

Spiritually Skilled Worship, Lesson 2
Unity Within the Worship Ministry
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Before I was saved by God's grace, I was looking for something I believed would help get rid of the hatred I saw in the world at the time. That something was unity. As I look at my life in Christ presently, I see that unity is still an important factor when I work with any group of people, no matter what the group's focus is. Why is it important for us to attain unity among the members of the worship ministry—singers, musicians, AV crew and church staff included?

1. Unity is important to Jesus | John 17:20-23

Jesus, before he was arrested, prayed for one thing among the believers: unity. COMPLETE unity. If it's important to Jesus, then, as His disciples, it needs to be important to us. One may ask, "How is complete unity possible? There are so many different people in the world who have different opinions and experiences. How is this possible?"

2. "By My Spirit" | Zechariah 4:1-6

It's only through the Holy Spirit within us that we can have complete unity—or accomplish anything that God has set for us to do. Think about it: Would we all be here together if we weren't forgiven of our sins and given the gift of the Spirit to guide us in our lives?

1 Corinthians 12:4-13

Take a look around you. Is everyone the same? Of course not. God has given each of us a specific role to play—a varying level of responsibility to carry out—through the power of the Holy Spirit. As a result, when everyone plays their part and works harmoniously through the Spirit, beautiful things are produced, God is glorified, the church is edified and the gospel is more attractive to the lost. Also, it makes submitting to church leaders' authority much easier (Hebrews 13:17), because everyone has the same Spirit within them, guiding them toward God's will being done on earth.

However, it's not enough to just have the Spirit within us in order to achieve unity.

3. Live by the Spirit; eradicate the sin | Galatians 5:16-26

This is an important point to bring up because everyone within the ministry—**everyone**—needs to live by the Spirit and keep in step with him in order to be brought to complete unity. Now, keep this in mind: The Spirit is all about God's glorification; the fruit of the Spirit will be evident within those who are living by him. That's why Jesus says, "By their fruit you will recognize them" (Matthew 7:15-20).

This scripture mentioned the sinful nature, which is important to note because

we all know that there's one thing that divides a family quicker than anything: SIN.

Guard your hearts (Proverbs 4:23) and remember these scriptures:

John 13:16

There is no hierarchy within the body of Christ, for everyone is level at the throne of God. Those of us in leadership roles must remember that God is the one who placed us in a position of authority (John 19:11a) and that we're held accountable for what we do with it (James 3:1). We are never to lord our God-given authority over anyone—it hinders and harms people more than it helps them.

1 Corinthians 12:14-27

The body of Christ isn't made up of one particular type of person, culture, or race—it's made up of many. Because of this, we need to make sure that what we present before God is representative of the diversity that exists within the body—this is a prime example of being all things to all people (1 Corinthians 9:19-23). Remember, it's the Holy Spirit who brings us to complete unity, not the opinions of one or two people or the opinions of a particular race. Every race/culture has something beautiful and unique to offer before God. Imagine what would happen if every race/culture placed their uniqueness on the table. How beautiful that offering would be!

Hebrews 12:14-15

Know your enemy! He wants us to give in to jealousy, envy, arrogance and selfishness in order to destroy unity through the Spirit.

Ephesians 6:12

Because of this fact, we've got to know that our struggle is against the forces of evil, not each other.

So, what are some practical things that can be done in order to keep Satan from getting a foothold (Ephesians 4:27) and to forge unity within the group?

1. Pray together as a ministry—everyone included, everyone involved. It takes prayer in the Spirit to begin forging the most needed unity within the group.
2. Know your congregation and your community. Once again, being all things to all people opens up more doorways and makes the gospel more attractive to those who haven't heard it. What cultures are within your congregation/community? This must be considered when putting together a well-flowing, diversified worship service that glorifies God and edifies His church.
3. Keep personal opinions and preferences out of the decision-making process. Remember, the goal of the worship & praise ministry is to glorify God and to edify His church, not to satisfy one person's ego or to cater to one or two

people's musical tastes.

4. Take people within the ministry where they are. Gently restore those who are caught in a sin (Galatians 6:1); praise God for the good things they have to offer; encourage growth of both kinds—spiritual and technical.
5. Do a book study. There are many books out there (my favorite is Dave Eastman's "Life-Changing Worship") that can help forge unity and develop deep, spiritual convictions to build the ministry upon. However, make sure that the book you choose to study is doctrinally sound.

To conclude...

Ephesians 4:3

As we work together in creating an incredible atmosphere of praise and worship to God, let's make sure that our unity is evident, knowing that it's only through the Holy Spirit that we're able to accomplish these things.