

## Is Music Important?

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Several generations ago there was almost universal agreement in the local churches about the content and purpose of Christian music. However, things have definitely changed with the creation and use of CCM (Contemporary Christian Music) in a large segment of the church. The trendsetters of a new kind of music began to play and sing a style of music that was no longer considered Biblically sacred (separated from the world) and which was a reflection of the musical, rebellious sound of the present-day culture instead of a reflection of righteousness. This new kind of church music sounded an alarm throughout much of the discerning church.



It would be correct to say that since the early inception of CCM within the church, this style of music has been an ongoing “hot potato” issue that is being disputed within the local churches. However, the issue is with man – not God. God and His Word has given us the verdict on CCM. The question is this. Are we teachable and reachable? Do we want to know God’s mind on the subject of music? Are we willing to surrender our music and hearts to God and discover if the music we listen and worship with is acceptable to God (Rom. 12:2)? Notice I said, acceptable to God – not necessarily acceptable to us! Some things are simply not acceptable to

God. Romans 12:1-2 teaches us that the only way to prove what is acceptable to God is to dedicate ourselves to God and then abandon those things which are unacceptable to Him.

Because of the sensitivity of the topic, many preachers do not present a Biblical philosophy of music and worship to their congregations. There is much disagreement on this subject among Christians. Churches are divided over the style or genre of worship music. There are those who teach that God can use anything including Rock Music. Therefore, they promote a rock ideology in the church which takes the historic sounds of Rock Music and joins or weds them with Christian words incorporating this sound into Christian worship. There are many so-called experts that are lined up ready to defend bad music with good words, Others argue that this is a musical distortion, mixes righteousness with unrighteousness, and does not give an accurate reflection of God’s holiness and glory in the time of worship.

In this study, I want to make a strong, Biblical argument for a sacred (non-worldly) methodology in our musical expressions of worship. I want to reinforce that music is to have a God-ward focus – not a man-ward focus (Rom. 12:1). Music is not merely a matter of preference but personal obedience to the doctrine of Bible separation (Rom. 12:2). It's not a "legalism versus liberty" issue as many suggest but understanding about the true nature of Christian liberty. The matter of music does not involve God only looking at a heart of sincerity (1 Sam. 16:7); it also involves the possibility of a heart of deception (Jer. 17:9). It is not only about what is occurring on the inside of us but also what is happening on the outside (2 Cor. 7:1; John 4:24). Both internals and externals are important to God. In fact, what is happening on the inside of our hearts will normally catch up with what is going on with our bodies and outward actions.

There are over 500 specific references to music in the Bible. This is a lot of material on one subject. Music is not given a non-essential status in the Scriptures. God has something to say about music. After all, He created it. There is wrong and right music in spite of what the CCM (Contemporary Christian Music) artists are saying. We know that music has a huge impact on the lives of people. It affects people psychologically, emotionally, physically, philosophically, and even spiritually. This is why we need to take some time and detail the effects of Rock Music on people and learn from the Bible why Christians should not embrace and promote the rock culture in their music and worship.

Many will try to stop the musical debate by bashing a Christian who disagrees with them with such phrases as "Judge not that ye be not judged" (Matt. 7:1) or "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (Gal. 5:1). They might add, "You are a legalist," "Music is a gray area," "It is a non-essential" and "The Holy Spirit told me this is the kind of music I should listen to." Of course, these reactive statements and conclusions are really smokescreens designed to dodge any real evaluation of a person's music. These type of arguments are not used to interact with Scripture (Acts 17:11) but to approve a person's involvement with the musical culture of the world. They are scapegoat verses and statements.



In the first place Jesus told us to not use hypocritical judgment in Matthew 7:1-6, but at the same time in Matthew 7:16, Jesus taught that “by their fruits ye shall know them.” This involves a proper form of discernment and judgment which must be passed upon others to determine the true nature of a person’s teachings and living. In short, there is a righteous judgment (John 7:24). Today music must be judged by its contemporary moral stigma and association with immorality. There is a “filth connection” as John Blanchard calls it in his book “Pop Goes the Gospel.”

When it comes to liberty, God has called to a freedom or liberty that pertains to New Testament grace sanctifying us (Rom. 6:1-15; Titus 2:11-12), where our personal choices do not overturn God’s enduring (trans-dispensational) moral laws of separation (2 Cor. 6:14-17), where we do not practice “turning the grace of God into lasciviousness” (Jude 4), and where “the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us” (Rom. 8:4). When throwing out the “judge not,” “liberty” or “legalistic” phrases, there is very little indication and true intentions that a Christian wants to actually get God’s mind or thinking on the matter of a Bible-based pattern of music and worship.

The argument that “You are a legalistic if you disagree with me or condemn my music” has been floating around for a long time. It’s an old and worn-out argument but it’s still used today so Christians can justify their own wayward and worldly living. The claim is made that when someone disagrees with another Christian over some area regarding sanctification (a specific area of consecration to God) that they are practicing legalism. This kind of argumentation is silly. Legalism by definition means to use the Law as a means of salvation (Acts 15:1) and sanctification without relying on God’s inward and sanctifying power (Rom. 6:1-15). The legalists themselves, during Bible times, were characterized as creating all kinds of intricate laws and regulations which had absolutely nothing to do with spirituality or following God’s moral law (Mark 7:3-4). They also set themselves up as being spiritually superior over others (2 Cor. 10:12) while being corrupt on the inside (Matt. 23:27-28).

Of course, just because one Christian seeks the spiritual restoration and welfare of other Christians (Gal. 6:1), and at times gives sound rebuke (Titus 1:13; 2:15) and speaks the truth in love (Eph. 4:15), does not constitute that person to be an unloving and merciless Pharisee or Judaizer (Heb. 12:6) who is creating absurd rules to regulate all Christians. One Christian questioning an unsanctified area in another

Christian's life does not necessarily mean they are trying to set themselves up as being "better than others" or that they are attempting to snuff out the true liberties of other believers, since Christians can often confuse liberty with the flesh (Gal. 5:13). The "legalistic" argument is a giant smokescreen designed to sanctify the CCM of others and give Christians permission to do almost anything without being held accountable for their unseparated and unscrupulous actions.

Many will tell you that music is not as important as other key doctrines of the Christian faith, such as theology (the study of God), the Gospel and salvation. Therefore, music is really insignificant when compared to other doctrines. In doing this, they pit the doctrine of Bible separation (1 Tim. 6:3) against the doctrine of God and the Gospel. However, there is an interrelation between music and God's essential being, nature, and glory. Also, the presentation of the Gospel is important when it comes to the salvation of sinners. It should be presented in a non-worldly atmosphere to provide the proper breeding ground for repentance and faith to occur. Yes, the Gospel is important for the salvation of the soul but this is just the beginning of the Christian life. The sanctified teachings of God's Word are important so we can learn how to live the Christian life. In the end, the Bible does not speak of greater or lesser doctrines. This is a manmade criterion which has no Biblical basis. Paul never talked about greater or lesser doctrines.

