Hope City

Discussion Guide

October 25, 2026

I've Decided to Praise Him Anyways

Growth Chart: Week 4

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Main Idea

Spiritual maturity isn't simply about how much we know about God, but how we respond when life doesn't go as planned. Hebrews 6:1 challenges us to keep growing in our faith, while Psalm 34:1 reminds us to praise the Lord at all times, not just when life goes well. In Acts 16, Paul and Silas demonstrate this kind of maturity when they choose to pray and worship while imprisoned for doing God's work. Their example reminds us that although we cannot always control our circumstances, we can choose where to place our focus. **Praise isn't just something we offer when life is good; it's something we offer because God is good.**

Anchor Verse: *"So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely we don't need to start again with the fundamental importance of repenting from evil deeds and placing our faith in God."* (Hebrews 6:1, NLT).

Read: Psalm 34:1

1. MATURE FAITH CHOOSES TO PRAISE GOD BEFORE THE CIRCUMSTANCES EVER CHANGE

Paul and Silas praised God while still in prison, and David found strength in the Lord while facing overwhelming loss. Their examples remind us that spiritual maturity isn't pretending our struggles don't exist; it's choosing to bring our pain to God, trust His faithfulness, and worship Him even before our circumstances change.

Scripture: Acts 16:25; 1 Samuel 30:6; 1 Samuel 30:8; Philippians 4:6–7; Psalm 34:1; Psalm 119:105

Discussion: When unexpected problems or disappointments interrupt your life, what is your first response, and how does it affect your ability to recognize God's goodness? David strengthened himself in the Lord before seeking direction and moving forward. What would it practically look like

for you to bring a current struggle to God through prayer and thanksgiving rather than waiting for the situation to improve?

2. SOMETIMES YOUR GREATEST TESTIMONY ISN'T WHAT GOD BROUGHT YOU OUT OF, BUT HOW YOU PRAISED HIM WHILE YOU WERE STILL IN THE MIDDLE OF IT

When Paul and Silas worshiped in prison, the other prisoners listened, and their experience ultimately became a powerful testimony that led a jailer and his household to faith in Jesus. Our response to difficult circumstances can witness to others, demonstrating an authentic faith anchored in God's goodness even when life is uncertain.

Scripture: Acts 16:25–26, 30; Hebrews 13:15

Discussion: Think about the people who regularly observe your life—family, friends, coworkers, or neighbors. What might they be learning about your relationship with God through the way you respond to difficulties? Hebrews 13:15 describes praise as a sacrifice. What makes worshiping God difficult during certain seasons of your life, and how could choosing to praise Him anyway strengthen both your faith and your influence on others?

"PRAISE ISN'T JUST SOMETHING WE DO WHEN LIFE IS GOOD...
PRAISE IS SOMETHING WE OFFER BECAUSE GOD IS GOOD!"

SUMMARY

Spiritual growth becomes evident when our praise is no longer controlled by our circumstances. Paul and Silas didn't wait for the prison doors to open to worship, and David didn't wait for his problems to be resolved to seek strength in God. Their examples challenge us to move beyond a faith dependent on favorable outcomes toward a faith grounded in God's unchanging character. Choosing praise doesn't mean denying our pain or ignoring our problems. It means remembering that God is still good, still present, and still worthy, no matter what we face. Our praise can strengthen our own faith while becoming a powerful testimony to those around us.

CALL TO ACTION

Practice Praise Before The Answer: Each morning this week, identify one situation you're struggling with or waiting on God to change. Bring that need to Him in prayer, then intentionally thank Him for three things that remain true about His character and faithfulness.

Replace Complaining With Thanksgiving: Read Philippians 4:6–7 each day this week. When frustration, anxiety, or disappointment begins to take over, pause and turn that moment into a specific prayer of thanksgiving. At the end of the day, reflect on how that choice affected your attitude.

Let Your Faith Become A Testimony: Share with one person this week about a difficult season in which you've experienced God's faithfulness. You don't need a perfectly resolved story. Simply share how God has strengthened you, what you're learning, or why you're continuing to trust Him.

GROUP LEADER RESOURCE

The Vacation That Didn't Go As Planned

Instructions:

Ask participants to think back to a vacation, special event, family gathering, or carefully planned experience that went completely differently than expected.

Invite volunteers to briefly share what happened, what went wrong, and whether they can laugh about it now.

Encourage participants to share the unexpected good moments that may have come out of the experience.

Connection to the Sermon:

Sometimes the difference between a miserable experience and a meaningful one is the perspective we choose to carry through it. Just as we can find reasons to be grateful when everyday plans fall apart, we can learn to recognize God's goodness and faithfulness during life's more difficult seasons.

Transition Question: Why is it often easier to recognize the good in a difficult experience after it's over than while we're still going through it?