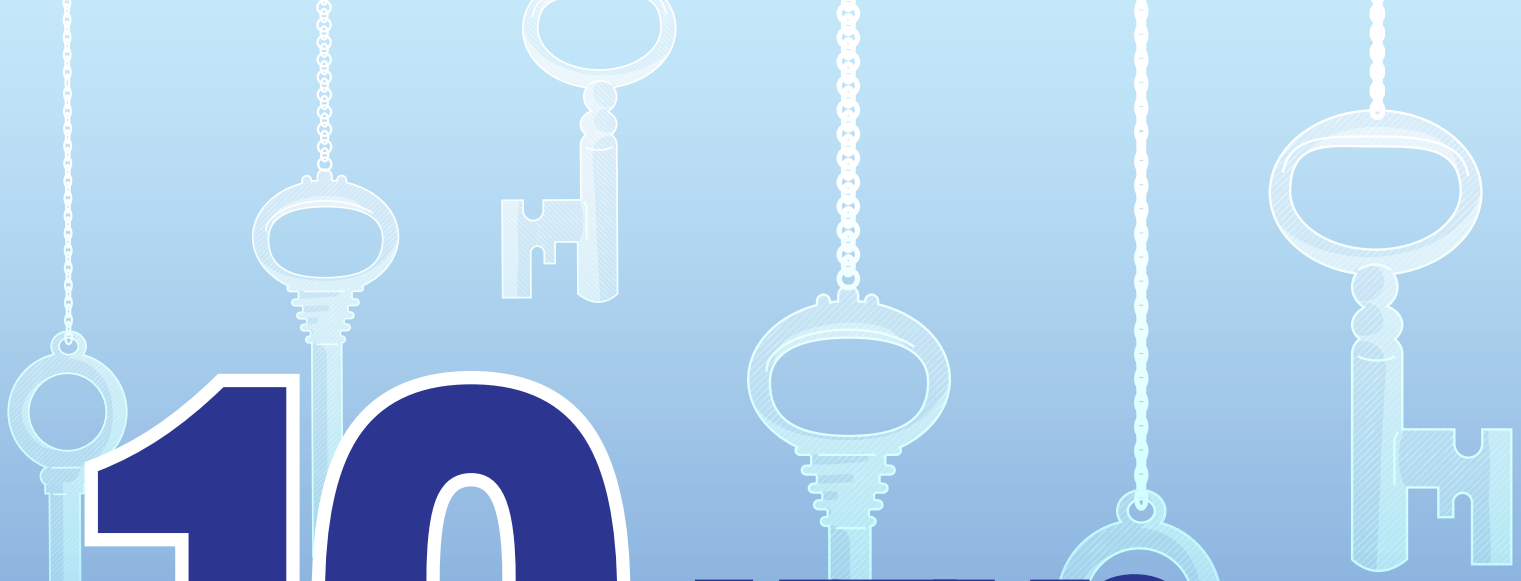


10 KEYS to Winning WORSHIP Services

by Jason Hatley

TRANSCRIPT

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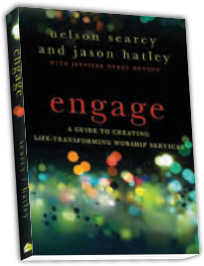
Meet JASON HATLEY

Jason is Lead Pastor of The Journey Church in Boca Raton, FL and the Executive Pastor of Worship Arts at The Journey Church. In 2002, Jason Hatley helped launch The Journey Church in New York City, directing the programming of their worship services. He served as the Pastor of Worship Arts and built from scratch The Journey's worship arts team, a group of over 200 artists and technicians who develop and implement the creative and technical elements at weekly Sunday services. The Journey has been recognized as one of Outreach Magazine's fastest growing and most creative churches.

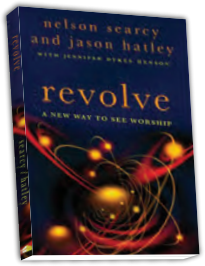
Jason has been a worship leader since 1996. He invests in Worship Pastors around the country through interactive coaching networks and worship planning resources. He has been a featured break-out speaker at the National Worship Leader Conference, Willow Creek Arts Conference, The Purpose Drive Worship Conference, Worship Leader Magazine webinars, as well as seminars around the country. He has a B.M. in Sacred Music Performance from Appalachian State University.

Jason is the author of *Engage: A Guide to Creating Life-Transforming Worship Services* and *Revolve: A New Way to See Worship* as well as over a dozen worship leader personal and ministry growth resources. He and his family currently live in Boca Raton, FL.

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This network is focused on Overcoming the Seven Challenges of a Worship Leader that Jason has identified and taught to thousands of churches – through books, resources and live events – and is provided in such a way that you can participate (and re-watch) at any time.
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Jason: Just by a quick way of introduction here, I mentioned earlier that I served as the pastor of worship arts at The Journey for quite a long time in New York City and now in South Florida in Boca Raton.

One of the fun things about being able to do something like that is you get to start two churches. The second time you start a church, you get to do it with all the lessons you learn the first time around. If I had only done it this way, that would have been really helpful. My wife Karen and I have been married for 15 and a half years.

We actually met in a band. We're the couple that made it. Usually, when you meet in a band, that's a bad thing. There are usually really good songs that come out of that because there's a lot of heartbreak and all kinds of things, but we actually made it. My wife Karen is actually one of the volunteer worship leaders at The Journey and has been for a long time.

The Journey has been our church home for almost 15 years now. I love it. I don't know about you, but there's nowhere else I'd rather be than the church that I'm in right now. I'm just excited about the future that God has for us. In my role serving as the pastor of Worship Arts for a long time and serving as the lead pastor now in our Boca Raton campus, I've had my finger very much on our worship services for many years.

Tonight, one of the things I wanted to is bring an opportunity for us to talk about worship services and specifically, to talk about winning worship services. I look around the room and I know, just from knowing the crowd that's here, that there are a lot of differences in this room. There are a lot of similarities. We all have one Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who is head of the church.

So, there are a lot of similarities, but there are also a lot of differences. We come from different areas. Some of us were urban. Some were suburban. Some were rural. We come from different traditions. I know we have Lutherans in the room. I'm pretty sure there are some Pentecostals here.

Sorry, we're not singing tonight. I just didn't have time to work it in. I grew up Baptist. I know we come from a lot of different traditions, denominations and backgrounds, but there is one thing that we all have in common. Even if everything else about what we do in ministry is different, there's one thing we all have in common this week.

In about three or four days, we're all going to do worship services. Regardless of how you do your service, what your traditions are or what your background is, we all share this one thing on common. This Sunday, I haven't been to all of your churches, but I can imagine that there's going to be a lot of different styles of worship.

There's going to be some contemporary. There's going to be some that are more traditional and maybe some that are blended. There are going to be different languages. Our worship services aren't always in the same language. There are going to be a lot of different traditions.

Maybe you work off of the Liturgical calendar. Maybe you work off of the preaching calendar. Maybe you're her tonight and you're just looking for a good sermon for Sunday. I'm not sure what your plan on that is. Sorry, tonight is not going to be your sermon for Sunday. Maybe, tomorrow, when Lance is up, that will be the case.

We all come here with a lot of differences, but we all come here with some very common ground. That is that this weekend, we're all going to hold worship services. Best I can tell, for about the next 52 weeks, we're probably going to hold worship services in our church as well. Our worship service is this thing that you've heard Nelson and me probably say before.

It just comes around with amazing regularity. Here's the thing about worship services. Our services may all be

different, but not all service are necessarily created the same. Tonight, we're specifically talking about winning worship services. What does that mean to have a winning worship service?

We're going to talk about that a little bit tonight because part of what we do in worship and worship services is about what we do. A lot of what happens on Sunday is about what God is going to do. How do we understand and work in side of that role? How do we maximize what we can maximize and trust where we can trust?

We're going to talk about that tonight. For some of us here, our worship services on Sunday are going to be 60 minutes. For some of us here, 60 minutes into your worship service, you're just getting warmed up. It's just starting to feel good in the service. We all come from very different backgrounds, but we all share the same thing, which is we are going to worship services.

For some of us here, your service on Sunday is going to be highly structured. Maybe that's your tradition or your demonization. For others, yours is going to be highly expressive. Maybe there's a lot of emotion in our service. For some, your service is going to be highly organized. You're just that kind of person. You and your worship pastor like to organize it down to the tee.

Some of yours are going to be a hot mess. It just kind of depends on who you are and what type of church you come from. We're all going to have these differences in our services. The one thing that we have in common is we're all going to have services on Sunday.

Tonight, we 're going to talk about winning worship services. What does that mean? Why is it that some worship services feel like a win? You know you've been there on the Sunday where it felt like everything went perfect. If you're the pastor, you just felt like you had the congregation in the palm of your hand.

You were just teaching with authority and conviction and lives were being changed. If you're the worship pastor, you know those Sundays where, in those 20 minutes, it just feels like the heavens have opened and God is just shining down on this worship. It's just an incredible worship. You walk away and think, "That was a win."

Then, next Sunday, you show up, and, if you're the pastor, you're teaching and thinking, "I can't get anybody to listen to me at all. I'm not connecting with anybody." If you're the worship leader, you're thinking, "What happened? Where did our people go? How did they get replaced with these zombies?"

It kind of goes that way week in and week out. We've all been there before. The thing about worship services is you can't always control the output, but unless there's a blizzard like there was in New York a few weeks ago at our campuses up there, you can pretty much control the input of the service.

Tonight, I was us to think about this. I want us to understand God's rule in worship service and planning worship services. I want us to understand our role. We need to realize that we're not god. So, tonight, what we're going to talk about is not how we manipulate, connive, convince or do those kind of things.

What we're going to do is talk about what God has called us to do, being excellent in that and doing our very best at that, while, at the same time, trusting God to do what only God can do. My goal is that you will plan a winning worship service every Sunday. That should be your goal.

Your goal, for every Sunday, should be that you have a winning worship service every Sunday. Tonight, we're going to talk about what that looks like, how to measure that and what it doesn't look like. I just want to challenge you as we get started. Don't ever take a Sunday off. I'm not talking about a vacation.

You should take a vacation. I'm not talking about that. I'm saying don't ever approach Sunday and just say, "Let's just do, this Sunday, what we did last Sunday. Let's just do, this Sunday, what we did one year ago when we taught on this same message." Approach every Sunday as an opportunity communicate the amazing, life transforming timeless truths of God's word in fresh new and creative ways.

Do the very best you can to make your service a win and, at the same time, trust God for all the things that only God can do. Tonight, that's my goal. That's my hope. That's where we are heading. If you turn over to page four in your notes, you'll see an image that some of you are familiar with.

I know some of you here in the room have been through my coaching network that I do for worship leaders. I still do that, by the way, even though I serve in the lead pastor role of our South Florida location because my hands are still on all that we do campus wide in our Worship Arts areas because I still have a great passion for worship leaders and worship in the church.

