

Worship Matters Study Guide For Teams

By West Breedlove
Director of Music Ministries
Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church
Knoxville, TN

PART ONE: THE LEADER

Ch. 1 – The Important Things

1. Has worship ever seemed empty, dry, or pointless? Can you identify some causes? What is the remedy?
2. What may God have been trying to teach you?

Ch. 2 – My Heart: What Do I Love?

“...what we love the most will determine what we genuinely worship” (25)

1. Before reading the quote below, discuss: What is the greatest challenge you face as a worship leader?

“...far too little has been said about the worship wars going on inside us. Each of us has a battle raging within us over what we love most—God or something else. ... We love our idols because we think they’ll provide us the joy that comes from God alone. ... I wanted God to be exalted through my life, but another agenda was ruling my heart. I wanted people to approve of me, admire me, applaud me. To be honest, I wanted people to adore me. I had an incessant passion to steal God’s glory.” (21, 24)
2. Bob quotes Isaac Watts as saying, “The Great God values not the service of men, if the heart be not in it: The Lord sees and judges the heart; he has no regard to outward forms of worship, if there be no inward adoration, if no devout affection be employed therein. It is therefore a matter of infinite importance, to have the whole heart engaged steadfastly for God.” Is worshiping with your heart a matter of infinite importance to you?

Ch. 3 – My Mind: What Do I Believe?

1. What is “theology”?
2. Define “doctrine”
3. Why are good theology and sound doctrine important?

“Being moved spiritually is different from being changed spiritually. Music affects and helps us in many ways, but it doesn’t replace truth about God. Music can never by itself help us understand the meaning of God’s self-existence, the nature of the Incarnation, or Christ’s substitutionary atonement. Nor can an instrumental solo tell us how music functions in worshiping God. For that, we need to read our Bibles. And to know what the Bible says, we need theology. Good theology.” (30)

4. What are you reading or watching in your leisure? How are these helping you grow in your knowledge of God?
5. Respond to the statement: “...the moment we veer from what is true about God, we’re engaging in idolatry.”
6. Compare these two statements by Bob and popular rock artist Sting:

“Music affects and helps us in many ways, but it doesn’t replace truth about God. Music can never by itself help us understand the meaning of God’s self-existence, the nature of the Incarnation, or Christ’s substitutionary atonement. Nor can an instrumental solo tell us how music functions in worshiping God. For that, we need to read our Bibles. And to know what the Bible says, we need theology. Good theology.” (Kauflin, p 30)

“I think music is the one spiritual force in our lives that we have access to, really. There are so many other spiritual avenues that are closed off to us, and music still has that, is still important, is important for me. It saved my life. It saved my sanity. (“Sting: A Musical Voyage,” In the Spotlight, Educational Television Network, 15 September, 1993)

Ch. 4 – My Hands: What Do I Practice?

1. Bob says, “...*leading the church to worship God requires more than a sincere heart and good intentions. It requires skill. And that involves work, time, and preparation.*” What Scripture supports such a statement?
2. What skills do you need to develop personally, or as a team or band or ministry? What steps can you take to develop them?
3. How can we achieve “undistracting excellence”? Or is “excellence” really just subjective or contextual? In other words, is it possible to do something in your church with *undistracting excellence* that in another church family would be entirely distracting?
4. Read the top of page 38, **Skills to Develop**, then consider this quote from Harold Best:

The sobering thing about so much contemporary Christian music and art – all types, but especially the big-scale stuff, pseudo-symphonic, classicised popular and popularised classics, oversized choirs and instrumental groups, or in their absence, the ever-present taped accompaniment, “excellence” in absentia – the trouble with so much of this is that it pretends so ardently, pushing for something that already exists in finer form. It is gross, large-scale, theme park imitation – unauthentic – hence so prone toward kitschiness. Without possessing an inner sense of indigeneity, so anxious to “be like” so obsessed with overstatement and so lacking humility and meekness, it sends out the worst signals to culture about the meaning of lean, disciplined, and authentic faith. (Harold Best, *Music Through the Eyes of Faith*, 130.)

5. Can you remember ever substituting your talent, gifting, abilities, and skills for genuine worship flowing from a life of worship?

Ch.5 – My Life: What Do I Model?

