

# Modern Man-Centered Christian Music



## Introduction

Have you noticed that many contemporary Christian song lyrics are more about man than about God? More about the worshipper than the God whom we should be worshipping? This trend seems to be ever-growing – just as the trend in the Church is growing for “easier to understand” Bible translations, simplified sermons, and even easy salvation formulas.

## A Prime Example Of Man-Centered Music

### “I Surrender All”

One of the most glaring examples of modern me-centered songs, is the ever-popular “I Surrender All”, which is by no means a recently published song but it sure is a popular song within the today’s church and a good example of me-centered lyrics (versus Christ-centered lyrics). Let’s take a quick look at the lyrics:

All to Jesus I surrender;  
All to Him I freely give;  
I will ever love and trust Him,  
In His presence daily live.

#### *Refrain:*

I surrender all,  
I surrender all;  
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,  
I surrender all.

All to Jesus I surrender;  
Humbly at His feet I bow,  
Worldly pleasures all forsaken;  
Take me, Jesus, take me now.

All to Jesus I surrender;  
Make me, Savior, wholly Thine;  
Let me feel the Holy Spirit,  
Truly know that Thou art mine.

All to Jesus I surrender;  
Lord, I give myself to Thee;  
Fill me with Thy love and power;  
Let Thy blessing fall on me.

All to Jesus I surrender;  
Now I feel the sacred flame.  
Oh, the joy of full salvation!  
Glory, glory, to His Name!

So what's so "bad" about this song? Well just look at how many times the word "I" appears. 13 times! And then there are the words "me" and "mine". But the worst thing about this song is that the focus is on the sinner when it should be on the Savior and worst of all, its just a bunch of lies. The singer repeats over and over "I surrender all", when nothing could be further from the truth. We, as sinful people surrender nothing compared to what Christ surrendered and we certainly never can boast of surrendering ALL. As the scripture says:

**"So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." [Luke 17:10]**

The fact of the matter is CHRIST SURRENDERED ALL! When Christ left his throne in heaven to come into this sinful world, he surrendered his throne, his glory, his honor, his comfort, and so much more. When he allowed himself to be crucified on that cruel Roman cross, he surrendered his power, his dignity, his very life. So instead of singing "I surrender all, I surrender all, All to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender all" we should instead sing "Christ surrendered all, Christ surrendered all; All for me, a wretched sinner and an unprofitable servant, Christ surrendered all".

## **More Examples Of Man-Centered Songs**

### **Michael W. Smith - "All About You"**

When the music fades

And all is stripped away  
And I simply come  
Longing just to bring  
Something that's of worth  
That will bless your heart

I'll bring you more than a song  
For a song in itself, is not what you have required  
You search much deeper within  
Through the way things appear  
You're looking into my heart

*Chorus:*

I'm coming back to the heart of worship  
And it's all about you, it's all about you Jesus  
I'm sorry Lord, for the thing I've made it  
When it's all about you, it's all about you Jesus

King of endless worth  
No one could express  
How much you deserve  
Though I'm weak and poor  
All I have is yours  
Every single breath

I'll bring you more than a song  
For a song in itself, is not what you have required  
You search much deeper within  
Through the way things appear  
Your looking into my heart

If this song and if worship is all about Christ, then where in this song are the many wonderful accomplishments and glorious attributes of the Lord Jesus Christ mentioned? This song's theme is actually a lie. Which is why you will often see it sung by a bunch of wanna-be rock stars in the front of a church, strumming away on their guitars and other band instruments, with the volume cranked up so high you can't hear any of the saints sing, not even yourself. At that point, *its all about the band*, its all about the band... and NOT all about Jesus.

If we, as the true church, honestly want to "come back to the heart of worship", we will throw out all our me-centered, child-oriented, watered-down baby-food-lyrics and go back to the Psalms in Scripture and to the old hymns of the the past, of the Reformers, who really knew what it meant to worship God in song. And while we are at it, we would jettison our dysfunctional simon-says services and paid professional entertainers and replace them with the honest, no-frills, body-ministering environment of the home-church model

of the first century church (and of the persecuted church throughout history).

## Another Example

### **“Come, Now Is The Time To Worship”**

Come, now is the time to worship!  
Come, now is the time to give your heart!  
Come, just as you are to worship!  
Come, just as you are before your God!  
Come!

One day every tongue will confess You are God.  
One day every knee will bow.  
Still the greatest treasure remains for those  
Who gladly choose You now!

OK, so what’s so bad about the song “Come, Now is the time to worship?” you may ask. Well, besides the fact that there is little if any mention of the attributes of God that we are supposed to be coming together to worship, it promotes one of the greatest false doctrines of our day and age: the false free-will gospel - within the lyrics “still the greatest treasure remains *for those who gladly choose you now*”. It is God who does the choosing. It is man who is at God’s mercy. This idea that we choose God is a lie from the pit of hell, even though MOST pastors preach this gospel nowadays. God sends His messengers out into the world to preach the true Gospel (about man’s complete sinfulness and lostness and about God’s perfect righteousness), then God the Holy Spirit convicts and converts whom HE wills, when HE wills. We may THINK we are choosing God, but it is only a person whom the Holy Spirit has regenerated who will choose to follow Christ and who will truly worship God in Spirit and in Truth. What do you think of THAT? Did your pastor ever explain THAT to you?

## Some Observations From John Beardsley

John Beardsley of Biblical Discernment Ministries once commented on Rick Warren’s mega-church and their perspective on “Christian” music. He starts out by quoting Rick Warren as follows:

*Rick Warren was once quoted as saying: “I believe that one of the major church issues (of the future) will be how we’re going to reach the next generation with our music.” Did he say “reach” them with “OUR MUSIC”? That’s what record companies and rock stars do! Is that what Jesus sent US to do? Is that what transforms sinners from the old life into the new — “OUR MUSIC”? Did Jesus carry a band around with Him to help draw a crowd so He could “reach” His generation with a song? If it’s music that*

*brings us to repentance and faith, why didn't Jesus round up 12 top-notch musicians to be His apostles and just sing to us? Why spend so much time lecturing everyone about the will of God? Is it only because they didn't have amplifiers and electricity back then to make them "feel it"? Music, regardless of "style," volume, tempo, or instrumentation, simply cannot accomplish what proclaiming the Word of God can. It might draw and hold a larger crowd than a lecture, bring everyone to their feet in resounding applause, and help us all FEEL better about ourselves, but if a sinner, bound for hell, doesn't care about the Word of God, there's not a song in the world that can save him. He might scream "JESUS ROCKS!" at the top of his lungs during the band's closing number, but I doubt seriously he'll take up his cross and follow Christ when the music stops and the hard times come.*

## Conclusion

It is not the purpose of this article to condemn Christians who sincerely want to praise God in song. The point is, that Christians need to think about what they are saying when they sing. We need to be like the Bereans of Acts 17:11 (studying to show ourselves approved [2Tim 2:15]). How else can we honestly say that we are worshipping God in TRUTH? Let's not settle for dumbed-down music any more than we should settle for dumbed-down sermons. Good Christian song writers - like good Bible preachers - will want their hearers to grow - in their knowledge and love of the Lord and His Word - His TRUTH. —  
*RM Kane*

***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen." [2 Peter 3:18]***

## More information about Christian music:

ComingInTheClouds Christian Music Resources

Lyrical heresies: What's wrong with modern worship songs

The Christian And His Music!

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