

PRAISE VICTORIOUSLY

C7

We're declaring STRONGER over 2021. We believe as a church and as individuals that by the end of the year we will be stronger across all areas of life as we apply the Word of God. So over the next 11 months we're going to go on a journey to get stronger.

Read Jude 1:20-21

The Bible encourages us to build ourselves up in our faith, praying in the Holy Spirit. When we do this we start to see strength running through our lives. Strength is important if we are to fulfil our God-given call. To build ourselves up we must first come to God, acknowledge and deal with the issue of sin and then encourage ourselves in Him. One of the ways we do this is to **Praise Victoriously**. As we learn to lift up the name of God, it'll cause our head to be lifted and our gaze to move heavenwards, onto the bigness of God.

What are some areas you want to get stronger in this year? What plans have you put in place to strengthen in these areas?

Read Hebrews 12:1-2 and Romans 6:23

In life we will come across many blockages or traps that try to prevent us from praising victoriously in life. One of these is sin. Sin is a hindrance, it makes us weak, awakens death and is a weight that entangles and holds us back. But we can triumph over sin through Jesus' work on the cross. We can stand victorious in what He has done and take up a stance and declaration of praise. When we triumph in life the natural response is to shout and celebrate.

Share one or two things you can celebrate and praise God for right now.

1. Celebrate by making a joyful noise (Read Psalm 27:6, Psalm 100:1-2, Psalm 98:4)

In life when there's something to celebrate our natural reaction is to shout, cheer, clap and make some noise. When we celebrate in God we are encouraged to do the same; to shout and make a joyful noise, to sing and skillfully play instruments. If we don't feel joyful or happy we can make the decision to be joyful, to reflect on the goodness of God and celebrate because He has given us the ability to shout and praise! When we understand what Jesus paid for us, there is liberty and celebration!

Can you think of an example in the Bible where someone praised God through song or joyful noises? What was the outcome? Or think about a time where you sang praise to God even when you didn't feel like it, what happened?

2. Celebrate by dancing and jumping (Read Psalm 30:11 and Luke 6:22-23)

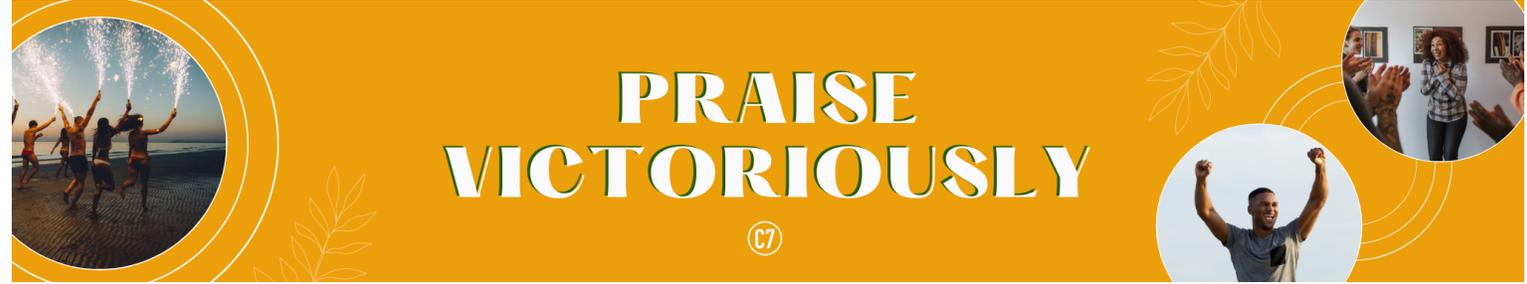
We're in a culture just now that just sits and watches, but God wants us to engage and participate with our whole heart, and our whole body. As well as making joyful noises, we can participate in celebration by dancing and leaping for joy before Him! When we do, it strengthens our life because it brings freedom!

Why do you think we are encouraged to celebrate God through dancing and jumping?

