3

THREE WORD LESSONS
FOR WORSHIP LEADERS AND TEAMS
FIFTY-TWO WEEKS OF TIPS
FOR THOSE WHO LEAD WORSHIP

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worshiptraining.com

THREE WORD LESSONS
FOR WORSHIP LEADERS
AND TEAMS

how we roll.

3 Word Lessons For Worship Leaders and teams is a collection of simple (and often humorous) ideas meant to inspire you, make you laugh, give you food for thought, and generally help you get better at what you do.

Designed for worship leaders, and also for worship teams, this little collection is written by a worship leader and musician, to worship leaders and teams.

We add in a "My Action" section for you to jot in ways you can apply the idea as a worship leader or team member. Use it if you please.

There are 52 brief lessons - perfect for a one-a-week dose for you and your team. Plaster them on your music stand. Tape them to your computer screen.

Ready to roll? 3 word lessons? 1) Let, 2) us, 3) begin.

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your online worship learning community

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about the author.



Dan Wilt, M.Min. has been leading worship for the past 20 years, in settings ranging from local churches, to living rooms, to big conferences, to hospital rooms, to recording studios, to children's bedrooms, to outdoor barbecues - and even in St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome.

He is the Learning Community Director of WorshipTraining.com, an innovative online worship learning community offering powerful online courses for worship leaders, teams and creative artists.

With hundreds globally involved in online training, as well as in Masters programs, Dan and his team are leading the way in transforming worship education for the 21st century Church.

Dan has been creating worship resources for the Church for over two decades as an author, artist and communicator, and is considered a premier voice in the 21st century worship conversation.

He, his wife Anita, and their three children Anna, Abigail and Benjamin, make their home in Nashville, Tennessee, USA.

Visit Dan's world at www.worshiptraining.com.

about our world.

Worshiptraining.com is equipping 21st century worship leaders, teams, creative artists and pastors through the power of online worship education.

Offering online studies in worship theology, history, values, songwriting, worship leading, spiritual formation and more, we bring the best of learning to you and your church - on *your* time.

Interact as you learn with worship leaders and teams from over 30 countries in our Learning Community, and take advantage of the amazing worship learning Church Solutions we have for your local team.

With every course, you receive a host of other free resources such as bi-weekly live encouragement calls with Dan, access to an amazing Media Library packed with digital training, connection with influential worship voices such as N.T. Wright, Tim Hughes, Brian Doerksen and many others, as well as PDF study tools for your worship team.

Interested in full-on university study? We have that too! You can do a course for credit, do a Certificate Online course, or go all the way to a Masters program!

Go to the site and see what we have to offer. Both you, and we, will be glad you did!

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stack the set.

Make the majority of your worship set out of songs the congregation knows and loves. Familiarity, when tastefully applied, can fan into flame the expression of people's hearts. You'll be amazed at the results.

My Action.

THREE WORD LESSONS
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prepare for spontaneity.

Diligently plan the songs, transitions and order of your set for the gathering. Then, after your band is secure and you are confident, you have more grace all around to deviate from the prepared set to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

My Action.

THREE WORD LESSONS
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don't be silly.

Of course that flourescent yellow dress you're wearing when you lead worship will distract people. Bright blue is a far more appropriate color – very postmodern – and attractive to birds of paradise.

My Action.

follow the leader.

If you are the worship leader, keep consistent eye contact with your pastor for any directional input. If you are a band member, keep your eyes on the worship leader and go where they go. If everyone is following a leader, it brings a sense of clarity to a worship gathering.

My Action.

practice for practice.

Before you meet with the band to rehearse mr., miss or mrs. worship leader, make sure you have practiced the songs yourself, and know where you would like to go in arrangements. Band members should keep their chops up as best as possible between rehearsals, and pre-practice sets when possible.

My Action.

THREE WORD LESSONS
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play in fractions.

(Idea from Brian Doerksen) Teach your band that the sound of all the players playing together must add up to “one.” In other words, if there are five of you, each one should be only be playing one-fifth (1/5) of what he/she *could* play.

My Action.

steer the ship.

Don’t be afraid to lead the congregation boldly in worship. While we want to get in the way, and out of the way at all the right times, don’t be timid as you lead. People won’t be able to follow if you are shy.

