

Praising God Cultivates Contentment

Message 02 of 03 in the series: "Power of Praise"

A. We are engaged in a spiritual battle for control of our minds.

"Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace." Romans 8:5-6 (NLT)

"Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise." Philippians 4:8b (NLT)

B. Praising God is a powerful strategy for winning spiritual battles because it changes the way we think.

Praise = expressing to God our admiration and understanding of His worth, bragging/boasting about His amazing deeds and the wonderful characteristics of His divine nature.

"I will praise the Lord at all times. I will constantly speak his praises. I will boast only in the Lord; let all who are helpless take heart. Come, let us tell of the Lord's greatness; let us exalt his name together. I prayed to the Lord, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears. Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces. In my desperation I prayed, and the Lord listened; he saved me from all my troubles. For the angel of the Lord is a guard; he surrounds and defends all who fear him. Taste and see that the Lord is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!" Psalm 34:1-8 (NLT)

"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect." Romans 12:2 (NLT)

C. Praising God is a secret weapon that will help us find contentment in every situation/circumstance.

Contentment = being mentally or emotionally satisfied with things as they are.

"...I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. **I have learned the secret** of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For **I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.**"

Philippians 4:11-13 (NLT)

1. Praising God will help us remember all that God has done for us and keep us from complaining.

"And don't grumble as some of them did, and then were destroyed by the angel of death. These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age." 1 Corinthians 10:10-11 (NLT)

"...**You were whining, and the Lord heard you** when you cried, "Oh, for some meat! We were better off in Egypt!" Now the Lord will give you meat, and you will have to eat it. And it won't be for just a day or two, or for five or ten or even twenty. You will eat it for a whole month until you gag and are sick of it. For you have rejected the Lord, who is here among you, and you have whined to him, saying, "Why did we ever leave Egypt?"" Numbers 11:18b-20 (NLT)

"Let all that I am praise the Lord; with my whole heart, I will praise his holy name. Let all that I am praise the Lord; **may I never forget the good things he does for me.** He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. He fills my life with good things." Psalm 103:1-5a (NLT)

2. Praising God will remind us of God's amazing love and concern for each of us and keep us from comparing.

Jealousy = a feeling of discontent or resentment aroused by someone else's possessions, qualities, or success. "For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and **demonic**. For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind." James 3:15-16 (NLT)

Coveting = strongly desiring, craving, or wishing for something that belongs to someone else. "You must not covet your neighbor's house. You must not covet your neighbor's wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that **belongs to your neighbor.**" Exodus 20:17 (NLT)

“The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need. He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name. Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me. You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies. You honor me by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings. Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the Lord forever.”

Psalm 23 (NLT)

D. Three simple steps to cultivating contentment through praise every day:

1. We can limit social media/television/magazines that regularly tempt us to covet and complain.

“...throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.” Ephesians 4:22-24 (NLT)

2. We can make a list of all the good things God has done for us and praise Him for at least one of them every day.

“I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all the marvelous things you have done. I will be filled with joy because of you. I will sing praises to your name, O Most High.” Psalm 9:1-2 (NLT)

3. We can sing God’s praises together with other believers.

“Praise the LORD. How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise him!”

Psalm 147:1 (NIV)

John Schmidt • 05-01-22 • john@centeringlives.com

Connect Group Questions:

1. A study conducted by a university in Singapore last year found that the more people use Facebook, the higher the levels of envy they experience, which then leads to feelings of depression. Do these results surprise you? Why do you think we spend so much time comparing ourselves to others?

2. Discuss the following definitions:

Contentment = being mentally or emotionally satisfied with things as they are. (Philippians 4:11-13)

Jealousy = a feeling of discontent or resentment aroused by someone else’s possessions, qualities, or success. (James 3:15-16, 4:1-8)

Coveting = strongly desiring, craving, or wishing for something that belongs to someone else. (Exodus 20:17)

Describe times in your life when you experienced these emotions.

3. Discuss the following three steps for cultivating contentment in our lives:

- We can limit/get rid of social media/television/magazines that regularly tempt us to covet and complain. (Ephesians 4:22-24)
- We can make a list of all the good things God has done for us and praise Him for at least one of them every day. (Psalm 9:1-2)
- We can sing God’s praises together with other believers. (Psalm 147:1)

Which of these is easiest for you?

4. Read Romans 8:5-6, 12:2; & Philippians 4:8. What does the battle for our minds look like on a day-to-day basis? How would praising God help us in this battle? (Isaiah 26:3, Psalm 34:1-8)
5. Read Numbers 11 & Psalm 103:1-5. Why is it sometimes easier to complain than to remember all that God has done for us?
6. Look over the praise list available in the bulletin & with this week’s sermon notes at centeringlives.com. Spend some time sharing answers to prayer, blessings, and times when you’ve seen God do amazing things. Then spend some time as a group taking turns praising God by celebrating His deeds out loud. (i.e. “Praise you Lord for doing _____.”)

Quotations to consider:

“Riches I heed not, nor man’s empty praise; Thou mine inheritance, now and always; Thou and Thou only, first in my heart; O King of glory, my treasure Thou art.” Dallan Forgaill (530-598 AD)

“Praise is something we do, NOT something we watch.”

Things God Does for Me Praise List

O Lord, I praise you because you:

provide for all my needs. (Matthew 6:25-34, Philippians 4:19)

protect me. (Psalm 18:1-3, Psalm 46:1-3)

guide me. (Proverbs 3:5-6, Psalm 32:8-9, Isaiah 30:21)

cause everything to work for my good. (Romans 5:3-5, 8:28; James 1:2-4)

have adopted me into your family. (Romans 8:15-17, Ephesians 1:5)

give me the desire and power to follow you. (Philippians 2:13, 2 Thessalonians 1:11)

give my life meaning and purpose. (Psalm 138:8, Matthew 28:19-20)

send your angels to help me. (Psalm 34:7, 91:11)

give me spiritual gifts to build up the Church. (1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12:3-8)

bleed me with family and friends. (Psalm 68:6, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)