1. What areas of life did Paul highlight in his instruction to Timothy, saying he set an example for Christians?
2. Read James 3:8-10 and Matthew 12:36. Now take a few moments, and allow the Holy Spirit to search your heart and bring to mind any sin or patterns of sin in your speech.
3. Bob says, “It’s not my songs that define my worship; it’s my life.” And later, “The standard for leading worship isn’t sinless perfection. But there has to be a consistent lifestyle of godliness.” Take another few moments, and ask the Lord in his mercy to reveal any sin in your conduct that you may be cherishing.
4. On pg. 46, Bob writes, “Temptation is too great, sin too deceptive, and the world too attractive to think we can live an overcoming life on our own.” Is there someone (of the same sex!) in whom you can confide and confess sin? Are you actively fleeing temptation?
5. Think about this: If your church followed your example of love, what would your church look like?
6. If we are to set an example in faith, and if faith means believing God “exists and ...rewards those who seek him” (Heb 11:6), what are ways we can battle unbelief?
7. The pursuit of holiness and purity is unpopular, and spoken of disparagingly, even among modern Christians, as puritanical. But God wants leaders in the church to be an example of purity. Old Testament ceremonial purification rites were only *outward signs of an inward reality*. Discuss what does purity means to you? What specific areas of life does a call to purity apply to? (cf. p.47)
8. The Puritans said we will never have *pure* motives, but we can have *right* motives. What is your motive for being in music ministry? Are there any motivations that challenge an undivided heart and single-minded devotion to Christ?
9. Consider, are there any areas of your life, or areas in your ministry, that are not under the Lordship of Christ? (Dress, thoughts, etc...)

PART TWO: THE TASK

Ch. 6 – So What Does A Worship Leader Do?

1. Imagine that you are planting a church. Now consider the question Bob posed at the beginning of this chapter: How important are worship leaders?
2. What do the Scriptures themselves say about worship leaders? (p.52, 53)
3. Who does 1 Tim 2:5 and Heb 10:19-22 is the true worship leader?
4. Does music bring us near to God? Does a worship leader? Explain.
5. What is the working definition of a worship leader that Bob gives? (p.55)

Ch.7 – A Faithful Worship Leader...

1. God hasn't called us to be successful or popular—he's called us to be *what*?
2. What does faithfulness in music ministry look like? If "each of us is to be trustworthy with the mysteries of God", that we're "called to faithfully proclaim what he's revealed", how do we do that in practical terms?
3. Bob quotes Harold Best, saying, "Ministry and fame have become so equated with each other that it is nearly impossible to think of anything but fame if one contemplates a ministry in music". Do you resonate with that? Discuss.
4. What does zealous leadership (Rom 12:8) look like in worship?
5. Bob says, "Every criticism provides a fresh opportunity to examine our motives and actions and to respond as those who have received amazing mercy through the cross." Can you share such an experience?
6. What is the ultimate goal of faithful leadership?

Ch. 8 - ...Magnifies the Greatness of God...

1. Psalm 34:3 says, "Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!" Bob expounds this text, saying "Magnifying and cherishing [God's] greatness is at the heart of biblical worship." Unlike a microscope, which makes something small seem much bigger, worship leaders are similar to telescopes, which "help people see through the eyes of faith how great God has actually revealed himself to be." So what are some ways worship leaders do this?
2. What dangers await us if we aren't clear and specific about God's nature in the songs we sing? (see bottom of p.62)
3. John Stott says that "All true worship is a response to the self-revelation of God in Christ and Scripture, and arises from our reflection on who he is and what he has done". Do you personally, and do we as a music ministry and church have times for such reflection? Is it fostered, or are there ways it is being drowned out by the noise of the world?
4. What are three areas God has manifested himself and invited us to explore his greatness?
5. Respond to this quote from p.64: "...worship is the triune God inviting us to share in the fellowship and joy he has known from eternity past. We've been chosen to join him in his eternal preoccupation: magnifying his endless glories, perfections, and beauty."
6. What are some ways the Psalms teach us to express our affections toward God to magnify his greatness?
7. Is there a biblical rationale for singing hymns of aspiration and commitment, such as "I Surrender All"?
8. If it is our responsibility to ensure that worshipers have ample opportunity to magnify God with biblical truth and strong affections, let's discuss how we are doing at it. Are feelings for God alive? Are they based on and born from encountering the truth from Scripture?

Ch.9 - ...in Jesus Christ...