I still coach all of our worship leaders on staff at The Journey. I still coach worship leaders nationwide. I know some of you have been a part of that network. Others maybe have not yet. The image on page four, I think, is a really good image for what I call The Seven Challenges of the Worship Pastor.

These challenges fit worship services as well. I'm not going to go through all of these. Let me just hit a couple of things there. You'll notice it's the image of an iceberg. I like this image of the iceberg. I think pastors and worship leaders alike can connect to this because, if you were to ask me what it's like to be in a teaching or worship leading ministry, I would say it's a lot like the iceberg.

Scientists tell us that the larger mass of an iceberg is not above the water. It's below the water. In fact, they say, often times, that 90 percent of the mass of an iceberg is not the little bit you see sticking out of the water, but it's this huge block of ice that's below the water. That's what they found out on the Titanic, by the way.

April is coming up if you're keeping score of how many years it has been. Most of what gets done is not what see above the surface. It's what goes on beneath the surface. I think that's really a great visual for what it means to be in pastoral or worship ministry because what the average person in your church and my church sees happens in about 65 minutes on Sunday.

I've even had it happen where people have come up to be before and said, "Jason, I know that you serve as the worship pastor here. What's your other job during the week?" They thought that all we did was show up on Sunday, that we just magically put all these things together and somehow, it turned out really good. Then, we all went on about our lives for the rest of the week until next Sunday rolled around.

You and I know better than that. We know that, if that 65 minutes on Sunday is going to be the very best that it can be, it takes a lot of work beneath the surface of the water to make that happen. When I do my worship leader coaching networks, I talk about these seven challenges. These seven challenges are the foundation for the network.

There's a personal challenge, which is what your plan is for personal growth. We're talking a lot about that at this conference and in today's session with Nelson especially, which is fantastic. It challenges us to grow personally because growing churches and ministries are led by growing leaders.

I don't want to be the lid on our church. I want our church to be able to grow. I pray that prayer that we talk about often around here. God, make me into the leader that I need to be to lead our church or lead this ministry at the next level. That's the challenge. What is going to be your plan for your personal growth?

The pastor/worship pastor relationship is a challenge. We're not going to get into this very much here tonight, but it's true. That relationship between pastor and worship pastor is so important. It's the most relationship inside the church. What's kind of interesting, I think, at least, is that it's also the relationship inside the church that tends to have the most attention.

Isn't that interesting? The two people on staff who have the greatest responsibility with the public presence, voice or vision of the church is such an important relationship. Yet, there seems to be this tension. I'm not talking about fists out. That's never been my experience.

I'm just talking about those things like, "I just don't understand him," or, "I just don't understand her. If she would only do this for me...," or, "If he would only do that for me, then we would understand and be on the preverbal same page." Do you know what I've often found about pastors and worship pastors when they say that we're just not on the same page?

I found that that page just doesn't exist. I always as, "Show me the page. Where is the page of what you do and what you expect your pastor to do or vice versa? Then, we can figure it out." Unfortunately, there's no page. That's what leads to this tension a lot of times in that pastor/worship pastor relationship.

That's the challenge. We have to figure out systems to help overcome that. The planning challenge is what we're going to talk about a lot tonight. I'll skip that and come back. The people challenge is so important. I don't know about you. Do you ever have this recurring nightmare? I haven't had it in a while.

For a while, I would have this occurring nightmare always on Saturday night. It would be Sunday morning. I would show up at church, and I was the only one. None of the volunteers came. The worship team didn't come. The sound team didn't come. The first impressions and the volunteers didn't come. The kids team didn't come.

I was the only one there to manage the whole life of the church. If you have the dream once or twice, you learn to really appreciate your people. What is this challenge of raising up, involving people in ministry, raising up leaders in that ministry or whatever it might be and just the challenge of helping people from where they are to where they need to be?

A provision is about stewardship. I know you probably have enough money for your church, but I don't have enough budget in my church. So, we all have this challenge of what we do financially and how we manage all that. The professionalism challenge is all about creating a culture of excellence.

We'll talk about that a little bit tonight. That should be something we all strive for. We should all strive for excellence in our ministries. So, we'll talk about that. The production challenge is the one that's kind of up there above the surface line. That's the challenge of Sunday.

If you're in pastoral ministry, you know very well the challenge of Sunday. In fact, I often say that Sunday has plenty of challenges all by itself. I don't need to do anything during the week to add to that and make it any harder than it really needs to be. We'll talk about that a little bit tonight as well.

Here's the point of this whole image: What most people see is just that Sunday. It's just that tip of the iceberg. You and I know that it takes all of these other things beneath the surface of the water to make Sunday the very best that it could be. Tonight, we're not going to talk so much about the tip.

Tonight, we're going to talk about what's beneath the water because when you work hard on what's going on underneath the water line, then your services will grow. They're more excellent along the way. Let's talk about

this topic of winning worship services. First of all, I think a worthwhile question is why should be even have winning worship services?

Why should that even be a goal? Isn't it enough just to, dutifully, week after week, have a worship service? There may be something to be said for that. I think there is something to consistency and just being a presence there every Sunday. People in your church and community know that, if they're going through a crisis, maybe there's at least this church I can go to.

I would challenge our thinking on that to say, "We should probably go a little bit further." We really should desire to win on Sunday. Why is that? First of all, it's because worship is a battle. It's that true? Worship is a battle. We'll talk about the church battle in just a moment. Let's just talk about personal battle.

Sometimes, worship is a personal battle. I don't know about you. I'm sure you've got this figured out in your life. It's not every morning that I wake up and I'm just dying, itchy and ready to dive deep into the Bible every morning without fail. Sometimes, I wake up and I'm really sleepy.

So, you're kind of battling against the clock, or you're battling against energy. Sometimes worship is a battle in our personal lives because we're not really living with an understanding of the importance and power of prayer. Sometimes we go through this battle where we go through seasons of strong prayer.

Then, things start going really well. We start thinking, "Maybe I'm the one that's making this go very well." We stop leaning on God the way that we used to until the pendulum swings the other way, and we think, "I really need to be praying. I need to be a prayer warrior." It's a battle.

Sometimes worship is a battle because there's a sin in our lives. As pastors and worship leaders, we are not immune to sin. We struggle with sin just like people in our church struggle with sin. Sometimes worship is battle because, when it comes to your personal life, there's this person that you're portraying on the outside, yet, you know some of the struggles that you're facing on the inside.

You wonder and worry, "I hope people don't know that I really deal with that. I hope I have my anger under control a little bit better this time around," or whatever the case might be. Worship is a battle because worship involves surrender. Let's be honest. Nobody likes the word "surrender."

That's the word that you hear said in war documentaries for the people that lost. We have this struggle to surrender every area of our lives. Sometimes we battle to hold onto things. Living a life of worship is a battle. Also, in our church lives, worship is a battle. I don't know if you ever think about it that way.

When I do, I think about this passage from 2 Chronicles, chapter 20, verse 22. The Israelites are going into battle. The deck is stacked against them. All the way going into this battle, in terms of their preparation for this battle, they're not doing the big Mel Gibson "Braveheart" speech about freedom.

They're not psyching themselves up and saying, "We're the greatest. We're the stronger army. We'll beat them." Do you know what they're doing? They're worshiping. They're singing. On their way to battle, they're singing and worshipping. Then, look what happens in this passage.

It says, "At that very moment that they began to sing and give praise, the Lord caused the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir to start fighting among themselves." They won the battle that day. They didn't win the battle by the sword. They won the battle by their worship and their trust in God.

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I think about that sometimes. Sometimes our lives and our church services can be a battle. Ephesians 6:12 reminds us that "we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places."

When you and I show up on Sunday morning in our churches, there's been a battle raging long before we darken the doors of our churches. We just haven't seen it. It's been in a realm that our eyes don't seen. Worship is a battle. We have to see it as that. If I have to pick whether I want to lose that battle or win that battle, I don't know about you, but I want to be on the winning side of that.

I want to do all that I can to partner with God to win this battle of worship. Worship is not only a battle. Worship is a witness. We should strive to win in our worship services because of the powerful witness that it is. Worship is not for unbelievers. Worship is not worshiping unbelievers.

It is an important part of witnessing unbelievers in our church. Just to clarify what we're talking bout here, here some of my favorite definitions of worship. I love Warren Wiersbe's definition. He says that worship is the believer's response to all they are—mind, emotion, will, body—to what God is, says and does. I think that's a fantastic definition of worship. I love Warren Wiersbe.

Rick Warren has one of my favorite definitions of worship. He says, "Worship is expressing our love to God for who he is, what he said and what he's doing." I think that's a great definition. Louie Giglio has a pretty similar definition of worship. He goes a little further on some things.

He says, "Worship is our response, both personal and corporate, to God for who He is and what He has done, expressed in and by the things we say and the way we live." I kind of like that because it ties in that way that we live. I'm sure you're with me in thinking that probably Romans, chapter 12, verse 1 has one of the best definitions of worship, where the Apostle Paul writes, "And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice-the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him."

That's what worship is. Worship is about God. One of the nice benefits of worship, especially when we are working hard to win at our worship services, is that worship can be a very powerful witness. We see this all way back from the very beginning of the church in Acts chapter two and the Day of Pentecost.

I grew up Baptist. I never knew quite how to handle this whole flames of tongue kind of deal. Some of you have been there. You know. You have experience. I grew up Baptist. That's a little denominational humor. It's okay. Jesus is Lord. We're all together as brothers and sisters. We're going to move forward on that note.

I think it's really interesting what happened that day. The disciples were together. The spirit moved. The tongues fell. They began to speak it the languages of the people around. All of a sudden, it got really noisy. Look what happens in Acts chapter 2, verse 6. "When they heard this sound, a crowd came together."

I think that's really powerful. When the people of Jerusalem heard the sound of worship, the crowd came together. We all know how Acts, chapter 2 ends. We all know what happened after Peter preached his famous sermon and 3,000 were added to the church that day. Worship, on the day of Pentecost, certainly was a witness.

Worship is a witness. We should strive to win at that because of our heart for the lost people in our communities. Worship is also a trust. For those of us who are called to ministry, God has entrusted us with this opportunity to lead people in his worship and to lead people to come to know Christ.

One day, you and I are going to stand before God. We're going to have to answer for how we led our churches. We're going to have to answer for how we organized and led our ministries, how we led people to worship God and how we led people to come to know Christ.

On that day, the judgement is not going to be, "Is your worship service better than their worship service?" That's not going to be the judgement. The judgment is going to be, "Did you do the best you could to reach, invest in, teach and lead people to worship God, both corporately and privately.

