

# PRAISE·News

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## Thank God for This?

By Merlin Carothers

A man who had lost his wife said to me, “Merlin, I’m trying, but I don’t believe I can thank God that my wife has died.” Should he? If not, why? If so, why?

Since Ephesians 5:20 directs us to thank God for everything, does that mean He will punish us if we don’t? Does it mean He is displeased with those who don’t thank Him? What is His reason for saying, *Always give thanks to God the Father for everything?* Perhaps we should ask, “Why does God tell us to do *anything?*” Does He need our obedience to satisfy His ego? Does He want to impose His will on us simply because He is Almighty? If we think this way, we have a poor understanding of who and what God is.

Did God say, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*, because He knew that would be difficult for people to obey? Did He say, *Thou shalt not steal*, just to please Himself? God’s laws emphasize what He knows is best for us! His “thou shalts” and “thou shalt not’s” demonstrate His perfect knowledge of what will help us. Even if we don’t understand His laws or don’t agree with them, they are there because of His love for us.

What child understands, “Thou shalt not eat cookies before dinner?” *That’s not fair*, the child might think. Or, how does he feel about, “Thou shalt wash your hands before you eat.” *What harm could a little dirt do?*

When the man told me that he had great difficulty in thanking the Lord that his wife had died, I knew

he was asking me, “Why should I?” To remain heartbroken and discouraged, the man needs to do *nothing*. He would remain that way until he dies.

However, there is a solution that God has provided. But the solution requires that we *believe* that God means what He says. Just as we believe that Jesus is our Savior, we can believe that God will use even a tragedy to work out some good for us. When God says, *Thank Me, and believe that I will work this for good*, He is telling us how to be delivered from *our burdens*! Praising God sets us free! Sometimes we are instantly free, and at other times we gain freedom one inch at a time.

Please believe that God’s perfect love has our best interests in mind, in everything He says. Our childish minds may think, *He is only trying to punish us*, but this is never true. As a loving father trains a child, God is always leading us in the direction that is best for us.

The disciples didn’t want Jesus to die, but Jesus said it was necessary. You and I don’t want suffering of any kind, but suffering can be used by God to work for *our good* - not for God’s benefit.

So many things we do not know or understand. But God says, *Trust Me. You don’t understand now, but later you will. Trust My Son, and your faith will help to force sorrow and pain to be used for your eternal good.*

Thousands of people have already witnessed the healing and life-giving power that comes from being thankful to God for everything.

(Reprint from September 2000)

# He is Holy - But What Are We?


By Mary Carothers



In recent weeks I have been continually impressed in my spirit with how very holy God is and His command

for us to also be holy.

In Isaiah 6:3 and Revelation 4:8 God is surrounded by angels crying, *holy, holy, holy is the Lord*. But how is this relevant to us? We're here on Earth, not in Heaven. Does what goes on in Heaven have any effect on us? I kept praying and searching the scriptures to understand. Here are a few things He has shown me, although I'm sure this is only a small portion of what He would like us to understand.


Seven times in the Bible the Lord commands us to be holy – because He is holy. But we have a sinful nature, passed down to us from Adam and Eve. So how can we ever be holy? Common sense would tell us that it is impossible. Still, God tells His people – *seven times* – to be holy. 

To begin with, we know that we cannot be holy in the same way that God is. But because of His command, He must intend for us to be holy in *some* way.

When we repent of our sins and ask Jesus to forgive us and be our own personal Savior, we are forgiven all our sins. At that point, God considers us holy in His sight (see Ephesians 1:4 and Colossians 1:22). This is our *position* in God's family. Whether or not we live a holy life that does not change.

Now the Lord calls us to strive to live a holy life, trying to please Him in our thoughts, our attitudes,


our conversations, and in our actions. For example, Romans 12:1 urges us to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. Ephesians 4:2 lists some behaviors that express a holy attitude: *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love*. One of the verses that often convicts me is in Ephesians 4:29, where the Bible explains that we should not let any *unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up ...* Colossians 3:13 tells us to forgive others just as the Lord Jesus has forgiven us. We are to have thankful hearts as well, because this is God's will for us, and He cares tenderly for us (see I Peter 5:7). And Peter goes on to tell us we are encouraged to resist the sinful desires that war against our souls, and to live good lives so that God will be glorified.

