

Praise Through the Pain

By: Lori Shaffer

Psalm 92:1 says, "It is good to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing praises to Your Name, O' Most High." It's easy to praise God when life is great, when things are working out, when all our ducks are in a nice, neat row. What about when we are in a season of pain or going through a storm, when you have been crying out for the mountain to be moved, and it still hasn't moved, or when it feels like all your ducks are scattered and lost? Times like these require faith. It is important to continue to praise God even when you don't feel like it.

Praise means to give God the thanks and honor He deserves. Some of the ways we can praise God include exalting His name with song, prayer, dance, or lifting your hands to heaven. We should praise God because He is worthy of our praise. Oftentimes, we use the words praise and worship interchangeably, but they really have two different meanings. Praise is an outward action, while worship is an inner attitude of the heart.

When we focus on praising the Lord, something remarkable happens. Praise puts our focus in the right place again. It lifts our eyes off of ourselves and everything that is going on around us and places our eyes back on Jesus. Praise makes you look up. I love this quote from Corrie Ten Boom. "If you look at the world, you'll be distressed. If you look within, you'll be depressed, but if you look at God you will be at rest." Psalm 22:3 says, "He inhabits the praises of His people." When we praise God, he draws near to us. God blesses, delivers, saves, and helps where praise is taking place. Where there is sweet praise, there will be an even greater victory.

Here are a few ways you can praise God in your daily life. Speak words of adoration to Him. Tell God how much you love and appreciate Him. Recite scripture. Turn up the praise music and sing, belt it out. Lift your heart, hands, and eyes to heaven. Give God your undivided attention. Start your prayers each day with praise. Think about who God is and praise Him for his attributes. He is the Prince of Peace, Mighty God, Wonderful Counselor, Holy One, Lord God Almighty, Word of Life, Author and Finisher of our faith, I am, The Way, King of Kings, Righteous Judge, Resurrection of Life, and Alpha and Omega. This list could go on and on. When you begin to meditate on God and who He is, you can't help but to praise Him.

It is important that we remember when we are going through pain or facing a storm, to praise God at all times. The enemy is relentless, and he will try to use the pain you are going through to inflict an even greater pain on you. In this world we are guaranteed troubles, sadness, and loss. But here is the good news! We can also be joyfully expectant because we bear a hope that will never disappoint. We have the promises of Christ who has overcome the world and left us His gift of perfect peace. When your heart is too overwhelmed, when you just don't even have the words to praise, lean on the Holy Spirit and scripture to guide you. I encourage you to turn to the book of

Psalms in your bible. Pray the psalms. The psalms are filled with praise. For me personally, I read and meditate on Psalm 26 every day and follow up with Psalm 150.

Praising God is a choice you must make. Rather than dwelling on the storm, choose to praise your way through the storm. Rather than focusing on the pain, choose to ask God to turn your pain into praise. In the past year, I have fallen on my knees in praise so many times. After my mom passed away, I was faced with this sense of complete loss and the difficult task of settling her estate. If that wasn't enough, add to it a Will Contest that was filed by a family member who didn't agree with my mom's final wishes. I didn't know how I was going to make it, but I relied on prayer and praise to carry me through. I have cried out to God through each difficult situation and obstacle I have faced. When it felt like my prayers were falling on deaf ears, I continued to praise God. When my prayers were answered, my immediate response was to fall on my knees, and lift my arms in praise. While you may not like the season you are in or the emotional pain you have endured, remember, God has a purpose and a plan. God's grace is sufficient, and He will carry you through. Psalm 150:6 says, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord '.

I encourage you to make it a daily habit to read your bible, listen to praise music, and to praise God in all circumstances. Praise Him through the good, the bad, and the ugly. I love the song "Raise A Hallelujah". Hallelujah means praise the Lord. Praise music is one of our greatest weapons we have in fighting the enemy. I love the lines in this song that say, "my weapon is a melody" and "I raise a Hallelujah in the presence of my enemies." When you praise God, he hears you and he comes and fights for you. The enemy flees. Sing it loud, lift your voice, your eyes, and hands in praise, raise your Hallelujah each and every day!

Application:

- Begin to read the Psalms. Pick a psalm a day to read. Psalms 145-150 are all about praising God.
- Start being consistent with what kind of music you listen to. Praise music will help redirect what you focus on and get your eyes on God.
- Never stop praying and praising, God is faithful.