

PART I



Praise is
Intimate

*God calls us to intimacy with
Himself through praise.*

It was a promising year. My husband's career was getting established and we were enjoying married life. I was a stay-at-home mom and felt fulfilled, but I needed some adult fellowship and spiritual encouragement. So when the opportunity to host a daytime ladies' Bible study was offered, I gladly took it. However, I said I would only be the host and would not be interested in leading it. Although she was also a stay-at-home mom, the lady who was to be the leader was different from me in many ways.

I exercised my faith in God the same way I followed a recipe. It was easy. I did what I thought was the daily requirement for a Christian of Bible reading and prayer. I talked to God, outlining to Him my needs and wants, and I even prayed for others. I praised God when He met my needs, but I did not think there was much more to praising God.

The Bible study leader shared my simple faith, but she seemed to know God intimately. When she praised God it seemed to come from her heart in a meaningful way. One day, she told me that her *word from the Lord* that day was.... Word from the Lord? I asked what she meant by a *word from the Lord*. She explained that every morning she would ask God to speak to her and then all day long she would meditate on what He said. Daily God would speak to her through His Word, or directly to her spirit.

I had heard God's voice a few times before, but it was only for specific reasons. I never thought of conversing with Him every day. I decided to ask God to speak to me just to hear what He had to say. Since then I've learned that He has much to say and, volumes of journals later, I am still learning from Him. This revolutionized my idea of devotions. My days became exciting instead of monotonous. I was spiritually awakened. It brought me into a new dimension of praise I had not known before. As my relationship with God deepened and I learned more about Him, my praise became more meaningful. God was calling me to intimacy through praise.

Chapter 1

God Calls Us to Praise Him

Who should praise Him?

All of creation is called to praise God. The call is to the angels in Heaven. *Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts.*¹

The call is to the heavenly bodies. *Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars. Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies.*²

The call is to the earth. *Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths.*³

The call is to everything God has created. *Praise the LORD, all his works everywhere in his dominion.*⁴ *Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.*⁵ *Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and all that move in them.*⁶

You and I are called to praise God. If we don't praise God, He