So, the "non-essential" and "gray area" arguments that are often applied to the realm of music are bogus since we will see in this study that God places a premium on the doctrine of sanctification (John 17:17; 1 Thess. 4:3) which extends to the area of pure worship. As we will see, God does not accept just any kind of worship (1 Pet. 2:5; Heb. 12:28; Mal. 1:8). We should be very careful of using this type of watered-down terminology (non-essential and gray areas) to justify a type of worship which may in some ways reflect carnality and actually be a diversion from the true type of worship that God accepts (John 4:24). Remember that the *music issue is a worship issue* and this is why our study is very emotional. But I have not chosen to "tip toe through the tulips" on this subject but to present a clear Biblical philosophy of musical expression in worship. I want to be clear and kind as I draw the battle lines.

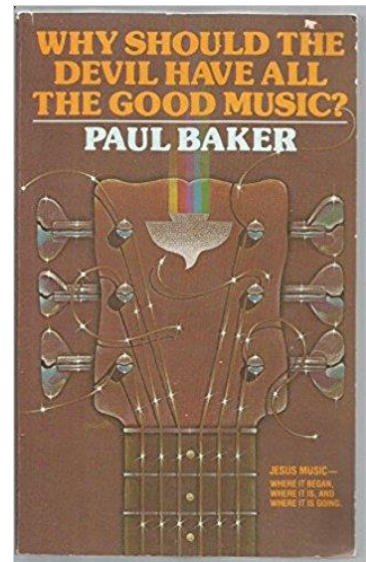
Richard Tayler said:

"We are living in a day of blurred lines and nondescript grays. In the poplar mind almost nothing is wrong, and almost anything can find its defenders, from

pornography to homosexuality, from nudity to 'rock' in the house of God! ... If we do not want the fruit, we had better not feed the root."

As we approach this study on music, we must turn to the Scriptures and confess the same words of Charles Spurgeon who said: "I fall before the majesty of revelation." Only when we possess this kind of attitude toward the Word of God can we be ready to open our hearts, learn, and change in those areas that do not align with God's truth. Here is my prayer for this study: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thess. 2:13). If together we approach this study on music and worship with the attitude that God's Word is the final authority on any subject, and if we possess a teachable spirit (Ps. 25:4-5; 119:26, 66), we will all make spiritual progress.

Paul Baker wrote a book that asks this question: "Why should the Devil have all the good music?" The question naively assumes that the devil can create good music! However, this study will confirm from the Bible that the devil's goal is not to produce good music and therefore he does not have "all the good music" as Baker suggests. The Evil One has actually produced an altered and twisted form of music that controls and adversely effects the lives of untold millions of people – both the devil's children and God's children. Therefore, we are going to expose this type and form of music in our present study. Our society is literally drunk on Rock Music, and unfortunately, there have been those who advocate its use in the church. This type of music is persuasive, satisfying to the flesh, and draws crowds.



Music in our day is dominated by the rapidly degenerating corruption within our society. This corruption extends to Christian Music. It is riding the corruption of the culture. Sadly, many Christians attempt to use unscriptural arguments to defend their own unscriptural music. This is because there are no Scriptural arguments to defend unscriptural music! Many CCM artists and those Christians who listen to CCM try and justify their music with arguments that dance around the true teaching

of Bible separation and holiness as it applies to music. Jesus taught, “Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God” (Luke 16:15).

As a pastor, I have personally seen how music can be a wonderful means of exalting God which results in the true edification of believers and which can be helpful in the evangelism of the lost. At the same time, the wrong type of music has the potential of becoming an area of spiritual corruption and bad influence in the lives of both Christians and the unsaved. It can become a barrier between a person and the Lord Jesus Christ. A specific type of music is created to stir the flesh and not the spirit and many musicians of today are exalted to a god-like status. Something is definitely wrong today with what we call church music or in some cases what others term as “praise and worship” music. The music, musicians, and mimicking of worldly musical values has become a leavening epidemic in the church. I have also learned over the years that Christians do not easily give up their ungodly music. This is because it’s very addictive emotionally and psychologically. It’s very difficult for Christians to give it up and replaced CCM because it has formed what someone has likened to “deep grooves into the heart, body, and soul of an individual.” This is why pastors need to be patient with their people and keep truth before them (2 Tim. 2:24). Our people need to be trained to think Biblical on music - not visually and sensually.



Now let’s switch gears. Can you imagine a world with no music? It would certainly be a different world. For believers, music is a gift from God which allows them to give expression of gratitude to God for who He is, what He’s done, and particularly for their salvation (Ps. 95:1; 96:2). The redeemed sing (Rev. 5:9). Music reaches its highest level among Christians, its greatest usage among Christians who maintain the sacredness of music that reflects redemption and the redeemed way of life. The music of the church is just that: it’s the song of the redeemed (Ps. 71:23).

“I have a song I love to sing,  
Since I have been redeemed,  
Of my Redeemer, Savior, King—  
Since I have been redeemed.



Since I have been redeemed.  
Since I have been redeemed,  
I will glory in His name;  
Since I have been redeemed,  
I will glory in the Savior's name."

Singing should be a part of our Christian life (Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; James 5:13; Eph. 5:10; Col. 3:16; Heb., 13:15; 1 Pet. 2:5). God's people were expected to have praise and singing in their hearts and flowing forth from their lips (Ps. 67:3; 116:12-14; 66:1, 4, 8, 16). Singing is the personal responsibility and privilege of all Christians.

Of course, music is a touchy subject to address in preaching and writing for the simple reason that music is tied to our emotions and is deeply imbedded in our daily lives. Many preachers fear how this subject might be unpleasant for many in their congregation to face. They fear the repercussions it might bring in their local churches. CCM can create emotional and even sensual



ties that are very difficult to break. For these reasons, most preachers ignore addressing the subject of worldly and unseparated music and the "fear of man" becomes a snare in their preaching (Prov. 29:25). In fact, there is a pressure-filled atmosphere in the church today to be successful in the world's eyes. I call it the success syndrome and the fear of not make our mark on society. Fear always becomes a snare. Proverbs 8:13 says, "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil" – not tolerate it! Tolerating something that we should not participate with ultimately leads us to spiritual defilement and eventually a downfall (Psa. 1:1).

David Cloud addresses this question to preachers:

"Have the under-shepherds of the flocks become so complacent they no longer answer the call to correct, reprove and rebuke sin, but rather appease the people by pretending that the problem is not there, ignoring it, or even worse, catering to it?"

Pastors need to have a working, Biblical philosophy being their music. Christian music must communicate God's truth (Col. 3:16), reflect God's character (1 Cor. 10:31), and be separate and distinct from the world (2 Cor. 6:14-17). The issue of

music does not revolve around personal taste or feelings. We must ask one important question when considering our musical choices. Where do the Scriptures take us? “What saith the scripture?” (Rom. 4:3) – not “what saith our feelings or what do we like?” We need to have a solid Biblical basis and philosophy for our music since music can affect us positively or negatively. This study will prove that there is no Biblical basis for the quicksand of CCM that so many Christians are sinking in today.

