

Does this mean the worship style of music we like glorifies the Lord? No. True worship is in spirit and in truth. God didn't accept Cain's offering⁸ nor did He accept the ark of the covenant being carried the world's way.⁹ He only accepts what is according to His Word. If it's not God's way, it's sin.

"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-34).

What does worshiping "in spirit and in truth" mean? First, we must be born again of the Spirit of God. At this spiritual rebirth, God gives us His Holy Spirit, Who leads us into all truth. Worshiping in truth is worshiping according to God's written Truth. Apply God's Word! For example: "Let everything be done decently and in order", "thou shalt worship no other god", "try the spirits whether they are of God", "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness", "approve things that are excellent", "worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness."¹⁰

Since the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3), Satan has been after every person's worship. Because music is a means of glorifying, Satan wants our music. If Satan tempted Jesus Christ to worship him (Mt. 4), do you not think that he will tempt us? Knowingly or unknowingly, when we Christians try to worship God with immoral music, we're bowing down to Satan's will for us. This renders us ineffective for the Lord and sears our conscience to knowing what's right or wrong. We lose spiritual power.⁶

Which view is right? You and I will only know what is right by reading and obeying God's Word. It's not a matter of what we like; it's a matter of what's pleasing to the Lord. Man does not determine what's right and wrong (otherwise that's Humanism¹, the worship of man). God has moral absolutes for our good. Let's take a look at why music is never "amoral."

There's no neutrality with God in any thing.

"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecc. 12:14).

When we Christians stand before the Lord for judgment of our works, how will our music choices stand? "My music is amoral, God. You can't judge that!" Sometimes, Christians believe the lie that "music is neutral" because they don't want God's authority in this area of their lives. Read through God's Word and see how God distinguishes between good & evil, light & darkness, and clean & unclean.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10).

Music is moral because it is arranged by moral men.

Creation is full of God's designs and structures from which we get excellent art & music principles.² Yet, when man draws nude, distorted, or fragmented pictures, he has perverted art. When man twists order, balance, and harmony (just to name a few) in music, he has perverted music.²

Why should we Christians choose acceptable music and refuse immoral music?

Because we love the Lord and we want to enjoy fellowship with God. We want to be used of God and have the Holy Spirit's power. We want to be separate from the defilement of our flesh and the world. We're in a battle for Christ-like music!

"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18).

Godly music needs to be in our lives. It is worship to God and spiritually edifying to us. The Lord—who is our Song (Ps. 118:14) and who is musical (Zeph. 3:17)—commands Christians to sing unto Him (Eph. 5:19).

Refuse sinful music counterfeits.

"All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Selah" (Ps. 66:4).

For further study:

- God's Word; all His balancing Truths and principles in addition to the hundred's of specific references to music. I personally counted 400 Bible verses that have musical words in them. When I counted the individual words, however, there were 660 musical terms!
- Harmony At Home by Tim Fisher (1999, Sacred Music Services, Inc.)
- The Power of Music by Don Staddon (2012, Institute in Basic Life Principles)
- Music in the Balance by Frank Garlock & Kurt Woetzel (1992, Majesty Music, Inc.)

Man is a moral being. He has the capacity to do evil (in his flesh) or to do good (in God's Spirit). When man arranges individual pitches and rhythm, he is now communicating a moral message. Man perverts music when he mixes it with carnality. We Christians can either embrace God's Biblical principles for music or reject them to enjoy our fleshly perversions of music.

"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" (Rom. 12:2).

"For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (1 Thess. 4:7).

Music always affects us and sends a message

Through the melody, harmony, and rhythm, music tells us how to think and what to do. It molds our character!

Melody affects us spiritually.

Melody is the "tune" or singing part of music. It is what (should) strengthen our inner being.^{3,4}

Harmony affects us mentally and emotionally. You've probably heard that music is called "the language of emotions." Feelings such as rejoicing, sadness, aspiration, and unrest are created through the combination of pitches. Have you ever considered how influential the music in videos is by telling you how to feel about certain scenes?⁵

End notes:

1. americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/manifesto3/ (2003); God's truth: Rom. 1:18-25
2. John. 1:3, Rom. 1:20, Ps. 19:1-4, Ps. 94:10
3. Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16
4. Gothard, Bill; Basic Seminar, Session #12; basicseminar.com/session/basic-seminar-session-12-how-to-prepare-your-home-for-successful-living/
5. Ibid
6. Dr. James Lyons, www.nuvancehealth.org/health-tips-and-news/your-heart-on-music (2022)
7. Richard Lipkin, "Jarring Music Takes Toll on Mice" (*Insight*, April 4, 1998, p. 58) From experiments of music's effects on animals, "If the results of this study are any indication, some musical rhythms help to synchronize an organism's natural biological rhythms, thus enhancing its functioning, while other rhythms tend to clash with, or disrupt, those internal rhythms."
8. Gen. 4:3-7 & Jude 11. "But unto Cain and to his offering he [God] had not respect" (Gen. 4:5).
9. 1 Chron. 13:1-14; 15:11-28. "for that we sought him not after the due order" (1 Chron. 15:13).
10. 1 Cor. 14:40, Ex. 34:14, 1 John 4:1, Eph. 5:11, Philip. 1:10, Ps. 96:9

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Rhythm affects us physically. This is very easy to see in marching or sensual movements. Even if we hold our bodies still or have become desensitized to its effects, the music is still telling our bodies to move a certain way. Music either strengthens or works against our innate rhythms (ie. heartbeat).

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23).

Be careful! We can wrongly justify ourselves, "This music makes me feel happy, so it must be good." Doesn't sin give pleasure for a season? Our feelings must not be the only deciding factor. Rather, ask yourself, "Is every aspect of this music acceptable to God? Is it Christ-like?"

Every part of music communicates a message. Immoral music (such as rock and jazz) builds rebellion, tension, and sensuality in us. Wholesome, God-honoring music (such as classical and hymns) builds delight, peace, orderliness, and clarity of mind in us.

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Is Music Neutral?

Music is a part of everyone's life. Indeed, most people can't go throughout a day without hearing some music. How do you decide what music to listen to? Do you base it on your preferences? Because music is moral, producing good or evil in your life, music choices are not merely a matter of taste. Music—the instrumental part—is far more significant than song lyrics since it reinforces or contradicts the words' tone and meaning.

Christians have one of two views about the morality of music. Many claim that music is neutral ("amoral") and is neither good nor bad. Others believe that music is definitely either good or evil with no in-between.¹

Believing the lie "music doesn't effect me" doesn't change the law of sowing and reaping. Music always has moral consequences in us. What kind of music seeds are you sowing in your heart? What fruit is music producing in your life? An appetite for lust & worldliness? Instant gratification? Or a desire to worship God in spirit & truth? A readiness to obey God's Word?

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8).

Music is worship.

Music is never neutral because music IS worship. Actually, everything we do is worshiping something or someone (life is an expression of worship).

"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Col. 3:24).

Worship is not just outwardly falling down on our faces in reverence; worship is a submission to an authority in our daily, practical living. There's never a time when we're not worshiping. God Almighty, Satan, or some other thing is obeyed every minute we think, speak, sing, or play.

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. 6:16)

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