

Anointed
Music and Worship

Norman Holmes

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Chapter 1

THE CREATION AND CORRUPTION OF MUSIC

Why God Created Music

When God created all things, He also created music. One evidence of this is that the Lord created the first musical instruments. People can sing, whistle, and clap because God has placed the proper musical equipment inside them. The animal kingdom also makes music because of the musical instruments and abilities that God has given them. Around the world, in the sky, and even throughout the seas, living creatures are filling our planet with music.

God created music to be a channel of communication. Not only people, but also the birds, animals, and insects communicate many messages through music, such as courtship, danger, aggression, and even sympathy. For example, I can remember one evening when a car ran over a dog in our neighborhood. As this dog let out his last dying yelps, all the dogs in the community began an unusually mournful howling. In essence, they were singing a funeral dirge! Music is commonly used by all kinds of living creatures to communicate with each other—it is only humans that also use words.

A musician combines sounds to bring a message through a song just as an artist combines colors to communicate a message through a picture. However, music is a more popular and powerful medium than art. The great 19th century conqueror of Europe, Napoleon Bonaparte, recognized this when he said, "Of all the arts, music has the greatest influence over the emotions and is the art to which leaders should give great attention."¹ Music has an appeal that goes much beyond our emotions because it relates to our entire human nature. For just as 1 Thessalonians 5:23 suggests that humanity was created with a triune nature, we can also see how music can communicate to each part of the entire person in his or her *spirit, soul, and body*.

Music is a Spiritual Channel

Godly music can stir up and release the moving of the Holy Spirit in our heart, or *spirit*. We can read in 1 Samuel 16:23 that when David played his harp, it released such an anointing that the evil spirit oppressing King Saul was driven away. Music can also help to release gifts of the Spirit, such as prophecy.² It is a special blessing to the musicians and singers in a church service when the moving of the Holy Spirit is released through their music to minister in such ways as to bring healing, prophecy, deliverance, or the conviction of sin.

One special time when I saw a powerful release of the Holy Spirit happened when I was a musician with a choir. As we sang about heaven at the funeral of a godly man, a wonderful anointing came upon us. Waves of the Holy Spirit seemed to flow through us as we played and sang, and a number of the singers saw the glory of God filling the

room. The mighty presence of God brought great conviction and many people had their lives changed by the power of the Holy Spirit that day. However, some unbelievers who had come to attend the funeral jumped up at that moment and ran out of the service as if they were in agony!

On another occasion, I was conducting a pastors' seminar in Baguio, a popular tourist city in the Cordillera Mountains in the Philippines. During the seminar we had some unusual spiritual breakthroughs into high worship. I told the pastors that we would see visible results from these times of worship.

A few days later the vice-president of our ministry led a man to Christ who was the owner of the largest group of prostitution houses in Baguio. He immediately closed them down and had some of the pastors who attended our seminar burn his many idols. Then he put up signs outside of the former prostitution houses that read: "This house is closed—Jesus is Lord." I believe that it was through the power of worship that this victory was first gained in the heavenlies, although through evangelism it was then accomplished upon the earth.

God made music to be a channel of the Holy Spirit, but it can also be used by Satan. Heathen religions use music to call evil spirits. Their music can help prepare a person to become demon possessed, and sometimes work miracles or prophesy by an evil spirit. As an example, a pastor from Uganda related to me that his father had been a famous witch doctor before he was led to Christ. He would start his religious gatherings with singing and chanting until the demonic spirits would come upon him. Then he would demonstrate supernatural powers.

There are many valuable spiritual lessons for us to learn about the power of music, as through it the battles between

light and darkness often take place. Most Christians know that evangelistic teams regularly use music to invade the devil's territory and rescue souls for Christ. However, what fewer believers understand is that the enemy sometimes uses music to bring spiritual attacks into the churches!

I saw an example of this one night when a young pastor returned to visit his former Bible school. At the evening meeting he sang a special song which kept repeating the words, "I love you." However, this young man was not singing his repeated "I love you" words to the Lord, but to the various pretty young ladies in the congregation! His singing was not a channel of the Holy Spirit, but a channel of a spirit of lust as he was seeking a "warm" response from any of the women that he was singing to. The reality of this spiritual mixture was confirmed a few weeks later when we discovered that this pastor was involved in an immoral relationship back in his church.

There was another time a spiritual attack was taking place through the music team of a church. While visiting the church my spirit was troubled by the performance this team was putting on during the song service. Pride, lust, rebellion, and self-centeredness all seemed to be exhibited during their stage performance. Afterwards, while ignoring the preaching, they all went to the back of the church where they continued to talk loudly, laugh, and disturb the congregation. The spiritual mixture they released both during and after the song service made it difficult for the congregation to receive any spiritual blessing from the church service.

I talked with the pastors after the service, who then unloaded their grief to me. They said that the musicians and singers were rebellious, proud, and had a negative influence

on the church members. The pastors also recognized that spiritual attacks were being released on the services through their performances.

Some people might wonder whether it is possible for evil spirits to come into a church service. However, we can understand this better by considering the first chapter of Job. There we read about a time when Satan came, along with the rest of the angels, to present himself before the Lord in heaven. If the Devil was able to stand before the throne of God among the congregation of heaven, then it would not be surprising for his demons to also at times stand among the congregations on earth.

This spiritual concept can also be seen in Genesis 15:11. There we read, “*And when the vultures came down on the carcasses [of the sacrifices], Abram drove them away.*” The vultures represented evil spirits, even as our Lord spoke of the birds as being a type of the Devil in Mark 4:15. Abraham had to drive away the vultures that tried to eat the sacrifice before the Lord came down and accepted the offerings. In a similar manner, there are times when we need to drive away the evil spirits that are trying to defile our sacrifices of praise and worship.

An anointed worship service will often be used of God to attack the powers of darkness, but there are times when we may face an enemy counterattack. During this type of worship service we must drive away these spiritual counterattacks, just as Abraham drove away the predator birds that were seeking to devour his offerings to God. It is only then that the Lord will come down to both accept our worship and to bless us.

Because music can be a powerful spiritual channel—both positive and negative—we need discernment in the

house of God. We need to be able to guard our church services from enemy infiltration, as well as enter into godly music and worship. This will release the moving of the Holy Spirit to both glorify God and bring victory to God's people.

Music Influences the Soul

Music is commonly used to communicate to the soul. Different types of music can influence your emotions to make you feel happy, sad, confused, or peaceful. The great German reformer, Martin Luther, wrote, "Whether you wish to comfort the sad, to terrify the happy, to encourage the despairing, to humble the proud, to calm the passionate, or to pacify those full of hate....what more effective means than music could you find?"³

Music is used to influence people. Our Lord Himself spoke about this in Luke 7:32. He said that those who were trying to influence both John the Baptist and Himself were like the children who complained, "*We played the flute for you, and you did not dance. We mourned to you, and you did not weep.*" An advertisement will repeatedly play a catchy tune to get you to buy their product, while a patriotic song can help a soldier to feel proud to fight for his country. Also, consider this: how often have you been at a successful party that had no music? Music is an important part of any festive occasion.

Some companies have conducted tests to determine how music can influence customers in a store. They have found that playing slow, soothing music will encourage the shoppers to stay in the store longer and buy more. As a result they will play this type of music during the daytime until about

4:00 PM to help keep the shoppers in their store. But after about 4:00 PM as people start to leave their places of employment the stores begin filling up with many people. Then the stores will change their music to fast, lively songs that encourage the people to buy what they came for and quickly leave—to make room for the other shoppers who are crowding in!

Music can influence not only individual persons, but also groups of people and even nations. Otto Von Bismarck, the famous 19th century unifier and leader of Germany, declared that music was one of the most important agents for bringing about the unification of his country. He said, “It was not the size of our army but its spirit that enabled us to conquer. For this reason I hope no one in the future will undervalue the power of music in arousing courage and devotion.”⁴ The Greek philosopher Plato wrote, “When the music of a nation changes, the nation changes.”⁵ Confucius said, “Do you want to know if a land is well governed, and its people have good morals? Listen to its music.”⁶ In line with these observations we can examine the musical trends in Western society during the last fifty years. Where music has slipped into increased immorality, cursing, and violence, we can see similar trends in its society.

Music Influences the Body

Music also communicates to the body. Changes in the volume, pitch, speed, and beat of music have been medically reported to have an effect on the human body in many areas including the heartbeat, blood pressure, muscle tension, gland secretions, and speed of breathing.

One part of the human body that loud music can effect is

the adrenal glands. These are two small glands located above the kidneys which produce a hormone called epinephrine or adrenaline. This natural hormone is a stimulant released during times of stress or emergency to make a person temporarily very strong and alert. In effect, the person experiences a natural high from the release of this natural stimulant. One circumstance that makes the human body feel that it is under stress or attack is when very loud music is played. The human body will prepare to defend itself by releasing adrenaline into the bloodstream. People can then feel a natural high, not from an illegal drug, but from the release of their adrenaline preparing them for self-defense against the attack of the loud music that is bombarding them!

Another way that music can be used to control the body is if a song with a strong beat is played faster and faster. This can cause the pulse rate to speed up with the increasing beat of the music and produce high blood pressure. This technique is often used by cheerleaders and rock musicians to increase the excitement of the occasion. Conversely, peaceful music can relax muscle tension. Dozens of medical studies have investigated this and have found that up to 98% of the people who suffer from anxiety and muscle tension can be helped by listening to gentle, peaceful music. For this reason many dentists have quiet, soothing music playing in their reception rooms to relax the nervous patients who are waiting for treatment. It is much easier for dentists to work if their patients are not nervously tightening their mouth and jaw muscles in fear of the pain that may come!

The Healing Power of Music

The powerful effect that music can have upon people is

so universally recognized that many hospitals, therapists, and psychiatrists throughout the world are using music to help treat their patients. National associations of music therapists have been organized in the United States, Britain, Canada, and many other nations. Universities around the world have been offering degrees in music therapy for over 60 years, and there are thousands of registered music therapy professionals. The *Journal of Music Therapy* and other publications record the research of these health professionals, while insurance programs such as Medicaid and Blue Cross accept music therapy as a medical treatment. Music is being used to help the emotional, physical, and spiritual problems of man in many areas including insanity, alcoholism, autism, nervous tension, hyperactivity, and depression.

The Corruption of Music

God created music to be a powerful channel of communication. The world recognizes the power of music and spends great amounts of money to provide music for advertising, entertainment, and other forms of influencing people. However, Satan also knows the power of music! Before mankind even existed, angels were created with the ministry of music.

One great leader of the angels who is specifically mentioned in the Bible as being created with musical ability is Lucifer, whose name means *Light Bearer*. Ezekiel 28:13 says about Lucifer that “*the workmanship of your timbrels [tambourines] and pipes [flutes] was prepared in you on the day you were created.*” Just as a person is created with musical instruments (such as vocal cords), in a similar manner the angel Lucifer was able to make music. While we

can only imagine what types of tambourines and flutes were created within his body, they quite probably did not seem unusual at all. After all, consider what people are born with: stringed instruments (vocal chords), percussion instruments (hands to clap and feet to tap), as well as a wind instrument (a mouth and lips to whistle). Each of these musical instruments in our bodies seem very natural as well as useful.

The garments that God designed to cover Lucifer would suggest that he functioned as a high priest among the angels.⁷ This indicates that he was a great worship leader also. A confirmation of this is shown by his title “*the Anointed Cherub who Covers [the throne of God]*” in Ezekiel 28:14. When we study Revelation chapters four and five about the heavenly beings who cover the throne of God, we find that they are worship leaders. Lucifer was perhaps the greatest musician and worship leader among the angels, leading the worship of heaven. When he lifted himself up in pride against God and led many of the angels to rebel, some of the talents that he surely used to help lead the rebellion were his musical and worship leading abilities.

We can think of what it might have been like in heaven before the rebellion. Lucifer, the anointed cherub, would play his music and lead the angelic hosts in worship to God. What an anointing must have filled the temple of heaven! As revelation flowed, Lucifer the *Light Bearer* would have taught them new songs that led them higher and higher into the glory of God.

Yet when Lucifer began to lift himself up in pride, the scriptures tell us that he began to keep some of the glory for himself.⁸ He probably began to lead songs of worship that were increasingly filled with his self-exaltation. Many of the angels were probably thrilled by these bold new songs of

beauty and pride, although the faithful angels would not join in. As the rebellion blossomed into maturity, Lucifer's hosts may have marched to boastful songs, just as the armies of the world now march to war with their songs encouraging them on.

Even today, many church splits are caused by worship leaders and musicians. Some have proudly told their pastoral leadership, "We are the ones who know how to lead the singing and worship. You pastors aren't even musical! You do the preaching, but we will control the praise and worship. And if you try to hinder us or control us, we will take our music equipment and our followers, and start our own church!" Worship leaders and musicians often help lead church splits because they are skilled in leading and influencing the members of the church—whether for good, or for evil.

When Lucifer fell, he kept his musical talents but they became corrupted in nature. Isaiah prophesied of this when he declared about Lucifer in chapter 14:13 that "*your pomp is brought down to Sheol, and the sound of your stringed instruments.*" As Satan is still seeking to corrupt the world today, he is using music to help lead mankind towards the world, the flesh and the devil. Satan knows the power of music and worship. In his wilderness temptations of Christ he was willing to offer the kingdoms of the world to Jesus, if He would only fall down and worship him. Satan knows that if he can control the worship, then he can control everything!

Our Need for Spiritual Discernment

It is very important for us to understand that while God made music to be good, it can be corrupted by Satan and his

followers—and even by unsuspecting Christians—and used for evil. I recently read this statement in a Christian book: “God made everything good, including music, so how can any music be called evil?” This logic is as faulty as saying: “God made all the angels good, so how can any of the angels be called evil?” We need to discern how the fallen angels and corrupted mankind are using their music for evil. The spiritual war between the armies of God and Satan is not fought with natural weapons, rather, it is often fought with musical instruments.⁹ Just as a wise army commander must understand the battles that he fights, we must learn to discern the spiritual battles that take place in the music and worship around us.

Some people may be talented and popular musicians or singers, but when they are born again as spiritual babies in Christ they must begin to learn how to minister by the Spirit with their music. Natural talent (without the anointing of the Holy Spirit) can only entertain, even though Christians may like it and may even fill a church to hear the good entertainment. Churches should be very careful about giving a music ministry to a new convert, even if he is musically talented. This is as spiritually dangerous as giving the pulpit to a newly saved politician or actor and letting him preach just because he is a talented speaker.¹⁰ Ministry is not primarily a result of talents and abilities, or by might and power: it is accomplished by the Spirit of God moving through a consecrated vessel.

When we are saved, we need to develop spiritual discernment and have our minds renewed. This will cause us to understand and discern the spiritual forces that are seeking to move through the music around us. Then we can prepare to

have a life and ministry of godly, anointed music that will help bring revival to God's people and bring glory to God!

Chapter 2

WORSHIP: ACCEPTED AND REJECTED!

The Scriptures clearly reveal that God does not accept all worship. Someone might say, “God will accept the worship and music of *any* Christian that is sincere.” However, from the first worship to the last worship recorded in the Bible we can see that this is not true. Jesus said in John 4:23 that “*the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.*” These words of Christ make it clear that there can also be worship that does not meet God’s requirements!

The Bible’s First Worship

The first worship service mentioned in the Bible is recorded in Genesis 4:3-5. We read from there,

“And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.”

Here we see that God rejected Cain's worship. However, the book of Genesis clearly shows that Cain was not an unbeliever. He talked with God, worshiped Him, and knew His presence. We can even say that Cain was a worship leader as his younger brother Abel followed his example and worshiped. Even so, God rejected Cain's worship. We are not told exactly how Cain's worship was rejected—perhaps God sent fire down from heaven upon Abel's offering but not upon Cain's offering—yet what is clear is that there was an obvious approval from heaven upon one sacrifice, but not the other.

From a natural viewpoint we might say that God was not being fair when He accepted one offering and rejected the other. Cain was a farmer who brought some of his produce as an offering, just as Abel was a shepherd who brought an offering from his flock. They were equal in that the two brothers each brought offerings from the increase of their labors. But from a spiritual perspective there were clear differences in their offerings. These differences are why God rejected the worship of one brother and accepted the worship of the other.

An important reason why God rejected Cain's offering is that it was from the fruit of the cursed ground, as recorded in Genesis 3:17. God had not indicated that He would accept such an offering—and the curse that He had just placed upon the ground would suggest the opposite. Since Cain was a farmer it was the natural thing for Cain to offer, but it was not according to any spiritual revelation or precedent that God had already started.

The worship of Abel, which the Lord accepted, was different. Abel was following the example that God had set in Genesis 3:21 when He made an animal sacrifice to clothe

Adam and Eve. His worship was *in truth* as he followed the pattern of sacrifice which the Lord had already instituted. Abel's offering was also *in spirit* as it was prophetic of God's true sacrifice, the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world.

There are still people like Cain and Abel in the church today. Some offer their natural accomplishments and worship according to their own ideas, while others are learning to worship *in spirit and truth*. Similarly, the Lord still demonstrates whether He accepts or rejects our attempted worship services. He desires to send the fire of His presence down from heaven when we properly worship, as well as show other signs of His approval and blessing.

When Cain's offering was rejected, Genesis 4:5 states that he became angry and depressed. Yet the Lord then spoke to him, "*Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted?*" The Lord did not reject Cain, only his offering. God encouraged him that if he would learn the correct way, his worship would be accepted. However, Cain did not offer the *sacrifice* of a lamb, neither did he have the *nature* of a submissive lamb. Instead of having a meek, teachable spirit, he rose up in anger and jealousy to kill his brother.

Whenever someone offers their talent and ministry yet finds that the Lord does not bless it, they are faced with the same decision that Cain faced. They can accept God's reproof and learn to do what is correct, or rise up in anger and jealousy to attack those whose ministry God is accepting. Now, most people who have participated in worship services for any length of time can remember occasions when their offerings failed to gain God's approval. Maybe you can even remember many worship services that have seemed dry, empty,

or lifeless. The key is not whether we have ever failed, or even how many times we have missed God—the key is whether we will meekly receive correction and learn, so that we can offer the Lamb when we worship. If we follow “*the way of Cain*,” as it is called in Jude 11, in our failure and anger we can reject God’s correction as well as reject the brethren whose example we should follow.

Some of the results of Cain’s sin are recorded in Genesis 4:16. There we read, “*Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden.*” Cain lost the presence of the Lord that he had known, and he lived in the land of *Nod*, which means *wandering*. This was a fulfillment of God’s punishment on Cain, when He had declared in Genesis 4:12, “*a fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.*”

In a similar way, sometimes a musician or a singer finds their ministry failing, or being corrected. If they will not submit to correction they may instead move to another church—and perhaps another church after that! They can become a wandering believer who is not properly planted and fruitful in the house of God. Yet because this is not what God desires for His people, He has placed the story of Cain and Abel’s worship at the very beginning of the Scriptures to warn us of the importance of this issue.

The Last Worship in the Bible

The last worship recorded in the Bible is when the Apostle John worshiped in Revelation 22:8-9. We can read from there,

*“Now I, John, saw and heard these things.
And when I had heard and saw, I fell down*

to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me 'See that you do not do that.... Worship God.'"

Here we see the worship of a mature apostle being rejected because he was worshipping an angel. John was overwhelmed by the revelations he had been given, and began to mistakenly worship the vessel that God was using instead of worshipping God Himself. We can face the same danger in our worship services today, as people might admire or idolize the worship leader, singers, or musicians that are bringing the anointing into the service. We also have the extra danger that the worship leader, singers, or the musicians may accept this admiration (or worship) and begin to be lifted up in pride as Lucifer was.

There is a story about a worship leader who did an excellent job leading a worship service. Afterwards a church member quickly came up to congratulate him. She excitedly praised the worship leader's ministry and said that she wanted to be the first person to congratulate him. The worship leader thanked the woman, but replied to her that she was not the first one to congratulate him. As she started to protest, he explained that as soon as the worship service was over, the Devil was the first one who had congratulated him!

