

Part One - Preparation

In this series I'd like to give some ideas you can use to improve your skills as a worship leader. For young leaders, skill development is essential based on three principles of scripture:

1. The parable of the talents (Mathew 25:14-39, Luke 19:12-27).
2. Study to show yourself approved (2 Timothy 2:15).
3. Play skillfully (Psalm 33:3).

**THERE ARE TWO PARALLEL AREAS THAT YOU NEED TO BE WORKING ON –
THE SPIRITUAL AND THE TECHNICAL.**

1. Personal Relationship (*The Spiritual*)

Your life really is your time. Use it wisely.

First is your personal relationship with God. This means the spiritual disciplines of daily **time** studying God's word, prayer, worship and service. Yes you've heard this before, but that's because it's fundamental. I love the way my pastor Steve Fry says, "the more you know about God, the more you fall in love with Him". Boy, that's the truth.

Consider this. Where are you investing your **relational** energy? If you spend more time watching TV, playing video games, talking to your friends on the phone (or over the internet), communing with your favorite (non-worship) music - what does that say about your priorities? What are you *really* worshipping? In other words - what is the object of your heart's affections? Because God rewards those who **seek** Him. (Hebrews 11:6) Seeking God is a process that requires time.

Jim Goll says it this way in "The Lost Art of Intercession" – "a relationship with God will **cost you something**" - it will cost you an investment of time and energy. That's what a sacrifice is. But the rewards are much, much more than worth it!

2. Musical Skills (*The Technical*)

Be excellent and spiritually minded.

Being able to accompany yourself on a musical instrument is possible for almost everyone who wants to lead worship. It's possible to lead without being able to play, but you will find much more freedom as a leader if you can lead with an instrument, usually piano or guitar. With enough investment of time and energy, almost anyone with a basic aptitude for music can learn enough simple chords to lead worship.

This takes hours and hours, but everyone who plays alone in their bedroom knows it's really rewarding to go from not being able to play a song to flowing with it effortlessly.

There's two aspects of learning to play I want to encourage you in. One is to study, take lessons, practice, and etcetera. The other is use the instrument to worship by yourself. Before I ever led worship with large groups of people, I would just worship God by myself with my guitar (and now some with piano).

*I can't emphasize the importance of this enough to young leaders -
what you do in public is an overflow of what you do in private.*

For many years (and I still do this all the time), I would practice flowing in worship, especially working out chord changes and transitions between songs. I would practice the "song of the Lord" and singing scriptures ("Psalm-ing"). I would pray for guidance and inspiration, and intercede for God's purposes at that moment (or maybe the meeting that was coming up). Use all your creativity and be free to experiment, and enjoy that unexplainable, but oh so powerful connection between the musical and the spiritual. This is what a shepherd boy named David did for years as a youth before he became known as "Israel's singer of songs" (2 Samuel 23:1).

The Wrap -Up

These are all aspects of "practicing the presence of the Lord" for worship leaders. It's a combination of the spiritual and the technical. Don't get tripped up by either extreme. Don't be so "super-spiritual" that you miss the importance of practice and preparation. And don't be so focused on technical excellence that you miss God's priority of genuine relationship, sensitivity and obedience. Remember - **the technical serves the spiritual**. It's easier to focus on God when playing is "second nature".

Finally but most importantly, understand that the worship leaders secret weapon is **the anointing** of God. It is the anointed presence of God that breaks down every force of opposition and glorifies Jesus. God will use you as a carrier of His presence if you are **faithful** to Him. Study Psalm 119. Nothing can take the place of God's anointing - not talent, not great musicianship, not positional authority, not even a great knowledge of the Word. The anointing of God overflows from your personal relationship with God. So position yourself (clean hands, pure heart, humility, etc - see Psalm 24) so that God can release His anointing through you.

"Taste and see and know that the Lord is good. " Enjoy practicing the presence of God.

Till next time ... Vaya con Dios,

Rob