

Announcer

Welcome to transformed by the word, a podcast about discovering how to live your life with gratifying purpose. God created you for a reason and the Bible contains the keys to unlock your transformed life. Now, here's your host, Debora Barr

Debora 0:25

Thanks for joining me for Episode 14 of transformed by the word. Today we are exploring the topic, praise as a weapon. Our last episode covered spiritual warfare and the armor of God. And this episode continues that conversation with another powerful weapon against spiritual warfare.

Satan, the enemy of our souls, hates it when Christians Praise God. You see, Satan was created as a beautiful angel, created by God for worship. But Satan desired the power and status of God. And he sinned against God and was cast down and will be completely destroyed by God at the end of the age. You can read all about this in Isaiah chapter 14, Ezekiel chapter 28, and Revelation chapter 20. Satan was originally created for worship, and he hates it when we worship God.

Throughout the Bible, we see praise used as a weapon. One of the stories is found in Second Chronicles chapter 20. In that story, King Jehoshaphat and the Israelites are being threatened by the people of Amman, Moab, and mount Seir. Then in verse 14, we read, then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly, and he said, Listen, all you have Judah, and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you King Jehoshaphat thus says the Lord to you, do not be afraid, nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's tomorrow, go down against them, they will surely come up by the ascent of Ziz. And you will find them at the end of the brook before the wilderness of Jeruel. You will not need to fight this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord who is with you. Oh, Judah and Jerusalem. Do not fear or be dismayed. Tomorrow, go out against them, for the Lord is with you.

Then we skip ahead to verse 20, it says, so they rose early in the morning, and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, hear me, oh, Judah, and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established, believe his prophets, and you shall prosper. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and we're saying, praise the Lord, for his mercy endures forever. Now, when they began to sing into praise, the Lord said ambushes against the people of Amman, Moab and mount Seir, who had come up against Judah. And they were defeated. For the people of Amman and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another. So when Judah came to the place overlooking the wilderness, they looked towards the multitude, and there were their dead bodies fallen on the earth, no one had escaped. Isn't that amazing?

The Israelites fought the enemy with nothing more than praise as a weapon!

I'm excited to tell you I've invited a special guest to the show today to continue our conversation. Her name is Clarise Ottley. Clarise is my dear sister in Christ. She has impacted my life, more than just about every other person that I've ever met.

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Debora 5:23

You see, when I was living as a lesbian, and began attending a church in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, I met Clarise when she was the praise and worship leader. And she was leading a women's Bible study that I started to attend with my lesbian partner is because of the Amazing love of Christ that flowed through Clarise to me, that my life has been completely transformed.

One thing that I learned early on from Clarise is the power of praise. Clarise has been a nurse and an educator for many years, and she holds a PhD in nursing research. She is also very involved in her church in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. There she is a parish nurse, a worship leader. And until recently, she led and mentored over 20 women in various capacities, with a main focus on empowering them in their social, mental, physical, academic, personal and professional needs. She is a highly sought after speaker and singer.

Stay tuned. We will be back in just a moment.

Debora7:23

Clarise, thank you so much for coming on the show today, to share with our listening audience, it is always a pleasure to connect with you.

Clarise 7:32

Thank you, Deb for having me what an honor it is to be able to connect with you in the listening audience.

Debora7:39

Today, as you know, we are focusing on praise as a weapon. And before we begin, could you share with my listeners, just a little bit about you and how God has equipped you and anointed you for praise and worship?

Clarise 7:56

Well, that's a long story. But let me see if I can shorten it. So I would say that from the beginning of time when God had me in his bosom in heaven, and then he sent me to my mother's womb, that he already had plans for me to be appraiser and a worshiper. And that realization didn't really hit home for me until I was much older. Certainly, I used to sing in the choir at home, and in my church choir in Washington, DC. But it wasn't until I really moved away from the DC area into the West Virginia area that I really began to understand that God had given me a unique gift, and then unique power, through my ability to praise.

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One of the Scriptures that really rings home for me is Hebrews 13, verses 20 through 21. And it says, Now may the God of peace through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, equip, and that's the word that really grabbed me, equip you with everlasting good for doing His will. And may He work in us what is pleasing to Him through Jesus Christ at home the glory forever and ever. So that equipping me to be a praiser and a worshiper was something that God had preordained to be the case for me.

