

Music - A Bible Study

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[0 : 00] Music. What does the Bible say about it? It says a lot. There's over 600 biblical passages on the issue! The Bible is full of songs. There's 185 songs in the Bible.

Of course, 80% of these are the Psalms. Right from the beginning, from creation, the angels sang praises to God. In Job 38, verse 7, we read, When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy.

Various kinds of music are referred to in Scripture. We read of military music, popular music, work songs, court music, love songs, songs of victory, songs that soothe, and songs that inspire.

One of the purposes for humanity is to worship God. Revelation 14, 7 says, Music is intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual.

So music is intellectual. It involves mental activity and our thought processes. Colossians 3, verse 16 says, Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

[1 : 39] Music is emotional. It involves feelings. For example, Ephesians 5, 19, Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

Of course, music is also physical. It involves sounds, hearing, and physical movement. Music is also spiritual. We read of psalms, hymns, spiritual songs.

There are spiritual songs. So there's definitely a spiritual dimension to music. Consider the purpose of music. Music is primarily, number one, for the praise and glory of God.

Psalms 104, 33, it says, I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. There's many other verses we could talk along that same line.

We also praise God because of what God has done for us. Isaiah 12, verse 5, Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done excellent things. This is known in all the earth.

[2 : 52] Psalm 98, 1, O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things. His right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory.

Not only do we praise God because of what he has done, but also because of who God is. Psalm 30, verse 4, Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

Isaiah 24, 14, They shall lift up their voice. They shall sing for the majesty of the Lord. They shall cry aloud from the sea. Psalm 145, verse 7, They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.

So music is for the praise and the glory of God. It's also for the edification of believers. Again, Colossians 3, verse 16, Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Godly music serves to teach doctrine and to admonish. This word admonish, it means to counsel or advise or exhort.

[4 : 20] The purpose of music is to attribute worth to God. Worthship is the sense of it. It's giving worth unto God, attributing worth unto him.

Psalms 27, verse 6, In part it says, I will sing, Yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord. Another purpose of worship is to praise God.

Psalms 150, verses 3 through 4, it says, Praise him with the sound of the trumpet. Praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance.

Praise him with string instruments and organs. Another purpose is to lift the emotions of the heart. Again, Ephesians 5, 18 through 19, it continues, Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

It engages the heart. Also, worship is to learn scripture and spiritual truths by singing. Psalm 32, 7 through 8 says, Thou art my hiding place.

[5 : 30] Thou shalt preserve me from trouble. Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah. I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go.

I will guide thee with mine eye. We sing the truth of scripture. Another purpose is to introduce others to our Lord. Psalm 40, verse 3, Music can also have a therapeutic healing effect.

We know even in secular circles they talk of music therapy. In 1 Samuel chapter 16, it talks about Saul being troubled by an evil spirit.

And it reads 1 Samuel 16, verse 16, Let our Lord now command thy servants which are before thee, to seek out a man who is a cunning player on an harp, and it shall come to pass when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.

And this is what happened. David came to Saul, he played the harp, he sang, and this settled Saul, and his mind was eased. Music can minister healing to the mind, soul, and body.

[6 : 52] Consider now some principles about music in a believer's life. Music reflects what is going on inside a person, inside a believer's heart.

It reflects our relationship with and our attitude towards God. Music comes from a heart of praise and love for our God. When we worship, we edify one another.

And our praise is for everyday living. Psalm 145, verse 2, it says, Every day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy name forever and ever.

Consider some principles for good music. My music must glorify God. Bringing glory to God is my life's highest goal.

Revelation 4, verse 11, it says, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

[7 : 57] Here is our highest purpose as God's creatures. Bringing glory to God is the highest purpose of music. Psalm 104, verse 33 says, I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live.

I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My music must reflect the character of God. God's character is order and peace.

We read 1 Corinthians 14, 33, For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. And then 1 Corinthians 14, verse 40 reads, Let all things be done decently and in order.

God's character is truth. Psalm 31, verse 5, in part it reads, Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth. God's character is beauty.

Psalm 27, verse 4, The Bible talks about spiritual music.

[9 : 09] It follows on then that some music is not so. It is the direct opposite of that. Carnal and fleshly. Music that is of the world.

My music must change me to be more like God, not the world. Romans 12, verse 2 reads, And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

My music must be in accord with God. It has the nature of submission, not rebellion. Ephesians 5, as we read about speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, in the context it talks about submission.

Ephesians 5, verse 21 reads, Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Of course, we know worldly music, rock and roll music, smacks of rebellion, the opposite of submission.

My music must be going in the right direction. We see the example of Lot and Abram in Genesis 13, verses 10 and 11. It says, And Lot lifted up his eyes, and he beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered.

[10 : 26] Then Lot chose him, all the plain of Jordan. Lot saw the favourable aspect of the valley, and he chose that, even though it was an unwise and ungodly decision.

As we see, it led him to Sodom and Gomorrah, and all the disaster and destruction of that. So, when we make choices, we need to have wisdom.

When we make choices about music, do we consider what pleases God? Do we consider what is the attitude of others who go along with this and listen to this music?

For example, Proverbs 13, verse 20, He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

An important consideration is, what is the philosophy behind the music? Can we go along with what that music style represents, and the lifestyle and the thinking of those that perform such music, all of that that goes along with such music?

[11 : 33] Is there a clash? Amos 3, verse 3 reads, Can two walk together except they be agreed? We want to avoid what has questionable associations.

Also, think about what's the message behind the music? Is it in accord with true teaching and right doctrine? Paul urges Titus in Titus 2, verse 1, in part it reads, Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.

