

In a handful of scriptural references, a powerful example is given to modern ministers of music. He is perhaps the chief music minister of one of the greatest pastors of the Old Testament. Shortly after King David brought the Ark of the Covenant back and established the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, he orchestrated the most elaborate worship services in the entire Bible complete with singers, musicians, dancers, and many other worshipers. One of the key figures was a Kohathite named Heman.

In 1 Chronicles 6:1-3, we find these words: “*And these are they whom David set over the service of song in the house of the LORD, after that the ark had rest. And they ministered before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of the congregation with singing, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem: and then they waited on their office according to their order. And these are they that waited with their children. Of the sons of the Kohathites: Heman a singer, the son of Joel, the son of Shemuel.*”

Perhaps this is not enough information to give us a detailed job description of the ministry of music in David’s era, but we can glean a principle that transcends three millennium of history and continues to prove important in church worship today. That principle is this: faithfulness is necessary in music ministry.

Before we delve into the particulars of this passage, we must first note the meaning of Heman’s name. In Hebrew the word, Heman, means faithful. What an appropriate name for this faithful minister of music in David’s time. As with any ministry, it is imperative that church musicians and singers be faithful. Paul told the Corinthians that faithfulness was a requirement of ministers of Christ. He also told Timothy that Christ put him into the ministry because he counted him faithful, and further admonished him to commit the truths he has learned unto faithful teachers as well.

Being faithful means being dependable. For a Pastor to vacate his pulpit with no replacement would be unforgiving. Teachers who leave their classes with no substitute are open to criticism as well. If music ministry is to receive the same acclaim, it should also be subject to the same accountability. Pianos need pianists, guitars need guitarists, drums need drummers, and songs need singers. Why? Because, although it is possible to worship without them, most Christians find it more conducive to worship with music and song.

There is perhaps nothing more frustrating for a pastor than not having adequate music or sufficient singing in a worship service. Music makes preaching easier by encouraging worship and facilitating altar services. Ministers of music must be dependable to their local church. Their faithful attendance is required.

While being there is the first necessity, it is hardly the last. Faithfulness is more than perfect attendance. ***Being faithful means serving.*** The text said that Heman and the others *ministered* (served)

with singing. The text twice uses the word *waited* to describe their service. The word is translated in various ways in the Old Testament including: to stand, to abide, to continue, to dwell, to be employed, to endure, to establish, to be, to be present, to remain, to serve, to set, and to tarry. You can see that more is implied in the term than just showing up and taking up space. Jesus said “Occupy (busy oneself with) till I come.”

At the restaurant, the server who takes your order, brings your food, refills your glass, and offers you dessert is called a waiter or waitress. The best waiters (and the ones most deserving of a tip) are the busiest waiters. Waiting means working.

Serve your pastor, your church, and your Lord by being faithful working in music ministry.

Lastly, *being faithful means persevering*. The most beautiful portion of the text may have been overlooked by many. The key word in this passage may be the word, *until*. The scripture tells us that Heman and others were appointed singers by King David when he brought the ark back to Jerusalem and they remained faithful singers until King Solomon built the Temple (over forty years later). Heman persevered through forty years. During those sometimes tumultuous years, he never lost his song. He kept singing through a change in leadership and an extensive building program. Let modern ministers of music learn from Heman that change in the church does not change the calling of God.

I believe that what Dr. Seuss said about his beloved Horton (and elephants in general) is exactly what God says about ministers of music.

*God meant what He said.
And He said what he meant.
A minister of music is faithful
One hundred percent!*

In part one of this series, we looked at the faithfulness of one of the great ministers of music in the Old Testament. Heman was a chief musician during David’s reign as King of Israel. While faithfulness is a chief attribute of this man and all good ministers of music, it is not the only desired quality.

In 1 Chronicles 16, we read about David bringing the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem. As he did, Zadok the priest offered sacrifices and all of Israel worshipped the Lord. Verse 41 indicates the subject of our series took a vital role in this worship: “*And with them Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest that were chosen, who were expressed by name, to give thanks to the LORD, because his mercy endureth for ever.*” The following verse also reveals that these men accompanied others’ songs of praise with their musical instruments.

We see then, that Heman was not only a faithful musician. He was thankful worshipper.

When we speak of praise and worship today, we are almost always referring to music. While it is possible to play music without worshipping God, and it is possible to truly worship without the use of music; the Bible teaches a significant relationship between the two.

There are many ways to give honor and glory to God. The psalmists show us their personal preference: singing and music. *“I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high.”* (Psalm 7:17). *“I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.”* (Psalm 9:2). *“Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.”* (Psalm 18:49). Finally, the 150th Psalm exhorts us to praise the Lord with all manner of musical instruments.

