

FROM MUSIC TO WORSHIP

by James Garrahy

What am I created for?

Over the years I have often asked myself that question. One of my earliest memories, (at 3 years of age) was ripping up a piece of my family's new carpet. I don't know how I did it but I knew my dad wasn't impressed. When he came home I remember him asking me what I was doing. He tells me I said I was riding a magic carpet. Apparently I thought I was created to fly.

As the years went on my ideas developed. My Mum was a singer. She used to sing at pubs and clubs and I worshipped the ground she walked on. I thought I was destined to be like her. I dreamt of being famous. I loved music soooo much. I even got hooked on Countdown (A bit like rage, but for the 1980's). I learnt the piano but I wanted to play the guitar like my mum. I believed I was created to be a muso and do it all.

However, as you get bigger, dreams and perspective can change. When I was ten, my mother passed away suddenly. I think when this happened, a little bit of my dream for life died too. I started to look to other things for answers. I desperately wanted to be something/someone, but I had no real idea what that was.

I got to high school and began to think I was created to be hilarious in the back of the class. (Not everyone thought I was hilarious but I did and perspective is everything to a 13 year old.) I then tried cricket and footy and began to worship the ground I walked on. I had some successes in sport and thought that perhaps I was created to be a legend. However after some success, I broke my arm quite badly playing footy and my doctors suggested I would never play again.

What am I created for?

Lying in bed not knowing where to go or what to do, I remember asking that question. Soon after, I received a card from a friend at school. It had the poem, "Footprints in the sand". I read it and thought maybe there was something more to life... and then went quickly back to my comfortable moping.

I have been with you, carrying you, your whole journey. They are my footprints...

My friend asked me to this Christian camp. She was a girl so I thought 'hubba, hubba!' and went to the camp. But after a bit of thought I realised it was actually Jesus that desired a relationship with me. I took a chance and I asked Jesus to help me and be with me, to be my friend forever. Someone prayed for me and I remember they said, "You are created for more James. God will reveal his plan." I thought that's a little long term...and a little cryptic...I wasn't really up for a big

commitment. But I did believe Jesus could look after me for the first time in my life.

I started to play music again. I bought a guitar and learnt three chords. I couldn't play much but I had learnt to sing in high school. I was asked to represent our church community at the World Youth Day in Denver, Colorado. I had a great time but for the first week had the flu and was sick! Someone wanted me to lead music at a prayer meeting but I'd lost my voice and was going to chicken out. The guy I stayed with said he wanted to pray for my throat. He said "James, I believe God wants you to know something. You were created for something more. He knit you together. He knew you before you were even born. Your name is on his hand. He created you to worship - so worship Him." I didn't really know the Bible that well but the concept of being created for something was starting to become familiar...so I took another chance.

I started to sing, and not just sing...Worship. I thought about the words of the song I was singing and for the first time sang loudly and passionately (and maybe a bit out of tune!) to God. Not just to 'sound nice' but to thank him for helping me, healing me, saving me and creating me. That night I worshipped my Creator and my throat got better. I received a little miracle and I have hung on to the words of that prayer ever since. (I later worked out the guy who prayed for me wasn't making his words up, they were from Psalm 139). I really got into the Psalms after that. They revealed a lot to me about my future purpose and helped me slowly discover God's plan for my life. If you want to know about worship, read the psalms.

You have created me, formed me, shaped me for something more

After that experience in Colorado, I started to lead worship in my church community. I loved it. I remember playing at Mass for the first time back in Australia. I was going to sing a song to the congregation by myself; just my guitar and voice during the reflection. I was very nervous. There were lots of people and I was very focused on my performance, so much so that I hadn't been able to concentrate on the rest of the Mass and I played the gospel acclamation during the responsorial psalm! Doh! Just before I was due to sing and have 'my moment', I had a feeling that I was missing the point. I closed my eyes, threw the sheet music away, and I started to play the song from the heart. I had a graced moment and was able to worship - not perform - but pray the words to my Creator.

The Father is calling true worshippers to worship him in spirit and in truth (Jn 4:23)

At the end of the song I felt really peaceful, I opened my eyes and everyone was still, their eyes were closed and they weren't looking at me. For a second I was disappointed. Then I realised; worship is not about the performance. It's about

connecting with God. I had surrendered my desire to sound good, to perform for an audience and get some praise. It was only then that the congregation was able to enter in to the celebration.

Someone came up to me after the Mass and said, "James, as you were singing I had a sense that a whole choir of angels was standing behind you, worshipping with you. Your mum was in that choir" he said "and I believe your gift of worship is a real way to bond with her."

Worship is Healing

The gift of worship has made a massive difference to my life. I believe that God has walked beside me and carried me through all the ups and downs life has to offer. I feel it's natural to want to thank Him for that, to worship Him even when I don't feel like it, when I want to give up and even when I doubt. God's promises give me so much hope for the future, and encourage me to lift my hands and voice to him, forever.

Those I have shaped for myself will broadcast my praises... creating rivers in the desert and water for my chosen ones to drink... (Isaiah 43)

How cool is that? I was created to chart a path through the desert.

I was created to broadcast praise.

I was created to worship.

For me there is peace in knowing just that.