

Gimme, Gimme, Gimme...

By Tony Guerrero



Gear envy. We all have it. No matter what we've got, we want more—the hipper, the newer, the better. I'm at a pretty big church. We have a lot of equipment resources, but it would be wrong to assume that we have everything we need or that we have the best or the latest. Big churches may have bigger budgets, but that usually just means bigger budget issues. I have also logged my time at a 300-member church and a startup of under 100. I am not at all unfamiliar, even where I'm at currently (Saddleback Church), with the struggle of lacking great gear to allow us to do our jobs the best we can.

ABC

What I'm about to say is not revolutionary, but it is one of those things for which a regular reminder is important. And that is...you ready?...God does not need any of our gear in our services of worship. All He ever asks is that we (a) worship Him and (b) do it in spirit and in truth and (c) use whatever we have to the glory of God.

In Scripture, we often see the commands to praise Him with whatever was available at the time:

Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet;
Praise Him with the lute and harp!
Praise Him with the timbrel and dance;
Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes!
Praise Him with loud cymbals;
Praise Him with high-sounding cymbals!
(Psalm 150)

If that were written today, it might read:
Praise Him with the sound of the synthesizer;
Praise Him with the guitar and blues harp!
Praise Him with the tambourine;
Praise Him with loud drum machines!

You get the idea. But it does not say, anywhere in Scripture, to wait until you have certain pieces of equipment. We are to praise Him with what we have.

ALL THE REQUIREMENTS

Now, this may seem elementary, but the amount of times I hear people complain about gear issues (myself included) as if we simply can't do our jobs well until we have this-and-that, the more I realize just how elementary we can sometimes be in our thinking. We don't need anything to praise Him, just our hearts (and they don't sell those at Guitar Center).

The hardest part of this issue comes when we allow ourselves to compare. To hear a great CD by someone and imagine you could do the same thing if only you had the gear or to see a great worship event and mourn the fact that your own church doesn't provide you with the right gear to recreate it. That type of comparison reinforces the sinful nature of envy that we have. The hard truth is, if you're reading this, chances are you already have far more gear than many high-octane praise teams that exist in the many developing countries. One visit to an on-fire church in the far reaches of Africa will convince you that a great P.A., great guitars, good sounding drums, the latest keyboards, are not at all necessary. In fact, if we really compare many of our Western churches to some in the developing world, we may actually see that our gear gets in the way.

TRUE NEED


I assume that many of us are currently pushing for some gear upgrades at our churches—it is a constant process in our type of ministry. While there is nothing inherently wrong with seeking better gear, there is something wrong with the idea that the gear you need will keep your congregation from offering authentic worship to the Father. And remember, if you even have a single guitar, you have more than many churches in the world. Clearly, God is pleased by our hearts—not our gear.

Tony Guerrero is the Director of Creative Arts at Saddleback Church. He is also a recognized jazz trumpeter and is finishing up his latest CD featuring several jazz notables. Visit tonyguerrero.com for more information.



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