

Reflect on this! series 7

**POWER
OF
PRAISE**

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DEDICATION

*This book is dedicated to the
Honor, glory and adoration
of*

GOD ALMIGHTY

also to

*All the Bible Students in the entire world
who seeks after truth:
The truth shall make you free, Amen*

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CHAPTER 1 **The Act of Praises**

It is complex. It is breathtaking. Yet it is difficult to understand. Tears were rolling from the eyes. But the faces are lighted up. Obviously, there is no anguish of sorrowful heart. No one was mourning. Bewilderment of joy rented the air. Some danced gleefully. No drumming. No orchestrated music show. Some jumped up and down in ecstasy. Not the kind for body-building exercise in the gym. Certainly it was not in the sporting arena. Some just fall face down muttering unheard words. Some were dumfounded, unable to say anything or making any kind of gesture because they were shocked by the pleasant occurrence. I wish there is a better way of describing praise to you but I believe that the following testimony will throw some light into the subject of praise.

A well known Christian man came to United States in 1989 and his family joined him in 1991. One of his children applied for admission into a private College in US. The income of the family was a lean one. I believe you understand what I mean. 'Let the poor say I am rich.' The college expense for a year in the private

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college in America was in the neighborhood of \$48,000.00 per annum. College fund became the mountain that seemed to stand between this young man and his desire to obtain his college education in the private college. There is no one to turn to for financial assistance. The family did not have ‘green-card,’ therefore the young man did not qualify for government loan to pursue his academic objectives. However, one day he received letters of admission from four private colleges that also offered him scholarship. Some of the admission came with partial scholarship and full scholarship packages. The family of course rejoiced and praised God for the breakthrough. But they did not allowed themselves to be carried away with full scholarship package without turning to God for direction before making a choice out of the four private college admissions. They finally chose one college as the Lord directed the family a day before the dead line date, which was May 1, 1999. The family mailed the acceptance letter to the college. With this choice, by law in America, the boy had to let go of the other three admission packages.

Two weeks later, the boy received a letter from the college stating that they noticed that the boy did not have permanent residency card. He was advised to fax a photocopy of the card to the college immediately or lose the scholarship he had been given if he failed to supply it. The entire family of seven was down cast. They just burst into tears. They were completely

helpless about the situation. It was no longer possible to choose another private college after the deadline date had passed. There was no one to turn to for advice. The news made the family so sad. The family, being Christians was aware where the problem was coming from. Typical of the way that Satan operates, when a breakthrough manifested in the life of a child of God, Satan will like to spoil the joy in his wicked attempt to raise a doubt in the mind of the person. The family also knew that when God began His miraculous work, He always completes it. They knew that when God opens a door of His blessing to mankind, no one is able to shut the door. They were also aware that God does not share His glory with anyone. This Christian family agreed by faith that Satan cannot share in the glory that had already been given to God in this matter.

With this mind the family summoned courage; they assembled together and called upon the name of God in prayer. They took their convictions about what scripture revealed that God operates miraculously to prayers offered to Him. *“And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” (John 14:14)* God Himself opened the way of His blessing to the family and the enemy cannot close it. They also told God in their prayer that they never took any step relating to the choice of the college without first seeking for His direction. They reminded the Heavenly Father that they had followed His directive in the choice of college

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they made and that the eyes of the family were on the Lord in the matter.

The father of the young man followed up this prayer with a letter on behalf of the boy, telling the college that the boy never claimed that he had green-card in any of the documents he had sent to the college. He mentioned further that it was now difficult for the boy to choose another college after the deadline date and finally he appealed to the college to please reconsider their stand and not withdraw the scholarship already granted to his son.

The letter was mailed but no one knew what could be the outcome, knowing that the family could not produce what the school needed. Anxiety mounted in the mind of the family. The school did not reply the letter. Fear of the unknown did not allow the father to call the college to find out whether the letter had been received. However, the father decided one day and said, "At least we need to know the outcome of this episode." He picked up the phone to call the college. His hands were shaking. He managed to dial the number and asked for the admission department. He gave the detail of the reason for the call. The man at the other end paused a while and said, "I will be expecting your son in August, 23 in the college." The father of the boy said, "I don't understand, Sir." The man again said, "What is it that you don't understand. I say, I will be expecting your son in our college in

August.” The father asked further, “Are you going to send us a letter to this effect so that there will be no misunderstanding?” The man said, “I am the Dean of Admission in this college. I am not going to send any other letter to you than what I have told you. I will welcome your son into our college come August, period.” The father was only able to say, “Thank you, Sir!” He quietly replaced the receiver and he fell down flat on his face in an open office. He was rolling up and down saying, “Thank you Lord! Thank you Lord! You have done it again! You have done it again! Only you can do such a miracle! Tears of joy were streaming on his face. He just began to worship God spontaneously like that until people converge round about him to make sure that he was still in his senses. After much extensive drama of praise, now he got up and called his wife. The poor woman echoed with a loud scream, praising God on top of her voice. Everybody in the family were dancing and jubilating, praising the Father in an uncommon language of praise and expression that the miracle brought forth.

