

April 2013

WORSHIP, MUSIC AND GOD'S PRESENCE

Dear Friends,

In the majority of all churches, camp meetings, or ministry conferences I have attended in my life, one of the greatest challenges I've observed is getting people to transition from fellowshiping with each other to worshipping when the service begins. Almost always there is so much noise, clamor, and talking that the worship leader has to call attention to the fact that the service is starting and it is time to praise the Lord. I remember being in one service where the noise was so overwhelming the pastor actually walked to the microphone and, with **GREAT** emphasis, said, "SHHHHH!"

The most prominent exception to this is a church in South Korea where I ministered a few years ago. When I walked into the sanctuary on Sunday morning the voices of the people were quite loud. At first I thought it was just a lot of chit-chat and friendly conversation. But I stopped and began to observe what was actually happening. The noise was not from idle conversation; rather, the entire congregation had been in the sanctuary, sitting in their seats for at least thirty minutes before the start of the service, praying in the Spirit.

Several years ago the Lord showed me a way to address the times of excessive talking and an overly-casual atmosphere in our own church. We began having pre-service worship forty-five minutes before the start of every service. Using special mixes of recorded songs that are slower and more conducive to worship, each song flows into the next to simulate a live worship service. People in the sanctuary sing along and those coming in during the pre-service worship realize something very special is happening.

I cannot begin to tell you how this has changed the atmosphere of our services. The pre-service worship transitions seamlessly into our regular service. No longer does our worship leader have to compete with disorder and excessive conversations to redirect people's attention to the start of the service. There have been times when the last song of pre-service worship would fade out, but the people would continue worshipping for 10, 20, 30 minutes or longer. Though our praise team is on the platform, the worship is already so intense that they don't get to any of the songs they had prepared ahead of time.

Worship is one of the most powerful spiritual tools available to a Christian. For a long time I never understood that there is a great difference between just singing songs as a congregation and actually praising and worshipping the Lord. But over the years the Lord has opened my eyes more and more to the power of worship and why it is so needful for a Believer. In doing so, He has helped me see that there are, essentially, three categories of worship: one is spoken worship, another is worship in song (without instruments), and the third is worship in song accompanied by instruments. Consider what is recorded in Ephesians 5:18-19 and Colossians 3:16,

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Note that in both passages there is a specific reference not simply to worshipping the Lord, but to singing to Him. In the Greek, part of the image painted by these verses is that of playing instruments and singing in praise and worship unto God. If you take the time to read the Psalms, repeatedly there is an emphasis on praise and worship in song and on instruments.

During our worship service one Sunday morning, I began to think about how a baby who can barely walk will start to move and dance when music begins to play. I also thought of people who begin to tap their feet or move to the beat of music - even subconsciously - when it begins playing, and why it is that music has such an effect on people. As I wondered about these things, the Lord began giving me the following prophetic word:

It's because music has a way to penetrate the spirit in a way that has not yet been discovered. Music was designed to help man have a deeper spiritual experience with Me. This is why there is so much in scripture about praising and worshipping Me. Your minds simply cannot comprehend the depths to which music can touch your spirit. Music is not a tangible thing, but it can be felt by your senses while being experienced by your spirit.

Satan knows this, and has known it from the beginning. Music can open an avenue to your spirit. If the words accompanied by the music glorify the things of sin, then your spirit becomes susceptible to the temptations of that sin. This is how Satan is able to speak to so many people: he does it through the music they hear. Consider the stories you hear of criminals who said voices spoke to them and told them what to do while they listened to certain kinds of music.

Music can even be used to create an atmosphere. This is why certain kinds of music are exciting, some are relaxing, some are peaceful, and some are distracting. Have you not noticed that fast music and slow music can produce different kinds of behavior in people?

Satan has learned how to use various forms of music to create atmospheres wherein the presence of demons is tolerated and people do not become fearful. It is in this kind of atmosphere that many horrible acts of sin can be planned.

I created music. What does my word say about Me? It says that I am a spirit and those that worship Me must worship Me in spirit and in truth. Thus, music is spiritual in nature because it originated with Me. Yes, I created music, but Satan has perverted the original intent of music. Just like I am present in music that flows with My original intent, it is through that perversion that Satan and his devils are able to operate more effectively.

Consider what you know of many war-like cultures throughout history. Study them and examine the behavior they demonstrated before entering into battle. Most of them have used music to prepare for the battle. The purpose of that music and the songs they sing is to dull the senses. They can actually lose their sense of self-preservation. The music, its beat, and the songs and chanting create an almost hypnotic effect on the participants. In some cases, it opened them to devils that would fight through them. Think about the Gadarene demoniac and the devils which operated through him.

Music that is played to glorify Me can take you to a place in Me unlike anything else. As I said, music can open an avenue to your spirit. Remember how David would play music and the troubling spirit would leave King Saul? This same thing is true for today. The emotional problems a lot of people experience could be solved if they would just subject themselves to music that glorifies Me. Even if they do not sing along, just being in the atmosphere created by that music can bring about a healing.

When you do choose to sing along with the music, you can increase the effect that the music will have on you. It is very important that you focus on the words that you sing. This can cause you to become more sensitive to what I am doing in you through your worship.

