

Chapter Fifteen

“Refrigerator Art”

Worship is the only thing that we can give to God that He doesn't already have. A lot of what we've been talking about is how our praise to God actually benefits us. That's true, but it should never be the reason *why* we praise! We shouldn't worship God expecting anything in return. We shouldn't praise God expecting to get anything. We should approach the throne of God willing to GIVE something. True worship is when we actually want to give an offering of praise, an offering of worship to a Holy God that is worthy of everything we can give Him.

In the book of Ephesians, the Bible instructs us to sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Most of us have heard this verse, but everyone has their own interpretation of what those three elements actually are. For the Bible to tell us to sing hymns messes with our cultural definition of the word. The Bible was printed long before the first hymnbook was printed, and long before the first “hymn” was ever written, or what we typically refer to as hymns.

I'd like to define the three elements of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs and what they mean to me - and you can interpret it however you see fit. I define *psalms* – as songs taken straight from scripture. There are a number of songs out there that we sing that can be interpreted as ‘psalms’ - “Create In Me A Clean Heart,” “Lord, I Run To You,” “Blessed Be the Name of the Lord,” “My Help,” just to name a few. Again, these are songs that someone has taken the exact words or pretty much exactly the words of scripture, and put them together with a musical melody so we can sing them. They are great for scripture memorization. Also they are some of the most comforting songs to sing when we are going through a trial. There's no better way to get encouraged than to quote scripture back to yourself.

Songs that are considered to be *hymns* from a biblical reference are not necessarily songs that are included in a hymnbook. If you want to get technical, songs that used to be considered “contemporary choruses” are now being printed in hymnbooks. Which will make a few people mad since they have a narrowed definition of what a real ‘hymn’ should be! I believe that in this scripture passage, a hymn can be defined as any song written by a man. So in that case, Fanny Crosby, Bill Gaither, Stryper, MercyMe, Chris Tomlin, Bono and Taylor Swift could all be considered hymn writers.

Confusion seems to start when people start to define spiritual songs. Some consider it to be when you speak in tongues, some consider it to be a new song that we won't sing until we get to Heaven. If you'll allow me, I'd like to explain what I consider to be a spiritual song.

In my opinion, a spiritual song is the highest form of praise that I can give. If you've ever been a part of a service where everyone is singing their own song to Jesus at the same time, it's

one of the most beautiful sounds ever heard. I consider it to be my own personal song to Jesus that I write just for Him. For me, it doesn't have to rhyme; it doesn't have to make sense. It doesn't even have to have any particular melody. It's a personal song from me to Him. It's my own love song for His ears only. If you've never allowed yourself to sing a song like that, I would encourage you to try. It's not complicated. In fact it can't be wrong because it's yours! Simply think of something you'd like to tell Jesus. Think about it and just come up with a few words or a sentence or two. And then, just sing those few words or sing that sentence to Jesus, making up your own melody. You might think that's weird and a little too free or charismatic for your personal taste. I will just say that if you don't free yourself enough to worship for an audience of One, you're seriously missing out on a completely different level of praise.

He decorates Heaven with your worship!

I sing a spiritual song during corporate worship times as well as my private times of praise. I've often heard people say that guitar solos distract them during corporate worship because it causes them to quit singing and focus on the guitar player. Whoever told you to do that? To be honest, I know several guitar players that have all told me the same thing at one time or another. They have told me, "Jason, I really wish I could sing like you and some of the other people on our team, but I can't. As much as I try, I just can't sing worth a flip. But when I play a guitar solo, that's the way I sing. That's the way I praise God. That's the time I get to sing a solo just to God and use the gifts He has given me to return my praise back to Him." First of all, most guitar solos never sound the same. A lot of them are considered ad lib. Guess what a spiritual song is? On the other hand, if a guitar solo is distracting you from worship, why don't you just join in and do what the guitarist is doing? Sing your own spiritual song to Jesus at the same time an instrumental spiritual song is taking place.

I want to create a visual picture for you to consider. I want you to imagine that you were elected to be a part of the decorating committee of Heaven. What would you do? How would you decorate Heaven? Think about it. The walls are made up of jewels and precious stones. The streets are made of gold. The one commodity that some people put the highest price tag on or the highest value on earth – that's what God put on the streets! How in the world are you going to decorate a place like that to make it look better?

Did you know that God is a collector? The scriptures tell us that He collects the tears and the prayers of the saints. (Psalm 56:8) And we know that He is seeking true worshipers. (John 4:23) If you think about that, it's kind of weird to me. He knows where everything is because He created it. He knows where every diamond is buried and hidden in the earth. He knows where every ounce of gold is placed on the planet. Yet He is looking for one thing. He is still seeking one thing – He's searching for you. He's looking for your worship!