1. What does it mean to worship in spirit and truth?
2. Why do you need a Savior? What are you being saved from? (p.71)
3. To save us from God's wrath, Jesus must be our *what*? (p.71) How did Jesus become that?
4. What does Bob find as the most compelling truth that consistently, powerfully, and rightly call forth praises? (p.72) Does this resonate w/ you? Why do Unitarians or Muslims or Mormons worship? What compels them?
5. What is the foundational theme of our worship? Why? (p.72ff)
 - a. For our A_____ to God
 - b. For A_____ Worship
 - c. For _____'s Glory
 - d. For _____ in Heaven's Worship
6. What does Harold Best mean he says that all of our offerings "*are at once humbled and exalted by the strong saving work of Christ*"? (p.75)
 - a. Why are our offerings humbled?
 - b. Why/How are our offerings exalted?
7. Where is the glory of God displayed most clearly? (p. 76)
8. Why might the hymn "Amazing Grace" be so popular, even among non-Christians? (p.78)
9. Would Jesus have come to die if you were the only person in the world? Why or why not? (p.78)
10. For whom did Christ die – you or God? Explain (with Scripture).

Ch. 10 – “...through the power of the Holy Spirit...”

1. Bob quotes Robert Rayburn, *“If worshipers are not consciously dependent upon the Holy Spirit, their worship is not truly Christian.”* Respond. How often are you “consciously dependent”? How much of our week-to-week worship can be pulled off in the flesh, with no attention – much less, “desperate dependence” – confessed to the Holy Spirit?
2. On p.82, Bob says, *“Trying to lead [worship] without spiritual power is far more serious [than leading without electrical power]. But not normally as obvious.”* Are there ways to know we are not worshiping and leading worship in the power of the Spirit? What makes the Third Person of the Trinity “functionally irrelevant”?
3. What three attitudes are indispensable in the practical pursuit of the power of the HS? Desperate _____, Eager _____ & Humble _____
4. What is one of the primary ways we show that we are desperately dependant on God?
5. If one of our goals in worship is to put on display the power of God, and if the Scriptures are correct when they say that it is our *weakness*, not our sufficiency, that displays his power (2 Cor 12.9), then practically speaking, how can we be weak in worship without drawing attention to our weakness?
6. Bob says (p.84) that one of the indispensable attitudes in the pursuit of God’s presence is an eager expectation of him to reveal his power. Along these lines, he quotes Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones as saying, “...it is ultimately what you and I believe about God.” What do you think? Is God’s active presence always a response to right belief? Does Mark 6.1-6 have any relevance to this?
7. What role does the Spirit play in a prelude or a choral anthem?
8. The next to last paragraph on p.84 lists some ways we know that God’s Spirit is at work. Read them. Are there others you can think of?
9. What is your church’s doctrinal stance on the Holy Spirit? Is there still prophecy in the church? Healing?
10. How can we allow room for the Holy Spirit to work?
11. How can we be “humbly responsive” to the work of the Holy Spirit?

12. Can a liturgical church be “Spirit-filled”?

13. If the Spirit stopped empowering our worship, would anyone notice? (p.87)

Ch.11 - ...Skillfully Combining God’s Word...

1. Bob says, “The whole meeting is worship; the whole meeting should be filled with God’s Word. And the whole meeting should be characterized by the Spirit’s presence” (p.89). Are there any areas in our regular worship services that are not so characterized? (Announcements, for instance)
2. What is the role of the Spirit in our singing?
 - Praying?
 - Preaching?
 - Baptisms?
 - Communion?
3. Is understanding the preached Word an act of the Spirit?
4. “We are what we sing.” Discuss.
5. How is worship “dialogical”, and not just us talking to God? What parts of worship are performed on behalf of God, and what parts by the congregation?
6. What are ways we can ensure a centrality of the Word in our worship?
7. What are some examples of songs that do a good a job of setting an example for “combining God’s Word with music to magnify the greatness of God in Jesus Christ”?

Ch.12 - ...With Music... (Part One: What Kind?)

