BASIC ACOUSTIC GUITAR
For The Worship Leader
Scott Cunningham
Foundational Aspects of the Acoustic Guitar

**Introduction**: One of the most challenging parts of learning to play the guitar is the rhythmic aspect of it. Why is that? Well if you think about it, there are 3 rhythms happening at the same time when you are leading worship or singing and playing your guitar.

There is a right hand strumming rhythm, a chording rhythm (the timing of your chord changes), and a vocal phrasing rhythm that happens when you are singing. A big part of learning to play the guitar is connecting those 3 rhythms together. The goal is for your hands to become so used to the chords and rhythm, that it becomes second nature. This will in turn set you free to sing the way you want to while playing.

**A. Rhythm**
- **Strumming**
  - Gallop Strum
  - Percussive Strum
  - Down Strum
  - Country Strum
  - 6/8 Strum (or ¾)
    - Finger Picking
- **Chording** –
  - Chord families
  - Open Chord Ideas
  - Using your Capo
  - Partial Capo ideas
- **Singing while playing** –
  - Remember singing adds in a 3rd phrasing rhythm that can take a little while to incorporate when learning. Don’t get discouraged though, with a little practice you will have it.

**B. Feel and Style**
- It’s okay to have your own style and feel that you apply to your instrument and songs, it’s what makes you unique.
- With that said, as worship leaders one of our simple goals on a very practical level should be to make our songs as sing-able and congregational for the most part, so that others can easily join in and participate.
**What is a Key?**
- A Key is a family of 7 different notes that all harmonize with each other. There are 12 keys that you can actually play in based on our western scale of music which is made up of half steps and whole steps.

**What Keys should I learn?**
- Most guitar players play in about 5 keys comfortably. When I say comfortably, I mean that they are typically chords that don’t require a lot of bar chords and difficult fingering.
- The 5 keys that most guitar players play in especially when learning are C, D, E, G, and A.
- Each one of those keys are made up of 7 notes that also have 7 corresponding chords. For example, if you learn the 7 chords in the chord family of the key of D, you can play almost any song in that key.

**What is a Chord Family?**
- A chord family is made up of 7 chords that all have a relationship to each other, based on the key that you are playing in. For example, in the key of D you have:
  - I II III IV V VI VII
  - D, Em, F#m, G, A, Bm, A/C#

**Why do I need to learn chord families?**
- If you learn those 7 chords in each family (C, D, E, G, and A), you will be able to play any song in those keys.

**What is a Capo?**
- First of all, it is important to note that Capo’s are the guitar player’s friend.
- A Capo gives you the ability to play in the same fingering of a key that you are playing, but to be able to raise the key up a half step every time you move your capo up one fret towards the sound hole.
- For example: if I really like playing a song in the key of D using the 7 chords in the chord family of D, but I find that the song is a bit low. Because I REALLY like using the D chord shapes and fingering in that particular song, I can place my Capo on fret 1 which sharps the key a half step, and I am now playing in the key of Eb.
- If I placed my Capo in the 2nd fret because I wanted to play the song even higher but still use the chord family of D because I like the voicing of those chords, I am now actually playing in the key of E because we have now sharped our guitar a whole step up from D. Make sense? Hope so… if not now, it will later… trust me! If I can learn, so can you!

**What is that 7th chord? Diminished… what?**
- If you notice there is a pattern to every key or chord family. The 1, 4, and 5 chords are always Major, and the 2, 3, and 6 chords are always minor. The 7 chords are traditionally always a diminished chord. Without getting too deep into what that means, it is simply a chord that you don’t hear a lot in modern worship music, and what’s more, you will rarely use it.
- So, with that said, we do always use a different chord, it’s what I like to call a “substitute 7 chord”. That’s the Chord that you will find in every chord family in this book. It’s a practical chord we use and hear all the time in our modern music. In technical terms, it’s the 5 chord of the family in its first inversion.
YOU WELCOMED ME HOME  Scott Cunningham ©  2008 Anchored Deep Music. CCLI #4956695

Key of C

Verse 1)
F C F C F C G
Adopted / accepted / befriended by love
F C F C F C G
Chosen / for redemption / for my faith in the Son

Chorus)
Am G F C
I was drowning and you saved me
Am G F C
And called me your own
Am G F C
I was running and you chased me
Am G F C
And you welcomed me home
Am G F (band in) C (F - C) (F - C) G
And you welcomed me home

Verse 1)
F C F C F C G
Adopted / accepted / befriended by love
F C F C F C G
Chosen / for redemption / for my faith in the Son

Chorus)
Am G F C
I was drowning and you saved me
Am G F C
And called me your own
Am G F C
I was running and you chased me
Am G F C
And you welcomed me home
Am G F C (band in) C (F - C) (F - C) G
And you welcomed me home

Bridge)
Dm - F - G Dm - F - G
Ha----Ilelu---jah Ha----Ilelu---jah
CHORD FAMILY / KEY OF “C”

