

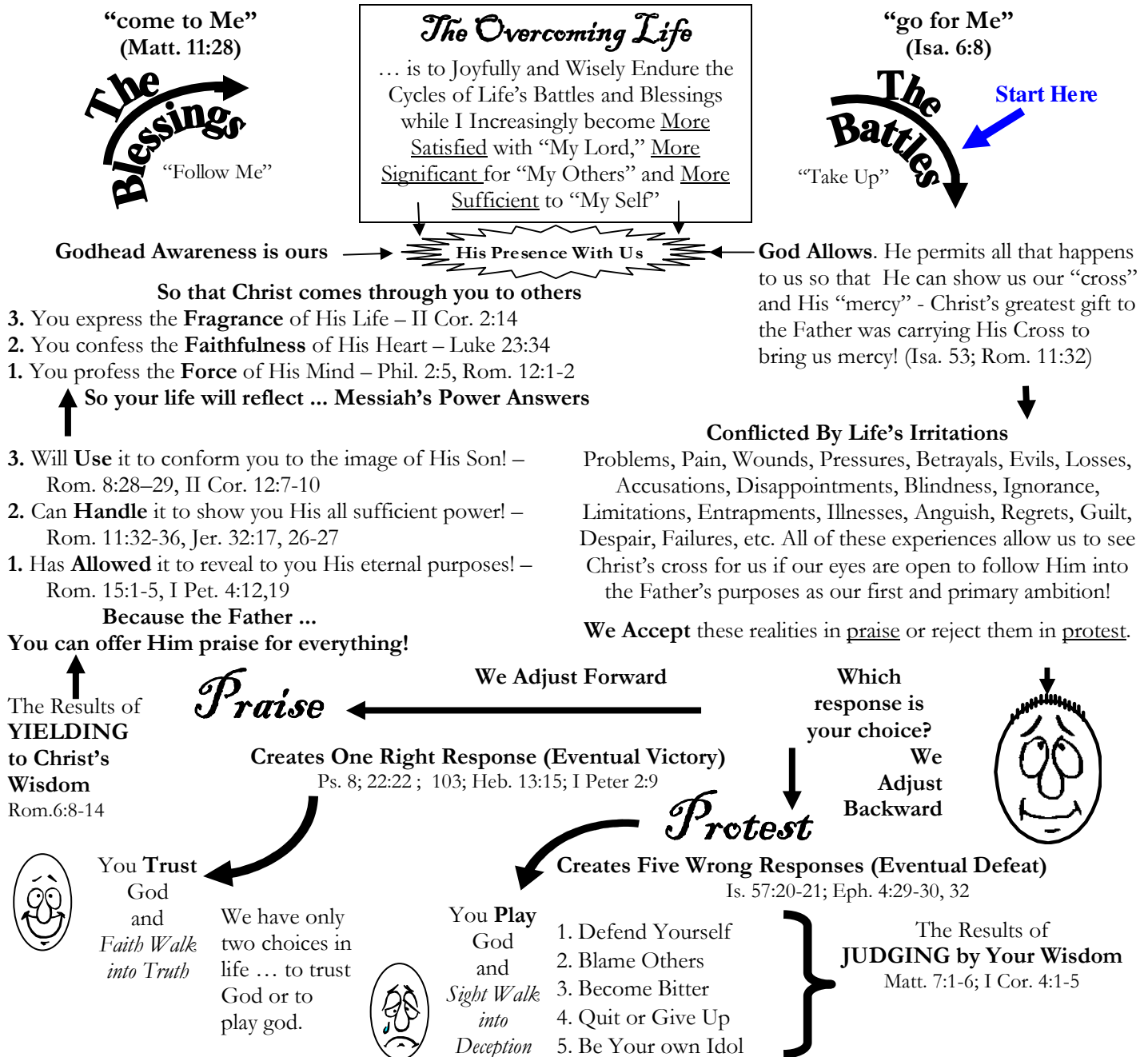
The Protest or Praise Process

A VFC Victory Visual: #32
www.venturesforchrist.com

by Dr. H.D. McCarty
President/Founder

Praise - The Weapon that Conquers All

Let the high praise of God be in their mouths and a double edged sword in their hands. Psalm 149:6 — Our highest thrill and strengthening in life comes from a powerful two edged response to Christ and culture. This means we are spiritually sharp in both sacred and secular living. Our “sword” creates a mouth filled with “high praise” as the Savior fulfills His triumphs around us, through us, and in us! Our praise is the proof that we radically trust His promises to control, mold, and use everything happening to us for His ultimate glory.



