
WHY GOD WANTS YOU TO WRITE SONGS

-MARK ALTROGGE-

Colossians 3:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

I. For the glory of God

1 Corinthians 10:31 (ESV)

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

A. Motives

1. Let us pray for pure motives
2. God has ways of humbling us.

Psalms 19:12-14 (ESV)

¹² *Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults.* ¹³ *Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.* ¹⁴ *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.*

II. For the joy of the church

Colossians 3:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

We bring joy to the church in songwriting:

A. By teaching truth

*“Songwriters’ role is “a teaching role” (Songwriters’ Retreat 2003)
Songwriting is a means of imparting the gospel; a means of sound, cross-centered instruction” CJ Mahaney Paraphrase*

1. Secular songs often teach or convey an attitude
2. Worship songs teach truth powerfully

It would be difficult to overstate the power of the musical language. It has emotional-mental stimulation unmatched by any other means of communication. Words alone can be and often are very strong, but couple them with the right music and they can be burned into the mind and consciousness indelibly An idea (either good or bad) set to a good melody, given rhythmic intensity and harmonic consistency, can really work its way into our minds. Science tells us we are what we eat; the Bible tells us we are what we think. The devil has made such use of music that one could almost come to the conclusion that it is the music which is evil. The fact is, that it is the heart which is deceived and the mind polluted. The devil simply knows what God has always known, that music is a powerful way to get his ideas implanted and affect the behavior of mankind. (Frank Griffith, *The Role of Singing in the Life and Worship of the Church, Reformation and Revival*)

Singing is one of the best means of extolling God for who He is and what He has done. It allows us, with one voice, to say something of real importance to and about God. According to the Word of God it is an effective way to teach biblical truth. "God's word, both directly and conceptually set to music, can penetrate the mind and heart and stay there. What we sing, we remember, because we have combined the power of intellect with emotion." (Frank Griffith, *ibid.*)

- a. The church needs a full-orbed diet of worship songs. We need songs about:
 - 1) The cross
 - 2) The attributes of God – e.g. immanence and transcendence, sovereignty, faithfulness
 - 3) Trinitarian worship songs
 - 4) Songs about the great doctrines of our faith: the incarnation, the resurrection, redemption, justification, election, reconciliation, adoption, the preservation of the saints
 - 5) Songs for times of suffering
 - 6) Songs that are prayers, e.g. songs requesting more passion, etc.

B. By reminding of truth

2 Peter 1:12-13 (ESV)

¹² *Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. ¹³ I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder,*

Romans 15:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ *But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God*

C. By comforting, edifying, encouraging and exhorting the saints

Singing is one of the ways in which the church instruct itself and thus exercises "the true use of Christ's word." In 2 Timothy 3:16 Paul says that the word of God is profitable for teaching, admonition, correction and training in righteousness. When the singing of the church is a manifestation of the rich dwelling of the word of Christ, that singing will admonish as well as instruct. The singing will confront the minds of the congregation about those things in their lives that need to change. ...The implication seems clear that singing in the life and worship of the church should lead to spiritual maturity in the lives of her members. (Frank Griffith, *ibid.*)

D. By stirring the affections

Christianity is not mere information. It is truth wedded to emotion. Truth should create affection for God.

One thing is unmistakable as a trend in these songs. They are Godward ... addressed directly to God. Not sung about God in His presence but to God in each other's presence. And therefore these worship songs force the issue of authentic worship. Are you right now engaging in a spiritual, authentic, genuine, real way with the Living God? That's what those songs force as an issue on Sunday morning in a way that many of the old choruses that my parents and I sang did not force. (Frank Griffith, *ibid.*)

Added to this, the tunes that are being written today are very, very engaging tunes. They have a way of awakening the affections. They're not excessively complex by and large, or intellectual or demanding. But they catch up the emotions and the spirit in their mood. So two things are happening in the best worship songs.... The mind is being brought with God-centered lyrics in an amazing way into engagement with God and the heart stirred by these contemporary tunes is being engaged with tenderness, devotion and enjoyment." (Frank Griffith, *ibid.*)

- E. By giving the saints fresh expressions of worship

"...along with the singing of the songs of Scripture there is to be a continuing flow of new and fresh expressions of musical praise and worship that faithfully teaches and admonishes the church as we sing to our Lord and God." (Frank Griffith, *ibid.*)

- F. By giving the saints a pleasurable way to worship God – with singing!

Psalm 135:3 (ESV)

³ *Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing to his name, for it is pleasant!*

Psalm 147:1 (ESV)

¹ *Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting.*

- G. By serving the pastoral leadership

Worship songs can review and enforce the doctrinal teaching of the pastors, helping to equip the saints

- H. By serving children

III. For your own joy

- A. Personal Worship

- B. Personal Meditation

Psalm 147:1 (ESV)

¹ *Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting.*