

Praise – Focusing on the Positive

1. Unlike so much of our talk, praise is not negative but focuses on the *positive*. It boosts others rather than uses others to boost ourselves. It heals rather than harms. (It is rare, therefore, in the media!)

2. Christians who repeatedly say 'Praise the Lord!' even when the topic is tragic may mislead others into thinking that praise is trivial. It is not. Such words are essentially **affirmations** about God – *in spite of all this, I know that God is worthy to be praised!*

3. The focus of Christian Praise is **what God has done for us** in Christ.

4. When life's pains and mysteries throw God out of focus for us, or seem to obliterate him altogether, Christian **praise** will always begin to put him back into our picture again.

5. If words help us, there are phrases of praise in countless hymns, songs, psalms and choruses that we can use. Their **strength** may help carry us from the negative to the positive. One of my own favourites is:

*Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven
who, like me*, his praise should sing?*

[*Original has 'thee' referring to 'my soul'.]

6. But if we find that words tend to create fog rather than focus, we may, like Christians in every century, find that the most helpful praise-focus is simply the name – **JESUS**. Try it!

7. Just stay with the name 'Jesus' as you gently allow his Name to put God into focus again and let him breathe afresh his Holy Spirit on you. This can be a helpful exercise. It won't put everything right, but it will certainly begin to renew your peace, to rekindle your love and to help you see things in a truer perspective.