The musicians and singers of the world seek admiration from those they perform for. They want to draw followers to themselves who will idolize them and bring them popularity and wealth. Because of this prevailing attitude in the secular music industry, the musicians and singers in the house of God need to be especially careful to not be conformed to the attitudes and actions of the worldly music scene. Our goal should not be for popularity or success—our goal should

be to lead the people to worship God, and God alone!

Rejected Worship Throughout the Bible

These two examples of the first and the last worship recorded in the Bible should begin to show us the great importance of this subject. In John 4:23 the Lord Jesus did not say that the Father is seeking *worshippers*—Christ said that He is seeking *true worshippers*. Yet for us to become those true worshipers, we must learn the difference between accepted and rejected worship. Otherwise we might be like multitudes around the world who assume they are accepted before God when they worship according to their own cultural religion or their own personal ideas. As we have just seen, this can happen not just to pagan worshipers, but to worship leaders who know God’s presence, and even to mature apostles!

Chapter 3

THE RESTORATION OF MUSIC THROUGH DAVID

The restoration of music for its proper use in worship was brought through David, who was called “*the sweet psalmist of Israel*” in 2 Samuel 23:1. Music and singing were occasionally used by the people of God in earlier times, but with no regular use or organization.¹ Moses did not use singing or music in the tabernacle he built. If you were an Israelite who went to Moses’ Tabernacle to worship, what would you have heard there? The cries of the dying animals, and the sound of the priests chopping up the carcasses of the animal sacrifices! Moses never used music and singing in his order of worship, it was based on blood sacrifice.

However, King David later made a *new* tabernacle where he organized the use of music and singing for the worship of God.² Because he was a man after God’s own heart, he was able to see beyond the rituals that were performed in the Tabernacle of Moses. In Psalm 40:6 David wrote, “*Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; my ears You have opened; burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.*” In Psalm 141:2 he also wrote, “*Let my prayer be set before*

You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.” Because David had a higher revelation of true worship he did not repeat all the rituals of Moses, but instead brought a purer form of worship through his music and singing.

The Restoration of Music and Worship During the Church Age

Centuries later the prophet Amos revealed the continuing importance of the worship that King David established in his tabernacle. He prophesied that God was going to rebuild the Tabernacle of David. The leaders of the early New Testament Church understood that this was a prophecy of what the Lord was going to do in the Church. They quoted Amos 9:11 during their church council in Jerusalem, as recorded in Acts 15:16-17.

“After this I will return and will rebuild the Tabernacle of David which has fallen down. I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up, so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name....”

The early church leaders understood that God did not want to restore the rituals and sacrifices of the Tabernacle of Moses in the Church. If that is what God wanted, then they would have required the Gentiles to be circumcised and to obey all the laws of Moses. It was not Moses’ Tabernacle that was to be rebuilt in the Church, but the Tabernacle of David.

The apostles and elders also knew that the Lord did not

want to literally rebuild a tent that God would dwell in. They understood that what the Lord wanted to do was restore to the people of God the spiritual experience that David had in his tabernacle. Yet when we study all of the scriptures about what David did in his tabernacle, we see that the main activity organized was the continual worship of God through music and singing. Let us read about this from 1 Chronicles chapter 16:

“So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it.... And he [David] appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord, to commemorate, to thank, and to praise the Lord God of Israel: Asaph the chief, [also 8 other leaders].... Jehiel with stringed instruments and harps, but Asaph made music with cymbals; and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests regularly blew the trumpets... So he [David] left Asaph and his brothers there before the ark of the covenant of the Lord to minister before the ark regularly, as every day’s work required....”

This gives us a glimpse of the worship that David organized. Many other chapters in the Old Testament also give much more instruction about the music and the songs (or Psalms) that David used for the worship of God. The Lord did not choose to repeat all of this in the New Testament. Instead He revealed in Acts 15:16-17 that we should refer back to the Tabernacle of David to understand the praise and worship that He is restoring in His Church today.

Many of the problems and controversies that the Church has today about music and worship have arisen from a lack of understanding about how David restored these important truths for the people of God. Some Christian denominations have taught that because the Gospels never mention using musical instruments for worship, we should not use them today. Other groups from the opposite perspective say that because the New Testament gives few guidelines for our music and worship, we should follow the music and singing of the world to find what will be popular and successful.

It is true that the Gospels and the New Testament give very little instruction about how to use music and singing in our praise and worship. Yet, as we have seen in Acts 15, this is because the instructions have already been fully given in the Old Testament. Following David's instructions about worship will enable us to fulfill our Lord's command that we are to worship not only *in spirit* but also *in truth*. In John 17:17 Jesus said, "*Your Word is truth.*" So for us to be able to worship *in truth*, we should expect the Word of God to give us complete instruction for our worship.

If we have not yet seen these complete directions in the Word of God, we need to pray with the Psalmist, "*Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law.*"³ In Proverbs 25:2 we also see that "*It is the glory of God to conceal a matter,*" yet it goes on to say "*but the glory of kings is to search out a matter.*" If we want to become kings and priests who will reign with our Lord in His glorious kingdom, then part of our preparation will be to learn how to search out the hidden truths that God has concealed in His Word!

***David's Music and Worship
were Given by the Holy Spirit***

David was anointed by the prophet Samuel when he was still a young man. The scripture then says that “*the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.*”⁴ One of the results of this mighty anointing was that as David played his harp while watching over his father’s sheep, he learned how to worship by the power of the Holy Spirit. He wrote in Psalm 23 that the Lord anointed his head with oil and caused his cup to overflow—and one way that the release of the Spirit of God overflowed from his heart was through his music and singing.

David learned to let the Holy Spirit move through his music with great power. When backslidden King Saul wanted to be set free from the evil spirit that troubled him, young David was called to the royal palace to play his music for the king and bring him deliverance. We read in 1 Samuel 16:23,

“So it came about whenever the evil spirit from God came to Saul, David would take the harp and play it with his hand; and Saul would be refreshed and be well, and the evil spirit would depart from him.”

David had been taught how to worship by the Holy Spirit during his private times when he was alone with God. We do not read that he took lessons from a famous musician, or that he learned in the king’s palace how to play the music that was fashionable in his time. David’s foundations were that he learned to play his music and sing by the Spirit during his personal devotions to the Lord. Yet what young David learned to sing and play in his private devotions afterwards became the music of Saul’s royal palace, and then later was proclaimed

to the kingdom through the worship in Solomon's temple. This was a fulfillment of what our Lord Jesus said, that what is spoken in the secret place will be proclaimed upon the housetops.

I can remember how, when I was a young Christian, the Lord began to teach me to flow in the anointing during worship. I was born again in a church that knew all about praise, lifting their hands, and dancing before the Lord. Yet that did not mean that I at first felt comfortable about joining in with those activities. Instead of concentrating on worshipping God, I was embarrassed about lifting my hands and attempting other expressions of praise.

The desire of my heart was that I wanted to know how to fully worship the Lord. However, some of the most valuable lessons I learned as a young Christian occurred when I was alone with God. I had a job as a night security guard which involved very little work. I actually spent most of the time each night praying and worshipping God. I learned how to clap and wholeheartedly lift my hands in His presence. The Lord taught me how to joyfully dance before Him, and shake my big key chain like a tambourine until the mighty presence of God would fill the large factory. I learned to worship deeper and deeper in the anointing until the glory of God was visibly manifested on several occasions.

Yes, I also learned how to worship in the church services and meet with God there. However, when I was alone with God I learned my most valuable lessons. Then I was not left to wonder whether others in the service had first brought the presence of God, while my own heart may have been slow to enter in. It was when I was all alone with God that I best found out how to prepare my heart to enter His presence and flow with the anointing.

While it is important for us to learn to worship God alone in our personal devotions, we should not conclude that it is wrong to take lessons from music teachers to improve our skills. Psalm 33:3 exhorts us to “*play skillfully,*” so to develop our musical skills it can be helpful to take lessons from a good instructor. Seeking to gain the anointing in our music does not mean that diligently developing our talent is unimportant.

However, it is true that many Christian musicians and singers are handicapped by the wrong foundations of how they learned their music. Perhaps they learned how to play their music before they became saved, where they were moved by such spiritual influences as pride, lust, rebellion, or depression. Others have learned how to play and sing after they were already Christians, but have been influenced by worldly music that they listened to and imitated. These wrong spiritual foundations can cause them to bring forth impure music and worship until the Lord cleanses them and renews the spirit of their minds.

This was the case in my life and early ministry. Before I met the Lord I had been a rock guitarist and singer. When I was fifteen years old I made a record with some songs I had written, which was then played on the radio. By the time I was eighteen I was playing solo performances before crowds of up to 8,000 people. I was accustomed to flowing under evil anointings as I sang about all the popular sins, and the music I played reflected the bondage that was in my own life.

After becoming a Christian I wanted to use my musical talents to witness for the Lord, so I organized several different Christian rock groups. When we would occasionally play a worshipful song the anointing would come, and then we could effectively preach or pray with people for

salvation. Yet when we played our usual style of music, I wondered why the presence of God was not manifested. We could stir the people up to great excitement, yet the manifest presence of the Lord was not clearly revealed through our attempted ministry. I was a Christian for six years (and a Bible school graduate) before all of the former mixture had been cleansed out of my life and my music.

We need to have the attitude that the Apostle Paul had. He wrote that he counted all of his worldly talents and accomplishments “*as dung*” that he might win Christ. Do we want to “*win Christ*” and gain the anointing for our lives and ministry? Then, like Paul, we will have to *unlearn* how to have confidence in the flesh and in our worldly talent, so that we can worship God in the Spirit.⁵

David’s Prophetic Worship was Multiplied

As David continued to mature and become a prophet, his music and worship also continued to mature by the wisdom and the power of the Holy Spirit. Many of the Psalms are the fruit of this growing prophetic ministry. As we study them, these Psalms can teach us how we can in turn develop to become prophetic “sweet psalmists” like David.

Later, when David became the king of Israel, he brought many changes to the kingdom. One change was that he organized hundreds of the Levites and taught them how to minister to the Lord with music and singing. First Chronicles 25:1 tells us,

“Moreover, David and the captains of the army separated for the service some of the sons of Asaph, of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, stringed instruments, and

cymbals....”

Here we read how they learned to prophesy with their music, as the anointing of the Holy Spirit directed them. Not only was David a prophet, but many of the other musicians and singers were also raised up by God to become prophets who were led by the Spirit in their ministries. One of these mentioned in this scripture was Heman, the grandson of the great prophet, Samuel.⁶ The prophetic mantle from his grandfather was passed down to his generation, and 1 Chronicles 25:5 says that Heman also became a prophet. The anointing that was upon his music ministry was in turn passed down to his 14 sons. They were chosen to lead 14 of the 24 groups of musicians that David organized to lead the worship in Solomon’s Temple.⁷

David and his fellow prophets organized their music and singing by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. They did not simply invent their own natural ideas. They could not go to a bookstore and buy books and videos that would tell them the latest innovations to add to their worship services. They also could not turn on their television and copy ideas from worldly entertainers in order to make the worship services more popular for the crowds! We read how the Lord had revealed the directions for their music and worship in the following scripture:

“Then he stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, of Gad the king’s seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for thus was the commandment of the Lord by His prophets.”

—2 Chronicles 29:25

From David’s humble beginnings as a shepherd boy

learning to worship alone in the fields, he matured to become a prophet who could organize the use of music and singing for the worship of God. He gathered other prophets and servants of the Lord, and together they built a worship team that ministered before the Lord in the tabernacle that he built. These teams continued to develop to full maturity until they were established to lead the national worship at the temple of Solomon. We can read about their glorious worship in Solomon's temple from 2 Chronicles 5:13-14,

“Indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying: ‘For He is good; for His mercy endures forever,’ that the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.”

David's Worship in the Church Age—and Beyond!

These Bible stories about the use of music and singing for the worship of God are to be much more than just interesting history to us. The many chapters in the Old Testament that record this worship are the blueprint that the Lord has given us to show what He is raising up in the Church of the Last Days. The prophecies of Amos 9:11 and of Acts 15:15-17 declare that the Lord is restoring the Tabernacle of David in the Church Age, so that *“the rest of mankind may seek the Lord.”* One very important key to the evangelism

of the world is the anointed music and singing that will be heard throughout the nations as we learn to worship like David.

Just as the worship in David's Tabernacle has prophetic significance for us, the maturing and multiplying of his worship in Solomon's Temple is also important for those who await the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is because Solomon's kingdom of peace and prosperity is a prophetic picture or type of the coming millennial reign of Christ. Those who have learned to worship in the "David's Tabernacle" of the New Testament Church will then be prepared for the fullness of their worship to blossom forth during the Millennium, when "*the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*"⁸

God declared in Acts 13:22 that David was "*a man after My own heart,*" and David gathered around himself men of similar desire and vision. These are the kind of musicians and worship leaders that our Lord is again raising up in our generation. They are men and women of God who have learned to meet with God in their own personal devotions, and who in turn can organize worship teams that will bring the congregations into the manifested presence of God. This will help the Church to complete the Great Commission, after which time the saints will lead the renewed world in worshiping Christ in the manifested glory of Christ's millennial kingdom.

While David was chosen by the Lord to lead the way into the restoration of music and worship, there was a great multiplication of prophetic singers and musicians that were trained under his guidance. May we also be among those prophetic musicians and singers that are being trained today

as David's Tabernacle is being rebuilt in the Church. And may the Lord give us such a vision of His true worship that we will never be content with anything less!

Chapter 4

HOW TO WORSHIP “IN SPIRIT”

Every born-again believer has had planted within their heart the desire to worship and love their Heavenly Father. Moreover, every Christian who has been called to a ministry position should also learn how to help lead others into the presence of God during their times of praise and worship. Yet as we have seen, not all worship is acceptable to God. Every maturing Christian will become aware of times when some worship services seem to miss the mark. Maybe the minister or worship leader was not sensitive to the direction the Lord wanted to lead the service. Perhaps a musician or some of the congregation seemed to bring confusion to the service instead of joining in the flow that the Holy Spirit was bringing. However, our worship services do not have to be “in and out” or “on and off” where the anointing of the Holy Spirit comes and leaves! As we gain discernment we can consistently enter and abide in the presence of God so that the Holy Spirit will move among us.

In John 4:23 Christ taught us how to be true worshipers. He said, *“The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth...”*

We can see from this teaching of Christ that one of the keys to true worship is to learn how to worship *in spirit*. Let us now study four keys or indications that will help us learn to do this.

4 KEYS TO WORSHIP “IN SPIRIT”

1. LIBERTY- Second Corinthians 3:17 tells us, “*Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*” If we are entering the presence of God we will have liberty, or a free spirit, in our praise and worship. The Lord does not want us to have a spirit of bondage where our heart seems to be in a prison. Let us learn to have a free spirit like King David, who could dance before the Lord with all of his strength!

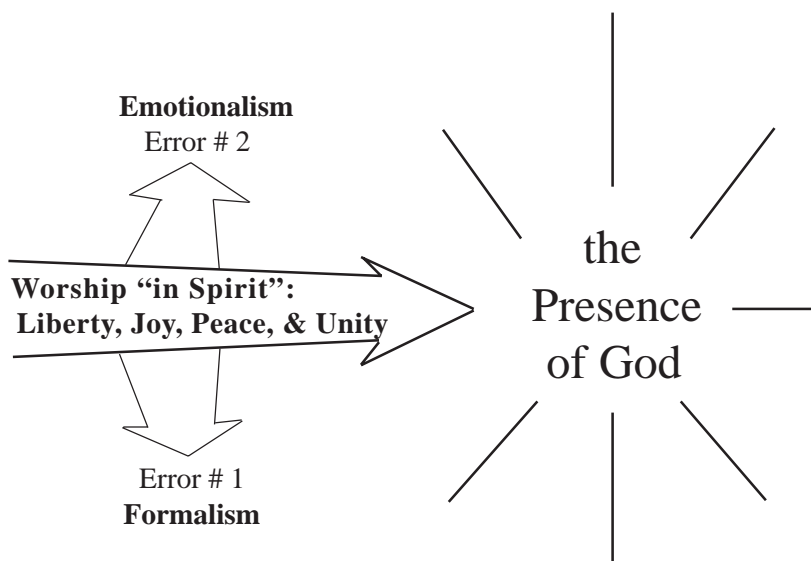
2. JOY- In Psalm 16:11 we read, “*In Your presence is fullness of joy.*” As we enter God’s presence the spirit of heaviness, sorrow, and sighing will flee away.¹ Our Lord Jesus is an example of someone who was so full of joy that His enemies accused Him in Matthew 11:19 of drinking too much wine.

3. THE PEACE OF GOD- Colossians 3:15 tells us, “*Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.*” The word for *rule* means to *arbitrate*, or be an umpire or referee. A referee will remain silent as long as the game is being played correctly, but if the rules are broken he will disturb the peace by blowing a whistle or waving a flag. Then the game will stop and the broken rule will be explained. After everything has been corrected the referee will again quietly watch as the game continues on. In a similar way, if we do not properly proceed with our praise and worship, the peace of the Holy Spirit in

our heart will be disturbed similar to when a referee blows his whistle. We then need to find out what was wrong, correct the problem, and continue in the flow of the Holy Spirit.

4. UNITY- Psalm 133:1-2 tells us that the unity of the brethren is like the anointing oil flowing down. If all the people in the worship service are continuing together in unity, this can be another indication that the anointing of the Holy Spirit is flowing.

If we have these 4 works of the Holy Spirit operating together in balance, we will find that our worship "*in spirit*" will lead us deeper and deeper into the presence of God. However, there are 2 wrong balances or errors that can direct us away from the flow of the Spirit. These can be named formalism and emotionalism. The following diagram will help us to better understand these 2 errors:



Error # 1—Formalism

Formalism is where praise and worship becomes a ritual which follows man-made patterns that we have learned. Formalism can slowly creep into our services when we do not continue to be led by the Spirit. The service may outwardly appear correct, but inwardly the people's hearts are far from true worship. This situation was spoken of by our Lord Jesus as He quoted from Isaiah:

“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” —Matthew 15:8-9

Formalism is an imbalance often found in the older, traditional churches. Some of these churches will print a bulletin that states the order of the worship service along with what hymns will be sung. It is easy to see that this can limit the leading of the Spirit in a service. But formalism is also a danger for churches that are called Spirit-filled, Charismatic, or Pentecostal! Many times these churches can have worship services that are almost the same every week, and the Holy Spirit is given little opportunity to move in a new way.

How can we detect formalism? A very practical way is by examining whether our four keys are all functioning together. This is because formalism will emphasize the importance of peace and unity, but it will ignore the needed balances of liberty and joy. Without these needed balances we can too easily find that a peaceful and orderly worship service can degenerate into becoming a boring and lifeless experience.

Nine Practical Suggestions to Escape Formalism

1) Preach and teach about liberty, joy, and the leading of the Spirit. This will encourage the people to break out from their hindering patterns and rituals.

2) Use worship leaders and musicians that are strong in the liberty and joy of the Lord. Different people have different preferences or styles in the way that they direct a service. If the services seem to be too formal, select a worship team that will help restore a true balance by being joyful and free. Include a tambourine among the musical instruments—or use several, if the congregation is large and you have enough skillful players. Tambourines are often mentioned in the Bible for the joyful, lively praise that they can encourage.

While each worship leader has their own personal style about how to keep a service flowing, there is a general pattern that can give us wisdom in choosing who should lead. Since men and women are created with different general balances of emotional make-up they usually function somewhat differently as worship leaders. Men tend to be more logically oriented, while women tend to be more emotionally oriented. As a result, most men tend to be more formalistic in their approach to leading a worship service. So if you feel that your worship services tend to be overly formal, there is a good possibility that choosing women worship leaders will help steer the worship services into a greater freedom and joy.