1. Does God care whether or not we use music to worship him? What Scripture supports your answer?
2. What hymns do we find in the New Testament? (For assistance, read Ralph Martin's article, Some Reflections on New Testament Hymns, http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/hymns_martin.pdf)
3. What are some ways that music helps us in worship? (p.98, 99)
4. How can we be intentional about helping worshipers focus on the lyrics?
5. Discuss Gordon Fee's comment: "Show me a church's songs and I'll show you their theology."
6. Bob says, "At times I've chosen not to do a well-known song because I thought the music was more impacting than the lyrics. The catchiness factor surpassed the weightiness factor." Are there songs in our church's catalogue that might be just catchy, and not sufficiently weighty?
7. One way we can serve the lyrics with our music is to adjust our musical arrangements and volume. Who is the real worship team when we gather, and how does changing the volume serve them?
8. Think back on your last few worship services. How much time was given to instrumental solos? Was this helpful or not? What purpose did it serve? What are ways we can help worshipers during instrumental breaks (i.e., *selahs*)?
9. Discuss Bob's comment that "God seems to have established an undefined but discernable relationship between music and the way we hear his Word. As best as I can tell, music affects our emotions, which in turn can make us more receptive to, or at least more aware of, the words we sing and hear. We can't speak dogmatically about this relationship, but neither can we deny it."
10. "God is too great and the human experience too complex to think that one kind of music will always best express the dynamics of our relationship with a living God" (p.104). Consider and discuss the implications of this statement.

11. Michael Hamilton says, “We need to welcome the experimental creativity that is always searching out new ways of singing the gospel, and banish the fear that grips us when familiar music passes away.” Many people in our churches have lost a lot of the worship music they grew up with – the music they that helped them express their godward affections. How do we shepherd them through such loss, and how are we preparing for the day when “our” music is gone? Or do we think we’ll be singing our current favorites 50 years from now?
12. What is the “music center” of our church? What is the signature sound that most effectively edifies the majority of our congregation?

Ch. 13 ...With Music... (Part Two: Planning Sunday’s Songs)

1. Describe (flaws included!) your worship planning process.
2. What do you think is meant by the phrase, “We don’t simply plan for meetings; we plan for people”?
3. To what extent is our worship planning a community effort? Are we considering everyone of every generation in our planning?
4. What is the unchanging theme of our worship services?
5. Do worshipers in our services clearly understand what they should be focusing on? How can we reinforce or improve on this?
6. Bob states, “I want to maximize the use of every song” (p.113). How does that resonate with you? Is it ever tempting for you to just get through a song without allowing it to serve its purpose?
7. Are our transitions between elements and portions of the meeting clear? Do the spoken transitions make sense? Are they edifying, or just filler?
8. Bob lists several ways to plan creatively (p.116-117). Are there any in this list that your church does not do regularly that might be of value?
9. Review your songs from the last 6 to 12 months, and with your team or pastor answer the questions Bob lists on p.119.

Ch. 14- ...Thereby Motivating the Church

1. What are three important ways that God can use a worship leader to help people connect with him?
2. Why should everyone – including the instrumentalists – on the worship team sing as often as possible? (p.123)
3. What does it mean to be a “transparent” worshiper? (top, p.124)
4. What do you do to help you stay focused on the words you are singing? Bob offers a few questions he asks himself on p.124. As a group or in private, practice asking yourself these questions and offering brief exhortations as you play through a song.
5. How should you react if people seem disinterested in worship? Considering the high probability that many people will come to worship hindered in a variety of ways, how can you encourage and “impress on them what God has done in Jesus Christ, what he has promised to do, and what a difference this makes in their lives”?
6. Beyond singing together and enjoying worship, God wants “to knit the fabric of our lives together”. Bob offers a few of questions toward this end:
 - a. Do you have a biblical perspective on your meetings?
 - b. Are you helping people see how they relate to God’s total plan and purpose for his people?
 - c. Are you attracting an audience, or are you building a worshipping community?

Ch.15 - ...To Proclaim the Gospel...

1. Are there any songs we sing, or are popular in many churches, that are lean on “proclamation” – declaring what is true about God?
2. If we have been saved “to proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9), are there ways we can know that people are leaving our churches proclaiming *the gospel of Jesus Christ matters*? What evidence might there be?
3. If God is using our trials to prepare us for the glory to be revealed in us (Rom 8:18), in what concrete ways can we rejoice in them? Can you share a way you have rejoiced or are rejoicing in a particular trial?

