it to their lives. If you don't live by it, don't expect to be able to help others apply it. Realize that all the answers are there. All that we need is found in its pages. (Note: As ministers, if we don't apply it to our own lives then don't expect those we minister to respect what we say. This is true for everyone, even if you aren't a minister.)

The key to making the Bible work for us is doing what it says. If we aren't careful, we can be like the man in the scripture who looked in the mirror, saw what a mess he was, and went away fixing nothing. When we do this, we can't fix anything for anyone else. We will be like the man with the beam in his eye that was trying to get the speck out of his neighbor's eye. The Word of God is like a mirror. It will show us where we are failing. It will show us what we need to fix. It will show us our heart. That is why a lot of people don't study it. They don't want to see these things. So they begin to distort God's Word. They twist it around to excuse their sin. Here is an example. There was a young lady who visited our church. She had been living with someone that she wasn't married to for many years. I tried to talk to her about her sin. She eventually got very agitated with me. She told me that she had a close relationship with the Lord. She told me that He used her in a mighty way like she was. She said that God considered him to be her husband, even though they weren't married. Well, none of this matched up with



God's Word. It didn't surprise me to hear that she was skipping from church to church and had no church home. She told me it was because the people didn't accept her like she was. After she heard the anointed Word of God at our church, she didn't stay there either. God's Word cannot help her because she refuses to hear it and do what it says.

The Word of God is the same and has been the same. It doesn't change to fit our society. It doesn't change to fit our needs. If this young lady doesn't admit her sin, and repent, then she won't make it to heaven. She is in danger of being deceived. When we fail to admit our sin, confess, and repent from it, when we fail to turn from our sin, then we will begin to change the Word of God. We will begin to pervert the Word of God. That is how new sects and denominations come about. Somebody changes a little of the truth to be able to get by. I heard someone say that this was the doctrine of their church. They said that God loves you. He doesn't want to make you uncomfortable. What is right for you might not be right for me, what is wrong for you might not be wrong for me. There is no absolute right or wrong. Whoever came up with that one has no knowledge of the Word of God at all. This has really become the end time doctrine that has deceived so many. God wants us to walk in the truth so that we can be set free. God wants us to know what sin is. If we don't know what sin is, then we will never be set free from it. How can we be delivered from something, if we think that it is fine to be bound? How can we even be forgiven, if we never realize that we have sinned? What hope is there if the truth is never preached? The Bible says that they will know the truth through the foolishness of preaching. That is what God called it. It is our job to reveal the truth.

Having and knowing the truth is so important. The Bible says this about the truth in John 8:32, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Halfway, compromised, watered down words won't get the job done.

We have to preach the truth, we have to minister the truth, and we have to give them the truth even if they don't want to hear the truth. It is the truth that will set them free. In John 1:1-5 we read, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." In verse 14 we read, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Now I am not sure how the Word became flesh, but I know that it did. I know His name is Jesus. If we don't allow the truth of the Word of God to sink into our hearts and spirits, then we don't know Jesus. If we don't know Jesus, then we won't make it to heaven. I don't care what church, or what denomination, or what doctrine we follow, if we don't follow Him, we won't make it to heaven. We can be filled up with the truth of our denomination, but if we aren't filled up with the truth of God's Word, then we won't make it to heaven.

What happens when things other than the truth are preached or taught? I remember when I was a young Christian I started going to a church. God started warning me about the doctrine that they taught. I kept going. He kept warning me to leave it. One of the things that I noticed about the church that it was filled with people who had illnesses. I mean crippling, life threatening illnesses. These people had no victory at all in their lives. They professed to be Holy Ghost filled, but showed little evidence of this. The anointing did not move in their midst. When I finally opened up and let God show me what was going on, someone came to me and explained their doctrine. It was really strange. It was definitely not the truth. Because it wasn't the truth, the people were all bound. They did not have the truth, so they could not be set free. It is our responsibility as preachers, ministers of the Word, teachers, and workers in the church, that we know the truth and we

declare the truth of God's Word. The Bible says that if we offend or hinder a young one in the Lord that it would be better that a millstone be tied around our neck and we be thrown into the water. God loves His people. He guards His people. He spends time wooing them with His Spirit, guiding them to His truth, making sure they receive His Spirit. We are His masterpiece. He uses ministers and teachers, but He does the greatest work. To put it another way, we may plant the seed, someone else may water it, but it is the Lord who gives the increase. If we haven't learned to partner with the Lord in working in His fields, we will be useless as ministers. When we learn how precious the souls are that are under our care as shepherds or teachers, then we will understand just how awesome a responsibility is that we carry the truth of His Word to them. The whole truth and nothing but the truth. The Bible talks about ministers who were like whited sepulchers full of dead men's bones. It warns against ministers who pervert the truth for filthy lucre's sake. It warns about ministers who are like the blind leading the blind, and they all fall in the ditch. Research what warnings the Lord gives for those who minister. Take this seriously. It is.

Part of the job of ministers and teachers is to warn people about their sin. Part of the job of parents is to be the spiritual leaders in our household and warn our children and spouse about sin. This isn't popular any more. We tend to want to pat sin on the back because we don't want to get controversial. God is controversial. God is loving and merciful, and He does not want His people to perish. He cares enough about them to set them straight. He doesn't want to see them destroy their lives with sin, so His Word is full of warnings against sin. He expects us to do the same. The Bible tells us in Ezekiel 33 that as watchmen over his flock, if we warn people about their sin, and they refuse to listen, then they will be judged, but it will not be laid to our charge. It tells us that if we fail to warn them, and they are

judged for their sin, then it will be laid to our charge. What kind of table are you setting for those who eat at your table? Are you preaching the truth that will set them free? Are you warning them of the pitfalls of sin and of the enemy? This is the kind of pastors that the Lord wants you to be.

Read Jeremiah 3:15, “And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.” Acts 20:28 says, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made overseers to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” God warns about not standing true to His Word before others.

Paul knew about being a minister. He knew about the power of the truth. It had set him free. When you want to know about how to handle a situation, read some of Paul’s writings. You think you have problems in your congregations, you should read about some of his. Here is a powerful section of scripture that talks about ministering. I won’t write it all here, so get out your Bible. It starts with I Corinthians 1:17 and goes to the end of chapter 2. You could even go on to chapter 3. I won’t comment much about this section of scripture. Read this and think about what it means. There are so many points in this section of scripture that I can’t cover them all in this chapter. It is definitely meat for a minister’s table. Also, meat for all of us.

