

An Open Letter to Worship Leaders: Stop Trying to Be 'Cool'

I wonder ... if Jesus were to evaluate our worship, would *cool* be a value?

If the Son of God stepped into our Sunday morning services, would *impressed* be a word He would use?

It's time for worship leaders to arise who care deeply about people and care deeply about the presence of God, for a kind of worship leader who knows the people he serves and knows the God he worships.

If you enjoy fashion, that is no problem. But that's not your strength as a worship leader.

If you have a trendy voice, that is a great gift. But it's not your strength as a worship leader.

If you are a skilled songwriter, that is wonderful. But it's not your strength as a worship leader.

If you have a ton of on-stage energy, that will serve you well. But it's not your strength as a worship leader.

What sets you apart? What makes you a great leader? It's your ongoing hunger for God's presence and a deep compassion for people. Period.

I don't care if you're 65 and wear baggy pants. You have a place if you have an ongoing hunger for God and a compassion for people.

I don't care if you're young and inexperienced. Hunger for God. Compassion for people.

Cool isn't a value. At times, our drive for relevance has simply left us with a Christian alternative to what the world gives. Let's pursue transcendence. Let's recapture the mystery of heaven on Earth.

To be honest, the problem is when we think we're *something*. When we carry a pride that leaves us impressed with ourselves and more concerned about what people think of us than the ministry we are doing.

Banning Liebscher, pastor of Jesus Culture, said it well in a recent podcast: Some of us are more passionate about pursuing a dream than we are Jesus. We are more driven by our reputation than the praise of God.

Instead, let's be:

- Real
- Biblical
- Compassionate
- Committed
- Worshipers
- Nameless
- Brokenhearted
- Simple
- Christ-centered
- Holy
- Outward
- Teachable
- In pursuit
- Flexible
- Humble
- Passionate

That might not make *you* known, but it will serve to make the beauty of Christ more visible.

Who Are You Pleasing?

It comes down to who you're aiming to please. Listen to what Paul says in Galatians:

"For am I now seeking the approval of men or of God? Or am I trying to please men? For if I were still trying to please men, I would not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10).

Paul goes so far to say that if his aim was to please people, he literally couldn't be a servant of Christ. Crazy, huh?

Let me ask you—who are you aiming to please?

Worship leader, do you want to entertain people for a service or lead them to the fountain that will never run dry? Do you want to raise up worshippers who are dependent on your charisma and talent or a people who can worship in the midst of their storms?

Do you want to be known or to make the eternal, glorious God known to as many people as possible?

Are you fostering a local church of fans or true worshippers?

I know these are big questions. This is intense. But the conversation is worth it.

What do you think? Are we trying too hard to be cool rather than biblical? What is your experience? {eoa}

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