

# Unceasing Praise-Prayer

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### *Seven UnCharacteristics That Can Change the World in 2017 – Lesson Six*

My first major assignment this year was to write this series – one I knew from the outset would illicit a spectrum of responses from “good words – I need to look more like that” to “unsubscribe”. To date that has been accurate. In case no one told you when you became a Christian, it is not for the fainthearted. **It is for the brokenhearted.** The thought that we receive Christ as Savior and then live powerless lives, indistinguishable from the rest of the (lost) world, is contrary to every biblical teaching. This Gift comes with instructions and batteries that never run down, i.e., the Bible and the Holy Spirit.

From His written Word, empowered by the Holy Spirit, we have all we need to **live and walk in a way that causes unbelievers to want what we have**. That is why we exist. To help us get there, this series provides seven characteristics that serve as *living proof* of Christ in our lives to a world that desperately needs to see and experience Him as they interact with us. To date, we have addressed the first five. (Links provided below.)

- **Unconditional love** – *Because He first loved us.*
- **Undying gratitude** – *Because He saved us from our sins.*
- **Unspeakable joy** – *Because we cannot forget the first two.*
- **Unwavering faith** – *Because it makes the impossible possible.*
- **Unmistakable Power** – *Because we can do nothing (for Him) without it.*

Today, we continue the series examining the *characteristic* over which we have the greatest control–*that which fills our thoughts and occupies the recesses of our minds.* Attitudes are born here.

**Unending Praise/Prayer – *Because we don't want to be embarrassed by a bunch of rocks!***

*“(Jesus) answered, “I tell you, if these (men praising Him) were silent, the very stones would cry out.” (Luke 19: 40 NASB)*

That verse has always stuck out in my mind. It creates a disturbing picture. Men fail to praise Jesus, so inanimate objects, like rocks, feel compelled to do it for us. Such an image serves as a great reminder and strong encouragement to me to keep His praise coming. I hope it does the same for you.

When I began outlining a version of this section for my recent book, *All Men Are Desperate Whether They Admit It or Not*, I wrestled with writing it as two separate actions of believers vs keeping them linked together. I was strongly led to keep them together for the following reason:

***Praise is a form of prayer – both integral parts of our worship.***

Together, they present strong evidence of a renewed, thankful heart, desperate for more of God.

I could not give more credibility to the area of praise than to offer this. Jesus began what is referred to as *The Lord's Prayer* with a declaration of praise. *“Hallowed be Thy Name.”* A modern translation is *Holy is Your Name*. Jesus praised His Father by first recognizing first His Holy nature.

Then there is David. No one in Scripture wrote more about praising God than David. From the pasture of a lonely, humble shepherd to the throne of the king, his praise was alive with singing, dancing, and worshiping before the Lord. Here are a few examples.

*“The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim His hands.” (Psalm 19:1 NIV)*

*“But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabits the praises of Israel.” (Psalm 22:3 KJV)*

And my personal favorite, memorized many years ago,

*"I will extol thee, my God, O King; and I will bless Thy name forever and ever. Every day will I bless Thee; and I will praise Thy name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised... One generation shall praise Thy works to another."* (Psalm 145: 1-4 KJV)

When it comes to prayer, who do you consider the greatest *prayer warrior* in the Bible? Moses, David, one of the prophets, or, perhaps, the Apostle Paul? Let me suggest another name: Jesus. Multiple times in the Gospels we read that Jesus made it a priority to "get alone to pray." He set the example for all of us.

*"But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray."* (Luke 5: 16 NASB)

*"In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there."* (Mark 1:35 NASB)

*"Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and He said to His disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray."* (Matthew 26: 36 ESV)

These three examples from three Gospels provide *living proof* of how seriously Jesus took prayer. He found a place and created space to get alone with our Father. We must do the same.

I chose to close with the Apostle Paul's words that incorporate *praising* and *praying*.

*"Rejoice always; **pray without ceasing**; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."* (1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18 NASB)

*Praying without ceasing* is not a command to sit around and do nothing but pray all day. Rather, it asserts a mindset we need to maintain throughout the day to **stay connected to the Source**. That connection

means everything. Without it we are powerless, i.e., operate on our own batteries.

If *attitude* is our first line of offense, there is no better way to drop a bad one and pick up one that imitates Christ (Philippians 2: 5) than to keep this *praising/praying* 'tude throughout the day. You will be pleasantly surprised at the impact on your own life and, more importantly, the lives of those around you. One more way to effect change in our world in concert with the life and command of Christ.

*Walter*