

The Language of Worship

I. The Lesson

Col. 4:6 “Let your conversation be always full of grace”

The worship level in a church or community is determined by far more than the worship experience that happens while the band is playing during the services. It’s been accurately said, “What takes us years to build with our talent can be destroyed overnight by our character;” and, what takes time and effort to build with our worship team efforts can be destroyed by the power of the tongue.

The sound of worship is not necessarily a song or a band cranking out the latest tunes. Worship is a sound that brings pleasure to the heart of God! This means that our worship-life happens more off the stage than on, more in the secret place than when the lights are shining bright.

Our instruments, our words, our talents, and our influence with people can bring great blessing to the heart of God and His people or they can bring great destruction. Lucifer is the first and most obvious example of what a being that was created for worship can become when his gifts and abilities turn away from the purpose of God. “Those who create the most beautiful sounds carry great potential to release the most destructive sounds.”

Another example is Miriam. She was a worship leader and a person of influence that was used by God. However, she allowed the language of faith to be replaced with the language of criticism and division.

Exo. 15:20-21 “Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her, with tambourines and dancing. Miriam sang to them: "Sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted.”

Miriam was recorded in the Bible as being a co-leader of one of the most powerful and influential worship services in the history of Israel. Consider it, nearly three million people all rejoicing and celebrating their freedom from the bondage of Egypt that had enslaved their people for generations! Miriam picks up a tambourine and all the ladies begin to dance as she sings to them. Her voice and leadership gift had great influence.

But we soon find her being used by the enemy to bring accusation against God's leader, bring division among the people, and cause the progress of an entire nation to be halted in the middle of a desert! Please read Numbers 12 in its entirety to understand how God responds when people speak out criticism and divisive things. It’s quite scary!

Num. 12:1-4 “Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite. ²‘Has the LORD spoken only through Moses?’ they asked. ‘Hasn't he also spoken through us?’ And the LORD heard this. ³(Now Moses was a very

humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.) ⁴At once the LORD said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, 'Come out to the Tent of Meeting, all three of you.' So the three of them came out.

Num. 12:15 "So Miriam was confined outside the camp for seven days, **and the people did not move on** till she was brought back."

Let's look at some important aspects of the "language of worship:"

1. Worship is not just songs or a "worship time." Worship is a lifestyle of honoring God that is released through a _____. What we vocalize is the release of what actually fills and owns our heart!

Matt. 12:34 "...For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."

2. As members of the worship team, we must take responsibility for the entirety of our conversation. Our words carry _____ both on and off the stage.

Deut. 30:19 "This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live."

Prov. 18:21 "The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit."

3. The Bible calls the act of complaining to one another murmuring. In the story of Aaron and Miriam rebelling against Moses, their murmuring stopped the _____ of the entire nation!
4. The two most valuable tools in learning and maintaining the language of worship are having a regular diet of the Word and having people who will keep us _____ for our conversations and confession.

Accountability with our words must become very practical and intentional. A great way to set this up is to have a "code word" established for those keeping each other accountable that can be spoken in the middle of any inappropriate conversation or critical moment. When the "code word" is spoken by those keeping each other accountable, it is an instant reminder that the content of the conversation is unacceptable and needs immediate adjustment. It's also a fun and effective way to rebuke and correct each other with minimal embarrassment. We have proven this technique to be effective.

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5. Practice intentional _____!

1 Thess. 5:11 “Encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”

Heb. 3:13 “Encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today”

Rom. 14:19 “Make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.”

Encouragement is speaking out the best things: the heart and potential of God for others! It’s a huge need in all of our lives and very powerful when we practice verbal encouragement. This goes far beyond compliments, motivational speeches, or making someone feel better. It is actually a very effective way to release the presence and purpose of God!

The language of encouragement is the language of worship!

6. Develop the language of _____.

The most powerful principles in the Word are actually quite simple. Being grateful and speaking out our thankfulness open the gates of praise and bring us into a place of favor before God.

Psalm 100:4 “Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.”

Deut. 28:47-48 “Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things, therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of all things”

II. Discussion

1. How can our conversations and confession off-stage influence people in our church and community (both positively and negatively)?
2. How does criticism and murmuring stop the progress of the church?
3. How can we keep one another more accountable in this area of speaking life and not death?
4. Give an example of when you were encouraged by what someone said to you. How did those words impact your life?
5. How will learning and practicing the language of worship off-stage affect what we do on-stage or when we are engaged in ministry?
6. Let’s think of and discuss a few ways that we can do a better job in the area of encouraging one another!

III. Prayer Points

1. Pray for a revelation of the power of the tongue!
2. Repent of any ungratefulness and a lack of expressing thanks to God and to each other. Ask for a thankful heart and vocabulary.
3. Pray for a keen awareness of the need and power of encouragement!
4. Pray that the worship team would have a reputation as people who bless and don't curse, who speak life and not death, and who worship and glorify God when they are off-stage!
5. Ask God to reveal any areas where progress has been forfeited due to criticism and murmuring; then repent and ask God for fresh momentum for the people of God!