Pastors need to be “fundamental by conviction” and not merely fundamental by preference when it comes to music. As pastors, we have the obligation to assist and reinforce the deliberate reshaping of our congregations’ worldview to a Biblical view as we share the truth of Scriptures. This sometimes involves loving rebuke with the goal of seeing greater advancements of sanctification in the lives of their people, with the prospect and goal of building them up and not tearing them down (2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10). Scriptural and loving rebuke is not designed to keep Christians from living a fulfilling life or exercising their personal freedom, but to remind them of their true freedom in Christ (John 8:36) and the importance of growing in the application of Scriptural commands and Bible principles to our lives.

Rod Bell once said:

“Every generation is born in ignorance of the truth. It is the divine mandate of every church to pass on the truth to its own generation and of every preaching ‘to declare ... all the counsel of God’ (Acts 20:27).”

Pastors are to guard the sheep from deception, not open the gate and let it in the church. As a pastor, I ask that God will give me what I call a pastor’s heart toward people, even as I write this study. I want God’s people to benefit from my shepherding ministry and Biblical perspective on music and be redirected in the right musical direction. A pastor’s heart means that he will not drive the sheep but lead the sheep into the paths of righteousness (Ps. 23:3). A pastor’s heart means that he will be gentle while at the same time firm (1 Thess. 2:7) in presenting the truths of God’s Word and how they relate to our lives. I enjoy music like most Christians. I have had the privilege of singing and playing in 5 different musical and instrumental groups during my college years and another brass and singing group following my college days.

I’ve grown to appreciate good music and have seen what it can do in the hearts and lives of people, including my own life. Some of my most precious times in my earlier



Christian days was when I shared vocally and instrumentally to various church congregations, while traveling throughout the Northeast, Southeast, and Midwest. For me, they were growing times, learning times, and preparatory times for future ministry that have brought me to where I am right now, sharing God's thoughts on the subject of music. I also want to share with everyone that I was just entering my teen years when the church began eroding its musical foundation which was based on Biblical separation. I lived through the transitioning years of the 70's and 80's and saw the original changes occurring in music and worship. It was disheartening to me back then and it still continues to break my heart today. I look at the spiritual and musical erosion that has occurred in the church over the last forty years because New Evangelical church leaders without Biblical conviction and Holy-Spirit guided direction adopted a worldly philosophy.



What has been happening in the church these days? Well, the church is divided over what some have termed as “old people’s church” and “old people’s music” and “young people’s church” and “young people’s music.” The Bible does not categorize music as old people’s or young people’s music but as “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Those who are involved in the CCM scene (young people’s church) will often say to those who embrace TCM (Traditional Christian Music) something like this: “You are old fashioned, out of date, the times are passing you by and you will soon be alone. You are no longer influencing others. You are just like an old fossil.” Don’t embrace this unseparated ideology that comes straight out of the CCM world. You need to become a religious rocker instead of a religious relic of the past.

We must remember that this is a time when the devil is at work like never before “selling” his popular culture to everyone who will listen and watch, we cannot afford to be passive or neutral on the subject of music (“How long halt ye between two opinions? - 1 Kings 18:21). You should not ride the fence on music. It’s time to

face your music! The fundamental churches and pastors cannot remain neutral in this battle over music (Joshua 24:15). As Christians, God has called us to live a disciplined and controlled Christian life and this discipline should be reflected in our musical choices as well (1 Cor. 9:27). Of course, increasing our knowledge of and appreciation for Biblical worship and music is admittedly a journey. But you must begin the journey and let God do a work in your heart so you can begin to change your musical choices. I hope this study will be a new beginning for you.

Dan Lucarini was a contemporary performer, composer, and artist, who finally abandoned CCM music. He wrote a book *Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement*. At one point in his career he tried to unite CCM with TSM. He concluded: "I tried in vain to be a bridge between the two styles, but there was, and there is, no middle ground." He is right. There is no middle ground between worldly and sacred (separated) music. This means we need to develop a Biblical philosophy of music and not a "feeling" philosophy of music (Acts 17:10-11). So many Christians emphasize their individual feelings, self-gratification, and self-expression (their own thoughts and ideas about music) as the sole reasons they listening to CCM. Our views and feelings on music do not matter, only God's view of music is important. This means God's Word should always be our final guide and authority – not our feelings.

To imbibe worldly philosophies in our personal lives and churches, which includes the unbiblical philosophy of Contemporary Christian Rock Music (borrowing from Rock Music), is a philosophy of music that "descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish" (James 3:15). This means that Rock Music is not of a heavenly origin (it's not from God), it cannot coexist in the spiritual realm, and it is "demonic" or demon-like (resembling the work of demons) who follow the wiles of the devil (Eph. 6:11).

In his 1985 book, "Set the Trumpet To Thy Mouth," charismatic David Wilkerson said: "One of the reasons God's Spirit was lifted from the Jesus Movement [not that It was ever there] was their refusal to forsake their old music. They gave up pot, heroin, alcohol, promiscuous sex, and they even gave up perverted life-styles. But they refused to give up their beloved rock. ... Amazing! I say its hold is stronger than drugs, alcohol, or tobacco. It is the biggest mass addiction in the world's history. Rock music, as used and performed in Christian circles, is of the same satanic seed

as that which is called punk, heavy metal, and is performed in devilish rock concerts worldwide."

Granted, not all CCM music is as extreme as others. There are varying degrees and departures of CCM from TSC (Traditional Sacred Music), which follows a separated, Biblical pattern of music. But all the departures of CCM take on a form of spiritual and musical corruption that does not resemble the morality of music or glorify the Maker of music. Even a little leaven is corrupting (Gal. 5:9). Therefore, we should learn the basic departures of CCM music from the Biblical pattern of music, clean up our listening habits, and only use music in our time of worship that reflects Creator God. Rock Music is carnal and it cannot be sanctified for the Master's use. God has called us to "discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14) and this discernment must apply to the areas of our musical choices. We must take the initial step to identify our own brands of hedonism and heathenism (Eph. 5:11) and bring our homes and churches back to being a sanctuary of godliness once again.

Al Smith said:

"The Christian life is not about fast food spirituality."

This would apply to the realm of music. Christians should know the qualities of good and healthy music. Instead of listening to the worldly philosophes of church-growth gurus and the "user friendly" movement of relevancy, God has called us to obey His Word. We need to have a Bible basis for our music since the Bible instructs us in every area of life



(2 Tim. 3:16-17). It is a guide for every facet of life (Ps. 119:105). Every motive, thought, feeling, desire, action and direction should be under the guidance and control of God's Word. We must remember that we can abandon the truth in the realm of our musical choices by not adhering to the clear commands of Scriptural separation from worldly and carnal philosophies (1 Tim. 6:20). But God wants us to develop a conscience based upon unchanging Biblical commands, guidelines, and principles (1 Tim. 1:19). The Bible is our bridge to the mind of God. When our music is left unchecked by the Word of God, it can quickly break down and it can also break down our spiritual defenses.

