

*Learning to Lean**

Resource Packet

Prepared by

Claudette Joy Andrews
North Caribbean Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists
St. Croix, US Virgin Islands

For 2005 International Women's Day of Prayer

W

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Department of Women's Ministries

**Suggested Friday evening/Sabbath afternoon program*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Claudette Joy Andrews was born on the Caribbean island of St. Kitts. She is married to Pastor Maurice Andrews and is the delighted mother of three sons. Presently, she serves as Women's and Children's Ministries Director and Shepherdess Coordinator of the North Caribbean Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Claudette is a Theology graduate of Caribbean Union College, a Psychology graduate of Andrews University and a Nationally Certified Counselor. Her interests include reading, hiking, and entertaining. Her philosophy of life is encapsulated in her motto: ***"LIVING TO PLEASE HIM!"***



Note to WM Leaders

This packet **can be used for a Friday evening and/or Sabbath afternoon program**. It is based on the **ACTS** prayer: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication

Please note the following: In the Program Outline, the sections of the program need designated participants. (There are other places where group participation is needed, unless a designated person is selected, preferably in advance).

Adoration – Praise Songs (songs can be chosen ahead of time or the participants can choose when the program begins)
Vocal Selection

Confession - Rid Me of Iniquity/Transgression/ Sin (7-10 minute presentation)
2 Vocal Selections
Psalm 51

Thanksgiving – Vocal Selection
Thank You for Your Blessings (7-10n minute activity)
When I Consider List (explanation needs to be given about using the list)

Supplication - Ask and It Shall Be Given to You (7-10 minute activity)
Prayer is How We Fight Handout
Vocal Selection

If you are unable to have a Friday evening or Sabbath afternoon program at the time you have the Women's International Day of Prayer, this resource packet could be used as a separate program.

Table of Contents

Program Outline (needs to be printed on 8 ½ x 14 paper) ***Will be a separate attachment**

Litany of Praise – Psalm 96 Handout

Living on Praise Avenue Program (written by Olga E. Edwards and first presented at a Women's Ministries Prayer Retreat in the U.S. Virgin Islands.)

When I Consider Handout

Thank You Song Sheet

Choral Reading – Matthew 5-6

Prayer is How We Fight Handout

Letter to God

Blessings (suggested prayers)

Oh, Sing to the Lord a New Song!!

Oh, sing to the Lord a new song!
Sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord, bless His name;

Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.
Declare His glory among the nations,
His wonders among all peoples.

For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised;
He is to be feared above all gods.
For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the Lord made the heavens.

Honor and majesty are before Him;
Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.

Give to the Lord, O kindreds of the peoples,
Give to the Lord glory and strength.

Give to the Lord the glory due His name;
Bring an offering, and come into His courts.
Bring an offering, and come into His courts.
Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!
Tremble before Him, all the earth.

Say among the nations, “The Lord reigns;
The world also is firmly established, It shall not be moved;
He shall judge the peoples righteously.”

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
Let the sea roar, and all its fullness;
Let the field be joyful, and all that is in it.
Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the Lord.

For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth.
He shall judge the world with righteousness,
And the peoples with His truth.

LIVING ON PRAISE AVENUE

by

Olga E. Edwards

(First presented at a Women's Ministries Prayer Retreat in the U.S. Virgin Islands)

It is a pleasure to be with you today, and to bring you greetings from all your sisters on Praise Avenue. Let me quickly confess that I do not live there but I have visited the area several times and I can honestly say that it is a wonderful, wonderful place.

Today, I represent Glory Realtors Inc and as such my job is to persuade as many investors as possible to buy property on Praise Avenue. Obviously, I do not know where you live now, but it would be safe to assume that many of you live in exclusive residential areas. However, whether you live in Grumble Gables, Complain Court, or Lamentation Lane, I suggest, I beg, I beseech you to pack up, sell out, and move to Praise Avenue.

So "Why should I do that?," you ask. Good question. Whenever an intelligent person decides to relocate, he does so for good reasons. Therefore, let me give you five good reasons for deciding to relocate to Praise Avenue.

