

PRAISE NEWS

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Focusing My Energies

By Merlin Carothers

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We make mistakes. Some of them can cause us unhappiness for the rest of our lives, until we learn the remedy.

It is easy to think about past mistakes - over and over. But after we have asked God to forgive our failures, it is time to do what we *should do*.

Do what Paul did: ***I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead (Phil. 3:13 NLT).***

Our enemy wants us to use our energy in the useless exercise of going over and over our failures. I receive many letters from people who are being tormented by their past. Strength to deal with the present and the future is drained away and they do not know what is causing their unhappiness.

If meditating on your past is one of your mistakes, learn to concentrate on the good things that you believe God is doing for you. He can accomplish many things through you if you permit His Holy Spirit to control your thoughts.

There is so much to be done! Jesus called us to get His message to the entire world. He assured us that what He calls us to do is easy,

compared to what our enemy wants us to do. Jesus said: *Take my yoke upon you (the life I want you to live). Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle, and you will find rest for your souls (Mt. 11:29 NLT).*

Jesus came to give us what He called life in all its fullness: The thief's (Satan), purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness (John 10:10 NLT).

We can increase or decrease our happiness by the things we think about. Paul made his choice and now we must make our choice. We too can forget those things that are behind us and concentrate our attention on the good things that God wants to do through us.

To avoid Satan's traps we must be quick about it. Learn to recognize when you are drawn to think about some past weakness or failure. Don't even think about having failed to keep that unhappy thought from coming to your attention. Simply change your thoughts to something good! Ignore that you even remembered those failures and leap ahead into the blessings that God wants to give you. The Holy Spirit is always ready to help anyone who wants to be blessed by God.

Wonderful things lie ahead for *anyone* of us who sets our mind on looking forward to the good things that lie ahead.

Why Is It So Hard?

By Mary Carothers



I don't know where we get the idea that once we become Christians we should not have any more problems, but I once felt that way. I knew God loved me. I knew that I belonged to Jesus; He had redeemed me with His blood. I knew

He would always be with me. Yet, somehow I thought life was now supposed to be easy. No more overwhelming problems. No more heartache or health problems.

But that's not what happens in our lives. Even though some problems are gone, new ones take their place. As I wondered why this was so, I wasn't angry or resentful, just puzzled.

Then I discovered some scriptures that I previously hadn't noticed. In Chapter 4:12 of I Peter, he writes: *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering . . . but rejoice . . .* In Chapter 5, verse 9, Peter writes: . . . *Stand firm in the faith because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kinds of sufferings.*

The reason we so often fall away when hard times come is that for some reason we think we should have things come to us easily. We want all our problems solved without a struggle, and we want it done right away!

Yet hard times are the "schools" in which we learn to walk in faith, regardless of our circumstances. This is where the power of praising God comes in. We don't get the job we desperately want, so we thank and praise the Lord that we didn't get it. What if we didn't receive the grade on our paper at school we feel we should have gotten, or some very close friend turns out to not

be the friend we thought they were. What is our reaction? What we *should* do is thank and praise the Lord, in each circumstance. **We need to thank and praise Him when everything is difficult, when things are not going our way, we can and must persist in thanking and praising Him with every single breath. If we do this, eventually either our circumstances will change, or we will. Remember, no victory is won without a struggle.**

For forty years now, I've been praising the Lord; sometimes pretty well and sometimes not so well, (I am, after all, a sinner saved by God's grace and mercy). If you will make a commitment to God to praise and thank Him for everything, no matter how difficult, I promise you a miracle. Either your circumstances will change, or God will change YOU! But you must stick with thanking the Lord. No complaining.

When I was first learning to praise the Lord for a very painful problem, I would want to complain about it to my friend. Then God told me I was "talking out of both sides of my mouth". So, no more complaining about what I was also thanking and praising God for. If I was complaining about my problem then I certainly wasn't trusting that God was working. So I had to keep on thanking, and praising the Lord, trusting that He was working. I had to do this for some years. Over and over and over again. No matter that things seemed impossible. Eventually, I began to believe, to *know* that what I desired would come to pass. Maybe I wouldn't see it in my lifetime. No matter. God's timing is perfect. I even began to truly rejoice in the fulfillment of my desire. When it finally came to pass, I wasn't surprised, just delighted that God had allowed me to have a part in fulfilling His will that this person be saved.

I have come to understand that living a life of being *thankful always for all things* (Eph. 5:20) is living in victory over our circumstances rather than *under* what life brings our way.

Your continued faithful support has enabled us to send shipments of free praise books to the following facilities:

Regional Unit, Brickeys, AR
Scott County Jail, Benton, MO
Teen Challenge, Sparks, NV
Rescue Mission, Westminster, MD
State Penitentiary, Winslow, AZ
Jackson Correctional Institute, Malone, FL
Federal Correctional Institute, Estill, SC
Martinez Detention Facility, Martinez, CA
Pinal County Sheriff's Office, Florence, AZ
Greene Correctional Facility, Coxsackie, NY
Statesville Correctional Institute, Joliet, IL
Chester County Prison, West Chester, PA
Kings County Sheriff's Office, Hanford, CA
Northwest Reception Center, Chipley, FL
Pregnancy Center of Clermont, Amelia, OH
Jefferson Parish Correctional Center, Gretna, LA
Albemarle Correctional Institute, Charlotte, NC
Snake River Correctional Institute, Ontario, OR
Pine Lodge Correctional Center, Medical Lake, WA
Jefferson County Correctional Facility, Beaumont, TX

