

Worship Songs And The Daily Walk

In the book of Amos God speaks through the prophet Amos and says to the children of Israel, "**take away from me the noise of your songs! (Amos 5:21-34)** God had become really tired of all their worship songs, solemn assemblies, fasting, and religious rituals! Why??? Basically, it was because the children of Israel weren't "walkin' the walk"! God said to them, (and of course to us today) that he doesn't want to hear our songs or melodies if we're not honoring Him with our everyday lives. "But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream"! Bottom line is this...God doesn't want to hear our songs if we aren't walkin' the walk!

The prophet Isaiah wrote a song, (Isaiah 5:1-7) about the vineyard and the owner (God), to confront the worshippers of his day and encourage them to take inventory and pass judgment on themselves! He concluded the last four lines of the song with a brilliant wordplay in Hebrew:

God looked for justice [mishpat],

But behold, bloodshed [mishpa];

For righteousness [sedaqah],

But behold, a cry [se-aqah]!

In Micah 6:6-8 the prophet states, "God has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly before your God? Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly. Sounds simple enough? But this is where shoe-leather meets the road!!!! This is the very essence of discipleship and practicing Christianity.

As worship leaders, (and worship lovers!), we tend to focus on and emphasize the importance of worship. And this is indeed a great thing to make worshipping God a priority! However, it's so easy to worship when the music is crankin', the crowd is participating, and the Spirit is moving!!! There are great emotional highs that we can experience in worship, but the danger is that we focus so much on our worship in the sanctuary, that we forget to worship in our daily lives!!

In addition, being a worship leader or even being on a worship team can be a wonderful thing. Finding new songs, introducing them to the congregation, or getting the worship band, team, choir & orchestra to all gel at one time is an amazing and glorious experience! The danger is that we learn to live primarily for that experience instead of letting our whole life be open to practicing love and walking humbly with God!

More importantly the familiar maxim, "talk is cheap" is extremely poignant and applicable here. We need to be very careful that we don't become intoxicated with our own importance as worship leaders. Our culture has become so obsessed with "celebrityism" that it has rubbed off and crept in to the church world! As leaders we must be especially careful not to become puffed up with pride and think we are, (along with the pastor) the most important players on the field! But walking humbly before God, and stressing the equality of all people can destroy this arrogance, and promote justice and equality for everyone! Everybody matters to God!

Jesus continues this emphasis on walking humbly by rejecting the sharp social boundaries of the established social and religious order of His day. His vision for the Kingdom of God was a kingdom where all the nobodies become somebodies!!!! He subverted the teaching between the righteous and sinner, rich and poor, men and women, Pharisees and outcasts! Being one in Christ also has profound social implications. All those who are "in Christ" are "one body". This new humanity in Christ completely destroys social boundaries and this equality in Christ creates a new social reality!

Moreover, Christ's emphasis on loving God and one another was the very centerpiece of His teaching! If there is anything clear about what Jesus taught, it was this!!!! On the other hand, Jesus had very little to say about corporate worship! This doesn't mean He didn't think corporate worship was important but rather that being a true follower of Him meant that in addition to loving God, (which implies worship) that loving your neighbor, (implies humility and equality) was more important than anything else!!! Jesus did quote the words of Isaiah, "These people honor me with their lips but their hearts are far from me"! We can sing and talk about God but God asks much more than mere "lip service"!!

Let me share with you a few words from a song "I Will Follow You". (This is the free download worship song of the month from Songs Of David!)

**People talkin' all about Jesus,
and everything that He has done,
But it's easy to talk, a lot harder to walk,
and really do just what He said;
It's time for people who call Him King of Kings,
and Lord of Lord's,
To start loving each other,
Reach out to the hurtin,'
Live in peace and one accord!**

Below are some practical suggestions specifically for those in Music ministry:

1) **Try to apply a key phrase from a song from your Sunday worship set to your everyday life.** For example, the song, "More Love, More Power". This song is a prayer, addressed to God, asking for more love and power in our lives. Meditate daily on the words and make it your prayer for the entire week. Constantly look for ways to apply it right in the middle of your normal daily life and relationships with others.

2) To help remind you of the equality of all people and to promote humility in your life **meditate on the following phrase (from a sermon by the late Francis Schaeffer) "With God, there are no little people or little places"!** Keep this saying in your heart and mind as you deal with other people.

3) **Make the great love chapter I Corinthians 13 a daily reading and devotional for an entire month, seeking to apply and put into practice what it says.**

If we as worship leaders, singers, and musicians, could spend as much time and emphasis on our daily walk as we do on our musical preparation for Sunday morning worship, there could be a dramatic

change in our lives that would spill over and touch the lives of others. It will have an impact in our worship times, both individually and corporately. And God might be more inclined to listen in on our songs at worship time! By the grace of God we can do it!!

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