

## ☞ Principles of Praise series

Review Purpose of Praise... we were created to proclaim God's praises; praise is the proper protocol for entering God's presence; it pleases God when we praise; and we receive personal benefit when we praise.

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

### ☞ The Power of Praise

#### 2 Chronicles 20:21-30

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 that. Then, at the beginning of chapter 20, the enemy attacks. We tend to think that if really get on track with God, he will immediately bless us. But here, the king of Assyria came and invaded... Success is often followed by severe testing. 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. 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!** That's what Jehoshaphat did...

☞ **v. 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 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.

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.

### ☞ **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**.

The first mention of praise in the Bible is at the birth of Jacob's son, Judah, in Genesis. Judah means praise. No matter where you see the name Judah in the Bible, it always means praise. Revelation 5:5 tells us that our Lord Jesus, The Lion of the Tribe of Praise (Judah) has overcome!

In the historical books of the Bible, Judah is always performing. In Judges 1 the Israelites asked God who should lead the invasion of Canaan, and God said Judah should go first. So, praise entered the battle first.

We tend to draw our weapons of worry, our defenses of distress, and our words of war. What would happen if we simply trusted that the Lion of the Tribe of Judah has already won the battle? What would happen in our lives if we put away our worrying words, and lifted our voices in praise?

Judson Cornwall said, *"Saints who would learn to do battle for the Lord should first learn ☞ how to praise, for God sends **praise as the shock troops** to drive the enemy back before the rest of the army is allowed to join the battle."*

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. 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

Their praise was not timid and ritualistic; they “stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a very loud voice” (v. 19). They praised Him with all their might, and as a result, God fought for them, struck down their enemy, and gave them victory.

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 - *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.” And Psalm 145:13 says, “The Lord is faithful to all his promises.”

Keep on praising God; he already has a plan; praise 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 turning 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.

Here in 2 Chronicles, they plundered equipment, clothing, and articles of value. 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 our 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 to 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. 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.

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**. So, just keep on praising him.

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

What are you battling today? Fear? An unsaved spouse? A co-worker? Your kids? Your weight? Your self-defeating thoughts? Try this, instead of battling in your own power, put on a praise song and start singing! Sing over your situation. Sing over your spouse, your kids, your fear, and your thoughts! Rejoice over your life, and lift up an encouraging praise. There is power in praise!

**Raise a Hallelujah**