4. How can singing songs together help us become more like Christ? (1 Pet 2:24, 1 Cor 6:20, Phil 1:6, 2 Cor 5:21)
5. *Broken relationships*: Before we can sing “psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to one another” (Col 3:16), we must forgive one another “as the Lord has forgiven us” (Col 3:13). Does anyone come to mind when you are asked, *If God has forgiven us our great sins, how can we not extend mercy to those who have sinned against us?* If you are comfortable sharing, feel free.
6. What do you feel like we proclaim in our church? As you have sat under sound, biblical preaching, has the result been a *growth in the love and appreciation for the gospel*? Is your church a joyful, gospel-centered community that demonstrates and proclaims the good news of God’s grace to a lost and hopeless world? Discuss.

Ch. 16 ...To Cherish God’s Presence...

1. What is the connection between music and God’s presence?
2. If God is omnipresent, why do we sense his presence more profoundly at certain times?
3. Psalm 105.4 says, “seek his presence *continually*.” How can we do that?
4. Is there anywhere that God is not? (cf. Psalm 139.7-8; Apostle’s Creed) What does it mean that God dwells in the praises of his people (Ps 22:3)?
5. Can we find any biblical precedence from the New Testament that records an unexpected encounter with the localized presence of God similar to that of Moses’? Should such an encounter be the norm in the Christian life today?
6. What are some qualities that might accompany the special awareness of God’s presence?
7. What is it that brings us into the special awareness of God’s presence? (2nd paragraph, p. 139)
8. Question 1 asks, What’s the connection between music and God’s presence. Now what about the *difference*? (4th paragraph, p.139. Note: BK doesn’t give an answer.)

9. If one of the Spirit's "primary purposes in the new covenant age is to manifest the presence of God, to give indications that make the presence of God known" (Grudem), can you point to times in your walk with Christ that confirms this?
10. Do you "earnestly desire" the gifts of the Spirit? (1 Cor 14.1)
11. How do you see the Spirit giving manifestations of his presence for "the common good" at your church?

Ch. 17 ...And To Live For God's Glory

1. What does 2 Cor 3:18 suggest as a primary reason for gathering?
2. What are some ways that worshiping God should transform us?
 - a. Biblical worship should H_____ us
 - b. Biblical worship should make us G_____
 - c. Biblical worship should make us H_____
 - d. Biblical worship should make us L_____
 - e. Biblical worship should make us M_____ -M_____
3. Can you point to evidence in your life and the lives of those around you that, through a steady diet of biblical worship, worshipers in your church are transforming into his image as you behold his glory? Discuss this and encourage one another with the evidence you see!

PART THREE: HEALTHY TENSIONS

Ch. 18 – Guiding Principles

1. "...every generation and church is responsible to weigh its practices and traditions against the unchanging authority of God's Word..." (p.154). Consider this comment and spend some time thinking about your church's worship pattern and practices (your "liturgy"). Talk about what might change in the coming years. Whether or not it's good, what can you identify as just tradition?
2. Bob says, "Whether a tradition is three hundred, thirty, or three years old, the danger is the same. We start with Scripture but eventually invest ultimate authority in our own traditions or views" (p.154ff).
3. What are three principles that churches adhere to govern their worship practices? (Two are formal, arising out of the Reformation. One was coined by Bob.) What principles govern your church's worship?
4. Do you allow room for evaluating everything in worship to see if you can do it better? (p.157)

Ch. 19 – Transcendent And Immanent

1. Many times in Scripture when we see someone encounter God, they are immediately aware of the holiness of God and their sin – the net result being worship characterized with reverence and awe. We are also instructed in Heb 12 to worship in such a manner. Discuss what worshipping with reverence and awe looks like. What songs help such worship?
2. God is also immanent—near. There is not only gravity on Sunday morning, but gladness; not just trembling, but rejoicing (p.162). What corporate songs of worship capture both God's total otherness and his nearness? His transcendence and his immanence?
3. Meditate together on what Bob says is the best way to maintain the healthy tension of God's transcendence and immanence (p.162).

Ch. 20 – Head and Heart

1. Based on Psalm 32:11, Bob says that if “we fail to demonstrate delight and satisfaction in God, we’re not only dishonoring God, we’re disobeying him” (p.167). How does that strike you?
2. Does Psalm 32:11 *require* us to shout for joy? Is it a command or an exhortation? What’s the difference?
3. Respond to the assertion that it’s our duty as worship leaders, as Jonathan Edwards said was his own duty, to “raise the affection of my hearers as high as I possibly can, provided they are affected with nothing but truth...”
4. Bob says that the church tends “to favor devotion over doctrine,” and that this “needs to be reversed”. If this is true, why do you think so? And do you agree that doctrine should be favored before devotion, “without losing either”? Why?

