

## ☞ Principles of Praise

The Bible repeatedly says, "Praise the Lord." There is Purpose and Power in praise. There are various Practices of praise. But Authentic Praise is really about offering your whole self to God. And, when we really Recognize who God is and Remember who we are because of him, it leads to Rejoicing. God deserves our very best praise and worship.

## ☞ The Ability of Praise

### 2 Chronicles 20:21-30

So, we see here a great victory orchestrated by the Lord to the tune of singers praising God. But, let's give a little of the back story...

This attack from the enemy came right after Jehoshaphat started reforming the kingdom. Chapter 19 talks about turning back to the Lord and fearing God. It also mentions serving faithfully and wholeheartedly. So, there was a reform going on. Then, at the beginning of chapter 20, the enemy attacks. "After this..." Our mind tries to finish the sentence saying, "God opened up the windows of heaven and blessed their socks off." That isn't what it says, it says the king of Assyria came and invaded... Success is often followed by severe testing. The good news is that if you stand up for God, He will stand up for you. As we follow this story we will see how the plans the enemy had were completely derailed. This is a good reminder for us... **the enemy** does not like to see progress in your spiritual walk and he **will often attack when you are moving forward with God**. We've seen this often after baptisms.

But Jehoshaphat didn't back down. Instead he turned to God even more. In the beginning of chapter 20 he resolved to inquire of the Lord and he proclaimed a fast. He sought the Lord and prayed and he continued to praise and worship God. When things go South for us, we need to remember that is not the time to give up, but instead **it's the time to press in even more!**

"Some men came and told... a vast army is coming..." Words can pull you down, or push you to heaven, and you - you alone decide for yourself the effect you will let them have. Follow Jehoshaphat's example, it is a good one.

2 Chronicles 20:12

we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. **We do not know what to do, ☞ but our eyes are upon you.**"

And, God responded to Jehoshaphat. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jehaziel and he prophesied, "the battle is not yours, but God's." He encouraged them to take their positions and stand firm without fear, knowing that the Lord was with them. When we are

☞ following Christ and cooperating with the Spirit's leading, **God is with us and will not abandon us.**

This story is a picture of spiritual warfare. We see people who were determined to follow God being attacked by an enemy. In fact, the enemy here in verse 22 is Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir. Ammon = people. Moab = sons of. And, Mt. Seir = a hairy goat or a demon. There really is a spiritual enemy that is out to destroy you. Meanwhile, ☞ Jehoshaphat = **the Lord is judge**. We know that ultimately God is in control.

2 Corinthians 2:11

in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. **5** We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

When we praise and worship we are getting ourselves focused on God and it brings our thoughts in line with who he is and what he can do. It's a form of spiritual warfare when we sing praises to the Lord.

Psalms 149:1, 6

Praise the Lord. Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints. May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands.

☞ **Praise Paves the Path v.21**

The singers were at the head of the army singing praises to God.

Could you imagine putting the church's worship team in front of Seal Team 6 to take out Bin Laden? This shows the complete confidence this people had in the word of God.

They were moving forward singing and shouting about how great God is. They were ☞ publicly thanking God in spite of their circumstances. **They praised first.**

Psalms 150:2, 6

Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

When Ezra was rebuilding the temple, he had singers praising God.

When Nehemiah was rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, he had singers praising God.

In all of our work for the Lord, we must remember to keep our focus on him and praise him. Serving is a form of worship, but it can become just another duty, so make sure your heart is in it by focusing on who God is and what he has done for us.

☞ Praise paves the path. We **enter into his presence with praise** and thanksgiving. **It's a priority** that sets the stage for God's miracle-working power.

### ☞ **Praise Prompts God's Power v. 22**

Proverbs 21:31

Go ahead and prepare for the conflict, but victory comes from God. --TLB

The Lord set ambushes and the enemies destroyed each other.