Perhaps you are wondering why the family was so happy. Their joy was no longer about the scholarship alone. Their joy transcended the restoration of the son’s scholarship. It was a spiritual victory against invincible forces that attempted to mess up their lives. The joy was about the glory of God that was at stake at the moment. The praise was about the confirmation of the word of God and the vindication of the faith in the

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precepts of the scripture. *“For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’”* (Romans 10:11) Beloved, think of this: this is a divine intervention in the secular life of this believer. Imagine the praises that the Heavenly King deserves for His miraculous and incredible acts in the overall affairs of the universe!

These are some of the different expression of praises. These are the act of the people that had experienced the divine intervention of God. Praise is deep and yet very simple. The reason to praise is very deep but the act of praise itself is very simple. There is always an important reason to praise God from one individual point of view to another. Praise takes root from the heart of appreciation and manifests in the lightened appearance of face. Mouths shout with joy, spontaneous laughter erupts, emotional tears of joy roll from the eyes and the hands are lifted up simultaneously. Praise emanates from man and points him heavenward. It always point man to the Heavenly Father from whom all blessings come. Praise has its own language that uniquely addresses the Living God that the individual is serving. One often hears believers saying, “Glory to God Almighty!”, “Praise be to His Holy name!”

There is no clear cut way of defining praise. But a sincere detailed consideration of the act of praise will enlighten our hearts about the message in this book.

Praise is a gracious attitude for gratitude. It is an expression of appreciation that flows from the depths of a sincere joyful heart. A praise filled heart compares the unworthiness of self with the unimaginable magnitude of the greatness, mercy and blessing of God in his life. Praise is the concurring acceptance of an outcome of personal discovery and realization of who God Almighty is. Praise is an induced joy and happiness through the divine intervention of God and His revelations in the affairs of mankind. Praise is the unalloyed loyalty we humbly express unto God when all the chips are down, when we lean on the bosom of the Heavenly Father in the midst of affliction and deeply sorrowful situation. Praise is expressed freely and spontaneously in uncommon gracious gestures that communicate the wholesomeness of our heart-feelings in a spiritual language that only God can decipher.

There is no specific format of praising God because it is commonly expressed spontaneously in random gestures. Praise redefines being crazy in humanity. The only remarkable difference between a mentally-crazy person and a praise-crazy person is that the former is insane and latter is sane. Praise fills people with intoxication of excitement and ecstasy not induced by alcohol but rather by the blessings and divine intervention of God. Some praise God with cries of joy because there are no words sufficient to express the feelings of the praise crazy person. Some bare their

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hearts to the Lord, praising him with hands raised up, faced towards heaven while adoring God, unable to utter a word. Some express praises unto the Lord by involuntary body shaking and shouting hysterically with joy. Some, on the other hands, kneel down, nodding their heads on bare floor, worshipping God telling Him, 'You alone are worthy to be worshipped.' Some will just jump up and down, laughing hysterically in an elated mood, hugging all and sundry.

In the mood of praise, all malice is lost, pains are momentarily forgotten, and the focus of hopelessness is transformed to hopefulness. The "How can it be done?" questions had changed to "How was it done?" Some dance to the music of their hearts that produces no sound at all. Some, on the other hand, dance to the melodious sounds pouring from their mouths. At the peak of my appreciation for God's loving-kindness for me, I rolled up and down on the bare floor for my God, shouting, "Thank you God!" "Thank you God!"

