

Why We Must Teach Our People to Worship in Spirit and Truth

God's judgment, thankfully, is tempered with His mercy. He sees our lives—all of it—and He implores us to give this warning to our churches. In 1 Corinthians Paul is addressing a church that had begun to look more like the corrupt and godless culture that surrounded the church than the church God had intended. I love Paul's response:

"Now some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. But I will come to you shortly if the Lord wills. And I will know not only what those who are arrogant are saying, but also their power. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (1 Cor. 4:18-20, MEV).

I believe we are continually confronted with this simple question asked by Jesus in Luke 6:46, "Why do you call me "Lord, Lord" and do not the things which I say?" Music, secular or sacred, is a powerful medium and can evoke enormous power over emotions and even over the thoughts of a man or woman. A trip to any big-name secular concert will prove that.

The power that comes through true praise and worship, in the context with the full counsel of God, is an incredibly powerful tool for teaching and experiencing the presence of God. But we must never forget that the feelings that can be associated with music can leave a person feeling "full" of God when in fact they are starving.

Jack Hayford says it all in this powerful quote:

"Worship is the key to evangelism, but true worship comes through access, and some songs do not allow access. Some worship leaders' presentations do not allow access—it only

allows onlookers."

This is why the worship experience in a church must not be held in a vacuum and instead must be examined in direct association with the lives of the worshippers, and especially the worship leaders. Otherwise, we send people out of our services with a myriad of emotions, which can be tragically deceptive. We don't ever want to be that church where a person can walk into church steeped in sin, experience all of the right "feelings" and leave feeling "full" and in right standing ... and then walk out only to continue in his sin, feeling like he has been with God and that all is well.

"In fact, regardless of how magnificent the musical moments are, unless your heart is fully engaged in the worship being expressed ... it is still only music. The pure song of a heart that is yearning for more of God and less of himself is the music that holds the key to so many victories ... and delights the heart of our King." –Darlene Zschech

We live in an age when the church is in great danger. Shallow faith will not sustain the heat of the day and the comings and goings of a world walking through fiery trials daily. Lives are at stake, souls even, and our God is watching.

It IS entirely possible for you to go to church and *feel* really good, or really sad, or really inspired, or really emotional, or really anything and still not know God. It is possible to give your offerings, serve in a ministry and never miss a service, and not have God's mind on the circumstances in your life and in the decisions you are making.

Here are some simple questions that every believer and certainly every church leader and pastor needs to be able to answer, and especially, as it relates to this article:

- **For worship leaders and pastors:** Are you growing in God's Word? When and how? And what has God showed you

recently?

- **For worship leaders:** How are you engaging the volunteers God has given you in discipleship and spiritual growth? What are you doing specifically to help your people grow in their faith? And how are you holding them accountable? Are you holding them accountable?
- **For worship leaders and frontline singers:** Are your hands clean? Is your heart pure? How is your walk? Where are you struggling and what are you doing to maintain purity, clean hands and a clean heart? Is there someone you can go to for encouragement when you are struggling?

Can you point to time in your recent past when you experienced true brokenness at the feet of Jesus? Are you willing to share that experience with your team? Would you willing to let the Lord interrupt a service or have that worship set continue without you because of the weight and power of the Holy Spirit moving in you and through you and speaking to you or ministering to you?

What is God saying to you about you? About your calling? About your people? About the church you are leading? Where is the Lord leading you to lead? Are you continually communicating with your senior pastor about the things God is showing you to seek confirmation and unity or do you just tell others about everything you would do if it were up to you?

What an amazing time to be alive and serving in God's kingdom, whatever your role may be. But what an awesome responsibility we have as leaders as we labor together to build churches in modern-day Corinth. We are commanded to worship. Praise God for worship that can usher us into the very presence of God, and this does not even have to be in a church service, as we all know worship goes way beyond what we do the first half of every service.

But we must teach our people the value of worshiping in spirit *and* truth and allow God to speak in that powerful time. The

words we sing are every bit as important as the feelings we feel when we sing the songs. Sometimes we need to give our people permission to just sit on a phrase, or a verse, or a word and allow the mind to become fruitful and for the Holy Spirit to convict as well as minister. {eoa}

[Click here](#) for parts 1 and 2 of this article.

Dr. Rich Rogers *is the editorial director of Jentezen Franklin's Connection and Discipleship Free Chapel OC in Irvine, California.*