If we feel that we just cannot measure up to God's requirements, let's remember that God only asks us to do our best. As we do, He strengthens us with the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus told us to be of good cheer, confident that Christ living in us is stronger than our enemy and his temptations. Every temptation we experience is an opportunity to believe that the Lord will help us grow just a little in holy living, a bit more pleasing to Him. We can do whatever Jesus asks us to with His strength. And always remember: *We are more than conquerors through Jesus Who loves us* (Romans 8:37). 

Please agree in prayer for everyone who receives *Praise News*.

We receive so many requests for prayer. Some of these requests are for:

- Our Nation
- Financial difficulties
- Marital problems
- Loss of a loved one
- Health Issues
- Family hardships and conflicts
- Unemployment
- Healing of loved ones
- Salvation
- Our military personnel

*But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.* (Deuteronomy 4:29) 





# Thanks for *Prison to Praise*



Many years ago, I was stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia and was assigned to clean the chapel, where the chaplain was Merlin Carothers. We got to talking and Merlin (I called him Colonel Carothers then) asked me if I could write. I had written a few articles, so he asked me to look over something he had written, in pencil and in a spiral bound notebook. It was such a powerful message that I found myself forgetting to edit, and instead read ahead often in tears because of the power of the stories he told. About three weeks later I was transferred so I didn't know how the book had turned out. Actually, *Prison to Praise* turned out rather well and whoever came up with that title was a genius! My experience with Merlin had a big impact on my life and I want to thank you for continuing on with Merlin's legacy. **HARRIS, NC**

While I was detoxing from my fentanyl addiction in the segregation hole, I found *Prison to Praise* in my cell. It's not the usual type of book I would read but something urged me to pick it up. It surprised me how much I enjoyed it, and something clicked, and it was like my soul was starving for this spiritual truth. I asked Jesus to forgive my sins and come into my life.



**DAVID, CORRECTIONAL FACILITY, CA**

I just read *Prison to Praise* and it has really changed my perspective on how I see things.

**IRENE, MN**

I just read *Prison to Praise* again for the umpteenth time and as always, I am reminded to praise God in my current situation. God is so faithful.



**JAN, TX**

I picked up *Prison to Praise* in my doctor's office and it is such a blessing! Thank you. **SANDY, TX**

As a teenager, I read *Prison to Praise*, and praise has been a part of my life ever since and I am forever grateful. Thank you for continuing on.



**JOYCE, FL**

Thank you for sending *Prison to Praise*. I know the men here will find comfort and encouragement in this book. Your ministry is a valuable tool for helping these men to cope with the situations that the prison environment brings.

**CHAPLAIN, CORRECTIONAL INST., FL**



## *Praise from eBook readers!*



*Prison to Praise* has many examples of how God works in mysterious ways. Just be thankful and watch the miracles unfold.



A friend of mine recommended that I read *Prison to Praise*. It's a quick and easy read and has a strong and positive message.

*Prison to Praise* is a great book and good read when in need of encouragement and reassurance of God's perfect plan.



## The Foundation of Praise

has received gifts IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

**David Lester**

By his wife LaVonne  
of Manteca, CA

**John Krone**

By Ray & Shirley Henry  
of West Palm Beach, FL

**John Cole Harris**

By his wife Beth  
of Oceanside, CA

**Amelia Haine**

By her daughter  
Debbie Haine-Wentz  
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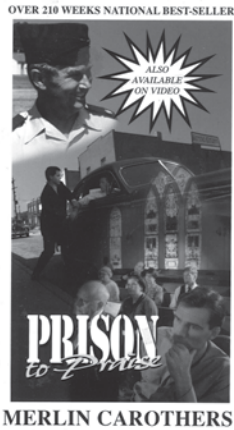
By her husband Michael  
of Bella Vista, AR

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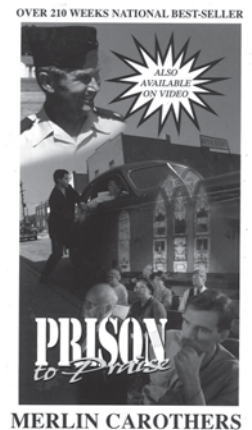
By his wife Nel  
of Seattle, WA







# Looking for an Opportunity to Serve the Lord?



You can begin by paying attention to places where people have little to do but wait. Places like doctors and dentists offices, hospitals, waiting rooms, airports, and train and bus stations. You can give them a copy of *Prison to Praise* or leave it there for the next person. Please pray and ask the Lord to guide you to those who need to hear the Good News of the Gospel. God will bless your efforts to share the message of praise with others.

**Go into all the World and preach the Good News to every creature (Mark 16:15 NKJ).**

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10	1.75	\$50	\$6.00	\$23.50

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