3. Celebrate by eating food (Read Nehemiah 8:10 and Psalm 23:1-6)

In this scripture Nehemiah declared to the people that they needed to stop being sorrowful and start feasting and rejoicing because it was the Lord's day! There is a time for mourning and weeping, but there is also a time for rejoicing! The Bible tells us that Jesus turns our mourning to dancing, and our weeping to rejoicing. Sometimes when we feel like we are under attack the last thing we want to do is to celebrate, but in this story we see that even while Nehemiah was under accusation, he knew that it was time to celebrate, because his celebration would bring forth a victory. As we come out of this time of fasting it's time to celebrate all that God has done.

We've just finished our 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting, what highlights or praise report do you have from this time?



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God wants to help us all become stronger and more courageous in life. To help us grow we'll be unpacking some of the great keys of the Kingdom that strengthen us and also some of the areas of life that have the tendency to try and discourage us, and what we can do to overcome this area. So this month we're talking about **Praising Victoriously!**

One of the things in life that can hold us back or weigh us down is the cares of the world. (Read Matthew 13:18-22)

The cares of the world weary people out as we become consumed by all the things we need to do and think about. Our mind gets clouded so that we lose the big picture of where we are going and why we are doing it. When the cares of the world become the frontrunner in our lives there can be no space or time to breathe and our thinking becomes consumed with our daily lives. God's word says that the cares of the world choke us. When God is no longer first and life has taken over we are in danger of being choked. We may succeed in some areas but peace and joy may be missing.

What are some things we can do to make sure God and His word are first in our lives?

One way we can overcome the cares of the world is by praising victoriously through singing! (Read Psalm 30:11-12)

In a world where we are currently discouraged from singing, we must remember that the Bible continually instructs us to sing! We can sing anywhere, in the shower, in the car, on a walk, in our home - in any place and any time, we can learn to praise and sing glory to God. Singing is a powerful practice in the believer's life. In silence, the mind can tell us wrong things, but singing interrupts the silence, shifting our attention onto God. When we are choking, when life is tense and our mind is racing, if we take a moment to sing praises to God, lifting our voice to Him, it will remove the intensity of the moment.

Where and when do you sing to God? Is there anything you could do differently this week to lift praise in your life?

Read Colossians 3:16 - We sing because we can! And when we do:

1. **We are agreeing with God's word.** Singing helps us to elevate who God is, which brings the right perspective when the cares of the world try to creep in.
2. **We get a better perspective.** Singing is like confessing out loud, it gets the ears listening to the possibility in God!

Read Psalm 96:1 - What do we sing?

1. **We sing the scriptures.** When we sing we are declaring God's word over a situation. When we sing scriptures back to God it reminds us who God is. It is our thoughts towards Him and our declaration of faith.
2. **We sing a new song to the Lord.** We can't just be going through the motions, our songs should be heart-expressions.

What are some songs just now that are helping you to stand on God's word and see God better?

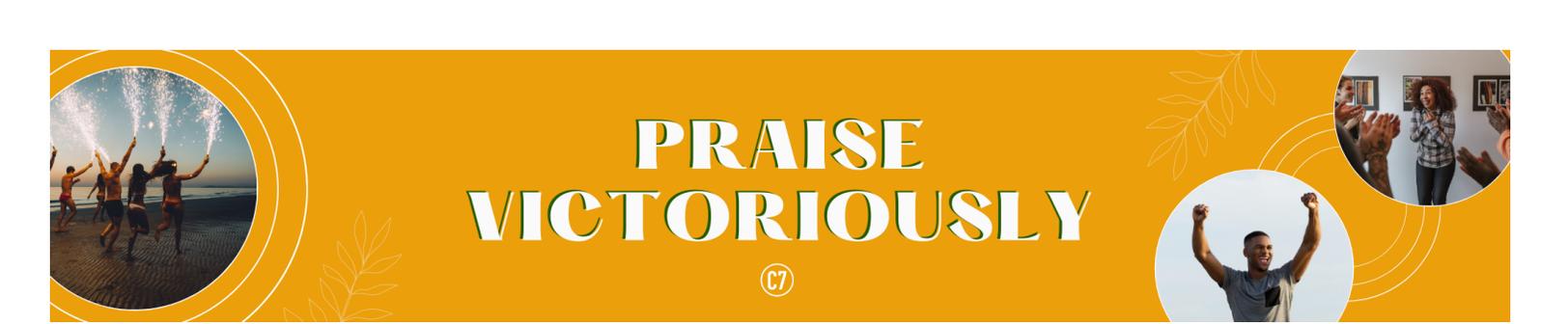
Read Ephesians 5:18-19 - How do we sing:

