

## Releasing God's Power Through Praise & Worship

*Acts 16:23-26* “And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely.

{24} *Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.*

{25} *But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.*

{26} *Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.”*

This Bible story begins the unjust arrest of Paul and Silas. Because they had cast a spirit of divination out of a girl, the local Philippian authorities at beat them and then threw them into a jail cell. Besides the trauma of the severe beating, they were fastened in stocks which clamped their arms and legs in an immobile position, causing cramps and loss of circulation. The atmosphere there was depressing. According to the standards of that day, a prison was more like the resemblance of a dungeon. A dark, damp, stench-ridden place, with no waste facility or comforts of any kind.

Yet, in spite of the throbbing pain in their bodies and the disheartening atmosphere, at midnight Paul and Silas were heard praying and singing praises to God! What a strange sound this must have been to the other prisoners, who were used to only hearing the groans or cursings of those who had been beaten.

Then suddenly, there was an earthquake that shook the prison! The doors flung open, and amazingly, the bonds of Paul, Silas, and every other prisoner were released! What caused this mighty discharge of power?

## Praise Elevates us into God's Presence and Power

Paul and Silas knew the secret of how to lift their hearts above their troubles and enter into God's presence and power. Through praise and worship their hearts were raised into the joyous presence and peace of God, and provided God a channel for his power to operate in their circumstances.

The Bible says that God inhabits in the praises of His people (*Psalms 22:3*). In other words, God “dwells” in the atmosphere of His praise. This means that praise is not merely a reaction from coming into His presence - Praise is a vehicle of faith which brings us into the presence and power of God! Praise and worship is the “gate-pass” which allows us to enter the sacredness of His glory. The psalmist writes, “*Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name*” (*Psalms 100:4*).

This corresponds with Jesus' teaching, that His presence will inhabit the gathering of believers who congregate in His name: “*For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.*” (*Matthew 18:20*). A “gathering in His name” means that Jesus must be the focus, the center of the assemblage. He must be the one preached about, sung about — the one praised and worshiped. “*I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the congregation I will sing praise to You*” (*Hebrews 2:12*). Consequently, Christ's presence, along with His virtue and anointing, is manifested in this type of gathering.

Have you ever noticed when “gifts of the Spirit” operate in a church service? The power and anointing of the Holy Spirit usually becomes evident, subsequent to a time of worship and praise. Some think that worship is a response after the Holy Spirit moves upon them.

However, it's the other way around. God's presence responds when we move upon Him with worship! Lifting up Jesus Christ through praise and worship invokes the Lord's presence and power to flow in our midst.

### What is Praise?

Praise means “to commend, to applaud or magnify.” For the Christian, praise to God is an expression of worship, lifting-up and glorifying the Lord. It is an expression of humbling ourselves and centering our attention upon the Lord with heart-felt expressions of love, adoration and thanksgiving. High praises bring our spirit into a pinnacle of fellowship and intimacy between ourselves and God — it magnifies our awareness of our spiritual union with the most high God. Praise transports us into the realm of the supernatural and into the power of God. “*Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! They walk, O LORD, in the light of Your countenance*” (*Psalms 89:15*).

There are many actions involved with praise to God — verbal expressions of adoration and thanksgiving, singing, playing instruments, shouting, dancing, lifting or clapping our hands. But true praise is not “merely” going through these motions. Jesus spoke about the hypocrisy of the pharisees, whose worship was only an outward show and not from the heart. “*These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me*” (*Matthew 15:8*). Genuine praise to God is a matter of humility and sincere devotion to the Lord from within.

Unpretentious praise and worship pleases the Lord. He delights in the love and devotion of His children. According to the scriptures, the various expressions of praise bring blessing to the Lord. He eagerly awaits the fragrance of our affections, desiring to manifest His sweet presence and power in our midst. “*...the true*

worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him” (John 4:23).

### **Praise to God is a Lifestyle**

All too often, praise to God is something that many people leave at church, an event that happens only when they come together with other Christians. However, praise should be a part of a believers lifestyle, inter-mingled as a part of their daily prayer-life. At work, in the car, at home in bed, or anywhere; praise to the Lord brings the refreshing of the Lord’s presence, along with His power and anointing. **“I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth” (Psalms 34:1).**

Praise is an expression of faith, and a declaration of victory! It declares that we believe God is with us and is in control of the outcome of all our circumstances (Romans 8:28). Praise is a “sacrifice,” something that we offer to God sacrificially, not just because we feel like it, but because we believe in Him and wish to please Him. **“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name” (Hebrews 13:15).**

### **Praise Sends the Enemy Running**

Since praise manifests God’s presence, we also realize that praise repels the presence of the enemy, Satan. An atmosphere which is filled with sincere worship and praise to God by humble and contrite hearts is disgusting to the Devil. He fears the power in the name of Jesus, and flees from the Lord’s habitation in praise. **“Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; And to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God” (Psalms 50:23).**

When the children of Judah found themselves outnumbered by the hostile armies of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, King

Jehoshaphat and all the people sought the Lord for His help. The Lord assured the people that this would be His battle. He told them to go out against them, and He would do the fighting for them. So what did the children of Judah do? Being the people of “praise” (Judah actually means Praise), and knowing that God manifests His power through praise, they sent their army against their enemies, led by the praisers!

So on they went, ahead of the army declaring, “Praise the Lord, for His mercy endureth forever!” And the scripture says, **“...when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated” (2 Chron. 20:22).**

When God’s people begin to praise His name, it sends the enemy running! I challenge you to become a person of praise, and you will experience the release of the power of God!

#### **Some Biblical Expressions of Praise**

- Declaring of thanks (Heb. 13:15)*
- Clapping hands and shouting (Psalms 47:1)*
- Musical instruments and dancing (Psm. 150:4)*
- Singing praise songs (Psalms 9:11)*
- Psalms, hymns, & spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19-20)*
- Making a joyful noise (Psalms 98:4)*
- By lifting our hands (Psalms 134:2)*
- By being still (Psalms 4:3-5, 46:10)*
- By being loud (Psalms 33:3, 95:1-6)*

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*Unless otherwise stated, all scripture references were taken from  
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