So, it's a trust that we have with God. God has called us to this. He's entrusted to us this responsibility of worship services. James 3:1 says, "Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach"—I would also add in there "lead worship" because when you lead worship, you are teaching, not in the same rightly dividing way necessarily that you're preaching.

As you lead in worship, lead these sings and do these kinds of things, there is a teaching element that goes with that. You will be judged more strictly. You shouldn't hope for it unless you're willing to stand before God's throne and give account for it. Of course, Luke 12:48 says, "When someone has been given much, much will be required in return. When someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required."

I'm not sure the last time you spent a lot of time on Luke, chapter 12, but Jesus is talking to us right there. It is a trust. That is our foundation. Worship is worth winning. These winning worship services are worth winning. Let me give you three pillars of what I think are the pillars of a winning worship service.

Then, we're going to get into the ten keys to winning worship services. The first one is planning. That is how we creatively plan worship services in our church. Let me say this because I know earlier I made this distinction. I want to come back to it right now. I'm not saying that planning is the end all be all of what it means to worship.

That's about God. It's not about programming. Worship is about God. It's not necessarily about programming. What I'm saying is, in the role, the responsibility, the trust, the battle and all the things we just talked about that God has called us to, there are some pillars that we need to build our worship services on to help people more readily understand and give themselves to the worship of God.

So, tonight, we're not talking about the end product of worship. Rather, we're talking about what the worship service can be to help people worship and live lives of worship. Does that make sense? Don't send me emails saying, "Jason, you didn't talk about prayer enough. You didn't talk about this enough," because I get it.

I'm with you on that. That's not the focus tonight. Tonight, the focus is on these practical worship service type things—the thing that we structure and build into our services that help people connect with God. Are we all good on that? I don't email. Don't send me emails. You can send me email. Just send me good emails.

Don't take me to task on it. That's okay. I can take it if you do. One of the three pillars of winning worship service is planning. That's how we creatively plan worship services in our church. Whatever that process is for you, we'll talk a little bit about that here in just a moment. That's a pillar.

Planning is an important part of your worship services. I guess you could just show up and say, "We'll just show up and see what happens." My grandparents were Primitive Baptist. I grew up in a really small town. They were Primitive Baptists. That was there way. There was a circuit preacher.

He was at a different church of one of four churches once a month. He didn't know what he was going to preach on when he walked into the pulpit. That was their method. You just walk into the pulpit. Whatever God

says, "That's what you preach." I always thought it takes a lot of faith to preach like that.

I don't think I've got that kind of faith. If you sit down and think about what you're going to teach on Sunday before you step into the pulpit to teach, then you plan worship services. If you think about what songs you're going to do before the sound system comes on and you strum the first cord on your guitar, then you plan worship services.

Can we just all be in agreement on that? Whether you plan then a year in advance or an hour in advance, if you know a little bit of what you're going to do when you step onto the alter, stage or the platform, then you plan worship services. A pillar of winning worship services is how we plan. We'll talk about that some tonight.

Implementation is the second pillar, I would say. That is how the worship service plan is executed. I don't really like the word executed. It's not a very churchy word. It sounds very carnal. We executed a good worship service. It just doesn't have the passion and flair that we all want.

There is something to be said for that. As I reach 1 Corinthians, it seems to me that Paul gave a lot of instructions about what could and should be in a service and what should not be in a service. So, there is something to the execution of it. It's not just showing up and seeing what happens. It's coming in and coming at that with order, not with chaos, whatever that may be for you and your tradition.

The third one is evaluation. That's the third pillar. We're talking about the planning, which what happens before the service, the implementation, which what happens during the service and then the evaluation, which is what happens after the service. This is how our worship teams assesses the overall excellence of the worship service.

Let's talk a little bit about the planning side. I'm going to give you a couple of my foundational thoughts about worship planning just so you know where I'm going as we head toward these ten keys here in just a few moments. Let me share with you some of my thinking about what I think are five fundamentals of worship planning.

The first one is that planning requires discipline. You've heard the old saying, "If it were easy, everyone would do it." You've heard that said before. If it were easy to plan worship services in advance, everyone would do it. Often times, in our churches, we kind of know what we're going to teach.

We kind of know what we're going to sing, but we don't really sit down to say, "Does what we're going to teach have anything to do with what we're going to sing, what's going on in the life of the church or what's going on in the calendar of the church right now?" So, planning requires some discipline. I love this passage from Proverbs, 21:5. Let's read this one out loud together. Can we do that? Are you ready? Go.

Everyone: Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.

Jason: Take your pen and circle that word prosperity and circle the word poverty. I've got an important question for you. Do you have them circled? Here's my question: Which one of those words do you want to describe the worship services at your church?

Do you want people to walk away from a service on Sunday and say, "I really sensed the Lord was here? What the pastor said today really connected with something that's going on in my life. The worship today wasn't perfect, but I just really sensed that people were really engaged in the worship."

Do you want people to walk away and say, "I don't really know why I went today? I don't feel like I connected with God. I don't feel like we really talked about what God's word says about anything that's relevant today." I'm not saying that's right or wrong. I'm just saying that's how people think, like it or not.

Even good Christian people in your church and mine think about Sunday. Do you want the word prosperity? Do you want your services to be thought of as prosperous and that good things are happening in our worship services or empowered? What's the difference between the two?

It's good planning that leads to prosperity. It's hasty shortcuts, throwing your sermon together Saturday night and not really knowing what key all the songs are going to be in when you show up on Sunday morning that leads to poverty. Try to work for this discipline.

I love this quite. It's not scripture. I think it's apt for what we're talking about here. Bobb Biehl says, "Discipline is not the problem." That's interesting. For most of us, we say, "Discipline is our problem." He says, "Discipline is not the problem. Motivation is."

Think about that for a moment. If you have the motivation, discipline is no problem. If you are motivated to have life-transforming worship services and you have as the goal to have a winning worship service every Sunday, then you won't have a problem with the discipline of doing the work that's needed for a winning worship service.

If you lack that motivation, then discipline is always a problem. I think that's interesting. I also love this quote from Jim Rohn who I would put higher than Bobb Biehl but not nearly anywhere around scripture. He says, "Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishments."

Underline the two words goals and accomplishments. Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishments. It's the bridge between what is and what could be in your worship services. It's the bridge between your present and your future of your church. It's the bridge between your current reality and your future possibilities.

The connection is the discipline the plan your worship services. Planning requires discipline. It takes discipline to sit down and say, "What are we going to preach on? What are we going to lead worship on? What media are we going to use? How does this all tie together? How can we tell a compelling story this Sunday so that God speaks to the heart and lives and transformed?" That takes discipline.

Planning requires cooperation. By the way, if you need any kind of worship planning versus, the "Book of Proverbs" is for you. Just go read through it. That will help you out right there. Look at what it says here in Proverbs, 15:22. It says, "Plans go wrong for a lack of advice, but many counselors bring success."

It requires cooperation. You could do it on you own if you want to. I'm telling you that your services are going to have a better shot at winning if you do it together. If you and your worship leader or you and your pastor decide you're going to work together to do this, it's going to be a lot better.

Thankfully, for most of us, the days of the pastor going off into his office, known as the holy of holies to every else in the church, and the worship leader going off to his office, known as the cave because it's really messy, dark and artsy, going their separate ways, coming up with their own stuff and coming together on Sunday to hope it works out are behind us. There are still higher levels of cooperation that we can have.

We want to engage in that. My little thing is if I plan alone, I'm only going to get my mediocre ideas. If I plan

with someone else, then the best idea wins. That's a good way to approach your worship planning. It requires cooperation. Planning produces possibilities. Can you say that five times fast? It's tough.

Planning produces possibilities. I'm not even going to try to do it. I don't want to see work inadvertently when I do it. Then, I'm going to get emails. I don't want to get emails. I have a system that I would recommend that you use. It's a book that I co-wrote with Nelson called "Engage." It's something that I teach in my coaching networks.

We have different resources. I have a system that I think would work for you because I've seen it work for thousands of other churches. Whatever worship planning is for you, that's what produces the possibilities. It's what makes it possible for you to be able to do more than you think you're currently able to do in your worship services.

I'm not going to spend too much time on that, but I will say this: I hate missed opportunities. Are you guys with me on that? I hate a missed opportunity. I hate it, when on Sunday morning, in the middle the worship set, it hits me that if we had only done this during that song, that would have just taken that moment to the next level.

That's a missed opportunity. It's too late at that point. So, I hate missed opportunities. It's not that you never miss opportunities. I try to minimize that. By planning in advance and really taking some time to pray, consider, work together and do all these things we're talking about tonight, it helps make sure you don't miss too many of those opportunities.

Planning pays off in implementation. Proverbs, 3:23 says, "Good plans keep you safe on your way and keep your feet from stumbling." The idea here is that if you've got a good plan going into your worship service on Sunday, it's going to pay off as you implement that. You're not going to struggle as much.

You're not going to have as many issues with transitions, wound problems or with losing your place in your message because you weren't quite sure what that connection between point one and point two was in the run-through, and you're still not quite sure, right now, why you're teaching it. The planning pays off in that.

The key idea there is that every minute spent in planning will save you 10 minutes in implementation. I'd love to talk more about that, but I'm going to keep us moving. Planning pays off in implementation. Here's number five: Planning engages God's power. I really believe that to my core. Planning engages God's power.

Some people will say, "If you plan your worship services too much, you remove the work of the Holy Spirit from the service because you just over-planned in." I get what they're saying. I understand. This is always my response that: I don't think that good worship planning limits the work of the Holy Spirit. think it unleashes the work of the Holy Spirit.

Here's why I say that: Let's imagine that we're in New York City together. We're walking down the streets of New York. If you've ever been to New York, you know that there's construction on every block. There is. Not only that, there's all the traffic. We're walking through Times Square. There's all this traffic, cars and cabs honking their horns.

Not on that, but there are all these tourists. The tourists are walking while looking up with their folks. Just walk. Let's say that you and I are walking down the streets of New York. That's the environment with construction, cabs, horns blowing, tourists, noise and bright lights. Let's say that's what's going on, and I'm trying to tell you something really important.

How well are you going here me in that situation? You're not. You're going to be distracted by all these other things that are going on. Let's say we realized that. So, we decided to take our walk out to Central Park. It's not a romantic walk. We're just walking. Walking through the park is quiet. There are no cabs, no horns, no construction and no tourists walking around like this.

All of a sudden, if I try to tell you something really, really important, you can really focus in and hear my voice at that moment. Here's what happens when we don't plan our services in advance: If you plan your services week to week, I call that being stuck in the week-to-week rut. Chances are you are so busy, distracted and focused on all these things just to try to make Sunday happen.

It's like walking down the street in Times Square. You've got your mind on all these kinds of things. You're trying to get the message. You're doing all these things of whatever your context for ministry is.