My Action.

THREE WORD LESSONS
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strike the anvil.

Like a blacksmith, when something is soft is the best time to form it. When your congregation is in a “soft” season toward God’s Spirit, provide extra opportunities for people to connect with God in worship, during the week or in demographic groups.

My Action.

give your best.

Remember that those gathering have come from their week of work, their family life, and their place of need to gather for worship. Serve them with your best energy, music and passion. Both God and they are worth it.

My Action.

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shape the set.

More inexperienced worship leaders tend to jump from song to song without regard for severe musical shifts that “jar” the congregation. Shape the set so there is a sense of fluid rising and falling in worship.

My Action.

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fetch a bone.

When in doubt, a wild, erratic trombone solo – by the worship leader especially - will change the atmosphere of your worship time. Like a genie in a bottle, every worship leader should attempt (at least once per lifetime) to pull out this little wonder, and stimulate everyone to be actively concerned about what happens during worship times at your church.

Note: No harm was done to any trombone player in the making of this lesson.

My Action.

THREE WORD LESSONS
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honor your pastor.

Your pastor is the one sitting in the front row thinking about the message he'll preach instead of engaging in the worship time! Do whatever it takes to support, submit to, and serve this obedient saint, carrying the spiritual responsibility for the discipleship of your Church.

My Action.

THREE WORD LESSONS
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listen to God.

Preparing to lead a worship set, or preparing to play, can be one of the most intimate times a worship leader can have with the Lord. Set aside space for those times of integrating thematic truth with harmonious set flow, and linger in worship as you prepare to lead God's people.

My Action.

THREE WORD LESSONS
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up the ante.

Sometimes when the quality of our worship music and spiritual temperature is waning, is the best time to raise the bar. Extended rehearsals, blending musical workouts with worship opportunities for your team, can be just what the doctor ordered to awaken a sleeping giant.

My Action.

THREE WORD LESSONS
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lighten the load.

Keep a close eye on your worship team for signs of wear and tear. Breaks, seasonal tech/setup support teams, and even better planning to get songs and materials to your teammates before rehearsals can bring much needed lightening to the servant's load.

My Action.

turn the tide.

When in doubt, press in as a worship leader. If your congregational worship experience seems to be stagnating, don't give in to the delusion that it's "just a season." Assume there is something God wants you and your Church to learn. Seek counsel, and make changes.

My Action.

THREE WORD LESSONS
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keep the faith.

Your own spiritual growth is essential to your effective leadership of the congregation God has given you to lead in worship expression. Use bible study plans, develop spiritual friends for prayer and accountability, and pursue your own spiritual development with passion. Drummer, leader – everyone.

My Action.

savor a moment.

A favorite worship song may end with a lingering quality of intimacy or attentiveness to God that is almost tangible. Don't be afraid to end a song and move on, and also don't be afraid to allow an extra few bars for the music to facilitate the encounter with Jesus.

My Action.

THREE WORD LESSONS
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don't be shy.

It is true that a congregation can feel used when a worship “cheerleader” is leading them. However, it is also true that a congregation can feel aimless when a worship “non-leader” is leading them. Learn the tools of your trade, apply yourself to growth, and then lead with humble confidence. God will help you.

My Action.

THREE WORD LESSONS
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lift the veil.

The most spiritually rich congregations are usually those with the most spiritually rich leaders. A waning spirit in your congregation for the things of God may be the most identifiable in… you. A fresh vision of God in your life will inevitably catalyze a fresh awareness of Him in your Church if you lead.

My Action.

stop the presses.

If it's clear in pre-service rehearsal that a song is not working out for the band, don't be afraid to just drop it from the set list. You heard God's voice telling you to do it – don't be afraid to hear His voice telling you to wait till a better time!

My Action.

deliver the goods.

If you make promises to your fellow team members, either regarding how you will prepare for events, times you will show up, tools you will give or development times you will offer, then follow through. Artistic people can be inconsistent – leadership teaches us to follow through on our promises.

My Action.

play the song.

