

SONGWRITING

*(by the songwriting team of
CLAY HOWELL & KEITH CALDWELL)*
CGC Songwriters of the Year 2009

Songwriting Article #13

LIVING THE SONG

Over the last few years, many new songwriters have asked me how I get my ideas. Unfortunately, I assumed that most of these songwriters were out in the world talking to people about the Lord. Soon I realized that many of them were in the Word daily, but weren't talking to people on a one to one level.

It is often saddening to talk to some Christian singer/ songwriters and hear a tirade about how "business" is going, how sales are going, and how much the rise of the price in gas or diesel is affecting their ability to be on the road. All of this conversation and nothing about what God is doing in their lives or their ministry. Don't get me wrong! Many are very focused on ministry over business. Now, while I know all too well that there is definitely a business side to a Gospel ministry, we must understand that, above all, this ministry is God's ministry. In following Christ's example, even as a child, he said, "knew you not that I must be about my Father's business?"

While the worldly business side must be run well (and remember, we must be good stewards with God's money) we MUST make sure we are out ministering daily whether singing or not. This is one of the last directives from Jesus, "Go out and preach the Word."

I have actually had people tell me that their calling is to lead people to the Lord only while on stage. They have actually continued to explain that they leave that to others who have that calling. I could not disagree with them more. If I am stepping on your toes right now, I offer no apology. Don't tell me that you can't talk one on one with someone about Christ and then complain that you have writer's block. And NO, I am not saying that you should do this to get ideas.

What I am telling you is that IF you are truly going about your Heavenly Father's business, the result will be a closer personal relationship with the Lord and a freer connection to the Holy Spirit who will inspire you. Also, in following His will (leading others to Christ personally and witnessing to others) a byproduct will be ideas for songs.

Some of the best ideas I have gotten for songs have been after witnessing to someone about the Lord. You know, talking about Jesus to someone, sharing the joy and peace that can come from a personal relationship with Jesus, the more they will open up their lives to you with incredible stories of their pain, struggles, and trials. Many of my song ideas have come from a desire to write a song that can be a blessing to that person and others going through similar circumstances.

My songwriting partner, Clay Howell and I, are currently tasked with writing 90 brand new songs for other Christian recording artists within the next 6 months. Yes, 90 original songs for projects to begin recording by September through the beginning of next year. Wow, indeed a daunting task lies before us. Yet in the last three months, Clay and I have written 20 of the best songs we have ever written, AND THEY ARE FOR OTHER SINGERS!! (I know, I'm greedy and want them all!) But God has given us these songs to give to the world and not to keep for ourselves since we can't afford to record them all (ARGHH!!). We have actually written over 30, but not all have been picked. Clay and I have had over 50 of our songs recorded by myself and other artists over the last 3 years, and now we are constantly writing.

We can only attribute this success to not only staying “in the Word,” but through “Living the Word.” You know, when we buy a technological product we always want to start using the product without reading the manual, therefore, we don’t know all of the benefits and features this product has to offer. We also don’t know the warnings about the misuse of the product. Well, when we become a Christian, our manual is the Word and we are to use the Word to do His will daily.

So, my dear songwriting friends, my advice to all of you is to stay in the Word to find out what God’s will for you really is and then to live the Word daily. Then you will be “Living the Song.”

Until next time, keep on writing!!!

Keith Caldwell