

The Importance of Good Music

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“Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt him. The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name. Pharaoh’s chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone. Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.”

Exodus 14:30-15:6

Introduction:

In Exodus chapter 14, the Lord delivered His people, Israel, from the tyranny of Pharaoh and the land of Egypt. The Jews miraculously crossed the Red Sea on dry ground, and watched the army of Pharaoh drown in that same ocean. How elated they must have been to finally be free from the bondage of Egypt! Imagine their joy & excitement! How did they respond?

“Then **sang** Moses and the children of Israel this **song** unto the LORD...”

The people of Israel expressed their joy and thanksgiving by singing a song of praise to their God. They chose to use the tool of music as their means of giving thanks, praise and worship to Jehovah God. This is the first Scriptural account of song, and it sets the precedent for centuries of the use of music by God’s people.

Music is an integral part of our modern society. It has been an important part of man's life for thousands of years. Man expresses himself in song. He makes political statements, protests wrongdoing, and speaks his opinion in song. Men and women have used music for eons to express their love for one another. You can tell much about the people of an era by listening to their music.

Music and songs have always been an important part of man's worship of Jehovah God. From the first recorded song in Exodus chapter 15 to the more modern works of Charles Wesley, Fanny Crosby and Ira Sankey, men and women have used music to worship, praise and petition the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Unfortunately, music has also been used for darker purposes, to further the work of the god of this world. A quick perusal of the typical rock music store will reveal the godlessness, wickedness and immorality of most modern "music." Some musicians even openly give worship and obedience to Satan himself.

When I got saved in 1985, I had a lot of ungodly, worldly, fleshly music - and I loved it! It took me years to finally get rid of the music that was hindering me in my Christian walk. But, then I was faced with a problem: Now what? A vacuum had been left by the sinful music that I had given away. What would fill that vacuum? Could I just listen to nothing, or to something neutral like classical music? Why was it important for me to learn to like that which I did not have a taste for: Good, decent, spiritual Christian music? Why listen to music that, in some cases, I did not really enjoy? Why was it not enough just to get rid of my bad music? **Because good, spiritual music is an essential part of the Christian life.**

Let me give you 7 reasons for the importance of good Christian music:

1. Good music will help you praise the Lord.

What was the purpose of Moses' song in Exodus chapter 15? Look at the words:

“Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.”

Why were Moses and the Israelites singing unto God? They were praising the Lord. God had given them a great victory, and they wanted God to receive honour and praise. When the Jews sang the song of Moses, God received honour and praise.

Christian, you are commanded to praise your God. Do you? Are you in the habit of praising God?

Psalm 148:1 "Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights."

Twenty-three times we are commanded in Psalms, "Praise ye the Lord." So, how do we praise the Lord? What is the vehicle of praise? How do we express our praise to God?

Psalm 33:2, 3 “Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.”

Psalm 40:3 “And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.”

Psalm 144:9 “I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.”

We use music and song to praise the Lord. We express our worship, thanksgiving and adoration of our God using the tool of spiritual music. That is the purpose for which the Lord created music.

When was the last time you spent even five minutes praising God? If you haven't done that for a while, it could be that you are not on a healthy diet of good Christian music. You must praise the Lord if you will be an obedient and spiritual Christian. Therefore, you must listen to, and use, good, spiritual music.

2. Good music will help your spirit.

Good music will enable you to encourage yourself and strengthen your spirit when you are down or discouraged. For example, consider how David's music helped King Saul when he was oppressed by an evil spirit:

1 Samuel 16:22, 23 “And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight. And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.”

It is very important to for you control your spirit:

Proverbs 16:32 "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

Why is it so important to control your spirit? Simply because you cannot encourage and help others when you are down and discouraged. You cannot be a blessing when you are depressed. You cannot be an effective witness when you are sad or angry. You must learn to control your spirit, and music is one tool that God has given you to help you do so. Godly music will calm and refresh your spirit, and the words will remind you of God's love and goodness.

3. Good music will teach and admonish you & others.

D.L. Moody was an American evangelist who saw over 1 million souls come to Christ. Ira Sankey was his valuable partner for many years - but Sankey was not a preacher. He was just a humble song leader and soloist. Why was Ira Sankey so important to the ministry of Moody? He made sure that before, during and after each service there was good Christian music that prepared the hearts of the hearers for the Word of God. Before Moody ever got up in the pulpit, the crowd had been taught and admonished in song!

Spiritual music is a powerful method for teaching the Word of God to both yourself, and to others:

Colossians 3:16 “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.”

For example, one effective way to memorise Scripture is to sing Scripture songs. If you want to sow the seed of the Word of God in the hearts of your children, teach them Scripture songs. It is amazing how the words of Scripture can remain embedded in the mind of someone for decades because they learned Scripture songs as a child.

