GENERAL

i ll fly away jars of clay chords

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How to Play “I’ll Fly Away” by Jars of Clay – Complete Chords, Tabs, and Tips

Whether you’re a seasoned guitarist or just starting out, learning the chords to **“I’ll Fly Away”** by *Jars of Clay*can be a rewarding experience. This classic worship anthem combines uplifting lyrics with a memorable melody that is perfect for solo practice or playing in a band. In this guide, we’ll walk you through every chord, give you a step by step tutorial on how to play the song, and share insider tips to help you master the piece quickly.

Song Overview

Released in 1995 on the album *Much Afraid*, “I’ll Fly Away” quickly became a staple in churches and praise and worship circles worldwide. The track is built around a simple yet powerful chord progression that makes it approachable for beginners, while still offering depth for more advanced players. The song’s key of G major gives it a bright, hopeful feel that matches the lyrical theme of liberation and faith.

Below is a quick rundown of the song’s structure:

- Intro: G – D – Em – C
- Verse: G – D – Em – C (repeat)
- Pre Chorus: Am – D – G – C
- Chorus: G – D – Em – C (repeat)
- Bridge: Em – D – C – G
- …and so on.

While the chords themselves are straightforward, the song’s arrangement and feel come from the way you play them. That’s why we’ll dive into strumming patterns, finger positioning, and subtle variations that can transform a basic rendition into something truly expressive.

Chord Chart

Below is a clean, easy to read chord chart that you can refer to while playing. The chart shows standard open chord shapes for the key of G major.

Chord	Fingering	Thumb Position
G	320003	Barre the 3rd fret on the low E string with your thumb.
D	xx0232	Thumb rests on the 5th string (A).
Em	022000	Thumb on the 5th string, no bar.
C	x32010	Thumb on the 5th string.
Am	022000	Thumb on the 5th string.

Feel free to transpose the chords if you prefer a different key. Many guitarists choose to play in A or D for easier fingerings or to suit their vocal range.

Step by Step Tutorial

1. Getting Comfortable with the Basic Progression

Start by playing the verse progression: G – D – Em – C. Move at a relaxed tempo, focusing on clean transitions. Practice each chord for one bar, then switch to the next. This will build muscle memory and help you avoid picking up unwanted notes.

2. Mastering the Strumming Pattern

The most common strumming pattern for “I’ll Fly Away” is a 4 beat pattern with an emphasis on the downstrokes:

1. Down (D) on beat 1
2. Down (D) on beat 2
3. Up (U) on beat 3
4. Down (D) on beat 4

Alternatively, you can add a gentle palm mute on beats 2 and 4 for a slightly subdued feel. Experiment with both variations until you find the one that best matches the song’s mood.

3. Adding the Pre Chorus and Chorus

For the pre chorus, you’ll need to incorporate the Am chord. The transition from D to Am can feel a bit awkward, so practice the move slowly until the hand lands comfortably. The chorus repeats the verse progression, so once you’ve nailed the verse, you’re ready for the chorus.

4. Navigating the Bridge

The bridge uses a slightly different progression: Em – D – C – G. This section is a great spot to add a little extra dynamics. Try playing the Em with a slightly heavier attack and then letting the chord ring out as you move to the next chord. The key is to keep the flow smooth while giving each chord its own character.

5. Incorporating the Ending

The final section of the song often features a repeat of the chorus with an extra emphasis on the last G chord. Finish with a soft strum and a gentle fade to leave a lingering sense of resolution.

Tips for a More Expressive Performance

- Use a Capo: If you're singing along, consider placing a capo on the 3rd or 4th fret to match the original vocal key.
- Dynamic Variations: Play softer during verses and louder during the chorus to create contrast.
- Fingerstyle Option: Try picking the bass notes of each chord with your thumb and plucking the higher strings with your fingers for a more intimate feel.
- Pedal Usage: A subtle delay or reverb can add depth without overpowering the song.
- Practice with a Metronome: Keep a steady tempo and gradually increase speed as you become comfortable.

Advanced Techniques for Guitarists

If you're looking to push beyond the basics, consider these advanced approaches:

1. Slide Guitar

Introduce a slide on the low E and A strings during the pre chorus to give the song an airy, bluesy feel. Slide from the 3rd to the 5th fret for a smooth transition.

2. Harmonics

Use natural harmonics on the 12th fret of the G and B strings during the bridge to add a shimmering effect. This technique is subtle but can elevate the emotional impact.

3. Palm Mute Drumming

For a more percussive sound, palm mute the lower strings on the downstrokes of the verse. This adds a rhythmic groove that keeps the listener engaged.

Practice Routine

Consistency is key when mastering a new song. Here's a simple 20 minute daily routine:

1. Warm Up (5 min): Finger stretches and chromatic scales.
2. Chord Practice (5 min): Switch between G, D, Em, C, and Am slowly.
3. Strumming (5 min): Play the verse progression at a slow tempo, focusing on rhythm.
4. Song Run Through (5 min): Play the entire song, noting any transitions that feel rough.

Repeat this routine daily, and you'll find yourself playing the song with confidence within a week.

Common Mistakes and How to Fix Them

- Fretting too hard: Keep your fingers close to the fretboard but not pressing too hard. This reduces fatigue and improves tone.
- Strumming too fast: Focus on accuracy before speed. Use a metronome to gradually increase tempo.
- Ignoring dynamics: Play every chord with intention. A flat, uniform strum can make the song feel lifeless.
- Not listening to the original: Record yourself and compare with the official track. This helps you catch subtle differences in timing and expression.

Why "I'll Fly Away" Is a Must Learn for Worship Musicians

The song's simple structure and memorable melody make it an ideal teaching tool for beginners. Moreover, its emotional depth and uplifting message resonate with audiences worldwide. Mastering the chords to "I'll Fly Away" not only expands your repertoire but also enhances your ability to lead worship with confidence.

Conclusion

Learning the chords to **“I’ll Fly Away”**by Jars of Clay is a rewarding journey that blends musical skill with heartfelt expression. By following this comprehensive guide—starting with the basic chord shapes, mastering the strumming pattern, and adding advanced techniques—you’ll be able to play this beloved anthem with ease and emotion.

Remember to practice consistently, keep your dynamics in mind, and most importantly, enjoy the process. Whether you’re playing for a small gathering or a large choir, the timeless message of freedom and faith will shine through each chord you strike.

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