

## LOVING THE BRIDE OF CHRIST: What is a Healthy Church Member?

*Mark #8 – Sings for God*

*“Praise the LORD. Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints.” (Ps 149:1)*

### I. Sing for WHOM?

#### A. The “Regulative Principle” for Worship – “Only what is commanded is allowed”

The light of nature shows that there is a God who has lordship and sovereignty over all, that he is good and does good to all, and that he ought therefore to be feared, loved, praised, prayed to, trusted in, and served with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might. *But the acceptable way of worshiping the true God has been instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshiped according to the imaginations or devisings of men, or the suggestions of Satan, or under any visible representation, or any other way not commanded in Holy Scripture.* (WCF 21.1)

1. How should the Regulative Principle give us at least a cue (granted, not always perfect) for the content of our songs in worship? As a start, what did Israel sing in worship?

*“But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.” (John 4:23)*

“To put it simply, in worship we *pray* the Bible, *sing* the Bible, *read* the Bible, and *preach* the Bible and see the Bible (in the sacraments). The language of Christian worship is the language of Scripture.”  
-Terry L. Johnson, *Reformed Worship*, 34.

### II. Sing With Your MIND

#### A. In Response to God’s Creative and Redemptive Acts

- Moses and Israel sang after God’s deliverance in the Red Sea (Ex 15)
- David sang after God delivered him from Saul and enemies (2 Sam 22)
- Mary sang after seeing Elizabeth and learning of Christ (Luke 1)
- Jacob (Gen 49); Moses (Deut 32); Hannah (1 Sam 2); NT songs (Phil 2: 6-11, Col 1:15-20)

1. How can we sing after the example of these saints? Do you ever remember Eph 2:11-13?

#### B. Recognizing the Point of the Hymn (e.g., “A Mighty Fortress is Our God”) (from Ps 46!)

1. What is particularly appropriate about singing stanza three this morning?

*That Word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth;  
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him Who with us sideth:  
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;  
The body they may kill: God’s truth abideth still,  
His kingdom is forever.*

**III. Sing With Your HEART**

*“Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. She is a mistress and governess of those human emotions which control men or more often overwhelm them”*  
 – Martin Luther, *Liturgy and Hymns*, 321.

**A. Worship “In Spirit”**

1. How do the following verses speak to the privilege of NT Christian worship done “in spirit” (John 4:23)? How is NT worship different from OT forms?

*“This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.”* (Matt 15:8)

*“Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord...”* (Eph 5:19)

*“Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.”* (Heb 13:15)

*“As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, <sup>5</sup> you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”* (1 Pet 2:4-5)

2. What are the biggest obstacles that keep you from singing from the heart? How does worship from the heart affect more than just our singing on Sunday morning?

*“But I, by your great mercy, will come into your house; in reverence will I bow down toward your holy temple.”* (Ps 5:7)

**IV. Sing With Your MOUTH – “O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.”** (Ps 51:15)

*“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”* (Col 3:16)

1. Learn these tunes before you learn any others; afterwards learn as many as you please.

2. Sing them exactly as they are printed here, without altering or mending them at all; and if you have learned to sing them otherwise, unlearn it as soon as you can.

3. Sing all. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a single degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you, take it up, and you will find it a blessing.

4. Sing lustily and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of its being heard, then when you sung the songs of Satan.

5. Sing modestly. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation, that you may not destroy the harmony; but strive to unite your voices together, so as to make one clear melodious sound.

6. Sing in time. Whatever time is sung be sure to keep with it. Do not run before nor stay behind it; but attend close to the leading voices, and move therewith as exactly as you can; and take care not to sing too slow. This drawling way naturally steals on all who are lazy; and it is high time to drive it out from us, and sing all our tunes just as quick as we did at first.

7. Above all sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to do this attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve here, and reward you when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.