

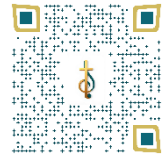
# Shoulders Study Guide

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and Seventeen : Eleven Young Women's Studies

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## SHOULDERS by For King And Country

There are worship songs that are mostly scripture-based, and there are worship songs that are personal in nature. Relational songs. Ones we can identify with. There's a growing trend right now to express disdain for these me-centric songs. But they have a unique ability to draw a person in and make them feel an emotional connection with our creator. Is that such a bad thing?

God tells us in Jeremiah 17:9 that our heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. So relying solely on our emotional response to a song that is produced in the Christian Music sphere is unwise. Hence the importance of examining the lyrics under the lens of Biblical truth.

Part of that truth is that God has emotions. He has personality. Jesus cried (John 11:35) before raising Lazarus from the dead (not because he'd died, but because He empathized with Martha's and Mary's anguish.) And Isaiah 53:3 describes Jesus as being a man of sorrows, and rejected by people. But Proverbs 8:30-31 says, in part, "I was daily His delight". In countless scriptures the Bible talks about God's pleasure, His compassion, and even His righteous jealousy and anger. And we were created in His image. That's not to say that our emotions are the equivalent of His, but to point out that He does express emotions, and so to feel emotional to worship music can be a good thing... Providing that it is solid theologically. After all, David was a psalmist. A song writer. And a lot of the psalms were centered on his personal (and emotional) relationship with God.

As is true of most songs, Shoulders has a backstory. In 2012-2013, Luke Smallbone, one of the brothers that makes up For King And Country, became critically ill with ulcerative colitis. He'd just become a father for the first time and was so sick he couldn't even hold his son. He had lost an enormous amount of weight and had to stop touring. His career came to a screeching halt. He lived in constant pain. He was bedridden. He had to have every personal need tended to by

someone else. He missed a total of 40 concerts. I'm sure there has to be some spiritual significance to that!

On one night Luke recalls crying out to God in desperation, asking why this was happening to him, and feeling God's hope fill him up. He knew that no matter what he would face in life, our (and his) Hope is in God, always. In an interview with Kevin Davis ([www.newreleasetoday.com](http://www.newreleasetoday.com)) he said that sometimes you can't see where your help is going to come from, and you just have to verbalize it... "I'm going to declare that my help comes from You, God."

**Verse 1**

*When confusion's my companion  
And despair holds me for ransom  
I will feel no fear I know that You are near*

*When I'm caught deep in the valley  
With chaos for my company  
I'll find my comfort here  
'Cause I know that You are near*

What does God say about confusion in 1 Corinthians 14:33?

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Read Psalm 119:169, and also verse 125. Highlight those in your Bible and write them below. The need for understanding in the midst of personal confusion is not exclusive to David. It's universal.

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What does God say about despair in 2 Corinthians 4:8, and what is the solution in 1 Peter 5:7?

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Read and Highlight Psalm 147:3. What is God's promise to us?

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**Verse 2**

*You mend what once was shattered  
And You turn my tears to laughter  
Your forgiveness is my fortress  
Oh Your mercy is relentless*

In the book of Job, we read about a man who lost everything, including all ten of his children, his health, and his status in society and yet Job never turned his back on God. We also read how God restores his health, his prominence, and gives him more children. How complete is that restoration? (Job 42:10) Why do you believe God was so generous?

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**Chorus**

*My help comes from You  
You're right here pulling me through  
You carry my weakness my sickness my brokenness  
All on Your shoulders Your shoulders*

*My help comes from You  
You are my rest my rescue  
I don't have to see to believe  
That You're lifting me  
Up on Your shoulders Your shoulders*

Read and highlight Psalm 121:1-2 and write it below.

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Also read and highlight Isaiah 53:4-6. When Christ carried that cross on his shoulder, up the hill to where he would be nailed to it, that cross was loaded down with every mistake we've ever made, every tragedy we have ever experienced, and every illness we have ever suffered through. And yet His sacrifice is what restores us.

And that is the message of the song. That our help, and our hope, are in Jesus. One more thing that Luke Smallbone said in the interview is that "When you go through anything traumatic in life, I feel like God gives you a story".

When you pray, no matter what your circumstances are, declare "My help comes from You, God!" Ask Jesus to lead you to someone who might see how His love can heal *their* story because of what He has done with *your* story.

Challenge: This week as you go about your daily life, offer a "hey... you matter" card to at least one person that seems to be hurting. Bonus points if you write a little note on the inside of the card.