

Songwriting Article #12

As Christian songwriters, sometimes the hardest thing for us to remember is that the Lord intends for us to use ALL of our experiences and ALL of our talents for Him. Keith and I have often experienced that in our songwriting. We have no problem using the times in our lives when God has intervened at our request for healing, both physical and spiritual, where it has been something introduced from an outside source or event that we had no control over. We are always ready to tell someone how God healed us or kept us from harm by delaying us with small things that really frustrated us, but when we drove by the wreck a few minutes later, we realized that it could have involved us. What about the things we have done that are intentional sins or sins of omission that make us look less than sterling in the eyes of our brothers and sisters in Christ? What about the times God has left us to wander in the desert of our willfulness or un-repentance until we're ready to hear His voice and give up?

The Bible is full of times when men and women of God have behaved less than Godly or have been angry with God because He wasn't fulfilling their prayers or God's promises to them fast enough. David sinned with Bathsheba and God took the child of that sin. The prophet Ezekiel complained to God that he was the only righteous prophet in the land until God reminded him that there were over 100 others that had not bowed their knee or hearts to the idols of Jezebel. And look at Jonah! To borrow Bugs Bunny's turn of phrase, "What a maroon!"

We look at these people and say, "Yes, but they didn't sin like I did or they didn't argue with God about what I argued with Him about. Honeychile, there ain't NOTHIN' new under the sun where God is concerned. He's seen the rebellious heart of mankind AND angel-kind at their very worst. There was no sin committed by man that God had not already prepared to forgive through the blood of Jesus and if we have sinned and obtained God's forgiveness, the significance of the sin is negligible compared to the glory of His forgiveness. Sometimes, we are still hanging on to something and God helps us as songwriters by letting us "write it out of our systems". When that happens, we really don't feel like sharing that song with anyone, but what if there is someone out there who has committed that very act too and they think there is no hope for them? Are we not obligated as Christians to lay aside our embarrassment and tell the story of healing and/or restoration that we have received?

With that said, sometimes it isn't so necessary that we "tell all" about a situation to reach the listener. Sometimes the process of God's forgiveness without the specifics speaks more directly to our listeners because even though they may not have experienced our exact "missing the mark", (Hamartia in the Greek), the story of our restoration may liberally apply to their need in their situation.

So, with all this said, it is confession time. Many of you have heard Keith sing the song, "God Answers Prayer," off his album *The Cross Began to Call*. He tells the story of how God healed my daddy after he'd had a heart attack, but the part of the story he didn't know was that I had been really angry with my Dad not long before that about something and I wasn't living in a very Godly fashion at the time when Daddy had his heart attack. I knew that I needed to pray and ask God to forgive my unrepentant attitude towards my Daddy, but I rather enjoyed wallowing in my self pity, so I told God, "Not yet." It's funny how a phone-call can change that. I felt so guilty when I got the call that I immediately dropped to my knees and began to apologize to God for my selfishness and God healed my Daddy. I could have been the cause of Daddy's early departure from this earth, I thought. Then I had to laugh at myself. Daddy's days were numbered when he was born and God already knew all of them ahead of time. I was merely getting in line with the spiritual place that I needed to be in order for God to use me. Sometimes, being a human ain't all that glamorous, huh? Don't be afraid to show your heart and your humanness in your writing. It's why God created you with a gift. Til next time, keep writing.