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don’t steal from it. I’m trusting you, friend.**

~Steve Baney, author

Shaping Worship

70 Devotions for Worship Leaders and Teams

Pastor Steve Baney, M. Div.

Shaping Worship

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By Steve Baney, M. Div.

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Each devotion is several pages long. The whole book is over 180 pages.



Introduction – How To Use This Book

You are a worship leader. Every time we gather for worship, whether you're holding a microphone, playing a keyboard, strumming a guitar, or running a sound system, you are leading others in worship. The example you set can either lead people *toward* worship or *away* from it.

The question isn't *whether* you will lead people; it's *where* you will lead them.

Worship shapes us. It strips away the illusions of this temporary world and focuses our attention back on the eternal. It draws us near to our God where we become aware of our sin, receive God's mercy, and experience cleansing and freedom. Worship influences our thought patterns, speech, attitudes, and behaviors. Our lives are shaped by worship.

As worship leaders, *we shape worship.* We identify songs with lyrics that support the Scripture, that express words that connect with the hearts of God's people. We find biblical texts that support the sermon. We lead others to pray. And we incorporate all kinds of art as an expression of love for our God. Worship leaders shape worship.

Shaping worship works two ways. *We shape it. It shapes us.*

If we are to respond to this opportunity to shape the worship of others, we must be shaped by our God.

There are ten shapes that describe a worship leader - ten words that identify the character God desires in one who leads worship. These shapes include humility, transparency, order, accountability, abiding, example, skill, excellence, team, and submission. Understanding these qualities will help make you a better leader and a better worshipper.

This book is written for worship band leaders and worship choir leaders, to be used along with the band or choir when you meet each week for practice. These worship devotions challenge you to let our God shape you into the kind of leader he desires most. The book you're reading now includes 70 short devotions that you can use as a team or individually. Teams that read and study these materials together, such as choirs or bands, can take turns to read, answer questions, and pray each week. It's an ideal companion for your weekly worship practice.

Spiritual growth happens in a variety of settings – one-on-one, in small groups, and in larger congregations. Your worship band or worship choir is a small group, a context where spiritual formation should happen. Considering the tremendous influence that your team has upon the congregation, be sure to

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use this small group as an opportunity to promote spiritual growth.

Lord, let this book be a blessing to those who read it. Use your powerful word in their lives and ministries. Unfold your teaching through the Holy Spirit. Apply these truths to their hearts, that they might be the kind of worship leaders you desire for them to be. Make us yours.

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Humility – part 7

What makes a great worship leader? Anybody can stand before others and make an attempt to sing a song. So how do we measure greatness when it comes to leading worship? What would you say?

- Playing with skill
- Choosing the best music
- Singing on pitch
- Reading certain Scriptures
- Enunciating with clarity
- Leading prayer
- Picking a key in comfortable range
- Including elements such as drama
- Something else?

Certainly these ideas above are good things for a worship leader to do. Combining them may make you seem like a great leader. But remember, these are just our ideas. The best way to measure the greatness of one who leads others to worship our

God is... God. He sets the criteria. So let's look at what Jesus had to say about greatness:

“At that time, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: ‘I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, *whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest* in the kingdom of heaven.’” (Matthew 18:1-4 NIV).

Greatness is found in being a humble servant of our God. It doesn't mean we should set the kids loose on stage, banging on the drums, and breaking guitar strings. But it does mean we should think no more of ourselves as musicians, choir members, or leaders than we think of a musically-unlearned child. Humility is the beginning of greatness.

Notice the first thing Jesus told his disciples to do. He grabbed a kid, put him in front of them, and said to his followers, “Unless you change...” To be a great worship leader, you must be humble. To be humble, you must be willing to change. You must recognize that all your years of experience, all the shows you've played, all the scales you've mastered – all of the things that make you think you're great – add up to a very small beginning of what Jesus says will make you a great worship leader.

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Your experience isn't bad. Your skills aren't a problem, necessarily. The problem comes when we combine our experience and skills with an attitude that says, "I'm great. My way is the best way. I don't need to change."

Lord, use our experience and our skills as worship leaders. Strip away from us arrogance, ego, and pride. Help us understand that having this greatly important job as leaders of worship is not what makes us great. Fill us with greatness by humbling our hearts. Make us yours.