All this noise is going on while you're trying to get ready for Sunday. The spirit is saying, "I need to tell you something important." God, I can't hear from you right now. I'm too busy putting together the worship service because we're doing it last minute. We have to figure this thing out versus if we take some time to really pray and plan that in advance.

What happens is you have more peace as you're getting ready for that Sunday. Then, when the spirit speaks to your heart, you're not so distracted by all the good things that you're trying to do that you miss out on the great things that God has in store. Does that make sense?

So, I think that planning doesn't limit the spirit's power. I think it engages God's power. Proverbs 21:31, which is one of my favorite proverbs of all times, says, "The horse is made ready for the day of battle. The victory rests with the Lord." I love this proverb. Don't turn the page just yet.

love this proverb for two reasons. One, it says that victory rests with the Lord. As a pastor and a worship leader, that should just help you feel like you dropped a big ton of bricks off your shoulders because at the end of the day, it's God who brings the victory. At the end of the day, I don't have it within my own power by my own will to will people into surrendering their lives to Jesus Christ.

It's not within my power to do it no matter what I do and no matter how much I pay. No matter how polished I am or how strong my words are it's not within my power to do that. Only God can do that. Victory rests with the Lord, but the horse if made ready for the day of battle. Somebody has got to get the horse ready.

Do you know whose job it is to get the horse ready? It's our job. God says, "I'm going to do my part. I'm going to bring the victory. I need you to do your part. I'm going to win the battle, but I need you to get the horse out of the stable. You need to make sure that you comb it down, feed it, put the armor on, get the pad underneath the saddle and do all these things. You've got to get the horse ready."

The horse is your worship service. That's one application of that. We've got to get that ready because we're going into this battle of worship on Sunday that we've talked about already. God says, "I'm going to bring the victory, but I need you to get the horse ready."

Do you think it honors God when we show up on Sunday and say, "God, I know you said you're doing to bring the victory, and, man, we got the horse ready the last couple of weeks, but we just didn't have it in us to get the horse ready today? We're just going to kind of run with the horse we brought."

Our job is to get the horse ready. Planning engages God's power. I think that's fundamental for worship

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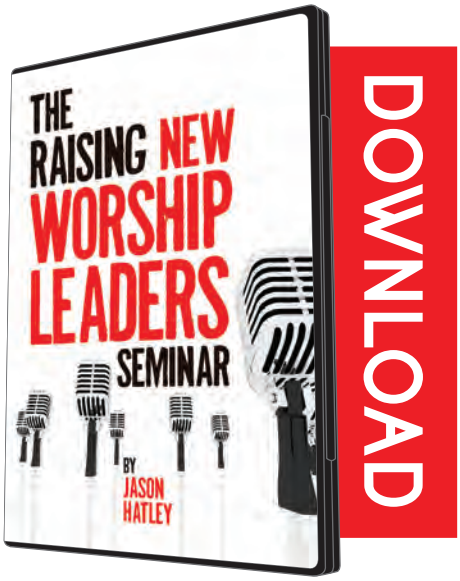
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planning. Let me give you four quick things on what you need. They're imperatives for winning worship services. Then, I promise we're going to talk about these ten keys. Do you believe me now?

I had to lead you along a little bit. I had to lay in the foundation of the ground work here. Very quickly, let me give you four imperatives for planning winning worship services. The first one is prayer. I talked about it. That way, you can't email me and tell me I didn't talk about prayer.

You've got to lay the ground work in prayer. Otherwise, you're just showing up on Sunday to put on a good show. That's the difference between what we do and what they do on Saturday night in the bar in your town. That's the difference between what we do and what they do at the big concert venue in your city.

We're not just gathering people for entertainment. We're gathering people for the worship of almighty God and the transformation of lives. The difference between a good show and God showing up in big ways is the understanding of that spiritual battle on the front end and really petitioning and praying for that on the front end.

In this situation, I equate prayer with surrender. Prayer is where I surrender to God and say, "God, I don't have it in me to do it all by myself. I'm going to get the horse ready. I'm going to do what I can do. I'm going to do the best I can to plan this winning worship service. If you don't show up, it's just going to be good music and a good message, but lives are not going to be changed."

This prayer is an act of surrender. The prayer is not only asking God's blessing on the plan. It's the very source of the plan. When you're planning your winning worship service, it's not just saying, "God, here's our worship service. Bless it," it's saying, "God, what would you have us do? What would you have us teach on this year? What are the need of our congregation and the needs of our community?

"What is it that we need to spend some time on in your word because we haven't had a chance to teach on that in a while? God, what is it that we need to do in this worship service that's not just three songs and some announcement but we really create a moment here and really give people an opportunity to connect with you on a deep and meaningful level and worship?"

It's the prayer that makes that happen. Proverb 16:3 says, "Commit your work to the Lord, and then your plans will succeed." Make sure we get the right order. It's not make your plans and then ask the Lord to bless it. It's commit the word to the Lord, and then the plans succeed. We want to get that in the right order.

Prayer is an imperative of a winning worship service. It's also people. We talked about that a little earlier tonight, talking about the importance of having the people on your team and making sure that you've got people around you that can help you implement this. You can't do it on your own.

Earl Nightingale famously said, "Every in the world that we want to do or get done, we must do with and through people." So, in ministry, we've got to get things done in ministry though people. You just can't do it on your own. As a worship pastor, you just can't do it on your own.

You need the people on your team around you helping you. As a pastor, you just can't do it on your own. You need your team. You need your staff. You need volunteers around you to help you do it. I will give this caveat. I think one of the thing about a winning worship service is it's not just any old people. It's getting the right people.

That's one of the things that you want if you're going to have a winning worship service. You need the right

people. Jim Collins talks about this. He talks about the right people and right bus and getting people on the right bus in the right seats. You're making sure you're surrounding yourself with the right people that are locked in with your vision of what the worship service should be.

They're locked in with your vision of what you do, what your style is and how you lead people and worship. It's important. It's so important that there's a connection point there and that you guys are literally on the same page with what the worship service will be.

I see this as I coach worship leaders and have done so for almost ten years now. I see this. I've sat across the table and on the other end of the phone from worship leaders that said, "I really think our services ought to be doing this, but our pastor says they need to be doing that." Do you know what my response always is?

Either follow your pastor's vision or go find a pastor's vision that you can follow. There's no room for two visions. Your vision, as the worship pastor, has to submit to the vision of the pastor because God called the pastor to lead the church. He's the under-shepherd that God has appointed. You are the shepherd under the under-shepherd.

The pastor has appointed to your ministry. There's no room for two competing visions of worship service or worship ministry. There's room for conversation. There's probably room for a little debate, but at the end of the day, as a worship leader, if your vision is not in lock step with your pastors, you either need to get in step or go find a pastor that you can get in step with.

That's matters. Those relationships matter. They make a difference in your services. You can have the greatest programming, technology, sound, lights, video and all these kinds of things in the world, but if the pastor and the worship pastor are at odds with one another, that's going to be a lot clearer than your HD screens on Sunday.

The people in your church are going to know it. They're going to know it. It's going to hinder the redemptive potential of your church. It can't be just any old people. It's got to be the right people. When I'm thinking about the right people on my team, here's three things that I look for. It's not complete.

I want positive people on my team. I have a little hiring rule. If I'm hiring and I can't see myself smiling every time you walk into my office, I probably will not hire you. I want to know, when you walk in the room, there's a positivity. There's a belief that good days are ahead no matter what we're in the middle of right now.

I have this belief that positive people produce positive people. If I'm hiring somebody on my staff and they're positive in ministry, they're going to attract positive people. The opposite is also true. Problem people produce problem people. See how important it is to have the right people on your team.

If you find yourself spending too much time dealing with problem people on your team, there may be a connection between some of your staff and some of those problem people. I'm putting it out there. You decide for yourself. I also look for productivity. I want to know that this person on our team, whether it's a volunteer or a staff member, is going to take something and run with it.

They're going to go and get it done. They believe in it. They say, "It's not going to be perfect, but I'm going to do the best that I can. I'm going to run with this. I'm going to bring this into reality." It just takes a lot of energy to manage someone who's unproductive.

I'd rather lead people who are positive, have a desire to get things done and correct their mistakes than have

to lead someone who I have to prod along. At The Journey, we like to hire bulldogs. I'd rather hire a bulldog, put a chain on his and hold back than hire a lapdog and try to get him off the porch.

I want people that have a passion to win people for Christ and a passion for the local church. I want to know that the people I'm serving with have potential. They're not serving at the height of their potential. They haven't hit their ceiling. They're learning. They're growing. They're becoming more.

Because of that, God can do even more through them. There are a lot more things that I look for in key team members, but I think those are three really important ones. The wrong people will hurt you just as much as the right people will help you.
I saw this happen recently at a church that I'm very familiar with. I know the pastor there. I've known him for a long time. Just because of my relationship with this pastor and the church, I've been to this church many times over the last few years. It's a very traditional church. It's kind of like the church I grew up in.

I visited this church many times over the last few years and recently had an opportunity to go to this church. I was having lunch with the pastor after the service. You know how it is. Sometimes, people don't ask for your feedback, but you love them so much that you give it to them anyway.

I had a lot of very positive feedback. There were just a lot of great things going on in this church. They just totally renovated their worship space. The place was beautiful. It just reopened. They upgraded their technology. It was really helping them communicate the gospel at a higher level.

I'd seen the pastor grow over the course of many years. He'd always been a good preacher, but he's really grown as a preacher. All these positives of growth have happened in the church, except the music. The music was exactly the same quality as it was the first time I went to that church six years ago.

Everything else in the church is going up and to the right, but the music is exactly the same. Every other ministry of the church—the children's ministry, the student ministry, the ministry to the community—are going up and to the right. They're really growing. They're expanding. The leaders are growing.

God is blessing it more and more. It's attracting more and more people. More and more people are coming into Christ because of those things, but here's the music and it's flat. I'm telling you that it hurt that church. The person in that position is very positive and a great leader in terms of heart.

They were productive in some ways. They were getting the worship plan every week. There was music. There were lyrics. The band was rehearsed. There was some productivity going on there. That worship leader just reached the top of their potential. They had not grown in five years.

Therefore, their ministry had not grown in five years with the same singers, the same band and the same worship experience. Everything has grown, but they had reached the top of their potential because they were unwilling to grow, learn and let God expand them so that God could expand their ministry. People really matter when it comes to planning your worship services.

Every good winning worship service has parameters. It has some boundaries. It has some things where you say, "This is what we're doing today." Have you ever been to those brainstorming sessions where nobody planned in advance before the brainstorm and they just said, "Let's just throw some ideas out and see what sticks?"

There's really not much that sticks. There's probably a lot that stinks. There's probably not a lot of ideas that

stick because it's just like these wild hair ideas. Let's go buy the Coliseum. We can't go buy the Coliseum. It's in Rome. There's just these wild hair-brained ideas.

