

The power of a grateful heart !

“I was mad at my legs. I was mad at the devil and anybody who came near me.”

“And I hadn't slept in days.” It was just after Labor Day 2004, and I was at the height of one of the most intense battles for healing I've ever fought. A few days earlier I had ruptured a disc in my back. It felt like a toothache that was 4 1/2 feet long—from my hip to the tips of my toes.

During my life, I have been beaten up, shot, thrown off horses and run over with cars...but never had I hurt as bad as I did at that moment.

All I wanted to focus on was the pain and getting free of it. God met me in it, but in a very different way than I would have imagined.

If you don't redirect your focus, the problem will consume your life.

By Kenneth Copeland

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Back Porch Praise

There I was on the back porch facing another sleepless night. One heating pad was wrapped around my calf. Another was wrapped around my thigh. Each was held on by a bathrobe sash. The heat was turned as high as I could get it. But nothing seemed to help—I was still lying there on my back crying.

I didn't feel very grateful. I certainly didn't look very grateful.

Right in the middle of all that pain, though, the Spirit of God dropped it in my heart to begin shouting out my gratitude for all my heavenly Father had done for me.

"Oh, Father, I'm so grateful to You! I'm grateful that my other leg doesn't hurt. I'm so grateful my arms aren't hurting, my fingers are all working well, and my head doesn't hurt—it is sleepy, but it doesn't hurt!"

In the midst of all that pain, by an act of obedience I expressed gratitude to God...
...by faith!

More Praise—Less Pain

Being grateful *by faith*...

Not by feeling. Not by temperament. But by a deliberate act of faith, I did something I'd done many times before. That night on the porch I decided I would no longer talk about the way I felt, my flesh or its condition.

Instead of focusing on the pain and hurt, I filled my thoughts and mouth with gratitude for my life, my family, for all the years I've been in ministry, and for every other good thing that arose in my spirit.

I started praising and thanking God and the more I praised Him, the less pain I had in my leg. And as I was expressing my gratitude to Him, God began talking to me.

The more He talked, the better I felt. Each day I progressed; not one day was as bad as the day before.

There were a number of things that brought me to the place where complete healing manifest in my body. Thousands of my Partners; many believers from Spirit-filled churches; faith-talking, true healing-believing doctors; my family and friends; all added their faith to mine.

Nothing, however, had more impact than what began that night on the porch. The moment I began thanking God for all that was going right in my life, I was on my way out of the problem.

Redirected Focus

If you'll think about it, we only have two real options in times of extreme pressure. Those options are to focus either on the problem...or the gratitude. You cannot do both at the same time.

For instance, what happens if you have one sore finger? You may have nine fingers, toes, arms, ears, and numerous other body parts that are working perfectly, but that isn't your focus. No. All you can think about is how you are going to get that one finger healed. You begin confessing healing scriptures and try to decide what else you need to confess or do, to stop the pain.

But if you don't water those confessions with praise and thanksgiving, your focus on the one sore finger—or whatever problem—will continue to dominate your thinking.

If you don't redirect your focus, the problem can consume you. So start giving God thanks for everything that is working right. Praise Him for all the good things He has done in your life. As you do, you'll come to a place where you can release your faith and receive your answer. "Yeah, but Brother Copeland, you don't know what has happened to me."

You're right, I don't. But I do know you're breathing—not pushing up grass!

So just start thanking God for your life! Remind yourself that no matter what your circumstances are—it could be a whole lot worse. You're not dead yet!

And this principle applies to far more than just receiving healing. Expressing gratitude by faith will change everything around you. It will change the whole complexion of your life.

Shouts Silence the Devil

I'm not saying the challenges will be over when you start filling the atmosphere with shouts of praise and thanksgiving. In fact once you begin praising God with purpose, you'll become a

prime target for the devil. Why? It'll scare the daylights out of him when you begin operating in gratitude...and he'll try to stop you.

He'll use the only tactic he possesses. He'll try to steal that word out of you by stirring up your flesh. Mark 4:16-17 tells us, "These are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended."

The enemy will try to get you to become offended. But that will only work if you have no root—if you're not grounded in the love of God.

However if you are loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind (Matthew 22:37) and expressing your gratefulness for all He has done, you are becoming rooted and grounded in love. That's what Paul wrote to the Ephesians. He said:

I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts as you trust in him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love really is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it. Then you will be filled with the fullness of life and power that comes from God (Ephesians 3:17-19, New Living Translation).

Become so filled with His love that offense can't come near you. Praise Him for His marvelous love.

Praise Him, and as you do the enemy will be stopped cold because praise "stills the avenger" (Psalm 8:2).

Fill your mouth and the atmosphere with gratitude—thank God for all He is, for all He has done and is doing in your life. You and the world around you will change! VICTORY

You can praise your way to victory by praying something like this:

Father, I don't care how bad the finances look, I don't care what they said about me or what I'm being threatened with. Jesus said You love me as much as You love Him, and the Love in me never fails.

I'm grateful, Lord. I remember the times when things were so tough the situation looked impossible, and You moved in and brought me out of it. You set me free so many times.

I'm so grateful to You. I worship You and thank You so much. Nothing is going to change that. I am thrilled to have a grateful heart—an abundant heart.

I am grateful for the very breath in my lungs. For everything You have bestowed upon me I am grateful.

Most of all, I am grateful Jesus went to the cross and paid the price for our deliverance from death, hell and the grave. I am grateful for the blood He shed for my sins, for the privilege of being called by and authorized to use the power of His Name, for the Word, and that heaven

is in my future. I thank You that I am alive. I will live and not die and declare the wonderful works of my God!

I praise You and thank You, and I serve You with joyfulness and gladness of heart.

Hallelujah.

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