

## PRIZING GOD

‘A nation no longer under God is a nation gone under.’ - President Ronald Reagan

‘In his pride the wicked does not seek Him, in all his thoughts there is no room for God. - Psalm 10:4

‘The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on earth had become and that every inclination of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.’

- Genesis 6:5-6

The kingdom of self predominates. Ephesians 2:1-3 describes the situation.

**Sin is above us**.....from the evil supernatural realm.

**Sin is inside us** ..... and personal - Galatians 5:16-21

**Sin is outside us**.....in the world around us - 1 John 2:15-17

The fallen world, the flesh and the devil are intertwined. The devil works through our flesh and the world system. God is aware of what we face in this world. He came to earth as Jesus and lived an overcoming life and because of his death, burial, resurrection, ascension to heaven and then the pouring out of his Spirit, his disciples can be world changers.

Dick Eastman is a World Changer. He wrote the helpful book on prayer: *The Hour That Changes The World*. Back in the late 1960's, Dick had started a 24 hour prayer ministry in California and the young people who were involved needed some help on how to pray for an hour. I was so impressed with the book that when I went to Kenya in 1990, I took a suitcase full of the books to give to the pastors there. In the book, Dick has a chapter for 12 different aspects of prayer which one can pray for 5 minutes each. It is not a legalistic pattern but an initial way that one can learn to pray for an hour. He begins the hour with **praise**.....the act of divine adoration. He closes the hour once again with **praise**.....the act of divine magnification.

In the early 1990's I was asked by a Bible School in London to write four different correspondence courses, one was on Praise and Worship. I gathered information from the Bible and also from three other books:

- \* *The Church On the Way* by Jack Hayford
- \* *The Power of Praise and Worship* by Terry Law
- \* *The Hallelujah Factor* by Jack Taylor

My study on the subject only increased my appreciation for the importance of praise. When Jesus taught us how to pray, he began with praise and worship. ‘Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed and holy be Thy Name.’ We do not begin prayer with confession, for God does not want us to focus on self as we come to Him in prayer. Self is our problem! God wants us to be preoccupied with Him! One good practice is to learn the various names of God that we find in the Bible. They reveal to us His nature, character and capabilities. The more we know about God the more reasons we have to place our faith in Him.

Those who know Your name will trust in You. for you Lord,  
have never forsaken those who seek you. - Psalm 9:10

Jack Taylor was asked to be an interim Pastor at a church but he had one condition before he accepted the invitation; he would only preach on the subject of praise and worship. The church accepted his request and after four months of his preaching, the church was transformed.

‘No exercise will result in more healing physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually than that of studying and practicing praise. In our laboratory of praise within the local church we discovered that longstanding hangups disappeared as folks began to praise the Lord on a continuing basis.’ - Jack Taylor

Paul Billheimer was a Bible School President who lost his speaking voice, but then God gave him an even more powerful voice through his books such as: *Destined For the Throne*, *Don't Waste Your Sorrows* and *Love Covers*. *Destined for the Throne* expanded my concept of God's ultimate plan:

A study in Biblical cosmology setting forth the ultimate goal of the universe which is the church reigning with Christ with a new view of prayer as on the job training in preparation for the throne. - *Destined For the Throne* (summary)

‘Here is one of the greatest values of **praise, it decentralizes self**. The worship and praise of God demands a shift of center from self to God. One cannot praise God without relinquishing occupation with self. Praise produces forgetfulness of self - and forgetfulness of self is health.’ - *Destined For the Throne*

As I prepared for full time missionary work, I was influenced by Psalm 67. It has two verses which say the same thing and another verse that reveals the fruit of praise:

‘May the people's praise you Oh God, may all the people's praise you.’

‘.....then the land will yield its harvest.’

Although that promise refers to the harvest of crops in a field, I believe it can also apply to a - spiritual harvest.

‘Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; and to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God.’ - Psalm 50:23 NKJV

**PRAISE** comes from the French word **preiser**, which means **to prize**. **To prize means to: value, esteem, and cherish something**. Man centered sermons and worship do not give God His due honor for God must be magnified above all else. When we pray.....Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven; that should be included in our worship.

The best idea of what true worship is like is the Bible's description of heavenly worship.

\* Revelation chapters 4 and 5, chapter 15:3-4, chapter 19. Worship in heaven has a focus on God and the Lamb of God Jesus Christ. The ultimate battle of the ages is: Who will we worship, the Lamb or the Beast? Those who want to live like animals will worship the beast. Those who seek to walk uprightly will worship the Lamb. The Lamb is mentioned 79 times in the New Testament with 77 of those references in the book of Revelation.

I heard of one church that planned a special closing benediction in their church service which would be sung instead of read. The song to be sung was 'Our God Reigns'. Unfortunately, the bulletin read: 'Our God Resigns'. The Bible reveals something better.

'Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:  
Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.'

- Revelation 19:6