Many contend that musical choice is just a matter of taste and preference. Of course, many times when someone talks about “taste” they mean “desire” and it is often a self-gratifying desire or fleshly desire that they want to fulfill through their musical choices. If we are not careful, we can become like Israel during the times of the Judges where “every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6; 21:25). We need to make sure that we have a spiritual taste (Ps. 34:8) for our musical choices and worship and not merely a fleshly taste or choice based upon a specific rhythmic sound, experiencing certain feelings, or wanting to be pumped up for a so-called worship experience.

Many also claim that just because one Christian does not like CCM does not mean others should deprive themselves from enjoying it. But the musical debate and so-called “worship wars” are not about “likes” and dislikes” but upholding a Biblical philosophy of separated and sacred music. Our Biblical philosophy of music and worship should be to play music (in both its words and sounds) that reflects God’s nature (His righteousness, holiness, purity, faithfulness, love, compassion, and mercy) and therefore glorifies Him, to direct our music to God (vertically) and not man (horizontally) through entertaining and fleshly-pleasing music, to use only separated (non-worldly) and orderly music, a universal genre or style of music which has been created by the Creator and passed down to us in the form of TSM (traditional sacred music).

Lastly, the goal of our worship music should be to help us to become more like Jesus Christ in our thinking and everyday living. 2 Corinthians 3:18 should be our musical philosophy and goal: “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Musician and music professor, Tim Fisher, in his book entitled “The Battle for Christian Music,” writes that “Christian music is that music in which text, music, performers, and performance practices are conforming to the image of Christ.” “

CCM artists have their own arguments to justify their music. But you could make a case for just about anything, including the use of Christian Rock Music in worship, if you want to embrace it. Making a case for something does not mean that it is true. A person’s misunderstanding of the Bible through faulty exegesis (2 Tim. 2:15),

misinterpreting the Bible (2 Pet. 1:20), and undermining the clear truths presented in the Bible (2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2) factors in to the false assessments that CCM (Contemporary Christian Music) is acceptable to God.



This study is going to bring the skeletons out of the closet. It's going to expose the rebellion and errors of CCM and unravel the primary arguments that are used to promote this type of music. Even Time Magazine once said that "CCM is merely new lyrics for the devil's music" (March 11, 1985). This is not a study that will make musical judgments based on personal preference. Furthermore, it's not for those who refuse to hear the truth of God's Word regarding music, or those Christians who are "dull of hearing" (Heb. 5:11), since the absolute standard of truth will be directly applied to the type of music that Christians have embraced.

This study is not for those who with "itching ears" want to hear the same repetitive arguments to approve their own style of music (2 Tim. 4:3-4). It's not for those who are forever getting on the "legalism" bandwagon whenever someone seeks to counter their music, in order to escape any confrontation and conviction regarding the type of music they listen to. Tim Fisher asks: "How did we get to the pitiful state of labeling any Christian's strongly held standard as 'legalistic?' In many cases, a mere suggestion for godly living, or drawing a line, or living circumspectly in this evil day will elicit catcalls of 'Pharisee' or 'legalist' or, even more insidiously, 'killjoy.'" This study is not for those who want quickly reach an emotional boiling point whenever they are challenged in the area of their music and worship. This study is actually designed for those ears who want to learn the Biblical basis for music, who want to learn how to discern between good and evil (Heb. 5:14) and sometimes make a choice between the better and the best.

Allan Bloom wrote in *The Closing of the American Mind*:

"Nothing is more singular about this generation than its addiction to music. Today, a large proportion of young people between the ages of ten and twenty live for music. It is their passion. Nothing else excites them as it does. They cannot take seriously anything alien to music. When they are in school and with their families, they are longing to plug themselves back into their music."

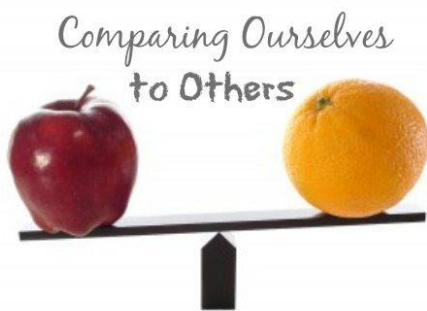
This goes to show how people are addicted to the rock sound of our present-day generation, whether it's CCM or secular rock. But the Christian life is to revolve around Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:10), a relationship with Him, being absolutely surrender to His lordship, and finding our complete sufficiency and satisfaction in the Lord (2 Cor. 3:5). Music should not be first in our lives (Matt. 6:33). It should complement our relationship and walk with the Lord and promote godliness in our lives.

God is a God of music. We read in the Bible that God rejoices with singing (Zeph. 3:17) and that angels were created to sing (Job 38:7); therefore, it's no surprise that man was created to sing praises to God (Ps. 7:17; 47:6). Music was created and designed by God to be a blessing to mankind. But it's no secret that music can be twisted into a force for evil and fleshly purposes. To ignore its power for both good and evil is to be foolish. Does God have His way in your music and even in your expressions of worship? Is He really the Lord (master) over what you listen to and how you worship? Jesus should be Lord over every area of our lives and He still asks us today: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? (Luke 7:46).

Sometimes we compartmentalize our relationship with God and give Him only the convenient things, but rationalize in other areas, allowing ourselves to feed our flesh, follow our personal pleasures, and have it our way. God has called us to radical discipleship (Luke 14:26) and "to study to show thyself approved unto God" (2 Tim. 2:15). Yes, approved unto God! As we study about proper rhythm and a Biblical-based music that honors God, we can present both our music and ourselves to God and receive His approval. Of course, this is not referring to our approval in the sight of God's heavenly throne, which only comes through Christ's perfect righteousness (Romans 3:24), but our daily living and sanctification, which results in God's approval both today and in the coming day (1 John 2:28). Our desire should be to receive God's approval – not man's approval. All of our efforts should be concentrated on becoming a worker and servant of God who does not need to be ashamed ("a workman that needed not to be ashamed" – 2 Tim. 2:15) because we have studied God's Word correctly and have surrendered our conduct, music, and worship to God and His Biblical standards.

Our goal should be to have God's full approval on all of our actions, worship, and the kind of music that we listen to. Does God approve of it? Is our worship and

music “acceptable” to God? (Romans 12:1-2; Eph. 5:10; Phil. 4:18; 1 Pet. 2:5). This is the real question – not do I like it, does it make me feel good, does it meet my alleged worship needs. If we are not careful, we can begin to worship our worship, a rock and roll style of music, instead of actually worshipping God. We can create our own golden calf and worship it (Ex. 32:8). If you have come to the point that you need a certain style of music or rhythmic sound to actually worship God, then this study is for you. If you have concluded that you hate or despise conservative/traditional/Biblically-based music and find yourself listening to both secular and Christian Rock Music, because of the similarity between the two, then this study is designed for you.