When it comes to planning worship services, you need some parameters. That why one of our core values at The Journey is that the message drives the day. Whenever we approach planning a worship service, we say, "What is it that we're teaching from the word of God today?" Everything else about the service is going to be based around that.

Let me tell you something pastors. On behalf of your worship leaders, one of the greatest gifts you can give to your worship leader is boundaries. Your worship leader won't tell you this. What they'll tell you is, "I need more freedom to do what I want to do." That's what they need. They need boundaries.

They need parameters. Even Picasso would have been overwhelmed with a canvas the size of the Empire State Building. It's just too overwhelming to say, "I don't really know what we're going to do. Just plan something." Your worship leader needs that input from you. They need to know that on this Sunday, two weeks from now, we're going to preach on how Jesus is the head of the church.

You can pick out some songs for that. You can find some video elements for that. You can come up with some great creative ideas about that. If you just say, "We've got a worship service in two weeks," I guess we'll play and sing what we play and sing. It reminds me of the little church I grew up in.

There are great people at the church I grew up in. I've told this story before. You may have heard Nelson tell a similar story. It's because our churches were not the same church, but they were in similar parts of the country and very similar in style. Sometimes, you just didn't know what you were going to get on Sunday.

You didn't know if what the choir was going to sing had anything at all with what the pastor was going to preach. The pastor is teaching on heaven and the choir is singing like hell. I mean, they're singing about hell.

That was intentional. I admit it. We'll cut that out of the recording. The next Sunday, the pastor is teaching on hell, and the choir is singing about heaven. That one Sunday when maybe the pastor was teaching on heaven and the choir was singing about heaven, singing "When we all get to heaven, what a glorious day that will be."

Don't you love that old hymn? I love that old hymn. On that day, we felt like something amazing happened today. The spirit really moved today. It wasn't that the spirit wasn't ready to move on the other Sundays. It's just that they hadn't done the work to get on the same page to say, "I'm teaching on heaven." "Okay, we'll sing about heaven."

So, we need these parameters. Pastors, give your worship leaders some parameters. Worship leaders, thank your pastor when they do. I know you appreciate them. I have one last thing here, which is process. The fourth imperative here for planning winning worship services is process.

You've got to have a process. If you just approach it like, "Let's just see what happens this week," I'm telling you that not much is going to happen this week. You've got to have a process. I would love to talk about that process tonight, but that's outside the purview of what I want to talk about, which is on the next page.

I will say this about your process: Part of your process is you need to get creative input from people around you. You need to talk to people around you that you trust. Let them have input into your message. Let them have input into your worship order. Let them have input into your worship set. Don't do it all by yourself.

Gather those ideas. Filter the ideas. Filter out the ones that don't work. Keep the ones that do. Assign the implementation of that idea to someone on your team, whether it's a volunteer or pastor. Assign it to your worship leader to find you this clip about that thing or whatever it is.

Check in on it along the way. Make sure that they're going to have that for Sunday. I was on a phone call with my staff just this afternoon after the sessions. I said, "I know we have talked about this already this week, but tell me about this. Do we have this clip? Have we talked to that volunteer? Is that thing worked out in Journey kids?"

You check in along the way. You don't get what expect. You get what you inspect. That's exactly right. So, you check in on that along the way. We're going to talk about debriefing here in just a moment. You have to have a process for that. Don't just make it up along the way.

With all of that, there is our foundation. Let me give you ten keys to winning worship services. By the way, are we all convinced that our goal should be to have a winning worship service every Sunday? We realize that sometimes, that's beyond our ability in terms of the results. At least, in terms of the input and what I can do to make this a winning worship service, we can all agree that should be our goal, right?

I feel like I've already done my job. Alas, I will press on here. Let me give you these ten keys for winning worship services. Here's the first one: Develop a clearly defined worship order. The little church that I grew up in would print the worship order in the program every week. I always liked that.

It was always the same worship order with just different songs and different message titles. In fact, any given Sunday, right now, at 11:22, I could tell you exactly what they're doing in the church that I grew up in because they're doing exactly today what they were doing four or five years ago when I was kid.

I guarantee they're doing exactly the same thing today that they were doing back then. They had one worship order. That's the worship order they ran. At least they had a worship order. I will say this: They had a worship order. It may not have necessarily been a clearly defined worship order.

I'm going to define what that means here in just a moment. Let me just talk about the worship order for a moment and borrow something from something that I've done on worship planning. Your worship order, on Sunday, doesn't have to be the same week after week after week. It doesn't have to be three songs, announcements, one song, a sermon, an invitation and a benediction.

You can play with that just a little bit. It's okay. Your denomination may or may not like it. Don't send them a copy of the worship order for that Sunday you changed it. Keep that one to yourself. You don't have to do the same thing. In fact, sometimes the best thing you can do for your worship order is change it up because if you keep doing the same thing over and over again, people in your church know when it's okay to fall asleep.

Hopefully, it's not during the important times. It's okay to change it up. At The Journey, we have three types of worship orders. I will just say this very quickly. This is just a bonus. Then, I'm going to move on. We have three types of worship orders that we tend to run. One we call a simple worship order.

That's kind of the worst order I was talking about that my home church has been running for 37 years now at least. That's how long I was there. This is where, basically, the control of the first half of the service is in the hands of the worship leader. Then, the teacher pastor kind of controls the second half of the service.

You've got all your music up front. You've got your preaching at the end. That's a very typical worship order. In

fact, probably 65 percent of the time at The Journey, that's exactly what we do. We do a lot of simple worship orders. It's not the only worship order we do. Sometimes we do a split.

A split worship order is the second one. A split worship order is where control of the service begins with the worship leaders. Maybe you do that opening worship set. Then, it shifts to the teaching pastor. Maybe they come in and teach the opening couple of points of the message.

Then, because it fits in really nicely with the message, maybe you go back to the worship pastor. The worship team comes back. You take some time to sing a song that really just hits home on that point or that scripture you just taught. You just give people a moment to stew and worship over that.

Then, the pastor comes back and finishes up the message. That's a very easy worship order to run. There are little things that are different about it, but that's a pretty easy worship order to run. It's something unique. It's something new. It helps you drive home a point really well. Then, there's a worship order that I love that we don't do very much of.

By the way, the split I'd say we probably do about 25 to 30 percent of the time. The last one is about 5 percent of the time. It's called salsa, like that stuff you dip our chips in. The reason why is because it's got a lot of different things mixed in, and it's a little spicy sometimes, not in a bad way but in a good way, for all the Lutherans.

Lutherans got picked on a lot today, by the way. I think we ought to pick on Baptists a little bit more, personally. The salsa worship order is where the control rotates a little here. Maybe you sing a couple of songs. Then, you've got a testimony. Then, you've got the opening of the message. Then, you've got a song.

Then, you've got something else. To help bring clarify to this, in your appendix on pages 16, 17 and 18, I gave you some examples of some worship orders that fit into this. These are necessarily recent examples, but they're good examples. On page 16, here's an example of a simple worship order from The Journey.

This is from our Boca Raton campus. You can see we did an opening worship set. There was a little hosting and another song. Then, basically, it went to the message. We just taught the message straight through. There was a little creative video in there. The control of the service never went back to the worship leaders.

There was music up front and preaching at the end. On page 17 is an example of a split worship order. You can see there was music up front. Then, we went in and taught part of the message. We did communion right in the middle of the message because it just tied in beautifully with what we were teaching that day.

We did communion. The band came out right in the middle of the message. We played a song, did communion and then went back to the message and taught the rest of the message. That's a split. The control went from worship leader to pastor, back to worship leader, back to pastor and then the salsa worship order.

Here's a good example of page 18. By the way, I like these salsa worship orders, but I'm exhausted whenever we do these things because you don't get a chance to rest. The pastor gets to rest before he goes up and teaches. The worship team gets to rest after they finish their worship set.

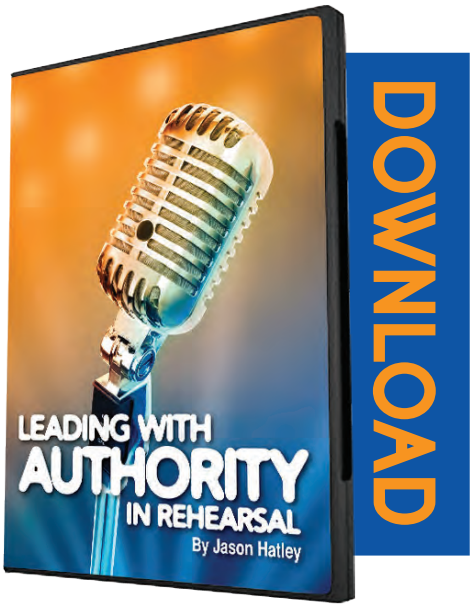
In the salsa, you never know when you're going back on the platform. In the salsa worship order on page 18 is some music up front and then the message. Then, we had a creative element where someone from the church came up and read this scripture and went back to the message. Then, we came back and did this Christmas medley because it was a Christmas service.

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Then, we went back to the message. Then, we went to this video. Then, we went back to the message. You can image. This keeps you on your toes. That's why we do it 5 percent of the time. Otherwise, we would just be exhausted every week. That kind of gives you some examples of that.

I had to share that with you to say, "Your worship order doesn't have to always be the same." Here's what it does have to be: It has to be clear. You shouldn't view your worship order as something that you frame and hang on a mantle. You should view it as a working document that you really interact with and slave over.

You talk about, "We really need more time for this," or, "We need to do that with the music," or whatever the case might be. Here's are some important elements to include in your worship order. First of all, include some communication points. Again, you're not going to frame this. So, put some communication points in there.

I know I've got you flipping all around in your notes, but if you go back to page 16 in your appendix, you see, on the right-hand side, this little section called notes. It has notes for the production team, the vocal team, the stage managing team, the video team and all these kinds of folks.

That's all there to help make their job easier on Sunday. What can you communicate in your worship order to help your team know what's coming up and know what they need to do to make it easier on them and make the flow of the service smooth. It can have those kind of communication points.

I think a good worship order should have all your confirmed volunteers on it. I don't know about you, but I kind of think it's a badge of honor to get your name of the worship order. I didn't include this because I don't think I put people's names in here. On our worship orders, there's a section at the bottom that has everybody's name that's serving on the team that day.

That's kind of like a badge of honor. I was part of that today. I had a hand in it. You need to remind your people of that, by the way. Whenever they serve back stage or serve in sound, they're not just pushing buttons, moving set pieces around or moving pulpits. They're helping to create the atmosphere where lives are going to be changed.

When they get to heaven, they get a piece of that crown, I believe, even if they didn't teach the message. Have a place to list your volunteers. Put your start and end times for sound checks and service. All that is just designed to help you stay on track in the morning. We'll talk about this a little bit later, but you've got to stay on track in the morning.