Praise is the only single act of man that puts his entire body to work simultaneously. At least there are nine ways our body participates in expressing praises to God. With our mouth we sing, shout and express cries of joy. With our hands lifted up spontaneously, involuntary clapping of hands, wringing hands in adoration to Holy and Mighty God. With the entire body lifted up when we jump in awesome adoration of our Creator, humbling self before God by bowing

down with fore-head nodding on bare floor and dancing around in non-format expression that could only communicates our heartfelt appreciation to God. The high placed man and the relatively unknown man are at par during the moment of praising God. The king dances in jubilation and subjects applaud with clapping and shouting. There is no training school for spontaneous praises. When the power of God manifests mighty deed, praises of man confirms its acceptance. Everybody has different ways of expressing this spiritual gesture towards our Creator. We may be wondering and ask ourselves, which spirit is in charge of our being when we are praising God? Certainly it was not Satan or any of its demonic agents. Of course the spirit of God in us is ruling in us for the glory of God in our life because at that very moment, there is harmony between the three components of our body: namely – flesh, soul and the spirit -- in that they united together to praise the Creator.

Again we are tempted to ask ourselves, “What do all these uncontrollable joy called praises do unto God Almighty when we express them in form of human gestures?” I need to explain this pleasant moment with an illustration and scenario that is common to everyone on the surface of the earth today. In recent wars, we have seen footage produced by the sophisticated media devices the military used to monitor drops of food supply from their planes. When this happens, hundreds of people stream to the drop site to gather the much

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needed food supply. By this monitoring device, the country that provided the relief will know that the humanitarian service gets to the expected destination. Similarly, every blessing of God unto mankind and His intervention in the affairs of mankind are targeted to the people for whom the blessings and intervention are intended. When God releases His blessing upon earth, the eruption of joy expressed in form of praises in response to the blessing of God is feedback that the blessing of God actually located and reached the intended people. When the blessings of God are made manifest among the people of God, it reflects the power of God and His glory in the life of mankind.

Every element of praises in the life of mankind addresses the attributes of Almighty God for who He is and for what he has done. There are two distinct types of praises namely: thanksgiving and worshipping praises.

Praises in worship express the glory of God as revealed to man in the infinite wisdom of God. We always extend a kind gesture towards someone who is very dear to us in terms of offering him or her with a special gift we think the person will appreciate. In order to fulfill this desire, we may go a step further to investigate indirectly the type of gift that will meet the individual desire. Once we lay our hands upon the appropriate gift, we wrap it with a befitting decorative wrapper, place it in a gift bag and address the gift tag

in favor of the loved one. Lastly we apply our personal touch towards the loved one by either bringing the gift to the person personally or mailing it in such a way that he will receive the gift in good condition and at appropriate timing.

Praise in worship is like coming to the presence of the Living God loaded with bundles of praises in our hearts as our own heart desired gift to the Living God. The gift is wrapped with decorative appreciations of our hearts. The only difference is that in our own application of personal touch with these gift, instead of putting it in a bag and label its tag in God's favor, we begin to unwrap those precious gift of our heart before God with the expression of worship from our mouth and making various gestures before Him as our own form of obeisance. It is like presenting pleasing fragrance before Him. This is different from thanksgiving praise prayer where we praise the Lord for all He has done for us in the past before we lay our petitions before Him. I am speaking of praise worship from the depth of our hearts for who Almighty God is. In this type of praise worship we only magnify Him, not just for what He has done for us but because there is no yardstick to measure His majesty. As majestic as He is, He is very detailed in His tender loving care towards mankind. He nourishes and ministers to every single cells of our body. That is why He knew the numbers of the hairs on our heads and none of it will fall without His knowledge. We exalt Him because He

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is mighty. We honor Him because His wisdom is unsearchable. *“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!”* (Romans 11:33) As mighty as He is, He inclines His ear unto mankind although man was described as grasshopper in the field. *“It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.”* (Isaiah 40:22) His mercy endures forever. That is why He is patient with sinful and unappreciative mankind. *“Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy.”* (Micah 7:18) We acknowledge His holiness and His faithfulness as these attributes truly describe Him. There is no one like Him. *“Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!”* (Psalm 71:19)

We honor Him on His Majestic Throne and sincerely worship Him as the Spirit of God has revealed unto us the glimpse of the Glory of God in Heaven where the twenty-four elders set aside their crowns and bow down before the Lord on the Throne, and the angels were shouting, Holy, Holy, Holy.