Let’s talk about Ezra here for just a minute. You remember him. You can find his story in the book of Ezra. Would you take some time to get out your Bible and review his story? I’ll briefly recap it. During this period of time, the nation of Israel was made a slave to the nation of Babylon. Most of the people were taken to Babylon where they were made to serve as slaves. Ezra was one of those people. During this time, Ezra was allowed to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. The temple, and the city, were both laying in ruin.

He and 42,360 people returned to Jerusalem. When they laid the foundation of the temple, they began to praise the Lord. Ezra 3: 11-13 tells us, “And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.” Why had they been in captivity? Same reason as always. They had left following after God and had started serving other gods. They had stopped worshipping the true God. They went into captivity, and the temple fell to ruins. That is a lot like what is happening today. We as a church world have followed after the gods of compromise. We have followed after the world, dancing with the devil while being married to God. We have winked at sin, and excused it to the point of coming up with doctrines to be able to ignore it. We have sold ourselves into captivity. The temple is fallen down in ruin. We have left the true Word of God. We need to return to the truth. We need pastors, teachers, and workers in the kingdom who will stand up for the truth, and join together to rebuild the altar. We need to rebuild it so that we can hear, like Ezra did, a shout with a loud shout so that the noise will be heard afar off. A shout of praise from the people of God.

Now, I know, here again, I have talked a lot about ministers. If you aren't a minister, is the Word of God less important to you? If you aren't a minister, how are you serving God daily in ways that like ministers? Why is it important for you to have the true knowledge of the Word? Why is it important

to your family, to your children, that you have the true knowledge of the Word? Why is it important that you not only have that knowledge, but that you live by that knowledge as well?

Studying out God's Word by seeking the face of God, and living by God's Word bring praise and glory to God. Jesus is the Word of God made flesh as spoken about in John chapter 1. That is how important the Word of God is to God. Lifting up His Word, honoring it by taking time to study it, and taking time to ask Him to reveal it by His Spirit, praises the Lord. Living by it praises the Lord. We shouldn't just consider reading the Bible as something that we do at the end of the day for a few minutes before we go to bed when we usually wind up sleeping while reading. Make reading God's Word a priority in your life. It will not only change your live, but the lives of those around you as well.

Just as a final thought, and as a preview of a chapter that is coming up, I want to tell you about a children's home where I once worked. It was run by a nominal denomination. They hammered the Bible into the kids. They had memory verses every day. They would even have to repeat their memory verses before every meal. These were verses like, "The soul that sinneth shall die." Most of the verses were pounding these kids into the pavement. They did not learn any verses about how to find victory in the Lord. They didn't learn about how to walk in the Spirit, how to be filled with the Spirit, or how to let God's Spirit touch them. They were only pounded with the Word. Talk about some rebellious kids. I watched some of these kids grow up. They became so hard against the Word of God. I am reminded of the verse, II Corinthians 3:6, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament: not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." We will talk more in the next chapter about the importance of the Spirit of God, and how if we don't allow Him to work in our midst and

anoint what we teach or preach then we will kill and destroy instead of empower.

I have spoken much about how we need to stay away from sin. It is a subject though that deserves a whole chapter. Coming up.

## Chapter 9

## Praise him by staying out of sin

Some of the most powerful workers for the Lord that I know were some of the worse sinners. They were drug dealers, alcoholics, partiers, sex abusers, and more. That word that has the most power in that last sentence is the little word were. They **were** those things. But the Holy Ghost led them to Jesus. God delivered them through the power of His Spirit. They became new creations in Christ. They were given new beginnings, new lives. They were changed by the power of God's Word and His Spirit. Like Mary Magdalene in the Bible, they were forgiven of much so now they love Him much. They become powerhouses for the Lord, serving Him at whatever the cost because of the difference He made in their lives.

These people are becoming a thing of the past. Why? Because the church has changed. Let me give you an illustration. We have a food program. A gentleman came to the food bank one day to pick up a box of food. He told me this story. He said, "I am an alcoholic. That is why I have to get a box of food, because I can't support myself. I am out on the street. I have been to all these churches in this area for help. They take me in and tell me that they love me and accept me like I am. I don't need to be accepted, I need deliverance. They pat me on the back and tell me I am OK like I am. No, I am not. My life is in ruins. They do not have the Spirit of God in their midst so that I can get deliverance. They don't even know what deliverance is. They love me and leave me in my misery." That opened my eyes to what is going on in the church world. Sinners don't want to be loved like they are, they want deliverance. Unless they are holding onto their sin, choosing it above God. They want to be changed. They want to have a place where they can come and be delivered. This guy has no chance of being



like the ones mentioned at the beginning of this chapter because of the failure of the church. Because of the failure of God's people to stand against sin. We have too much sin in our own lives to help others to deliverance.

I wrote a song that explains all this a little more. It is titled, *In the Box*.

Verse 1

I hear so many times today  
 A church say they have a new way  
 We'll not restrict you Come as you are  
 It's OK to stay that way  
 But I read in the Bible that you can find power  
 You can find power to change  
 Get real with Jesus leave the old man behind  
 Be a new man made the old way

Chorus

I want to be in the box not out of the box  
 The old ways are working for me  
 The old ways were settled a long time ago  
 On a cross at Calvary  
 You can have Your new thing  
 The way that's not tried and true  
 Remember the broad way leads to destruction  
 The narrow one will take you through

Verse 2

Come as you are you're welcome to stay  
 Jesus will meet you that way  
 But the power of God here  
 Will make you new  
 Long as you're willing to change  
 If you want a watered down truth  
 It won't hold through the storms  
 If you want a house on the rock that will stand  
 The old ways will work for you too

Here is a scripture that bears out this same message found in Ezekiel 13: 22-23, “Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life: Therefore ye shall see no more vanity, nor divine divinations: for I will deliver my people out of your hand: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.” Woe be to the preachers who do these things-making the hearts of the righteous sad, and strengthening the hands of the wicked by promising them everything is OK with them. God will deal with them, and God will deliver His people out of their hands. If you are in such a church, get out, get out, get out. This is an end time doctrine that is controlling most of the church world. If you stay there you will be devoured by this teaching that is right out of the pits of hell.