This Biblical examination of Christian Rock Music is not for those who try and hide behind the notion that Christians who disapprove of someone else’s’ genre and sound of Rock Music are setting themselves up as spiritual giants over other Christians. Of course, this is a giant smokescreen and is not the case, since the Bible says we are not to compare ourselves with one another in order to promote our own spiritual superiority over others. 2 Corinthians 10:12 says, “For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.” However, I must remind you that comparing music is not the same thing as comparing ourselves with one another to see who is more spiritual. We must be careful that we do not set ourselves up as spiritual giants over others, even though we might disagree over music.

I accept the fact that those I disagree with in the area of music and worship are on a journey in their Christian life like everyone else. I accept the fact that all Christians are at different levels of sanctification and growth (2 Pet. 3:18). And let’s face it, some Christians in CCM churches do love the Lord as much or even more than some in fundamental churches. Both fundamentalists who follow TSM (Traditional Sacred Music) and CCM Christians can love the Lord in varying degrees within their lives, even though there is disagreement over the area of music. However, the more we seek the truth and follow Christ’s commands, the deeper our love will be for the Lord and His righteous ways (John 14:15; 1 John 5:2).



Do you remember what Jesus said in Luke 9:49-50? “And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid *him* not: for he that is not against us is for us.” John’s contention was that this person was not following the Lord since this individual was not part of their movement. Sometimes we conclude that if a person is not following our movement, then they must be wrong in everything. Jesus clears up this type of thinking when saying: “Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.” While Christ did not necessarily validate everything that this man was doing, neither did he condemn him for doing what was right. His conclusion reminds us that other believers whom we might disagree with are not necessarily outside the blessing of Christ.

There are those who are saved in CCM churches and concerts through the Gospel (not the music) and we should rejoice whenever this happens since Christ was preached (Phil. 1:14-18). I’m reminded that God can work through and in the lives of other people who ignore the Bible doctrine of separation that I strongly believe in and embrace. Let’s stop comparing ourselves with others and denouncing Christians who espouse CCM as heretics. We must remember that there are “tares among the wheat” (Matt. 13:25) in any movement.

I share this so our attitude toward other Christians does not sour because we disagree with them over this issue. Of course, this does not mean we are going to give Christians a pass for imbibing the sounds and practices of a perverted culture. What it means is that we are not to become the sole judge of a person’s spirituality. Of course, this does not mean we cannot “judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24). Yes, God is the only righteous Judge over a person’s spirituality, but we are a member of the jury! As a member of the jury, the Bible actually commands us to “prove all things” and “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. 5:21). This means that no area, including the area of music, should be exempt from being examined in light of clear Biblical commands and principles. Clinging to the good and abstaining from evil wherever we find it is an important command to follow in the Christian life. This enables us to live a sanctified life. The Bible also states that we are to individually examine ourselves to assess our own spirituality and advancement (1 Cor. 11:28). It may be time for you to examine your musical listening habits and make some changes.



It's amazing how many Christians who embrace the religious rock idiom (the religious rockers) keep throwing the "holier than thou" argument in the face of those opposing their music, as a way to avoid facing the Biblical and moral issues related to

their own music. Just because one Christian disagrees with another Christian on a certain issue does not mean they possess a "holier than thou" attitude. This is a smokescreen to hid behind for those who embrace CCM. We need to listen to one another as God's people, even when we might be rebuked (2 Tim. 4:2). Rebuke and warning (2 Tim. 3:16; Titus 2:15) is not a lack of love or proof that one is elevating themselves over other Christians; it's actually part of how we build one another up and seek their spiritual welfare of one another (2 Thess. 3:15). "Faithful are the wounds of a friend" (Prov. 27:6).

Of course, there are those Christians today who will tell you that God loves them "just the way they are" and somehow they use this statement on God's unconditional love as an argument to justify their Christian Rock Music. This is rather absurd and demonstrates that this type of Christian only views God from one side of His character (love), forgetting about the crowning



attribute of God's holiness. The wonderful truth of God's unconditional love and acceptance for His people (Rom. 8:38-39) cannot be raised as an excuse to do whatever pleases us and what we might think is acceptable. The truth of the matter is this, God always accepts His children in His Beloved Son Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:6), but that does not mean He always accepts the things His children do. This generation of Christians has learned that even if one is disobedient, God still loves them, so it does not matter what they do. This is a disastrous idea because God desires our obedience first and foremost since the Bible clearly states that "to obey is better than sacrifice" and "rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft" (1 Sam. 15:22-23).

To put it bluntly, we cannot worship God in our flesh and disobedience. We need to remember this when it comes to fulfilling our fleshly wants and alleged needs through our musical choices. A music that is geared to appeal to the flesh cannot somehow be magically sanctified by "Christian" lyrics (2 Cor. 6:14). Are you ready

to examine your musical choices? There are times God tells His children in unmistakable terms: “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth” (Rev. 3:15-16). Of course, He says this while at the same time reassuring His love to His children. “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” (Rev. 3:19). In short, God’s unconditional love and acceptance of His people does not mean His unconditional love and acceptance of what His people do, since God actually hates some of the things His own people do and practice (Rev. 2:6, 14-16).



Lastly, there are Christians who will often tell you that since the vast majority of Christians embrace and accept CCM (Contemporary Christian Music), that this should be the measuring stick of what is right and acceptable to God. In other words, somehow it’s easier to believe that if many Christians promote and accept something as being good, then this makes it acceptable to God, since multitudes of Christians could not be mistaken about the worth and value of something like Christian Rock Music. This kind of reasoning is skewed and twisted. The majority many times have been wrong on spiritual matters.

The majority was wrong in Jesus’ day (“fear not little flock” – Luke 12:32). The majority was wrong in Noah’s day. The majority was wrong when the twelve spies voted 10 to 2 not to enter the Promised Land and the entire congregation endorsed the wrong decision. The majority crucified the Lord. God has never been impressed with the majority! We must never confuse the will of the majority with the will of God. God does not measure success by numbers but by faithfulness (1 Cor. 4:2). This being said, there are vast numbers of Christians, churches, and Christian learning institutions who do not embrace the worldly philosophy of CCM. The problem with many Christians is that they live within the sphere, approval, and acceptance of their own musical choices, worshipping in churches that embrace CCM, and therefore become comfortable, approving, and insensitive to an opposing and Biblical viewpoint on the subject of music. Quite frankly, many Christians are “dull of hearing” (Heb. 5:14).

If someone counters or opposes their style of music and worship, they are immediately viewed and dubbed as oddballs, who are out of touch with the movement that God has chosen to bless in our modern and updated Christian era. Of course, this kind of reasoning and reaction to opposing views on music, normally comes from Christians who have grown “comfortable with compromise” and who no longer will hear a voice that is crying in the wilderness (John 1:23). My prayer is that you will hear another voice, and ultimately God’s voice, speak to your heart through the truth and finality of Scripture.

