



STAYING GROUNDED IN WORSHIP

by Doug Gould, Worship MD

It started as a low, persistent hum that haunted every guitar performance, leaving musicians frustrated and uncertain. Was the culprit a faulty cable, a defective pickup, or something deeper? The noise seemed harmless at first, a mere annoyance likely caused by loose connections or electronic interference. Yet, underneath, it hinted at problems that hadn't been considered. Even vocalists, reaching for the microphone, sometimes felt a faint electric shock — a surge that was more than uncomfortable. This wasn't just a quirk of the equipment; it was a signal that something was seriously wrong with the electrical system itself.

For a while, it was frustrating, but certainly not catastrophic. But it was enough to shake the worship team's confidence, making every show feel a little less safe, a little more uncertain.

Some chose to ignore the warning signs, chalking them up to the quirks of live performance: "Don't worry, it'll go away."

Then, one day, an unexpected surge ripped through the system. There was nowhere for the surge to safely go and no outlet to redirect the dangerous energy. Suddenly, that subtle hum transformed into a destructive force.

THE TURNING POINT

That's when a seasoned engineer arrived, quietly assessing the chaos. He explained, "It's not a problem with the power itself. The real issue is that there's no safe path for it to escape."

The first thing he did was determine where the noise was originating. All the input channels on the console were muted during the soundcheck. By unmuting one channel at a time, he was able to locate the source of the hum—bad cable, a bad connection. But it wasn't just the hum. There was a deeper issue. The system didn't have a common ground.

Without hesitation, he installed a proper ground—simple, unassuming, yet essential. Everything we had been experiencing changed.

- The "hum" — the 60 Hz tone — disappeared.
- The slight shocks felt when singing into the microphone were gone.
- The system, at last, was reliable, which alleviated all the concern that was obviously affecting our worship.

The power was still there, unchanged, but now it was safe, stable, and trustworthy. Every electrical system begins with a source of power, either a generator or power plant. Without the source, nothing functions.

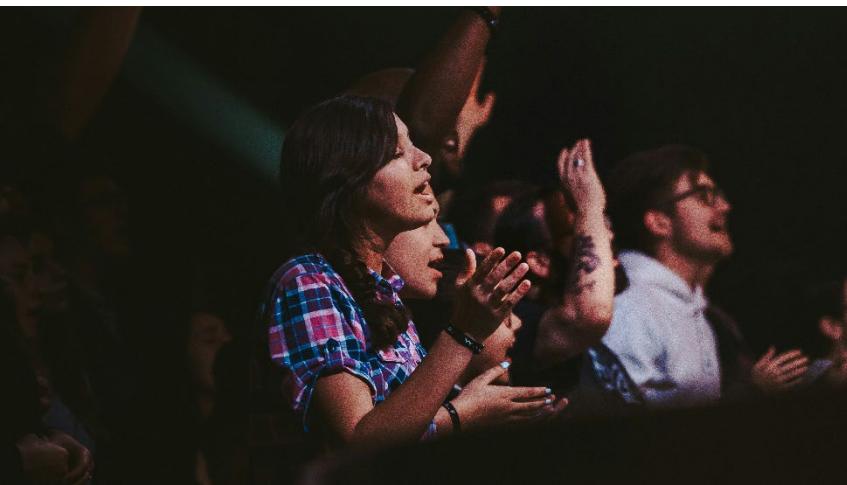
In the same way, God is the source of all life and spiritual energy. “For in Him we live and move and have our being.” – Acts 17:28

Just as your guitars, amplifiers, digital keyboards, or electronics do not produce their own electricity, we need to be connected to a source for our own spiritual life. **Who is your source?**

Our wisdom, strength, direction, and fruitfulness come by way of “THE” source of life, God. And unless that source signal, to God Himself, is secure and maintained, daily, we will always

be unsafe, less secure, not knowing the truth or worse: believing everything our tickling ears want to hear.

Like the sound engineer who muted everything to isolate where the noise was coming from, we need to do the same in our lives by removing the distractions, one at a time. So, the Christian life is sourced in God.



THE CONNECTION

If the source provides power, the next essential element in any system is connection. In audio systems, signals must travel through a path. Microphones connect to stage boxes. Stage boxes connect to the console. The console routes the signal to amplifiers and speakers. The instruments can connect to amplifiers and sound systems, and we hear our own signals back through in-ear and floor monitors. If the signal path is broken anywhere along the way, or corrupted by noise or distortion, the service is disrupted. Every audio engineer has experienced the moment when something stops working or doesn't work in the way it's supposed to. The microphone looks fine. The mixer is powered on. The speakers seem fine... I think. But there is something wrong. Eventually someone traces the problem and discovers the issue: a cable is unplugged, a connection is broken, or the signal path is compromised.