4. Good music enables you to obey God.

Psalm 30:4 “Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.”

Psalm 96:2 “Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; show forth his salvation from day to day.”

You are commanded to sing unto God. It is not a suggestion - it is a commandment from the Lord. To not sing to God is to commit a sin. But, how can you sing to Him if you don't know any good Christian songs? You can't use the world's music to praise God!

Consider the example of Paul and Silas in prison (Acts 16). They sang praises to God at midnight, in spite of their injuries and their imprisonment. What songs did they sing? Those that they had learned over their years as Christians. How could they have sung to God if they weren't in the habit of doing so? Obviously they had a diet of good, godly music.

5. Good music helps to renew your mind.

The principle that applies to computers also applies to the advanced computer of the human mind:

Garbage in: Garbage out.

Your mind has been messed up by the philosophies and ideas of this evil world. Thus, the command,

Romans 12:2 “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

How can you renew your mind? One powerful way is to listen to good Christian music.

For example, consider the words to the song, “Sweet Hour of Prayer” (by William W. Walford):

Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer,
That calls me from this world of care;
And bids me at my Father's throne
Make all my wants and wishes known.

In seasons of distress and grief
My soul has often found relief;
And oft escaped the tempter's snare
By thy return, sweet hour of prayer.

By choosing to listen to and sing godly music like this, you are choosing to think good thoughts, and reprogram your sinful mind. Thus the command from the Apostle Paul,

Philippians 4:8 “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.”

6. Good music will protect you from bad music.

There is no doubt that carnal, fleshly, worldly music is sinful, and will hurt your spiritual life (see pages 5 and 6 for Scriptures concerning good and bad music).

Romans 16:19 “For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.”

1 John 2:15 “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

Unfortunately, many of us had a habit of enjoying sinful music before we got saved, and it may still be a temptation for us. One way to protect yourself from bad music is to be filled with a diet of godly music:

Romans 12:21 “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”

7. Good music is a good testimony.

Psalms 40:3 “And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.”

When people see and hear you singing good Christian songs, they will know that you are different. A new song is powerful evidence of a new heart. When everyone at work is stressing out and losing their cool, you will stand out like a sore thumb if you sing hymns and have the joy of the Lord.

For example, I mentioned before the example of Paul and Silas in jail. Look at who listened to them sing and pray:

Acts 16: 25 “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.”

The unsaved prisoners heard the songs and prayers of Paul and Silas, and it had an impact upon them. They knew that Paul and Silas loved God, and they knew that what the Christians had was real. The good music of Paul and Silas was a powerful testimony for Christ.

Conclusion:

How's your music diet? Are you eating junk food? Are you suffering from malnutrition? Do you have a healthy diet of godly, spiritual music?

Remember one characteristic of the Christian that is filled with the Spirit:

Ephesians 5:19 “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;”

Scriptures Concerning Good Music

The subject of good and bad music certainly arouses a large amount of emotional and subjective debate. Music is an important aspect of life for most people, and our flesh certainly doesn't like to be told that the music we like is wrong, sinful, or questionable. However, if we are to yield our heart and mind to the Lord, then we must also give Him veto power concerning our music.

I am not an authority on music theory or on the different types of music that people listen to today. I have simply gathered some Scriptural principles in my quest for deciding what music is acceptable for me to listen to. This list is by no means exhaustive, but is rather a brief and pointed examination of what the Bible says about music. I believe that there are enough clear Scriptural principles in this article to enable the sincere Christian to decide whether or not his music is pleasing to the Lord.

1) Good music causes us to think right thoughts.

Philippians 4:8 “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.”

Does your music meet these criteria? If not, then why are you listening to it?

2) Good music is spiritual.

Ephesians 5:19 “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;”

James 5:13 “Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.”

Does your music fit the category of psalms, hymns or spiritual songs? Is your music spiritual? Does it appeal to the flesh, or to the spirit? Rock music and its variants (rap, house, pop, etc.) certainly appeal to the flesh because of the dominant beat. Music can, of course, be pleasing and enjoyable, but it must primarily appeal to the spirit.

3) Good music teaches you the truth.

Colossians 3:16 “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.”

Music is one way that we are taught and admonished. Would you let the author of your music teach you and your family about life, morality, religion, etc? Is he a good and godly influence? If not, then why listen to his songs? Remember,

Proverbs 13:20 “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.”

4) Good music is not worldly.

1 John 2:15 “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

James 4:4 “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

Romans 12:2 “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

Is your music worldly? Is it the popular music among those who hate God? Certainly if rock, pop and rap music are not worldly, then nothing is! They are the epitome of worldliness. Check out the lives and philosophies of the composers if you doubt this. Even many of the composers and performers of contemporary Christian music look, act and sound worldly.

