

LifeSpot ... Praise power

Possibility of praise

"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NIV). To us, this is impossible and impractical. To God, it is possible and powerful. Praise to God—especially in our worst times—changes our perspective so we can see God's view, not just our own view. Praise can be the hardest thing we do, but also the most life-changing thing we do. It's a devil-defying choice of attitude, an act of faith that connects with Heaven and changes everything. How effectively praise dissipates darkness! Jesus said that if people don't cry out in praise, rocks will. Let's get ahead of those rocks.

More praise, more souls

"About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening." Acts 16:25 (NIV). We shouldn't assume this was easy. The two were fresh from humiliation, stripping, and beating. Bruised and bloodied in a dungeon, they praised God. This so startled Heaven and Earth that it caused an earthquake. And it shook perhaps a dozen people out of unbelief and into saving grace. Praise is not natural, but supernatural. It's "a mighty force in projecting the Gospel" (E M Bounds). It's our most effective means for soul-winning. What a fascinating formula—*More praise, more souls*. Let's praise!

More praise, less worry

Adoration. Confession. Thanksgiving. Supplication. The acronym ACTS, and the character of our prayers. Two of the four have to do with praise. Is praise anywhere near half my praying? Pray with thanksgiving, wrote Paul—it's your antidote for anxiety (Philippians 4:6). I can be filled with worry or filled with praise to God, but not filled with both. This process is not mental trickery or reality denial. Rather, it is consciously pouring each concern into God's big bowl of compassion. We believe, don't we? "Lord, here are my concerns for today. . . . They're yours now, not mine. Deal with them as you wish. Thank you! Praise God! I rest in you. Hallelujah."

Extreme praise

"Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 5:20 (NIV). *Always?* For *everything*? This is extreme praise. We have extreme sports, so why not extreme praise? To give thanks to God for virtually everything—there's an adventure into places we've never been! For years I argued against such an exercise. Irrational. Futile. Stupid. Then, some tough things happened that made me try it. I could at least thank God for the chance to trust him. I could thank him for strength in weakness, presence in pain. Extreme praise in the name of Jesus. Here's what I found—the blessings that follow are just as extreme.