



*Be joyful always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)*

These words seem a big order. Give thanks in ALL circumstances?

It is easy to Praise God when things are going well. But when things are not going well our human tendency is to be anxious, worried, afraid or even angry. So God seems to be asking us to rise above our normal human tendencies. Since God never asks us to do anything He doesn't give us the power to do. He must know we need to do this for our own good.

Let me tell you how God taught me the value of praising Him in all things. I was born the first time July 4th 1950. Over the next 29 years I learned well how to be anxious, afraid and worried about many things. I learned how to be discontent and angry with so many of life's inconsistencies. I was so unhappy with all the mundane duties of every day life. Life seemed so hard and disappointing; not at all what I had envisioned. This is where God found me on June 19, 1979.

A neighbor had given me two books to read that day. The name of these books were From Prison to Praise [italicized] and The Power of Praise [italicized titles] by Merlin Carothers. At this time I didn't really believe God was real, I hoped He was but if He was I sure couldn't seem to find or reach Him. That was all about to change, as He was about to reveal Himself to me.

As I read these books I knew what I was reading was truth. God was reaching down to me through the pages of the books I was reading. He was real and was asking me to surrender my life to Him. I knew I was to begin to praise Him in all things. If I would do this I would begin to become a victorious person rather than a defeated one. That day my heart was changed and hope again entered my life. The God of the Bible was real and He was communicating with me. He wanted to have a personal relationship with me through the person of Jesus Christ.

Through the next months I praised Him for being real and then for everything He allowed into my life. I was full of so much joy. The more I praised God the happier I got. I knew that Satan could not

win a victory in my life as long as I kept my eyes on Jesus, and continued to praise Him in everything.

Six months from the time I was saved I would face the biggest challenge of my life so far. My third son Jody, age five, was diagnosed with Wilms Tumor (cancer of the kidney). I knew to be victorious through this trial I must do as God had been teaching me. I must keep my eyes on Him and continued to trust and praise Him through this. I held my Bible as I walked the hospital corridors. Knowing that in order not to fall into fear I must hold on to God with all my heart.

At one point I surrendered my son to God and told Him I would continue to love and praise Him whether Jody lived or not. Right after I did this, I knew in my heart that God was pleased and my heart was filled with a peace that passed all understanding. I knew God was trustworthy no matter what the outcome. God did intervene, Jody will be 30 this year, married with two children and he is cancer free. Praise God! Yet, even had the outcome been different God is worthy to be trusted and praised.

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