C (I chord)
Dm (ii chord)
Em (iii chord)
F (IV chord)
G (V chord)
Am (vi chord)
G/B (V - 1st Inv)

Other Useful Variations for the Key of C

C/G (I chord)
F2 (IV chord)
Fmaj7 (IV chord)
Gsus (V chord)
G6sus (V chord)
G2 (V chord)

Open Chord Ideas for the Key of C

C (I chord)
Dm (ii chord)
Em (iii chord)
F (IV chord)
G (V chord)
Am (vi chord)
G/B (V - 1st Inv)
Verse 1)
Bm          G           D/F#   Asus
Hear my heart Lord, as I cry out to you
Bm          G             D/F#    Asus
Hear my prayer Lord, and carry me through
Bm       G     D/F#           Asus
In your mercy, and the promise You made
Bm      G                D/F#        Asus                  (Bm  -  G  -  D/F#  -  Asus)
Be my strength Lord, when strength fades away

Chorus)
D                                         G
When I am weak, your strength is complete
Bm       A     G
It’s perfect completely all I need
D                                      G
Sufficient for me, Your grace and Your peace,
Bm          A     G                              (Bm  -  G  -  D/F#  -  Asus)
Is perfect, completely all I need, Your all that I need

Verse 1)
In my weakness, I’m finding your strength
In my sorrow, a gentle embrace
Through the seasons, of laughter or pain
You are listening, as I’m calling your name

Bridge)
Em     D/F#  G        A           Em
When I am weak, I bow my knees,
D/F#    G                     A
For when I am weak, You are strong
CHORD FAMILY / KEY OF “D”

Open Chord Ideas for the Key of D

Other Useful Variations the Key of D
MY SOUL THIRSTS  Scott Cunningham © 2006 Anchored Deep Music. CCLI #3975529
Key of E

Verse 1)
E            E/G#              A       B        E            E/G#         A      B
My soul thirsts for the living God,    my soul thirsts for You alone
C#m       E/G#              A        B          E  -  E/G#  -  A  -  B
My soul thirsts for the living God alone

Chorus)
E           E/G#     A        B                          E         E/G#     A
Praise, Praise,             lift your voice and Raise, Praise
B                 C#m - E/G# - A       B                  C#m  -  E/G#  -  A
Well sing of Your am---azing     grace, to the living God,
B                    E     E/G#   A    B
To You the living God

Verse 2)
E             E/G#             A       B      E              E/G#     A      B
My heart longs in the living God,   my heart longs in You alone
C#m        E/G#            A       B           E  -  E/G#  -  A   -  B
My heart longs in the living God alone
(I Cry Out to the living God alone)

Chorus)
E           E/G#     A        B                          E         E/G#     A
Praise, Praise,             lift your voice and Raise, Praise
B                 C#m - E/G# - A       B                  C#m  -  E/G#  -  A
Well sing of Your am---azing     grace, to the living God,
B                    E     E/G#   A    B
To You the living God

Bridge)
A                           E/G#             C#m        F#m                A
Why are you cast down, oh my soul, why do you doubt, Oh my soul
E/G#            C#m                      B
(To Chorus)
Place your hope in God, Oh my soul, for I will be Glad...

Ending tag)
E                   E/G#       A                 B               E             E/G#     A      B
Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me
I once was Lost, but know I’m found, I was blind but now I see
**CHORD FAMILY / KEY OF “E”**

- **E** (I chord)
- **F#m** (II chord)
- **G#m** (III chord)
- **A** (IV chord)
- **B** (V chord)
- **C#m** (VI chord)
- **B/D#** (V - 1st Inv)

**Open Chord Ideas for the Key of E**

- **E** (I chord)
- **B/D#** (V - 1st inv)
- **A/C#** (IV - 1st inv)
- **C#m** (VI chord)
- **B** (V chord)
- **A** (IV chord)

**Other Useful Variations the Key of E**

- **E** (I chord)
- **E/G#** (I - 1st inv)
- **A** (IV chord)
- **B** (V chord)
- **C#m** (VI chord)
- **A/C#** (IV - 1st inv)
- **B/D#** (V - 1st Inv)
UNTIL I CAN’T SPEAK
Scott Cunningham © 2006 Anchored Deep Music. CCLI #4739654
Key of G

Verse 1)
G         C                Em  D/F#  C
Captivated, with who you are
G             C       Em    D/F#  G
Motivated, to know you more

Pre-chorus)
Em   D/F#    G       C
This is my hearts desire
Em   D/F#           G  (G/B) C
To know you Lord my God

Chorus)
G                                       D
Capture my heart, as I surrender my will
Em                                      D/F#
Focus my mind, till I’m yielded and still
Em                                 G/B
Hearing your voice, to answer your call
C                         D            Em  –  D/F#  -  G  -  (G/B)  -  C
Carried away, till I can’t speak at all

Verse 2)
G         C                        Em  D/F#  C
Captivated, with your love for me
G             C             Em  D/F#  G
Motivated, as you set me free