In these and many other verses, we see the correlation of music and worship. This should teach us something about our music ministry: ***the goal of music ministry is to lead God’s people into worship***. Modern ministers of music should strive for excellence in their abilities. There is a need to sharpen the skills and hone the abilities God has given us. However, if our well-rehearsed performance only entertains or our awe-inspiring talent merely enthralls our audience, we have missed out on the purpose God has for the talent He has given us. Legitimate music ministry leads people into worship.

The text said that Heman was *expressed by name* to give thanks to the Lord. When David was preparing to bring back the Ark (representative of the presence of God), he sought after some key individuals to lead in worship. David carefully and deliberately chose Heman. Many of his contemporaries may have wondered, “Why does Heman get asked to sing all the time?” The answer was simple and intriguing: because when Heman sings, others worship.

Why did others worship when Heman sang? Because, in addition to being a talented musician and a gifted singer, ***Heman was a genuine worshipper***. Songs of thanksgiving can only come from thankful hearts. Heman’s music magnified God because his life magnified God. True praise floods the soul before it flows from the lips. Those who have encountered God’s grace and the *mercy that endures forever* find it only natural to worship Him.

What a site that must have been when David danced before the Lord with all his might as Heman sang of the Lord’s mercy! Many would have been satisfied with this experience as their greatest encounter with God. However, faithful worshippers such as Heman are never content in their pursuit to worship the living God. We find him again standing *at the east end of the altar* as Solomon dedicated the Temple *arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps*. 2 Chronicles 5 says *“that the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound*

to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.” As Heman led this type of worship, *“the house was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.”* So we see then, that **ministers of music never tire of encountering God in worship.**

Perhaps, the next time you are asked to sing, you will remember Heman. May he remind you of why to sing, what to sing, and how to sing! Let the 6th verse of Psalm 47 serve as a reminder to you. Above all else...

Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.

We have been gleaning some music ministry principles from the life of one of the greatest ministers of music in the Old Testament, David’s chief musician, Heman. In the fifteenth chapter of I Chronicles, we find another characteristic of Heman that serves modern musicians and worship leaders as an example. Verses 16 and 17 read, *“And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice **with joy**. So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel...”* We have already discovered that Heman was a faithful worshipper in the service of the Lord, now this passage brings our attention to the manner in which he faithfully worshipped. The attitude of his heart was that of joy.

Previously, we looked at the sacrifices of praise offered as the ark returns to Jerusalem. Now, the focus of our text is on the preparation for bringing the ark home. David would not make the mistake he made on his first attempt at bringing the presence of God to him. So this time, in addition to securing the Levitical priests to bear the ark on their shoulders the way God intended, David intended for a group of Levites to worship the Lord with music. Once again, Heman is in the forefront of worshippers.

Notice that the text reveals: **Heman did his job with joy.** Why is that significant? Let us consider what his attitude could have been. In David’s first attempt to bring the ark home, one of the Levites was slain by the Lord for touching the Ark. This occurrence caused David to be both displeased and afraid. Although the prosperity of Obed-edom and the correction of the previous error greatly encouraged David in his second attempt, there may have still been apprehension by some of those involved. It is possible that some even harbored slight resentment for being asked to participate in this potentially dangerous assignment. There were no such feelings, however, in the heart of our hero. Let

Heman serve as an example to all modern ministers of music and those involved in every other area of ministry. Serve the Lord with joy!

When the Israelites brought their gifts for the building of the Temple in Jerusalem, David confessed that he had watched them worship the Lord by giving willingly and joyously (1 Chronicles 29:17). When the temple was re-dedicated by King Hezekiah, the Levites sang praises with gladness (2 Chronicles 29:30). Several Psalms further instruct worshippers to sing with joy.

In the New Testament, Paul found great delight in faithful prayer for the Philippian church (Philippians 1:4). When warned not to go to Jerusalem for the opposition and danger there awaiting him, Paul boldly proclaimed these distractions would not deter him from finishing his course with joy (Acts 20:24). The writer of Hebrews admonished Christians to be submissive to those in authority that they may give an account of their ministry with joy (Hebrews 13:17).

In any ministry we should serve the Lord with joy. For some, their work for the Lord has become a burdensome chore. Others for various reasons *do their job* in the church with bitterness and resentment. On the other hand, many have discovered how gratifying and personally fulfilling faithful service can be.