1. **With thankfulness in the heart.** Thankfulness opens doors in our heart and in our lives.
2. **We make melody in your heart to the Lord.** Our song should be a heart response to the Lord.

Read Psalm 105:1-2 - When we sing...

1. **It encourages others.** Your praise and enthusiasm begins to stir others around you to get hungry for God
2. **It connects with those who don't know Christ yet.** We are instructed to make God known, and one of the ways we can do this is through song!

How can we share the love of God and the great things He has done with people in our world this week?



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We all want to get **stronger**, but we don't always want to address things that can discourage us from getting stronger. So today we are going to look at becoming stronger while dealing with the area of pride.

Read Proverbs 11:2, Psalm 10:4 and James 4:6

Pride is an ugly attribute that wrecks life. It can stop us from attaining the best possible outcome and prevent us from seeing a miracle. Pride removes God out of the picture, but He loves a humble heart. Deciding to praise God requires us to humble ourselves.

Why do you think it takes humility to praise God? What things can we do to prevent pride from forming in our lives?

Read Psalm 100:1-2 and Psalm 98:4-6

If we're going to get stronger, we've got to learn to **Praise Victoriously** with an attitude of joy! This means singing, shouting triumphantly, shouting with joy, praising with musical instruments, clapping our hands and dancing!

Praise is victorious with joy because:

1. It stops daily life and turns the inner man back on to the creator God to see His nature and character

A tough day doesn't often feel great, so when we find ourselves lacking in joy, praise is the vehicle for joy to enter our life. As the joy of God enters your life, so does the strength of God.

Have you experienced strength come when you praise? Share an experience recently about the change that has happened as you have begun to praise.

2. In His presence is the fullness of God's joy and strength comes because God reveals he is the Almighty.

God's power can turn your mourning into dancing. When we are in the joy of the Lord, it's visible through our face and the energy we carry. Joy is produced when we praise. When we don't feel like it, we can still choose to praise. To help us, we can think about and look at who God is, what is he capable of and what He has done for you.

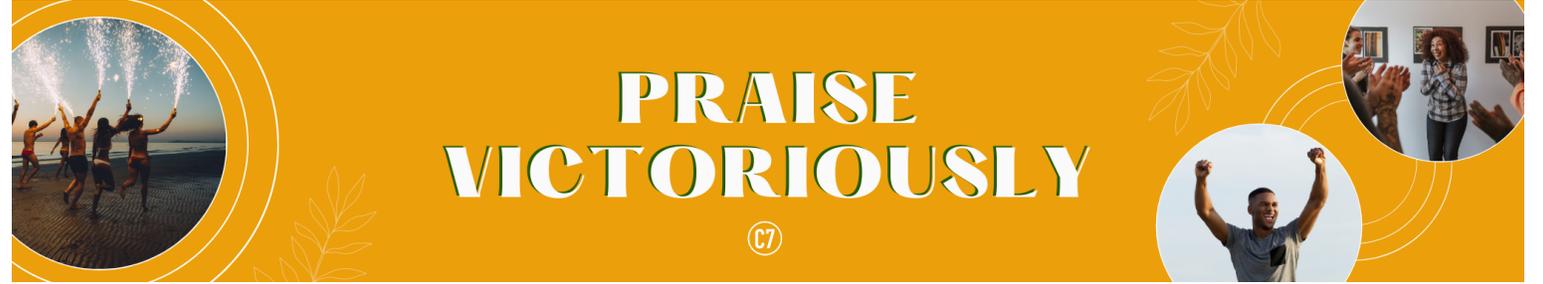
Share three characteristics of who God is to you, three things He is capable of and three things He has done for you. How does our understanding of who God is affect how we praise Him?