We as Christians are to stay out of sin, to be a lighthouse and praise to the Lord. If we are caught in the same messes that the world is caught in, we are no longer praise to the Lord, but a disgrace to Him. We become lukewarm, and He promises in His Word that He will spew out the lukewarm. He will spit us out. We won't be perfect. But the day that we start making excuses for our sin and failures instead of allowing His power and His Spirit to help us to overcome is the day that we move away from God's fellowship and His love. The day that we say to ourselves that it is OK to do what I am doing even though I know it is wrong is the day we start walking toward having reprobate mind where God can no longer convict us, and we are on a one-way track to hell. The day we say that we do not want God's Spirit to convict us because we choose our sin above God, His Spirit, and His Word, is the day that we doom our souls to be eternally lost.

We read a section of scripture in Romans 1:21-32. Please get out your Bible and read this section. I won't write it all here. The summary of it is when these people described in these words chose to do what they wanted to in spite of God, He gave them over to a reprobate mind to be stuck in this life style until they until they were judged. He gave them over to it. The very thing that they chose over God destroyed them. They received eternal damnation because they chose it. Church, lay down your sin. Come out from the compromises. Get real. Let God's Spirit work in your life and in your church so that you can overcome.

## Chapter 10

## Praise him by honoring The hol y ghosT

We closed chapter 8 about the Word of God with the illustration about the children's home that I once taught in. If you don't remember it, would you go back and read it. It ended with this thought found in II Corinthians 3:6, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament: not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." We will talk more in the next chapter about the importance of the Spirit of God, and how if we don't allow Him to work in our midst and anoint what we teach or preach then we will kill and destroy instead of empower. One of the biggest ways that we can praise God is by yielding to His Spirit and letting his Spirit to do His complete work in our lives and in our churches. The move of God's Spirit has become a denominational thing. It isn't that at all, it is a Word of God thing. I am talking here about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. I am talking about praying in the Holy Ghost in tongues, God's prayer language. I am talking about praying and praising the Lord until the power of God falls in the midst and the lame walk, the blind see, the bound are delivered. I am talking about having the anointing of God so that when you speak your words do supernatural things. This is an exclusive table, only set for the obedient. There are many who profess to have a seat at this table, but in their private relationship with the Lord, they don't have a seat at all. There are many, too, whom the Lord welcomes, but they do not go because they think that they are not worthy, not holy enough to have a seat. We can't deserve this, earn it, (except by being obedient), or be holy enough to sit there because none of us are holy. We certainly can't go there because of our own merit. God doesn't give us a special seat at this table because we are the pastors, because we are reverend. That doesn't get far with God. He knows better.

The first several chapters have moments in them that encourage and lift. They also have several moments that chastise. We can begin to see our shortcomings, our failures. We see how important it is to be accountable before the Lord in our ministry, and then we begin to see our own failures. Then we begin to try to correct these on our own, in our flesh. Then we fail more. That just leads to discouragement, and more failure. Then we begin to give over to the flesh, and give over to false pride because that is what happens when we want to do something, and can't do it right after trying so hard. Then we might begin to come against those who are anointed, and who are doing it right. But you see, we can't do it right. On our own we are nothing. Only through the power of God's Word and His Spirit can we be who we need to be to be able to minister. Only through the power of His Spirit can we minister. Only through the power of His Spirit can we as children of God daily walk where we need to walk. Only through His Spirit can we be a light to those around us. This isn't a natural thing; it is a supernatural thing to do. We have to be in the supernatural, in the Spirit, to be able to do anything for God.

Let's start by talking about a fellow named Isaiah. We read about him in Isaiah 6:1-8. God was speaking to Isaiah. Isaiah was caught up in the spirit and saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. I am not sure what the train was that he saw. I believe that it was much like a wedding gown that has a train that flows back behind the gown. I see this, not as a wedding garment, but an honorary garment, a symbol of His presence. His presence and honor and glory filled the temple. The seraphims were testaments to this crying "Holy is the Lord". He is so glorious that before his throne there will always constantly be praise. We forget how holy He is. We take His righteousness, His power, and His glory for granted because we look at Him through flesh filled eyes and we look up

from the cesspool of this world. We get these things in our eyes, and fail to see Him for what He is. He is Holy. He is almighty. He is above us as far as the heavens are above the earth. There is no reason why He should even be mindful of us. He not only is mindful of His, He sent His son to die for us. He is concerned about the affairs of men. He is concerned about you. He is able to see you through the battles. He is able to uphold you with the hand of His righteousness. He is able to use you in a mighty way. Why then do so many fail? I believe that it is because they fail to allow God's Spirit work in their lives and in their churches. Isaiah did. Let's talk about it.

When Isaiah saw all this he cried out, "Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." God was so huge, and mighty, and magnificent, that Isaiah was struck with his uncleanness before Him. I think that Isaiah had this moment in mind when he later wrote in Isaiah 64:6-9a, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away." We are like filthy rags in the presence of almighty Holy God. We need to always be mindful of this. Sometimes it is easy to take God for granted, to see Him as one of the boys because of His love for us. He is far from that. If we want to walk in His Spirit, then we have to be mindful of this. How can He even use us? How can we even come into His presence? Isaiah got the answer to that. In verse 6, "Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me. And he said, Go and tell this people..."

We are nothing. But when God's Spirit works and we are touched with a coal of fire from the altar, we are purged, and we are touched with the anointing. We are empowered with strength and boldness from on high. We are able to do God's will in the spirit, not through the weakness of our own flesh, but with the power from on high. Let God touch you with this coal of fire. Let His Spirit touch you. You will be changed. You will be able to go out and tell His people in a powerful way. That is the main objective. The beginning of all this comes when we receive the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter that this has become a matter of denominations. The Pentecostal churches believe in the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, and the nominal churches do not. I say, this is not a matter of denomination at all, but it is a matter of God's Word. God's Word says it, I believe it, and that settles it. It doesn't matter which denominations preach it. I mentioned before how God gives me pictures to explain things. He once showed me a group of people crawling around on the ground, picking up little morsels of things. They were all excited about each little morsel that they found. I came closer and saw that they were picking up crumbs. The bigger the crumb, the more excited they got. They were rejoicing over those crumbs. Then God caused me to focus just above them, and I saw something that they didn't see. Just over their heads was a table. It was full of a wonderful feast with everything imaginable on it. They never saw the table because they were so busy crawling around gathering their crumbs. They could have pulled up and feasted to their hearts content, but they wouldn't. They had settled for the crumbs. God showed me that this was how many people do His Spirit. They settle for a taste when they could have the feast. They settle for the morsels when they could have their hearts desires.