I believe it could be said of Heman that, while he faithfully did his job with joy, **his job gave him joy**. That is, the more he did for God, the happier he was about the service he had performed. The more faithful he was, the more he was fulfilled. His reward was in proportion to his effort. This principle is also reiterated in the New Testament.

After faithfully fulfilling Jesus' commission, the seventy disciples returned to him with joy (Luke 10:17). Even amidst the physical pain he endured, our Savior found joy in completing the work assigned to Him by the Father (Hebrews 2:2). May the same be said about modern ministers as well.

In the work place, laborers are much more effective if they enjoy their job. The same principle is true in the Kingdom work. Those who find joy in the faithful service of the Lord are much more likely to be effective in their ministry. Whether you are a pastor, Sunday School teacher, church secretary, janitor, or music minister (like Heman), let Psalm 100:2 be your guide as you minister for Christ.

Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

For the fourth part of our study on the Old Testament music ministry of Heman, we look to 1 Chronicles 25. In this chapter, we find that David appointed 288 individuals to *prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals*. Among them are the fourteen sons of Heman. Verse five of our text describes Heman as, *the king's seer in the words of God*. We discover from this text that not only was Heman a joyful faithful worshipper, but his was also a ministry of the Word.

Note the **message of his ministry**. As a prophet, the singer-musician, Heman, declared the Word of God. This is fitting for all true ministry is a ministry of the Word. How can this be? It is because the *message* of all true ministry is the Word of God. Paul exhorts young evangelists to preach the Word and avoid that which takes away from the ministry of the Word (1 Timothy 1:4; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 3:9). Preachers should preach the Word. Teachers should teach the Word. Apostles should take the Word. Singers should sing the Word.

Sermons should be informative, but biblical; instructional, but biblical; encouraging, but biblical; enjoyable, but biblical. In the same manner, ministry in song should present the Truth of God's Word. When choosing a song to sing, there are several factors— style, key, rhythm—but the most important is the song's message. There are many things we could sing about, but the only one worthy of our song is the Word of God.

Notice further the **method of his ministry**. The prophet Elisha would later employ the ministry of a minstrel as he declared God's Word to Kings Jehoram and Jehoshaphat (2 Kings 3:15). Habakkuk sang his prayer accompanied by stringed instruments (Habakkuk 3). In the same manner, Heman prophesied with a musical background. We have already discovered in our study of Heman that the goal of music ministry is to lead God's people into worship which makes preaching easier. As God's people are responsive to Him in worship, their hearts are open to receive his instruction.

Thirdly, we should observe the **harmony of his ministry**. In every mention of Heman in the Old Testament, he is serving in ministry with Asaph, or Jeduthun, or both of them. We can only conjecture about their three-part harmony (musically), but the harmony (unity) of their ministry of music is unquestionable. In a local church, music ministry usually involves several people. Playing well together is only part of what it takes to make the ministry successful. Synchronized spirits are just as necessary.

This harmony can also be seen in the close correlation between King David and Heman. David appointed Heman to perform several duties in his worship services. There is no record he ever refused an assignment. Heman is also called the king's seer. The two worshipped together, and they ministered to each other. David is his king, and yet his partner in the Lord's work. Pastors who prohibit their members from ministering and ministers who cannot submit to the direction God has given their leaders will hinder the whole body. Thus, every minister of music (and all lay-ministers) should seek the same spirit of the leader God has given them, for we are all laborers *together* with God.

For our final thought, we examine the **heritage of his ministry**. This dual ministry of musician and prophet should not surprise us. From his childhood, Heman was certainly acquainted with the Word of the Lord, for his grandfather was one of the greatest prophets in Israel's history—

a man named Samuel. Although Samuel's own sons (including Heman's father, Joel) did not walk in his ways, his grandson did. In his youth, David heard the Lord's words from Samuel. Later in life, Samuel's grandson fulfilled that ministry.

Heritage is not just a thing of beauty because of it has been handed down from one generation, but also because of the opportunity to leave it to another. Our text says Heman had fourteen sons and three daughters who followed him in ministry. These fourteen sons each led a group of one dozen worshippers. When Hezekiah cleansed the temple and restored Jehovah worship in Judah nearly 260 years later, descendants of Heman were present to assist in worship (2 Chronicles 29:14). One hundred years after that in the same manner, Josiah rededicated the temple; and once again descendants of Heman were leading the way (2 Chronicles 35:15).

Three thousand years after Heman's ministry began; his spiritual descendants continue his ministry of music. Let all modern church musicians and singers learn from his example what it means to faithfully worship the Lord with joy, and let us ask one question: what is the message of my song? If it isn't the Word, I really have nothing to sing.