

The need for godly principles surrounding spiritually sound music

1. **There is a need to spiritually evaluate music that we allow into our lives and minds**

- music is so prevalent and appealing that unless a person establishes and maintains personal standards for holiness related to music, they will inevitably be adversely impacted by it
- the world's music, like other forms of its entertainment, will desensitize us to sin and things unholy
- the world's entertainment industry (artists and producers) is driven by money and popularity, it therefore makes its appeal on the basis of the flesh because that's where the money is
- not all religious music is spiritually wholesome or edifying; discernment is needed even in this genre
- having been purposely designed and created by God, music has the potential to lift our minds to things that are holy and eternal; but only *spiritually sound music* will achieve this outcome

2. **Music began with God – it was His invention, not man's; God created it along with our ability to enjoy it, participate in it and write it**

- God enjoys music – our aim should be to understand why He does, what music He enjoys and learn to enjoy it for the same reasons He does
- God sings! Zeph 3:17 – for joy over Zion; as should we! 1 Chron 15:16
- the angels sang at Creation (Job 38:7); it must have been ***God who taught them how + what to sing!***
- God has gifted man with music – there is a specific divine purpose behind music and its creation
- man's ability to appreciate, write, and play music is part of Creation (God created music for our benefit)
- music ***plays a key part in praise and worship of God***
- being connected w/ worship, it reflects a sacrifice we offer to God (Heb 13:15)
- as such, it must be offered on His terms, conforming to His requirements, not based upon what pleases us
- ***we are commanded to sing God's word*** – the phrase "Sing unto the LORD" found 16 times in OT; also Eph 5:19 – "making melody in your heart"
- the divine ordination of music is like the divine ordination of marriage
- God invented, created and designed it for a specific purpose – ***to prepare a holy people for the Kingdom***
- when the righteous parameters of this divinely ordained model are followed, holiness results, God is glorified and a people prepared
- when the parameters are not followed, holiness does not result, God is not glorified and the people are not prepared

3. **Music and song are intended to be a power for spiritual good in the life of believers**

- - in times of adversity: a) Jehoshaphat sending out the singers prior to battle in 2 Chron 20:21; b) Paul and Silas singing in the Philippian jail (Acts 16)
- on special occasions of worship and praise – 1 Chron 15
- it is connected with praise/thanksgiving; prayer, sacrifice, exhortation/encouragement, remembering key historical events, admonition/warning, unity, teaching God's word (doctrine/conduct/prophecy), meditation, therapy, preaching and fellowship with God (Heb 13:15)
- the right (spiritual) music ensures the battle waged against sin/evil is fought on God's terms, by faith, not in the strength of the flesh
- singing is intended to be done in solitude (David as a shepherd) or in communal worship
- singing allows for continuous praise/thanksgiving, individually or communally – 1 Chron 16:4,37
- reverence should always be maintained – praise is never a performance nor entertainment

4. **Music is everywhere as are the dangers associated with it; some of it evil/ungodly, some spiritually sound and helpful; it can impact us either for good or bad**

a) **each disciple needs to learn to spiritually manage and control the influence music has upon them**

- absent any controls, it will inevitably lead us to Sin
- ensuring music we listen to adheres to spiritual principles will ensure music has a positive spiritual influence in our lives

b) **music has an emotive component – either for good or evil;** it impacts us psychologically and physically; it has the ability to spiritually heal and encourage or to promote sin and destruction

- it's spiritually destructive capability is seen in the events of the golden calf in Ex 32 (v18-19)

- it's ability to be constructive and unifying is seen in the events of Neh 12 at the dedication of the wall
- c) **absent the divine purpose** of music, including the righteous parameters and principles defining spiritually sound music, **man invariably redefines music according to humanistic parameters and principles**, turning it to his own self pleasure, removing God (it's creator) from the picture and producing a form of music never intended by God that glorifies and promotes the flesh
- determining the divine objective, parameters and principles related to music is key to using, enjoying and benefiting from music in the way God intended
5. **Singing is bound up in teaching/doctrine** – Col 3:16; 1 Chron 25:1-2; Eph 5:19
- the songs we sing should reflect God's Truth – His righteous ways, and encourage godly living
 - it is only the principles of His word that can teach us, transform us and sanctify us – prepare us for the Kingdom
 - just as our expositional writings and preaching should reflect God's truth, so should the lyrics of the music we write
 - the doctrine we believe is different than that of the Churches – this should be reflected in our music
 - our music should reflect the distinguishing truth of our doctrine, not the shallow, unbalanced and distorted views found in contemporary Christian music
 - as with doctrine, sincerity alone is not the sole grounds for divine acceptance of music: 1 Chron 13:8 with 15:16;
 - feelings and emotion can be engaging on an emotive level, but without right doctrine it is of little value
 - a song sung sincerely, wholeheartedly and enthusiastically, while containing lyrics contrary to God's truth is not acceptable to Him
 - true (spiritually-based) emotion can only exist in an environment of true understanding of God's word
 - a sound understanding of the Word is a prerequisite for either Bible exposition or the writing of music
 - Spiritual music should:
 - Be rich with the Word
 - Encourage correct doctrine – 'teaching'
 - Encourage correct practice/lifestyle – 'admonishing'
 - Include Psalms, Hymns, Spiritual songs
 - Be sung thankfully and enthusiastically to the Lord
 - Instil wisdom
6. **The most important part of our musical offering is the words (not the music)** – Eph 5:18
- we need to sing w/ understanding – 1 Cor 14:15; Ps 47:7
 - the music should not overshadow the words and the message of the words must have meaning
 - what honours God is the words, not the music; when we fill our minds with His principles, not with music
7. **Believers are expected to maintain a Godly heritage with respect to spiritually sound music**
- a) **David did not leave the musical side of Temple worship to generational preference or to chance**
- under the guidance of the Spirit (God designed), specific arrangements were established for songs and singers
 - the proof of the divine hand is seen in that the same divine model will be used in future worship (Rev 4/5)
 - this specific form of worship was entrusted to qualified leaders and taught to subsequent generations
 - God waited until the 4000 singers raised their voices at the Temple's dedication to fill it with His glory
- b) **the sons of Asaph ensured the spiritual aspect of the worship music was never altered**
- the national anthem of worship first given in 1 Chron 16:7-35; appears again in: 2 Chron 5:7-14; 23:13; 29:25-30; and 35:15
 - it was also likely sung in Ezra 3:10-11; Neh 12:27; the captivity did not change the worship music
 - it will also be sung when the Jews return to the land in the Kingdom – Jer 33:11
- c) **music/praise will play a significant role in the life of the immortal saints**
- David's system of worship and praise was patterned after the Kingdom worship (24 elders of Rev 4/5)
 - David's system had singers on duty day and night (1 Chron 9:33) – cp Rev 4:8; 7:15
 - there will be Kingdom singing in – Ps 87:7; Isa 51:11; Ezek 40:44; Rev 5:7-10; 15:3