Let's start by talking about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. (Just a note here: You may already have this experience. Please bear with me a little if I am explaining something that you have. Here is some good advice. Read this section of the book any way. It has some things that you can use when you are trying to explain this experience to others who are not familiar with it.) Trying to walk in the Spirit, serve God, minister to His people without having the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is like trying to race a 2012 sports car with a model T engine. You just won't have the power to win the race. I grew up not hearing about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. I grew up in an area that had been blinded and bound to think that this gift of the Spirit was not real. I was taught that when you were saved, you got all of God's Spirit that there was. I was taught that after salvation, you had it all. I grew up not knowing a thing at all about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Through a miracle, God brought me into contact with a church that believed in the Baptism of the Spirit. After I received it for myself, no one could tell me that it wasn't real. It was the key that brought me victory over a life that had been bound by sin, drugs, and alcohol. The devil had worked overtime in much of my life to destroy me because he knew that I would one day serve God. Maybe you are going through the same thing. Maybe it seems like every time you try to get up, you get knocked back down. You know in your heart that you should walk up-right before God, but every time you take one step forward it seems you get knocked three back. You may be about to give up in defeat, which is exactly what the devil wants you to do. It may be that he sees that up ahead, you will bust his little kingdom wide open in some area. You may be sitting there thinking that it is hopeless. That there is no use to keep trying. You won't make it. The devil has you where he wants you. You think it is because you are worthless. It may be because you are getting ready to rise up and be what God has chosen for you to be. It is your choice. If you give up now, you will never know. Maybe the key for you to overcome is



the same as it was for me-the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. When I first learned about it, I got it. I grabbed hold and didn't let go. There was none of that intellectual twisting around that a lot of people do. I knew that this was the key for a victorious life and I turned it. Even though I had grown up hearing that it was not right, when it came time for me to accept it, I knew I needed it. That settled that. Don't read about this and talk yourself out of thinking that it is real, and that it is for you. God said it is, so let that be the end of that.

I had to be hungry enough to submit myself to allow God to do things His way. I had to take Him and His Word at face value. I had to receive the gift that He had for me. I have never regretted it. God will allow His Spirit to control only the things that we allow Him to control. When we say, God, I have decided to do it your way. Come and fill me up to the brim. Then we are ready for the Baptism of God's Spirit. He fills us up all the way with His Spirit. That is what the Baptism of God's Spirit is all about. Here is what God has to say about it in His Word. We first read about it in Acts Chapter 2. Here we read that the disciples were all gathered in one mind and accord. In verse 4 it tells us, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." What was the outcome of this? These few who were hiding in fear after the crucifixion, became bold enough and so full of God's Spirit that they turned the world upside down. Without the Baptism, they would not have endured to start the church, and keep the Gospel that was committed to us today. Verse 41 tells of the outcome of that day, "Then they that gladly received His word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." This didn't stop here. We read about this throughout Acts. In Chapter 8, verses 14-17, these men received the gifts of the Holy Ghost. In Chapter 10, verses 44-48, the Holy Ghost is again on the scene filling the Gentiles. In Acts 19:1-6, these men also received the gift of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost since they had believed. These men were already saved, but they had something in addition to salvation that they were about to receive. They answered, “We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.” In verse 6 the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied. I think of myself when I read their answer to Paul, “We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost.”

I hadn't heard, but God found me anyway. How do you receive the gift of the Holy Ghost? I was blessed to find a church that believed this way. The congregation laid hands on me and prayed for me in the same way that Paul laid hands on the men in Acts 19:6. But I still didn't receive it that night that they prayed. Several nights later, when I was by myself, the Holy Ghost fell on me and I was filled. I prayed in tongues for the first time that night. You can receive it through the prayers of others, or you can receive it through your own prayers. It is a gift of God that He has given us to empower us against the battle of satan. It is a gift that gives us boldness in our witness, like it did those on that first day. It is for you. I have heard many people argue against the Baptism of the Holy Ghost being real. They argue that it is not for us today. When I hear this I know several things about those people. I know that they are ignorant of God's Word. In Acts 2:38-39 we read, “Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” I would say that means us too. I also know when I hear people argue that the Baptism is not for us today, that these people do not know God. I know that He wants the best for His children. He wants us to overcome and be victorious. I also know that we live in the last days, which has to be one of the hardest times to live on the earth. Why would God give a gift to help the early disciples, tell us

about it, and then deny us the right to have it or make it so that it is not available to us who need it the most? That is not the God I know.

I think that one of the things that hinder people in receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is that it comes along with the gift of speaking in tongues. For many, that is a stumbling block. This is because the devil wants to scare people away from our being able to pray in the Spirit, or pray in tongues. What it means when we pray in tongues is that the Spirit of God prays through us in His own language. He is praying directly through us using our vocal chords. We may not understand what He is saying, though sometimes He will allow us to interpret, or He will use others to interpret. Whether or not we understand, the devil knows when we start praying that something is being done to bind him and to loose the power of God on the scene. No wonder he works overtime to confuse people about this powerful gift. Have you ever wanted so badly to pray for someone but didn't know how to pray? All you could do was to say a general half way prayer, when you know you needed to do more. The Holy Ghost knows exactly how to pray in God's perfect will. When He prays through you that is a powerful prayer that will get the job done. Also, when we pray in the Holy Ghost it strengthens our inner man, Who is the Spirit of God in us. (Jude 20, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost." When we are filled and consumed with the Spirit of God, and we allow Him to pray in us, we are submitted to His Spirit in a way that nothing else can do. We strengthen His Spirit in us. We submit our flesh and our flesh man takes second place in our life. With all that going on our flesh doesn't stand a chance. God's Spirit rises strong in us and we take on His likeness.

Now you may interrupt me here to say, what about the people who receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and wind up turning their back on God, or they sin in a big way and

take on a life of sin instead of a life with God? Just because you have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost it doesn't make you perfect. You still have your flesh man. If you have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, but the Holy Ghost is still not allowed to control your life, then flesh will. That is why it is important to allow the Holy Ghost to move in you. Pray in the Holy Ghost daily. Don't hinder the Spirit of God when He starts to move in or through you, whether it is in church or at home. Allow God's Spirit to control. Then He will be there when you need Him.

