
Introduction

Imagine you are standing on an overlook at the Grand Canyon. Its beauty and awesome depths have you awestruck as you drink in the view.

Suddenly you lose your balance and begin to fall from the edge. As you grasp for something, anything, to hang onto you helplessly realize that nothing is going to save you. You are doomed.

A hand grabs you, seemingly from nowhere. The man pulls you from the edge and you realize what was certain death has suddenly turned into an amazing salvation. Thankfully, you are saved.

How grateful would you be? Thank you wouldn't come close to conveying the gratitude for the one who saved you from the impending destruction you had faced.

You would be eternally grateful and would do anything to pay back the one who had saved you.

Jesus saved you from something no one else could have: An eternity of hopelessness, fear and suffering of which there would be no end. He died for you so that you could live. He deserves our gratitude.

A Hero

Chesley Sullenberger. Does that name mean anything to you? Is he a hero to you? You probably don't know him by name, but if you were aboard US Airways flight 1549 his is a name you will never forget.

"Sully," as he's known to friends and family, did what many would consider impossible. He landed a passenger jet *in* the Hudson River, without engines, saving the lives of all 155 passengers on board. Instantly he became a hero as millions around the world watched the video footage again and again. He was just an average pilot, doing his job, and would not have chosen to become a hero that way. Guaranteed.

Many are now lauding him with praises, calling him a hero. One passenger, upon being interviewed, stated "He not only affected our lives but the lives of our kids and our grandkids." What a statement!

It's easy to consider this man a hero, especially if you were aboard his aircraft and survived, or, if you are related to or a friend of someone who was.

Let's look 10 years down the road. Will anyone other than those aforementioned remember Sully? Will they remember, without prompting, the day the jet landed in the Hudson? Probably not.

Man made heroes come and go. Their popularity suffers the fickle emotions and short attention spans of humanity. But we serve One who cannot be forgotten. We serve the only One who made provisions that all men could be "saved." Obviously I'm talking about Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

The word “hero” doesn’t fit Jesus. No, He’s way beyond a simple hero. He is the Son of God, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. He was there when the Earth was created, He was there when the sun and the moon were hung, and He was there when man was formed. All power has been given to Him by God and it was His sacrifice that made it possible for our sins to be forgiven and forgotten by God. Yes, He is much more than a hero, He is our Savior!

By this we should know that He is much more worthy of praise and accolades than Sully or any other hero man has ever known. No matter how heroic a feat has been it will never come close in comparison to what Christ has done.

Before we go on in this pamphlet it’s important that you understand that Jesus did what **no one** else could do. No other human death could have ever paid the price for our sins. None, not ever. It is only the blood of Jesus that could fulfill the law of God and only Jesus that can take a broken life, one sick in body and one bound by addictions and set them free. No one else can do it! Only Jesus.

If we give so much praise, attention and thanks to Sully, what does Jesus deserve? Our deepest and most sincere gratitude.

Gratitude

Webster's definition of gratitude is, in part, "*A virtue of the highest excellence, as it implies a feeling and generous heart, and a proper sense of duty.*" It is very important to understand gratitude as it is the place true thankfulness comes from. There is a difference between thankfulness and "worship." Thankfulness, hand in hand with gratitude, is a feeling that is portrayed towards one who has done something for you. In other words, without an act of kindness or favor towards you, there would be no thankfulness. However, worship is given to one deserving not in response to an action but simply because of the nature of the one being worshipped.

God is worthy of our worship simply because He is Jehovah our Great God. There is no other like Him, there is none before Him and He is "God alone." (Psalms 86:10) He deserves our worship whether He ever does anything for any of us again simply because He is God.

Until you move into a deeper place of relationship with God, you may not learn the full magnitude of worship. I can't move you there, explain it to you or help you glean the information from another source. Worship isn't an action, it is an *experience*. What I can do, however, is to teach you to be thankful toward Jesus for saving your soul. Drawing from wells of gratitude, you will begin to understand worship as you put into practice the thankfulness or gratitude in your heart.