3) Do not always follow the same patterns or formula for the service. We all learn at least a few ways that the Lord can

move in a worship service, such as in joyful praise, holy worship, and in conviction of sin. But there is so much more that the Lord wants to lead us into. We need to learn to not quench the Spirit, but leave room for Him to move. For example, there are times when the Lord may not want us to set a time limit on the praise and worship. I have been in services where the song service lasted for hours, where prophecy and the gifts of the Spirit flowed freely. Then after the Lord had finished moving, the preacher went to the pulpit—not to preach his prepared sermon, but to give the closing prayer.

4) Keep the praise songs fast and lively. The musicians could also play joyful songs before the service begins. This can help prepare everyone to begin the service with the joy of the Lord bubbling forth from their hearts.

5) Do not let the worship drag on and be too long or slow if there is bondage in it. Sometimes we continue on and on with a song service, trying to get a spiritual breakthrough—but the service just becomes more and more draining! Be wise to know when to pass the service on to the next leader, who perhaps will be able to get a spiritual breakthrough in the next part of the church service.

6) Teach new songs. If the same songs are always sung, they can become like a sponge that has had all of the water squeezed out of it. Keep looking for new songs that have a fresh message and anointing.

7) The leaders should not be too formal. Smile, be friendly, and relate to the congregation! The Lord wants His people to

come before His presence and meet with Him. However, by our attitudes we suggest to the people whether God can be personally approached, or should only be honored through tradition or a ritual of worship. We are to be ambassadors for Christ, and if the people can relate to us then it will encourage them that they can also relate to Him.

8) Exhort the congregation during a song service if there is bondage, sleepiness, or a heavy spirit. Encourage them to praise the Lord and get a breakthrough.

9) The worship leader and everyone on the platform should be good examples to help lead the congregation into the joy of the Lord. They need to all be rejoicing! Sometimes shouting, jumping, lifting our hands, clapping, dancing, or even marching can help bring the victory.

Error #2—Emotionalism

Emotionalism is the opposite imbalance to formalism. It is caused when our soul or our fleshly emotions are over-active, struggling or pushing away from the leading of the Spirit. We all know that politicians and actors learn to motivate people by the natural abilities and talents of their souls. Yet we need to grow in discernment to see how Christians can ignorantly do the same.² Soulsh activities bring unrest and confusion to a service because everyone is not flowing together by the Spirit in an orderly fashion.³ This imbalance is often found in Charismatic and Pentecostal churches, which are usually zealous for God but have not always matured in discernment and wisdom.

We can also discern emotionalism through using our four

keys. The service that is overly emotional will emphasize the importance of liberty and joy, but it will ignore the needed balance of peace and unity.

Nine Practical Suggestions to Escape Emotionalism

1) If the services are overbalanced towards emotionalism then teach about peace, unity, order, and reverent worship.

2) Have the musicians start playing worshipful songs perhaps fifteen minutes before the service is to begin. This will help them to begin to flow in the anointing, and it will prepare the hearts of the people who are coming in and waiting for the service to begin. The singers can also prepare themselves by coming to the services early and praying. When the musicians and the singers hurry into a service late, they often bring a hasty spirit and are not prepared to flow with the Spirit of God when He desires to move in the service.

3) Use musicians that have smoother, more gentle music. Some musicians developed their musical skills before they were saved, and they learned to stir up the people's emotions by pounding their instruments and playing too loud. But if the services are unbalanced by being overemotional and soulish, it is important to choose musicians that will help restore the balance by playing more gentle music.

The musical instruments included in the worship service may also need to be re-evaluated. While many instruments (such as the keyboards and guitar) can be either lively or gentle depending upon how they are played, other instruments

(such as the drums and electric bass) emphasize a strong rhythm that can more easily stimulate a worship service into becoming led by the body instead of the Spirit.

4) Do not let the microphones and electrical instruments be too loud or cause speaker distortion. A person with little discernment can think that a greater volume brings a greater anointing. This is because loud music can excite and move the flesh—but just because something is happening in the service does not guarantee that it is the moving of the Holy Spirit. There is a liberty of the Spirit, but there is also a liberty of the flesh that we need to be sensitive to avoid.

5) If the service is excessively emotional or soulful, be careful about having the worship leader talking and exhorting between or during the songs. Many times the people are distracted from concentrating on the Lord because the worship leader is always talking and getting the attention of the people. Moreover, if there are several singers with microphones who are all adding their exhortations and directions to the service, it can become very confusing to the congregation. Having the worship service go directly from song to song without a pause or distraction can often help the worshipers to focus their attention on the Lord and enter deeper into God's presence.

6) Musicians should also be careful not to distract the people. The musicians of the world often like to play loud, abrupt, or complicated music to draw the attention of the people towards themselves and their talents. However, a Christian musician should be consecrated towards seeking to draw the attention of the people to the Lord.

7) Lead others into spiritual discernment and maturity. This will help them to become enlarged vessels that the Holy Spirit can move through in greater power without their emotions or soul taking the direction of the service away from God's presence. Jesus spoke about this subject when He said in Matthew 11:7 that John the Baptist had not attracted the people to himself by being like a reed shaken by the wind. John the Baptist was a stable, pure channel of the power of God. Immature Christians will sometimes be like a shaking reed when the wind of the Holy Spirit begins to blow, or they will be like an electrical fuse that short-circuits when the power of the Spirit is above their capacity. The result can be distraction or confusion in the service.

Many years ago my wife and I knew a precious sister in the Lord who would start to sing a very high note whenever she strongly felt the presence of the Lord. She would sound like a teakettle that whistles when the water begins to boil! She was genuinely being touched by the Spirit of God, but she did not know how to channel that anointing into a more scriptural and profitable manifestation. A teakettle can only channel the power of the steam into making a whistle—you need a steam engine to be able to use the power of the steam in more profitable ways. When my wife and I prayed about this, the Lord showed us that this woman had the anointing to prophesy even though she had never learned to properly use that anointing. After we counseled with her, she started to channel that anointing in a way that contributed to the services instead of bringing distraction.

8) If someone constantly disturbs the peace and unity of the worship services, privately counsel them. Some people

are ignorant about how to flow together during a service, and in their zeal without knowledge they can disrupt the worship service while they are sincerely trying to meet with God.

At other times a person who is proud may do something to attract attention to himself. He might even try by his unusual actions to show the people how "spiritual" he is! If a person continues to disturb the services and does not learn from the general teachings or exhortations of the pastor and leaders, he will then need to be counseled. First do this privately, as Jesus outlined the steps toward dealing with a problem in Matthew 18:15-17. Yet if he does not submit to the counsel of the church leadership, then there is the possibility that further steps will need to be taken.

9) If confusion or something wrong is troubling your spirit, there may be an evil spirit that needs to be discerned and bound in the service. As 1 Corinthians 14:33 declares, "*God is not the author of confusion but of peace.*" However, the opposite truth is that evil spirits often try to bring confusion to defeat the people of God. Sometimes a service does not seem to flow correctly. Perhaps the musicians are playing wrong chords, or the singers are not in unity. Perhaps the electrical equipment is not working correctly, or the people in the congregation are not flowing with the worship team. Many times these things happen because of natural reasons such as a lack of musical practice. However, at other times there can be an evil spirit who is influencing these natural situations to try to bring confusion and defeat to the worship service.

The enemy sometimes even tries to counterattack and

disturb a service by moving a person to make a disturbance or manifest a false gift. In Acts 16:16-18 we read that a woman with a spirit of divination was following Paul's evangelistic team around, as she cried, "*These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.*" Most church leaders would like to have a member in their church who repeatedly prophesy that the leaders are great servants of God that the people should follow! Yet the Apostle Paul correctly discerned that the source of those prophecies was an evil spirit, and he cast the spirit out of the woman in the name of Jesus Christ. We also need discernment so that we *will* allow the true gifts of the Holy Spirit to move, but *will not* allow the enemy to infiltrate and misdirect the services.

While this woman in Acts 16 was clearly not a Christian, the Scriptures show us that even a godly believer can be unknowingly led in a wrong direction because of the deception of the enemy. We can see an example of this in the ministry of the Apostle Peter. Shortly after he was inspired by God to declare that Jesus is the Christ, we read in Matthew 16:22 that Peter told Jesus that He should not go to the cross. But Jesus discerned that Peter was ignorantly being used of the Devil, and replied, "*Get behind me, Satan!*" If this could happen to the leader of Christ's apostles, who among us could ever claim that we are too "spiritual" for the enemy to misdirect us? Yet we need to grow and gain spiritual discernment so that we can properly direct the services away from enemy attacks and into the wonderful presence of God.

Worship “In Spirit”

Liberty, joy, peace, and unity are all important ingredients in our spiritual worship. If we do not have all of these ingredients working together in harmony, then we will go in a wrong direction—either towards formalism and a lifeless service, or towards emotionalism where the service turns to confusion or mere excitement. It is as we learn the keys of praise and worship that are *in spirit* that we can be the true worshipers that the Father is seeking. We can become a people that delight the heart of our God as we enter into greater experiences in His glorious presence!

Chapter 5

HOW TO WORSHIP “IN TRUTH”

In John 4:24 (NIV) the Lord Jesus declared, “*God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.*” In the last chapter we began to study what Jesus meant when He said the true worshipers will worship the Father *in spirit*. We will now go on to examine the second part of His teaching, where Christ said that we must also worship *in truth*. There are two basic areas that we will study that have to be *in truth*. These are the *worshiper*, as well as the *worship*.

The True Worshiper

To become a true worshiper, you must first be a saved believer. That is why the Lord Jesus told the woman at the well that the Samaritans did not know how to have true worship. In the Old Testament times, salvation had been given to the Jews. Other religions have followers who attempt many kinds of worship, but to be true worshipers we need to first receive Christ who *is* the Truth.¹ This is the first step in coming to the Father to worship Him.

Furthermore, for someone to be a true worshiper, he or

she must also be *walking* in the truth.² A past experience of salvation is not sufficient unless we are presently seeking to live in the light of His truth.³ This is what qualifies us to acceptably approach the presence of the Lord and offer Him true worship.

David expressed the central issue of worship when he wrote in Psalm 40:6-8,

“Sacrifice and burnt offering You did not desire; my ears You have opened; burnt offering and sin offering You did not require. Then I said, ‘Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart.’”

The highest worship we can offer is a heart and life that obeys—that even *delights* to obey—the will of God. Without this, all of our music and singing will be only as empty noise to the Lord.⁴ Yet with this, we will be the true worshipers who can offer our every action throughout life as worship to our God.

True Worship

While our life must qualify us in order to be a true worshiper, our Lord also said that our worship itself must be *in truth*. In John 17:17 Jesus said, “*Your Word is truth.*” As we mentioned in an earlier chapter, this means that our worship must also be according to the truth of the Word of God.

The Bible gives us many keys on how to have balanced worship that can be correctly expressed through our singing and music. In the next sections of this chapter we will seek to give some scriptural keys that help guide us into

worship *in truth*.

Key # 1- Nine Methods of Praise and Worship

As we have already seen, David was a man after God’s own heart who restored the use of music and singing for worshipping the Lord. In all, there were nine ways that David and the Israelites learned to express themselves in their praise and worship. These same scriptural methods teach us how we can also worship *in truth*.

With the VOICE:	With the HANDS:	With the BODY:
1. THANKSGIVING Ps.100:4, 69:30, 1 Chron.16:4	4. PLAYING MUSIC Ps. 150:3-5, 149:3, 1 Chron.16:4-6	7. DANCING & LEAPING 2 Sam.6:14, 16 Psalm 149:3
2. SINGING Ps.147:1, Col.3:16	5. LIFTING HANDS Ps.134:2, 63:4	8. BOWING & KNEELING Ps.95:6, Gen.24:52
3. SHOUTING Ps.32:11, 47:1 & 5	6. CLAPPING Ps.47:1, 98:8	9. STANDING Ps.134:1, 135:1-2

Vocal Actions

The first column shows us three ways that we can use our voices. Thanksgiving is when we speak words of gratitude, as compared to singing where we must also use musical ability to join in with a song. Shouting is another way that we can use our voice by lifting it up with strength.

The Bible says we are to *shout* to God with the voice of joy in Psalm 47:1. It is useful to study the full meaning and usage of this word. In the Hebrew it is *ruwa*, which means to *split the ears, shout, blow an alarm, make a joyful noise, triumph*. This is also the root word used for *teruwah*, which

means *clamor* or *battle cry*. These words are most often used in the Scriptures to describe the shout of a battle cry. This was the victory shout that Joshua and the Israelites proclaimed at Jericho before the wall fell down.

Proclaiming a victory shout as part of our praise is a declaration of faith. A joyful victory shout can release the anointing. In Psalm 47:5 we are told that “*God has gone up with a shout [teruwah]*” as the Lord arises in response to this victorious proclamation of faith. An example of this was demonstrated when godly King Abijah found himself fighting an army twice the size of his own. Just before the battle began, we read,

“Then the men of Judah gave a shout; and as the men of Judah shouted [ruwa], it happened that God struck Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.”—2 Chronicles 13:15

This victory shout can also work in our spiritual warfare when we are in a worship service. An example of this is seen when David wrote,

“And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me; therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy [teruwah] in His tabernacle....” —Psalm 27:6

When you study this psalm you can see how David had learned to gain the victory over his enemies by faith *before* he went out to battle! By shouting the victory as he sought the Lord in the tabernacle, he knew his enemies would be beaten back.

Sometimes in a worship service the praise may seem to be lacking joy and faith. However, when someone who has the victory working in their heart shouts a “hallelujah!” or a “praise God!” it can release a fresh anointing that can

spiritually wake up the sleepy saints in the congregation. That does not mean that we want to always be shouting, as that can disturb the service and draw attention to the person making all of the noise. Yet a joyful victory shout released at an appropriate moment can help lift the praise to a higher level. On occasion, the worship leader may feel to lead the entire congregation in proclaiming a victory shout together.

I have seen the spiritual power of this victory shout at many different prayer meetings and times of worship. Once was when our Bible school had been negotiating very unsuccessfully for over a year to rent a large property. The owner was asking for almost twice the rental price that we were able to afford. However, we kept negotiating because the Lord clearly showed us that it was the place for us to be. When the owner would not come down to what we could afford, we finally felt that we should become very aggressive in spiritual warfare. At our next worship service at the Bible school we shouted the victory shout again and again to obtain that property. And just as Christ had said in Matthew 11:12 that the violent take the kingdom by force, through our “violent” victory shouts we saw a dramatic turnaround. The next day the property’s business manager called us to say that she had decided to delegate the negotiations for the property to a lawyer on her staff. And to my surprise, when I then talked with her lawyer he gave us the property for a significantly *lower* price than we had been previously offering!

Hand Actions

The second column of our table shows us three actions that we can do with our hands. The first one is playing music.

Our hands do most of the action when a musical instrument is played. In fact, the Hebrew word for playing music means *to pluck the strings*. To be able to “*play skillfully*,” as we are exhorted in Psalm 33:3, we must develop the skilled use of our hands.

Another way we can use our hands in praise and worship is to lift them up. There are several reasons why people are told to lift their hands during natural activities. These reasons also have a spiritual counterpart.

For example, lifting up your hands is recognized around the world as a sign of surrender. In a similar way, when we worship we want to surrender ourselves to the Lord, and an appropriate action to express this is to lift our hands.

We can also consider how people are searched before entering an airplane or a prison. A guard will usually ask them to lift up their hands as he checks to see if they have tried to conceal something prohibited. In a similar way, we are told in 1 Timothy 2:8 to be “*lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting*.” Through our action we can be inviting the Lord to search us! David expressed this attitude when he said, “*Search me, O God, and know my heart... and see if there is any wicked way in me...*” in Psalm 139:23-24.

Another purpose for lifting your hands is when someone wants to make an important speech or declare an oath. The speaker may lift his hand(s) to motion the people to remain silent or to gain their attention.⁵ A speaker may also lift his hand to testify to the truth of his oath.⁶ We may similarly want to solemnly testify to what we are singing by lifting our hands.

As well as playing music and lifting our hands, a third way that we can use our hands is to clap them. When we clap along to the rhythm of the song we are using our hands as

a musical instrument. Another use is for the congregation to clap their hands as an expression of praise to the Lord, just as an audience will applaud someone they admire.⁷

Body Actions

The third column shows three actions we can do with our body. The first is dancing and leaping. We can easily understand that these are actions that show great joy. When the excitement in our heart cannot sit still, it can burst forth through the bodily expressions of dancing and leaping!

I can still remember what my young children would always do when I returned home after a day or perhaps after several days of ministry. When I would open the gate to our house, I would call out to greet my family. As soon as my young children would hear my voice, they would run out of the house, exclaiming “Daddy’s home!” while they danced and jumped about. Seeing their joy at my arrival would always fill my heart with joy, and I could not wait to pick them up in my arms and express my love to them. Likewise, we should have an expectant heart that is waiting for our Heavenly Father to come and meet with us. When we sense His times of visitation, should we not be just as excited as a little child who dances and jumps?

The Bible words for dancing and leaping can also give us further instruction. In Psalm 149:3 the word used for *dance* is *machowl*. It means *to dance by spinning or whirling in a circle*. Then in 1 Chronicles 15:29 the word for dancing is *raqad*. This word means *to spring about; to dance, jump, leap, or skip*.

These words in the Bible show us many ways to joyously express ourselves in dancing and leaping. However, it would

also be wise to notice what forms of dancing the Bible does not mention or encourage. There was no swinging of the hips or sensual body movements such as modern dance emphasizes. These forms of dancing can seductively draw attention to the dancer's body and encourage lust.

A pastors' gathering I attended a number of years ago illustrated this. There were about 300 pastors who attended this meeting, and about 95% of them were men. The two worship leaders for this gathering were both attractive women. They were doing a fine job leading the praise, until they started singing the song "God's Not Dead, He's Alive!" As they began this song, they started singing that they could "feel Him in their head" as they pointed to their heads. Then they said that they could "feel Him in their shoulders" as they started to wiggle their shoulders—and then they started singing that they could "feel Him in their hips" as they both continued to point to their hips and swing them back and forth! The visual mixture they presented was such that most of the pastors had to close their eyes or look somewhere else if they wanted to remain spiritually minded.

Church leaders should be careful to discern if someone is ignorantly dancing in worldly carnal ways, and if so, to encourage them to a greater purity. Yet beyond this, church leaders should also be careful to discern if someone has impure motives for dancing in church, especially if it is at the front of the church where the dancers are more noticeable. For example, I can remember one large church where many of the young women in the church would come to the front and spontaneously dance during the song services. The impression I received when I visited and saw this was that some of them were not wholeheartedly worshipping God—they were dancing in front to compete with each other

in attracting the attention of the young men, while they were silently yet visually saying, “marry me!”

Another form of expressing our worship is in bowing and kneeling. The main words used in the Bible for *worship* both mean *to prostrate* or *bow down in reverence*. This is a form of outwardly humbling ourselves, and can be an expression of our inner worship to God.

Sometimes a congregation will sing about bowing down or kneeling in God’s presence. Yet many times the people will not do it! When we sing about scriptural expressions of praise and worship, it is good to encourage the people to be “*doers of the Word*” and not just hearers, as James 1:22 exhorts. The song leader and all the leaders at the front of the church should also be following these instructions. This will make them good examples that will help the rest of the people to enter into fuller expressions of their own praise and worship.

A third way that we can express our praise and worship through bodily actions is by standing. It is an action through which we can demonstrate our respect towards someone. Soldiers are to stand at attention when in the presence of a high ranking officer, and custom usually requires people to respectfully stand when a king passes by. How much more worthy is our great God and King to be respectfully honored!

After George Friderich Handel finished composing the *Hallelujah Chorus* for his musical masterpiece, the *Messiah*, he told his servant that while writing it he saw a vision of Almighty God surrounded by the hosts of heaven. The music he wrote seems to truly depict the vision that he saw.

When Handel’s *Messiah* was first performed in London, the King of England stood to his feet when the *Hallelujah Chorus* began. This was in respect for the Majestic One

whose presence was revealed as the choir was singing, “Hallelujah! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth! King of kings, and Lord of lords!”