Read Psalm 84:1-12

When you are in God's presence, this is the experience:

1. It's lovely!
2. You'll want to go back to it.
3. Happiness! Praise releases happiness.
4. We go from strength to strength: When we come into His presence, we need to stay there until the strength comes.
5. It's better than any other place! When you get a taste of God, it doesn't matter where you are; there is no better place.
6. He does not withhold anything good from the blameless who dwell in His presence.

Share an experience of being in the presence of God. How can we choose to enter into His presence regularly in our own lives?



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We're committed to getting **stronger** in 2021, so to do this, we're following a journey through ten principles, starting with **Praise Victoriously!** As we grow in praise, we also need to keep addressing the challenges and things that can hinder us from moving forwards. Today we're going to look at demonic forces and powers and how to overcome these through our praise.

Read Ephesians 6:10-18

We all face many battles and enemies, but the Bible instructs us that we don't wage war against people; we're commanded to love people; however, we fight against spiritual enemies. Our spiritual enemy will try to attack you on who you are as a person, bring confusion and get you not to believe in yourself. He will also attack your future as he doesn't want you to reach the full potential you have in Christ. However, victorious praise helps us overcome him.

What things can you do to remind yourself of who God says you are and to help stir up your belief in yourself when the enemy tries to bring confusion.

The right praise manifests the presence of God. (Read Psalm 16:11)

There is no substitute for the presence of God. His presence is not just an encounter; it's a declaration that God is Almighty. In His presence, there is the fullness of joy. In His presence, His Kingdom has come, and where His kingdom is, every demonic power has to move, every sickness has to go, every hint of poverty has to change as God begins to establish His rule and Kingship in your life.

The right praise will have the enemy turn back on themselves. (Read James 4:7)

When we submit to God, surrendering to Him through praise, we resist the enemy, and he flees. In the story of Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20, three armies came against Jehoshaphat, but as the battle approached, Jehoshaphat went to God in prayer and then praised His way through the battle. The Bible says that God caused confusion amongst the enemy, and they all turned back on themselves as Jehoshaphat and the people praised. When we are in a battle, we must remember that the battle is real. We can't ignore it, or things can get worse; however, we can be sure that God has a plan in the midst of it all, so we always have a reason to praise!

List three reasons you have to praise God today.

The right praise silences the enemy. (Read Psalm 8:2)

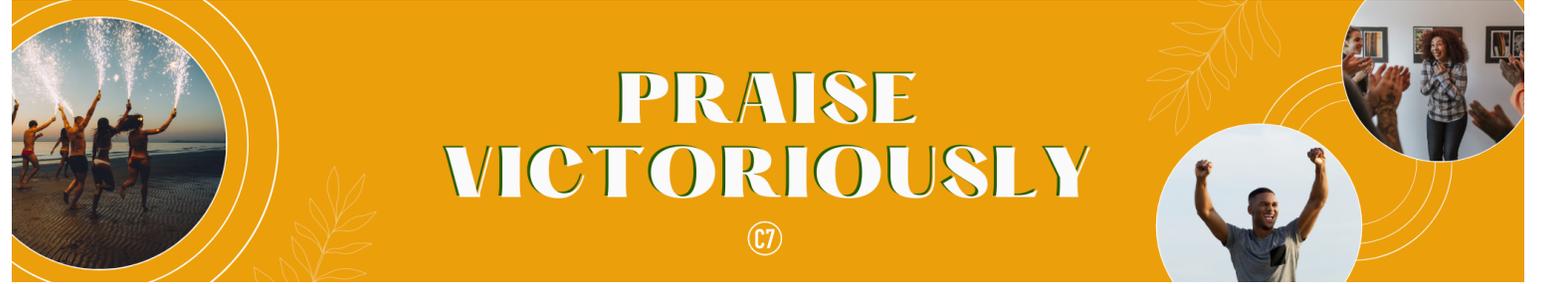
The enemy will always try to keep you from praising because he knows that when you praise, it silences him. When praise is loud, the enemy can't be heard. Victorious praise removes the unhelpful and negative attacks on your mind, putting a muzzle over his mouth. When we speak the victorious name of God over our lives, declaring His wonders, His power and His glory, it shuts the voices that oppose Him down. When you feel discouraged, it's time to turn praise on!

