

Countenance

I. The Lesson

We all understand that in order to be an effective worship team, we need to practice regularly in order to ensure that everyone is on the “same page” musically. We know that the more musical skill we have, the better we’ll be able to inspire people into a place of worship with God. We even see how the Bible repeatedly places value on excellence in ministry (for us, it’s musical... see “Musical Excellence”). However, there is one aspect of our role as worship ministers that usually gets overlooked by the majority of worship teams. A lack of appropriate execution of this element can immediately hinder the effectiveness of the musical element we worked so hard to produce. Pop stars call it “stage presence.” We call it “countenance.”

Webster’s Dictionary defines countenance as a “look or expression.” Therefore, our countenance involves everything from the clothes we wear to the look on our face to our body movements while on stage.

We can play every note correctly, sing every melody and harmony with precision, and nail every solo and feature, but if our countenance is not aligning with the declaration we’re singing, the congregation will be confused, unmotivated, and have the sense of, “I’m not buying it.”

So, we must give careful consideration to how we look on stage. We’re not talking about a vain thought of, “Is my hair okay?” but rather, “Is what I’m doing right now inspiring people to worship?” If we’re singing about how good God is, yet we look like our dog just died right before we got on stage, there is an obvious inconsistency that must be addressed.

Through studying the Psalms (and seen throughout scripture), we see nine expressions God commanded us (through David) to use in praise and worship. Those expressions are...

Using our Hands:

1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

Using our Voice:

1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

Using our Posture:

1) _____ 2) _____ / _____ 3) _____

Since God has commanded us throughout scripture to praise Him in these ways, then we – as the worship ministers and “models of worship” – must demonstrate these forms to the congregation. We frequently encourage our teams...

“What happens on stage is _____ in the congregation”

This is true in more than just with countenance, but if we – as the worship team – are demonstrating these various forms of praising God, we are in a sense saying to the congregation, “Do as we do,” and people will catch on.

Part of this issue of whether we do or do not exemplify a proper worship countenance is our heart attitude.

Rom. 12:11 "... Serve the Lord enthusiastically." (NLT)

1 Cor. 15:58 "...Always work enthusiastically for the Lord." (NLT)

How do we work and serve the Lord enthusiastically while on the platform? By demonstrating the nine expressions of worship. “But what if I don’t *feel/like* it? Do it anyway! It’s your JOB as a worship minister. If we always wait until we *feel/like* worshiping, we probably wouldn’t worship that often (if we’re brutally honest). But if we worship because we know it’s the best thing for us, that He is worthy of our offering, and God is seeking worshipers (John 4:23-24), we will worship *no matter what!*

It is easier to ____ your way into _____ than it is to ____ your way into _____.

So, approach the platform every time you minister with an attitude that is set on musical excellence and a countenance that models enthusiastic service unto the Lord. *That* is the picture of an effective worship minister.

The following are some good questions to ask yourself regarding countenance:

- Am I _____? Do I look like I’m enjoying myself and God?
- Is my _____ “tastefully contributing to a low profile?”¹
- Do my _____ reflect the “emotion” of the song/what’s going on?

II. Discussion

1) As a worship team, what are we doing well in the area of countenance?

¹ Sorge, Bob. Exploring Worship: A Practical Guide to Praise & Worship. Pg. 158. 1987, 2001. Oasis House. Lee’s Summit, Missouri.

- 2) As a worship team, how can we improve in the area of countenance?
- 3) If we are not enthusiastic on stage, what does that portray to the congregation?
- 4) What effect does a worship team who is not enthusiastic have on the spiritual atmosphere of the service?
- 5) What are ways that singers can demonstrate the nine expressions of Psalmic praise and worship? Guitarists? Drummers? Keyboardists? Etc...

III. Prayer Points

- 1) Pray that God would refresh each member of the team and that we would look forward to ministering, not dread it.
- 2) Pray that God would give us grace, as a worship team, to have the boldness required to demonstrate Biblical expressions of praise.
- 3) Pray that there would be freedom released in the congregation to join in enthusiastic worship with us as we experience that freedom.