Transparency – Part 6

Have you ever heard of Bezalel and Oholiab?

These two famous people are mentioned over and over in the end of the book of Exodus. So why don't many of us know them? If you don't believe they are famous, consider their well-known accomplishments listed in Exodus 31:

- They were chosen by God (v 2).
- They were filled with the Holy Spirit, given divine wisdom, understanding, knowledge and all kinds of skills (v 3)
- They designed and created art of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood (v 4-5)
- Their art was central in the Tent of Meeting, the Ark of the Covenant (and its atonement cover) (v 7)
- They made the pieces of furniture in the tent like tables, lamp stands, the incense altar, the burnt offering altar, the utensils, the water basin, and the woven garments worn by the priests (v 7-11)

We don't know their *names*. But we certainly recognize the importance of their creative *ministry* in worship.

This is the same kind of reputation we should seek to have as worship leaders. We don't want people to focus on us, who we are, our names, our personality, etc. Instead, we want to be so transparent in the way we point others to worship God that all they remember is *him*. We want people to focus on God, who God is, his name, his personality, and more.

Lord, make us transparent worship leaders, just like Bezalel and Oholiab.

Let people forget about us but remember you. Let our contributions to worship help others to draw near to you (not to us). We are yours.



Order – Part 4

Think of how a mother or father would feel upon realization that they had accidentally left their child alone in a store after shopping. Frantically, the parents rush back to look for the child. Questions of the child's safety race through their minds. What if something terrible has happened? This may have been similar to the way Jesus' parents felt in Luke 2.

“Every year his [Jesus'] parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, ‘Son, why have you

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treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you” (41-48).

This is how the worship leader feels when the drummer doesn't show up, or when the sound technician is absent, or when the keyboardist has gone missing. Questions of their well-being race through the worship leader's mind. In addition to concern for the missing team member, the worship leader also begins to worry about what kind of effect this will have upon the congregation. Can the band play that upbeat song without the drummer? Will anyone be able to hear the choir without the sound technician controlling the microphones? What will the band do when the pianist's lead solo goes missing from the instrumental portion of that song?

Your ministry of worship is important. When you are missing, there is a void left behind. If you need time off for vacation, illness, or other responsibilities, your worship leader understands these needs. And he or she will work with you to arrange for the time off that you need. But the only excuse for your absence without a phone call is an emergency. When you skip practice or worship without telling the worship leader where you are, he or she comes to one of two conclusions.

- (1) There is some sort of emergency. Because they care about you (as a person, not just as a function of the

band), they will want to know how they can help respond to the emergency. Or...

- (2) You don't respect the leader, the band, the congregation, or our God enough to let the worship leader know where you are and why you're absent.

Since we worship a God of order - not a God of chaos or confusion – let's agree to be on time for practice and worship. Let's be dependable - the team member that others can always count on to show up. And let's worship God in an orderly way, prioritizing his team and his congregation over our personal desires.

Lord, we will worship you with order. We commit to being on time and present at practice and at worship. And when we cannot be present or on time, we commit to respecting your team, your congregation, and the worship leader you placed over us by letting he or she know where we are and why we're absent or late. Take our time and make it yours. Make us yours.

The remaining devotions address the following issues:

- Accountability (giving permission to others to confront you)
- Abiding (our deep relationship with Christ)
- Setting an example
- Skill (addressing general principles and a few specific skills for worship leaders)
- Excellence (what it looks like to offer God our best, not our left-overs)
- Team (going beyond a collection of individuals)
- Submission (why it's good to let go of my expectations and rights)

The book also includes information about specific tools you can use to measure your success and health as a worship ministry or individual worship leader.

<http://www.worshipbanddevotions.com/worship-leader-assessment/>

Other books by Pastor Steve Baney

You may also have interest in these other books written by Pastor Steve Baney.

Devotional Books...

- > The Daily Devo – Volume 1
- > The Daily Devo – Volume 2
- > Shaping Worship – 70 Devotions For Worship Leaders and Teams

Discipleship Resources...

- > Purpose at the Park - A Simple Four-Step Community Outreach Guide
- > Good Friday Worship Experience – Seven Stations of Contemplative Worship
- > Ready... Set... Seven Devotions For Short-Term Mission Teams

Children's Books...

- > The Hopeful Worm
- > Leonard Likes Lizards
- > Dancing With Fishes

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