One of the greatest stories I have ever heard about the power in the prayer of the Holy Ghost is this. The Holy Ghost moved on a man and began interceding through him. The man had no idea why, but he obeyed and yielded. God spoke to him to take note at what time this had happened. The next day he heard about a close friend who had been stabbed. That had happened at exactly the time that the man had prayed. The other man's life had been miraculously spared. Another time I heard about a man on a plane who had interceded through the Holy Ghost. After they landed, they were told of a mechanical failure that had nearly caused them to crash, but miraculously the failure had corrected itself. The man who had prayed had no idea, but God knew. Thousands of times I have heard stories about how the Holy Ghost had interceded by speaking in tongues through those who had the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. The situation was corrected, the life was saved, the soul was saved, the person was delivered, or whatever need there was, it was met. There is no prayer that is more powerful than the prayer of the Holy Ghost Himself. If you do not have the gift of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, ask God for this. Seek it. The Bible says that when we seek God, or His gifts, we will find them. Who says so? Jesus. Luke 11:9, "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Read this section of scripture through verse 13. In verse 13 we read, "If ye then,

being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" Think about times when the gift of speaking in tongues supernaturally saved you from disaster, operated in your life supernaturally doing a work that ultimately you in your flesh could not have done.

When we have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost then we are able to walk in the Spirit. We have talked about this some. Let's talk more. In Romans 7:15-25 Paul talks about how he is not able to do what he knows he should do. Read this section of scripture together. He bemoans, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death." He goes on in chapter 8:1 to say, "There is therefore now no condemnation..." That is where a lot of people stop. We want not to have condemnation so stop there, use this whole passage to make excuses for our sin, and we stop there. That is a comfortable place to stop. But stopping there will cause us to eventually spend eternity in hell with the people we deceive because if we stop there, then we will also stop there in our preaching and teaching. God doesn't stop there. He goes on. Read the rest of Romans 8 to see how to get the victory that God intends for us to have. Read this think about it.

We can't do this in the flesh. God knew that. That is why He created you to be a container to hold His Spirit. Through His Spirit, we can overcome, we can be victorious, and we can minister to others. Not on our own in our flesh. But in Him. We don't have anything to give. But when we fill up to overflow with His Spirit, when we receive His anointing, when we allow ourselves to be quickened by His Spirit and by His Word, we can change our world and the lives of those around us who we love. We no longer will have to make excuses for our sin, or the sins of others. We can overcome and teach others to do the same.

There is a key word to enable all this to happen in our lives. That word is YIELD. We can either be full of ourselves or full of God. We can either do our will or do His will. We can either be full of flesh or Spirit of God. What determines all this is whether or not we yield to His Spirit, to His Word, to His will. We can be so full of ourselves and our pride that we prevent the Lord from being able to work a supernatural work in and through us. Yield to God. Yield to His Spirit. He will fill you. He will empower you. He will keep you.

We have an enemy. That enemy is a spiritual enemy, not a flesh enemy. The only way to fight him is to walk in the spirit. If we don't come against him, he will destroy us, guaranteed. If we don't learn how to fight him, he will destroy our families, our church, our ministries, and us. He will steal our health, our strength, and even our desire to serve God. I believe that he is why so many people compromise and settle for less than God's best for them. He fights us and convinces us that it isn't worthy it, why go for the best. If we don't walk in the spirit we can't fight the devil. We read in II Corinthians 10:4, "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds). Ephesians 6:12 says, "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." It goes on from there to tell us about our armor, the armor of God. Then in verse 18 it mentions, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit...". We can fight the enemy when we pray in the Spirit, when we pray in tongues in the Holy Ghost. Some of the most tremendous victories I have ever seen came when the power of the Holy Ghost fell in services and the entire congregation began to intercede in the Holy Ghost. It sounded like a mighty rushing wind, all those voices. The devil was pushed back, and the bondage broke, and the power of God came in like a roaring

lion. People were delivered and healed. God came on the scene in all His glory through the power of His Spirit.

There have been times when it seemed like the devil would surly wipe me out. He was coming against me on every side. God's Spirit would begin to intercede through me. It may be that it took some time, but when He broke through, the victory came in like a flood. I remember a time just recently when I was caught up in the Holy Ghost praising the Lord. God showed me the devil throwing things at me to destroy me. He showed me that praising God and getting caught up in His Spirit was just like greasing me down. Everything the devil threw at me would just slide right off. It wouldn't stick. There have been many times when getting caught up in the Holy Ghost praising the Lord and praying has saved my life. I remember a time when we were traveling with the tent. Bishop Goad was driving the tent truck. There was van behind him with some of our church members, and I was in a mini van behind that van. We were going down the interstate. The Lord came into our midst. We began interceding and praising the Lord, praying in tongues. The Holy Ghost filled our little van. Just after that, a tractor-trailer plowed into us all. The driver had fallen asleep at the wheel. The state police told us later that he had been going over 80 when he hit the van in front of our mini van, and then plowed into the tent truck. It hit the van in front of us so hard that it peeled the side off. The seats were bent back flat and twisted around. It then hit the tent truck so hard that it popped the bed off of the frame and set the bed over on the guardrail. The people sitting in the front seat of the van didn't have their seat belts on. The people in the second seats flew up and instead of going through the windows, landed on the people in the front seats and kept them from going into the windshield. There were many more circumstances about that wreck that were miraculous. The most amazing was that we all walked out of it with only minor injuries. When the police who first arrived at the scene saw the wreck they

immediately called in the helicopter to transport critical patients to the hospital. When we all began to walk out of the wreck, they remarked that they had witnessed a miracle. They took us to the local rescue squad since no one had been hurt enough to take to the hospital. People kept coming by to see us. It was such a remarkable miracle. The local paper even printed an article about the interstate miracle. What the devil did to destroy us was turned into a lot of miracles. What would have happened if we had not been caught up in the Holy Ghost interceding and praising the Lord?