Praises in worshipping addresses seven awesome attribute of Almighty God namely:

His Majesty	Psalm 96:1, 6; Isaiah 24:14
His Glory	Psalm 138:5; Ezekiel 3:12
His Excellency	Exodus 15:7; Psalm 148:13
His Greatness	1Chronicles16:25; Psalm 145:3
His Holiness	Exodus 15:11; Isaiah 6:3
His Wisdom	Daniel 2:20; Jude 1:25
His Power -	Psalm 21:13

Praises in thanksgiving express the gratefulness of mankind for what God has done for us individually or collectively. It always come to a point in the life of mankind that solution to the problems of our lives defies human methods, and we are left with only one choice, that is – to seek the face of Almighty in the desperate situation. When we received divine intervention of God in a situation like this, people always go wild with joy in order to express how joyful, happy and appreciative they are for what God had done for them. An appreciative minded person will always have cause to offer praises of thanksgiving unto God.

There is a difference between praise and prayer. Praise is an act of thanksgiving and worshipping God. Praise may be part of prayer. Praise in prayer is our moral way of coming to God, to thank Him first of all as a precursor before bringing forth our petitions to God.

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But it has its distinct purpose in our relationship with God. Prayer is not only an act of praises and worshipping God; it is also a medium whereby we pour out our mind unto God, communing with Him in the wealth of our understanding of His word. We strengthen our faith when we begin to relish in the wealth of His uncountable miraculous deeds and recount the faithfulness of God in His past relationship with mankind according to the revelation of the scripture. In the confidence of faith in our mind we communicate to the Father in Heaven concerning our needs and lay before Him our petitions.

There are four elements of true thanksgiving that can be found in praises, namely:

- Remembering and relishing what God has done to strengthen our faith
- Telling others about goodness of God in our testimonies to build the faith of others
- Showing-off evidently in humility and in adoration of God's glory to others
- Offering gifts of self, time, resources and services in the vineyard of God

Generally man tends to forget those wonderful moments that God has intervened in his situation. Man has very short memory for the goodness of God. The length of time in man's memory about the goodness of God is at most, as long as his lifetime. Even within this

time there are crowds of events and problems that will try to over-shadow the monumental events of God's greatness in the man's life. God was aware of this human weakness when the Israelites were at the point of crossing the River Jordan. *And the Lord said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. You shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, say, 'When you have come to the edge of the water of the Jordan, you shall stand in the Jordan.'"* (Joshua 3:7-8) The people of God made their entry into the land of Canaan during harvest time. The River Jordan always overflows its bank during harvest time. The volume of the river was at its greatest at this time of year and its flow was most erratic.

The moment the priests that bore the Ark of the Covenant stepped in to the River Jordan, the power of God descended into the deep. The water that came down upstream was cut off and stood as a heap and stopped flowing. Of course, the normal flow of the rest of the water continued thereby creating the pathway for the people of God to walk safely on a dry ground through the River Jordan. No amount of expression of the mouth could be sufficient for the description of this miracle. It was evident that God was with His people. The event gave the Israelites a sense of belonging to the Living God, the Creator of Heaven and earth. The events will no doubt remain permanent in the mind of

the people that witnessed it. But no matter how carefully they describe the unique events to the younger generation, they may be thinking that their parent is telling them a fable story. For this reason, God told Joshua to direct that a man from each twelve tribes of Israel should pick up a stone in the middle of River Jordan, where the priests that bore the Ark of Covenant were standing and carry them to their lodging place. These stones were set up upon each other as a memorial stone of the great deed of the Heavenly Father for His people. And Joshua said to them, *“Cross over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of the Jordan, and each one of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of children of Israel that this may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come saying: “What do these stones mean to you? Then you shall answer them that the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever.” (Joshua 4:4-7)*

We owe God the duty of remembering His greatness among us. His divine intervention in our lives and all His miraculous blessing should always be in our memory. The purpose is that we may be able to give a testimony of the glorious moment of God in our lives to those around us. Giving of testimony is another form of praises unto God. It is a dissemination of

knowledge of an unimaginable power of God that ignorant people are not tapping into. When a grateful child of God gives testimony of the greatness of God in his life, he is building bridge of faith over the problems of another person. He is telling someone that has a problem that there is no problem at all if God is the person's center-focus. Now the person with a problem will now walk on this bridge of faith to reach God and declare in a faithful challenge unto the Lord and say, 'If you can do this miracle in the life the person that gave this testimony, you will provide similar solution to my own problems.'

There are two kinds of song of praises – songs ABOUT God and songs FOR God. Songs about God reveals the excellence of God and His deity to man. It also edifies man and strengthens our faith in the Lord. The example below will throw more light on this point.

*O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder
Thy power throughout the universe display*

*Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee
How great Thou art! How great Thou art! (2ce)*

Carl Boberg, 1856

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