

# The Secret

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## Praise and Thanksgiving

We all face battles in our lives that we have not chosen. There are many battles, both internal and external, where we are overwhelmed and outmatched. We can't choose all of our battle or circumstances, but we can choose how we respond to those circumstances. Do we respond to our circumstances with complaint or with praise? If we respond with praise, we grow in love of God, faith in God, and hope in God. Praise is the most powerful thing we can do to grow in these three areas. In spite of our changing circumstances, God does not change.

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## Discussion Questions

1. When was one time when you faced overwhelming odds? (When have you been overwhelmed" by something you had to do?
2. Are you someone who reacts to challenges by embracing and engaging with them? Do you find yourself running away or hiding from them? What is your typical response when things don't go your way?
3. In the Psalms, David often praises God while he is in the midst of trouble. Why do you think he can do this? Is he being disingenuous? How would you respond in his situation[s]?
4. Saint Paul indicates that the secret for handling anxiety is to come before God with praise, petition, and thanksgiving. With which of those do you find that you most often come to God?
5. If praise is about who God is, and thanksgiving is about what God has done for you, which do you find easier to do? Why?
6. Does praise feel "forced"? How so?
7. Why might you hesitate to decide to make it a practice to praise God in the morning and thank Him at the end of each day?

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## God in Real Life

1. Praise can be thought of as telling God what it is you love about Him. Thanks is telling God how grateful you are for what He has done for you. Knowing that we all face battles, are you willing to name your battle and also name the attributes of God that will help you face your circumstances? Are you also willing to go back over your day and

thank God for the large and small things? Take time each day and praise Him in the morning and thank Him in the evening.

## Be Transformed

The Bible is filled with examples of praising God in the midst of battles:

- A. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: "Praise is the form of prayer which recognizes most immediately that God is God. Lauds God for his own sake and gives him glory, quite beyond what he does, but simply because HE IS."
- B. In 2 Chronicles 20, Jehoshaphat is facing troubles. But in verse 6, his fear turns to praise.
- C. In Joshua Chapter 4 and Chapter 6:16, the Israelites win the battle by walking around the city and praying and praising God. "Shout; for the Lord has given you the city".
- D. Isaiah 61:1-3 (a "garment of praise, instead of a spirit of despair"...NIV translation) H
- E. Hebrews 13:15-16 ("a sacrifice of praise"...in this, we give God our words of praise ... that matches the gratitude and awe in our hearts)

## To the Heart

"Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens." Psalm 148:1-4 (NIV)

"Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 5:19

Ways to praise God:

Look at your life and praise God for Him in your life.

Look at Scripture and learn what God .

What do you know about God? What do you love about God?