



The President's Perspective



A Good Dose of Praise

Many of you, who are older, will remember the iconic Life Cereal commercial featuring "Mikie." He was the cuddly little boy who had Life Cereal pawned off on him. Well, low and behold, he actually liked it. To conclude that classic commercial, the announcer says, "Life Cereal, not only good tasting, but good for you."

You may wonder what that commercial has to do with anything. Actually, it is a wonderful illustration of Ps. 147:1, "Praise ye the Lord: for it is GOOD to sing praises unto our God; for it is PLEASANT; and praise is comely." The two words "good" and "pleasant" are interesting Hebrew terms. "Good" literally means "good for you" or "healthy." That is, praise is a practice that can enhance ones physical well-being. "A merry heart doeth GOOD, like a medicine." The word "pleasant" has the connotation of being "sweet to the taste." Praise is not only healthy, but it, literally, "tastes good."

I love to be around praising people. They are an oasis of joy in a world filled with trouble. Their circumstances never seem to govern them. Instead, they sit atop their circumstances, lifting their hearts and hands heavenward, voices raised in triumphant praise to their God. Did you know that the Bible mentions praise far more often than it mentions prayer? Do not mistake my intention! I, in no way, want to minimize prayer. It is the very life blood of the Christian life. It is the very breath of one who has been saved by grace. However, prayer can be a very "man-centered" activity. Prayer can become mere petition for one's own needs. As James says, "ye ask (pray) amiss that ye may consume it upon your lusts (selfish desires)." On the other hand, praise is the most "God-centered" thing a person can do. "Make a joyful noise UNTO THE LORD." (Ps. 100:1)

Consider the praises of Paul and Silas in that dark Philipppians dungeon. "At midnight Paul and Silas...sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them." (Acts 16:25) Note that their focus was not on them and their difficulties. Rather, it was on the awesomeness of their God. Their praise arrested the heart of their jailer and won him to Jesus. Why? God blesses praise because the focus is on Him. In fact, the Scriptures teach that "God inhabits (dwells in)" the praises of His people. God's address is on an avenue called 'Praise.' He dwells there!!

Perhaps the greatest way one can "witness" is to simply praise God everywhere in every circumstance. I have heard my pastor say that the man whom God used to draw him to Christ was a co-worker nicknamed "Crazy Roger." Roger never gave my pastor a tract.

He never presented the Romans Road. He never invited my pastor to church. He just came to work on Monday morning with a heart, and mouth, full of praise. No matter how many service calls were given to him, he always responded with "Praise God!" Friends, there's a lesson to be learned from that!!! May we freely and frequently express our unfettered praise to God for ALL He is, and has done for us. Others ARE noticing.

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