

**~Other Speakers S-Z: Classic Christian Writings:**

For prayer to be effective we must know how to get access to God. Psalm 100:4 says, “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name.” It is as we come to God with thanksgiving and praise that we have access into His presence.

In Isaiah 60:18, the prophet likens the presence of God among His people to a city: “...you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise.” The way through the walls of salvation is by the gates of praise.

I know sometimes, however, we come to God with needs so great and circumstances so bleak it’s hard to find a spirit of praise within us. Psalm 100:5 addresses that problem. The psalmist gives us three things to praise for that never change. Praise Him because He is good. Praise Him because His love endures forever. And praise Him because His faithfulness continues through all generations.

If we omit praise we are, at best, like the nine lepers of Luke 17:12-19. They cried to Jesus for mercy and help. He heard their cry and met their need, but only one returned to thank Him. The language used in the Greek text indicates that all ten were physically healed, but only the one who returned to thank Jesus was also spiritually healed.

Praise is not only the gateway into the presence of God; it is also the means by which we release the supernatural power of God into the situations of need. When feeding the 5,000, Jesus did not pray for the multiplication of the loaves and fishes—He merely gave thanks for them (John 6:11). This released the divine power that turned them into an abundant meal for 5,000 men, women and children.

When Jesus stood before the grave of Lazarus, He did not pray that Lazarus would come forth, He merely gave thanks that the Father always heard Him (John 11:41-42). This released the power needed to bring out of the tomb a man who had been dead four days.

First Thessalonians 5:17-19 says, “Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit.” Giving thanks is the will of God in all situations. This has a direct bearing on the effectiveness of our prayers. We may be offering to God a petition that is right in every respect, but if we do not accompany it with thanksgiving, we are not in the will of God. Our failure to give thanks nullifies the rightness of our petition. Paul also indicates that it would have the effect of quenching the Spirit.

“In everything give thanks.”