The worst thing you could possibly do for your worship service is run late on all your sound checks and everybody is hurried, scurried and scattered going into the worship service. You've been there. I have too. Typically, that worship service is not going to be your best. You're typically not going to preach your best message.

Your band is not going to play the best they can if you're running right up into your margin. So, you build some margin into those kinds of things—some time for focus, prayer and a practice run, which I'm going to talk more about here in just a moment. Have a clearly defined worship order, not just, "These are the songs where singing and the title of the message, but here are the details. Here is what you need to succeed as a member of our worship arts team or as a pastor on the staff for Sunday."

A clearly defined worship order goes a long way. By the way, people y yes to what they understand. People will implement with great excellence what they more clearly understand. People will be say yes to what they understand. People will implement with great excellence what they more clearly understand. People will be

much more willing to come back and serve again if you're clear with them and it's not utter chaos around your church on Sunday morning. So, develop a clearly defined worship order.

Here's number two: The second key to winning worship services is communicating with key team members before Sunday. Here's the big idea on that: Don't wait until Sunday to talk to whoever has a hand in the implementation of your worship service on Sunday. You need to send out notes if you're the worship leader.

You need to send notes to your band and let them know this is the flow of the music. Be kind to your band. I always this rule to be kind to your band. They'll come back and keep playing. I promise. If you keep sending them charts in the wrong keys and keep having your guitar player learn really complicated worship solos that you were never going to include in the set on Sunday anyway and you don't tell them this kind of stuff, don't be surprised if they decide to take a lot of Sundays off in the near future.

So, send out these communication points. The pastor and worship leader are really the most important areas. There's got to be a sense of communication between the pastor and worship leader throughout the week. That happens in meetings. We'll talk about that in just a moment. It doesn't have to always be in meetings. Sometimes, some of the biggest decisions that Nelson and I have ever made about a worship service have been when we ran into each other getting a Diet Coke out of the refrigerator.

"By the way, I sent you that worship order. Did you get a chance to see that? What do you think about this?" We made a decision while we were both getting a Diet Coke out. So, it doesn't have to always be formal, but you do want to have some formal things. I'll talk about that in a moment. Worship leaders, send your music team notes before rehearsal so they know how prepare.

Pastor, help your worship leader do this. Love your worship team enough that you help your worship leader do this if that communication and organization is not their strength. If you've got something special in the message on Sunday, if you've got some kind of audio que or some kind of video clip that you want to show, don't let your video team and your sound guy find out about that for the first time on Sunday morning.

I have this little thing about Sunday. You tell me if you agree or not. Sunday has enough stress on its own. Can we just all agree on that? Why in the world would you go and add additional stress to Sunday? Why would you do that? Sunday is going to be stressful already, so why add additional stress on Sunday? There are five things you should never say.

Let me sure I get it at five. Let's discuss that on Sunday. Those are five words you should never say. If you're going to discuss it on Sunday, why not discuss it on Thursday, I say. Why not work out all the details on Thursday so that on Sunday, you can just show up and know what you're supposed to do, and you can just kind of do your thing. There's not all this stress.

Worship leaders and pastors, listen to this. Here's what happens when you wait until Sunday to communicate important details: Little things that are easy little fixes or easy little communications points become big things under the pressure of Sunday. In your mind, it's not really a big deal that you have to swap those slides around on PowerPoint ProPresenter because you decided to teach those points in different orders. You think to yourself, "I'll just tell the worship guy or the video guy on Sunday, and they'll make that shift."

If you tell them that on Thursday, it's no big deal. In 30 seconds, everything is ready to go. On Sunday, you never know what's going to happen. The computer system is down. Your video guy has been running around like the proverbial chicken with his head cut off. He's trying to get all these things working. All of a sudden, you show up and say, "By the way, I know you're trying to just get power to the DVD player or the computer, but

when you get all the worked out, we need to swap these bullet points."

All of sudden, what could be a little thing on Thursday, under the pressure of Sunday, becomes this massive thing. So, be kind to the people who help you make your worship service a reality every Sunday. Be kind to them. Communicate with them in advance. Don't wait until Sunday to tell them the things you can tell them during the week.

Here's number three on the next page. I love this one. See and approve every element of the worship order. I always get push back on this one. Jason, how can I see and approve every element. The pastor says, "We trusted our video guy," or, "We trusted the worship leader to pull the clip. I'm sure he pulled the right clip." You show up on Sunday. It's the wrong clip.

This happened to me not too long ago. I was teaching not too long ago. We had a video clip. I broke my own rule. The problem was the worship guy sent me the video clip in advance. I watched the beginning of it and the end of it. I didn't watch every second of it. It was a video clip from a movie. We always use good movies. We don't use really racy movies.

Every once in a while, one of those shows up even in a really good clip. You just trust your editor to drop the audio out on that before Sunday. On that Sunday that I taught, I watched the beginning of that clip. I watched the end of that clip.

I said, "That's going to be great." However, when that played on Sunday, guess which word the video editor forgot to drop the audio out on. It was one of those two I just said a moment ago. That's why you see and approve every element of the worship order. That's why. Another great example of this happened at the very beginning of our church. It was the first Christmas in New York.

We were doing a big Christmas party because we didn't have a Christmas service. We did a big Christmas party one night. It was at the place where we do our worship service. It was like a Christmas worship service, but it was on a different night. It wasn't on a Sunday. I was a worship arts pastor at the time. I was a young, inexperienced and not quite as wise. I still had hair back in those days.

We had a video guy who was just great. He was an NYU Film School graduate. He was just a great video volunteer. As we're going into this and he pulled all of our clips and created all this content for us all year long, he said, "I've got this great idea for a Christmas montage." I said, "That's great. Do it." I didn't even have him tell me what the idea was.

I was just thinking it was going to be like these scenes from Christmas, "Miracle on 34th Street" and all these classic kinds of things. So, we set it up. I thought, "This is going to be great." I didn't ask too many questions. I didn't watch it before the Christmas service. I know in my mind this is going to be great. So, we put it right in the heart of the worship order, right after Kerick read the Christmas story, and the worship team sang, I think, "Away in a Manger."

This video clip was going to transition to Nelson giving the Christmas message. I'm such a good worship leader. I put together this awesome worship service. This is going to be great. So, we get there. We do the Christmas story. We sing "Away in a Manger." It's all very exciting. Then, the video plays. It comes up with this big screen.

It says "The Journey Church." It's got this nice quaint Christmas music. The Journey Church would like to wish a very merry Christmas. Then, there was this huge explosion. It was a scene from "Die Hard," [laughter] because

everybody knows that "Die Hard" is a Christmas movie, right? It happened at Christmas.

Do you guys remember "Die Hard"—the old Bruce Willis film? His montage was scenes from all the anti-Christmas Christmas films. So, it was these scenes from "Trades Places." Do you remember that movie with Eddie Murphy and Dan Aycroyd? It was these scenes from "Die Hard" with these big explosions and these guns firing and all this kind of stuff.

It was all these classic non-Christmas kinds of Christmas movies. It was all set to the Trans-Siberian Orchestra. It's set to that song. It's this big intense kind of thing. Nelson has to come out after that [laughter] and teach the Christmas message right after we just read the Christmas story and sang "Away in a Manger." That was our transition.

Audience Member: Blown away in a manger. [laughter]

Jason: That's about right. That's good. We got that for the recording. So, that's where I learned this rule. That rule has been in existence from the very beginning of our church because of that guy, who I love. In hindsight, it's a really awesome video montage. It's really funny, but it was really inappropriate for that moment in a worship service.

See and approve every element of the worship order. Worship leader and pastor, you should put this under your job description as well. The worship especially, you are the protector of the stage. Nothing should ever happen on the stage of your church at a worship service that you have not seen, approved and signed off on.

Somebody says, "I've got a great idea for what we should do in the service." That's great. Show me. "I've got a great idea for a video clip." That's great. Send it to me. "I've got a great idea for a song we should sing." That's great. Send me the mp3. I want to see it. I want to know what it is. You've got to protect that worship service.

Don't be like me and let the Die Hard Christmas film and the movie clip that has the curse word in it play. Don't let those things happen. Be the protector of the stage. That's enough on that. Later, I'll see if I can dig up this video clip. We can watch it together. I don't think I have it. I wish I did.

Number four is create your Sunday plan. You have a worship order for Sunday. That's really good, but you need a plan beyond that. When I say "your Sunday plan," I'm not talking about the elements of the worship order. What I'm talking about is who is doing what on Sunday? Who is responsible for what? How is all going to play out?

Let me just give you a few things here. One is your leaders. What are the roles on Sunday? When it comes to your worship service, who's a go-to person? Who's in charge of something in the worship order? I know the pastor is in charge of preaching. I know the worship leader is in charge of music. Who is in charge of sound?

Who is in charge of video? Who is in charge of technology? Who is charge of this? Who is in charge of that? What are the roles on Sunday? Who is in that place? You need to know who those people are. Knowing who is in specific roles changes the way that you approach Sunday. For example, on our worship arts team at The Journey, we have a lot of different stage managers.

They all do a great job. I know that certain stage managers are upper-echelon A+++. They tell you stuff you didn't think you even needed to know, but it just helped you immensely in the service. Some of our stage managers are A- or B+. An A- or B+ is good, but we've got to communicate differently with the A- or B+ person than we do with the A+++ person.

So, you've got to know who those people are that are involved in the worship service so that you know how to work with them to help make your service run very smoothly. Transitions aren't just what the elements are on the worship order. What are the transitions between the two?

At The Journey, we used to run 75-minute worship services. Then, we made a strategic decision to cut our 75-minute services back to 65-minute services. Do you know what? We didn't cut any songs. We didn't cut any time off the service. Do you know what we cut? We cut that lagging time of transitions.

Maybe you're in a church like this or are familiar with one. I know, at the little home church that I grew up in that I love and love the people at, it was not uncommon, on a Sunday, for the pastor to call on someone to pray or to come forward to pray at some point during the service. It always got me. I never understood why he picked the person in the balcony to come forward and pray on Sunday.

Brother Jim, up there, would you come forward and pray? So, Brother Jim stands up. He comes down. He goes to the stairs. He walks down the stairs. Then, he's at the back of the sanctuary. Now, he's got to walk all the way down the aisle. He walks up on the stage. Is this the right microphone? No, it's this one. Let me have the microphone.

Then, Brother Jim, finally prays. We can work that stuff out in advance, can't we? Brother Jim, I'm going to call on you to pray today. Would you mind sitting in the front row? Hold this mic. We can work that stuff out in advance. We don't have to let that stuff happen to us. Your transition is on Sunday.

Do you want to know what the big difference is between good services and great services? A lot of times, it's your transitions. It's just taking time to sit down and think, "How are we going to get out of this song and into this song? How are we going to get out of this song and into the sermon? How much time is needed to get from this to that?"