Our present study on music is for those Christians who are truly seeking to honor God with the music they play, listen to, and participate with in their times of worship. It is for those who are searching for the truth about music, whose hearts are tender toward the truth, and who possess a tender heart and teachable spirit toward this subject and “the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). Psalm 25:4 speaks of a teachable spirit when the Psalmist says: “Show me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.” Ultimately, may our prayer and desire be that of Edwin Hatch, when he wrote:

“Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
Fill me with life anew,  
That I may love the way you love,  
and do what you would do.”

I hope this is your desire as you take time to reflect on the comments and Scriptures presented in this musical study. We must always remember that our philosophy of music must come from Scripture (“What saith the scripture?” - Rom. 4:3; “thy word is truth” - John 17:17). Our musical philosophy should not originate from our personal preferences, feelings, or even our likes and dislikes.

Doug Bachorik said:

“In the final analysis, music, like every other practice or tradition, must be weighed in the balances of the Bible and not in the world’s false balances.”

But someone will say, “Show me where the Bible says that Rock Music is evil.” We might counter with questions like this: “Show me where it’s okay to use the same type of musical sound used by Satanists, Madonna, and the sex and drug culture.” “Show me how you are not taking on the appearance of evil by using the same sound that has morally corrupted untold millions of people through the years?”

“Show me why you should use Rock Music which has the stigma of immorality.” Sometimes this type of stinging response actually works by getting lovers of CCM to think about their music.

Of course, there is no “Thus saith the Lord” statement that condemns Rock Music but this is true for many other unspecified sins (smoking, gambling, getting high on marijuana, etc.). Paul’s list of the works of the flesh ends with the words “and such like” (Gal. 5:21). This is an all-encompassing statement which assumes there are many other carnal and fleshly actions which could be included in this category of fleshly sins which are evil and inappropriate for Christian living. Rock music is one of these evils because of the sensual nature of this music and evil fruit of rebellion that has been promoted by this particular rebellious sound. Furthermore, the Bible does not have to specifically mention every new style of music, new fad, or new cultural practice so we can discern whether it’s good or evil. This is because there are many commands and principles (1 Cor. 6:12; Phil. 4:8) we can apply to the new things that come down the pike (so to speak) in order to prove their worthiness or worldliness (1 Thess. 5:21).

We also need to remember that we cannot worship God in any manner that may seem attractive to us but we must worship Him “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24) and “prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:2). Not everything is acceptable to God, including various forms of musical worship which reflects worldliness and paganism. We must be Biblically based in our worship, which includes incorporating the right type of music into our personal and corporate times of worship. God is calling us to place our music on the altar and turn everything over to Him and His ways (Isaiah 55:8).

In Romans 12:1-2, God’s Word commands: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God (in view of God’s mercies), that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service (rational worship). And be not conformed to this world (the standards of society): but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind (think differently by thinking Scripturally), that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” As previously stated, the only way to dedicate ourselves to God is to abandon those things which are deemed unacceptable to Him based upon the Scriptural commands of Bible separation.

When we come to God's altar to present ourselves to Him in absolute surrender, we must also surrender our music to God and His way. In presenting your body to God, you are surrendering everything to Him, including your ears! This means we must surrender our music and worship to God and allow only godly music to rule our hearts and lives. Are you willing to do this? Are you ready to surrender every area to God – including your music? Jesus taught that we will know His doctrinal teaching if we are willing to first do it (John 7:17). If you want to know and practice musical expression that glorifies God, then you must be willing to do it. Our prayer should be this:

“Dear Lord, please don't ever stop working with me  
'Til You see I can be all You want me to be.  
I am willing, Lord, I am willing, Lord  
To be just exactly what You want me to be.”

I want to convey something very important before getting in to our main study. We should not condemn good music, regardless of how new or contemporary it is. What we need to condemn is worldly music that reflects cultural rebellion against God (Rom. 12:2). Of course, we do live in a postmodern world. This basically means that there is a shift away from a belief in universal objective truth to reliance on personal subjective perception and experience. It's the idea of no absolutes. But the Bible is God's book of absolutes. This means we must approach the subject of music and our musical choices from the perspective that there are moral, spiritual, and Biblical absolutes that pertain to the area of music. Furthermore, if a person wants to know the truth about spiritual versus sensual music, they can learn to make the necessary distinctions and maintain a moral perspective on music. But Jesus taught that a person must be willing to *do* what is right before they can *know* what is right (John 7:17).

An appliance that runs on 110 volts cannot be plugged into a 220-volt outlet because 220 volt plugs are different. Even electrical tools, such as wire snips, come with rubber insulation on the handles to protect the worker from any live wires that he may encounter. These precautions are not taken because electricity is evil, but rather because it is powerful, and it can be dangerous. When used wisely, electricity can offer some great benefits, but it can bring great harm to anyone using it carelessly. Music has just as much power as electricity, yet most Christians do not put safety measures in place when listening to it and using it in their time of worship. The wise and discerning Christian knows the powerful influence music can

have upon his life, and he takes measures to guard himself from Satan's devices. II Corinthians 2:11 says, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."

Martin Luther once said:

"I have no use for cranks who despise music, because it is a gift of God. Next after theology, I give to music the highest place and the greatest honor."

Many Christian authors will tell you that Christians should listen to, play, and sing "Christian" music only. But I do not believe this is a Scriptural position, and it is not my position on music. If this were the view that God intended for us to embrace, then it would be wrong for us to sing even "Happy Birthday" or for a child to sing the "A-B-C song," because neither of these are "Christian" songs. It would be wrong to listen to classical music and tasteful band music. Our concern should be what is acceptable to God (1 Tim. 2:3; 5:4; 1 Pet. 2:20), not what is specifically "Christian." No one eats only "Christian" food. God has given us freely all things to enjoy which are not desecrated by this evil age and promote ungodliness (1 Tim. 4:3-5).

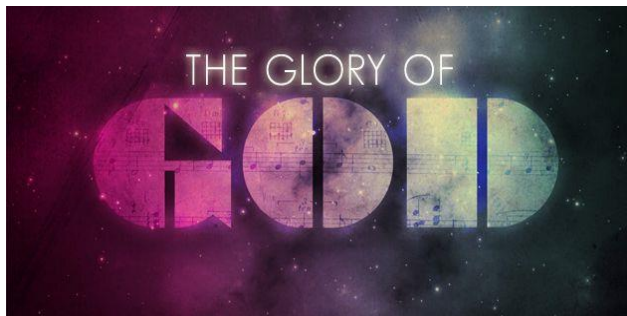
Of course, we must remember that a lot of secular music often promotes immorality, false freedom, and secular values, while belittling purity and integrity. If a song and sound glorifies what opposes God, a Christian should not listen to it. This is what we want to address in this particular study. In particular, our worship and church music must be sacred in that it is directed to God, possesses a Christian message, is separated from the world (non-worldly), and also reflects a God of peace, order, holiness, and righteousness.

