

# When People Think It's Bad – Praise God

Psalm 75

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When I think of horn there are three things that come to mind. First, the big thing that sticks out of both sides of a bulls head. The longhorn bulls could certainly do some damage with their horns. Second, is a musical instrument like a trumpet or bugle or French horn. In the band they are known as the horn section. Third, is a bullhorn used to project a person's voice. I remember it from the days when the football coach used it.

I don't think of it as a symbol for my accomplishments or even raising my fist anger. However, that is how it is used in scripture. So, some versions of the Bible make that translation. We read horn, but it's is symbolic word for pride or anger, and all things associated with them.

***Psalm 75:1–10 (NLT) We thank you, O God! We give thanks because you are near. People everywhere tell of your wonderful deeds. God says, "At the time I have planned, I will bring justice against the wicked. When the earth quakes and its people live in turmoil, I am the one who keeps its foundations firm. "I warned the proud, 'Stop your boasting!' I told the wicked, 'Don't raise your fists! Don't raise your fists in defiance at the heavens or speak with such arrogance.' " For no one on earth—from east or west, or even from the wilderness— should raise a defiant fist. It is God alone who judges; he decides who will rise and who will fall. For the Lord holds a cup in his hand that is full of foaming wine mixed with spices. He pours out the wine in judgment, and all the wicked must drink it, draining it to the dregs. But as for me, I will always proclaim what God has done; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. For God says, "I will break the strength of the wicked, but I will increase the power of the godly."***

**Some people raise their fist to God, others sing praises to God.** We know people whose pride in their accomplishments has convinced them that they are invincible, or don't need anyone, or they look down on others. I'm not just talking about some athlete that demands their own way. I'm not just talking about some actor or musician, but about any individual that thumps their chest or raises their arms seeking the accolades of others.

Pride and arrogance hits every class of citizen, at every economic level. This kind of pride doesn't discriminate, anybody can be infected. It doesn't take much for pride to take over. It's like a drug and we crave it. Pride has a stiff price to pay.

We know people who blame God for all their problems, or protest against God because they feel as though they have been treated unfairly. Anger is a tricky thing. Sometimes we're angry and we show it. Other times anger is a slow burning fire. Either way our anger has us pointing a finger or shaking our fist at somebody. We want to cast blame away from ourselves. Every time the anger just grows worse. We shake our fist harder or we let the fire burn hotter.

The Lord says, "Stop it." He promises us that He will be judge. As Christians this might make us feel good. The evil doers will eventually receive their punishment. But for every sinner this promise is also a warning. Someday when God has decided, there will be a judgment. Either pride or anger will bring God's judgment.

Both pride and anger reveal the real attitude: we're right and God is wrong. Somebody is going to be judged for attempting to overrule the creator and sustainer of life. This is Elohim whom we know as the God who spoke all things into creation, who gives life, and has the power to take it away. It is foolishness hold onto the idea that Elohim is wrong. But people either raise their fist at God or sing praises.

God is always worthy of our praise. He never leaves us. Even when we shake our fist, He is there. When the world is falling apart: tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes God is holding it all together. As we walk away, He is as close as calling His name. As we are deceived, He is revealing the truth. When our hearts are broken, He is comforting our souls. When diseases and illness attack, He is healing. When we are confused, overwhelmed, exhausted, He cares for us. Our God, thee only God, the Living God is worthy of our praise.

*Psalm 75:4–6 (NLT) "I warned the proud, 'Stop your boasting!' I told the wicked, 'Don't raise your fists! Don't raise your fists in defiance at the heavens or speak with such arrogance.' " For no one on earth—from east or west, or even from the wilderness— should raise a defiant fist.*

**We are surrounded by people who bring about God's judgment.** It's too easy to blame God for our problems, but we're the problem. I get this a lot from kids and teenagers: "she started it." The problem they created escalated and now it's impacted others. Not only do we have the "she started it people", we also have "I'm going to pick on you." Children acting like children. Adults acting like children. Nobody taking responsibility, but everybody facing the consequences and whining about it.

I think about my actions and my thoughts. There are moments I want revenge. There are people I want to beat. I act like I have the right to take revenge and hurt other people. Especially if they deserve it. So, I'm no different than the next person sitting beside at the game or the restaurant. I deserve what has been planned for all those who shake their fist or raise their horn or whatever you want to call it.

God has a judgment planned. He will not tolerate our pride or our anger. He is telling us to stop it. His judgment is intended to break us of our sin. Those who have been broken of their sin, rejoice. Those who hold onto their fist shaking or horn raising, their pride or their anger will drink to the bottom of the cup of His judgment. It might be good to be broken, to rejoice.

We make life complicated, confusing, and filled with conflict. We fill our lives with our desires. Not our needs. We need food, clothing, and shelter. But we want certain kinds of food. It's not enough to have a muffin, we have to have a jelly filled donut. It's not enough to need a coat, we have to have coats for all our favorite teams. It's not enough to have a house, we have to have one on the mountaintop overlooking the river.

These may not be your desires, but they're mine. When they interfere with trusting God, when they are contradictory to trusting God, then I'm just as bad as the people who are shaking their fist at God or raising their horn. I'm saying I'm better than God, I know more than God, I can do whatever I want. That complicates my life. It creates confusion in my soul. It fills my life with conflict.