5) Good music is not written by fools.

Ecclesiastes 7:5 “It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.”

Is your music written by fools? Are the words foolish and unscriptural? If so, then it is bad music.

6) Good music comes from a good source.

Matthew 7:17, 18 “Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.”

A bad tree cannot produce good fruit. If the tree is bad, then so must the fruit be bad. What is the tree that produced your music? What individual, group or organisation wrote it or put it out? Are they good, godly, and right? If not, then the music is not good music.

7) Good music is not associated with the “way of the heathen.”

Jeremiah 10:2a “Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen...”

Certainly rock music is part of the “way of the heathen.” It is an integral part of their lifestyle and philosophy. What type of music is played at ungodly parties where people take drugs, blaspheme God, use filthy language, and have illicit sex? The answer is rock, pop, rap, etc. So why would a Christian want to partake of such immoral garbage, and learn the way of the heathen?

8) Good music brings glory to God.

1 Corinthians 10:31 “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

Does your music bring glory to God? Does it cause you to glorify Him more? If not, then it is hindering you, and it is displeasing to God.

9) Good music protects you from bad music.

Romans 16:19 “For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.”

Romans 12:21 “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Do we really have to delve into the movies, literature and music of this world so that we know what we are fighting against? Not so, says Scripture. We are to learn all we can about the good, and we are to remain simple (ignorant) concerning that which is evil.

10) Good music does not instruct you contrary to Scripture.

Proverbs 19:27 “Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.”

Does your music agree with and support the precepts and principles of Scripture? If not, then God says you must cease to listen to it.

**** If you are unsure about a certain type of music, take this 11-point Scriptural test :**

1. Are you willing to do what is right once you know God’s will? John 7:17.
2. Does it agree with all that Scripture has to say on the subject? 2 Peter 1:20; 2 Timothy 3:16,17.
3. Have you prayed about it? Philippians 4:6,7.
4. Do you have the leading of the Holy Spirit? Romans 8:14.
5. Does it please God? 1 John 3:22.
6. Can you do it in the name of the Lord Jesus? Colossians 3:17.
7. Can you give God thanks for it? Colossians 3:17.
8. Does it bring glory to God? 1 Corinthians 10:31.
9. Does it offend other Christians? 1 Corinthians 8:13.
10. Am I fully persuaded that it is right? Romans 14:5, 23.
11. Do the best Christians I know agree that it is right? Proverbs 12:15, 24:6

See also: Answers Book (Keith Piper) Page 661-671

Russian Church Leaders Request U.S. Christians to Stop Sending Rock Music

The head of the Unregistered Union of Baptist Churches in Russia and an elder of the same group have sent an "Urgent Message to the Churches of America from the Persecuted Church in Russia." The letter, from Peter Peters and Vasillj Ryzhuk, was printed in "Christian Info News," a monthly Christian newspaper from British Columbia, Canada:

"For 30 years we have suffered intense persecution, and now freedom is bringing another great harm to our churches. This damage is coming from the Christians in America who are sending rock music and evangelists accompanied by rock bands. Our young people do not attend these meetings because we have all committed not to participate in secular entertainment. This is a great burden on our hearts. Many come with Bible in hand and rock music. We are embarrassed by this image of Christianity. We do not know what words to use in urging that this be stopped. We abhor all Christian rock music coming to our country.

Rock music has nothing in common with ministry or service to God. We are very, very against Christian Americans bringing to our country this false image of "ministry" to God. We need spiritual bread; please give us true bread, not false cakes. It is true that rock music attracts people to the church, but not to godly living.

We were in prison for 15 years and 11 years for Christ's sake. We were not allowed to have Christian music, but rock music was used as a weapon against us day and night to destroy our souls. We could only resist with much prayer and fasting. Now, we have a time of more openness, and we are no longer taken to prison. However, now it is Christians from America who damage our souls. We do not allow this music in our church, but they rent big stadiums and infect teenagers and adults with their rock music.

We, the leadership and congregations of the Unregistered Union of Baptist Churches, the former Persecuted Church, have made an agreement not to allow rock music in our church. We urge you to join with us and we advise you to remove rock music from America.

Do not desecrate our teenagers with it. Even the unbelievers recognise it is unholy music and they cannot understand how American Christians can be so much like the world. We can give you the conclusion that after Russian unbelievers have attended rock concerts where Christ's Word was preached, the people were very disappointed and disillusioned with Christianity.

We call this music from hell. We urge all Americans to stop giving money for Organisation of such concerts in Russia. We want only traditional Christian music in our churches. This is the unanimous decision of all our leaders."