Debora9:38

And that is so so insightful because, as you know, God actually knew us in heaven before we come to earth. And I love how you brought that out that even before you knew that this is how God had anointed and equipped you. That that is what exactly what he did. So when did you first begin To realize and understand that God called you to be a worshiper, when was that revelation for you?

Clarise 10:08

Probably after I moved to West Virginia, just prior to just as a backdrop I used when I sing in the choir in DC, someone very close to me, talk to me one day, and the person asked me if I thought that I could sing. And I thought it was a very odd question, because I was singing in the choir. So obviously, I thought I could sing. And I was singing in the North Carolina choir, and nobody ever questioned or asked that question. And I said, Well, yes. And the person said, Well, I don't think you can. And I thought, maybe you should know. And it really was somewhat devastating to me. Because when you believe something for such a long time, and someone comes along and says something different, probably if it wasn't for the fact that the person who said it was a very strong person in my life, I may have just dismissed it. But it was a seed sown a negative seed sown. And as a result, I really didn't put forth what I believe God had called me to do, which was to sing.

And I did join the worship team at my church in Covenant church, and would sing some of the background vocals, but I was called upon one day, to sing to lead a song. And I remember the song was way out of my ability to sing. And I immediately wanted to say, No, I can't sing. Because remember, somebody told me that I couldn't sing. But there were a group of women at church who would always surround me whenever I would sing, because singing was something that I was so afraid to do that I couldn't even eat, I couldn't even drink before I sang. It was just, it gripped me. The fear gripped me.

And I began to understand that that fear was not of the Lord, and that the women who would pray for me would break through those barriers of fear. And I would actually be able to get up and sing about I think, the the morning when I sang a song, and I don't remember to this day what it was, but I lead a song, and there was a man in the audience, when the opportunity for people to be baptized went for people that already been planned to get baptized with this man, apparently went up to get baptized, unbeknownst to me. And when it was his turn to be baptized, the pastor asked if he wanted something to say, after saying, you know, have you received Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and save you? And he said, Yes, I do want to say something. He said, my brother had been praying for me for 40 years, to receive Christ. He said, and he invited me to come to church today. He says, and after that lady saying, and he named the song and he pointed me out. He said, it was something about her voice, something

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about what she's saying something about the power in which she's saying it something about the meaningful way she's saying it. He said, It pricked my heart in a way that it never been prick before. He said, and she got to me.

And he says, and I wanted to give my life to Christ, he says, and as a result of the 40 years that my brother had been praying, it was that song, that person that helped me to understand that God was calling me. So that was, to me, the most revealing of God's affirmation that I was chosen by him to be appraiser and a worshiper and not only bring glory and honor to him through praising him, but that there would be people whose lives would be impacted in such a positive way that they could come to know Christ, that they would be able to move forward positively in their lives, because of a song that I would sing or something I would do in terms of worship. And that lie that I had been given about not being able to sing a really helped me to understand that that was a seed from the enemy.

Debora14:44

That is so powerful. That is exactly spiritual warfare. I mean, the enemy did not want you to be able to impact that man's life and all the other people that have been impacted by your serving as a worship leader and appraisers. That's and that overwhelming fear that you experience those are the signs that the enemy is attacking us in the spiritual realm

Clarise 15:08

It is - absolutely Deb.

Debora 15:11

Wow. Now I know you've experienced a number of very painful situations in your life where it's even hard to pray, let alone to praise God, can you share with our listeners, one of those episodes in your life and how you were able to get through that season?

Clarise 15:33

Yes, it certainly rings true to me when I reflect on the death of my husband in 2017. That probably was one of the most devastating times of my life aside from some childhood experiences of devastation, but this one was very, very significant. I think all that surrounded the untimely death. And I say untimely, because I didn't know that he was that ill that he would be dying. It's not like someone who has a cancer or sickness. And you know that that day, I had no clue. He was on vacation with our son. And after our son left, he was alone. And somehow, as God apparently would have it in the middle of the night, while he was sleeping, he slept right on into eternity. So becoming aware of his death in that he was out of the country. It was devastating in and of itself that he had died. But the fact that he was away, in another country took three weeks to get him home. So I had three weeks of dealing with his death, not knowing what had happened to him, going to Barbados to claim his body, and then to only come home and wait

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for his body to come. But things get tied up in a bureaucracy. And it just wasn't that easy to get him home.