*The Foundation of Praise
has received a gift in loving memory of:*

JIMMY CARO

Beloved Son of
dear friends

Jim and Marilyn Caro
By Mary Frances Cable
of Belton, TX

MARGARET GRANT

By her husband
Clay Grant
of Bon Secour, AL

CAROLYN DANIEL

By her daughter
Patricia Daniel
Pennyfeather
of Charlotte Amalie,
Virgin Islands

VINCENT CALLAHAN, Father

PATRICK CALLAHAN, Brother

By J. Michael Callahan
of Bella Vista, AR

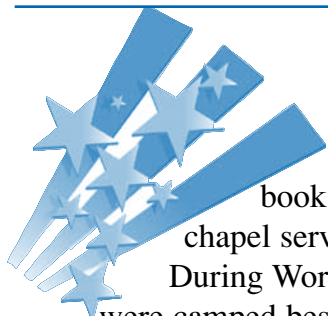
VIVIAN CORECE DORSETT

By Clare and Sam Clayton
of Dresher, PA

JOHN VOSLEY

By his sister
Nancy Smith
of Westerville, OH

*Our loss is Heaven's gain. Our prayers
are with those who loved them.*



Dangerous Places

Sometimes men and women in the military have no interest in reading Christian books. But Chaplains agree that when there is greater danger, there is greater interest in chapel services and Christian books.

During World War II, I had no interest in attending chapel services, except once when we were camped beside an airfield in Belgium, preparing for a parachute jump into Germany. The airplanes began arriving that would carry us to our drop site. Then an announcement was made, "The Chaplain will hold a service in 15 minutes." I, along with many others, headed for the service.

We were anxious, knowing that in a few hours we would be landing behind German lines. Then we were told to get all our equipment and line up along the airstrip. We were issued parachutes and sat waiting.

Later, we saw a man running toward our Company Commander and we knew we would soon be boarding the planes. Our Sergeant called us to stand in formation as our Commanding Officer headed toward us. *This is it, we thought.* "Men take your chutes to that truck over there and turn them in. General Patton has overrun our drop zone and we won't be jumping today. Maybe tomorrow."

Years later, as a chaplain serving in Korea, Dominican Republic and Vietnam, I saw many men who wanted God's help when they were in danger. The books we send to the military have great potential to lead men and women to ask God for help. So, when chaplains ask for books we do the best we can to send as many as we can.

We have been sending our books to soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, to Air Force and Army bases, and to sailors and marines all over the world. We are blessed by the testimonies we receive from those who are living in dangerous places.



Praises From Around the World!

I appreciate seeing your face and hearing your voice on your website. I read *What's on Your Mind?* in Japanese but enjoyed hearing your voice for the first time.

KOU-ICHIRO, JAPAN

I have just discovered Merlin's books and have started putting them into practice. I suffer from anxiety, but the last few weeks I have had a joy that I have not experienced for a long time. The fears have not gone, but they have subsided. My trust and faith in God is growing, and it is amazing!

BECCY, ENGLAND

I read *Power in Praise* in an Arabic language and God used that book to bless me. I gave this to my friends who were also blessed by it, and now my seventeen year old daughter wants to read it as well. God bless you.

ALICE, E-MAIL

Your books really helped me in my time of need. Through your books I learned that God is in control and that He loves me and has a great plan for my life. I have felt safe knowing I'm in God's hands.

SANDRA, AUSTRALIA



Inmates Share Praise Reports!

I read hungrily through *Prison to Praise* and enjoyed it so much that I am witnessing to the other girls here. I am truly excited about serving the Lord. When I speak about the Lord I have so much joy and I know it's because I thank and praise God for everything.

JUDY, COUNTY JAIL, AR

I'm an inmate in jail for ten years. I thought my life was over until my roommate gave me your book *Prison to Praise*. I cried, and praised God. I thought I would never be thanking God for my long prison term. The last few pages, I could hardly finish because I was crying so much. I found myself thanking God for everything in my life. I felt so light and filled with joy. Thank you.

LINDA, COUNTY JAIL, GA

God bless you over and over. I just read *Prison to Praise*. I know the Lord brought me to jail to restore me. I read the Bible and have totally committed my life to Christ. God has assured me that He is in full control. I feel okay with the fact that God is disciplining me and that He is doing a new thing in my life.

HERNAN, IN

While in jail I read *Prison to Praise*. I felt the spirit of the Lord in my cell with me. I praised the Lord for putting me there and thanked Him for His grand plans. I praised His name and jumped for joy that I was in jail. I hope your book reaches more people in a time of need.

RICARDO, COUNTY JAIL, CA

Good News Pledges

We rejoice that we are able to provide *Prison to Praise* and the other praise books to those who need to hear the

Good News of the Gospel. **If you are currently pledging to the Foundation of Praise, we thank you for your faithful support and generosity and we bless you in Jesus' name.** If you are not pledging, please pray and consider doing so for the remainder of 2009. Enclosed with this month's *Praise News* is a pledge card for *first-time pledges only*. It will help us to know how many books we can plan on sending for the rest of this year to our military personnel, prisons, hospitals, and pregnancy centers.