Reason #1:

We are counseled to do so in the Holy Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Over and over we are commanded in the scriptures to praise God. I am sure that these texts are familiar to you but let us read them again for emphasis.

Psalm 135:1 Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the name of the Lord; praise him O ye servants of the Lord.

Psalm 106:1 Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks to the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Psalm 103:1 Bless the Lord, O my Soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Psalm 100:4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise.

Mrs. White also exhorts us to praise God. In *Testimonies* Vol. 2, p. 593 she says,

"Praise the Lord even when you fall into darkness. Praise Him even in temptation. "Rejoice in the Lord always...again I say, Rejoice." In *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 299, she carries this issue of praise one step further. She makes it clear that praising God is not an option but a duty. "To praise God in fullness and sincerity of heart," she says, "is as much a duty as is prayer." In other words, praising God is an integral part of the Christian life.

Reason #2

We need to move up to Praise Avenue because as Christians we should live to honor and glorify God and He has declared that we honor Him by our praises. God, our Creator, the Omnipotent One, the Majesty of heaven declares, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me." Psalm 50:23. Mrs. White echoes this same thought in *Prophets and Kings* p. 566, where she says: "Praise and thanksgiving from grateful hearts will ascend to God as a sweet oblation."

If you find yourself in love, really in love with a gentleman, you will constantly be looking for some little way to please him. You will listen keenly for every hint or suggestion because you know that a birthday or Christmas is coming up. You wouldn't want to ask him outright what you could do or give to please him; but at the same time, you would not want to miss the opportunity to please. If you catch a hint or a suggestion, you file it away until you can fulfill that desire. Well, our God with whom we profess to be in love has made it really easy for us. He has plainly said that praise is one of the finest gifts we can give Him. Psalm 103:1 does not say "Bless my soul, O Lord," but "Bless the Lord, O my soul." We the lesser are invited, nay commanded, to bless, honor, magnify, extol the greater. The creature is commanded to give pleasure to the Creator because that is the purpose for which he was created. In Revelation 4:11 we read "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou has created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Ephesians 1:12 states that we should enhance or complete His glory (The Twentieth Century New Testament).

When a small child climbs into his father's lap and hugs and kisses him, does that make him a complete man? No. Does he have to have this? No. Does he desire and enjoy this? Oh yes! This completes his enjoyment of fatherhood. Just so our expressions of love and adoration of God complete His enjoyment of being our Father. God loves us and receives genuine pleasure when we respond to His love with expressions of worshipful praise.

Reason #3:

We should become residents of Praise Avenue because it is good for us. We will benefit from the move. Note that God's emphasis is always on us. He is constantly seeking to do us good. Close investigation would prove that God's commands are all designed for our benefit. "Love your enemies." Do not render evil for evil." "Rest on the Sabbath." "Be morally pure." Who benefits by our obedience to these commands? We do, of course! The command to praise God is no different. In *Ministry of Healing* pp. 251 & 252, Mrs. White says "Nothing tends more to promote health of body and of soul than does a spirit of gratitude and praise. It is a positive duty to resist melancholy...as much a duty as it is to pray." Also in *Testimonies* Vol. 5, p. 317, she says: "If the loving-kindness of God called forth more thanksgiving and praise, we would have far more power in prayer. We would abound more and more in the love of God and have more bestowed to praise Him for. You who complain that God does not hear your prayers, change your present order and mingle praise with your petitions. When you consider His goodness and mercies you will find that He will consider your wants."

Reason #4:

We should be anxious and ready to move to Praise Avenue because we serve a God who is worthy. He deserves our praise. "Oh that men would praise the Lord". Why? "For his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." Psalm 107:8 Think about it for a moment. God sustains you, protects you, provides for you day in, day out with monotonous regularity. He wakes you up each morning and the blessings of life, sight, hearing, and the ability to move prove His love anew. Is not that reason enough to praise Him? But above and beyond all else, the story of redemption is cause for unceasing praise. Pause for a moment and think of Gethsemane and the sweat that was like drops of blood. Think of Jesus being dragged before Pilate, then to Herod, and back to Pilate. Ponder again the mockery, the abuse, the scorn, the

agony, the crown of thorns, the nail-pierced hands—all this so that you and I could have eternal life. Should we not shout with the hymn writer* "Love so amazing so divine demands my soul, my life my all," including my fulsome praise. (*Isaac Watts, *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*, SDA Hymnal 154, 155)

