

# Worship Notes

by Christine Gofron

Because of your unfailing love, I can  
enter your house; with deepest awe  
I will worship at Your Temple.

Psalm 5:7

## It's Just You and Me God

I was talking with my mom the other night and I was really stressed out over all the things I wanted to do. I have a finger (or five) dipped into so many things, that I begin to really struggle with keeping up. I am one of those people who tend to take on too many tasks; I have become an "I can do it all" person. I find myself so overwhelmed with the amount of tasks I've given to myself, I feel like I'm failing at everything I've set out to do, so I abruptly withdraw from it...sound familiar to anyone?

Even though there are many things I like to do, there is one thing that has been so close to my heart for years – and that's leading worship. I love to lead worship – and I don't mean the stage and the amps. What I mean is, I love to experience worship as a group, and being able to help people see God the way I do, even for a brief moment, is exhilarating. In a sense, my worship feels validated. But thinking that using my gifts to lead worship is the only way to validate me as a child of God is so off base from the right standard of thinking.

One of the things my mom kept repeating as I tearfully rambled off all the things that I was struggling to keep up with was "you don't have to do that". Over and over she would say it as I listed my self-imposed "duties". She's right. I don't have to do any of that, except be a child of God, a respecting wife to my husband and a hard worker at the job I've been at for three years now. I thought it was interesting that she didn't add worship leader to that list. At first I was thinking "um...mom? Did you forget something?" And then at that moment it hit me like a ton of bricks. The gifts I was given, the talents that have been left in my care, are for one purpose only – to glorify God. Their primary purpose is not display, but rather intimate expression to the One who gave them to me.

Any church I've been to has lovingly insisted that I get involved in being part of the worship team, or writing or serving in an aspect of ministry. And there wasn't anything wrong with that – the role of the church leader is to find the potential in their flock and to not just encourage it, but utilize it. But I wasn't communicating my boundaries very well – that would require knowing them! I'm a people pleaser – I'm the poster child for it. I say yes whenever I can. And while I have never felt exploited, I have felt overwhelmed. I know what happens when I'm leading worship. I know what happens inside of me and around me – and it's amazing. I feel like my heart is directed straight up and there is no one else around me, even when I'm leading a congregation into worship. It's an intimacy with God that I cannot begin to describe. But then it's done and it feels like it got turned off and real life got turned back on. The channel changed. The commercial was over. Even now I feel sad at all I've missed thrusting myself into that thinking.

When I sing, or play the piano – that's my expression of prayer and love to my Father. First and foremost, it must be for Him. So when did it become a fantastic commercial, only to be brought

back to our regular programming? It became that when I began to focus on pleasing people. My new pastor or ministry leaders, my old friends, those I've let down in the past – out to prove something to them, my parents – all these people became my focus. Sunday morning became daunting. Overwhelmed by everything I felt I had to accomplish, I would dread leaving the house. I planted myself in my office literally 12-15 hours a day and hated coming out. I stopped cooking dinner for my husband, finding any excuse to stay in my 'safe room'. My relationship with my husband began to change and drift. We weren't really fighting as much, but the intimacy wasn't really around much either. We exchanged pleasantries and went about our own business. All of this stemmed from my focus being lost on the order of my priorities. I still struggle in this area, but there is light up ahead.

I am still holding talents as a pianist and vocalist. But who I give them to has changed. I now sit and play on my own again – like it was a long time ago. Melodies have begun to flow that I didn't know I still had. I feel like I can do it again – and not in front of a church, but in front of God. Just me and Him. I still believe God has called me to lead worship – but that doesn't mean I have to do it now. It means I sit before my Father and show Him what I can do with what He gave me; to love on Him for all He's done for me, and to be validated for who I am, not what I do. And who says I have to lead people into worship? Maybe I should master the art of leading myself into worship right now.

People who are talented in the arts tend to be people pleasers – it's why we're good at it. We know how to "work a crowd". And that's all great – the world needs people like us! But we also need to be grounded. We need to say yes to what's right and say no to what cannot be accomplished right now. Otherwise who we are becomes lost to us, and it's a painful road back.

So whether you're a worship leader who's experiencing dryness, or simply a Christian who isn't finding yourselves so intimate with God anymore, stop and step back. Talk to someone about it. You may know what your priorities are supposed to be, but hearing them from someone who loves and respects you will open your eyes. And allow yourself that time with God again. Sit down with Him and love on Him in every way you know how. Allow that change in You to happen – that real change that grounds you in God's character and ways. Then, and only then, when He is ready for you to share it, you can start each worship service or ministry with a true and heavenward statement – "It's just you and me, God." Now it's not a commercial - it's one awesome element of a beautiful story.

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