The same principle applies in the Christian life. God is the source of spiritual life, and we must remain connected to Him. Jesus described this connection using one of the most powerful metaphors in Scripture. In John 15:5, He said, “I am the vine; you are the branches.

Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

Branches do not generate their own life. They receive life from the vine. When a branch remains connected, life flows naturally and fruit grows. When the branch is disconnected, it withers. The Christian life is sustained the same way.

Connection to Christ is not a one-time event. It is an ongoing, minute by minute, day-by-day relationship. Abiding in Him includes practices that keep our hearts connected to God:

Prayer

I know I don't pray as often as I should, and I regret that I am not daily presenting myself to the Creator of all things. I need to remember to keep the line open. Things get in the way: social media, the distractions of a busy life, too much of this or that. We need to carve out time that is reserved for prayer. It's a challenge. Whether we pray alone or together, it is vital to our spiritual health.

Scripture

Scripture aligns our thinking with God's truth. He said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." He didn't say, "I say true things." He is THE TRUTH. Devote yourself and your team to the Word.

Worship

Worship lifts our attention toward God rather than ourselves. It's not simply the music portion of the weekly service; rather, it's the daily act of adoration to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – and it takes many forms. It will keep you humble.

Obedience

Obedience keeps our lives in harmony with His will. When we are not obedient, it becomes necessary to confess the error of our ways and change direction. In ministry environments, it



is possible to remain busy with spiritual activity while becoming disconnected from spiritual life.

Worship leaders can plan songs without praying, but where will the power come from? Musicians can rehearse without worshiping. Talent and technical expertise are a poor substitute for God's power.

Technical teams can prepare systems without seeking God but even media techs need to be grounded in the truth and to the call of what and why they do what they do. Is this all for production and performance or for something far greater? Hopefully, it is to fulfill the Great Commission.

When this happens, the system may still operate outwardly, but the signal lacks life. I have been in churches with world-class talent and gear, but it didn't translate to the congregation. The people were watching, not participating. That isn't worship.

Healthy worship ministries continually restore connection to God and to each other. We need community. Why? If we are connected to God and connected to the lives of those we are involved with (in a close relationship such as the worship team), we can accomplish things in the church and in the larger Kingdom of God that we never could have imagined.

We remember that preparation is important, but dependence is essential. We make space for prayer before rehearsals, Scripture before services, and humility before the platform. We become servants to each other.

IMITATING CHRIST'S HUMILITY

In Philippians 2:1-4, it says, "Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."

The most important signal flow in the church is not the one running through cables, consoles, and loudspeakers. It's the one flowing between the hearts of God's people and the living Christ.

GROUNDING

Without proper grounding, the system may still function, but something unwanted rides on top of the signal. Ministry can experience a similar problem.



A worship team may have talented musicians, capable leaders, and excellent equipment. Services may be organized and rehearsed. But if the hearts of the team are not grounded in Christ, something begins to creep into the ministry. Pride can begin to grow. Humility takes a back seat. Comparison can take root. If you want to compare yourself to anyone, compare yourself to Christ. That should humble anyone.

Insecurity can surface. If you are solely relying on talent, production gear, and technique, you will never measure up. Our focus on production and performance will replace the Christ-centered purposes that we are called to.

Do we think we are sending up a “sweet scent of worship” when our focus is on perfect production? Read what it says in Amos 5:23, “Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps, I will not listen.”

A modern psalmist, Matt Redman, wrote a song that was about the sobering experience his church had when relying too much on the production and not enough on “the heart of worship.” I invite you to [listen to it here](#).

The Apostle Paul prayed that believers would experience something deeper. In Ephesians 3:17 he wrote, “That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love...”

GROUNDING!!!

The image is one of stability and depth. A tree whose roots reach deeply into the soil can withstand storms. In the same way, a believer whose identity is grounded in Christ becomes stable even in the pressures of ministry.

Grounding produces humility.

Grounding produces peace.

Grounding produces unity.

When team members are secure in their relationship with God, they can celebrate the gifts and contributions of others rather than compete with them.

In the world of sound systems, grounding protects the signal.

In the life of the believer, grounding protects the heart.

Healthy worship ministries understand this truth well. They pursue excellence in music, technology, and preparation. But even more importantly, they pursue humility and spiritual depth. Because the most powerful ministries are not those with the most impressive platforms. They are the ones whose leaders and teams are deeply grounded in Christ.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Doug Gould is the CEO and Founder of Worship MD and has been a Pro Audio and Music Technology industry veteran for nearly 30 years, serving in management roles at Shure, Tascam, and E-Mu Systems. Doug has served as a worship leader, musician, and sound tech at various churches throughout his career.

Over the last 18 years, Doug has been a very effective presenter at hundreds of worship conferences throughout North America and beyond, focusing his experience on consulting and teaching.

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