That's easy stuff. It doesn't seem as theologically important as selecting the worship sets and writing the sermon, but it makes such a difference. It's the difference between people being checked in and checked out when you step up to lead that worship set or teach that message. So, those transitions really matter.

That's part of your Sunday plan. How are we going to get from this to this to this to this in a way that doesn't disengage everybody in the church? I don't want it to be disengaged because I don't want them to be bored. More than that, I don't want them to disengage because I don't want them to miss out on hearing from God.

I want to hold them in the palm of God's hand from the first strum of the guitar to the last Amen so that they don't check out and miss out on what God is going to do in their life that day. That's little stuff, but that's the difference between good and great. What are those things in your plan? You've got to think through those things.

What are those conversations that we need to have? What is that meeting that you need to have, where you and your worship leaders sit down and say, "For the next 15 minutes, let's just talk details, details and details." Remember what we said earlier. Every minute spent in planning saves you 10 minutes in implementation.

I'm pretty sure it took 10 minutes for Brother Jim to walk down those steps, get to the front of the room and find the right microphone. Create that Sunday plan. Think through those plans. Here's number five: Obey the Thursday midnight rule. How many of you guys are familiar with the Thursday midnight rule?

You've heard us talk about this. It's about half of us here. That's really good. Here's what the Thursday midnight

rule is: It's this little self-imposed deadline that we've created in our church that says that everything for Sunday has to be done by Thursday at midnight. You might imagine that there's a reason why we have this rule.

In the early days of our church, sometimes it was Sunday morning before we were wrapping up things that needed to be done for Sunday. We were going by Kinko's to pick up the printed message notes on Sunday morning. They're open 24 hours. It's the FedEx office now. I still call it Kinko's. I just can't help myself.

We're showing up on Sunday morning to pick up the printing at 8:30 for the service that's at 10:30 only to find out that Kinko's lost the order and didn't print it. Maybe we should have a little better deadline. So, we backed it up to Saturday at midnight. Now, we have to go to Kinko's on Saturday night to get it.

Still, that was creating pressure because Saturday was our Sabbath. Now, somebody has got to break their Sabbath to go get this stuff done. Maybe we should move it back. Then, it's Friday at midnight. That was better. Then, we thought, "What if we could do really well?" So, we moved it back to Wednesday at midnight.

We were like, "Holy cow, what have we done? We can't have it all done by Wednesday at midnight." That's how my hair was pulled out. That's how I got these grays right here in the beard. Then, we said, "That's probably too early. How about Thursday at midnight?" Thursday seemed to work pretty well. The reason why is because we had rehearsal.

Worship team rehearsal was on Thursday. We figured that as long as everything for Sunday is done by the time the band finishes rehearsal on Thursday, that's pretty good. Here's what that does: That gives you room on Friday to think about next week. What a gift it is not to spend all day Friday trying to pull all the final pieces of this Sunday together.

You create this little self-imposed deadline. Pastor, you have to drive old people's feet to the fire. Worship leader, you have to do the same. All the printing, all the worship rehearsal, all the planning and all the volunteer confirmations has to be done by Thursday at midnight. You have this gift on Friday to work on next week.

Then, you have this gift on Sunday knowing that everything is ready. It's all put to bed. I have a gift right now. I'm teaching on Sunday. My sermon is done. I had my message run through this afternoon. Guess what I'm not going to be sweating on Friday night while I'm driving back to Boca? I'm not going to be sweating it.

I hit my Thursday midnight deadline, and I hit it a day early. That was a good thing. You create this Thursday midnight deadline. Here's what that does: It forces you to think in advance, to work in advance and to avoid this tendency to say, "I just need longer in the week to figure that out. I'll work on the message on Friday."

I'm telling you that if you work on the message on Tuesday, the message you teach on Sunday is going to be better than if you start writing the message on Friday. If you put together the worship set the week before rehearsal, I guarantee you that rehearsal is going to go a lot better than if you put together the worship set two hours before rehearsal.

It's just the way things are. So, you need these little deadlines in your life. Here's number six: Develop systems to ensure timely set up and sound check. I'm not going to talk much about this one, but this one is a big difference maker. I referenced it a little bit earlier. Worship leader, this is a good one for you to drive.

Make sure that your team has a time that their supposed to show up on Sunday. Make sure you get them there

on time. I have this problem with people that run late. Am I the only one? Is it just me? I have a problem with that. When I was the worship pastor up in New York, whenever somebody would arrive late, I would have a conversation with the late arriver.

That conversation was uncomfortable enough that they didn't want to arrive late anymore after that. It was done in Christian love. I always held my team to attention on that. I think the way that you manage your time shows respect for the people that you're sharing that time with. I never understood a worship leader that, if the call time on Sunday morning is 8:00 a.m., didn't have any conversation with the people that showed up five minutes before the service at 8:30.

I don't get that. It matters. I'm telling you, if you fight battles on that stuff in the early days, you don't have to fight battles on that kind of stuff or even bigger stuff later on. I didn't intend to talk about this, but very quickly I'll say this: You should get a reputation as somebody who doesn't put up with a lot of shenanigans in your church.

Worship leader, you should have a reputation with your worship team so they know that, if they step outside of the bounds of the biblical values of your team or your church, you're immediately going to come talk to them about that. I call that running to conflict. If you run to that kind of stuff, people are going to start saying, "Bill's the kind of guy that doesn't put up with this kind of stuff. I'm just going to go ahead and get in line on it because I don't want to have any more of those conversations."

If you will fight those battles on the little things and get that reputation, you will not have to fight those battles on the big things. Does that make sense? People will say, "If he gets uptight about me showing up five minutes late for this, what's he going to do if I show up unprepared or if I show up and do this or that?"

That has really nothing to do with set up and sound check, but it's a little bonus there. So, you want to create those types of things. Here's the one thing I will say to worship leaders: Worship leaders, we are notorious. You are notorious. I say "we" because I've been there. You are notorious for really usurping all of the sound check time for yourself because you got the band.

You got a lot of things to figure out, such as being satisfied when the pastor walks up on stage and says, "Check, check, check—okay, I'm good," and then your pastor leaves the stage. Give the pastor check its due. I've been a worship leader. I can say this. The most important thing that's going to happen on Sunday probably isn't the singing.

It's important. I elevate it. It's really important. I love it. It's got to be the preaching of God's word. Give the pastor sound check its due. Pastors, you should make sure that your sound check gets its due. Don't get up there and go, "Check, check—okay, it's working. I'm good." Get up there. Make sure your sound guy has plenty of time to EQ you and make sure you sound just right.

Stand up there and have your probe team or your PowerPoint team go through all the slides while you look through the message notes and make sure everything is right. Give that time its due. We have a little rule at The Journey that if the worship leader goes over time consistently and cuts into the pastor's sound check time, then, the following week, the band has to do their sound check after the pastor check, and the pastor gets to show up whenever he wants to.

When you do that one time, you stop running late on your sound checks for the band. Give that pastor check its due. It's something I would say is worthwhile. By the way, a lot of these examples I'm talking about are in some of the appendix areas. I'll draw your attention to page 20 and 21 in your notes. This is appendix 4 and appendix 5.

These are some little setup and sound check procedures we've developed at The Journey. These are actually a little bit outdated in New York because we just moved to three simultaneous locations. We were just rewriting all of this. Here's a little example of Sunday morning setup assignments because we're portable. These are the jobs that specific people on the worship team had to do in order to make Sunday a reality.

The reason we created this list of specifics is because setup was taking forever. There was no time for all these good things we wanted to do. So, we created this so that setup would go smoothly and we had plenty of time for the more important sound check items. I gave you a couple examples of that. You can take that and adapt that for your church.

Page five is a stage manage checklist that we adapted because stage managers have so much to do on Sunday. We gave them a little checklist so they can just walk down it every Sunday. They check off all they've done. Develop those systems on your church. That's really helpful. If you have those systems, those systems are going to save you stress, time, energy and money when it comes to the rest of your service.

Here's number seven: Prepare a focus time. A focus time is a five- to ten-minute meeting where you bring your entire team together that has a role in the worship service. You bring them together to pray together, talk about the day and walk through the worship order. You can use that time to communicate a vow or talk about something that really matters for them that day.

Use that for a little investment time. If you look on page 16 in your notes, you see this worship order. You'll notice that we put the focus time right after pastor sound check. We've got the setup, then the band sound check and then the worship leader meets with the production leaders. Make sure that all the video clips have been tested.

Then, we do the pastor sound check. After that pastor sound check, we do this focus time. That focus time is an opportunity for everybody to catch their breath. It's time for everybody to pray together. What you're doing with that focus time is shifting from setup mode to worship mode. Up until now, everything has been about checks.

Is this line working? Is that this right? It's all very technical. So, that focus time allows you to shift out of that and bring people into worship mode so that they're ready now to start thinking about the worship service as a whole. That's the time of prayer. It's the time where you can communicate some vision. This is what's going on.

I like for our team to use that to communicate some behind-the-scenes type of information. Let me pull back the curtain and tell you something really big that's coming up in our church. Talk about one of your core values and those kind of things. That focus time helps you make a shift in your thinking on Sunday to be ready now.

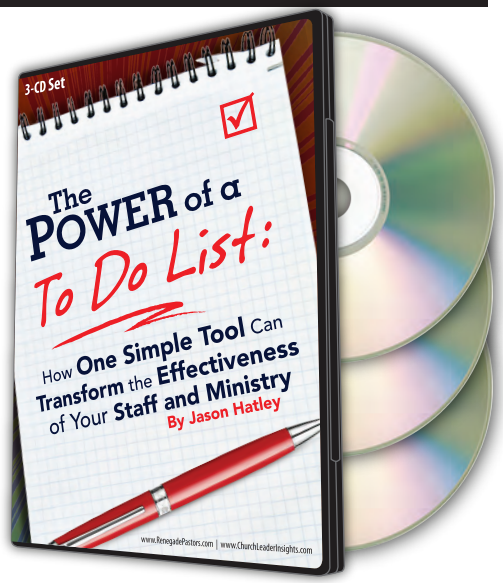
Now, we're moving into worship time. On the back side of that focus time, after you've spent that time to pray and talk about that value, you walk through the worship order and do what I call number eight, which is practice important transitions by implementing a que to que. I'm going to let you spell that however you want to.

You're practicing the different ques in your worship service. Regardless of whether your church is very ultra-contemporary with moving lights and all that kind of stuff or very ultra-conservative and you just have lights and stained glass, which I love by the way, there are certain ques in your worship service.

These are points where transitions happen, where you move out of the opening worship song into the call to worship into the pastoral prayer. These little transition points happen along the way. I found that if you just see

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how it goes during your first service on Sunday with your transitions, your service is going to be longer and more disconnected.

