

## The Top Ten Secrets of Life I Learned Leading Praise

Phil Christensen

After interviewing hundreds of psalmists, I can safely say that worship leaders are a special breed. They nurture the souls of sensitive singers, and encourage brusque sound guys to be...less blunt. They see the gifted drummer within a goofy 9-year-old. Worship leaders sharpen their mastery of Scripture and musical chops in the same week. They calmly walk into meetings where they'll receive near-lethal doses of personal criticism.

Through it all - praise God - these psalmists will somehow emerge with tender, Davidic hearts. I suspect it's all part of God's greater strategy in conforming us to the image of Christ; pressure turns coal into diamonds, and the constant rub of a grain of sand creates a pearl. The unique pressures of a psalmist create a unique kind of perspective and character.

Such "Worship Team Wisdom" probably contains the essence of what we need to know about life; it worked pretty well for King David.

Over the years, I've repeatedly found myself drawing on principles learned while working with worship teams; I'll share here what I consider my top ten bits of Worship Team Wisdom.

- 1. There's only One Person in the audience.** There are lots of people out there to please (and some of them are quite insistent). At the end of the day, though, only One Person matters most, and His name is Jesus. Seek first His approval. (Mt. 6:33)
- 2. Everybody needs to tune to the same pitch.** We pass around the tuner every time we gather, and find that this guarantees we'll be in tune with each other. Similarly, if we're all in fellowship with God, we'll also get along together beautifully; our differences simply become rich harmonies. (1 Jn. 1:7)
- 3. Sometimes we're at our best simply because we spent quality time together.** An afternoon together as friends can tighten the groove of a bassist and drummer when they play together that evening. God has commanded a blessing when people "dwell together in unity." (Ps. 133)
- 4. All our plans are subject to change.** I have yet to experience a worship service, a wedding or a work-week that went exactly as I expected - or wished. Wise people are prepared to bend; they also know that these changes are often directly from the Hand of God. (Pr. 16:9)
- 5. How we respond to change is probably more important than whatever we had planned in the first place.** When we're thrown a curve, the way we handle it reveals much - maybe everything - about our character. (Job 1:21)
- 6. The song is bigger than the singer.** The message we carry is more important than we are. When the cheering masses greeted that donkey at Jerusalem's gate, he might have felt pretty good about himself, but I doubt he was ever received that way again. Without his Divine Passenger, he was just another donkey. (Jn. 3:30)
- 7. The person in charge of your "sound" can help you or destroy you.** If your work has to be channeled through someone else, make sure of their competence and character. A lot rides on the shoulders of the middleman. (2 Kg 5:21ff)
- 8. We never really leave the platform.** The wireless microphone is never truly switched off. Strangers, co-workers, friends and family are observing us every moment of the day. We are - 24/7 - as Paul said, ambassadors for Christ. (2 Co. 5:20)
- 9. God often turns our worst mornings into miracles.** There are Sundays I step down from the platform thinking I should resign and get a job at Walmart. These are usually the same days someone grabs my hand, and - tearfully - thanks me for leading them into the Presence of God. I don't know how God transforms my clumsy moments into masterpieces, but I've

seen Him do it over and over, and not just with music. Trusting that His transforming power is working in us (and often in spite of us) should keep us both humble and confident (Ph. 2:13).

**10. The song might not end exactly as we rehearsed it.** Musicians must follow the leader's cue as he closes a song; life's that way, too. Sometimes there's a key change. Sometimes we finish a Cappella. Once in a while, the song even has to be cut off early. Our times are in the skillful hands of the Chief Musician, Whose timing is always perfect. (Jn. 20:22)

God is the Supreme Economist; He never allows one teardrop more than is absolutely necessary to complete the good work He began in us. Along with the pleasures and the pressures of His calling, may we always clearly sense the presence of Him Who is our Wisdom (1 Co. 1:30).

## The Top Ten Secrets of Life I Learned Leading Praise

Phil Christensen

After interviewing hundreds of psalmists, I can safely say that worship leaders are a special breed. They nurture the souls of sensitive singers, and encourage brusque sound guys to be...less blunt. They see the gifted drummer within a goofy 9-year-old. Worship leaders sharpen their mastery of Scripture and musical chops in the same week. They calmly walk into meetings where they'll receive near-lethal doses of personal criticism.

Through it all - praise God - these psalmists will somehow emerge with tender, Davidic hearts. I suspect it's all part of God's greater strategy in conforming us to the image of Christ; pressure turns coal into diamonds, and the constant rub of a grain of sand creates a pearl. The unique pressures of a psalmist create a unique kind of perspective and character.

Such "Worship Team Wisdom" probably contains the essence of what we need to know about life; it worked pretty well for King David.

Over the years, I've repeatedly found myself drawing on principles learned while working with worship teams; I'll share here what I consider my top ten bits of Worship Team Wisdom.

- 1. There's only One Person in the audience.** There are lots of people out there to please (and some of them are quite insistent). At the end of the day, though, only One Person matters most, and His name is Jesus. Seek first His approval. (Mt. 6:33)
- 2. Everybody needs to tune to the same pitch.** We pass around the tuner every time we gather, and find that this guarantees we'll be in tune with each other. Similarly, if we're all in fellowship with God, we'll also get along together beautifully; our differences simply become rich harmonies. (1 Jn. 1:7)
- 3. Sometimes we're at our best simply because we spent quality time together.** An afternoon together as friends can tighten the groove of a bassist and drummer when they play together that evening. God has commanded a blessing when people "dwell together in unity." (Ps. 133)
- 4. All our plans are subject to change.** I have yet to experience a worship service, a wedding or a work-week that went exactly as I expected - or wished. Wise people are prepared to bend; they also know that these changes are often directly from the Hand of God. (Pr. 16:9)
- 5. How we respond to change is probably more important than whatever we had planned in the first place.** When we're thrown a curve, the way we handle it reveals much - maybe everything - about our character. (Job 1:21)
- 6. The song is bigger than the singer.** The message we carry is more important than we are. When the cheering masses greeted that donkey at Jerusalem's gate, he might have felt pretty good about himself, but I doubt he was ever received that way again. Without his Divine Passenger, he was just another donkey. (Jn. 3:30)
- 7. The person in charge of your "sound" can help you or destroy you.** If your work has to be channeled through someone else, make sure of their competence and character. A lot rides on the shoulders of the middleman. (2 Kg 5:21ff)
- 8. We never really leave the platform.** The wireless microphone is never truly switched off. Strangers, co-workers, friends and family are observing us every moment of the day. We are - 24/7 - as Paul said, ambassadors for Christ. (2 Co. 5:20)
- 9. God often turns our worst mornings into miracles.** There are Sundays I step down from the platform thinking I should resign and get a job at Walmart. These are usually the same days someone grabs my hand, and - tearfully - thanks me for leading them into the Presence of God. I don't know how God transforms my clumsy moments into masterpieces, but I've

seen Him do it over and over, and not just with music. Trusting that His transforming power is working in us (and often in spite of us) should keep us both humble and confident (Ph. 2:13).

**10. The song might not end exactly as we rehearsed it.** Musicians must follow the leader's cue as he closes a song; life's that way, too. Sometimes there's a key change. Sometimes we finish a Cappella. Once in a while, the song even has to be cut off early. Our times are in the skillful hands of the Chief Musician, Whose timing is always perfect. (Jn. 20:22)

God is the Supreme Economist; He never allows one teardrop more than is absolutely necessary to complete the good work He began in us. Along with the pleasures and the pressures of His calling, may we always clearly sense the presence of Him Who is our Wisdom (1 Co. 1:30).