I can't stop this chapter without talking about the move of the Spirit of God in our churches. We have talked about how having God's Spirit makes a difference in our personal lives. It also makes a difference in our churches. We read in I Corinthians 12:1-11 about spiritual gifts. Verse 11 tells us how these things work: "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will?" These gifts are: word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. These gifts were given to empower the church. Not just to empower the preacher or minister, but to empower all the saints of God in the church. This is where we find our power to overcome, through these gifts. Without these operating in our midst, we are playing church. Church isn't a social gathering. It is a place where God's Spirit can work in the midst of His people. Are the gifts of the Spirit in operation in your life? Are the gifts of the Spirit in operation in your services? If they aren't, then why not? Let's talk a little about what the church is supposed to be like.

We all talk about how the church used to be. Here is a little trip down memory lane. I could title this little section here, Remember When. Remember when the church was a place where God was worshipped, where He was praised, where His Word went out with His anointing. People would gather



no matter what they had to face to get there. For them, it was a way of life in obedience to what the Lord told them to do. While they were there they would obey the Lord, while they were outside of the walls of the church they did the same. During the week they lived a life that was yielded to the Spirit of God so that when they were within those walls of the church, they were yielded as well. During the week, they would sing praises to the Lord and thank Him for His blessings and His goodness. They would lift their hands in their homes and shout and praise Him and His anointing would flow. When they came to church it wasn't surprising at all that the same happened. The Spirit of God flowed in their midst bringing salvation, victory, deliverance, healing, overcoming power, strength, clear minds, peace, and all the fruits of the spirit to the people.

When it came time for the message to go out from the pulpit, the one who was ordained for that message would clear his throat, get the mind of God and open up like a vessel to pour out what it was that God wanted to tell the people. God's Word was anointed. When it poured forth it kept the promise that God made that it would not go forth void. When it poured out with God's anointing, just from hearing the Word souls were convicted, they repented of their sin, and they gave their hearts to the Lord. The altars were full of people who joyously and with much crying gave their hearts and lives to the One Who had purchased them with His own shed blood. But it wasn't just the sinners that were brought to repentance. Praise God, it was also the saints, the Christians who gathered there. When the temptations of the week, and the temptor behind it all, got to them so that they could barely stand, it was there at church that they repented just for starting in the direction that would lead them to sin. God's Spirit would convict them, and draw them back into His peace and His love. You see, when God's Spirit doesn't convict us, and we don't repent, that is when we cannot find the peace that forgiveness brings. When God's Spirit

convicts us, and we repent, that is when we find the power to overcome. God's Word was a light, a lamp to their feet. When it went out in uncompromised truth, it shone bright enough not only to light their path, but also bright enough that they could carry it and light their world around them.

When the Christians found peace and life in the walls of the church, they brought that to their homes. Entire families served God together. Grandparents, parents, and their children gathered together in those walls. The little ones grew up under the feet of the parents as they shouted in the victory of the Spirit of God in their midst. Those little ones raised up their children to do the same, and they did the same for their own. The older generation passed on the truth of the Word of God to their children, and it went from there to their grandchildren, and great grandchildren. You see the truth of the Word of God doesn't change. It stays the same, just as God has done from the foundation of the world. There is no new truth for the younger generation. Just the same truth that gave their great-great-great grandparents the victory as did for that generations great-great-great grandparents. God's Word was preached from the pulpit, God's Word was studied in the home. The children grew up learning God's Word, and because of that they could teach it to their own children. If those children strayed from that Word later on in their life, then they had to run past the Word that had been poured into them, past the Holy Ghost that they knew from those services and from watching their parents live by His guidance, past the blood of Jesus and it's power to keep us that they had learned about as a child, past the fellowship of saints that were praying daily for their soul. It was very hard to go to very far from the Lord with all that pulling them in the right direction.

In their homes, the Lord was the center of their life and who they were. They were not compromising so with the world that the world couldn't tell that they were a church.

The world knew that they were different in their habits, their choices, their day-to-day walk. The world knew that they were different because they were not following where it was going. They didn't put value on the things that the world valued. They didn't compromise like the world to be able to do the things that the world did. They didn't long to be accepted by the world, but they longed to find favor with God, and knew that if they found favor with those around them who weren't walking with God, then they would lose His favor. They were in the world but the world knew that they were not of this world. They were a light that shone bright in the darkness, not just a hazy, dingy glow, but a bright light that led the way.

When the people were sick in body, they gathered and laid hands on one another and prayed. God's Word was honored. The Holy Ghost came and filled the house, the earthly building, and the vessels of clay, bringing healing. Broken vessels were restored and made whole by the same one who touched and healed those when He was on earth. Cancer lost its hold. Heart disease lost its power. Diabetes was cast out. The blind saw and the lame walked, and the deaf heard the Word of God preached. The dead were even raised in their midst. There was victory in the house of God over sickness. There was victory in the house of God over sicknesses of the heart. Anxiety and fear didn't rule. Broken hearts were mended and healed just as the broken bodies were healed. Broken lives were mended and brought back together.

The children of God gathered every service in anticipation of the miracles that the Lord would work in their midst. Sometimes His power would be so thick in their midst that it would appear like a haze. When His power came, only those who refused to let Him touch them left unchanged. Healing came, deliverance came. Those who had been chained to habits that destroyed them like alcohol, drugs, sexual sins, cigarettes, and spirits of depression, fear, anxiety, rebellion,

and all other bondages, were set free in joyous deliverance. God's people walked in freedom. His Word showed them their sin, His Spirit convicted them, and when they repented, the power of His Holy Ghost would deliver them.

And, oh, the Baptism of the Holy Ghost would fill them. God's Spirit would fill them to the brim, chasing out the flesh that held them bound, chasing out the world that tried to filter out His victory. The Holy Ghost would begin to pray from inside their spirit in His language, in His tongues. That prayer would break the yoke of the enemy who was trying to bind their church, their flesh, their homes, their families, their finances, their health, and their work. Even when they didn't realize the enemy was coming against them, the Holy Ghost would begin interceding, praying in His own tongue, and binding the devil with a power that no other prayer can have. Intercession would break out for those who were lost, or those who were straying away. The Holy Ghost would begin to intercede. This prayer would echo around the congregation. They knew that the bondage was broken, that the hindrance was moved, even before they got home to hear the news. They knew what it was like to walk in the victory during the week that was broken loose in the walls of that church. They carried that authority and the same Holy Ghost with them as they went home, binding the devil and loosing the victory of God in the lives of those around them.

They learned to walk in the victory of walking in the Spirit and not in the flesh. They learned how to submit their flesh to the Spirit of God within them, and they learned how to walk in the victory that brought. The flesh that is enmity against God wasn't the center of the church, or of their daily lives. They learned to submit their flesh to the Spirit of God so that they were able to obey Him and walk in victory in both the big and the small things in their lives.