What are some of the names of God you know? Share them and explain how they help us to praise Him.

The right praise causes walls that block promises to come crashing down.

There are many great examples of this in the Bible, including the Walls of Jericho in Joshua 6 and Paul and Silas in Acts 16. In these stories, shouts of victory and praising in the midst of battle broke down walls that otherwise would have been impossible to move. In Paul and Silas's story, we see that through their praise, not only were they set free, but others around them were also set free! Our praise brings freedom to us and those in our world.

Have you experienced praise bringing breakthrough? Share this story with the group. Is there something in your life today that looks like an impossible wall? Stand together as a group over this and choose to praise God in the midst of the battle during your time of prayer together.



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We've just had a powerful weekend with Vision Sunday, where we unpacked the theme, key goals and strategies for the year ahead at C7. Our theme for 2021: **Stronger - strengthen what matters most** is designed to help you get stronger across all of your life; one way we are doing this is through our 10-part teaching series over the year, which has started with **Praise Victoriously**. As we grow in victorious praise, overcoming hindrances to our lives, we will get stronger.

What is one area you want to get stronger in this year? What things are you doing to grow here?

One of the barriers that can come against us in life is the area of **unbelief**. We all have experienced some level of unbelief at some point. Unbelief stops us from progressing and getting stronger because something inside us says, 'I don't believe! It fences us to believe that something can't and won't be done. It is a viewpoint that is often connected with a lack of trust. However, the good news is that we can turn unbelief around and begin to believe the promises of God once again! One of the ways we do this is through praising victoriously.

The Bible describes praise like a garment (Isaiah 61:3). We put on praise by faith, learning to look up to God and not down at our situation. When we get a glimpse of His goodness, our perspective radically changes, and we get liberated in Him. When we begin to praise God, and He turns up, the following things start to happen:

1. Whatever is weak becomes strong (Read 2 Corinthians 12:9 and Psalm 40:2)

God doesn't leave His kids weak; He wants to bring you strength, encourage you, lift you, to make you solid.

Share a time where you have been strengthened through choosing to praise God.

2. Whatever is broken gets healed (Read Isaiah 53:5)

When we praise God, we bring Him into our brokenness, sickness and pain and allow the hand of heaven to touch our lives. He is the God that heals.

3. The evidence is undeniable.

When God shows up, He does things that no one else could do; signs, wonders, and miracles accompany Him. When we praise Him, He brings answers, peace, restoration, breakthrough and more!

Have you experienced the undeniable presence of God when you praise? What breakthrough, healing, miracles have you seen? Encourage the group with one.

4. Knees bow and hearts bend (Philippians 2:10-11)

Bending the knee is a sign of surrender; when God shows up in our praise, we bow before Him because of His Lordship over our lives. Our physical position is often a reflection of our heart response, so there will be moments in our praise where we need to get on our knees before God. When the heart bends, it simply means that we are surrendering fully to God, letting Him take control.

What are some other physical actions of praise? What do you think they can represent in our heart?

5. A future destiny is given (2 Timothy 1:9)

Scripture says that we are both saved and called; this means that God has a plan for our lives. We, His Church, are His vehicle for reaching humanity, to see His Kingdom established here on earth.

We saw through Vision Sunday some of the ways we can play a part in building God's Church; what things has God put on your heart to get involved in? If you're already part of Dream Team, share why you serve! If you're looking to get involved you can sign up today at c7church.com/vision