Worship Team Teaching – Margaret Graham

Leading in the Anointing

We are called to lead worship through the presence and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Let's establish a biblical foundation for the anointing, explore seven practical keys to leading in it, and consider the cost of living a surrendered life.

1 Understand the Anointing

What is the anointing

The anointing is the power, presence and divine enablement of God's Holy Spirit.

Consecration is closely related to anointing. It involves dedicating ourselves to God's service, separating ourselves from the secular and committing ourselves to the sacred. In the Old Testament, consecration rituals often included sacrifices, offerings and anointing with oil, as seen in the consecration of Aaron and his sons in Leviticus 8.

Anointing in the Old Testament was a significant ritual involving the pouring of oil on a person or object. It symbolized sanctification, consecration and the impartation of divine favour.

The anointing of believers

In the New Testament, the anointing continues to hold spiritual significance. It signifies the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, empowers believers for service and heightens discernment.

1 John 2:20

> "But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth"
> https://biblehub.com/john/2-20.htm

2nd Corinthians 1:21-22

> "Now it is God who establishes both us and you in Christ. He anointed us, Placed His seal on us, and put his spirit in our hearts as a pledge of what is to come."

Why the anointing matters in worship

We often hear people say, "Wow, that sermon was anointed today," or refer to an anointed worship set or song. Equally, pure-hearted people can discern when the anointing is absent from a room.

Isaiah 10:27

> "And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing."

Yokes and chains signify slavery and captivity. Many people are still broken, bound by their past and enslaved to sin. In the midst of Spirit-filled, anointed worship, we can see people delivered and set free.

Christine Caine says that a gifted worship team can fill a room and get a good response, much like a concert, but only an anointed team will break yokes and chains.

2 Practise the Seven Keys

Key 1 Develop an intimate connection with God

Great worship leaders and team members know their Father. They can say, “I am a friend of God.” They love Him so much that they begin each day with Him.

- Foster a strong and consistent prayer life.
- Live a lifestyle of worship beyond serving on Sunday morning.
- Make personal worship a priority. You cannot lead people where you have not first been.

Personal worship resource: Come Sing app.

Key 2 Depend fully on the Holy Spirit

Be yielded and surrendered. Do not lean on your talent or experience; rely on the Holy Spirit’s leading, listen to His voice and respond to His promptings with obedience.

When choosing a worship set, seek the Holy Spirit and ask:

- What do You want to do in the room?
- Where do You want the people to journey?

It is fine to have favourite songs or songs that suit your voice, but these cannot be the main reason for choosing them.

Key 3 Love worship without idolizing it

It may sound strange, but we can end up worshipping worship instead of the One who should be worshipped. Beware of craving the platform, becoming possessive of your gift or making it an idol. Check your heart and motives to ensure you love Jesus more than anything else.

Key 4 Keep growing in your faith and your gift

- Love God’s Word. Read, absorb and study it daily.
- Learn through worship blogs, books and seminars that strengthen your walk with God.
- Balance rehearsals with community devotions, Scripture reading, psalming, group prayer and reflection.
- Welcome feedback. Ask a trusted leader, “How can I improve? Is there anything I can do better?”

Key 5 Seek fresh anointing

Do not rely on yesterday’s anointing. God provides new mercies and fresh oil every morning. Instead of repeating a song simply because it worked last week, pray:

Holy Spirit, what songs this week will take us deeper into Your presence and heal the hearts of Your people?

Illustration: Tell the story of the surfer.

Key 6 Walk in humility and serve others

A major part of humility is serving others well and aligning with the vision and direction of our leadership. To exercise authority in our sphere of gifting, we must first understand what it means to defer to authority.

The church faces many battles, and resistance to godly oversight is one area that can rob us of anointing. Soldiers would never dream of going into battle if they could not follow orders. We will never exercise the full authority of the Spirit if we do not first honour the leaders God has chosen.

1 Peter 2:13

> Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority (emphasis mine).

The story of the centurion whose servant was sick is a beautiful example of someone who understood both military authority and the Kingdom's order of authority.