Reason #5:

Finally, praising God is not only an expression of love, gratitude, and appreciation but it is the fruit of faith. Our ability to burst into praise to God regardless of the circumstances is a measure of the quantity and quality of our faith in Him. If we believe that God is both willing and able to do for us exceedingly more than we can ask or think, if we believe that our lives are in His care, if we really believe that nothing comes to us except what in His providence He allows, why would we not praise Him in bad times as well as in good times?

The story is told of a stunning example of life— Praise Avenue style. A city missionary stumbling through the dirt of a dark entry heard a voice say "Who's there, Honey?" Striking a match, he caught a vision of earthly want and suffering, of saintly trust and peace, cut in ebony-calm appealing eyes set amid the wrinkles of a pinched black face that lay on a tattered bed. It was a bitterly cold night in February and she had no fire, no fuel, no light. She had had no supper, no dinner, no breakfast. She seemed to have nothing at all but rheumatism and active faith in God. Yet the favorite song of this elderly creature ran:

Nobody knows de trouble I see
Nobody knows but Jesus
Nobody knows de trouble I see
Sing Glory, Hallelujah

Sometimes I'm up, sometimes I'm down
Sometimes I'm level on the groun'
Sing Glory, Hallelujah

And it went on: Nobody knows de work I does, Nobody knows de griefs I has and the constant refrain was "Glory, Hallelujah. And finally the last verse rose

Nobody knows de JOYS I has
Nobody knows but Jesus

Yes, when you live on Praise Avenue you may be "troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" 2 Cor. 4:8,9.

You see, even in the darkest circumstances, we can praise God because we know that all things are not good but "all things work together for good to them that love God" Romans 8:22. When we turn a matter over to the Lord, we permit Him to work things out for the best and we praise Him for whatever He does.

Another excellent illustration of active faith at work is the familiar story found in Acts of Paul and Silas, two well-known residents of Praise Avenue. Paul and Silas had just been thrown into the jail at Philippi on false charges. It had been several hours since they had been flogged and their backs were torn and swollen. Their feet were in hard, brutal stocks. Every movement brought added pain. By all of the world's standards, these men had every right to complain. But they didn't. They didn't even just sit there wishing that they were out of this bad situation. Instead, they decided to sing praises to God; and our awesome God, the mighty deliverer, responded to these praises. The record says that suddenly there was a great earthquake so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's hands were loosed! Hallelujah!!!

In the Old Testament, too, we find another striking example of a Praise Avenue resident who praised God in desperate circumstances. When you are tempted to think that your circumstances are too bleak to praise God, review the story of Jehosaphat and compare his circumstances with yours. Jehosaphat was surrounded by three hostile armies. The people of Israel were greatly outnumbered and things looked very bleak. Jehosaphat could have murmured and complained; he could have lost faith and despaired; but he and the Levites had moved to Praise Avenue. The record says that "The Levites... stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high...[Then Jehosaphat] appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness as they went out before the army, and to say Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever" 2 Chronicles 20:19, 21.

Notice that Jehosaphat put his full trust in the word of the Lord. Jehosaphat's praise team was not stationed behind the army where they would have some measure of protection. No, they were stationed before the army, relying on the fact that their praises would be a suitable habitation for an all-powerful God who would fight the battle for them. Yes, we need to remember that the Lord inhabits the praises of His people—a good reason to keep praising God, isn't it?

I have given you the five reasons I promised, but let me add one more just for good measure. Read Revelation 5:11-14 and Revelation 19 for a description of the lifestyle of the redeemed as pictured by John the Revelator. In Revelation 5:11-13, John paints a word picture of a glorious praise service in heaven. He says:

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands."

I cannot calculate how many trillions that is but let us say that John saw more angels praising God than our minds can comprehend. He continues:

"Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Hallelujah!!!