If you have the technology, create an mp3 of the upcoming worship set with just you and your lead instrument a week or two before you lead if possible. Not only will musicians come to rehearsal better prepared and more confident, but they will have a feel for where you will go with each song (or use WorshipTeam.com to do it all!).

My Action.

THREE WORD LESSONS
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lower the anchor.

Often, mid-set, there is a moment where it is clear the congregation has engaged in a sweet corporate communion with God. Have the courage to drop anchor, and linger a bit longer on that song you're doing than you might normally.

My Action.

THREE WORD LESSONS
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still your soul.

Your job as a worship leader or team member is not to hype up the crowd, or to somehow evoke outward expressions of worship to make Church leaders feel good. Your job is to lead people to Jesus. Quiet your soul before you play your first note, show your first visual, or push a fader – to remember why we do this.

My Action.

share the load.

Look for your areas of weakness when dealing with your worship team, and see if there is someone who has a servant's heart who is part of your worship community, who can cover that area of weakness with their strength. This is how we love one another.

My Action.

loosen the reins.

If you have a tendency to over-dictate the how, when and what of worship rehearsals and events, experiment. There is no good reason why you can't intentionally loosen up a bit to see what rears its head without your tight grip. You may be joyfully surprised at the result. If you're on the other end of this, strong leadership is also good - don't knock it!

My Action.

pop the question.

Never be afraid to ask a team member why they are involved in worship ministry. While it may be difficult for them to process, there is a natural loss of focus that can occur with those who have been serving on your team for some time. A good question can refocus us, and remind us of our greater purpose.

My Action.

lend a hand.

Model servant leadership as a worship leader, and as a team member. Your attempts to champion another by changing someone's strings, bringing them water, or stopping rehearsal to aid a musician struggling with a part, will not go unnoticed by your God or your band.

My Action.

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trip the wire.

When you start a worship set, picture yourself tripping a wire to an alarm system. As you start that first song, do so with confidence and expectation that something dear to the heart of God, and precious with God's people, is about to powerfully happen.

My Action.

tighten the circle.

When people feel loved, it is not hard to keep them committed. While some churches like to allow anyone who would like to participate to join their worship teams, this can detract from a sense of community, shared gifted growth and joint focus. Work hard to create community within the task assigned to your team, no matter your church philosophy.

My Action.

wipe the slate.

Be quick to forgive as a worship leader. Worship may be more tainted by a worship leader who lacks grace with a team member, than by a team member who is struggling in an area of sin. Weigh the consequences, and err on the side of extending grace when possible. As a team member, spread the love around.

My Action.

run the race.

Worship leadership is not a journey for the faint-hearted. Don't give up as you grow along with those that you lead. Though you may be afraid at times, God is interested in forming you through the very leadership you bring to others. Run well, and run hard for the line.

My Action.

darken the door.

When you have a Sunday off, it may be appropriate for you to plan visits to other congregations of different traditions that you respect, to see what their worship times are like. Nothing brings needed perspective to your own situation quicker than seeing "how someone else does it."

My Action.

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manage the expectations.

When enlisting a new worship team member, or re-visiting values with team members, be clear as to what your expectations are, and what their's can be. When people have some sense of what to expect, and vice-versa, they are more apt to give grace when needed.

My Action.

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mix it up.

Nothing can reinvigorate a worshipping community more than a reposturing of the musical expression of worship. In other words, if your church has a power band, plan in an acoustic set every once in awhile. Let the congregation know beforehand, and they will respond positively without feeling “gypped.”

My Action.

champion your team.

Leading worship is not about a worship hero being appreciated while the supporting team stands in the background. When your team wins, everyone wins. Compliment your team regularly, privately and publicly, use “we” language in public, and celebrate together your joint leadership in worship.

My Action.

examine the evidence.

Many church leaders act as though they are afraid of what the congregation thinks. Take a written survey over two worship gatherings, with questions asking worshipers what they appreciate, and what they find distracting, about the worship experience in the Church. The results may surprise you.

My Action.

THREE WORD LESSONS
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choose for discipleship.

Your mission as a worship leader includes choosing songs that will disciple your congregation in healthy ways in their journey toward Jesus. They may not remember the sermon illustration, but they will hum the songs you pick.

My Action.

THREE WORD LESSONS
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AND TEAMS

prepare the ground.