They had not lost their savor; they were salt to those around them. Their victory was a light to those who were lost.

There was no hazy, gray area. It was either the saved who walked in victory or it was the lost who had none. They had not deceived themselves to think that a halfway walk with God was all that you need. They had not deceived themselves to think that sin in a certain measure was fine. They had not deceived themselves to think that church with the Spirit of God and His anointing and the full declaration of His Word were not needed. They had not deceived themselves into thinking that it was wrong to make people uncomfortable because of their sin, while they watched uncaringly as they destroyed themselves with that sin. They had not deceived themselves into thinking that the middle of the road was a fine place for them to walk. They were a lighthouse to those around them. They shone, and people came for miles to find out what was going on. When those people came searching, they found, and their lives were changed. So were the lives of those around them who saw the change. This is a picture of the way the church was. It is also a picture of how it should be.

I'm not talking here of a church within a particular four walls. I am not talking of a church that is within the boundaries of a given denomination, but I am talking of the church that is the church that Jesus purchased with His own blood. I am talking of the scriptural vision for the church today. I am talking about what we have lost, that we need to find. We talk about how we know that the rapture is nearing. Even sinners talk about how the end of the world is drawing near. But we continue on as a church, as the bride of Christ as a whole, in a seem-right, compromised state. We have forgotten what it is like to walk in the victory of the Lord. We have long lost our burden for the lost. We no longer recognize the power of the Holy Ghost. The scripture says that we are stay away from those who deny the power of God. We have become those who deny the power of God. We need to seek the Lord on our faces and repent for our compromise, for our sin, for our complacency.

We need to go back to what we remember so that it isn't just a memory, but a reality in our lives. The trumpet soon will sound. Those who have compromised and refused to repent, those who deny the power of God, those who are disobedient, will not rise to meet its call. Only God's Holy Ghost can make us ready. It is the "washing machine" and the "iron" that will get out those spots, blemishes, and wrinkles that the scripture says we will have to get out to be able to go when the Lord calls. Church, let's get right, get ready, and let's go home. Let God's Holy Ghost fill you to the brim. Let His gifts operate in your life and in your ministry. Open up your doors to His Spirit. Obey Him and yield to Him. He will do a mighty work in your midst.

Time for Reflection. Do you have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost complete with the gift of speaking in tongues? Do you use the gift of tongues in your personal prayer life? Do you use it in church services as the Lord leads? Does God anoint your ministry? Are the gifts of the Spirit in operation in your services, in your congregation? Do you preach and teach about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and about the gifts of the Spirit? Is the anointing of God welcomed in your services? When you read about how the church used to be, could you say, that is how our services are today?

Something to think about: how can you as a minister open the door for those in your congregation to be more receptive of the works of the Holy Ghost in their midst? If your church looks back at the "good old days", how the church as a whole used to be, and longs for them, how can you lead them in bringing the good old days back?

## Chapter 11

## Praise God by Fellowship with him

I have put this chapter last, but it is not the least important. It is the most important and I wanted to close with this thought. Remember in chapter 5 when I told the reason why I was writing this book? It was because God had told me to share this thought with His people. He said to “Tell My people that they can be free from blame and guilt and praise Me.” We talked about in chapter 5 how praise helps strengthen our relationship with the Lord. The most powerful and life changing way to praise the Lord is to fellowship with Him. God created us for this reason. He created man to walk and to talk with Him. Even though He knew before He created us that the price He would have to pay would be sending His own Son, Jesus, to die for us, He still created us. He is love, and this wonderful God of love created us to love. He delights in our fellowship. He enjoys spending time with us. He delights in our love. There is no greater way to praise Him.

Salvation is such a wonderful experience. Remember when you first got saved. You were so excited that you couldn't understand why everybody in the world didn't want it too. I know I was. We started a revival everywhere we went. We had a group of teens that hung around Hardees on the weekend. We'd witness to people out in the parking lot. Hardees was the big hangout spot in our town for all the young people. We'd pass out tracts. We'd kneel right down at the booths to lead people to the Lord. Young people would come through the drive through and yell out for us to pass them some more tracts. They wanted to pass them on to their buddies so that they could find what they had found. The police that was stationed at that Hardees (it had been a really rough Hardees, the teen hangout in town) told us that they had never seen such a change in a place.

The whole atmosphere changed. They asked us to keep on coming. I had found a salvation that stuck and boy had it stuck this time around. It was so rich and real and full of love and joy that I wanted to share it with everyone. We never had a thought like, “What if someone rejects this? What if they make fun of us? What if it takes up a lot of my time? I have such a busy schedule. What if we run into an uncomfortable situation? What if it takes time away from some of my other activities? What if it costs me something?” We didn’t even think any of that. We had no thought of not having time to do this. It was the joy of our lives and the focus of our being, to be able to reach out for the One Who had reached out to us. Remember those days. If when I said this you sadly shook your head and agreed that you remember those days, then here is something to think about? Why is this just a memory and not a reality? Has something happened to your first love? Has Jesus changed any from the first time that you met Him? Is He less wonderful than He was then? Does He love you any less than He did when you first found out about His love for you? What has changed? Have you lost your first love? Isn’t salvation just the same then as it is now? Has something changed with your experience with the Lord?

Remember those sweetheart days with your honey, your husband or your wife? Praise God for those who still have them after years of marriage. Never lose those sweetheart days. Those google-eyed-red-faced-hungry just for the sight of that sweet lover feelings. In over 30 years of marriage, there have been times when I took my husband for granted. There have been times when I did my own thing and he did his own thing. There have been times when situations such as financial problems and health problems put a strain on our marriage. There have been times when personality differences and misunderstandings drove wedges between us. There have been times when we’d say or do things that we would have to make right. But we are still sweethearts



after nearly 30 years. I love him more than I did when we first had our first set of starry eyes for each other. We've been through a lot together. We are growing old together and believe me as you do that you know it isn't all based on our looks or what is on the outside. I know he will be there for me no matter what we have to go through because he has been there for me through what we've already overcome. I know he is the one that sees me at my ugliest outside and inside, but still loves me. He will be there when I need him, because he has always been there. I can trust in his love for me. The love that has been through the fire is the love that will last. Amen? Isn't God the same way? But because I know that my husband will be there for me through it all, I have to remind myself that I don't need to take him for granted. Isn't that how we do if we aren't careful? We don't care about how we act, or look because we don't have to. That isn't fair. If we aren't careful we become less for those who mean the most to us. More importantly we don't need to take God for granted or do Him the same way.