It's simple: trust God. Trust the one who created you. Do you think you know yourself better than the one who created you? That's foolishness, and we know. There are parts of your personality and your abilities you have not understood or comprehended. But God knows. He knows what desires are in your heart before you know them. He knows what you are capable of doing and what you can't do.

Trust Him because He loves. You would not exist if God did not love you. You are not some experiment or the pawn of a lunatic. God loved you, created you, breathed life in you, and asks you to trust Him.

Love Him with all your soul, spirit, heart, mind and strength. That doesn't mean you sit in church all day long. It doesn't mean you meditate with your head on your Bible for hours on end. Love God at home, at work, in the car and in between. Love God when you go to the ballgame, the store, or a walk around the block. Love God as you lay down to sleep at night. Love the people you encounter. Your mother-in-law, your boss, the lazy co-worker, the noise neighbor, and the forgetful person in the grocery line in front of you.

*Psalm 75:9 (NLT) But as for me, I will always proclaim what God has done; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. For God says, "I will break the strength of the wicked, but I will increase the power of the godly."*

**What comes first, our praise or God giving us His strength?** Praise is our instrument to glorify God. That's how we turn whatever is in our soul, spirit, heart, mind, or body to love for God. Our words of praise to God for being our creator are the turning points each day of our lives. When we are ready to shake our fist at God in anger, praise God for being your creator. You can't stay angry with God when you are praising Him. When your pride rises up, taking its undeserved place, praise God for being your creator. You can't keep patting your own back when you are praising God.

Like playing the guitar or the piano, praise is an instrument. It's been given to you by God. For your instrument to be useful, to be heard, you have to use it. Open your mouth and let your words of praise echo throughout your day. Okay, so maybe praising God in some of your daily situations may not be as easy as I make sound. You might be a flash mob of one at Aldi's. A little too much for you? Speak those words of praise in your heart. Then when you get in the car shout them.

But, what if you say "thank you Jesus" when you're on the trail at Lake Park? Somebody might be walking the other way who needs to hear it. You definitely needed to say it. What if you said "thank you Jesus" while slowly following that pokey driver? You definitely needed to say it. What if you said "thank you Jesus" as your boss demonstrates their inability to lead? They may need to know that you trust Jesus. You definitely needed to say it.

Praise is our antidote for pride, anger, fear, anxiety, and doubt. It is the medicine for all these ailments and sins that exist in our lives. There is a spiritual chemical reaction that happens in our souls when we start praising God. It's like pouring gasoline on smoldering wood, a fire is ignited. This fire blazes hot. This fire burns up all the impurities. This fire consumes all that's in its path. It spreads to every thought and situation in your life.

Praise is like the lubricant you put on a rusty bike chain. Once it wouldn't rotate, but with praise you go far. Praise is the power of God's Holy Spirit changing your attitudes. Your thinking about the big stuff is turned upside down. Your attitude about the little stuff is quickly overcome. Praise is the work of Jesus giving you new actions and behaviors. When you are praising God you don't have the need to seek revenge. As you praise God you can spend your energy helping somebody, anybody. While you praise God you are empowered to do what you thought was impossible.

Praise becomes the weapon that beats back the distractions and the temptations. Your words of praise are greater than the temptation, because your God is greater than the tempter. Your words of

praise bring your mind and your body and your spirit into one. You are focused on loving and trusting God.

*Psalm 75:9 (NLT) But as for me, I will always proclaim what God has done; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.*

**Stop shaking your fist at God and give God all your praise.** Praise God for what He's done in the past; praise God for what He will do next. When you are sensing the need to shake your fist at God, remember the moment you first trusted Jesus. In that moment there was hope, power, and peace. You were set free from your sins. Your attitude was changed. You knew that anything was possible.

Praise God. That was a miracle moment. That moment is forever part of who you are. That moment made you a child of God. That moment gave you the power to overcome all your doubts, fears, pride, and anger.

When you are in the midst of shaking your fist at God, or patting yourself on the back for your accomplishments, praise God for what is going to happen. I don't know what will happen next and neither do you. But God does know what will happen next. God has been working in every situation in your life to do what is good. You don't have any control over it. You can organize and plan, but whatever happens is in God's hands.

Praise God. A miracle is about to happen. The miracle might be something for the whole world to see, or it might be just for you to see. God will reveal Himself, doing what is good and justice. You will be strengthened.

Praise God for the sinners He puts in your path. A funny or odd thing happens to Christians. We draw closer to God which results in a greater dislike for the things of this world. But, we too often associate the things of this world with people. God created each person just as He created you and me. God loves each person He has created. Some people become completely absorbed by evil. As a result they pass through a point of no return. Only God knows who they are.

As we encounter the people who are attached to the world, let's praise God. Praise God that He loves them. Praise God that Jesus died and rose from the dead for their soul to be saved. Praise God that until they day they die He can save them from their sins.

Praise God for His saving mercy and grace. Through your faith in Jesus heaven is your eternal home. Through Jesus you are empowered for each day. That is a lot for which to be thankful. The people you encounter may not know they can be saved. Praise God they are in your path. A moment, a miracle is on the way. You are going to be a part of that miracle. You may plant a seed, water the seed, or bring in the harvest. Praise God.

Are you shaking your fist at God? Are you lifting up the horn of your accomplishments? You don't have to be angry. You don't have to live off of your accomplishments. Your anger and your pride are heavy burdens. They are a weight you don't need to carry. They are a drain physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Give them to Jesus. Give your life to Jesus.