You do not need to have music actually playing when you worship me. My word says to sing a new song unto me. This does not mean that you have to have music; it means that you create the music as you sing. In your church, you call this free worship. It is something you can do almost anywhere at any time.

Now consider what My son the Apostle Paul wrote. As he taught the Corinthian church on the use of tongues and their manifestation, he said he would pray with the spirit and with the understanding, and he would sing with the spirit and with the understanding. He had a revelation of singing in tongues that few people have ever understood.

Because of this lack of understanding, many people have unfairly criticized singing in tongues. They have prevented it, rebuked those who did it, and incorrectly taught about it. The result is that many of My children have missed out on much that I could have been doing in their lives.

Read again what Paul wrote to the Corinthians and leave his words in context [*1 Corinthians Chapter 14*]. He said he would pray and sing with the spirit and with the understanding if he was in a congregational setting. He explained that the reason he would do this was in case there was someone next to him who did not understand what he was doing as he sang and prayed in tongues. But nowhere did he say he was *interpreting* the tongues he sang and prayed; just that he would do both with the spirit and with the understanding.

Now think about what you are doing when you pray in tongues. You are edifying yourself, but you do not have an instruction that you must have the interpretation of the tongues you pray. If you are at home praying in tongues,

you do not have to immediately receive an interpretation of what you have prayed.

Notice that Paul made reference to singing in tongues right along with praying in tongues. When you pray in tongues it is Me, by the Holy Spirit, praying in you and through you the very thing you need to pray at that moment. The result is that you are edified. When you sing in tongues, your spirit is singing, but your mind is unfruitful. Yet the words that come out are from Me by the Holy Spirit. This, too, will produce edification.

But, when you sing in tongues you are putting the words of your edification to music. Remember, again, that I said music can open an avenue to your spirit. As you speak those words in tongues, you are receiving edification in your spirit. But the music you create as you sing those tongues will enable Me to minister to your spirit as you are edified.

Some have taught that that there must be an interpretation if a person sings in tongues. This is not true. I have at times given the gift of tongues and interpretation in song during a service; but just like praying in tongues, it is not necessary to always have an interpretation when singing in the spirit.

Once more, think of what Paul wrote about praying and singing with both the spirit and the understanding. He made reference to this happening in a congregational setting and he did not say he was interpreting the tongues of his prayer or his song. Therefore, know that it is acceptable for a congregation to both pray and sing with the spirit and with the understanding.

Do not take all of this and go off on a tangent. Do not begin to think that you must sing in tongues every time you begin to edify yourself. This is how wrong doctrine comes about: truth is taken to an abnormal extreme and becomes an inappropriate dogma.

So again I say, I created music as a way to have a deeper experience with Me. If you choose to worship Me, particularly through your free worship in private and in your church services, you will have My presence. For some, the deeper experience that they are seeking with Me will come if they will enter into free worship.

In closing, I want to encourage you to take advantage of every opportunity you have to worship God. Focus on the words of your songs. Make them personal, directly from your heart to His. No longer see the worship time in your church services as just singing songs because it is the thing to do at the start of a service. The Holy Spirit once shared the following with me, "Sermons are declarations *about* the Lord; worship is an experience *with* the Lord."

May God's presence fill your life!

Jim

P.S. - Be sure to take advantage of this month's offer of a special sermon about worship!

***** SPRING PRAYER AND POWER CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT *****

The 2013 Spring Prayer and Power Conference is upon us! Sunday, April 21 through Friday, April 26 with ministry by Pastor Dave Roberson, Gary Carpenter and Janet Inman. We have made special arrangements at the following two hotels:

COUNTRY INN AND SUITES

3971 Colonel Glenn Highway, Fairborn, OH, 45324

Direct line: (937) 429-2222 www.countryinns.com/fairbornoh

Special conference rate - \$89 per night; King Suites are \$99 per night

10 minutes from church * all rooms non-smoking * exercise room * indoor pool * free WiFi * hot breakfast every day * hot dinner Wednesday evening * microwave, refrigerator and coffee maker in each room * close to many restaurants, stores and a mall. King Suites have a small living room, sofa bed and separate bedroom with a king bed and TV.

RAMADA LIMITED

2540 University Drive, Fairborn, OH 45324

Direct line: (937) 490-2000

Special conference rate - \$79.99 per night

10 minutes from church * all but four rooms are non-smoking * exercise room * indoor pool * free WiFi * very close to many restaurants, stores and a mall * breakfast every day

A list of additional hotels is posted at our web site, www.jmmgrace.com.

International travelers may need a visa along with a passport for travel to the United States. If you need a letter of invitation send an email to jmmgmi@gmail.com.

Please register for the conference ahead of time. Use the form below or email your registration to jmmgmi@gmail.com. Be sure each person coming with you also registers

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_____ Please send me a CD of the sermon, "Why Worship in Tongues?"

_____ I will be attending the 2013 Spring Prayer and Power Conference

Name _____

Address _____

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My love gift for this month is: \$ _____
Make checks or money orders payable to "Jim Martin Ministries."

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