Is the message clear, or is it that the music dominates and that the lyrics are superficial or drowned out by the noise and the beat? 1 Corinthians 14, verse 8 reads, So we want to choose that which is clearly right and not compromised.

The Bible urges us to steer away from sin. We don't want to accommodate or lean towards what may be in any way questionable. We don't want to veer towards that wrong direction and dishonour our Lord.

Best that we rather flee from it, as it reads in 2 Timothy 2, verse 22, Flee also youthful lusts, but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

[12 : 59] As God's people we are born again and we put behind us what is of the old sinful nature. Our heart has been changed and our desire now is that with whatever life choices that we make, our primary consideration is, does it please the Lord?

2 Corinthians 5, verse 17 reads, Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new.

The Bible talks about setting a clear dividing line, a distinction between what is holy and what is profane or ungodly. We don't want to stray into so-called grey areas and compromise our convictions.

The Bible tells of setting a difference between the secular and the sacred. Ezekiel 22, verse 26 reads, in part, setting a difference between the holy and the profane, between the unclean and the clean.

Here's another way of looking at the issue of music. God wants your heart, not just your music. And if he has your heart, he'll have your music.

[14 : 14] If he does not have your music, he does not have your heart. Music can be a fraught area for Christians to make up their minds about, about what they will accept.

Of course, there's many different styles and genre of music, with some music clearly worldly, in origin. And of course, there's all kinds of variations of styles out there.

We all have to come to that mind of our own about what is going to be acceptable unto the Lord.

The Bible sets out for us how there is a right way and a wrong way to worship.

We see examples of that. For example, Samuel rebuked Saul for his compromise in 1 Samuel 15, verse 22. To obey is better than sacrifice.

This is the occasion where Saul had disobeyed God, who had commanded him to destroy all of the spoil of the Amalekites. But Saul tried to justify his actions in keeping some of it as being motivated by his desire to worship.

[15 : 20] But he broke the clear principle of obeying God as the first consideration. So the end doesn't justify the means. That's what a lot of modern contemporary Christian music does, trying to manufacture worship while adopting worldly, fleshly methods.

Another example is Abel's sacrifice. Abel's sacrifice was accepted by God in contrast with Cain's sacrifice. We read about that in Genesis 4, from verses 4 through 5.

And Abel he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering, but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.

So Abel's sacrifice was accepted, Cain's sacrifice was not. It's important that we worship in a way that is pleasing and right in the sight of our holy God.

David neglected to obey God when moving the Ark of the Covenant and he suffered God's judgment. In 2 Samuel 6 verse 7, in part it reads, and the anger of the Lord was kindled.

[16 : 38] David made the mistake of adopting the way that the ungodly Philistines did things and also disregarding God's clear word about how to conduct worship.

We must accord with the principles of Scripture. It is essential that we treat holy things reverently and in honour of our Lord. Another example is where the sons of Aaron also disobeyed God in

regards to worship.

It reads in Leviticus 10 verses 1 through 2, in part, they offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And they went out fire from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.

It's another example of people treating holy things carelessly. We dare not worship God in ungodly ways. We should not have the attitude that the end justifies the means.

We should not think that we can treat worship and music carelessly. God calls us to use the right approach and methods in our worship. Compromise in respect to worship can break down godly principles of separation.

[17:55] This is the case with some ecumenical approaches to worship, using rock bands and accommodating the trappings of worldly stage and performance and a blending together with all kinds of false teachings and practice.

It does not honour our Lord when truth is compromised. 2 Corinthians 6 verse 17 reads, Wherefore, come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you.

Our music and worship ought not to be focused upon the sensual aspects, but upon what is spiritual and founded upon the truth.

2 Corinthians 5 verse 7 reads, For we walk by faith, not by sight. Here's some telling quotes about the power and effect of music.

I quote, Music is a two-edged sword. It is a really powerful drug. Music can poison you, lift your spirits, or make you sick without you knowing why.

[19:01] That was from Dr. Adam Canist, a PhD in human behaviour. Here's another quote, Music will bring down a political system faster than any revolution.

So said Lenin. Another quote, You can hypnotise people with rock music, and when you get at their weakest point, you can preach into their subconscious minds whatever you want to say.

So said the rock musician Jimmy Hendrix. So we see from these secular sources that music is powerful, it has an influence, and it can be used in a harmful way.

So the bottom line is we want to exercise care and pay attention to godly principles when we consider what type of music that we will use.

Here's some questions we can ask ourselves about our music choices. How does the music affect us? Does it have a beneficial, helpful influence, or a harmful one?

[20:10] Does it have a positive and beneficial effect, or a negative and harmful one? Does it excite in some way what is wrong, what is fleshly, or does it produce feelings that are inappropriate?

These are good questions to contemplate when we consider what music do we consider acceptable. Music, even without lyrics, can have an effect upon the listener and produce certain fruit.

Consider Philippians 4, verse 8, as a good guide as to what we should think about, as to what we should accept. It reads, Philippians 4, verse 8, Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise.

Think on these things. Here is an essential quality of God's character, whatsoever things are true. When we apply this principle, music in the worship service must be doctrinally sound.

plus, those other characteristics, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. I trust that we'll be able to apply some of these principles about music in our own lives as to what choices we make, as to what music we listen to, about the music style we adopt as we worship, and revere, and bless our holy and fearful God.

[22:05] May the Lord bless you as you search the scriptures on these truths and exercise godly discernment about the choices you make with the music that you think is acceptable to honour your Lord.

and ending the truth Thank you.