Ambush = to lie in wait... God was already in place to take out the enemy; he wasn't surprised; he already had a plan

The same kind of thing happened for Gideon in Judges 7. They blew trumpets and broke some jars and God caused the enemy to turn on each other.

Remember when Elisha's servant saw a vast army surrounding the city? Elisha said, "those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes and he saw horses and chariots of fire all around them.

☞ **God is already with us.** We need to keep on praising him; this prompts his power.

☞ Psalm 8:2 says that ***praise from children is ordained to silence the foe and the avenger.***

1 Samuel 16:23 - *When David played his harp the evil spirit would leave.*

☞ Isaiah 30:32 says that ***God fights the enemy to the music of tambourines and harps.***

Jehoshaphat's men hadn't even reached the battlefield yet! Don't forget that God made a promise, "This battle is not yours, but God's."

Psalms 145:13

☞ **The Lord is faithful to all his promises**

2 Corinthians 1:20

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ.

*A despairing man confessed to his pastor, "My life is really in bad shape." "How bad?" the pastor inquired. Burying his head in his hands, he moaned, "I'll tell you how bad - all I've got left is God." The pastor's face lit up. "I'm happy to assure you that a person with nothing left but God has more than enough for great victory!"*

Keep on praising God; it prompts his power. Your miracle could be just around the corner!

### ☞ **Praise Plunders Principalities v. 25**

*You can't have a triumph without a trial, you can't have a testimony without a test and you can't have a great victory until you've gone through a great battle!*

*"When God is going to do something wonderful, He chooses a difficulty. When He is going to do something very wonderful, He chooses an impossibility!"*

After the enemy destroyed themselves there was plunder to be taken... A great amount that was more than they could take away. In fact, it took three days to collect it all.

They went from worrying to worshipping, from fear of losing everything, including their lives, to gathering up so much spoil it took them 3 days to collect it all. **God has the ☞ ability to rapidly change circumstances.**

Malachi 3:1

See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple

Remember the story in 2 Kings about the siege on Samaria. It was so bad that prices went through the roof and the people started to turn to cannibalism. Then the word of the Lord came saying, "this time tomorrow..." everything is going to turn around and prices will be cheap. There was doubt, but it happened in an instant and the word of the Lord was fulfilled.

Equipment – sometimes, when we come through a difficult time, we gain **new ☞ perspective about life** and new tools to help others in a similar situation.

☞ Clothing – those troubling times can shape us and give us a **new perception of your identity in Christ** if we will learn from them.

Articles of value – there are always lessons to be learned when we face troubles; they can ☞ give us **new power to overcome**. "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger."

How do you handle your problems? Do you panic? Do you complain? Do you raise your fist in the air and shout at God? Do you begin to doubt or do you go the Lord in prayer, humility, praise, and trust? As you can see, God had already done great things for the Hebrew people. He has already done great things for you as well. Satan has had you in a hole so long he has you believing there is no solution. But God always has a plan and praise plunders principalities.

## ☞ Praise Produces Peace v. 30

They returned joyfully = exceeding gladness and pleasure

☞ At some point, things will return to some sense of normal. It might be a **new normal**, but it will come.

They rejoiced over their enemies = to brighten up; to cheer up

One day you will be able to look back with rejoicing that you made it through. There may ☞ be some scars, but **you can make it**.

There was rest on every side = peace and quiet; to settle down

The old adage says, "This, too, shall pass." But even if it doesn't **there is always the possibility of peace when you trust God** and keep on coming back to him.

Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! **5** Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. **6** Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. **7** And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Isaiah 26:3

You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.

True peace comes from trusting Jesus. This kind of peace goes beyond the kind of peace that comes when everything is going your way. This is the kind of peace that can occur even in the midst of troubles. When you really trust Jesus, it doesn't matter what comes ☞ your way because you know that "he's got this;" **he is still in control**.

☞ **There is power and ability in praise. Praise Paves the Path and Prompts God's Power to Plunder Principalities, ultimately Producing Peace in you.**