Going back to where you imagined you were standing at the Grand Canyon, it would be easy to understand how thankful you would be to the one who rescued you. Let me say this very simply as many people fail to truly learn thankfulness toward God, because they over complicate it: You need to thank Jesus the same way.

You might say, “Is it really that simple?” The answer is YES! Too often I’ve seen new Christians try to emulate the more “seasoned” Christians in the church. They try to learn to worship and praise by watching others.

To learn thankfulness and praise by watching others is like learning to land a jet in the Hudson River by watching the video of Sully over and over. Not going to happen. You might go through the same motions, you might even manage to aim the plane at the water, but it takes knowledge of the craft and of the controls in order to successfully do what he did.

If I saw the man pull you from the edge of the Grand Canyon, I could thank him for saving you. I could even get excited and jump up and down with you. But it wouldn’t mean near as much to me as it would you. See the point?

Your personal praise and thankfulness has to be just that - personal. There is no “right” way or “wrong” way to do it. It’s simply knowing what you were, realizing the difference Jesus has made in your life and saying, “thank you,” in your own personal way.

There are those that will tell you it has to be done a certain way. Send them to me and I’ll help them. God loves you, His child, just as an earthly father loves his child. Personally, when I know my children are truly grateful and thankful for something I’ve done for them, I don’t care how they tell me “thank you” just as long as they do it. I like hugs, I like smiles and I love the excitement in my children’s faces. God is the same way! He’s our heavenly Father and He loves that we show appreciation and take the time to say, “thank you.” There are other aspects that we will learn here in a few moments but I feel it very important to stress the point of keeping your praise simple.

The Importance of Praise

Allow me to share a story with you from the Old Testament. Jehoshaphat was king of Judah. One day he received a report that a huge army had gathered together and they were coming to defeat him. Obviously shaken, Jehoshaphat fasted and prayed to God for help.

Now you would think under this situation the king would send out his most fierce fighters first. He would send out the heaviest artillery he could muster in hopes of deterring this mighty army. But God promised Jehoshaphat victory in the battle.

Having received this word from God, Jehoshaphat instead decided to send out the *singers* that they should praise the Lord. No archers, no armor, just singers. But look what happened:

“After talking it over with the people, Jehoshaphat appointed a choir for GOD; dressed in holy robes, they were to march ahead of the troops, singing, Give thanks to GOD, His love never quits. As soon as they started shouting and praising, GOD set ambushes against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir as they were attacking Judah, and they all ended up dead.” (2 Chronicles 2:20-21 MSG bible.)

Having never fired a shot, victory came to the armies of Judah because God takes praise very seriously. I’m sure if you’ve had a hard life full of trouble and trials it’s hard for you to imagine praising God even when the situation looks dire. I’m sure it’s hard to grasp the concept of praise when facing certain defeat. But that is one of the many joys of serving God. He performs the impossible!

Once you learn this concept it's easy for a Christian to live a life having faith in God. The understanding that God has all things under control is a mind boggling concept, but He does. Even when things look as though they couldn't get any worse, there is a peace and calmness available. Faith begins operating in your life when you can praise God honestly and whole heartedly even when it looks impossible.

Look at this story from the book of Mark.

Mark 4:35-40

*(35) And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, **Let us pass over unto the other side.***

(36) And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships.

(37) And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

(38) And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

*(39) And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, **Peace, be still.** And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.*

*(40) And he said unto them, **Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?***

What did the disciples miss? Why were they so fearful? Because of the storm? Well, sure, but that's not the whole reason. Look at verse 35 again. Jesus said, "**Let us pass over unto the other side.**" Jesus is the Son of God and once He said they were going to the other side it was as good as done, just as God told Jehoshaphat they would win the battle. The people of Judah began praising in advance, in spite of the size of the army. The disciples were fearful

because of the storm. **Had they listened to the Master, they would not have been afraid.**

It is from these simple concepts that you will begin to move forward into a worship experience with God. Praise isn't about how you do it but instead *why* you do it. If you feel like jumping, jump. If you feel like clapping your hands, then clap. If you just want to stand silent and drink in His presence, then drink it in. There is no wrong way to praise Him as long as you are doing it for Him.