When the King of England stood, the rest of the audience also arose to stand during the chorus. The performance was a success, and Handel’s *Messiah* has gone on to become the most famous and often performed oratorio in all of world history. Even today, centuries later, audiences around the world carry on the tradition of standing while the *Hallelujah Chorus* is performed. Yet this tradition first originated, not in honor of the King of England or the talent of George Handel, but in honor of the King of kings Whom the song proclaims!

While standing can honor the Lord, it can be difficult for a congregation to stand throughout a long worship service. A song leader should be particularly sensitive to not make the people stand for too long a time. It can often be appropriate for the congregation to be invited to sit for a while during the middle of a long worship service, and then stand again when the worship becomes more intense. We should seek to organize worship services that all the church members can fully participate in.

Participate—Or Become Barren!

When we consider the great national gathering that King David organized in 1 Chronicles 15:28-29, we can see the importance of learning how to participate in praise and worship. In this story all Israel joined in except for David’s wife, Michal. We read,

“Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the horn, with trumpets and with

cymbals, making music with stringed instruments and harps. And it happened, as the ark of the covenant of the Lord came to the City of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul, looking through a window, saw King David whirling and playing music; and she despised him in her heart.”

Michal stayed at home in the palace instead of joining the celebration. She observed the praise and worship as she looked out through a window, yet she was only a *spectator*, not a *participator*. Michal despised her husband’s undignified music and dancing, and in doing so she was criticizing and rejecting the praise and worship of God.

In this scripture we have just read that Michal was described as Saul’s daughter, although she was also David’s wife. These were the two major social positions she held in her life: one from her birth, and the other from her marriage. Yet these two positions in her life also suggest the two natures that every Christian has. We all have an *old nature* that we were born with, which came from Adam. This is like the first nature that Michal was born with as the daughter of King Saul. However, when we are born again and become part of the bride of Christ we also receive the *new nature* of Christ. This is like the new character and position that Michal received when she became David’s wife.

Sadly, it is clear that Michal did not let her heart and character abide in unity with David. If she had, she would have been out at the celebration dancing before the Lord with her husband and the others! In this scripture she is described as “*the daughter of Saul*,” and she was also functioning in the *character* of Saul. For just as King Saul had despised David, his critical daughter ended up doing the

same.

This story is relevant for us because we each face a similar struggle in our lives. In Romans chapters six to eight we can study about the struggle between the old Adamic nature and the new nature of Christ that is in our lives. We need to remain dead to the old Adamic nature and united to Christ, just as Michal should have forsaken the nature of her backsliding father to be united with David. If we abide in a carnal Adamic nature after we become Christians, our hearts will become hardened and critical to the things of God. We can begin to criticize joyful worship services, and might end up only watching a revival instead of participating in it!

Second Samuel 6:20-23 tells us the end of this story of Michal. When David returned home she rebuked him. Because of her attitude, the scripture then says, *“therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.”* Michal was judged for her sin and became barren. If we similarly reject entering into praise and worship we can also end up criticizing it and become spiritually barren. Our lives and ministries will become unfruitful. A person or an entire church can become barren if they reject praise and worship, like Michal.

This barren condition can be found in many churches today. They are not growing either spiritually or numerically. Yet there is a prescription that can cure this barrenness! It is given to us in Isaiah 54:1-3, where we read,

*“Sing, O barren, you who have not borne!
Break forth into singing, and cry aloud,
you who have not labored with child! For
more are the children of the desolate than the
children of the married woman,” says the Lord.*

Enlarge the place of your tent, and let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; do not spare; lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes. For you will expand to the right and to the left, and your descendants will inherit the nations.”

Here we can see God’s prescription to cure barrenness: it is to sing and cry aloud! The same problem that caused Michal to become barren can be reversed to become the cure. For this reason we must be careful not to despise new (yet scriptural) expressions of praise and worship. We should instead join in!

A church that is gaining new experiences with God through their praise needs to prepare for results. As Isaiah 54:1-3 shows us, it can include three areas of breakthrough. The first is an abundance of new converts—“*for more are the children of the desolate.*” The second will be the need for a building program to hold the growing church—“*enlarge the place of your tent, and let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; do not spare; lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes.*” And the third result will be a greater missions program—“*and your descendants will inherit the nations.*”

To obtain these important results we should encourage every member of the church to learn how to clap, sing, shout, dance, lift their hands, and bow at the appropriate times. If they are embarrassed or self-conscious, then encourage them to practice these nine expressions of praise and worship when they are alone with the Lord. Once they gain a release in their praise and worship during their private devotions, they will not find it difficult to express themselves when they are in a public service.

Key # 2- Understanding Praise and Worship

What is the difference between praise and worship? They are both similar activities, and it is often difficult to distinguish between them. The following explanations and contrasts will help give a simplified understanding of their nature and use.

The words in the Bible for *praise* can also be translated as *to boast, celebrate, approve, admire, and commend*. Praise can be described as a simple, joyful celebration to God.

Worship can be translated through the words *to reverence, adore, bow down, and express devotion*. Worship can be described as a spiritually deeper activity than praise, as it involves communion with God.

The Scriptures make it clear that people can be worthy of praise. In Proverbs 31:30 we read that “*a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.*” However, the Scriptures are equally clear that only God is worthy of worship!⁸

Praise is generally expressed in response towards the actions or works of God.⁹ As such, praise can be easier to begin with than worship, as it is directed at the more easily seen external works of God. However, worship is expressed toward the nature or being of God.¹⁰ As such, worship can be more difficult to begin with as it is directed at the more difficult to see inner heart of God.

Praise uses more physical action and emphasizes a faster, more lively rhythm or tempo.¹¹ That helps the believer to awake and fully concentrate on the Lord. Worship uses less physical actions and rhythm, and on occasion, no rhythm at all.¹² Fleshly actions are humbled and become still as we enter into the glorious presence of God, so that all our attention is on *Him*. Zechariah 2:13 reveals this

attitude of reverent worship when it proclaims, "*Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord, for He is aroused from His holy habitation!*"

Another difference is that the one we praise does not have to be present.¹³ However, to properly worship someone they should be present.¹⁴ As a result of this difference, we can begin to praise the Lord outside of the manifest presence of God. This is the situation with which we start most worship services. Most services do not begin with the presence of the Lord being manifested unless there has been much prayer before the service, or unless the musicians have already been playing with the anointing and have brought the presence of the Lord to the sanctuary. Many services begin with a cold start when they first prepare to praise the Lord. Yet while we can *begin* to praise the Lord *outside* the manifest presence of God, our praise can cause us to *enter into* His presence.¹⁵ Then, once we have entered God's presence, we can shift over from our praise to begin our worship.¹⁶ This is why the usual order for a worship service is praise and then worship.

This basic progression of praise and worship is also expressed in the Tabernacle of Moses. There were different experiences or levels of meeting with God in Moses' Tabernacle, which teach us spiritual principles that are still relevant for us today. Just as the Israelites had to first enter the gates of the tabernacle to come and worship, we also need to follow certain steps to draw near to God.

To first enter into the Outer Court, Psalm 100:4 tells us that we "*enter into His gates with thanksgiving.*" We can spiritually accomplish this at the start of our services through an opening activity such as thanksgiving, prayer, a scripture reading, or an exhortation. Then as we begin to enter into the spiritual experiences typified by the Outer

Court, we can offer up the sacrifice of praise (Hebrews 13:15) just as the Israelites offered their sacrifices in the Outer Court.

Through our singing and praise the presence of the Lord usually becomes manifested. At this point we are entering into the Holy Place of the tabernacle. This was a covered, enclosed place that symbolized that we are covered and enclosed by the presence of the Lord. This manifestation of God's presence which occurs when we enter the Holy Place is further confirmed by the fact that those who entered the Holy Place found everything illumined by the golden candlestick. This speaks of the radiant presence of the Holy Spirit. Here as we enter into the Holy Place and experience God's presence we can make the transition from praise into worship. As Psalm 132:7 says, "*Let us go into His tabernacle; let us worship at His footstool.*" It is as we begin to enter into personal communion with God that our worship can begin to be *in spirit*.

If we want to draw even closer to God we must then go on into the innermost sanctuary which was called the Holy of Holies. To enter into the Holy of Holies we must enter within the last veil, which symbolizes the death of the flesh.¹⁷ There in the Holy of Holies we can find that there were no activities performed by man, except for the High Priest once a year entering in to sprinkle the blood of atonement—and even this symbolizes the finished work of Christ.¹⁸

This was the opposite of the Outer Court, where there was much exhausting human effort involved in the offering up of the animal sacrifices and the washing at the brass laver. In the Holy Place only much lighter tasks were performed as the priests changed the bread, placed incense on the altar, and adjusted the lamps. But in the Holy of Holies *human* activity was replaced by *God's* activity as the Lord revealed

His glory and spoke from the mercy seat. There it was not *man* seeking to meet with *God*—in the Holy of Holies it was *God* meeting with *man*. As the Lord declared in Exodus 25:22, “*And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony....*”

In a similar manner, if we spiritually enter into the Holy of Holies we will find all of our human activities to be humbled and silenced before Him. It is *God* who will perform all the activity as He meets with us, speaks with us, and reveals His glory. There as His glorious *shekinah* presence is revealed, our hearts are filled with love and communion with Him as all flesh is silent before the Lord.¹⁹

Key # 3- Bible Numerics and Music

God in His wisdom has created all things, including music, to conform to scientific and spiritual laws. When we study the Scriptures it is clear that numbers can have spiritual significance or meaning. We will now see how the spiritual significance of Bible numbers also corresponds to the scientific significance of musical numbers.

Music is formed when something (a string, pipe, vocal cords, etc.) vibrates the air. When the vibrations of a note are halved or doubled, the same note will be heard except it will be one octave higher or lower.

Within each octave are seven notes in the diatonic scale (the *do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti*). These are played on the white keys of a keyboard. Seven in the Bible is the number of completeness, perfection and rest; and in a similar way, seven notes complete our scale. Eight in the Bible speaks of new beginnings, and similarly the eighth note

begins a new octave.

When you also add all the half notes (the black keys on a keyboard) we have what is called the chromatic scale. The chromatic scale, which includes all the notes on the keyboard, has twelve notes. These twelve notes govern all of music, and in a similar way we find that twelve is God's number of government. (This can be seen in the twelve tribes of Israel, the twelve founding apostles of the Church, the twelve hours in every day or night, and the twelve months in a year.)

Another way that God's spiritual laws and His natural creation follow similar patterns can be seen when you combine three notes together to form a simple chord. This triad of three notes blending together to form one chord is like the Trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; Who together are one God.

The first note of a chord is the beginning note, just as the Father is the beginning of all things. The second note is called in music the "mediant" note, just as the Son is called the mediator. The third note of each chord is called the "dominant" note, just as the Holy Spirit is to dominate or lead us.

There are two basic kinds of triad chords, the major and minor. The major chords have a "happy" or brighter sound, while the minor chords sound "sad" or darker. This can speak to us of the difference between heaven (where everything is joy and gladness), and earth (which is under the curse and is sorrowful because of sin). The music of this world emphasizes sorrowful music in minor keys. Even the birds and the animal kingdom confirm this. Scientists have carefully analyzed the singing of the birds and animals, even the whales in the sea, and have found that they all sing in minor scales. There is a sadness that has pervaded the world since

the fall of Adam, as we can study from Romans 8:20-22. This is also reflected in its music. We need to be careful of music that has too many minor chords, as 2 Corinthians 7:10 warns us that “*the sorrow of the world produces death.*”

The musical difference between a major and minor chord is that the mediant (or middle) note is lowered. This natural fact also has a spiritual application. Just as the lowered mediant note makes a minor, sorrowful chord; there was a time when Christ the Mediator lowered Himself to become a man of sorrows. To redeem us from the curse of sin, Christ descended from the joys of heaven to become a man on the earth. As He took upon Himself our suffering and sin and died on the cross, it was so that He could lift us out of our sorrow and sin when He was raised from the dead and ascended to heaven. Now we have been raised with Christ and seated in heavenly places, and our Mediator has lifted us up from our sins and bondage and caused the joys of heaven to be our new song! This is comparable to how the mediant or middle note of the chord, when it is lifted up, will lift up sorrowful minor chords to become joyful major music.

Another parallel can be observed when we consider how each of the twelve notes of the keyboard can be played with both major and minor scales. There are therefore 24 keys in which all music is written. These 24 keys have been used for centuries by composers who have then often named their music according to the key it was written in. Examples include Mendelssohn’s Symphony No. 4 in A major, Handel’s Concerto No. 5 in D Major, and Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 in D minor.

These 24 keys—twelve major and twelve minor keys—compose the fullness of all musical expression. They can also be compared with the full expressions of worship that we see

in both Solomon's Temple and the worship of heaven. In 1 Chronicles 25 there were 24 worship teams that King David organized for the worship in Solomon's Temple, while Revelation 4:10 tells about the 24 elders around the throne worshipping God. Music's 24 keys of full musical expression can be paralleled with these 24 worship teams and 24 elders, which speak of the fullness of worship in both the Old and the New Testaments.

This same correlation can be further seen when we consider the 24 hours which comprise a complete day. Worship should be expressed through all of music's 24 keys, just as it should be expressed through all 24 hours of the day. These 24 hours include twelve hours each of the day and night, just as the 24 keys include twelve major and minor keys each. The twelve "brighter" major keys speak of the twelve hours of the day, while the twelve "darker" minor keys correspond to the twelve hours of the night. Full worship to God will include not only the happier, brighter times of our life but also the sadder, darker experiences that we all sometimes face. If we can be like Job, who worshiped God during the dark season of his soul as well as during the times of joy and blessing, we can become full overcomers whom Satan himself will fail to defeat!

Other parallels between Bible numbers and music can be seen when we consider how extra notes can be added to a basic chord. This will change the mood of the chord. When you add a seventh note to the basic triad of a chord, you make what is called a major seventh chord. This kind of chord sounds very restful and relaxing, similar to the Bible meaning of the number seven that can speak of entering into rest.²⁰

Adding a ninth note to the basic triad makes a ninth chord. Scripturally we find that the number nine refers to the work

of the Spirit, as there are the nine gifts and the nine fruit of the Spirit.²¹ Ninth chords sound uplifting, and can bring a fresh release of the Spirit when tastefully used in worship. It is interesting that ninth chords only started to be widely used by musicians at the beginning of the 20th century at about the same time as the Pentecostal experience was restored to the worldwide Church.

Two other kinds of chords, the eleventh and the thirteenth chords, have a very negative effect upon the listener. They sound clashing and dissonant, and have actually been labeled the "rebel chords" by the secular music world. This evaluation also lines up with the Bible meaning of these numbers, as they are both symbolic of rebellion (Judas rebelled and left eleven apostles, while the first Biblical mention of the number thirteen in Genesis 14:4 speaks of rebellion).

As we see the parallels between the scientific laws of music and the spiritual significance of Bible numbers, may we find fresh encouragement to adore the Lord for His wisdom. Let us also learn how to apply this wisdom, to use music more effectively for the furtherance of His kingdom!

Chapter 6

BALANCED MUSIC AND WORSHIP

A very important key to our spiritual growth depends on our learning how to be correctly balanced in the different areas of our life. The Scriptures reveal that the Lord created us—and our ability to worship—with this need for balance. This will show us another important lesson in the topic that we have been learning about, on how to worship *in truth*.

The Three Parts of Man

When the Lord said “*Let Us make man in Our own image after Our likeness*” in Genesis 1:26, He created man to have three parts, like Himself. The Apostle Paul spoke about this in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 when he said that we are each composed of spirit, soul, and body. This is illustrated on the first line of our chart on page 70.

The Apostle Paul also taught that the spiritual person must be led by the Holy Spirit, Who dwells in the spirit of every born-again Christian.¹ The Holy Spirit, working through our human spirit, can then direct our soul to make us become

spiritually minded.² The Holy Spirit can then further work through our spirit and soul to also direct our body, which can then cause our entire lives to be spiritual.³ This is the opposite of a carnal Christian who is only led by their flesh. Moreover, if a Christian's life is dominated by their soul—if they are not controlled by the Holy Spirit working through their spirit—then they cannot mature past being a soulish person who is governed by their feelings or their intellect.

The Trinities of Man, Worship, and Music:

the TRINITY of MAN 1 Thess.5:23	“I pray God your whole SPIRIT	and SOUL	and BODY be preserved blameless”
our PRIORITY of WORSHIP Deut.6:5	“You shall love the Lord your God with all of your HEART	and with all your SOUL	and with all of your MIGHT
the TRINITY of MUSIC	the MELODY - the leading note which the spirit follows	the HARMONY - the added notes which interest the soul	the RHYTHM - or BEAT which which interests or controls the body
the RESULTS:	EDIFIES the spirit	ENTERTAINS the soul	EXCITES the body
BALANCED SPIRITUAL MUSIC Ps.68:24-25	“the singers went before” 1st MELODY - the singing (melody) should lead	“the instruments followed after” 2nd HARMONY should follow and support	“among them the maidens playing with tambourines” 3rd RHYTHM (concealed)
STYLES of MUSIC that emphasize this balance	spiritual Christian music - Eph.5:19, Col.3:16-also some music birthed from a Christian culture or influence, Mat.5:13	soul music, jazz, blues, psychedelic, emotional songs, patriotic songs, love songs	rock music, disco, rap, and heavy metal music- also pagan music such as Hindu, African, and Voodoo

Worship in Three Parts

This same principle shows us the order that should be in our worship. Spiritual worship must begin in our spirit, then be expressed through our soul, and go on to also be expressed through our body. We are taught this in what the Lord Jesus said was the great commandment of the Old Testament in Deuteronomy 6:5—“*You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart [or spirit], with all of your soul, and with all of your might [or body].*” Our heart can become so involved with worship, and our soul can so completely join in, that we can also enter into using all of our might to love and worship the Lord! King David was an example of this complete expression of worship when he danced before the Lord with all of his might, as recorded in 2 Samuel 6:14. But if a person seeks to have worship that is expressed in the body or soul that does not come from the heart (or spirit), then that unbalanced worship will not be acceptable to God. He only desires worship that is “*in spirit and truth.*” The second line of the chart helps to illustrate this.

Music in Three Parts

On the third line of the chart, we see how music is composed of three parts: melody, harmony, and rhythm. Charles Walton, a secular music theorist, expressed it this way in his book *Basic Forms in Music*: “Throughout the history of music, composers have used certain fundamental basic principles of organization and structure, which serve as a mold or framework for the presentation of the materials of music—rhythm, melody, and harmony. From this, the basic forms have developed through the centuries.”⁴

As shown in the chart, these three parts of music are related to the spirit, soul, and body of man.

The melody is the leading note or the “tune” of the music. It is the part that we commonly sing. While singers can add extra notes or harmonies, the melody line of the song is always the major emphasis of the singing. The music is also usually built around the melody line, as it leads the direction of the song.

The melody of a song is what our spirit (or heart) follows. A well-created melody can lift our spirit as the melody is lifted higher. It can bring our spirit down to rest as the melody descends, and can give us a sense of fulfillment when the melody line is completed. As the German composer Richard Wagner wrote, “Melody is the absolute language in which the musician speaks to every heart.”⁵

This truth is also taught to us by two New Testament scriptures. Ephesians 5:19 exhorts each believer to be “*singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*” Colossians 3:16 also says, “*singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*” These verses give us scriptural confirmation that we sing a melody to the Lord from our heart, or spirit. We can also see that the grace of God (which will include the anointing of the Holy Spirit) can be at work in our worship when we sing from our heart.

The second part of a song is the harmony. The harmony is a combination of notes or chords added to the melody of the song, that work together to create “feeling” or mood in our soul. This is because our soul (our mind and feelings) relates to the harmony of the music as it compares and judges the blending or conflicting notes. The famous artist and inventor, Leonardo da Vinci, recognized this when he said, “Do you know that the soul is composed of harmony?”⁶

When notes are combined to make major chords, a happy feeling can be brought, just as using many minor chords can make the music “feel” sad. Other styles of harmonies can have many other effects on our mind and emotions, such as bringing peace, confusion, exhilaration, or tension.

