



# On Praying

## ***5 Days On “Redirecting Our Praise to God”***

### **Day 1: Redirecting Our Praise**

**Reading:** Psalm 145:1-9

#### **Devotional**

As we begin this week, let's focus on redirecting our praise to God. In Psalm 145, David exalts God's greatness, compassion, and love with unbridled enthusiasm. Notice how David declares he will "exalt" and "praise" God's name forever and ever (v.1-2). This isn't casual acknowledgment—it's wholehearted devotion.

Our hearts are naturally wired for praise, but we often misdirect this powerful force toward human approval instead of divine recognition. We scroll through social media seeking likes, fish for compliments, and anxiously await others' validation. Yet David shows us a different way—praising God becomes his daily rhythm, his automatic response to life.

When we consistently praise God for His character rather than chasing human applause, something transformative happens. Our focus shifts from our performance to His perfection, from our inadequacies to His abundance. The psalmist reminds us that "The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love" (v.8). This truth should anchor our hearts when we're tempted to seek worth from fickle human opinions.

Today, practice intentionally praising God for who He is. Each time you feel the urge to seek validation from others, pause and offer a word of praise to God instead. Let His unchanging character become the foundation of your security.

**Reflection Question:** What specific area of your life do you most seek human approval, and how can you redirect that desire toward praising God instead?

**Action Step:** Set three phone reminders throughout the day to pause and speak one sentence of praise to God about His character.

"Praise is the rehearsal of our eternal song. By grace we learn to sing, and in heaven we continue to sing." - *Charles Spurgeon*

## **Day 2: Security in Christ**

**Reading:** Philippians 4:4-8

### **Devotional**

Paul's words in Philippians reveal a profound secret: true security comes from our relationship with Christ, not our reputation with others. Writing from a Roman prison, Paul encourages believers to "rejoice in the Lord always" (v.4). His circumstances were dire, yet his joy remained unshakeable because it was rooted in something deeper than external validation.

This passage teaches us that peace isn't the absence of problems but the presence of God's nearness. When Paul writes, "The Lord is near" (v.5), he's reminding us that our security doesn't depend on human proximity or approval but on divine presence. God's closeness means we can approach every situation with gentleness rather than defensiveness, confidence rather than anxiety.

The prescription Paul offers is revolutionary: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (v.6). Instead of ruminating on others' opinions or seeking reassurance through human channels, we're invited to bring our concerns directly to God. This practice of "anxious for nothing, prayerful for everything, thankful in all things" transforms our internal landscape.

Notice how Paul concludes by directing our thoughts: "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things" (v.8). When we focus on God's truth rather than others' opinions, our minds find peace.

**Reflection Question:** What anxious thoughts about others' approval consume your mental energy, and how would focusing on God's nearness change your perspective?

**Action Step:** Create a "peace practice" by writing down one worry about human approval, then immediately write three things you're thankful for about God's character.

"Anxiety is the natural result when our hopes are centered in anything short of God and His will for us." - *Billy Graham*

### **Day 3: Reflecting God's Character**

**Reading:** Exodus 34:5-7, 2 Corinthians 3:18

#### **Devotional**

The scene in Exodus 34 is breathtaking: God proclaims His own character to Moses, revealing Himself as "compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness" (v.6). This divine self-revelation wasn't just information—it was transformation. Moses emerged from this encounter with his face literally shining, reflecting God's glory so intensely that the Israelites couldn't look at him.

This transformation principle continues today. As 2 Corinthians 3:18 promises, "We all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory." The more we behold God's character, the more we reflect it. This is the opposite of seeking human approval, where we constantly adjust our behavior based on others' expectations.

When we're secure in God's love, we're free to embody His character authentically. We can be compassionate because we've experienced His compassion. We can show grace because we've received His grace. We can remain patient because we know His patience with us. We can love sacrificially because His love first filled us.

Consider how different your interactions would be if you approached them from this place of overflow rather than need. Instead of managing others' impressions, you could focus on reflecting God's character. Instead of protecting your reputation, you could extend His grace.

**Reflection Question:** Which of God's character traits (compassionate, gracious, patient, loving, faithful) do you most need to reflect in your relationships today?

**Action Step:** Choose one of God's character traits from Exodus 34:6-7 and consciously demonstrate it in at least two interactions today.

"The vigor of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our life and thoughts." - *George Müller*

### **Day 4: Praising in All Circumstances**

**Reading:** Psalm 13, Habakkuk 3:17-19

#### **Devotional**

Today's readings confront us with a challenging truth: authentic praise doesn't require perfect circumstances. David begins Psalm 13 with raw honesty: "How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?" (v.1). Yet by verse 5, he declares, "But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation." This isn't denial of difficulty—it's the choice to praise God despite circumstances.

Habakkuk's declaration is even more striking. Facing national disaster, economic collapse, and agricultural failure, he chooses to say, "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior" (3:18). This is what theologians call a "sacrifice of praise"—praising God when it costs us something, when our emotions aren't naturally inclined toward worship.

This kind of praise breaks the cycle of seeking human comfort or validation during difficult times. Instead of turning to others for approval or sympathy, we turn to God with both our pain and our praise. This doesn't mean suppressing emotions or pretending everything is fine. Both David and Habakkuk express their struggles honestly before choosing to praise.

The power of circumstantial praise lies in its declaration: "My security and joy aren't dependent on my situation but on my Savior." When we praise God in difficulty, we're proclaiming that His character remains constant even when our circumstances change. This practice gradually rewires our hearts to find stability in God rather than in favorable conditions or human affirmation.

**Reflection Question:** What current difficulty in your life could become an opportunity to offer God a "sacrifice of praise"?

**Action Step:** Identify one challenging situation you're facing and write a prayer that honestly expresses your struggle but ends with specific praise for God's unchanging character.

"God is looking for people who will come in simple dependence upon His grace, and rest in simple faith upon His greatness. At this very moment, He's ready to work in you, both to will and to do for His good pleasure." - *A.W. Tozer*

## **Day 5: Living as God's Image Bearers**

**Reading:** Genesis 1:26-27, Colossians 3:9-10

### **Devotional**

We conclude this week by returning to our foundational identity: we are created in God's image, designed to reflect His glory to the world. Genesis 1:27 declares, "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them." This truth predates any human opinion, performance, or achievement. Your worth isn't determined by others' approval because it was established before others even existed.

Sin distorted this image, creating the insecurity that drives us to seek validation from created beings rather than our Creator. But Colossians 3:10 announces the good news: we "have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator." Through Christ, the image of God in us is being restored daily.

This restoration process frees us from the exhausting cycle of image management. When we know we already bear God's image, we don't need to craft an image for others. When we understand we're being renewed in His likeness, we don't need others' approval to feel valuable. We can live authentically, love freely, and serve generously—not to gain something, but because we already have everything we need in Christ.

Living as God's image bearers means every interaction becomes an opportunity to reflect His character rather than protect our reputation. Our words can carry His grace, our actions can display His love, and our attitudes can demonstrate His peace. This transforms relationships from transactional (what can I get?) to transformational (what can I give?).

**Reflection Question:** How would your daily interactions change if you truly believed you already have God's complete approval and love through Christ?

**Action Step:** Before each significant interaction today, remind yourself "I am God's image bearer" and ask "How can I reflect His character in this moment?"

"The Christian does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because He loves us." - *C.S. Lewis*