If you take ten minutes some time before your service starts, you just practice those transitions and you say, "We're not going to do the whole worship service. We're just going to do the starts and the stops so that the band knows the que for when to leave the stage for the pastor to come up and teach and so that the lighting guy knows when to bring the lights down for the video," not only does that help the flow of your service, but it cuts down immensely on your mistakes in your service.

I don't think mistakes in a worship service are a cardinal unforgiveable sin, but they're just below that. You don't want mistakes in your service. What do mistakes do? They pull people's attention off of what God is saying to them and puts them on, "Why did they show the wrong video," or, "I can't even see that video. All the lights are on," or, "That was weird. The drummer is still on stage even though the pastor started the sermon. What's up with that?"

You don't think that they should do this, but this is what the people in our churches see. This is what they think about. What happens is, if you implement this que to que, basically, what you do it go through and say, "Here's our worship order." I know I keep calling you back to page 16. Go back to page 16 for our simple worship order.

You see the que numbers. There's a pre-service. There's a zero and a one, two, three, four, five, six and seven. Those are the que numbers. Here's what we would do at the end of that focus time as we're getting ready for que to que: The worship leader would walk through and say, "Let's walk through the worship order and talk about it."

Then, we'll just literally walk through every step of the worship order. This is where that transition is going to happen. Stage team, are you guys good with that? Everybody is good. You know what's going on in the worship order. Everybody knows what you're doing. We're going to practice que numbers zero, one, two, three, four and five.

Then, we're going to jump down and practice the end of que six. Basically, what that means is we're going to que to que. It's like a practice run of all the little transitions we're going to do. It takes about ten minutes. What we do is have our team treat it just like it's the live real worship service. We have our lighting guy set the lights for what they're going to be before the service starts.

Then, the band comes on stage. They're all standing there in the dark. Then, they practice the transition to bring the lights on and for the band to fire the first song. They play about ten seconds of the first song and stop. Then, we say, "Let's fast forward to the end of que number one for the transition into the hosting time.

Then, the worship leader will count it off. The band will play the alto of the last worship song before the hosting time. Then, the worship leader isn't going to say, "I think I might say something like this." He's going to say exactly what he's planning to say to have the people do the welcome and the greet or whatever that transition is so that they know when to fire that que, the lighting people know when to do that and the pastor knows when to come on and do his little welcome.

We practice that. The band plays the last eight bars of the song. The worship leader says, "Welcome to The Journey again. We're so glad you're here. Why don't you turn and say hello to someone around you that you haven't met? Then, you can have a seat." Then, the pastor walks on and says, "Good morning, welcome to The Journey. My name is Jason. It's great to see you this morning."

Then, we stop. It's such a little thing. We just do these little starts and stops. Here's what happens when we do that: Everybody that has a role in that little transition gets a chance to practice it before the real service begins. Because they have a chance to practice it, they're comfortable with it. They know how it's going to work.

They know how it's all going to flow. Then, in the service, they're probably not going to make a mistake by going to the wrong lighting que or the wrong video or saying the wrong thing. I know that's a little technical thing, but that's a game changer in your worship services. I remember the first Sunday we moved from not que to que to doing que to que.

I can't tell you how many people came to me after the service and said, "Man, today's worship service was awesome." It wasn't the preaching and the singing. It was the fact that we just all knew what we were doing before we started the first service. We're going to do a Q & A in just a moment.

Will you hang onto that question? I'd like to record that to make sure everybody can hear it. I want to answer that question. We're on the home stretch here. Here's number nine: Start and end your services on time. Don't give into the temptation to wait until everybody shows up to start your services. If you do that, your service will run late, and the people will just come later next Sunday.

There's a reason they don't show up on time. They do it on purpose probably. I won't get off on that. Start and end your services on time. Don't wait until the sanctuary is full to do that. Don't hold your congregation captive at the end. Let them go home. Don't end the sermon and say, "Amen. Now, we have 20 more minutes of singing and 15 minutes of announcements."

When you said "amen" at the end of the sermon, they were pretty much ready to go. I know you've got to do some things. You've got to do the offering. You've got to do some things. Do those things, but don't hold them captive. Think through how that works. Start and end it on time. I promise that if you start on time, you're must more likely to end on time.

Then, make adjustments. If you're doing multiple services and you went late in the first service, have a little meeting, which we're going to talk about right now, and say, "What do we need to do differently so we don't run over and put our children's ministry in a bind by letting everybody out too late?" So, start and end on time.

Here's number ten: Debrief after every service. This is the evaluation point I was talking about earlier. You want to take a little time after every worship service to say, "How did it go?" Just honestly give feedback. I'm not going to dive into this as deeply as I could because we get into this a lot and engage in other worship planning resources that we do.

We debrief not just on Monday what happened on Sunday, but if you're doing multiple services, there should be a little five-minute window where you, your worship leader and any other key people on the team get together after each service and do a little quick debrief and say, "How do you think that joke went?" If everybody said it was lousy, cut it for the next service.

Just because you keep telling the joke doesn't make it any funnier. If the worship set went over five minutes, that's normal. Worship sets always go over, I think. By the way, I used to have the nickname of the only worship leader in America who went under his time. Nelson used to call me that. I don't think it was a compliment.

I think he wanted me to go his fully time. He said I was the only worship leader in America who went under his time. A lot of times, the worship goes over. At that transition, you've got to say, "You guys went five minutes over. I had to cut three big points from my sermon. We can't do that. We've got to five that. We're going to cut

that song because I'm going to teach this."

Pastor, you have the authority to do that. You do that little debrief after every service so you can make little adjustments. Here's my mentality on that: If you make some kind of mistakes in the first service and you've got multiple services that day, why perpetuate those mistakes all day long? Why not fix those little things from service to service?

By the end of the day, you've got a really good worship service going. In the first service, maybe you've made some mistakes, but by the end, everything is better. When we debrief, we ask four questions. I included this on the next page of your notes with a little Sunday debrief sample. This big debrief right here is not the in-between service debrief because we only have maybe five minutes.

Those are just quick check ins. What did you think about this? Do you think we can go to that a little quicker? This is the bigger debrief that we would do on a Monday in a worship planning meeting, where we would say, "Let's all show up and talk about Sunday. First of all, let's talk about all the things that went right.

What's the first thing you want to do whenever you evaluate your worship service. You want to talk about all the things that went wrong. This didn't work. You have to make yourself talk about all the things that went right so you can celebrate and thank God for that. You can even stop right there and pray at the end. Pray and thank God for everything that went right.

Then, you have this little session where you're meeting with your worship leader and pastor and say, "Let's just be honest. What are the things that went wrong yesterday? What was missing yesterday." Missing is kind of like wrong with just a little nuance. It's like we were missing batteries for all the wireless mics. That's wrong, but it's kind of missing because that's something that was on a list but didn't show up.

What was confusing? I love it when the worship sets show up on the confusing list. The worship list was confusing. Sometimes, we don't like to get too honest about this stuff because we think we're going to hurt one another's feelings, or we're going to somehow be ungrateful to God for all the good things that happened. It's just an opportunity to just call it like it is.

Say, "What is it we could go to work on this week to make this week a little bit better?" Here's why debrief matters to your Sunday service: Doing a debrief like this after every service every Sunday makes your worship service better the next Sunday because you're going to fix the mistakes you made this Sunday.

You might make some new mistakes this Sunday, but at least you won't make all the same old mistakes you made last Sunday. If you do that week after week. The quality of your worship services is just going to grow that way. Take time after every worship service to debrief.

Ten keys to winning worship services: Develop your clearly defined worship order. Communicate with team members before Sunday. See and approve every element of the worship order. Create your Sunday plan. Obey the Thursday midnight rule. Develop systems to ensure timely setup and sound check. Prepare a focus time. Practice important transitions by implementing a que to que. Start and end your services on time. Debrief after every service.

Here's what I'll say about all that: These are lots of little things. None of those things require 40 hours this week. That's the point I want to make. It's the difference between the good service and the great service. The difference between the okay service and the winning service is attention to those little details.

Harvey McKay said, "Little things don't mean a lot. They mean everything." Chuck Swindoll had a very similar one. I don't know if he borrowed it from Harvey or vice versa. Swindoll said, "The difference between something good and something great is attention to detail."

It's those little things. I want you to see this as the difference between where you are in your worship service right now and where you want to be. A lot of times, it's not the huge massive overhaul. Sometimes, it's just the attention to the little things. Those little things can mean a lot. Let's wrap up tonight with Romans, chapter 12, verse 1 and 2.

I read it earlier in the New Living Translation. This is the version that I memorized it in. It's the New International Version. I kind of like this version as a reminder of what worship is and what we do in worship. Let's read this out load together. It's page 15 in your notes. Are you ready? Go.

Everyone: Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good pleasing and perfect will.

At the end of the day, your worship services exist to accomplish that verse in the lives of the people of your church. That's why your services exist. It's to help the people of your church present their bodies as living sacrifices and to not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but to be transformed by the renewing in their mind. That's why we want winning worship services because in that service, there's power for transformation in people's lives.

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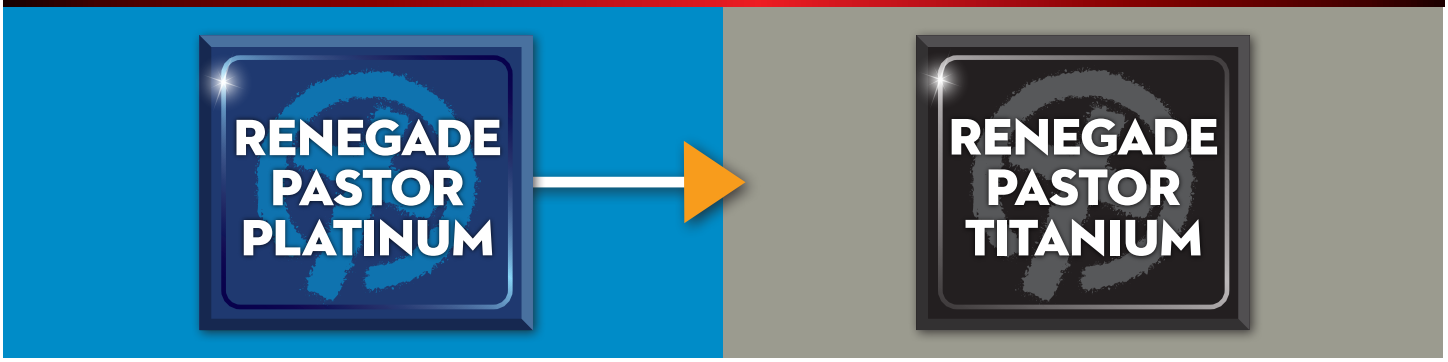
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Turn the page over to see the other two levels on the ladder!

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