And I remember being home, and my children were home, and I felt so numb. And even to this day, I can't even remember from day to day, what happened. But what I do remember is I spent much of that time with praise music, and singing as loud as I could to the top of my voice, songs of praise. Because that's all I knew to do. And there's a song that even says praises what I do. And that song wasn't out at the time. But that's what, that's what I encountered. And the other thing about it once I couldn't get his body back, I needed to have a memorial I just couldn't, couldn't keep everybody hanging out there waiting for a body that we didn't know what come.

And I arranged the service such that there was music and that I would be singing. Because I felt that that's what God wanted me to do. I had been singing all along. So why am I going to let the death of my husband stop me from singing. So I didn't know how I was going to do it. I just knew God was going to help me. And so during the service memorial service for him, I remember singing and I remember feeling as if I was carried by the angels, to a place that I had never experienced before. And the pain of his death and his loss. And the fact that his body wasn't even back, there was a lifting of my spirit.

That was a celebration that took for the people were encouraged and excited about the praise. And about me being able to praise because people watch us as Christians, they watch us to see how we handle such things as death and devastation. And they need someone that they can say, in spite of what she's been through. She's still praising God. And that's what the message was that God had given me that you need to praise me. People need to see that you are not destroyed by the death of your husband. But it is God who strengthens you, and gives you the ability, the talent to praise him. And getting through that through praise. And through worship is what launched me to the next level, which was my mother would die eight months later. I didn't know that was happening and the praise continued through her service as saying there and you God just reminded me praises what I've given you. It is your weapon to fight the enemy, and you need to let people understand and teach people how to do that same thing.

Debora 20:13

Yeah, I can personally attest to the inspiration that you were to all of us when you sang at Al's funeral. Home going celebration. It was a powerful witness of the power of praise, and it did lift everyone's spirits.

And that reminds me in the book of Acts, in chapter 16, where we can read about Paul and Silas being beaten and being thrown into prison and put into shackles, for preaching about Jesus. And while they were in prison, at midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. And God showed up in a powerful and mighty way, as a result of that praise. And he shook the earth such that the prison doors flew open and all of the shackles for all of the prisoners, not just Paul and Silas, but the others who were also in that prison. Everybody's chains came loose. And all of that, I believe, was because Paul and Silas were praising God in the midst of a terrible situation.

Can you share with us any other situations in your life where your praise impacted? Not only you, but also the others around you? I mean, you've shared a couple so far. Do you have any more stories? I know you've been appraiser in a worshiper?

Clarise 21:38

That's very that's a very good question. And I laughed, because you were part of some of that back in the day. Yes, I remember that. I led the women's Bible study group that you were part of, probably 16 years ago now. And one of the things that we did was we worked from a book by stormy Omartian, called the power of a praying woman. And in her book, one of the chapters that really stuck out to me was one that talks about defeating the enemy. And the other one was about being a worshiper.

And as I prepared for this class, and I read those 30 chapters, it just rang so true to me, as it just pricked my spirit, that God this is, this is part of the reason for why You created me is to now be a part of these women's lives, and to help them understand that the enemy wants to destroy them as he wanted to destroy me on at that time, my husband hadn't died, and neither had my mother. But I was going through some very, very dark days, and some major changes, that I realized that the enemy wanted to destroy me because I was appraiser. Now, that's what the enemy wants to do, because he lost his position of praise. And he knows the power of praise. And he doesn't want anyone to praise God. And I knew that and so through this class, that that you were a part of, if you if you remember that.

Debora 23:25

I remember,

Clarise 23:27

I laugh even today, because one of the things that the Lord gave me, certainly the ability to sing, and it's not so much whether all of you could sing on key or not, or even me, it was about what went forth from our lips to the Lord, that he honored and that he came in inhabited. Every time we had class, he inhabited our praise. And we would we would sing praises to the Lord before we get involved in our study.