Praise is based on a relationship with God. It is the relationship that has been through the fire. You know that when the storms come, you will last through them as well. You know He's been there, so you know He'll be there to hold you through tomorrow. It isn't that your relationship with God will last because you know that everything will be perfect from there on out. That isn't what this is all about. Some people teach that because we are children of God, we have a right to have a perfect life. One day in heaven that might be true. Down here though, if you are having a perfect life, I might go so far as to doubt your salvation experience. Why? Because you are a child of God, you have a ready-made enemy who hates you because he hates God. The devil is out to get God's children. If you don't have any battles, there must not be enough evidence in your life to show him that you are a child of God. Sure you will have battles even if you are saved. You will have to live in this world that is

definitely far from perfect, right in the middle of people who mostly aren't saved, and don't care about doing anything good. You will have battles. That doesn't mean that God doesn't love you. It does mean, praise the Lord, that you will have someone to hold you and keep you through whatever this old world and the devil that is its prince brings against you. It does mean that you can find victory. Without God, all you would find would be sure defeat. He loves you even though He has seen your ugliest. He has waited when you had your priorities all out of whack until you got it together enough to focus on Him. He has been the anchor that held you even when you sailed way off course. He loves you. He will keep you. My how He loves you.

John 3:16-17 says, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world: but that the world through Him might be saved." Jeremiah 31:3 says, "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." I John 3:1 tells us, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." You are Beloved. You are beloved and longed for. Here is a prayer that we all need to pray. It is found in Ephesians 3:17-19, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." How big is His love? What can separate you from it? Romans 8:35 and 37-39 tells us, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors

through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

God loves you. God loves you. God loves you. That is the key to understanding what praise is all about. We need to wrap ourselves in that great big love, and fellowship with the One who created us to love. Get all the junk out that separates us from God and gets us tied up and tangled up in other things and bound from His love. What does God expect from us in return for that love? Deuteronomy 6:5 tells us, “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” Deuteronomy 10:12 tells us, “And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.” Fall in love with the One who loves you so much. Get google eyed over Jesus again. Go back to your first love.

Now I can just hear some of you men. We can't get that way? You know, I agree that is harder maybe for some of you than it is for women. I have heard our pastor say after his being in the ministry for over 40 years, that it is easier for a woman to have relationship with the Lord than it is for some men. It is harder for men to let themselves go enough to fall in love with Jesus. They have to think too much about it. They don't just go ahead and jump in. Sure, salvation isn't all just based on our feelings. Sure it is based on what we know and how we think. But a relationship with God is also based on our love for Him and His love for you. Let Him love you. Fall in love with Him. Your salvation will be much stronger than it is if all you have is what you think. Some of the manliest men I know have fallen in love with

Jesus. Think of Paul, David, many of others in the Word of God. God is your father.

Some of you know what it is like to be a Dad. You know how you want your children to love and respect you. You know how you want your children to respond to your love. Should you love your heavenly Father any less and respond less to His love. We need to never get too “manly” to receive love and to love. Sometimes we get as much of God’s love as we are able to receive from the people around us. If we are shut up and can’t easily receive love from others, it’s a given fact that it will be hard for us to have a loving relationship with God. I John 4:8 tells us, “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” I John 4:12 tells us, “No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us.” There is a lot of truth in those two verses. If you want to find a deeper relationship with the Lord, love His people. Sometimes, too, we can shut ourselves up, closing ourselves away from people because we have been hurt. We are afraid of making ourselves vulnerable to being hurt again. That will also shut us away from God’s love. We get only as much love as we open ourselves up to receive. Open up wide to God. Open up wide to Jesus. I have seen that picture of Jesus on the cross that says, “Jesus said I love you this much, and then He spread open His arms wide and died.” You are loved. Fellowship with God, and praise Him.

I have compared this relationship with the Lord as being a little table for two where we sit in intimacy with the One who loves us. A table where we fellowship with Him. The key to finding a relationship with the Lord that sticks is finding your place at that precious table for two. Finding that fellowship with God that is real. No other place will work. Matthew 7:21-23 tells us the importance of sitting at this table. If we don’t have that fellowship with God, if He

doesn't know us, then we won't enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Are you seated at that table for two? How long has it been since you basked in the presence of God's love? How long has it been since you pulled up that chair to his table of fellowship? When is the last time that you lifted up your hands to feel His presence and feasted on His Spirit that flowed down covering you, lifting you up? I'm just talking about doing this in church. I mean in the still quiet hours of the morning when it is just you and Him. That is when you know if your salvation is real. When you have fellowship with Him. It's time to do a relationship check. When I wrote this, I had a typo and spelled relation REALATION. I thought to myself that is a new word and a good one. Get real with your relationship with God. (Just as a side note, as a leader or teacher, it is easy to get caught up in the mechanics of things. We focus on the people we are ministering to. When we focus more on our congregation than we do our fellowship with the Lord, we are in danger of losing it all. We are in danger of being there for all the wrong reasons.) Have you lost your first love? It is easy to do. The demands of the ministry, the demands of life, of our family, the pull of the cares of life and this world, lack of time, strength and energy all steal us away from His presence. If when you read this chapter you realize that you have not been seated at His table for two, go home to Him. Run to Him. You won't last if you make it a priority to sit at this table. After all, why do you want to miss out on the sweetness of His presence.



It is my prayer that through these pages you have found keys to finding a greater victory in your life through the power of praise. I hope that you have learned that praise is very important to God, and that He honors those who praise Him, and He inhabits our praise. He deserves our praise just by being who He is. When we praise Him, the battle is won, we overcome, and He is lifted up. We talked about how we can praise God by yielding to His Spirit, and obeying Him, how through our obedience He is honored and praised. We talked about how we can let go of our hurt. Trust in God's love, so that we can truly praise Him. We praise Him by honoring His Word, and by letting His Holy Ghost have His way in our personal lives and in His church. Learning the power of praise can set you free to have a greater victory in your life. It will cause you to have a deeper relationship with God. Praise will release God's presence in your life. *Praise the Lord.*





About the Author

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