If you stick with me (or you stick with the Word of God!) and read this study through carefully, with an open heart, I believe you will learn why Rock Music, including Contemporary Christian Music which is born out of the Rock Music culture, is polluted from a spiritual standpoint and a reflection of the evil age (Gal. 1:4). But even better, you will learn God's standard, a standard that you can use time and time again with any piece of music you encounter. Never again will you have to ask, "What's wrong with this music group?" or "Is this kind of music okay?" You will know how to discern for yourself. Much like a trained and certified electrician working with high voltage, you will know how to discern, control, and use the power of music for the glory of God. Beloved, we should listen to godly Christian music for it has a very important role in our daily sanctification and worship.



But what kind of music does God accept? This is the big question and what we want to discover in this study on music. A while back, someone mentioned to me that “Music is not very important.” One man, who headed up the mission’s department in a Bible college, told me that “we need to be sensitive to the music issue and the ethnic musicology in other parts of the world.” This is a fancy and “religiously correct” way of saying that music does not matter. Let’s think about these statements which conclude that music is not very important or that music does not really matter. Is it true that the music we listen to is unimportant to God? Is music really a secondary matter in the Christian life? Is it true that music is not very important when compared to others things in the Christian life such as prayer, evangelism, loving others, giving to the Lord’s work, and serving God? Let’s answer these questions in a simple and understandable format, if we espouse the view that music is not very important.

- **Music would not be important if the character of God is not important.**



The question about all music is this: “Does it glorify God?” not, “Does it entertain me?” and not, “Does it have some worldly appeal?” But does it glorify God? Will it bring honor to Him, glory to Him? A CCM performer might stand on stage and say, “This is for the

glory of God,” but if the words and sounds of the music and the actions of the musician send a different message, then it cannot represent God’s glory. Our concept of God will determine what kind of music we use to worship Him and the manner in which we worship Him. The glory of God focuses on God’s character. In other words, to properly glorify God with our music and in our times of worship, we must play and worship with music that reflects who God is in His eternal being. Contemporary artists over the years have talked about “Jamming with Jesus” and the “Holy Ghost Hop” and that if Jesus were here today, He would definitely shake His body or jive to Rock Music.

The older CCM group Petra, which was considered a pioneer of the CCM genre promoted the blasphemous idea that God is the “God of Rock and Roll.” Here are

some words in one of their songs: “God gave rock and roll to you/Put it in the soul of everyone/If you love the sound/Then don't forget the source/You can turn around/You can change your course/You can love the rock/And let Him free you soul.” Of course, there is no true spiritual freedom that comes through Rock Music (John 8:32) nor does the genre of Rock Music glorify God with its creation to glorify sex. Let’s be honest, you cannot glorify sexual promiscuity and God at the same time.

The purpose of music is to glorify God the Creator. Much that passes as Christian music today is not worthy of the God to whom it is directed. Not all music glorifies God. Rock musicians of the '60s and '70s were not famous for their morality but rather often for their wild lifestyles and, later, tragic drug-related deaths. Despite this stereotype, many talented Christian artists, starting in the late '60s when Christian rock music was born, have embraced the style of rock and used it as a medium for communicating God’s truths. But does using a rock medium glorify God? Some well-meaning Christians will sometimes tell you that the most important thing is the Gospel and seeing people saved. However, the most important thing is to properly represent the character of God in everything that we do, whether it’s listening to the proper kind of music or evangelizing the lost.

1 Corinthians 10:31 says:

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do (listening to music or evangelizing), do all to the glory of God.”

We will see in this study that God hates a mixture. There is a universal and enduring principle that we learn from God when He stated long ago: “And that you may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean” (Lev. 10:10). Although there is nothing unclean today from the perspective of ceremonial laws (Rom. 14:14) there is to be a continuing distinction between right and wrong, darkness and light, righteousness and unrighteousness, and God and Satan (2 Cor. 6:14-16). This distinction is never lost. This means that mixing Christians words with a perverted sound of a rock culture does not give God the glory that He deserves for He said, “my glory will I not give to another” (Isa. 42:8). God will not surrender His glory to the pagan sounds of our culture but CCM (Contemporary Christian Music) does indeed surrender God’s glory to a form of paganism when Christians

attempt to mix that which is good (Christian words and Bible themes) with that which is unclean (the pagan sound of our rock culture).

At least CCM singer Amy Grant was honest when she said:

“My art and the feeling I am trying to communicate through songs, it would be silly for me to say, this is who God is; I don’t have any answers.”

Of course, our music is to reflect who God is if God is going to get the glory. However, much of what is labeled as CCM does not glorify God’s character.

#### a. Understanding God’s glory



The word “glory” in the Old Testament carries the concept of something weighty. This metaphorically speaks of how God carries weight or how He is filled with splendor, dignity, honor and therefore is worthy of our respect, that He should be revered as the great God of eternity. In the New Testament, the word “glory” means doxology and also connotes dignity, honor, and praise to God (Rom. 16:27; 1 Cor. 10:31). Therefore, when I want to give God the glory, I am giving Him His due reverence, honor, and praise. In other words, when God is glorified, it means that He gets all the glory (reverence, honor, praise) that is due His name.

But in order to give God proper glory and praise, we must honor who He is in His eternal being, we must reflect His character and ways. In other words, God cannot be truly glorified (revered, honored, and praised) when we misrepresent His holiness, purity, righteousness, and ways. The glory of God is directly linked to the character of God and His crowing attribute of holiness. This is because God cannot be truly honored, revered and praised, as the holy God, when His purity is maligned, misdirected, or misrepresented. Someone might say, “Praise the Lord” when shooting heroine in his arm but God would certainly not receive honor, respect, and praise as a result of this sinful act. There is an important lesson we must learn early on in our Christian life. We can often use the expression “Praise the Lord” in an atmosphere that is not praiseworthy of God’s character. We can sometimes think

we are worshipping and glorifying God with reverence, respect, and dignity, that our worship truly is praiseworthy to God, when in reality it does not properly reflect and represent God's character.

For God to receive His proper glory, the reverence, honor, respect, splendor, and praise that is due His name means that we must properly represent and reflect God's character in our daily lives, our times of worship, and in everything that we do. In other words, our worship must correspond with God's character for it to bring reverence, honor, and praise to Him, that is, so God can be truly glorified. Colossians 3:17 adds, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." The "name" of the Lord in Scripture represents His person and characteristics. The name of the Lord Jesus Christ stands for Who He (His holiness, righteousness, faithfulness, love, mercy, grace) which in return should cause us to reflect and represent God in our actions and everyday living.

The glory of God, which is a proper expression of reverence, honor, and praise toward God, results in the manifestation of His unchanging character to the world. This is what it means when the Bible states: "do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). It means that whatever we do, it should reflect God's character and ways, so that He might be truly revered, honored, and praised as the eternal God who is unchangeable, holy, pure, righteous, faithful, and loving.