And one day in particular, the Lord spoke to me and he said, I want you to take some instruments to class. He said because praise and musical praise and vocal praise, they all appraise. And so to me, it was like double duty against the enemy to have instruments. And I gathered up tambourines. I don't even know what to call all those things, bongos, kongos, a little little, egg shakers, anything I could find. And I distributed them, I put them in the floor first. And I told the women to go grab you an instrument because we're going to we're going to praise without voices and without instruments and we did that for years and years and years. And I believe I do believe that. Just like it was for King Jehoshaphat in Second Chronicles when the Prophet went to him and told him that there were these armies waiting to attack him. Well, King Jehoshaphat did not have an army that was tough enough for those enemies. He just wasn't equipped. And we as women, then and even now, we are not equipped, we were not equipped to fight the enemies that we're trying to attack each one of us individually, as well as us as a group of women collectively. And Jehoshaphat was told by the prophet, this is what you do to defeat

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the enemy, you sing praises, put your praises on the front line. And so as we sing praises to the Lord, and we use those little instruments, I felt that we were on the front line. And what happened to Jehoshaphat, I believe happened to us, the enemy turned on itself, and killed him killed itself. And Jehoshaphat was able to go to those enemy camps, and take all of the spoil, and enrich his army and enriches people. And so as we as women, praise God, we too, we're able to go to those enemy camps, and take back what the enemy had had taken from us.

And praise became a weapon. And we used it to fight all of those things that the enemy had brought against us. And even though we are not in class anymore, and many of us have gone our separate ways, and we don't have our class that didn't diminish and doesn't diminish the type of warfare that God sent forward. And he continues to fight. I believe for each and every woman, you yourself, have your own testimony and how those praises moved you from point A to point B, I believe those praises gave me the strength to endure my husband's death, my mother's death, and some other kinds of deaths, not so much physical that I've experienced over the years. So that that really, to me is an answer to why praise is so important and to have the obedience to do what it is that God so me to do. Is what helped the women to be able to move forward as well.

Debora 27:30

Yes, yes, yes, yes, I have been a personal witness to many people's lives being transformed, because of what you taught us in that class. And I'm so so grateful. What could you say to a listener who might be experiencing some deep sorrow or disappointment or fear right now, to encourage them to step out on faith and wield this weapon of praise over their situation?

Clarise 27:59

I think these words, it is not something maybe very lofty, but I think it's very practical. And it is to remember that praise goes before your battle. And we all will have battles. But if we can praise before the battle, even hits, that means you continue to Praise, praise and something you do all day, every day. So then when the battle comes, you don't have to try and get a praise. You don't have to try and muster up or praise. But there are times when you when you may not be able to pray, as I've experienced that as well. But praise somehow seems to come forward from the belly, that when prayer may not be able to come from your lips, that praise can go forward. So I would say to them, to remember the praise God before you battle and to also rely upon God's word, especially in Ephesians chapter six, it says, For our struggle is not against flesh and blood.

And many times I think that we believe that the people, perhaps that's a part of the Battle of the struggle, we get caught up in who they are and the attack that we may feel from them. But the Word says that we are to, to not struggle, but to war waged against those that are in rule, against the authorities against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil and heavenly realms. It says, Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground. And after you have done everything, then you are to stand and I believe praise is part of that. That weapon of warfare that we're to put on our armor, praises upon about armor,

and that we really have to move in the power of God through these weapons that we are encountering, and that our weapon of praise is part of that.

But God has given us and there is only one power in the world, great enough to help us to rise above ourselves, and to rise above these difficult situations that we face. And this is the power of God. And without his power, we cannot get out of our ruts. And we cannot get out of those deep sorrows, in those places of despair, those places of disappointment or fear. We cannot we cannot stand strong in the face of all that oppresses without the power of God working through us through the Holy Spirit, we cannot be liberated from those strongholds that keep us bound and hinder us from moving into all that God has pre-ordained for us. He has so many great things that he has pre-ordained for us that we can't even begin to realize, because we are oppressed by the enemy, who wants to kill still in to destroy us. But when we recognize who we are, and who's we are, we adore the Most High God. I mean, how can you have a position even greater than that, and that and then our father, really, in my, in my visual, he wants us to go and adjust those crowns on our heads that have really kind of become lopsided, and we adjust those crowns and we we square our shoulders, and we remember who's we are. And then we begin to lift up a praise before those battles begin and recognize that God is the one who fights he gives us what to do, but he is the one who fights for us.