I praise God that this old world is not our home, we are simply pilgrims passing through. We look, we long for that city that hath foundations whose builder and maker is God; and in that city, according to John, the saints will engage in praising God throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. Why not move to Praise Avenue now and practice heaven's life style while on earth?

So I'll tell you what. In the light of all we've said, I have decided to move to Praise Avenue and I'm inviting all of you to move with me. Regardless of our problems, let us praise the Lord. If—and God forbid that it should happen—but if you walk out of this auditorium and sprain your ankle, praise God. He is Jehovah Rophe, the Mighty Healer. If you are dead broke, if the bills are high and the funds are low, or if you find that you constantly have too much month left at the end of the money, praise God! Jehovah Jireh, the Provider owns the silver and gold and the cattle on a thousand hills. He will take care of you. If your husband runs out on you, or your children turn their backs on you, praise God still. Jehovah Shammah will never leave you nor forsake you. He has promised to visit the fatherless and the widows and those who have none to help. If one day Satan, the accuser of the brethren mounts a massive offensive against you and you feel that your filthy rag of righteousness is more filthy than ever, praise God because Jehovah Tsidkenu is only a prayer away. He is eager to cover you with His spotless robe of righteousness.

I beg, I beseech you to move up to Praise Avenue!! O come and magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His name together. As for me, I have decided to bless the Lord at all times and to let His praise be continually in my mouth.

When I Consider

“When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and stars, which thou has ordained” (Psalm 8:3)

I say, “THANK YOU LORD!”

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.
- 21.
- 22.
- 23.
- 24.
- 25.

“When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and stars, which thou has ordained” (Psalm 8:3)

I say, “THANK YOU LORD!”

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.
- 21.
- 22.
- 23.
- 24.
- 25.

When I Consider

Thank You Song

Thank You

As the world looks upon me As I travel along
They say I have nothing but they are so wrong
In my heart I'm rejoicing though I wish they would see
Thank You, Lord, for your blessings on me.

I know I'm not worthy for the clothes may not be new
Lord I may not – may not have much money
But I thank God that I have you
And to me it does not matter though the world may
not see
Thank You, Lord, for Your blessings on me.

There's a roof up above me I have a good place to sleep
I've got food on my table (Lord) and shoes on my feet
You gave me Your love, Lord, and a fine family
Thank You, Lord, for Your blessings on me.

Lord you know I'm not worthy of the blessings that you give
But I'll always – always be thankful and praise your dear name
For 'tis all I can offer for Your kindness to me
Thank You, Lord, for Your blessings on me.

There's a roof up above me I have a good place to sleep
I've got food on my table (Lord) and shoes on my feet
You gave me Your love, Lord, and a fine family
Thank You, Lord,
Thank You, Lord,
Thank You, Lord
For Your blessings on me.

By Marlon Anderson

*Alternate Song - **Now Thank We All Our God**, Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal #559 or **Let All Things Now Living**, #560, Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal

Thank You Song

Thank You

As the world looks upon me As I travel along
They say I have nothing but they are so wrong
In my heart I'm rejoicing though I wish they would see
Thank You, Lord, for your blessings on me.

I know I'm not worthy for the clothes may not be new
Lord I may not – may not have much money
But I thank God that I have you
And to me it does not matter though the world may
not see
Thank You, Lord, for Your blessings on me.

There's a roof up above me I have a good place to sleep
I've got food on my table (Lord) and shoes on my feet
You gave me Your love, Lord, and a fine family
Thank You, Lord, for Your blessings on me.

Lord you know I'm not worthy of the blessings that you give
But I'll always – always be thankful and praise your dear name
For 'tis all I can offer for Your kindness to me
Thank You, Lord, for Your blessings on me.

There's a roof up above me I have a good place to sleep
I've got food on my table (Lord) and shoes on my feet
You gave me Your love, Lord, and a fine family
Thank You, Lord,
Thank You, Lord,
Thank You, Lord
For Your blessings on me.