My Greatest Old Testament Verse on Praise—Psalm 149:6

Praise—is the most authentic proof to yourself, impact power on others, and deep pleasure to the Godhead that you truly believe the message of the Messiah. It is the great evidence that Jesus is more significant and powerful to your living than your own flawed desires and human problems.¹ Only a life of praise and prayer will keep your life in orbit around the purposes and plans of the Father!² In Christ our increasing joy for salvation will grow into consistent praise in deliverance which can ultimately produce bursts of high praise of His magnificence in our being!! Using Christ's "DOUBLE EDGED SWORD" will cut down the idols of good and bad, success and failure, victory or defeat, comfort or suffering, the idols of worst or best, and free you to live above them all in His higher presence and perception. Only this strategy of "double edged sharpness" will radiate the LIGHT of the Christ Life through your life! (Ps. 149:6). Only in this one verse does the term "high praise" appear in the Hebrew of the Old Testament.³ The "Double Edged Sword Disciple" is effective for Christ in both the secular and the sacred arenas of life. To be "cross significant" for Christ in your secular duties and your spiritual ministries will "put" high praise in your mouth. If true praise is increasing in your life, regardless of your circumstances or personal, inner battles, you know you are becoming what you were created and re-created to be. You impactively learn "Christ contentment and sufficiency" and comprehend the peace that passes understanding! (Phil. 4:6-7, 11-13) Nothing on earth can fill and satisfy our hearts more magnificently than to see the blazing and stunning realities of our Lord's life and His message to us that He wants us for Himself! What greater thrill can be ours than to grasp His commanding and exalted supreme significance – His glory and splendor! Such a vision of our existence can't help but produce the highest praise possible in human hearts and from human lips (Isa. 6:1-8). Essentially, to truly trust God is to create praise in your heart.

What Praise Is and Does

Persistent praise is the most evident positive proof that we properly perceive the powerful promises of the Prince of Peace. This is the kind of praise that powers our perception and programming about every problem or perplexity that presses upon us. It is the kind of praise that always opens a fresh path for our next step of decision! It is the kind of praise that propels our pursuit of more of the presence of God. It is the kind of praise that puts a passion in our hearts to share with others the excitement of Messiah's presence in my life. It is the kind of praise that places me in spiritual authority over all the processes going on around me.

The Three Progressions of the Sharpened Sword

First, I see joy! This is our initial and continuous experience of personal satisfaction, delight and well being in Jesus. Paul and our Lord define its capacities (Phil. 4:4 and John 15:11). Our primary contentment is based on what we sense He is doing in us and for us! Our joy is this: comprehending His grace (initiatives) and truth (reality) working for us as we experience changing for the better. Every little bit of sharpness helps.

Second, I see praise! This exclamation is rooted in what we see God doing in the lives of others and the world. It is our experience of confirmation that He is our Sovereign Lord and all things are moving toward the conclusions desired by Him. The summary thought is in Psalm 69:34, "Let heaven and earth praise Him..." I encourage my readers to check their concordance and read thorough a few dozen verses

¹ I am indebted to Bill Gothard and his Institute of Basic Youth Conflicts for the essence of this Victory Visual. God used him to touch my own life deeply. I have taken great liberty in adding my own thoughts and expanding his original, more simple diagram. At least 75% of the above is my contribution to the 25% foundation the Lord gave me thorough my brother in Christ, Bill Gothard. I thank the Lord for his ministry to me and so many others.

² See *Victory Visual #103: Soaring Like the Eagle*.

³ See *VFC Resource # 22: Living in High Praise* and *VFC Resource #30: Using Christ's Double Edged Sword*.

on praise if you want to begin to catch the sweep of this fantastic word! Our contentment is exalted by recognizing His creation works and His workings in others and throughout history! Our praise is this: comprehending His grace and truth going on around us! Nothing in man or in Satan can stop the sharpness of the Lord's cutting purpose!

Third, I see High Praise! Again, this word is used only once in Scripture (Ps. 149:6). It describes the spirit that most fully captures the purpose of our being and floods our mouth with inexpressible hallelujahs of thanksgiving! Our minds are engulfed in awe as the highest revelations of Christ Jesus become amazingly real to our hearts. We sense the Lord's conquering sharpness as we discern the foolishness of earth's secular situations of sorrowing fallenness and the eternality of our sacred calling to proclaim righteousness! We should become our Lord's impactive servants at our highest level possible of comprehending our culture and communicating our Christ. We should seek to do this in such a way that will maximally contribute to the Father's glory and purposes. The earth's grandest drama of fulfillment for ourselves and clearest preview of His coming Kingdom is High Praise in the mouth of a Believer. Note I Chronicles 12:32! "The men of Issachar understood the mimes and what Israel should do!" Our contentment is in being part of a special group of His people who have power insight into the times we live in and possess ultimate wisdom in what to do about it! We are doubly equipped with a sharp sword to be overcomers in our creation!