Debora 31:57

Yes, absolutely. Well, I want to thank you so much for joining me today to share this powerful message about this spiritual weapon that I believe that we don't use near enough in that is the power of praise. Before we go, would you please pray for our listening audience today.

Clarise 32:20

Absolutely is an honor to do so. Deb,

Thank you, Father, I do thank you. And I do praise you. And we expect that you will inhabit the praises that we send forth, God those are not my words. Those are your words, you inhabit the praises of your people. And God as I envision the praise that will go forth from not only my lips, but from the lips of the hearers God, that if they've never been able to praise you before God, my prayer for them is that they will begin immediately to do so. I feel God your presence even now, as with praise your train fills our houses. And God, we really need you to fill our rooms, from the darkness that the enemy has brought forward. And as we lift you up, the enemy has to bow he cannot stand in the presence of praise. And so God I pray that every woman, every listener, would understand the power that you've given them, the power to tread upon that enemy of our souls that wants to kill us, that wants to steal from us, and that wants to destroy us. And that everyone listening to my voice, God would be empowered by the Spirit of God, to do what you've called us to do. And that is to praise and to worship, and to honor and to glorify you, God, that you might be lifted up father. So as we lift you up God, the, the Serpents that even we experienced God that might sting us with the sting of, of bitterness and the sting of depression, the sting of suicide, God that plagues us God, that we will not feel those things God but that our eyes would be lifted up that our eyes would be focused on you that there would be a major shift in our lives God, that we would realize through the ability to praise you and magnify you and glorify You God. So God may

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every life be changed God by the simple truth that we praise before the battle ensures that we praise before every situation that we think may come upon us, that we praise even in the midst of where we find ourselves. And it is through our praise God, that you will begin to do something so powerful that the enemy of Allah Lives God would be destroyed as a result. I pray this in your name Jesus. Amen.

Debora 35:07

Amen.

Don't go away. We'll be right back after this short break.

Debora 35:53

Now we just heard from Clarise Ottley, some important truths about praise as a weapon. And it's because of Clarise's personal relationship with Jesus Christ, that she has this amazing power and ability to praise God even in the midst of trials and tribulations that she goes through in her own life.

If you don't have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, you will not be inclined to worship God, whether good times or bad, are affecting your life.

Jesus did such an amazing thing, to take away the sins of the world, and to give those who believe in Him powerful tools to combat the enemy of our souls.

If you have never surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, you can do that right now. It is by faith that we believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sins. And if you are ready to place your trust in the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and receive the forgiveness of sins. Would you pray this prayer with me right now?

God, I confess that I'm a sinner, and I need Jesus in my life.

I repent of my sins, and I turn to you.

I believe that Jesus died on the cross for my sins.

He was buried and rose from the dead.

I accept this by faith and invite Jesus to be Lord of my life, to reign and rule in my heart, from this day forward.

Thank you for forgiving me, and saving me. Amen.

Now, if you just prayed that prayer, the Bible says that you are saved, that you will have everlasting life.

If you have just accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, we want to hear from you. Please visit my website at TBTWpodcast.com. That stands for transformed by the word TBTWpodcast.com. And let me know about your decision for Christ so that I can share that with Clarise and we can encourage you and support you with the next steps in your faith.

My prayer for you today is that you will fully understand that though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but are mighty in God for pulling

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down strongholds. I pray that you would read your Bible and study the ways of God. Learn how to combat the enemy of your soul with the armor of God and praise as a weapon. When we praise God, he comes to our defense and fights our battles for us. His victory is final. May the God of all Peace be with you. Amen.

Stay tuned for our next episode of transformed by the word where we will discuss the spiritual heart.

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Thank you for listening to transformed by the word with your host Debora Barr, be sure to subscribe to our podcast on iTunes or Google Play and connect with us at TBTWPodcast.com. Until next time, be blessed.