The third part of a musical piece is the rhythm or tempo. The rhythm is the beat that is emphasized during the music to give speed and timing. This is the part of a musical piece that our body relates to, because our body itself is regulated by many rhythms such as our heartbeat and breathing. We can use our bodies to clap our hands, tap our feet, or dance, as our bodies relate to the music through the rhythm of the song.

The ways in which the different parts of music interact with the different parts of man are listed on the third line of the chart on page 70. These interactions have been investigated and written about since the time of the ancient Greeks. One of many confirmations of this interrelationship was written by Jean Rameau, the famous French composer and music theorist of the 18th century, when he wrote, “The musical expression of the physical lies in beat and rhythm; that which touches the emotions comes, on the contrary, from harmony...”⁷ A simple definition for the basic effects of these three parts of music is that the melody can *edify* the spirit, the harmony can *entertain* the soul, and the rhythm can *excite* the body, as shown on the fourth line of the chart.

These three parts of a musical piece must have the proper balance for the music to be a channel of the Holy Spirit. The melody should lead the harmony and rhythm, just as our spirit must lead the soul and body for a person to be spiritual. In the same way that a carnal person will be led by their flesh, a carnal song will be led by the rhythm or beat.

For example, perhaps you have sometime found yourself

hearing a disco club from a great distance away. The first part of the music that you would have heard is the loud beat or rhythm. That is the most prominent part of disco music, not the melody of the song or even the music. This is because disco music was not made to emphasize the lifting up of the heart with singing. This style of music was designed to motivate dancing—to stir up the flesh by its pulsing beat. Styles like rock, disco, and rap all emphasize the beat as the loudest part of the music for the purpose of stirring up and exciting the flesh. That is why we will rarely ever hear of slow, gentle music being played for aerobic exercises, a rock concert, or a disco club.

We need to have all three of these aspects at work to form music. However, the balance of these ingredients at work in the music will motivate our human nature in different ways towards either the spiritual, the emotional, or the flesh. In a similar way these three ingredients need to work together properly to form acceptable praise and worship, as we can see on the fifth line of the chart.

Balanced Spiritual Worship

We have already considered in previous chapters how the Lord used David to restore the use of anointed singing and music for worship. One of the revelations that David had was how to create a balanced spiritual worship that would cause the Lord to come and visit them. We read that David organized his worship service in the following way:

*“They have seen your procession O God,
The procession of my God, my King, into the
sanctuary: The singers went before, the
musicians followed after; among them were*

the maidens playing the timbrels (tambourines)." —Psalm 68:24-25

There are three parts to the worship that David organized: the singers first, the musicians that followed them, and the tambourine players who are mentioned last. This worship team worked together in a way that pleased the Lord and caused Him to come into the sanctuary. This is what we also desire—to have the presence of the Lord come and visit us in our worship services.

The first and most important part of the worship service recorded here was the singing. This should also be the leading part of our services. The congregation is able to join in the worship wholeheartedly if they can easily hear their own singing. This is much different from worldly music. Worldly music often does not emphasize the singing, and sometimes it is difficult to hear all the words of the songs because the music and the beat are so loud. We need to be careful that the music and the singers with microphones are not so loud that they cause the people to have a difficult time in hearing what they are personally singing. If the music team is too loud, then the members of the congregation are not being encouraged to join in and sing from their hearts. The members are only being encouraged to listen to what the worship team is doing, and the worship service becomes a performance while the congregation becomes the audience or the spectators! The worship team should lead and encourage every person in the service to also become a worshiper, but they are not to seek to overwhelm and dominate the people by their loud music. This is how many worldly music groups try to influence and control the people who are listening to them.

As an example of how we should *not* shape a worship

service, I can remember one church I was invited to speak in many years ago when my eldest daughter was about eight years old. In the middle of the worship service I looked down to see her standing there, not singing. So I encouraged her that it is important for us to sing to the Lord, but she then replied with exasperation, “It’s no use for me to sing, Daddy. The music is so loud that I can’t hear myself when I try!”

The next part of David’s worship service was the musicians that followed the singers. In balanced worship the music is to follow, support, and encourage the singing. Foremost it is the singing that will lead the heart (or spirit) of each person to be turned to the Lord. But then each worshiper can also in turn be encouraged by the music to focus their soul (their mind and emotions) on loving the Lord.

The last part of David’s worship service mentioned in Psalm 68:25 was the maidens who played the tambourines. The tambourine is a rhythm instrument. It does not add a melody to the music, and it has very little musical pitch to add to the harmony of the music. However, it can add a beat or rhythm that helps make the song service more lively and orderly.

We need a proper amount of rhythm in our singing and music, just as the human body needs a proper amount of rhythm to function. If our heart stops beating or our lungs stop breathing, we will quickly die! In a similar way, if our music has no rhythm it will be lifeless and dead. But the other imbalance is if our body has too much beat or rhythm, then we can have high blood pressure or a pounding headache! Even so, we must be careful that the beat or rhythm does not overpower or dominate our music. The rhythm contributed by the tambourines was the last of the three parts mentioned in the worship that David organized in

Psalms 68:25. This order shows us the proper balance for the rhythm section in our worship teams. They should have a subordinate or lesser place than the melodic singing and the harmonic music.

We can more clearly see this proper balance for rhythm as we further consider how God designed the human body to operate. Our hearts continually beat and our lungs breathe, yet most of the time we are unaware of these rhythms. They silently serve us except for times of exercise or stress when they will temporarily take a more pronounced place of action. We may notice our pounding heartbeat or hard breathing during this time of peak activity, but shortly afterwards these rhythms will again balance out to be the silent servants of our body. In a similar way the rhythm in our song service should take a lesser role, acting as the unnoticed servant, except in times of peak activity when the music may become unusually joyful, militant, or loud in a crescendo to the song. Yet during its regular flow, the music of a song service should return to the normal balance of having the melodic singing leading, the harmonic music supporting, and the rhythm inconspicuously serving.

As we apply our growing wisdom to consider these truths about music, we find that the music of the world is often the opposite of the godly music that David established. Many times the musicians will start a song by having the drummer establish the beat. After the rhythm is flowing, the musical instruments join in. The audience that is listening will start to respond to the beat by perhaps clapping their hands, swaying their bodies, or by dancing. The people are already getting stimulated in their body and soul before the singing even starts. This pattern (which is the opposite of David's balanced worship) is how worldly music is often shaped.

However, it should not be the pattern of the singing and music for worship services. It may excite our bodies or entertain our souls, but these are not the purposes for a worship service. Our goal should be to have our God and King come to visit us in the sanctuary! Yet to accomplish this we need to follow the balanced worship that David the prophet restored to the people of God.

Any type of musical instrument, if it is used in a balanced way, can contribute to the anointed worship of God. But we must properly consider that some instruments are designed to emphasize the parts of music that more easily form unbalanced, unspiritual music. For example, consider drums. They have very little musical tone to contribute to the music. Their purpose is to help keep the rhythm of the music orderly and lively. Yet worldly drummers often use the ability of their instrument to overemphasize rhythm in carnal ways that can promote lust, frustration, rebellion, or even a hypnotic state (such as is often used in Hindu music). Christian musicians who are unaware of these things can unsuspectingly follow the wrong examples and corrupt influences that abound in the music field. Instruments that emphasize the beat of the music must be sensitively used so they do not dominate or overpower the singing and the music of our worship services.

Because the musical styles often promoted by the world tend to emphasize a carnal musical balance, we need to heed the instruction of the Apostle Paul in Romans 12:2 where he exhorted,

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

As we gain an increasingly renewed mind we will also grow in our understanding and discernment of music as well as everything else. We will learn to not be conformed to the world, but to understand clearer what the perfect will of God is. This is very important, because this scripture suggests that there are different categories or levels of the will of God.

We can understand this more clearly by considering the following. When someone has young children there are many things that they are not yet allowed to do, such as riding a bike or crossing a busy street alone. Sometimes, if a child insists on having his own way, a father will allow him to do something that may be unwise or even dangerous. It might be the *permissive* (or acceptable) will of the father while it is not the *perfect* will of the father. If we are stubborn (like the Prodigal Son in Luke 15) we may be permitted to make costly mistakes before we learn to trust and obey the perfect will of our Heavenly Father.

The Lord once taught me a very important lesson of how unbalanced music and worship can spiritually affect a service when I was a guest speaker at a certain church. While I was there I noticed something in their worship service that disturbed my spirit. It was certainly not a lack of talent among the music group that led the service. Their leading musician had been a famous jazz-rock musician before he was born again. The music group that he had helped train was so skilled, that they could seemingly take the congregation wherever they wanted to lead them—but that was part of the problem! They occasionally led the people into the presence of God, yet there were other times when they were controlling the direction of the service by their impressive talent and the volume of their large amplifiers.

During these times it was difficult to sense any anointing of the Holy Spirit in the service.

As I was praying about this, the Lord opened my spiritual eyes and I saw what was happening in the spirit realm.⁸ I saw a demon sitting on a little throne above the sanctuary and off to the side. I understood that this was an evil spirit that had partial control over the church.

I then saw the demon start to play a musical instrument. As he began to play his music it started to spread a spiritual influence throughout the sanctuary. As this influence filled the sanctuary, a door on the floor in the back of the church opened and I saw steps that descended towards hell. After the music had prepared the way, a strong demon king stepped up through the open doorway and began to walk around the church.

Before this time I had been in worship services where the Lord had come to visit His people. I had also been in services where I had been aware that the glorious worship had caused angels to descend from heaven to join us. But I had never before considered that the opposite could also happen. Anointed music can bring the angels down from heaven to join us in worship, but corrupt music can bring the demons up from hell!

I talked with the pastor afterwards and shared my concerns about the strong spiritual mixture that was at work through the church's music team. He agreed with me that there were some serious problems. However, he then looked at me with sadness and said, "You know the guitarist that leads the team? He is my father. The keyboard player is my sister, and the drummer is my brother." While that finished our conversation, I knew that meant he would not try to correct the church's problem as that could cause conflict

in his family.

May the Lord help each one of us to have clear discernment in the area of balanced worship. Along with this spiritual discernment, may we also have a wholehearted desire to *follow* the paths of righteousness that God will show us. The Lord has testified, “*I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, who will do all My will.*”⁹ It is only as we wholeheartedly desire to follow all of the will of God that our music and worship can become powerful and pure, like David’s music. Then we will be able to invite our God and King to come into the sanctuary when we worship. Also, like David, our music can then become anointed to drive evil spirits away— not to invite them in!

Chapter 7

LEADING WORSHIP

Every worship leader holds a very important yet difficult ministry. Even if you are not personally a worship leader or musician, it is good for everyone called to Christian leadership to gain some understanding about the complexities of this ministry. As the combined church leadership gains more wisdom and discernment they can increasingly help guide those who are called to this important responsibility. So even if your voice sounds more like a frog than an angel and you will never be a worship leader, be encouraged that reading this chapter can still be beneficial for you!

There are many factors that must be well organized and directed for a worship service to “hit the mark” and fulfill all of God’s plans. While singing, the worship leader must also gather and lead all the musicians along with the congregation, much like the conductor of a symphony. Yet the spiritual responsibilities of this ministry are even greater than the natural talent and organization that is needed. A worship leader needs to be sensitive on the spiritual level, to lead all the people deep into God’s presence while avoiding spiritual hindrances and overcoming enemy opposition. The worship leader needs to be a worshiper, organizer, singer,

watchman, and spiritual warrior all rolled into one!

The Need for Worship Leaders

The first thing that worship leaders need to have is a correct vision towards understanding the true purpose of their ministry. This vision is that they must be a worshiper who can help lead all the people into worship. Our Lord Jesus told us in John 4:23 that the Father is seeking for true worshipers. This is important to satisfy the heart of God, yet it is also important for the people. This is because it is as we worship God that we are changed to become more like Him.¹

Being a worshiper who leads others into worship is the vision that must grip the worship leader's heart, as many have a much lower vision or goal. An illustration of some of these lower goals can be explained as follows:

1. The Cheerleader

This type of worship leader seeks to motivate the people to excitement and activity. He or she equates excitement with the anointing. They believe that a good worship service must be dynamic, loud, and energetic. If a worship service becomes quiet or slow they think there is bondage in the service, and it should be made more lively. The "cheerleader" is always exhorting and telling the congregation what to do as they seek to stir up the people. I have heard song leaders like this who have continually exhorted the people to worship while they have not been doing it themselves! They seek to bring the congregation into a release, but it can easily be a release of fleshly enthusiasm rather than a release of the anointing and true worship.

2. The Entertainer

This type of worship leader thinks he has done his job well if his performance was popular and everyone has enjoyed the service. Entertainers cannot discern between soul and spirit (see Hebrews 4:12). As a result they aim to please the souls of the people with such things as beauty, talent, humor, and drama instead of learning how to flow and minister in the Spirit.² Since the entertainer rates his performance by his popularity or success, he will tend to promote himself instead of the Lord, and can become a pleaser of men instead of a pleaser of God.³

The performance of an “entertainer” may follow one of two imbalances. Sometimes he will copy the style of a popular worship leader and appear very spiritual. However, if this attempt to be spiritual is not a true spirituality birthed by the work of the cross, it is only hypocrisy. He may appear to be very spiritual when he is in the “spotlight” at church, while his daily life is filled with carnality and sin!

The other imbalance is that an “entertainer” may copy the techniques of popular worldly singers and musicians, or of carnal Christian song leaders. If a worship leader lacks spiritual discernment he will aim for success based on such external tests as audience response, popularity, increasing attendance, and financial success. There are many worldly and carnal methods through which unsaved singers and musicians often gain all of these things. If Christians will follow them they can gain the same worldly success. Just as Satan tempted Christ in the wilderness to gain worldly success through corrupting His worship, worship leaders and musicians today can also be faced with the same temptation!

Worship leaders who are “entertainers” make the mistake that the Apostle Paul warned about in 2 Corinthians 10:12 and 18, when he wrote,

“For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.... For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.”

A worship leader who wants to gain God’s full commendation needs to learn from David’s example. David did not externally look like he would become a man of great success, yet God said about him that *“the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”*⁴ It was because David was a man after God’s own heart that he was raised up to become *“the sweet psalmist of Israel.”*⁵ Moreover if we will similarly focus our vision and worship on God’s heart, not on natural entertainment and success, we may also obtain the commendations and promotions of the Lord that David obtained.

3. The Professional

A worship leader with this goal can be distracted by aiming for excellence, while forgetting that his main purpose is to worship the Lord. Musical talent and smooth teamwork are important, but they can become an idol. A worship leader that is seeking above all to be professional can often produce a smooth, talented service where it is the worship service that is worshiped instead of the Lord! This is because someone who seeks to promote his talent and its musical

product will inevitably also be turning the people's attention away from wholeheartedly worshipping the Lord.

Wanted: Worship Services, not Music Concerts!

I spoke at a church once where the Lord opened my eyes to see how important it is to have a pure vision for the worship service. This service was led by a music group which performed Christian music concerts. The group knew that the guest speaker for the service (myself) was a musician and worship leader who was known for holding music and worship seminars. Among other motives, they wanted to do their best to impress their guest speaker. I did in fact find it to be so impressive that I now mention it around the world at the worship seminars that I conduct.

The service started off with a “bang” as the drummer launched into starting the first song. The electric guitarist quickly joined in with a distortion unit giving his guitar a heavy metal sound. The loud music moved right along as the singers regularly repeated the shout, “Let God arise!” for the congregation to join in and repeat.

As the service progressed nonstop I soon realized that the music group was playing its original songs that it regularly played for music concerts. The group was not playing songs that the congregation knew; and the occasional parts that the congregation did try to sing along to were of little importance. The music group was going along, carrying the performance whether or not the people in the congregation could sing along, or would just clap, or only watch! Although it was Sunday morning in a church sanctuary, I soon recognized that I was at a music concert, not a worship service.

As the “worship service” progressed along at a fast pace,

I was trying to pray and worship and meet the Lord. I knew that in a few minutes I would be called up to preach the morning message, and I was calling on the Lord that He would send the anointing upon me even though the presence of the Lord was not becoming manifested in the song service.

Then I looked over at my wife. I noticed that she was not even trying to clap or sing. I leaned over to her and said, “I know that this isn’t a good worship service, but we should at least try to join in and meet the Lord.” My wife replied, “You wouldn’t be clapping and singing along with them if you saw what I see!” That reply got my attention, so I asked her what she was seeing. She replied that the Lord was giving her a vision of a large idol towering over the music group in the middle of the platform. She saw the music group singing to and worshiping the idol—and the idol was their own music!

After I preached and the music group had wrapped up the service with a final slick song, their leader headed right over to me. I was concerned that he might ask me my opinion of the “worship service,” and I would have to say something uncomplimentary. However, my concerns were relieved as he started to talk. His first words to me were: “That song service was great! We didn’t miss a beat! I knew right from when the drummer started, that this was going to really click!” He went on and on praising his music group’s performance and never asked me for my opinion or comments.

Even if my wife had not received that vision, it had become very obvious that their talent was an idol to the music group. The attitude of their leader as he praised his group’s performance was the same attitude of the entire team during their time on the stage.

Because their music ministry was self-oriented, this group not only would not submit to the lordship of Christ, but they also would not submit to their pastor. A few months later the pastor tried to reorganize the worship services into something that he thought would be better. When the music group saw that they could not continue to do their own thing, they left the church and caused a church split.

Our motives and vision for being a song leader or musician in the House of the Lord are of the highest importance. This will guide everything that we think and do, and can cause us to either “hit the mark” and fulfill God’s will; or else cause us to follow our own human ideas and goals. Let us choose to delight to do God’s will, and wholeheartedly seek to be the worshipers that He desires!

Practical Helps for Leading a Worship Service

While keeping the right vision in our heart, we must also gain much practical wisdom to become skilled worship leaders. The following are steps that can help someone to develop a skilled ministry.

1. Your Heart Must be Prepared

The first foundation that we each need is to have our heart right with God. The Psalmist declared in Psalm 66:18, “*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.*” To be able to properly function in any spiritual ministry we need to have a heart cleansed from bondage. That does not mean that we are perfect, but we do need to know that the blood of Christ has washed us clean and that we can stand unashamed

in His presence. If anyone does not have this confidence, they need to either sincerely seek for this victory or else have someone else lead the worship service that they were asked to prepare for.

Another way that we need to prepare our hearts is to begin praying for the coming service. We should seek the Lord for revelation to show us what He wants to accomplish. A worship service can be like a battle, and a wise commander will seek to have the correct battle plan for every situation. Prayer can also help us to have the anointing when we stand up to lead the service.

We also need to prepare our hearts so we will be confident in the Lord when we stand in front of the people.⁶ The army commander that is fearful at the battle front will not inspire his troops to do their best. Yet if God has prepared your heart as He prepared Joshua, then the people will trust following your leadership. When you stand in front of the people, trust in the Lord that He will help you lead them into His presence. Smile and be natural, don't act stiff or afraid!

A final reason that we need to prepare our hearts is so that we will have the joy of the Lord. We lead others into what we already have. Don't bring a heavy heart full of burdens and problems to the service. That will only remind the people about their own problems. Point them to Jesus instead!

2. Prepare a Song List

Worship leaders should prepare their list of songs in advance. Just as a preacher should pray and prepare a sermon beforehand, the worship leader has a lot of advance

preparation that he should fulfill. This does not mean that you have to mechanically follow your exact list during the service, just as a preacher should be able to be led by the Spirit to speak of things that he had not prepared beforehand. However, even if you change the order of an occasional song during the service, a list made in advance will help the whole worship team function more smoothly.

Leading a worship service is not a one-man operation. Churches have musicians and sometimes either back-up singers or a choir that help lead the service. They will usually need advance warning and practice for the songs. If your church uses a projector to show the congregation the words of the songs, then the person operating the projector will also need a list in advance to fulfill his job smoothly.

The songs you choose for your song list should flow together and help lead the church step by step into the presence of God. The following are some general patterns of how songs can flow together with divine direction and purpose.