Ch. 21 – Internal and External

1. Reconcile a) that failing to demonstrate delight and satisfaction in God surmounts to being sinful (p.167), and b) that we can never know if someone is a true worshiper by observing them from the outside (p.169).
2. Bob puts forward this as the crucial question regarding physical expressiveness: Is there any physical expression of worship that God has given us in Scripture that I’ve never displayed? And if so, why? (Find a list of physical expressions at the middle of p.171.)
3. Hypothetically, if you are worshiping in a church where there is no physical expression and you want to lift your hands, shout, dance, kneel, etc., what do you do? Is it an act of obedience to the Scripture’s exhortations to follow through and be demonstrative in your Godward affections, or are there other, higher concerns that take precedence (p.172ff)?

Ch. 22 – Vertical and Horizontal

1. Why, according to John Piper, did God create the word?
2. What does acceptable worship depend on?
3. Why does God command us to worship him? 2 reasons:
 - a. Our D_____
 - b. His M_____ P_____
4. Discuss this paragraph: “Worship is God’s gift of grace to us before it’s our offering to God. We simply benefit from the perfect offering of the Son to the Father through the power of the Spirit (Ephesians 2:18). Worship is our humble, constant, appropriate, glad response to God’s self-revelation and his enabling invitation. Apart from this perspective, leading worship can become self-motivated and self-exalting. We can become burdened by the responsibility to lead others and can think that we might not be able to deliver the goods. We subtly take pride in our worship, our singing, our playing, our planning, our performance, our leadership. Ultimately we separate ourselves from the God who drew us to worship him in the first place” (p.177).
5. How is encouraging and edifying one another a legitimate form of worship? (Hint: Heb 10:24-35, WM p.178)
6. How might we edify one another in worship?

Ch. 23 – Planned and Spontaneous

1. What are the benefits of planning well for worship? What do you need to watch out for?
2. What are your weekly worship planning habits?
3. How do you treat your plans? As final? As suggestions? How tied do you feel to them as a team?
4. Does the worship team expect and respect any veering from the plans? Have they been sufficiently, patiently and pastorally trained on how to allow for change from plans? In other words, is it clearly a leading of the Holy Spirit, or might it be seen as just a musical decision?

5. Bob writes, “We have God’s Word, four or five songs, and thirty minutes to help them see that God is bigger than their problems and that Jesus Christ is a magnificent Savior.” How does that impact you and your planning?
6. Do you feel chained to the music? What are ways you as a team can free yourselves to lead with Spirit-driven spontaneity? What does such spontaneity win for you and your church?
7. Discuss ways you can grow in spontaneity.

Ch. 24 – Rooted and Relevant

1. What are the benefits of singing hymns and practicing liturgical forms from the past? Bob lists a handful on p.190.
2. Might there be anything in your church that was a “Spirit-inspired practice of a previous generation” that is now only a “dead, unexamined practice”? Is anything in your service prohibiting people from seeing Jesus? (p.191)
3. What are some of the hidden dangers in pursuing relevance?
4. Os Guinness says, ...”by our determined efforts to redefine ourselves in ways that are more compelling to the modern world than are faithful to Christ, we have lost not only our identity but our authority and our relevance” (p.193). Give some thought and discuss what ways he might be referring to that are *more compelling to the world than are faithful to Christ*.
5. Flipping question two on its head, are there ways your church, in attempts to become more relevant, has unintentionally set up unnecessary boundaries to encountering Christ?
6. Consider the ways your church has sought or is planning to seek to be relevant. Evaluate what are the theological bases, the underlying motives, and the consequences of this decision.

Ch. 25 – Skilled and Authentic

1. How important is musical skill and excellence in worship? What role does excellence play in worship? (p.196)
2. How does Reggie Kidd's comment resonate with you, that "There will always be a flat tenor, a broken guitar string, and overly loud organ, or a poorly placed hymn. But it's okay. The cross means it's covered."? Is that a godly attitude, or does it sound flippant? Is this your default attitude when something goes wrong in worship?
3. What does Bob mean when he says, "Assuming I have sufficient skill, do I have to sacrifice my worship of God in order to facilitate the worship of others? No. *The only thing I have to sacrifice is my narrow understanding of what worship is.*"
4. What are your music ministry's qualifications for membership?
5. How would you define *Excellence*? What's Harold Best's definition (199)?

