



Let Us Offer Up a Sacrifice of Praise



**Twelve Steps to a Good Year
(Part 14)**
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we continue to work through our twelve New Year resolutions, taken from the epistle to the Hebrews. I do trust that you've already begun to find in these resolutions a new source of strength and direction as you set out on your way into this New Year. Let me review briefly something about resolutions that I said at the beginning of this series. I said that resolutions determine attitudes, attitudes determine approach, and approach determines outcome. I'll repeat that just once: resolutions determine attitudes, attitudes determine approach, and approach determines outcome.

Now, my purpose in going through these scriptural New Year resolutions with you has been to produce in you an attitude and an outlook that will carry you through to a successful outcome when this year ends. In other words, it'll be a good

year.

The last two "let us" resolutions that we looked at were the following: Hebrews 12:28 and 29:

"Therefore, since we received a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe. For our God is a consuming fire."

That one is, "Let us show gratitude", and it's connected with the way in which we're able to serve a holy God. The next one was in Hebrews 13:13:

"Hence, let us go out to Him [that is, Jesus], outside the camp, bearing His reproach."

That resolution is, "Let's be willing to be identified with Jesus and His cross. Let's not try to be Christians and avoid the reproach of the cross." The attitude of the world to Jesus sooner or later is going to be reflected in its attitude to us. The cross brings release from two related forms of slavery. The first, pleasing self; the second, pleasing the world. The only way of escape from those two slaveries is through the

cross.

And last, yesterday I quoted to you the words of James, that if we want to be friends of this world we become the enemies of God. We've got to accept the principle of the cross in our personal lives.

Today we're going to look at the twelfth and the final resolution. It's found in Hebrews 13:15:

“Through him [that's Jesus] then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God; that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to his name.”

So that's the final resolution. To me it's very appropriate and very beautiful: “Let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God.” I think it's so good that the final resolution is something that we're to go on doing. Are you going to go on doing that all through this year, continually offering up a sacrifice of praise to God? It's going to make all the difference to what the year holds for you.

This final step of offering up a sacrifice of praise to God is related in a direct and practical way with the two previous steps, which were, “Let us show gratitude” and “Let us go out to Him outside the gate.” You see, gratitude naturally leads to praise. There are so many passages in the Bible where it relates thanksgiving with praise. One of the most beautiful is Psalm 100:4, where it says about coming to God:

“We enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise.”

The first step in access to God is thanksgiving, the second step is praise. Thanksgiving leads to praise. It finds expression in praise. It flows out in praise.

And then the step just before this one, “Let us go out to Him outside the camp, let us be identified with the cross of Jesus, let us not try just to follow Jesus without accepting the reproach of his cross,” brings us, as I've said already, release from the two slaveries of pleasing self and pleasing the world. And that again is directly related to offering the sacrifice of praise. You might not see it at first, but there are two hindrances to spontaneous, free-flowing praise in our lives. They are Love of self and love of the world. As long as our affections are centered in ourselves or in the world, we are not really free to praise God. But the cross removes these two hindrances and sets us free to praise God.

And then we're no longer affected by what happens to ourselves; we're not affected by our moods, by our problems,

by apparent adversity. We're no longer affected by what goes on in the world around us. You know, sometimes we sit and listen to the news and we get up afterwards and we think, “Well, the situation's pretty bad, problems, disasters, crime, immorality...” But you see, we're not living in this world. The world doesn't dominate us. It doesn't dominate our thinking. We're in the world but not of the world. And when we are released from that slavery to the world, when the world doesn't control our thinking and our motivations, when we've been liberated by the cross in that inner attitude towards the world, then there's nothing left to hinder our praise. We don't praise God just when things are going right in the world. We don't praise God just when things are going right with ourselves. But we praise God because He's worthy to be praised. Our liberated spirit isn't entangled with self-love and the love of the world.

There's a tremendous mystery of the liberty that comes through being identified with the cross of Jesus. You see, praise is something that's very significant. You find out a lot about a person when you study how much praising they do. You find out really which kind of life they're living in. Are they still the slave of the old man or have they entered into the resurrected life of the new man? There's one thing about the old man, he's a grumbler. Any time you hear a person grumbling, you know that's the old man speaking. But the new man is a praiser. So which is it in you? Is it the old man that speaks or is it the new man that praises? Is it the old man that says, “I can't take this any longer, things are getting too bad, nobody treats me right, I don't know what's wrong with the world,” or is it the new man that says, “Hallelujah, praise the Lord, I'm free, I'm a child of God. Heaven is my home. God loves me.” Which is your attitude?