Luke 7:6-8

> "Jesus started off with them, but on his way there, friends of the captain stopped him and delivered this message: "Master, don't bother to come to me in person, for I am not good enough for you to enter my home. I'm not worthy enough to even come out to meet one like you. (Humility)
>
> But if you would just speak the word of healing from right where you are, I know that my servant will be healed. (Understood Jesus Position) I am an ordinary man. Yet I understand the power of authority, and I see that authority operating through you. I have soldiers under me who obey everything I command. I also have authorities over me whom I likewise obey. So Master, just speak the word and healing will flow.""
> Luke 7:6-8 TPT
> https://bible.com/bible/1849/luk.7.6-8.TPT

Did he receive his miracle? Jesus will move heaven and earth for a heart like this.

I have been pastoring creatives for 35 years. This is hard work for most of us, but it is vital that we understand it. Perhaps this is one of the reasons we do not see the church move in the full authority she has been given.

The centurion was not prideful, rebellious, independent or arrogant. He was humble, submissive and trusting. He knew who he was and who he was not.

What do we do when we disagree with leadership?

Communicate. Create a safe, healthy environment where differing opinions are welcomed, provided we come with the right spirit.

Key 7 Pursue purity and value consecration

- Set time aside to withdraw to the secret place.
- Fast, especially from things you really love.
- Practise accountability and honest conversation.

Psalm 51:10

> A place to ask God in prayer: create in me a clean heart, oh God and renew a right spirit within me.

Romans 12:1-2

> Offer your whole life as a living sacrifice.

3 Embrace the Cost of the Anointing

The anointing is precious, and a life of consecration will cost us something.

The crushing and pressing

Song illustration: New Wine by Brooke Ligertwood.

Joseph went through considerable character development and personal crushing. Remember his arrogant years!

Christian teaching often uses the metaphor of an olive press, which releases oil by crushing the olives. Interestingly, Gethsemane, the garden where Jesus prayed in deep anguish and was crushed under the weight of our sin, means the place of the oil press in Aramaic.

Isaiah 53:5 says He was crushed for our iniquities.

Life's trials, suffering and crushing pressure are not meant to destroy us. As with the olive, pressure can release the anointing, godly character and spiritual fruit hidden within us. Raw olives are bitter, yet the pressing process releases precious oil.

We have to make a difficult decision: I will not let this destroy me. I will let the suffering and pressure do their work. Bring out the oil.

I know how hard this is. We are experiencing it right now with one of our family members. Have grace for the reality of where you are, but keep journeying toward the best choice.

Development before discovery

Christine Caine uses the illustration of developing film in a darkroom. It is better to be developed than discovered. If the door is opened before the film has finished developing, the light will overexpose and destroy the pictures. I have seen ambition destroy character.

That is why we must not place people in positions of authority before they can carry its weight. I have seen musicians become upset when, after auditioning them, I felt the team was not a fit, their gifting needed further development or their character needed growth.

They did not understand the order of authority or my role as a shepherd, with the responsibility to protect them from being placed in an unsafe position.

Obscurity before prominence

Hiddenness is good. Serving faithfully in seasons of anonymity, without applause, prepares us to sustain public responsibilities without relying on human approval.

If our faith is not tested, it will not stand against trial or persecution. Testing in the secret place develops character, squeezes out pride, fear and self-reliance, and replaces them with a more deeply rooted faith.

Romans 5:3-5

> "Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."

4 Trust God with What You Have

God can use us in our weakness

As David takes up the throne of Israel he says, '… though I am the anointed king, I am weak' (2 Samuel 3:39). The moment you put your faith in Jesus, God anoints you with the Holy Spirit. However weak and inadequate you may feel, God can use you, like David, in extraordinary ways. Even your weakness is anointed.

A little can become a lot

In 2nd Kings 4:1-7, a widow faces immense debt and risks losing her sons. She tells the prophet Elisha her sad story. He asks what she has in her house.

She has only a small jar of oil. He tells her to borrow as many jars as possible. She fills every jar until there are no containers left.

Do not say, "I don't have any," or "I don't have enough." God can exceed our natural resources. He takes our small gifts and talents and does more through them than we could do ourselves, so that we and others will know it could only be Jesus. He receives the glory.

5 Respond With a Surrendered Heart

We do not have to be perfect, just yielded.

The anointing of the Holy Spirit flows powerfully through believers who fully surrender their personal control, ego, pride and agenda to God.

Reflection: What can you surrender today to allow the free flow of the Holy Spirit's anointing in your life?

Let's pray.