

Dr. Ted Hildebrandt, Praise of God in Book II of the Psalter, Session 4, Call to and Cause for Praise, 6-min. Video Overview

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Alright, let's get right into it. When you hear the word praise, what comes to mind? Maybe just a song or, you know, saying a few nice things. But what if it's actually something way more complex, more passionate, and even more structured? Today, we're going to break down the anatomy of praise, pulling from Dr. Ted Hildebrandt's incredible research into Book 2 of the Psalms.

Everything really kicks off with this image right here. It's just so raw, so visceral. This tells us that praise isn't born from a sense of duty.

No, it comes from this deep, almost desperate longing. It's the soul thirsting for its source. And that intense passion? Well, that's the engine behind everything we're about to explore.

So, okay, you have this incredibly powerful emotion, but how does it actually get translated into action? What are the real building blocks of praise, at least according to these ancient texts? That's the big question we're going to tackle. We're going to go from the why we feel this way to the how it's all expressed. So first things first, the cause for praise.

The Psalms make one thing absolutely clear. Before any singing or shouting or clapping starts, there has to be a reason. Praise isn't just some random happy noise.

It's a direct response to something very specific. It always has a cause. And what's so fascinating is how a tiny little word can carry so much weight.

In Hebrew, the word *ki*, which just means for or because, basically acts like a trigger. It's the connector. It links the act of praising to the specific reason why.

It's literally the here's why that comes right after the call to praise. So what are some of these reasons? Well, the first category is all about God's fundamental character, who he is. The Psalms say praise is given because God is awesome, because he is a great king over all the earth, and because he's defined by this unwavering loving faithfulness.

It's praise for his very being. Okay, so the second big category shifts from being to doing. Praise is also a direct response to God's actions.

It's offered up because he created the world, because he delivers people from trouble, because he actually answers prayer, and because he forgives sin. You see, these are real, tangible things that spark a response of gratitude. All right, so we've got the reason; we know the why, but how does praise actually get started? That brings us to our next piece of the puzzle, the call to praise.

You can think of this as the ignition switch. A lot of the time, it starts with a direct command, and I mean it is not a gentle suggestion. This verse shows it perfectly.

It's an energetic, all-in instruction. Clap, shout. It's a big, open invitation for literally everyone to join the party, but you know that call to praise isn't always about shouting instructions to a crowd.

Sometimes it turns inward. It becomes this really personal vow or commitment, and this is such a powerful shift, isn't it? The writer here isn't telling other people what to do. They're making a personal promise.

It's a declaration that says, because of who you are and what you've done, I will praise you. It's the moment an individual's response turns into a lifelong promise. So we've covered the why and the what that gets it started.

Now let's get into the how. How does all this internal passion and personal commitment actually show up in the real world? This is where things get physical and very, very audible. Look, if there's one thing to get about praise in the Psalms, it's this.

It is not a silent, purely mental activity. Not at all. It's a fully embodied experience.

It involves your whole person from head to toe. And the text gets super specific about this. It's not vague at all.

It talks about singing lips, a shouting tongue, clapping hands, and hands that are lifted up. It's like every part of the body is recruited to physically show this joy that's bubbling up inside. And it didn't just stop with the human body.

Nope. Praise was meant to be heard. So it gets amplified with music.

And I mean, they used everything they had. You've got the harp and the lyre bringing the melody. You've got the powerful, arresting blast of the shofar; that's the ram's horn.

And you've got tambourines for rhythm. The point clearly wasn't quiet, solemn reverence. It was a loud, noisy, joyful celebration.

And here's another crucial piece of the puzzle. This huge, noisy celebration? Well, it almost never happened alone. A core, non-negotiable part of praise was that it was public.

It was a shared experience. This verse just says it all, doesn't it? Praise really finds its home in the great congregation, in the assembly. It's supposed to be a collective voice, with everyone marching and celebrating together on their way to the house of God.

So if it happens in a big group, where is this group supposed to be? Well, the Psalms paint this incredible picture where praise has a very specific starting point, but a completely universal destination. Okay, this slide is just so cool because it shows you the incredible ambition of praise. You've got this dual focus.

On one hand, praise starts in a specific, sacred center. Places like Zion, the Temple, the Holy Mountain. But it was never, ever meant to stay there.

The ultimate vision is for this praise to break out, to go global, filling the entire earth and reaching every single nation and kingdom. Okay, so let's tie all these threads together now. We've looked at the cause, the call, the how, and the where.

But what's the ultimate point? What does all this praise actually do for the human soul? You know, the Psalms are just unflinchingly honest about pain and suffering. They ask this question over and over again, fully admitting that there are times of deep despair and inner turmoil. The soul gets downcast.

It's a fact of life. So what's the remedy? Any answer? Incredibly, it is praise itself. But notice, it's a very specific kind of praise.

It's praise as an act of hope. It's a conscious choice to look forward and declare, I will yet praise him. That word yet is everything.

Praise becomes the tool the soul uses to pull itself out of despair by focusing on a future that's still to come. So when you put it all together, you realize that praise is so much more than just noise or ritual. It's the anatomy of hope.

It is the passionate, physical, communal, and forward-looking overflow of a soul that even when it's at its lowest, is fighting its way back to the very source it thirsts for. Which kind of leaves us with a big question, doesn't it? What does that overflow look like in our world today?