Just as a good farmer plows the ground before planting seed, so too it is vital that you and your team both worship and pray together before you lead God's people into worship. The softening of your heart will pave the way for the seeding of everyones' hearts.

My Action.

THREE WORD LESSONS
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passion meet restraint.

The most effective worship leaders and musicians are very passionate about how and what they do. However, know how to restrain your own passionate expressions in the service of the greater good – the vibrant worship of the gathered congregation. Both passion and restraint should be held in tension, as both are necessary to effective worship leadership.

My Action.

THREE WORD LESSONS
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listen to input.

Don’t run away from your pastor’s perspective, and counsel on how you lead worship. In their spiritual overseeing role, they have every reason to give input, direction and even strong suggestions to how you do what you do. If you will listen and pray, both your hearts will be shaped by the other.

My Action.

train the troops.

It is shocking how little money and effort is put into training the present and future generations of our worship teams. Find budget, or other creative resource for lessons, training and ongoing input for your bandmates/techs. It will pay off in the end. That is why we do what we do at WorshipTraining.com!

My Action.

save your spouse.

For those who are married, your spouse is your most important barometer of your balance between work, church participation, extracurricular activities and family life. When he/she is indicating a state of emergency, you need to listen closely and do what it takes to meet their needs. In the end, God will bless the honoring of a spouse more consistently than the honoring of everyone else first.

My Action.

teach the stuff.

Many worship leaders/pastors shy away from actively teaching their congregation what is happening in the midst of a worship time. Worshipers need to be intentionally taught, from the scriptures and church history, what it means to embrace the inbreaking of the Kingdom in worship, what the symbols of worship (communion, singing, etc.) truly mean, and what it means to offer true allegiance to God.

My Action.

skip the song.

You're mid-set, and you've rehearsed your band during the week on a particular tune. However, as you approach it in the moment, you feel like the song that follows it is far more appropriate to the moment. Skip the song. Move to the next, and be confident in your judgement call.

My Action.

stay the course.

If you prayerfully planned the worship set during the week, and then feel like it's just not the right set of songs to do, stay with the impulse you had during the week. Nine times out of ten, your initial thoughts were stronger than your momentary quake, and the set begins to make sense as you go along.

My Action.

THREE WORD LESSONS
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beat the traffic.

Leave early to head out to prepare for the worship time you're leading. Spend some time plugging in, getting set up and personally worshiping before the rest of the band arrives. It will loosen up the performance jitters and renew your perspective on the worship time ahead.

My Action.

coin the phrase.

Find a few phrases that mean something important to the climate in which you want your team to operate – and build them into your vocabulary. Try “When in doubt, lay out,” "When in doubt, serve," or “Worship first; play second,” meaning "get your heart postured to honor God before you attempt to lead others to that place."

My Action.

THREE WORD LESSONS
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mother the musicians.

Extra encouragement, embraces, words of value and appreciation, all go a long way with we artsy types. Don't spend all your time whining about what makes musicians frustrating – celebrate the gift and affirm what you want more of – it will take hold over time.

My Action.

blast the trumpet.

Sometimes your community may need someone to make a bold call to worship, either musically, or verbally. Stand up as a leader and call people passionately to draw near to God. Like a flame near paper, the fire in your heart will light the hearts of others.

My Action.

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make a place.

Assume that when people in your community come to worship, that they have come to meet with God. They say “Where can I go and meet with God?” You say, “I know; how about here and now?” Don’t pump them up. Create a space for them to do what’s in their heart to do.

My Action.

yes, you can.

We hope you enjoyed this rumbling ride through 3 Word Lessons, and that you laughed, cried, or called your fellow worship team members and said "I am SO at your service."

Cheers and blessings to you as you lead the people of God into worship. What a great privilege we share – what a responsibility we must steward before God.

Yes, you can do it.

Whether you're a worship leader, a musician, a tech, a creative leader or a pastor, learn to depend on God to guide you as you lead.

He will be faithful to whisper in your ear, help you choose your actions, and use you to inspire your team, your congregation, your family and your ministry partners.

If we can serve you and your Church in any way, let us know by emailing info@worshiptraining.com,



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we are done.

with this ebook.

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