Ch. 26 – For the Church and for Unbelievers

1. Bob says that if our congregation is "not growing in grace and godliness, our demonstration of the gospel is out of step with our declaration" (201). What's your response to that?
2. On p.202 we read that the "first priority of our Sunday meetings is strengthening the church." And that, "as leaders our job is to support our pastor in his role of insuring that the church is growing in maturity." Is that a new realization to you? Is it convicting or reaffirming? Does such a statement demand any adjustment to your present thinking or philosophy of worship? How does it shift your priorities?
3. Discuss how the presence of non-Christians in your worship service changes your leadership, if at all?
4. What are some ways Bob suggests that God will faithfully use to affect unbelievers in our worship? (p.203ff)
5. Discuss the implications of D.A. Carson's quote (p.204) that "without the repeated, passionate, Spirit-anointed proclamation of 'Jesus Christ and him crucified' we may be winning more adherents than converts"?

Ch. 27 Event and Everyday

1. "Biblically speaking, there is no sacred/secular distinction in our lives" (p.207). Spend some time responding to this claim.
2. If all of life is an act of worship, why is it important to gathering with other believers to worship corporately? (p.208ff)
3. Respond and wrestle with Bob's quote that "God has so designed the church that it's impossible to grow in godliness and know the fullness of his grace apart from the church" (p.208).
4. How can God receive greater glory than he already has intrinsically?
5. How important is it to connect the event of Sunday worship with the rest of the week? What are ways we can do that?

PART FOUR: RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS

Ch.28 – Always People

1. How are you learning to relate to other Christians for God's glory?
Perhaps share some trials that have helped you grow in Christian love.
Any conflicts that God has used for your sanctification?
2. In your relationship with your church, your team, and your pastor, is there an invitation to work through relational obstacles?
3. Why is it important to work with others?
4. How much of your time is devoted to the musical side of worship ministry, and how much to the relational?

Ch. 29 – Your Church

1. Bob says that “being a worship leader is more about leading people than leading songs.” How does that strike you?
2. Discuss the importance and benefits of praying for your church, and some ways you as a team can increase your faithfulness in this privilege and discipline.
3. How do you receive compliments? What are practical ways to receive praise better?
4. What about criticism? Are you praying for correction? How are you at handling it, no matter how poorly it is delivered?
5. Read the Poirier quote on p.223 out loud. Do you actively, consciously agree with God's criticism of you in Christ's cross? How might this change your perspective on criticism?
6. Many people might say that Bob thinks too much about song choice. If some song has accompanied a brother or sister's meaningful encounter with God, or if it's getting a lot of play time on Christian radio, shouldn't that be enough to begin singing it corporately? Respond. What are the filters you use to choose songs for corporate worship? (p.224, 225)

7. What changes has your church experienced in the last decade? How were they received? Looking back, how would you do them differently? What are some principles Bob recommends for leading a church through change? (p.226ff)
8. Do you love your church? How can they tell?

Ch. 30 – Your Team

1. Does everyone on your worship team have and know their role and responsibility, beyond their musical contribution?
2. Does everyone know the standards and requirements for participating on the worship team?
3. Bob asks a poignant question: “When you think of the members of your team, what comes to mind? Problems or joys? Pain or pleasure?” He then adds, “Whatever’s in your heart will be revealed in your words and actions” (p.233). Do you have experiences that affirm this?
4. If it’s true that “...everyone will know what’s most important by what we bring to their attention most often” (p.233), what would your worship team say is most important?
5. How are you encouraging your team?
6. Is your worship team or music ministry growing theologically? How do you know? How are you helping in this endeavor?
7. Is there consistent, gracious and clear evaluation of your services? How is it accomplished?
8. “...godly attitude is more important...than great musicianship” (p.238). Is there accountability in your music ministry to ensure that members are pursuing godly character? How so?
9. How are you preparing current team members for the possibility of being replaced?
10. Can your church’s worship music ministry be characterized as a culture of joy?