Songs can be organized according to the *music key* they are to be sung in. You must be careful to pitch the starting note of the song in a good range so that no parts of the singing have to be sung too low or too high. It is hard for a congregation to release their hearts in praise and worship if their vocal cords need to be painfully stretched!

Every church should have a list of the songs that they sing, along with the keys that they can be comfortably sung in. If you do not have the musical ability to make this master list, then find someone who can do it.

If you start to prepare some songs that are comfortable to sing in a certain key, for example the key of C, then you may want to look for more songs in the key of C to continue the

flow. You can sing these songs one after the other without waiting for the musicians to give you a new starting key to sing. This is musically the easiest way to carry a flow in the worship service. If you want to sing some songs in a different key, it is also very musically comfortable to pick songs in the next higher full key. For example, this would be singing in the key of D after some songs in C. This can smoothly lift the worship service to a new, higher step without making the singing confusing.

A second way that a worship service can be organized to have a flow, is to have a *theme* or *subject* to the songs. The Lord may want to emphasize a theme through the words of the songs. Some themes that have many songs available include: joy, salvation, deliverance, Zion, the river of God, warfare, the blood of Christ, victory, as well as many others. If the Lord impresses a theme upon your heart as you prepare the worship service, it may be a key message for that service. Sometimes the preacher will have the same topic for his preaching. In that case, the worship service can help prepare the people and confirm the message so that the Lord can move in a greater way during that gathering.

A worship service that flows with a theme birthed by the Holy Spirit can release great blessings. I remember one service I led at the dedication of a house, where I felt that we should sing many songs about the blood of Jesus. As we worshiped the Lord we proclaimed the cleansing of the blood of Christ until we felt the presence of God come down to cleanse the house and property.

A few days later the husband of this woman had an unusual experience. While she was a Christian, her husband was a gambler and a drunkard. As he was standing outside in his yard, he heard voices calling to him from the neighbor's

yard. They said, “Come over here, we will go drink and gamble and have a good time.” The husband heard the voices clearly, but there was no one there! It was the demons who often controlled him who were calling out to him. He then asked them, “Why do I have to go over there across the fence to my neighbor’s yard? Why don’t you come over here?” The demons replied, “We can’t go over the fence, there is too much of the blood of Jesus on your side!” That one worship service brought God’s protection to this woman and her family in a remarkable way, and her husband shortly afterwards became a Christian and lived a godly life for many years.

Another way that we have already discussed to organize a worship service is to go from *praise to worship*. This is a good general pattern for our services. However, remember that this pattern of praise to worship is a guideline that should not be legalistically followed. The Lord may want to emphasize praise in a specific service, and have no worship. At other times, the people’s hearts may have been already prepared (such as by prayer, or by the musicians playing before the service) so that the service can begin with worship. On other occasions, if there has been any bondage or heaviness in the worship, it is often good to have a song of praise at the end of the worship before continuing on with the rest of the service.

In a similar way, worship services can usually be properly organized by going from *faster songs to slower songs*. The faster songs can help “wake up” the people at the beginning and encourage them to start rejoicing. Yet once the people are meeting with God, slower songs of worship can usually allow the person to concentrate more fully on their communion with God.

Another similar pattern we can consider when we prepare a song list is to first sing *songs to ourselves, then songs to the Lord*. Sometimes we start a service with songs where we greet each other—perhaps shaking hands while expressing acceptance and love to the others attending the gathering. At other times we may exhort each other by singing lyrics which direct a message to ourselves—perhaps that we should all start praising the Lord, or should all enter into spiritual warfare. These are all songs that we sing to ourselves and to the other church members. We could call this “horizontal exhortation” or “body ministry.” This can serve a valuable purpose towards unifying and encouraging the people in the worship service. Yet the higher goal of the service should be for us to end up with our eyes turned towards heaven, and our hearts personally meeting with the Lord. This could be termed “vertical worship” or “ministering to the Lord.”

If we are not skilled in this area of selecting our songs, we could have a very confusing service. We might repeatedly switch between singing songs directed to the saints on earth and directed to God in heaven, until we feel like we are repeatedly going up and down on a spiritual roller coaster ride! It would also be similar to trying to jump back and forth between the Outer Court and the Holy of Holies between each song.

A final suggestion for preparing a worship service is to use songs that are *present truth* or have a *fresh anointing*. Write down the name of songs that have had good results in the last few worship services, and remember the songs that have recently been on your heart. You may also sometimes wake up in the morning singing a song in your heart. As the Psalmists mention in Psalms 42:8 and 77:6, God can give us a “*song in the night*.” Even while we are asleep the

Holy Spirit can move our hearts to sing, and when we awake it is wise to remember what song the Holy Spirit gave us. If we are preparing to lead a worship service, that song in the night may have been given to us as a key song for the coming service.

3. Be A Good Leader

A worship leader should be what their title says—a leader, not a follower! It is your responsibility to lead the whole worship team and congregation into meeting with the Lord. A nervous song leader who acts timid and who weakly mumbles directions will not inspire confidence in their leadership.

If you are leading a worship service, give clear directions so that everyone understands where you are leading. This will help everyone to flow together in the same direction without confusion. Speak clearly when you need to give directions. When starting a song you can begin to clap, sing loud, or swing your hand to show when you are starting it. You can help direct the speed of the songs by clapping, using a tambourine, or by swinging your hand. If you want everyone to join in an action (like lifting their hands or dancing) then tell them in advance, either before starting the song or in a quieter moment during the song when everyone is not singing.

If you want to repeat a chorus, you can simply keep singing or also use a hand gesture to signify that you will sing it again. When you want to stop the singing, you might stop clapping and stand silent and calm, or perhaps lift your open hand to get everyone's attention. If you want to lead everyone into spontaneous worship you can lift your hands

before the chorus ends, close your eyes, and start worshipping while perhaps also backing away from the microphone.

You may need to have a system of signals to use with the overhead projectionist. Song services are often disturbed when a song is not put on the overhead quickly, or if the wrong words are placed there. If you have a silent signal that you can give the person at the projector or the computer (perhaps a nod of your head, or a flip of your hand) then you can let them know in advance that they should be ready to put the next song on the overhead. Make sure the person operating the projector keeps looking to you for directions. If they close their eyes too much to worship the Lord, they may miss your directions and end up distracting the entire church.

The signals I use with a projectionist are that I make eye contact with them and flip my hand during a chorus. This is to show them that this will be the last time we repeat the song, so they will be ready to put the next song on. If I want to skip a song and go to the next song on my list, I flip my hand and then hold up two fingers to show them to go to the second song. And if I want to go back to the previous song, I flip my hand the opposite way back and forth to signal them to prepare to repeat the previous song.

4. Be a Good Follower

While the worship leader must learn how to lead well, a very important key towards being a good leader is to also know how to be a good follower. If you are not the senior pastor of the church, you need to know what the church leadership wants you to do. Do they want a short worship service? Then keep it short! You lead under the pastor, the service leader, and the music director. If they have

confidence in your ministry and give you full liberty to lead the worship service, then seek to lead it well. But if you are only learning or if the church leadership has already given guidelines for the worship leaders, then be sensitive to abide by whatever directions they give you. If you have only been asked to lead a few short songs, then do not hijack the service and try to preach, prophesy revelations, or give an altar call!

Many times worship leaders struggle when they feel that their personal guidance from the Holy Spirit is different than what the church leadership has asked them to do. They do not want to disobey their church leadership, but they also do not want to disobey God. This is where worship leaders need to remember that they (as well as the other church leadership) are all in the process of being taught by the Holy Spirit. After the service discuss together about the flow of the worship. Honestly seek to discern together about the strengths and weaknesses of the worship service, and as to whether having gone in a different direction may have produced better results. In this way the leadership team can mature in their ability to lead the services. Discussing these things may also give the leadership a better idea of what you are attempting to accomplish with your worship leading. They might then give you a greater flexibility in leading the worship services. But even if they do not allow you more liberties in your leading the worship service, you should not independently take control and disobey the leadership. If you have done your best leading the service under the directions that the leaders have given you, then you are not the one responsible to God for any hindrances those restrictions may have caused. The Lord will be pleased with you doing your job to the best of your ability under the restrictions that you were given.

5. Starting The Worship Service

If you are starting the service from the very beginning then you must gather the attention of the congregation and get them going. This may be done through prayer, a Bible reading, and/or through exhortation.

If others (such as the pastor or the musicians) have already started the service and gotten the people flowing, then be sensitive to lead them on from where they are already. A service can be like a relay race, and you need to understand where you are starting to lead them from. Don't take them back to the beginning! If the congregation has already been singing praise songs before the worship leader is given the microphone, then it may be wise for the worship leader to delete some of the praise songs from the song list he had prepared. Two praise services together can be long and tiring. Also, if the people's hearts are already prepared (such as during a convention or series of meetings) then perhaps you will feel to go directly into songs of worship without starting with praise songs.

6. Directing The Flow

You want the song service to flow onwards by the moving of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is referred to in the Scriptures as being like wind, water, and oil. Each of these have patterns of movement, and in a similar way we can learn how the Holy Spirit wants to move through our song services.

A worship leader should be sensitive to how many times they should lead a song. Many times one particular song can be a key to bring victory to the service. If the anointing keeps

increasing as you repeat a song, you may feel to keep singing it many times. Some Biblical examples of victory songs that were repeatedly used throughout a day are Exodus 15:20-21 and 1 Samuel 18:6-7.

If you sense that the flow and anointing are decreasing in a song, then finish singing it and move on to the next song. Maybe there is musical confusion, or it is the wrong song or message. If God does not anoint a song that we lead then we need to be sensitive, and in humility not stick to our own plans, but move on.

Seek for a release in the praise before going on to worship. If there is no victory, liberty, or joy, then quickly pray for the key. Maybe victory will come through a song, a prayer, or an exhortation. An action (such as shouting, dancing, or clapping our hands) can often help bring a release.

Be careful to lead people away from distractions. This can include having people walking about, noise outside the sanctuary, or having amplifiers or musical equipment that do not work properly. Keep the attention of the people turned to the Lord and have other people (such as the deacons or ushers) ready to take care of problems.

It is the worship leader's responsibility to gather the people's hearts together and then lead them to the Lord. To do this, they often have to first gain the attention of the people and lift them beyond their self-centered thoughts and struggles. Yet as the service progresses, they are to focus the people's attention on the Lord, at which point the worship leader and the worship team are to *lose* the people's attention!

We find this same progression in the ministry of John the Baptist. When he first came on the scene all the people quickly focused on his dynamic ministry. Yet after John the Baptist had prepared the way and Christ had come, John

backed off of center stage. When some of his disciples began to complain that his ministry was no longer the “main attraction,” John could only say, “*He must increase, but I must decrease,*” Jn.3:30.

Some of the ways that we can turn the people’s attention to the Lord (and away from ourselves) are as follows:

- a) Be a worshiper, not just a song leader or director.
- b) Avoid speaking unnecessary words, such as exhorting the people or repeating the words of the song.
- c) Avoid giving too many directions, and do not continue to tightly control the service when the Spirit begins to move. Give opportunity for the Lord (and others) to minister, by waiting upon the Lord. Give opportunity for prophecy and other manifestations of the Spirit to be expressed.
- d) Avoid movements that will draw attention to yourself. This can include talking to others, hurrying around the platform, hand movements that point to yourself, and such things. When the Holy Spirit begins to move, remember that He is like a dove, and we should be gentle to not disturb His presence.
- e) Use movements that draw the people’s attention to the Lord. These can include lifting your hands in worship, closing your eyes, standing still, kneeling in worship, and backing away from the pulpit or “center stage.”
- f) During worship, back away from the microphone (if using a stand) or hold it farther from your mouth. If it is not a moment when you need to give clear directions, then leave the people alone with the Lord! Your voice should not always dominate as if you are singing a solo. If everyone is meeting with the Lord during worship, then back away from the microphone so that you become just one of the

many worshipers.

g) Let the congregation carry the worship experience instead the worship team. Remember that the congregation is perhaps 90% of the worshipers in the service, and that your worship team is there to help them, not the other way around.

h) Know when to stop. Try to finish your worship leading ministry when the people are on a spiritual mountain top, not in a valley. Seek to finish with the presence of the Lord strong in the sanctuary, and with the hearts of the saints full of joy, love, and victory. If you carry the service on for too long, the people may become tired and the presence of the Lord may begin to lift.

If the service has not been going well, then try to discern whether you can bring it through to victory. If you cannot, pass the service on to the next leader. Perhaps they will have the key for a fresh breakthrough that you do not have.

7. Working With The Musicians

The worship leader must learn to flow well with all of the musicians. There must be unity in a service for God's blessing to come, as is emphasized in Psalm 133.

Make sure the musicians know how to play all the songs you will lead. Give them a song list with the keys of the songs. Try to practice together before the service.

Most churches have a music practice before the Sunday morning service. It is important for the team to not only practice the songs, however, but also to spend time learning how to flow together in worship. This can help make the difference between having the actual song service become a music concert or a worship experience. It is also good for the worship team to come early to the services to pray

together.

All of the team need to know your signals of direction. You should be able to give them simple signals that they can follow. Different hand signals can direct the team when to start, repeat, or stop, and how to have the correct key, speed, and volume. Try to make the signals “invisible” to the congregation so that they are not distracted by the mechanics of the service. A hand signal given behind your back or behind the pulpit can often be done in such a manner that only the people who need to see the signals will notice them. The best way to tell if a service has been well organized is if you do not notice the organization, or a lack thereof.

Many churches print up a set of guidelines for both the worship leaders and the musicians to follow. At the end of this book is an example of these guidelines for you to further study. You will probably want to make your own list, as different churches have varying situations which will require differing guidelines.

Chapter 8

REPAIRING THE BREACHES

As we have seen, David's music was an important part of the revivals that were in his kingdom and in the kingdom of Solomon. There continued to be other great revivals in the kingdom of Judah for centuries after the time of Solomon, and each revival included the restoration of David's music and worship.¹ We cannot overestimate the importance of the worship that David instituted for the kingdom of Judah. Even the meaning of the name *Judah*, which means *praise* from the Hebrew language, shows that they were to be a kingdom of praise!

Yet between these revivals there were often long periods when the people of God became lukewarm or backslidden. The worship that David established was then forgotten until the next revival began. Amos 9:11 likens this to having the Tabernacle of David falling down, and the worship that the tabernacle represents becomes like a breach or broken place in a wall. “*On that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and **close up the breaches** thereof....*” *Amos 9:11 KJV.*

As in the kingdom of Judah, there have also been many

breaches or gaps between times of revival in the history of the Church. In these times when revival and true worship have “fallen” or stopped, the breaches must be rebuilt and worship must be restored back to the pattern of the Tabernacle of David.

What stops true worship and revival, and how can the breaches be repaired? We can gain an important understanding of this problem as we study the first breach that David experienced in his worship, which he named “*the Breach of Uzzah*” in 2 Samuel 6:8. This breach stopped his first attempt to bring back the presence and the glory of God to his people. We can learn from King David’s experience so that we can also repair the breaches or gaps in our own worship. In doing this we will prepare for revival through restoring the pattern of the Tabernacle of David.

David Tries to Bring Back the Glory

We can read in 1 Chronicles chapter 13 that as soon as David became king of all Israel he wanted to bring back the ark of God. This ark was a wooden box covered with gold and had two golden cherubim on the top cover. The Lord had instructed Moses to make the ark as a symbol of the presence and glory of God dwelling among His people.

This ark had been with the Israelites in the Tabernacle of Moses for centuries, until the days of Eli the High Priest. We read in 1 Samuel chapter 4 that when the Philistine army came to attack Israel, the Israelites brought the ark to the battlefield, hoping that the Lord would reveal His power and defeat the enemy. Yet because of their sins the Lord allowed His people to be defeated and the Philistines captured the ark. Eli and his sons died that same day,

and the widow of one of Eli's sons gave birth to a son whom she named *Ichabod*, which means *no glory*. As she was dying during childbirth she said, "*The glory of God has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been taken.*"²

The Philistines did not keep the ark for long, because the Lord revealed His power among them by breaking their idol and then bringing a plague upon their cities.³ They decided to find out if it had truly been the ark of God that had caused all their problems by placing the ark on a cart yoked to two cows. The cows that were chosen had never had a yoke placed on them, and they had young calves who were taken away from them and sent back to their stalls. When the cows were let loose to go where they wanted, the Philistines knew that the natural response of the mother cows would be to resist the yoke and return home to their calves. They recognized that the unguided cows would take the cart with the ark on it onto the highway back to Israel *only* if God supernaturally guided them.

The Lord again showed the Philistines His power, by causing the cows to head directly to the country of Israel as they pulled the ark, as recorded in 1 Samuel chapter 6. Yet while the ark was then returned within the border of Israel, it was not returned to the Tabernacle of Moses or to any place of importance for at least another 80 years until the time of David. That is when the new king told all of his people, "*Let us bring back the ark of our God to us, for we did not seek it in the days of Saul.*"⁴

David was a man after God's own heart, who wanted to bring back the glory of God to his people. First Chronicles 13:6-13 tells about David's first attempt to bring the ark to the capital city of Jerusalem. There we read,

“And David and all Israel went up to Baalah, to Kirjath Jearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God the Lord, who dwells between the cherubim, where His name is proclaimed. So they carried the ark of God on a new cart from the house of Abinadab, and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart. Then David and all Israel played music before God with all their might, with singing, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on cymbals, and with trumpets. And when they came to Chidon’s threshing floor, Uzza put out his hand to hold the ark, for the oxen stumbled. Then the anger of the Lord was aroused against Uzza, and He struck him because he put his hand to the ark; and he died there before God. And David became angry because of the Lord’s outbreak (breach) against Uzza; therefore that place is called Perez Uzza (the Breach of Uzza) to this day. David was afraid of God that day, saying, ‘How can I bring the ark of God to me?’ And David would not move the ark with him into the City of David, but took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite.”

The first revival that David started as the king of Israel seemed to have a very good beginning. All the nation attended the opening service, and the worship was joyful and impressive with all the instruments and singing. But the revival suddenly stopped short when God sent judgment instead of blessing.

The Threshing Floor of Chidon

As David and all of Israel were bringing the ark of God up to Jerusalem, they passed by a threshing floor. It was there that the Lord chose to thresh the revival to remove the mixture that was in it.

We read from Matthew 3:12 that our Lord Jesus “*will thoroughly purge His threshing floor, and gather His wheat... but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*” We serve a holy God who will only tolerate mixture up to a certain point, but beyond this He will choose to purify His people with swift and thorough judgment! There will be times in all of our spiritual development, when we will pass through “threshing floor” experiences of cleansing.

This threshing floor was owned by a man named *Chidon*. His name in the original Hebrew means *something to strike with*, and comes from a root word that means *calamity* or *destruction*. This calamity or destruction is exactly what happened at Chidon’s threshing floor when David attempted to bring back the glory of God. God struck Uzza dead in the midst of the celebration, and the revival came to a sudden end.

David named that place *Perez Uzza*, which means *the Breach of Uzza*. There was a breach or breakdown in the revival that needed to be repaired and closed up before the Lord (as signified by the ark) would continue to move.

In a similar way, there are also reasons why revival is withheld from a life, church, or nation. We can have the best of intentions like David, and everything in our ministry may seem to be going perfectly according to plan for a time. Yet when the Lord chooses to expose the mixture in our ministry

during a “threshing floor” experience, a breach or breakdown can occur that will stop the move of God until we separate the chaff from the wheat.

David later came to another “threshing floor” experience when the Lord sent a plague upon Israel, and the destroying angel stood by the threshing floor of Ornan in 1 Chronicles 21:15. David repented and built an altar there, and that threshing floor became the place where Solomon’s Temple was built.⁵ So we can see that the judgment and cleansing received at these threshing floor experiences can be used by God to become the entrance into glorious new experiences of worship and revival.

In our day, we have also seen the Lord bring His people into times of threshing. Whether on the international level of world famous television evangelists, or down on the level of the local church, the Lord is threshing His people to remove mixture. While this is a time of repentance and cleansing for the Church, it is also the time for glorious hope. Revival will come soon to the saints who have learned to worship and serve the Lord in spirit and in truth!