A Mentor's Definition

My dear friend, Mickey Bonner, now with Christ, defined praise this way: "A man's maturity in Christ is always revealed by his level of praise while undergoing his worst crisis." Amen and amen! I would add that whatever takes praise out of your mouth – your optimism about Jesus and His promises and plans – is close to being an idol in your life! Praise perceives the designs and directions for Christ perfection! Complaining grieves the Holy Spirit and gives in to the deceits of cultural pretenses. The question to the Cross Disciple is this, why go on grieving your situation that has been allowed by God when with Christ's mind you could be perceiving your higher possibilities and opportunities. Instead you could be receiving His resurrection power of overcoming by simply believing the new truth the Savior's mind is seeking to teach you? The mature responses to that question is to become an experienced Triune Thinker and create your Christ Nuclear Thought.

Praise — The Proof We Possess Christ's Answers and Awareness

Let me illustrate by referring to an ongoing theological debate about God deciding (sovereignty) and men choosing (free will). Our debates over the apparent conflict between God's sovereignty and man's free will, so called Calvinism verses Arminianism, would end if we would recognize that they are dualities (two) created to form one practical truth. Both these positions point to the same end as intentioned by our Lord. We simply need to recognize that they are two essential ingredients of creation that can be reconciled by seeing them as one ingredient of praise! I resolved the tension this way: In this world we have been given enough freedom to be responsible, but the Godhead keeps enough authority to be sovereign. Reconciled together, as they should be, for both are true, these two become one ingredient of praise for the Father's brilliance and wisdom. So male and female become "one" in marriage to God. Amazingly, these two can create and produce "one" other person. Two are necessary to produce the one, but it is a mystery of how it all works and why! It is a miracle! So is free will and sovereignty, yet more so. However, together they produce the one new person in the family of God.

The Doubled Edged Sword cuts both ways. It has a culture edge and a Christ edge – a secular edge and a sacred edge – a worldly edge and wonder edge – a soul edge and a spirit edge – an earth edge and an eternal edge – a self edge and a Savior edge – a flesh edge and a faith edge – a work edge and a worship edge – a law edge and a grace edge – a death edge and a life edge – a mystery edge and a relational edge! All

these dualisms have a mid point that are biblically authenticated and multiplied in Ecclesiastes – especially in the following passages, 3:9-14 and 5:16-6:2. Throughout Scripture and history the “two” on earth find their meaning and fulfillment as they contribute to the purposes and glory of the “one”!

The meaning of “two” is rooted in the creation and the Lord’s gift of division in nature and the human world. There was night and day, land and water, earth and sky, man and beasts, fish and birds, male and female, cold and hot, sun and moon, etc. All of the twos mean nothing in themselves except as they come together in the intentions and processes of the third and higher reality – the purposes of the Creator. Uniting “the dual realities” with “the single reality” is the climax of the Godhead’s creation and the challenge of the mankind created in His image! Whenever this triune joining is exposed and experienced, the glory of the One shines upon us, and we are blessed, often beyond expression! The divine Son became the human Jesus Who, united on the cross, became the one Messiah!

Edge one of our sword demands that we must have a working grasp of what is going on in the minds of men about our current world of relationships, business, economy, politics, and education. Social conditions and values, as well as knowing the varied basics of philosophical belief systems are necessary to comprehend and integrate into our daily thinking and coping. This culture edge of your sword equips you to be sharp “in the world” and be able to “cut it” when it comes to job performance, social responses, and positive imaging among your peers! We must disciple ourselves to be adequate, content, successful, and influential in our own orbit in the secular world. We have proven to others that we can be effective contributors in their secular world!

Edge two demands knowing in depth the secret things of God. There must be a continuous and growing encounter with the mind, heart, and mission of Messiah Jesus. Yieldedness on the part of each Disciple is both essential and critical.

Our praise ensure when we are yielding our freedom to His cross control and relaxing in His promise for our destiny. Where these two are effectually coming together in our daily moment by moment living is beyond our reason! We can only trust His assurances and continue our assaults on the things that matter. The Apostle Paul documents my thinking here by his words to his beloved Philippian church, “You must work out your own salvation with fear and trembling [Greek] ... For God is working in you to will and act according to His good purpose!” (Phil. 2:12-14) The best and the worst are as nothing when we are finding our most in Christ and the high praise that comes with it!

“Let my whole being Praise the Lord” (Psalm 103:1).

“Let the high praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands” (Psalm 149:6).