

Worship Team Expedition Weekly Devotional



Week 4: Sing, Play, and Shout!

Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy. –Psalm 33:3

Ever had a song just reach out and grab you?

You know what I'm talking about- you're cruising along, going about your business, and then a song cuts through the noise of life, grabs you, and pulls you in. It speaks to your heart...it stops you...it *moves* you. It's a powerful experience, right?

Think of the most recent song that had that effect on you. Where were you the first time you heard it (or *really* heard it)? What did that song say to your heart? Did you hear God speaking to you in some way through it?

God has used songs that “come out of nowhere” to speak to me many, many times. I'll be discouraged and a song comes on the radio that lifts my heart or my eyes to Jesus. I'll be running, running and a friend shares a song about slowing down. I'll be feeling tired, or weak, or afraid and a song about God's strength encourages me greatly.

Songs have great power to move people, to refocus their outlook. Those of us who stand in front of a group of people and lead worship have an awesome opportunity to leverage the power of songs to point people to Christ. How cool is that?

So let's crack open this verse in Psalm 33 about songs and learn from it. We'll look at three sections of the verse.

Sing A New Song

It says to sing to him (God) a new song. I love that it says to sing- the Bible actually encourages us to sing to God! He's given each of us a voice and we have the opportunity to use it to praise Him. It also tells us to sing something new to Him. Of the many reasons that's a good idea, think about just one for a minute- that fresh song you introduce this month or that new arrangement of a worship favorite could be just what God uses to really speak to someone's heart. Sometimes we can go into auto-pilot on familiar songs; but the message in a *new* song or song arrangement may leap off the screen or stage and really speak to somebody- just because it's new and that person has to pay attention to the song in a different way to sing along and engage with it.

Play Skillfully

How 'bout that? The Bible actually commands us to play our instruments skillfully (singing is included- your voice is an instrument)! If God has gifted you musically, he wants you to develop your musical skills. And why? So you can show off? No, that's distracting. But so is poor musicianship- people wind up noticing your mistakes instead of the message in the song.

When you're skillful, you can play songs in a way that inspires people to worship Christ. You can leverage the power of songs to point people to Jesus. You can't do that nearly as well if you can't play skillfully. Really skillful musicians can use a song as an instrument to lead people. The song isn't their master, they use the tool of a good song to lift the eyes of the congregation to God.

When you play skillfully the message takes center stage and the song's power can really go to work! Play skillfully and the playing, the instrument, the song itself sort of fade into the background as the message and the Holy Spirit's voice speak to people's hearts. And that's what we want, right? The great thing is, everything you are doing to increase your skill behind the scenes as you practice and develop your instrument is helping those kinds of worship moments happen!

Shout For Joy

Ever been in a situation where a group of gathered believers is singing with their whole hearts? It's a powerful thing, right? White hot, passionate worship where the whole assembly is bringin' it is really something. On the flip side, ever been in a situation where a few people might have been singing but most were just watching. Staring at screens, but not really participating. What a drag.

God wants us to be passionate in worship! No ho-hum, hands-in-your-pockets, spectator type of worship gatherings! Throughout scripture (and especially in the Psalms) making some noise is encouraged. There are a lot of reasons to celebrate who God is, what He has done, and what He is doing. And sometimes it's good to celebrate Him with some volume!

As worship leaders, we have the opportunity to encourage people to really worship, to sing, to move, to make some noise, to...engage. The good news is they are built for it, deep in their hearts they want to let go and just worship! We all come pre-wired to yearn for the freedom and connection found in worshipping Christ. Sometimes we just need a little prompting, a little encouragement, a little permission even, to let our hair down, forget about everyone around us, focus on Jesus, and sing to Him!

So, this week let's...sing to Him a new song, play skillfully, and shout for joy!

Questions for Thought

What is a new or fresh way I can express my worship to God this week?

What is one aspect of my singing/playing/leading that God is nudging me to work on?