

☞ Principles of Praise series

Review The **Purpose of Praise**... we were created to proclaim God's praises and it pleases God when we praise.

The **Practices of Praise**... There are many ways to express praise to the Lord. And, it's okay to stretch yourself a bit and learn to praise in some new ways.

The **Power of Praise**... Praise is spiritual warfare which can repel the enemy and give you peace.

The **Product of Praise**... Praise invites God's presence; it helps us to hear from God; Praise is an important part of keeping filled with the Holy Spirit.

☞ The Perks of Praise

There are a lot of reasons to thank God and praise him. He's done so much for us and he is just plain amazing. God is pleased and honored when we take time to praise him. And yet, when we praise we also receive benefit.

The Bible is filled with examples of God's power being released when people praise: life-changing miracles, the enemy being defeated, hearts being changed and drawn closer to Him. There's power when we praise God and there are perks for us as well...

☞ Praise returns our focus to God.

We need this constant reminder - life is not all about us. We may know that in our heads, but our hearts think differently so often. We're prone to selfishness. Selfishness is the essence of sin and leads to all kinds of problems.

James 3:16

where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

In our often "selfie" focused world, we like to have everything centered on us. But that is not really what's best for us. God wants our eyes be set firmly on Him, because that's

☞ where **our true hope is found.**

Some of the most miserable people are those who only think of themselves. Meanwhile, some of the happiest people are those who are always thinking of others and simply serving God.

Ten Ways to Be Unhappy

by Neil Eskelin

1. *Make little things bother you. Don't just let them, make them.*
2. *Lose your perspective on things and keep it lost: don't put first things first.*
3. *Find yourself a good worry, one about which you cannot do anything.*
4. *Be a perfectionist, which means not that you work hard to do your best, but that you condemn yourself and others for not achieving perfection.*
5. *Be right. Be always right. Be the only one who is always right, and be rigid in your rightness.*
6. *Don't trust or believe people, or accept them at anything but their worst and weakest.*
7. *Be suspicious. Insist that others always have hidden motives.*
8. *Always compare yourself unfavorably to others. This guarantees instant misery.*
9. *Take personally everything that happens to you.*
10. *Don't give yourself whole-heartedly to anyone or anything.*

Praising God is the antidote to many of these things. It gets our focus in the right place.

☞ **Praise reduces complaining.**

Sometimes even within our prayers, we can tend to complain about our problems. But through praise, we're reminded of what He has already done in our lives. We're reminded that He knows what concerns us, and is capable of taking care of everything that burdens us.

☞ **Psalms 68:19**

Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, **who daily bears our burdens.**

When we are reminded that God is with us, carrying our burdens, it helps us stop complaining. Praising God reminds us who God is and how much he cares.

☞ **Praise restores humility.**

As we praise Him as Creator and King over all, we admit and recognize that we're not in control, but He is. He is above all.

Psalms 95:1-3

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. **2** Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. **3** For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods.

When we are humble before the Lord, it's good for us...

☞ **Psalm 18:27 He saves the humble**

Psalm 25:9 He guides the humble

Isaiah 66:2 God esteems the humble person

James 4:10 He lifts up the humble

1 Peter 5:5 He opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble

This is counter-cultural. Our society promotes pride, but the scripture promotes humility. Now, humility is not tearing yourself down. It's knowing who you really are and understanding that God is above all. And God blesses humility.

☞ **Praise releases stress.**

1 Peter 5:7

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

☞ **Philippians 4:6-7**

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

The prescription for stress and anxiety in Philippians 4 is prayer, praise, and a positive ☞ mindset. We need to **pray and praise.**

Sometimes in prayer we focus on the problem. In fact, a lot of times in group prayer, we spend more time talking about the problem than actually praying! But praise simply focuses on the solution. So, I say pray, but be sure to praise as well.

In Matthew 11:28-29 Jesus said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your soul.” True rest is found in the Lord!

When we praise the Lord, it gets us focused on him and he can give us peace beyond understanding, releasing stress and anxiety.

Neuroscience reveals how gratitude literally rewires your brain to be happier

by Justin Brown

We often hear about the power of gratitude for creating a more positive and happy mental state. But did you know that gratitude literally transforms your brain?

According to UCLA's Mindfulness Awareness Research Center, regularly expressing gratitude changes the molecular structure of the brain, keeps the gray matter functioning, and makes us healthier and happier.

When you feel happiness, the central nervous system is affected. You are more peaceful, less reactive, and less resistant. And gratitude is the most effective practice for stimulating feelings of happiness.

In one study of gratitude researchers randomly assigned participants one of three tasks. The participants kept a journal each week, with one group describing things they were grateful for, another group describing what was hassling them and the other keeping track of neutral events. After ten weeks, the participants in the gratitude group felt 25 percent better than the other groups.

Another study on gratitude was conducted with adults suffering from congenital and adult-onset neuromuscular disorders. Compared to those not jotting down what they're grateful for every night, participants that did express gratitude felt more refreshed each day upon waking. They also felt more connected with others than did participants in the group not expressing gratitude.

*Another study didn't require a gratitude journal, but looked at the amount of gratitude people showed in their daily lives. In this study, a group of Chinese researchers found that **☞ higher levels of gratitude were associated with better sleep, and also with lower levels of anxiety and depression.***

Better sleep, with less anxiety and depression. Some compelling reasons to express gratitude more regularly. If you've only got time to say one prayer today, make it the simple words of "thank you."

☞ Praise renews us.

We're encouraged by His peace and strengthened by His joy. Through a heart of praise, we realize that God doesn't just change our situations and work through our problems, He changes our hearts.

☞ Psalms 16:7

In Your presence is fullness of joy

☞ Nehemiah 8:10

the joy of the Lord is your strength.

When we praise him, we are entering into his presence where there is joy and joy gives us strength. Psalm 103 reminds us of the benefits we have in God. There are many, but here's one to remember...

Psalms 103:5

...satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

☞ Praise rouses God's power.

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

God shakes things up through praise. We've already talked about Jehoshaphat putting the singers at the head of army and God ambushed the enemy while his people sang praise. Here's another one: As Paul and Silas sat in prison, shackled, and chained, they kept right on praising God. And God sent an earthquake that shook the cells and broke the chains. The jailer and all his family came to know Christ that very night.

We have a choice every day in this life. To live absorbed in worry and stress, on the fast track of busyness, focused only on what surrounds us, tuned into the roar of the world. Or, we can take our eyes off all our problems and mess, and the voices of others, and we can look up... to Him, the One who holds it all together, and who holds us in his hands.

He desires to bless us more than we could imagine. His Spirit urges us onward, calling us closer. **When we enter into praise, God is honored and we receive great benefits. There are some great Perks to Praise.**

**Here for you
Holy Spirit**