

PART TWO:

THE DISCIPLINE OF CHRISTIAN SINGING

HOW TO CULTIVATE THE

DISCIPLINE OF CHRISTIAN SINGING?

I. Discipline yourself to sing.

Comment: There is no better way to learn singing than to start singing. Don't worry about not having a good voice. Singing is not a performance. Just hum and sing in private, and sing with others in corporate singing.

John Piper: "Satan cannot bear the singing of the saints. You can drive him away with song. And don't fall for his lie that you can't sing. Everybody can sing. Not everybody can perform. Not everybody can lead. Not everybody can read music or even stay on the right keys. But everybody can sing to God."

Ronald Allen wrote in his book *Worship: Rediscovering the Missing Jewel*: "When a non-singer becomes a Christian, he or she becomes a singer. Not all are blessed with a finely tuned ear and a well-modulated voice; so the sound may not be superb-it may even be out-of-tune and off-key. Remember: worship is a state of heart; musical sound is a state of art. Let's not confuse them."

Caution: Learn to sing actively, not simply listen passively to songs. Engage yourself in singing.

2. Let learning new songs be the regular habit of your Christian life.

The Psalms encourage repeatedly to sing a new song. **Psalm 149:1**, "Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise in the assembly of the godly!"

Learn the right words and the right tune:

- Hymnary.org
- Hymnal.net

- Worshiptogether.com
- YouTube

Comment: I have spent hours of time learning many new songs. I want to learn the entire hymns in “Near to Heart of God” book. I love writing songs too. By the Lord grace, I have written more than ten songs in Telugu, close to ten songs in Hindi, and close to ten songs in English.

A. W. Tozer, “After the Bible the next most valuable book for the Christian is a good hymnal. Let any young Christian spend a year prayerfully meditating on the hymns of Watts and Wesley alone and he will become a fine theologian. Then let him read a balanced diet of the Puritans and the Christian mystics. The results will be more wonderful than he could have dreamed.”

Note: It is also good to learn a bit of the history of the song, which would be a great encouragement to us in singing.

Example:

Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee.
Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Biography: Reginald Heber was born in 1783 into a wealthy, educated family. He was a bright youth, translating a Latin classic into English by the time he was seven, entering Oxford at 17, and winning two awards for his poetry during his time there. After his graduation he became rector of his father's church in the village of Hodnet near Shrewsbury in the west of England where he remained for 16 years. He was appointed Bishop of Calcutta in 1823 and worked tirelessly for three years until the humid weather and travel took its toll on his health. One Sunday morning, after preaching to a large outdoor crowd of Indians on the subject of the evils of their caste system, he evidently suffered a sun-stroke and died very suddenly, at the age of forty-three. Most of his 57 hymns, which include "Holy, Holy, Holy," are still in use today.

3. Don't sing blindly. Understand the meaning of the song and mean what you sing.

Understand the meaning of the song:

- Rock of ages *cleft* for me, Let me hide myself in Thee
- Come, thou Fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some *melodious sonnet*, sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount I'm fixed upon it, mount of God's redeeming love.
- A mighty fortress is our God, a *bulwark* never failing;
our helper he, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.

Mean what you sing:

A congregation was singing a song, "I cry to you O Lord." The speaker turned to a man on the platform and asked quietly, "Why are you crying?" The man was stunned. "I am not crying. Why do you ask?" "Well, I just heard you say, 'I cry to you O Lord,' and I thought you meant it," the preacher replied. "Oh, no," said the man. "I'm just singing."

Sing truthfully: **John 4:24**, "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

A. W. Tozer: "Christians don't tell lies – they just go to church and sing them."

4. Sing with joy and vigor.

Psalm 81:1, "Sing aloud to God our strength; shout for joy to the God of Jacob!"

Psalm 71:23, "My lips will shout for joy, when I sing praises to you."

John Wesley (1703-1791) said it this way in an introduction to a hymnal: "Sing lustily (energetically) and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half-dead, or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of its being heard, than when you sung the songs of Satan." (John Wesley, Preface to Select Hymns [1761])

About A. W. Tozer, "He enjoyed singing immensely. He would sit on the platform with chin cupped in hand, his eyes closed, enraptured. The congregational singing was also a delight. It is worth noting that while he never sang except for his own pleasure, his children remember him singing, and always it was the great hymns."

Question: Do your children know you as a singing and worshipping father and mother?

5. Sing with your focus on God (especially when a song is a song of praise or prayer).

Psalm 68:32, “O kingdoms of the earth, sing to God; sing praises to the Lord...”

Comment:

- Don't let your focus be on personal feelings but on God who delights to have personal relationship with us.
- Distraction is a great temptation in our prayers and praises to God. Don't give up in your battle against distraction in your mind to focus on God.
- Just as the body is dead without heart, so also is a song without the heart set upon God.

Isaiah 29:13, “Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me...”

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

Part 3: To be continued.....