The Oxen Stumble

We read in 1 Chronicles 13:9 that the oxen stumbled at the place of the threshing floor of Chidon. The reason for this was that the ark was being brought by a wrong method. They had followed the plan of the Philistines in using a cart, instead of following the scriptural order.⁶ This was the mixture in their worship service that the Lord chose to purify.

Several New Testament verses say that the ox is a type of a minister.⁷ Just as the oxen which were pulling the ark

stumbled, there are times when an individual's ministry will stumble if he or she is using a wrong method or plan to seek to bring the presence of God. This stumbling can be seen when the flow or progress of a service does not continue smoothly. Perhaps the worship leader and musicians have a difficult time leading the service forward step by step. If we are using the wrong methods, we will have God's judgment instead of His blessing when we come to the place of His threshing.

We also read that when the oxen stumbled, the ark was shaken. For us, this signifies that the presence of the Lord (which the ark symbolizes) can be disturbed in our worship service. Perhaps the service started off well, but at some point the anointing is disturbed by the stumbling of our ministry. The Holy Spirit is likened to a dove in the Scriptures, and the dove is a very sensitive bird that can be easily disturbed and will fly away. The abiding presence of the Lord can lift from a service if our ministry stumbles and we disturb the service. We need to have a holy reverence in our services that we do not do anything soulish or out of place that can disturb the abiding presence of God.

The next thing that happened when the ark was shaken, was that Uzza reached out to steady it. The name *Uzza* means *strength* in Hebrew. What do we do when the anointing is hindered in a service? Do we try to use our own strength to rescue the service, as Uzza did? The natural man will always try to "hold the ark," and use his own abilities and talents to keep the service going and keep the people comfortable. Some churches have lost the anointing for months or even years. Yet instead of admitting their situation, the leaders have substituted entertainment and programs to seek to keep the church members happy and busy. However, the spiritual man

will have no confidence in the flesh. We must hear the words of Jesus when He declared that “*without Me you can do nothing.*”⁸ We need to see that it is “*not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord of hosts.*”⁹

Death!

Uzza was struck dead for his presumption of touching the ark. It had been forbidden by the law of Moses in Numbers 4:15. The Israelites had already experienced a great judgment for this very reason only about 80 years before. There had been thousands of Israelites at Beth Shemesh who had died because of their similar irreverence to the ark, as recorded in 1 Samuel 6:19. Uzza knew all about this, as after their death the remaining men of Beth Shemesh sent the ark away and it was placed in the house of Uzza’s father at Kirjath Jearim.¹⁰ He was probably chosen to help bring the ark to Jerusalem because he was very familiar with it, since he had grown up with the ark in his house. In a similar way, we want to have the presence of the Lord in our households, and we also want to be chosen to help bring the presence and the glory of God back to our churches. Yet we also face the danger of becoming carelessly familiar with a holy God! If we ever become wrongly casual and irreverent in serving the Lord, we are walking down a dangerous path. We can become so used to directing service after service, that we sometimes think of ourselves as skilled professionals with all the answers instead of humble servants who should follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in all things.

The Lord struck Uzza dead for his presumption. However, this was not the first time that the Lord had judged a worship service with death because of mixture. We can remember

how 3,000 men died when the Israelites had worshiped the golden calf that they made in the wilderness. Yet just a few weeks before that event, the same people had been gloriously worshiping the Lord at the Red Sea! Instead of continuing to worship God in the Spirit, their worship quickly degenerated into idolatry and immorality. This can be a warning to us that just because a church is meeting the Lord in their worship services at one time, it is no guarantee that they will still be flowing in the Spirit even a few weeks later. Hebrews 3:13 tells us, *“But exhort one another daily, while it is still called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”*

We can also read in Leviticus 10:1-2 that two of Aaron’s sons had died when they offered strange fire to the Lord. The priests were to use the fire from the altar that the Lord had started when He first sent fire from heaven, as recorded in Leviticus 9:24. Only the fire from heaven was acceptable for their worship, just as only the fire of the Holy Spirit is acceptable in our music and worship. Yet there are other kinds of “strange fire,” or other anointings, that can seek to motivate us. Worldly musicians and singers frequently have anointings from evil spirits such as lust, pride, rebellion, or drunkenness. You can often tell what evil spirits anoint them from the words that they sing, or from the pictures and advertising that promotes their music. However, Christians who allow sin to remain in their hearts can also have the “strange fire” of an evil spirit anointing their music or singing.

I have seen this happen on occasion during church services. One time was when a worship leader was leading the congregation in praise. As he began to dance at the pulpit, he was always looking and smiling at a certain woman.

She was dancing in the front row as she kept returning her own smiles back to him. They were basically dancing to each other, while the “strange fire” of pride and lust was motivating their hearts. This spiritual observation was confirmed a few months later when they were found to be in an immoral relationship together.

Another occasion took place in a large church, and concerned the man who was in charge of controlling the sound mixing for the amplifiers. He would always change the balance of the instruments in a way that the leadership of the church thought was unbalanced and worldly. This man stubbornly resisted the leaders whom he was supposed to be in submission to. He had more technical experience than the church leaders, and therefore ignored their directives. He was trying to add the “strange fire” of pride and rebellion into the music, and in his pride he began committing other sins until he backslid and left the church.

If a member of the worship team enters into a time of defeat and sin in their life, it is important for the church leaders to be sensitive to this. The team member should temporarily withdraw from the ministry until he or she again comes into victory and consecration. There is the danger that when a key member of the worship team is in defeat or sin, the church leaders will insist that they continue to lead the music or singing because they may be the only skilled person available for the job! Yet when someone is going through a difficult time it can add a burden of guilt on them to have to minister and act spiritual. The church leadership should seek to be sensitive to the needs of those in the worship team. Someone can be given a break from their ministry schedule without public embarrassment. As a loving help and encouragement, the church leaders can give

the worship team member a season of rest from his or her responsibilities. As they have a fresh chance to concentrate on the Lord during the services—without the pressure of having to minister—they can refocus their lives and gain a deeper victory. That in turn will release a greater blessing through their ministry when they return to their position.

Some churches in need of a musician have even invited backslidden or unsaved musicians to play during the worship services. I have heard people explain to me their reasons. Church leaders have said that they need the talented musician to improve the quality of the music, to complete the music group, or to encourage the unsaved to come. They have also expressed the hope that the musician will hear the gospel preaching and turn to Christ if they keep inviting him back to play or sing.

Of course we want to invite unbelievers to come to church and get saved. However, we do not want to invite them to come and help lead the service! In a similar way, a church should not invite a worldly actor or politician to become a regular speaker at their church just to get unbelievers to come, and then hope that maybe they will get saved listening to the gospel songs. It is true that anything that is godly in the service may touch the hearts of the unsaved and help lead them to salvation. However, it is also true that anything worldly that is permitted in the service can be imparted to the church members and will help lead them into lukewarmness or backsliding. So we need to be careful that when we bring unbelievers to be influenced by the church that we do not allow the opposite to happen.

Allowing unconsecrated but talented people to be a part of the worship team may help the church services to appear professional. However, it will hinder the true ministry of the

church. The Lord called this type of mixture an “abomination” in Ezekiel 44:6-8. And as previously mentioned, it can even bring “strange fire” into the services. We must put spiritual ministry above professionalism or we can find that death will come to our worship services, just as Aaron’s two sons died offering strange fire in their worship. A small church that has no spiritually qualified musicians can still meet the Lord through singing together without using any musical instruments. This is better than to have a great sounding music group in the church, yet have no anointing in the worship service.

In the Old Testament we have read of worship services that were judged by God with death. Yet now we are living in the time of the New Testament, when the Lord is bringing a spiritual fulfillment to the events of the Old Testament. When the Lord is not pleased with our worship services today, we are thankful that the singers and musicians do not fall over dead like Uzza and Aaron’s two sons. Nevertheless the result today is that the Lord may send a spiritual death. It may be that His wonderful presence does not come and meet with us. Other evidences of spiritual death in a church service can include division and gossip,¹¹ minds that cannot focus on the worship,¹² and sorrow.¹³

The Ark Stopped Moving

After the Lord struck Uzza dead at the threshing floor we read in 1 Chronicles 13:13-14,

“And David would not move the ark with him into the City of David, but took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. The ark remained with the family of Obed-Edom in his

house for three months...”

As the ark was moving onward to Jerusalem, we read that it stopped for three months because of the breach of Uzza. Since the ark is a symbol of the presence of God, this shows us how the anointing of the Holy Spirit can stop moving or can lift from a service. Sometimes the Lord will even stop moving in a church for months or years. If this happens, we should not just sit around and be content to tell stories of “the good old days” when the Spirit used to move in the services. We need to seek the Lord and find out how to correct the problem that may be hindering us from having an ongoing revival *now!*

David Prepares to Repair the Breach

During those three months when the ark stopped moving, David sought the Lord about how to correct the situation. David still wanted to have the ark brought into his city and returned to a place of prominence in Israel. Yet he was afraid that judgment might fall again if the Lord was displeased with how it was done. The Lord showed David several ways he should correctly prepare to bring the ark and return the glory of God to his people.

The first way that we read of is in 1 Chronicles 15:1, where David “*prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched a tent for it.*” When David first tried to bring back the ark we do not read that he had prepared a place for it. But our Lord is a God of order, and therefore if everything is not prepared for His visitation we may not qualify for His blessing. As His servants, it is our responsibility to prepare the way of the Lord, so that His glory may be revealed.¹⁴ We must prepare our life, family, ministry, and our church just as

David prepared a place for the ark.

Psalms 132:1-9 tells us that David desired to make a place for the Lord and bring back the ark. When he was a young boy, he first heard about the ark of God when he lived at Bethlehem Ephratah. He had probably heard the story many times of how the glory of God had departed from Israel when the ark was taken by the Philistines, and although the ark was soon returned to Israel, it had been ignored by King Saul. So when David first became king he searched for the ark until it was found at Kirjath Jearim. (Kirjath Jearim is the “fields of the wood” referred to in Psalm 132:6.)

We can see the desire of David’s heart to prepare a place for the Lord and bring back the ark in verses 3-5:

“Surely I will not go into the chamber of my house, or go up to the comfort of my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty God of Jacob.”

This needs to also become the desire of our hearts in order for us to bring back the glory of God. This desire must become our daily motivation. We should not fall asleep at the end of the day until we have met the Lord in our daily devotions and made a place for Him to dwell in our hearts. We should fully realize that the foundation of all our Christian ministry is hinged upon meeting the Lord in our daily secret devotional life. As the Lord begins to visit our own life, then we are able to start to bring revival to our family and church.

Sanctify Yourselves

We then read in 1 Chronicles 15:12 about the second time

that David was ready to bring the ark to Jerusalem. There he told the Levites, “*Sanctify yourselves, both you and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel to the place that I have prepared for it.*” If we already have a heart like David to daily meet with the Lord, we need to then go on to this next step. Everyone who is called to a worship ministry in the church, to “bring back the ark,” must sanctify themselves as the Levites did. While every church member should be involved, the worship team has a special responsibility that they must prepare themselves for. If we are spiritually unprepared or unqualified, the moving of the Holy Spirit can be hindered. At times, even one “Achan” can cause the whole congregation to lose the battle (read Joshua 7). Holiness is an important foundation for us to be able to “bring the ark,” meaning the presence of God, to a worship service.

One part of the consecration of the priests in the Old Testament was that they were to have the blood put upon their right ear.¹⁵ This is an important truth for us. The blood of Jesus needs to cleanse us from all the worldly music we have heard. We need to be careful of the things that we listen to—keep the blood on your ear! If a Christian singer or musician listens to worldly, defiled music, then his heart can become polluted and that same spiritual pollution will be released through his own singing or music in the house of God. As Proverbs 4:23 exhorts us, “*Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.*”

The music of the world is seldom profitable or even spiritually “neutral” for our spiritual life. Most popular secular musicians and singers have specific sins and evil spirits that give power to their music. Many secular musicians also record their music while under the influence of drugs or

alcohol. If you listen to that music, its corrupt spiritual impartation can defile your spirit. We need to have our ears sanctified or set apart, so that our spirit will be undefiled and our music will be pure. Keep the blood on your ear!

After the priests were sanctified with the blood, the next part of their consecration was that they were sprinkled with the holy anointing oil.¹⁶ This signifies that the anointing comes upon someone who has been cleansed from worldly influences. With both the blood on our ears and the anointing of the Holy Spirit in our hearts we will be able to truly know what is—and what is not—anointed music and worship.

In David's order of worship it was only the sanctified priests who could be part of the ministry. Even so, we should be careful that everyone who is on the platform or at the front of the church is a consecrated believer. Some people only want a position of leadership because they want to gain the attention of the congregation. Singers, dancers, musicians and tambourine players who want to stand in the front are sometimes seeking the "spotlight" or "center stage" as entertainers rather than worshipers.

In some worship services it is popular to have children or young people in the front, all playing tambourines following a choreographed program. As I have observed this, I have noticed that many times these tambourine dancers are not seeking to be worshipers. Their attention is often focused on each other and the mechanics of their performance, or they may be concentrating on whether they are doing well and are pleasing the congregation. Yet when the tambourine playing and the choreography is over, I have too often observed that these young people do not even attempt to enter into worship. Instead of lifting their hearts, hands, and voices

in worship, they talk, look around, and are disinterested in the worship. There is no drawing of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. This type of person is often not learning how to be a worshiper, but an entertainer!

When I was in one church service like this, I was saddened to see that the tambourine dancers on the platform during the worship service were all children acting like the above. I wondered in my heart, “This is cute and colorful, but how can the church tolerate substituting entertainment for anointed worship?” The Lord then spoke to my heart that it was because the congregation themselves were only spiritual babies and little children! Yet if the pastors will only permit consecrated worshipers to stand before the church to help lead the worship services, I believe that the people will desire to follow their godly example and will more quickly grow in God.

This does not mean that children cannot be taught praise and worship, or that they should not be allowed to share a special song or activity at church. Even the youngest child can meet with God, be touched by the Holy Spirit, and then respond to God in a way that can bless adults. The most extreme scriptural example of this would be John the Baptist, who was filled with the Holy Spirit and jumped for joy when He first met Christ—while they were both still in the wombs of their mothers!¹⁷ However, children should not be a regular part of the worship ministry team just as you would not allow them to be among the regular preachers of the church. Train them, and prepare them for a mature future ministry when they will be able to become anointed musicians and singers who wholeheartedly serve the Lord.

The Proper Order

We can then read in 1 Chronicles 15:13 that David told the Levites that “*the Lord our God broke out against us, because we did not seek Him after **the proper order.***” King David had been searching the Scriptures to find out why the Lord had not blessed his first attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem. He found in the law of Moses that the Levites were to carry the ark.¹⁸ Before this time David had tried to use a new cart to carry the ark. Where did the idea of using a cart come from? The Philistines, the enemies of God!¹⁹

Many times God’s people do not follow the scriptural order for their worship services, but instead use the ideas of the world. Some try to make their worship services more attractive or modern by making them like a talent show, a rock music concert, a popular television program, a theatrical pageant, or a disco club! But it was because David had used the unscriptural Philistine method of the new cart that the Lord sent judgment and made a breach in the revival. We must similarly be careful to not lose the presence of God by following worldly ideas and methods. How can we bring the presence of God, and revival? Not with new carts and new ideas, popular fads and modern entertainment—but by carrying the ark (the presence of God) in our life and ministry.²⁰ The scriptural way that David learned to bring back the ark was to have the Levites carry the ark. In a similar way today, the servants of the Lord must have the presence of the Lord resting upon their lives and ministries for them to bring the moving of the Holy Spirit. We should not trust in a method, or our talent, or any “Philistine carts.”

Many churches are not searching the Scriptures to find the proper order for their worship services. Some of the

churches are instead looking at the popular forms of music and entertainment that the world is using to draw in the crowds. They are merely copying and following the world! Other churches will not do this, but they are following other churches that are already copying the world. However, we need to remember what God declared in Deuteronomy 28:13, that the triumphant people of God will be “*the head, and not the tail.*” The Church is to lead the world, not follow it!

Using Ethnic Cultural Forms for Worship: Redeem or Renounce?

Another important point to consider about the Philistine cart concerns our using ethnic cultural practices in worship. It was the Philistine priests who had first suggested using the cart, along with some other unscriptural forms of worship.²¹ The Lord blessed their attempts to honor Him, as they were ignorant of the ways of God that had been revealed to Israel. This was similar to what the Apostle Paul said in Acts 17:30 about the Athenians who worshiped the “Unknown God” when he declared that “*these times of ignorance God overlooked.*”²² However, God did not permit David to continue this Philistine practice, since he should have known better. This story about the Breach of Uzza should be a sobering warning to us that we cannot indiscriminately mix pagan ethnic practices in with the worship of God—even if God graciously responded to these practices to show the pagans His mercy.

Many different cultures have developed around the world, and many of their ethnic cultural expressions can be very beautiful and God-honoring. However, we must

let everything be judged by God’s word and by His Spirit to know what will properly honor Him as He desires. Some Christian groups are seeking to integrate Christian worship with every cultural form of music and worship. They have often declared words like, “We need to redeem this culture—or this music—or this worship, and take it back from the Devil!” However, is this scriptural?

The Bible makes it clear that people from every tribe, tongue, and nation will be redeemed.²³ Yet the Bible is equally clear that not every tribe and nation will be redeemed *as a cultural unit*. Some of the redeemed will be rescued out of ungodly cultures that will be destroyed.

This is exemplified in the prophecies of Jeremiah about the nations of his time. The Lord declared that He would judge some of the nations, yet would then allow a purified remnant of these nations to continue with their national identity.²⁴ However, there were other nations that were such an abomination to the Lord that He declared that he would destroy them completely, like Sodom and Gomorrah!²⁵ One of these nations that was marked for utter destruction was Babylon. Revelation 18:22 goes on to tell us that one of the specific aspects of Babylonian culture that will be eradicated is their music.

Many nations have godly elements within their culture that God will purify and glorify. Yet other cultures were so deeply formed in sin and demon worship, that they will—or have already been—totally destroyed.

We must therefore be selective with what ethnic elements should be brought into Christian worship services. I do not think, for example, that Sodom and Gomorrah’s probable erotic styles of dancing and music would have been possible to “redeem” and use for the worship of God. What we do

know is that God chose to eradicate them.

I have participated in thousands of worship services in conventions, churches, and Christian gatherings held in many nations around the world. Indigenous cultural expressions have often been used in worship that the Holy Spirit clearly chose to anoint. However, I have also been in gatherings where the use of pre-Christian ethnic music and cultural expressions released the same pre-Christian pagan spirits that had long ago dominated that cultural group. I have even known megachurches and large organizations that in this way have introduced demonic pagan spirits into their worship services to their eventual destruction.

Many nationalists around the world want to incorporate pagan forms of music and dancing into their worship services. However, many times using these “Philistine carts” brings death instead of new life. We should not judge our cultural forms of worship by whether they are indigenous or “foreign imports,” to accept the first and reject the second. In line with this, it is good to remember that the “indigenous” cultural forms of many nations were brought to them by former waves of migration from foreign lands, so they are actually only the older foreign imports. The godly way we should judge culture is not by its age or by its national derivation—rather, by discerning whether it has godly foundations, and whether it conforms to being “in spirit and truth.”

The Importance of Balanced Team Ministry

We can also read in 1 Chronicles chapters 15 and 16 about another part of the *proper order* that David established. This was the ministry team that worked together to bring back the

ark. King David was the one main leader of the service; just as we need a pastor or worship leader to be the main leader for a worship service. Having many equal leaders can bring either paralysis (when all the leaders are too timid to step forth and lead) or confusion (when the leaders step forth to sing, exhort, and lead all at the same time). Let one person lead at a time, then let all the other singers and musicians follow in unity. If the Lord gives someone else a revelation on how to continue the direction of the service, then if the main leader feels it is of the Lord, he can step back and be silent while the new person does what was revealed to them.²⁶

We need to build a mature, balanced team that can contribute everything that will be needed to help “bring back the ark” and see the Spirit of God move freely in the services. Many Levites had to work together to balance and carry the ark, along with the others who were appointed to sing and play the music. In our day we also need the ministers, musicians, and singers to work together in each service along with the congregation. Every person who is called of God is being equipped with something to contribute, to lead us into balanced team ministry. Together the body of Christ will edify itself and grow to the “*stature of the fullness of Christ.*”²⁷

The Ark Moves On—The Revival is Restored!