By Marlon Anderson

*Alternate Song - **Now Thank We All Our God**, Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal #559 or **Let All Things Now Living**, #560, Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal

Choral Reading–Matthew 6-7

Choral Reading

- ALL:** When you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites; they love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them. I tell them solemnly, they have their reward.
- 40+:** But when you pray, go to your private room and when you have shut the door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.
- 30+:** In your prayers, do not babble as the pagans do, for they think that by using many words they will make themselves heard. Do not be like them; your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.
- 20+:** If you forgive others their failings, your heavenly Father will forgive you yours; but if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive your failings either.
- ALL:** Ask and it will be given to you; search and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.
- 40+:** For the one who asks always receives; the one who searches always finds; the one who knocks will always have the door opened to him.
- 20-39:** Is there a man among you who would hand his son a stone when he asks for bread? Or would hand him a snake when he asks for a fish?
- ALL:** If you, then, who are evil know how to give your children what is good, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him.

~ From Matthew 6 & 7, Jerusalem

- ALL:** When you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites; they love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them. I tell them solemnly, they have their reward.
- 40+:** But when you pray, go to your private room and when you have shut the door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.
- 30+:** In your prayers, do not babble as the pagans do, for they think that by using many words they will make themselves heard. Do not be like them; your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.
- 20+:** If you forgive others their failings, your heavenly Father will forgive you yours; but if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive your failings either.
- ALL:** Ask and it will be given to you; search and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.
- 40+:** For the one who asks always receives; the one who searches always finds; the one who knocks will always have the door opened to him.
- 20-39:** Is there a man among you who would hand his son a stone when he asks for bread? Or would hand him a snake when he asks for a fish?
- ALL:** If you, then, who are evil know how to give your children what is good, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him.

~ From Matthew 6 & 7, Jerusalem

Choral Reading—Matthew 6-7

Choral Reading

PRAYER IS HOW WE FIGHT

Our Father wants to give us divine power to “demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God.” Every lie spun from the pit of hell that contradicts the truth of our standing before God, of our status in His family, is to be blown to smithereens with the weapons God has given us to fight with. And the only offensive weapon God has provided is “the Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” (Ephesians 6:17) That Word declares, “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine!” (Isaiah 43:1)

And it is only in prayer that we will receive this divine power. Prayer is not another weapon in our spiritual arsenal. It is how we fight! Prayer is the battle plan. It is how we engage the enemy.

Haven't you ever wondered why so many of us are such defeated Christians, when we know all the right doctrines and all the right texts? We've heard all this before. In Sabbath School, at retreats, from pastors, in books and seminars. And yet we can't seem to settle this issue of God's love. Why?

The best sword in the world won't defeat one enemy if the person wielding it isn't engaged in battle. And prayer is how we “engage.” Without prayer, we are as the Israelite army was when they stood on a mountain facing Goliath and the Philistine army —“all dressed up with nowhere to go.”

Are you dismayed about your relationship with God? Is your walk with Him characterized by fear or faith? Will you continue to stand there armed with doctrines, texts, and information that you've absorbed over the years in your head but not in your heart, and allow Satan to tell you that you are too great a sinner for God to save? Will you stand there arrayed for battle in religious regalia, only to be pounded with accusations of your own unworthiness, failure, and unacceptableness to God?

“If my people...pray, ... I ... will forgive...and will heal.” (2 Chronicles 7:14). Go to your knees and wield the sword of God against the enemy. Learn to confront each false belief with a specific truth from God's Word. Send Satan's lies back to the pit where they came from, and rejoice in the truth that you have found favor with God. That you are His and He is yours.

Letter to God

Dear God:

I did some serious thinking about our relationship today. I have decided that I want to become closer to You. I also would like to confess things I have done wrong and to make some promises with your help for the future.

I WANT TO CONFESS THESE THINGS:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

IN THE FUTURE, I PROMISE TO:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

SOME PRIVATE THINGS I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU ARE:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Love,

.....
Your Daughter

BLESSINGS

[Have congregation form pairs. Each person is to place one hand on their partner's shoulder. The person assigned leads out with the blessing, phrase by phrase and the congregants repeat after her.]

SABBATH MIDDAY BLESSING

“Therefore my beloved...be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

I Corinthians 15:58 - NKJV

FRIDAY EVENING/SABBATH AFTERNOON BLESSING

“And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.”

II Corinthians 9:8 - NIV