Let me remind you of a sentence from Proverbs that I quoted earlier in this series, Proverbs 18:21:

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”

Two things that come out of the tongue: death and life. If you grumble, if you're negative, if you're self-centered, your tongue will bring forth death. But if you're liberated from all that and you're walking in the praise of God and the worship of God, your tongue will bring forth life. And whatever your tongue brings forth, whatever fruit it brings forth, whether it's sweet or whether it's bitter, you're going to eat that fruit.

I want to go back for a moment to that verse in Hebrews 13:15 and just bring out one more important point. The writer says:

“Through Jesus, then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God.”

twelve steps.

One very significant word there is the word “sacrifice.” Praise is a sacrifice. And a sacrifice, according to the principles of Scripture, requires a death. Nothing was ever offered to God that hadn’t passed through death. And so, the sacrifice of praise requires, as I’ve already said, the death of the old man. The old man can’t really praise God as God deserves to be praised. There has to be a death. And then again, a sacrifice costs something, and praise is costly. Let me put it this way, “We need to praise God most when we least feel like it.” Praise cannot depend on our feelings. It’s a sacrifice of our spirit.

I want to just give you the example of David for a moment, in closing this talk, Psalm 34. The introduction says, “A psalm of David, when he feigned madness before Abimelech, who drove him away and he departed.” At this time, David was fugitive from his own country. The king, Saul, was trying to kill him. He had to leave his own country and his familiar surroundings. He went to the court of a Gentile king for refuge but Abimelech the king suspected him of being an enemy, and in order to save his life, he had to feign madness. It says in the historical book that he scrabbled on the door and he slobbered on his beard. That was his situation. What was his reaction? Listen to the first three verses of this psalm:

“I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear it and rejoice. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His Name together.”

Isn’t that marvelous? Right there, in such a terrible situation, with his life hanging in the balance and the shame of having to feign madness, he says, “I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth.” That’s the sacrifice of praise. He says, “I’m going to go on boasting in the Lord. There’s nothing else I can boast in right now, but I can boast in the Lord.” He says, “the humble will hear it and rejoice.” And then he goes on, “O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.” I want to tell you, praise is infectious. If you learn to praise God that way, others will join you. But grumbling is infectious, too. If you grumble, you’ll get fellow grumblers. So learn to offer that sacrifice of praise to God continually.

Our time is up for today. I’ll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. I’ll continue with this theme, “Twelve Steps to a Good Year.” Tomorrow I’ll be giving an overall summary of all

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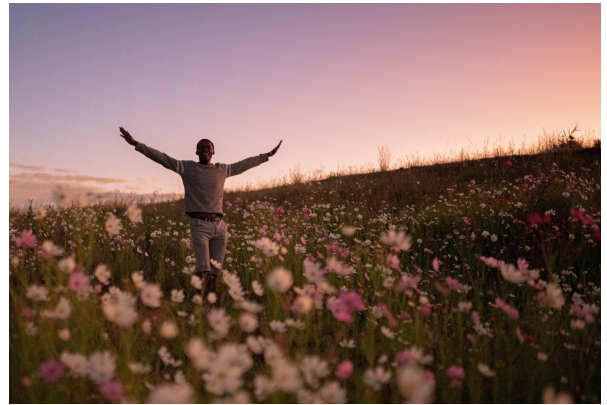
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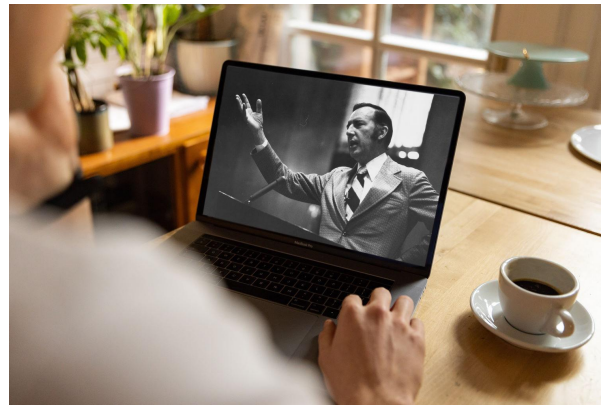
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