In 1 Chronicles 15:14 to 16:37 we read that the ark moved on to Jerusalem after David had repaired the breach. We can study how the ark was carried by the Levites and was placed in the Tabernacle of David on Mount Zion.²⁸ It was there that the ark of God rested in the midst of God’s people once again to manifest the presence and glory of God. It was on Mount

Zion that David established his order of spiritual worship with continual music and singing.²⁹ It was there that many of the Psalms were first given by the Spirit to David, Asaph, and others. Yet the great revival in the Tabernacle of David on Mount Zion is not just to be past history. It is an experience that is available to us now! Through the Church, God has promised to rebuild the Tabernacle of David, and to close up the breaches that have kept us from continual revival. May we each sanctify ourselves that the Lord will use us to repair the breaches, restore anointed music and worship, and bring revival to God's people to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ!

“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in days of old: that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by My name, saith the Lord that doeth this.” —Amos 9:11-12 KJV

“And thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.”

—Isaiah 58:12 KJV

Chapter 9

ONWARDS TO ZION

The closer we walk with the Lord, the more we become aware that the Lord is inviting His people to a high calling. The highest place of God's calling for the Israelites was Mount Zion. We can read in the Psalms, "*the Lord has chosen Zion,*" "*His dwelling place [is] in Zion,*" and "*out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God will shine forth.*"¹ It was on Mount Zion that King David placed his tabernacle and organized the use of singing and music for the worship services. The importance of this singing and music is emphasized when the Word of God says that Zion is "*the joy of the whole earth*" and that the singers and musicians are to say "*all my springs [of joy] are in you [Zion].*"²

While the natural hill of Zion in Jerusalem was the most important place for the Old Testament people of God, we also see that there is to be a spiritual fulfillment of this in the New Testament Church. The prophet Amos saw that the Tabernacle of David that had been on Zion would be rebuilt. We have seen that the early Church fathers understood that this would happen through the Church. Isaiah also prophesied about the restoration of Zion through the Church when he declared,

“Now it will come about that in the last days, the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways, and that we may walk in His paths.’ For the law will go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

—Isaiah 2:2-3 NASV

The reason why there will be a spiritual fulfillment of Zion in the Church, is because Zion is much more than just a hill in Jerusalem. The earthly Mount Zion is only a prophetic forshadowing of the true Zion in heaven! We read in Hebrews 12:22, *“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels....”* And we also read of the singing and music that is used for the worship in the heavenly Zion, as recorded in Revelation 14:1-3. *“Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion.... And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. And they sang as it were a new song before the throne....”* So when we seek to enter into the singing and music that David established in Zion, we are actually entering into an expression of the worship of heaven at the throne of God!

While dwelling on Mount Zion was the high call for the Old Testament people of God, most of the Israelites did not attain to living there. In a similar way the Lord has a spiritual life and worship offered to us where we can abide in heavenly places—but many Christians may fall short of

this high calling.

When we look at all the places that the Israelites lived in the Old Testament we can gain an understanding of the different kinds of worship experiences that Christians have today.

From Egypt to the Promised Land

God's people first lived in Egypt, which is a picture or prophetic type of the sinful world. Before they were set free from their bondage they had to work to obtain their water. Deuteronomy 11:10 says that in Egypt they had to pump with their foot to get water to irrigate their crops. In a similar way, a Christian who is in bondage to the world must "pump" to try to bring the water of the Holy Spirit. Yet if we have ever tried to "pump" a worship service by our fleshly efforts to seek to enter into the Spirit, then by God's grace may we move on towards something better!

As we continue on to read Deuteronomy 11:10-11 we find that the Israelites did not continue to pump with their feet to obtain their water in the Promised Land.

"For the land which you go to possess is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and watered it by foot...but the land which you cross over to possess is a land...which drinks water from the rain of heaven."

While the Israelites had to work to obtain their water in Egypt, we see that it was quite the opposite for them in the Promised Land. There, it was God who promised to supply their water from heaven. This is what we also want to spiritually experience in our worship as we thirst after the presence of God. Oh, to be able to lift up our heads, open

wide our mouths, and let the Lord fill us with the rain of heaven! There are no works of the flesh here, only the work of God that causes the rain of the Holy Spirit to come down.

God's People in the Time of Ichabod

We earlier studied how the sins of the priesthood had brought the judgment of God in the days of Eli the High Priest. The ark that symbolized the presence and glory of God had departed from the Tabernacle of Moses. They continued to have their services at the tabernacle, but the presence of the Lord was no longer there. They were still living in the Promised Land, but because of sin their worship was rejected. May the Lord help us not to live in this spiritual condition! We don't want to continue on with service after service, appearing professional with our ministry, when the presence of the Lord has departed because of sin.

Living with the Philistines

We then saw how the ark of God was with the Philistines. They learned to fear the Lord and give Him an offering of worship because of the mighty power He revealed to them in judgment. Even when they made an unscriptural cart to carry the ark, the Lord blessed the cart that the Philistines had used. They did not have the Law of God from Moses to show them that this was not the right way to carry the ark. The Lord was merciful to overlook their ignorance, as He revealed His power and supernaturally guided the ark back to Israel. God often permits and even blesses that which is not His perfect will.³ Just because somebody did something, and God blessed it,

does not guarantee that we should continue to copy it. When King David tried to do the same thing, the judgment of God quickly fell.

Bringing the Ark to the Threshing Floor

When King David followed the method of the Philistines in using a cart to bring the ark, the judgment of God came at the threshing floor. The reason was that the Lord expects a higher standard from His people. The more light we receive from God's Word, the more God will hold us accountable to walk in that light. As the Lord Jesus declared in Luke 12:48, "*To whom much is given, from him much will be required.*"

God blessed the cart that the Philistines used, but judged David for copying their same method. In a similar way, God can show His power to an unsaved person through a certain method, but that does not mean that the Lord wants His people to do the same thing. Someone might say, "This is the type of music that helped lead me to Christ, so it must be the same kind of music that I should continue to play and listen to." But when the Lord brings us to a threshing floor experience, we can begin to see the mixture in our lives and ministries that He had *never* fully approved of!

Ascending to Zion

Mount Zion was where David brought the ark to dwell in his tabernacle. To follow the presence and glory of God to its resting place, we must also know how to ascend to Zion. We can learn about this in Psalm 84 where we read,

"How blessed is the man whose strength is in

*Thee, in whose heart are the highways to Zion!
Passing through the valley of Baca (weeping),
they make it a spring, the early rain also covers
it with blessings. They go from strength to
strength; every one of them appears before
God in Zion.” —Psalm 84:5-7 NASV*

We each need to have the highways to Zion in our hearts. We can study more about this in Isaiah chapter 35. There it is called the “*highway of holiness*” that can bring us to Zion with singing and everlasting joy. There we read,

“A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it...But the redeemed shall walk there, and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

—Isaiah 35:8-10

David was more specific about the holiness that is needed to ascend to Zion when he answered the question in Psalm 24:3-5, “*Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood, and has not sworn deceitfully.*”

Here we see four requirements of the sanctification that is needed to ascend Mount Zion and stand in the presence of the Lord in David’s Tabernacle.

Abiding on Mount Zion in David’s Tabernacle

It is a wonderful privilege to ascend into the presence and

glory of God that is represented by the Tabernacle of David on Mount Zion. Yet we are told that there is a much more wonderful invitation given to us. There is something much better than to ascend and *visit* the Tabernacle of David—and that is to abide and *dwell* there! David wrote about this higher calling when he said “*Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill?*”⁴ Then he tells us in the rest of the Psalm about the eleven requirements of righteousness that are needed for us to abide in this experience. If we want to *ascend* to the hill of the Lord, there are only *four* requirements needed. However, if we want to *abide* on Mount Zion in the Tabernacle of David, there are *eleven* requirements of righteousness. If we want to go further on and higher up in our worship and experience of God, then the Lord will require higher standards for our lives!

Where Do We Want To Live?

The question for each of us is, where do we want to spiritually live? If we live among the Philistines, then the Lord may bless many things that are full of mixture to show us the power of His ark (or His presence). Yet when we are moving on with God we will come into times when we are chastened and disciplined by God, similar to what happened at the threshing floor of Chidon. If we want to ascend higher to visit the Lord in the Tabernacle of David, then we will need to sanctify ourselves to meet the four requirements of Psalm 24. But if we want to abide and dwell in the Tabernacle of David on Mount Zion, then we will have to meet the much higher requirements of Psalm 15. Yet as we seek to ascend and abide in Mount Zion, we will find ourselves lifted

into the heavenlies to “*come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.*”⁵ Abiding in David’s Tabernacle spiritually means that we are to be seated with Christ in heavenly places!

Many people become content to receive and live with only part of the blessings that our Lord is offering to His people. A lukewarm Laodicean Christian will say, “*I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing.*”⁶ The reason for this contentedness, is that you have to pay a price to move on in God. Many Christians do not buy “*gold refined in the fire*” because that means they will have to experience living more of the crucified life.⁷

May the Lord help us to not compromise and love the things of the world. We need to pray along with David, “*Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*”⁸ We need to pray with David, “*unite my heart to fear Your name,*” until we can also say along with him, “*one thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.*”⁹

May the Lord give us such a vision of His high calling for us to live in Zion, that we will not be content with allowing any mixture to remain in our lives and ministries. Let us pray with David, “*Oh, send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me; let them bring me to Your holy hill and to Your tabernacle.*”¹⁰ May we each become men and women after God’s own heart who can abide in the spiritual worship of David’s Tabernacle! For as we learn to abide in this spiritual experience, we will find our ministries to be anointed from

the overflow of our meetings with God. We will declare like the Psalmist, “*I have been anointed with fresh oil.*”¹¹ Then, like David, we will also be able to lead many others into *anointed music and worship*.

Appendix A

Suggestions for Musicians

1. Come at least 15 minutes early before the service to pray and prepare your heart. Practice any needed music and make sound checks *before* that time.
2. Background music should be played before the service to help prepare the hearts of the people who are entering the sanctuary. The music can be either played by the musicians or from a CD.
3. Try to avoid all distractions, time delays, and unneeded noise. Help provide an atmosphere where the people can prepare their hearts and sense God's presence.
4. The keyboard or music group should play an introduction when the first song is to start.
5. Be sensitive to any directions the song leader may be trying to give you (faster, repeat song, change key, louder or softer, etc.).
6. Be careful to keep the fast songs lively.

7. Between songs, the keyboard should usually continue to play to keep the flow going. The other musicians should not play if everything is very quiet.

8. Check and practice your song list in advance. If you need a lot of time to practice, then ask the worship leader to give you the song list very early.

Appendix B

Suggestions for Worship Leaders

1. Be ready to start on time.
2. Try to avoid all distractions, time delays, and unneeded noise. Seek to lead the people into God's presence.
3. Start with songs of praise, then lead into songs of worship. Make sure the praise songs are fast and seek to bring everyone into joy.
4. Announce the name of the first song before you start it. For a short service it would be good to sing about 3 praise songs and about 2 to 3 worship songs, for about 20 to 30 minutes of singing. For a longer service it would be good to sing about 4 praise songs and about 3 to 4 worship songs, for perhaps 30 to 40 minutes of singing. Do not go beyond your requested time for the worship service unless: a) you are confident that the anointing is flowing and that you can lead the people further into the presence of God; and b) you have the permission of the pastor.
5. Do not sing too loud into the microphone. The song leader should not be singing a "solo," but should be helping all the

people to sing together to the Lord. When you start a song or are leading a part that the people do not know well, then sing loud enough to lead clearly. But when everyone is singing together well the song leader should back away from the microphone to allow the corporate worship to carry the flow.

6. Do not stop too often between songs. It is best to go smoothly from song to song to encourage a developing flow. If the people's hearts have become prepared for a time of spontaneous expression, then lead them into wholehearted spontaneous praise or worship.

7. Organize your song list in advance. Make copies for yourself, each of the musicians, and for the overhead projection. Write down the name and key of each song. Make sure that the musicians have the list early enough to get the practice that they need.

8. If you feel led by the Spirit to sing a different song that what is on the list, then try to be sensitive to follow the Holy Spirit *but* make sure that your musicians are skilled enough to follow you.

9. Try to use the songs in the church's song list. It is good if you can teach one new song, but make sure the musicians know it and the overhead is prepared. If it is a praise song that most of the people do not know then teach it at the beginning of the praise. If it is a worship song that most of the people do not know, have the congregation sit down for a few minutes as you teach it at the beginning of the worship section of the song service. Try to only use one

song each service that is not well known, never more than two songs that are not well known.

Notes

Chapter One

1. Quoted by John Edwards in *God and Music* (New York: Baker and Taylor Co. 1907), 144.
2. Study 2 Kings 3:15, 1 Samuel 10:5, and 1 Chron. 25:1
3. Martin Luther, preface to *Symphoniae Jucundae* (1538), trans. Ulrich Leupold, in *Luther's Works*, LIII (Philadelphia: The Fortress Press, 1965), 322.
4. Quoted by Edwards, 145
5. Quoted by Edwards, 147
6. Quoted by Edwards, 146
7. Compare Ezekiel 28:13 (the precious stones which covered Lucifer) with Exodus 39:10-13 (the precious stones on the breastplate of the High Priest of Israel). In the Septuagint version, the stones in these two scriptures are identical. The similarities between their “uniforms” suggest that Lucifer had a leadership position over the angels that was similar to the position of the High Priest over the Israelites.
8. Study Ezekiel 28:15-18 and Isaiah 14:12-14
9. Read Isaiah 30:31-32 and Psalms 149:6-9, where warfare

is directly linked to musical instruments and praise.

10. 1 Timothy 3:6 also warns that if a recent convert is given leadership in the church, he will be more susceptible to pride and backsliding.

Chapter Three

1. Three examples of the occasional use of music before the time of King David are given in Exodus 15, Judges 5, and 1 Samuel 10:5.
2. 1 Chronicles 15:1-16:38
3. Psalm 119:18
4. 1 Samuel 16:13
5. Paul wrote these statements in Philippians 3:8 and Philippians 3:3.
6. We can see this in 1 Chronicles 6:33-34, where Heman was the grandson of Samuel through his son, Joel.
7. Study 1 Chronicles 25
8. Habakkuk 2:14

Chapter Four

1. Read Isaiah 61:3 and Isaiah 35:10
2. Study Zechariah 4:6 and Philippians 3:3
3. I Corinthians 14:33

Chapter Five

1. John 14:6

2. 3 John 3-4
3. 1 John 1:7
4. Amos 5:21-24
5. This is demonstrated in Acts 12:17 and Acts 21:40
6. As used in Revelation 10:5-6
7. As used in 2 Kings 11:12
8. Study Matthew 4:10, Acts 10:25-26, and Rev. 22:8-9
9. Study Psalms 7:17, 21:13, 42:5, 106:2, 118:21, and 139:14
10. Study Exodus 34:5-8 and John 9:35-38
11. Study Psalms 149:1-3, 150:3-5, and 30:11-12
12. Study Psalm 95:6, Revelation 7:11, and Mat. 2:11
13. Read Proverbs 31:31, 1 Corinthians 11:2, and Eccl. 4:2
14. As seen in Matthew 2:2, Mark 5:6, and Exodus 34:5-8
15. See Psalms 100:4 and 95:2
16. Study Psalm 132:7 and Matthew 28:9
17. Study Mark 15:37-38 and Hebrews 10:20
18. Study Hebrews 4:14 and 9:11-12
19. See Habakkuk 2:20, Psalm 46:10, and 1 Cor. 1:29
20. Genesis 2:2
21. Galatians 5:22-23 and 1 Corinthians 12:8-10

Chapter Six

1. Romans 8:9 and 8:14
2. Romans 8:5-6

3. Romans 8:11-13
4. Charles Walton, *Basic Forms in Music* (Port Washington, NY, USA: Alfred Pub. Co. 1974), back cover.
5. Richard Wagner. Quote. Retrieved August 15, 2005 from <http://www.schoolmusicmatters.com/resources/quotes.tpl>
6. Leonardo da Vinci. Quote. Retrieved August 15, 2005 from <http://www.schoolmusicmatters.com/resources/quotes.tpl>
7. Jean Rameau, *Observations Sur Notre Instinct Pour la Musique et Son Principe* (Paris, 1734), 3.
8. Through the discerning of spirits, one of the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10
9. Acts 13:22

Chapter Seven

1. Read 2 Corinthians 3:18 and 1 John 3:2
2. Study Philippians 3:3, Zechariah 4:6, and 1 Cor. 2:1-5
3. Read Galatians 1:10
4. 1 Samuel 16:7
5. Acts 13:22 and 2 Samuel 23:1
6. Read Deuteronomy 31:6-8 and 2 Corinthians 3:5-6

Chapter Eight

1. Study 2 Chronicles 20:21-29, 23:16-18, 29:25-28, 35:15-18, Ezekiel 3:10-11, and Nehemiah 12:27-43
2. 1 Samuel 5:1-12

3. 1 Samuel 4:21
4. 1 Chronicles 13:3
5. Study 1 Chronicles 21:26 to 22:1 and 2 Chronicles 3:1
6. Compare 1 Samuel 6:8 with Exodus 25:14 and Josh. 3:6
7. Study 1 Corinthians 9:9-10 and 1 Timothy 5:17-18
8. John 15:5
9. Zechariah 4:6
10. 1 Samuel 7:1
11. Study 1 John 3:14 and Prov.18:21
12. Study Romans 8:6
13. Study 2 Corinthians 7:10
14. Isaiah 40:3-5
15. Study Exodus 29:1 and 29:20
16. Read Leviticus 8:30
17. Read Luke 1:41-44 and Luke 1:15
18. See Deuteronomy 10:8
19. Study 1 Chronicles 13:7 and 1 Samuel 6:7-14
20. See Jeremiah 6:16
21. Read 1 Samuel 6:2-11
22. The story behind the Athenian worship of the Unknown God has definite similarities to the biblical account in 1 Samuel 6. About six centuries before Christ the city of Athens was being devastated by a plague. When sacrifices to all their gods brought no relief, sheep were sacrificed to the Unknown God, and almost immediately the plague stopped. One of these altars where the sheep were sacrificed was

apparently still used as a place of worship when Paul tried to tell them more accurately about this Unknown God Who had shown them mercy in the past.

To further study this, read:

http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=2149

(Retrieved August 22, 2005.)

23. Recorded in Revelation 5:9
24. These purged but restored nations include Moab (Jer.48:47), Ammon (Jer.49:6), Elam (Jer.49:39), and Egypt (Jer.46:26). Study also Matthew 25:32-34 and Revelation 21:24-26.
25. Nations to be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah include Edom (Jer.49:17-18) and Babylon (Jer.50:39-40). Study also Psalm 9:17 and Matthew 25:32 & 41.
26. Suggested by 1 Corinthians 14:29-33
27. Study Ephesians 4:11-13
28. Read 1 Chronicles 15:1, 16:1, and 2 Chronicles 5:2
29. As recorded in 1 Chronicles 16:4-37

Chapter Nine

1. Psalms 132:13, 76:2, and 50:2
2. Psalms 48:2 and 87:7
3. Study Matthew 19:8, Numbers 14:2 & 28, Judges 16:1-3, 1 Kings 13:18-20, and Psalm 106:15
4. Psalm 15:1 KJV
5. Heb.12:22

6. Revelation 3:17

7. Study Revelation 3:18, 1 Peter 1:6-7, and Galatians 2:20

8. Psalm 139:23-24

9. Psalms 86:11 and 27:4

10. Psalm 43:3

11. Psalm 92:10