Refuse those that try to limit your praise because of "properness". The Bible says David danced before the Lord with all of his might to the point of receiving criticism. His answer was, "I'll gladly look like a fool..." (2 Samuel 6:14-23) When someone does for you the magnitude of what God did, or when someone brings you through the troubles that God has, no one else may ever understand. Praise Him from your wells of gratitude! Praise Him from the works He has done! It is through this that you will move forward into a place of worship.

Perfect Contentment

I will close this pamphlet out with this last point as I feel this is very important for the New Christian to learn.

Life is hard. Things go wrong. Things break. Things fall apart. Struggles come to the Christian and the non-Christian. The difference is, we have a loving God who never leaves our sides through the struggles.

The Bible says of God that it is “impossible for him to lie...” (Hebrews 6:18) This is very important to understand both in your praise and in your Christian living. There are many promises of God that He has made to His children (I will put the scriptures on the last page) and He will keep every one of them.

Because of this, you can live this life in perfect contentment. It is a learned behavior because our very nature is to worry and stress. God gives us the assurances that no matter what we are facing we need not worry because He is with us.

As you read through your Bible look how many of its characters were facing seemingly impossible situations yet God always came through. God never leaves His children. It doesn't mean you won't suffer troubles and trials. It doesn't say that we'll never feel the heartache of loss. It does tell us that no matter what, God has a plan for our lives and that He is eternally on the throne.

Paul wrote in Philippians the following passage:

Philippians 4:11-13 (MSG)

(11) Actually, I don't have a sense of needing anything personally. I've learned by now to be quite content whatever my circumstances.

(12) I'm just as happy with little as with much, with much as with little. I've found the recipe for being happy whether full or hungry, hands full or hands empty.

(13) Whatever I have, wherever I am, I can make it through anything in the One who makes me who I am.

This is the type of mentality that you can have! Once you realize how worthy God is of your praise and realize that He is with you every second of every day regardless of the circumstances you can live a life of contentment.

Have you ever felt that kind of peace? Have you ever known the joy of facing trials? Have you ever looked forward to a problem? It seems ridiculous, I know. But it's the power of our God and the joy of serving the One who died for us.

Without trials and suffering, God has no opportunity to work miracles in your life.

If you're never "down," you won't learn an appreciation for being "up."

If your heart never hurts, you won't learn an understanding of gladness.

If nothing ever goes wrong, how can you learn to praise Him when He makes it all right?

David wrote, *“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble.”* (Psalms 46:10)

In Closing

I genuinely hope this pamphlet has, at the very least, encouraged you. I hope it has given you an understanding of the importance of praise.

Sadly you will find many in the church world today who never lift their hands or open their mouths to praise God. Don't learn from them. Instead, always keep in mind that He alone saved you when no one else could. Keep in mind that He loved you enough to die for you and that even when you were unlovable, He loved you.

Church is not the only place to praise Him. In fact it should be only a small portion of your praise. Praise Him when you wake up, praise Him before you go to sleep and Praise Him all times in between. Praise is an attitude. Keep in an attitude of praise. Learn to thank Him for waking you up, the air you breathe, the laughter of children, the rain on a dry day and for being able to hear the birds singing in the trees that He made. If you praise Him 24/7 for the rest of your life you will never run out of things to praise Him for.

He is awesome.

Scripture for you

Psalms 34:1

(1) *A Psalm* of David, when he changed his behavior before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed. I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.

Psalms 22:3

(3) But thou *art* holy, *O thou* that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

Psalms 30:4-5

(4) Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

(5) For his anger *endureth but* a moment; in his favor *is* life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy *cometh* in the morning.

Hebrews 13:5

(5) *Let your conversation be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Philippians 4:19

(19) But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

1 John 4:4

(4) Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.