Consider this. When you worship God, when you give Him true praise with a heart that's right with Him, it's as if He leaves the throne room of Heaven and He grabs an empty bowl. The King James Version calls it an empty vile, a jar of clay. He grabs a jar and leaves the throne of Heaven when He begins to hear you sing. He comes down to where you are and He collects every passionate tear that you shed, every sincere word of praise that you give to Him in worship. He gathers all of your worship up and He takes it back to Heaven and places it on the shelves, lining the walls of Heaven. He decorates Heaven with your worship! And I've got to imagine that the angels just look at Him like that RCA dog with his head cocked to the side saying to God, "I just don't get it. I just don't get what you see in that. It looks pretty pitiful to me." God melts when you worship Him. He craves it! If God has a weakness, you are it! Your praise is His weakness. He's like a father that will give anything to his child when they ask for something in a way that melts his heart. Your worship is the one thing that He is seeking, the one thing that He desires. The one thing that He just can't get enough of.

I want you to take a second and picture the throne of Heaven. Go ahead and imagine in your brain what you think that the throne of Heaven looks like. I don't know what you imagine, what colors are represented, if it's high up on top of a hill or at eye level, if there's smoke or clouds or just extremely bright lights invading the canvas of your mind. I don't know how you picture it. The Bible says that angels surround the throne of Heaven. Now when I say surrounded, I'm not talking about an angel to the right and the left of the throne. The Bible tells us that the throne of God is surrounded by six winged seraphim-angels. (Isaiah 6:2) *With two wings they cover their face, with two wings they cover their feet and with two wings they fly.* They don't just surround the throne like we would a famous person we want to meet. The six winged seraphim are above Him, below Him, to every side of Him, until the throne of Heaven literally looks like a giant beehive of angels' wings. Picture that for a second, a giant beehive of angels' wings. Right where the angels words and their eyes meet – right in the center where they meet – THAT is the throne of Heaven! God literally sits on the praises of angels that are constantly worshiping Him who are right at this very second saying, "*Holy, holy holy is the Lord God Almighty who was and is and is to come.*" (Revelation 4:8) "*To him who sits on the throne and unto the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, forever and ever!*" (Revelation 5:13) That is happening right now this very second as you are reading this book.

However, for some reason which I'll never fully understand, when we start to sing, when we start to give Him praise, when we start to sing psalms, hymns or spiritual songs, it's as if God says to His angels, "Hey guys, quiet down for just a second....do you hear that? Do you hear what I'm hearing?" It's like He walks over to the edge of Heaven and tells his angels, "That's my child down there that is giving me praise!" He continues and says, "Michael, Gabriel, - I'm leaving it with you guys – I've got to get down there!" On His way out of Heaven, He grabs an empty vile and comes down to where we are and collects our worship to take back to Heaven to add to the decorations. I've just got to imagine that the angels get pretty frustrated! When He comes back with my worship and puts it on display, I imagine that they look at it like we would

some weird, abstract piece of art and say, “God, what do you see in that? Did you not just hear what we sounded like? You think his song was good? Did you hear what the host of angels just sang to you? Honestly God, I just don’t get it, it makes no sense at all to me that you think that’s special enough to keep!”

Ironically, I am writing this chapter in my kitchen. I have some things displayed in my kitchen that if you saw it, you’d look at it the same way as the angels do. You’d back up; tilt your head for another angle, a different view. You’d look at it and study it and it still wouldn’t make any sense to you. It’s what I like to call “refrigerator art.” I have three children.

My kids are still at the age where they color pictures and give it to me. Truth is, I display those pictures in my house and I like them a lot! It doesn’t make any sense to anyone else on the planet but me! It’s something that my children have taken the time to create just for me. It’s not special to anyone else but the one that they created it for. If I gave you one of the pictures that they created, you wouldn’t want it, you would never see what I see in it.

Here’s the reason why - you’re looking for the perfection in the art. The only thing I’m interested in is my relationship with the artist! That is exactly how God looks at your worship. He wants it. He can’t get enough of it. He’s proud of it. He wants to display every act of worship, every single song of praise that you give Him.

I know, you might say, “Yeah but I can’t sing, I can’t play an instrument like other people can. I can’t write, I can’t teach, I can’t do anything that other people would have an interest in.” Let me tell you in love, please don’t compare your scribbling to my scribbling or the scribbling of anyone else because your Daddy wants to see what you’ve drawn for Him!

Your “refrigerator art” is a spiritual song! So my question is, “What are you decorating Heaven with?” Take out your brush, take your pencil, take your shoes off and dance, lift up your voice in a song of praise and start creating a masterpiece for your lover. He’s never quite satisfied. He always wants just one more piece of art in His collection to put on display in the halls of Heaven. I can’t wait to find all of my pitiful scribbling one day. If you get there before I do and you find mine, go ahead and laugh all you want. It’s not for you. It’s for my Daddy. He loves it. He’s proud of it and that’s all that matters to me!