Pre-chorus)
Em   D/F#    G       C
This is my hearts desire
Em   D/F#           G       C
To know you Lord my God
CHORD FAMILY / KEY OF “G”

1 = thumb (optional)  2 = pointer finger  3 = middle finger  4 = anchor finger  5 = pinky finger

**Open Chord Ideas for the Key of G**

- **G/B** (I - 1st Inv)  
  - 3
  - 2
  - 0
  - 3
  - 3

- **C** (IV chord)  
  - 3
  - 0
  - 2
  - 3
  - 0

- **D** (V chord)  
  - 7
  - 0
  - 8
  - 0
  - 7

- **Em** (VI chord)  
  - 9
  - 0
  - 10
  - 0
  - 10

- **D/F#** (V - 1st Inv)  
  - 1
  - 2
  - 3
  - 3

(G/B is often used as a 3rd chord substitute = 1st chord in first inversion)

**Other Useful Variations the Key of G**

- **G²** (I chord)  
  - 3
  - 0
  - 2
  - 3
  - 3

- **C⁶** (IV chord)  
  - 3
  - 0
  - 2
  - 3
  - 3

- **Dsus** (V chord)  
  - 3
  - 0
  - 2
  - 3
  - 3

- **Em** (VI chord)  
  - 3
  - 0
  - 2
  - 4
  - 0

(Dsus = this is traditionally a F# diminished chord i.e... F#dim)
Key of A  CCLI #4739915

Verse 1)
A  F#m        E                    D  A         F#m       E                       D
Who is like you Lord… none I know of, who is like you God, none I’ve heard of
None I know of

Chorus)
A                                     A
You are Greater Than Heavens, in all Your Majesty
F#m                                                                             E
Your Greater than the Mountains, And still You think of me
A                                               E/G#                F#m
And all Your Loving-kindness I know I don’t I deserve
E                          D          E                          D          A
Lord the greatest part, is how You set Your love on me

Verse 2)
A          F#m       E                          D   A          F#m       E                     D
Who is like you Lord… in all Your Glory, who is like you God, in all of History
In all your Beauty

Bridge A)
F#m       A                         E
Who am I, that you would love me?
F#m       A                         E
Who am I, that you would save me?
F#m       A                         E
Who am I, that you’d forgive me?

Bridge B)
Bm            E                       A                      F#m
Because of Your Love I am saved, all of my sin is washed away…
Bm             E                     A  -  F#m  -  E  -  D
Because of Your Cross I am saved… By grace!
CHORD FAMILY / KEY OF “A”

A (I chord)  E/G# (V - 1st Inv)
0 0 2 2 0 0  4 4 4 2 0 0
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Bm (ii chord)  F#m (vi chord)
0 2 0 2 3 0  2 4 4 2 0 0
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

C#m (iii chord)  E (V chord)
0 2 2 1 0 0  0 2 2 1 0 0
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

D (IV chord)  D
0 0 0 0 2 3 2 0 0 0 0 0 2 3 2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

E (V chord)  C#m (iii chord)
0 0 0 0 2 3 2 0 0 0 0 0 2 3 2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Bm (ii chord)  Bm (ii chord)
0 2 0 2 3 0  7 9 9 7 0 0
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

A (I chord)  A (I chord)
5 7 7 6 0 0  5 7 7 6 0 0
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Other Useful Variations for the Key of A

(A/C# is often used as a G chord substitute = 1 chord in first inversion)

(this is traditionally a G# diminished chord i.e... G#dim)
SATISFIED IN YOU  Scott Cunningham © 2008 Anchored Deep Music. CCLI #4065139
Key of A

Verse 1)
A  B  C#m - E/G#  A  B  E  A  B  C#m - E/G#  A  B  E
I’m satisfied in You my God, and I will abide in You, in the vine

Chorus)
E  E/G#  A
I want to live, to live for Your pleasure
E  E/G#  A
I want to run, to run for Your fame
C#m  B  A  E/G#
I want to dwell in Your house forever,
A - B - C#m - B/D#  A - B - C#m - B/D#
To seek Your face as You call my name
A - B - C#m - B/D#  E
To hear You say… well done

Verse 2)
A  B  C#m - E/G#  A  B  E  A  B  C#m - E/G#  A  B  E
Be glorified in me my God, take all of my life, and be magnified

Chorus)

Bridge A)
C#m  B/D#  B  C#m  A  C#m  B/D#  B  C#m  A
For I am not my own, You bought me with Your blood (3x)
E/G#  C#m  A  E/G#  C#m  A
Your Prec - ous Blood, Your Prec - ous Blood (To Chorus)
CHORD FAMILY / KEY OF “E” (Partial capo on 2nd fret)

- E
- B/D#
- C#m
- E/G#
- A
- B

Symbols:
- 1 = thumb (optional)
- 2 = pointer finger
- 3 = middle finger
- 4 = anchor finger
- 5 = pinky finger
- = optional

Finger placements and fret positions are illustrated for each chord.