#### b. Entertainment and God's glory

Bob Larson, an early opponent of CCCM, said:

"The typical Christian rock concert is entertainment, not worship, but that doesn't invalidate it. There's nothing wrong with Christian entertainment – any effective religion has always been entertaining (quoted by Gail Pellert, *Christian Rock*, p. 23).

Larson is right. Most CCM is entertainment and not worship. But he is absolutely wrong when he states that we should use religious entertainment and essentially fool people by getting them to think they are worshipping God. Contrary to what Larson said, many Christians feel that they can worship God in the midst of an entertaining atmosphere. Most CCM, whether played in churches or in concerts,

should be placed in the realm of entertainment. It's as if many are saying today, "Get your ticket to worship." Actually, they are saying this! Worship is seen as an event or show instead of a sacred time of worship. It has been relegated to the realm of theatrics.



Someone has remarked:

"When ministry becomes performance, then the sanctuary becomes a theater, the congregation becomes an audience, worship becomes entertainment, and man's applause and approval become the measure of success."

Of course, our audience is God! This sounds simplistic but it is Scriptural (1 Chron. 29:11-14).

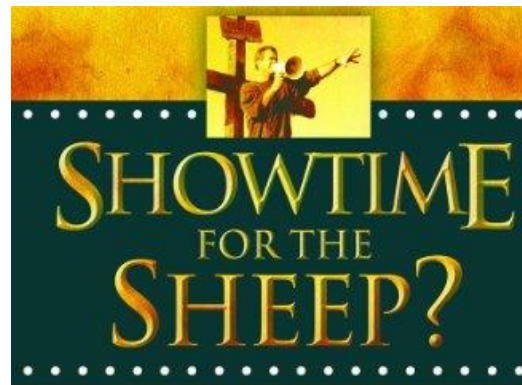
Tim Fisher states:

"Many CCM preface techniques, knowingly or unknowing, have copied the world's methods of vocalization, body movement, expression, and they are calling attention more to themselves than to the message ... Tricks such as scooping, sliding around on pitch, unnecessary body movements – all detract from the message and call attention to the performer. These practices didn't just appear. They are a result of constant exposure to the world's performance styles."

It should be noted that not only should the music reflect God's character in order to glorify Him, but the singers themselves should also glorify God. Many CCM singers by their dress, looks, and actions lack reverence toward a holy God. They dress entertaining part and want to be seen by men (Matt. 6:1, 5; 23:5). Also, their performance-oriented (entertaining) musical expression certainly does not reflect God's glory but man's praise ("they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" - John 12:43). Many seem to have the "Look at me!" attitude when singing and performing CCM. They also possess the "Can't you see we're as good as the world?" syndrome. The point is this, Jesus does not want us to be as good as the world, He wants us to be different than the world! But we must also be better than the world by possessing a humble spirit of service in our walk and worship of the Lord (Micah 6:8).

Even Keith Green, a CCM singer himself, once said, “If there’s anything wrong or worldly at all about so-called ‘Christian rock,’ it’s the self-exalting spirit and attitude that comes across loud and clear in many of the records and concerts today” (*Can God Use Rock Music*, Pretty Good Printing, 1982) He’s right about this. Of course, I’m not saying that every CCM singer possesses a spirit of showmanship and wants to exalt himself and steal away God’s glory (Isa. 48:11). This would be too broad of a generalization of those who participate with CCM worship. However, the style and nature of the music, including the movements, dress, and actions associated with it, tends to lead to entertainment, performance, and man’s glorification. And quite honestly, entertainment and man’s glory is a big part of the CCM movement.

Our music and worship must reflect the attributes of God. Reaping the benefits of performing is not a legitimate motivation to do things in the church. The carnal Corinthians were doing this by wanting to show off their gifts before others and be seen in the limelight (1 Cor. 14:26). The performance-oriented, “showtime religion”



mentality does not result in true spiritual edification or the glory of God. Most CCM is “showbiz with the trappings of Christianity!” (Leonard Seidel).

I think many church congregations are approaching their music on a showy and sensual plane. By this I mean that they cannot tell the difference between a musical thrill and a true spiritual blessing. We are blessed spiritually when the Biblical and textual message of a song communicates to our spirit – not the thrill that comes from a musical presentation which caters to entertaining people.

Adam Clark wrote this several hundred years ago:

“It is too often the case, that in public worship, men are carried off from the sense of the words by the sounds that are put to them. And how few choirs or singers are there in the universe whose hearts ever accompany them in what they call ‘singing the praises of God.’”



Music, including religious music, that is driven by performance and entertainment is nothing new. Many are more interested in the praise of men through their performance-oriented music than the praise and glory of God (John 12:43). What many call “praise and worship” music is performance-oriented music designed to allegedly create an atmosphere or environment of worship. But this worship is on a horizontal level (earthly and manmade level) and not a vertical level (a heavenly and Godward level and focus). We do not need a certain manmade environment to worship God since worship occurs in the realm of the human spirit and the hidden man of the heart (John 4:24; 1 Pet. 3:4). The point is this, none of this praise type of music which is performance driven and designed to produce specific gyrating and fleshly responses in people results in God’s glory.

Dan Lucarini, former rock music performer, composer and leader of contemporary music in several churches, came to grips with the sensual nature of CCM. He wrote: “I need to separate from the temptations that were ever-present in the CCM setting: the ego gratification and attraction to the female members of the worship team.”

Sadly, a lot of CCM singers claim to be singing for God’s glory but want the notoriety, applause, and praise of men. They claim to be singing for the glory of God but their music reflects the depravity of humanism and sensual Rock Music. Even more sadly, there are many CCM women singers who pretend to be singing for the glory of a holy God even while drawing men’s attention away from Christ to their carnal appearance. God’s glory is lost in the midst of CCM music and its performers. Anybody can say they are singing for God’s glory, they might even have good intentions to bring glory to God, but this is no guarantee that God’s glory is actually being properly portrayed and that God is ultimately being honored, revered, and praised. 1 John 1:6 reminds us that when we “walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.”



Many Christians listen to CCM for worldly entertainment, personal gratification, and other self-seeking purposes instead of worshipful surrender to God's holy will (Rom. 12:1-2) and for the glory of God. Remember this, our worship may be directed to God but it must also be acceptable to God. Many Christians need to feel something, hear something, or experience something when they worship or else they conclude that they did not really worship God. However, all these reactions are physical responses that keep people worshipping their own feelings or experience instead of God. They are not spiritual responses triggered by the Spirit's control (Eph. 5:18).



Ezekiel 33:31-32 speaks of the entertaining song:

“And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee *as* my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, *but* their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou *art* unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.”

The idea of an entertaining song can be seen here. The people hear the song, it pleases their emotions, but it leaves them unmoved to action. In other words, it was mere entertainment to them. They enjoyed it but it did not have a spiritual impact upon their lives. An important principle can be derived from this text of Scripture. When the CCM sounds of a perverted age are presented in a worship context, they are primarily designed to entertain people by capturing their feelings, creating a sense of euphoria, and eliciting physical responses (the raising of hands, stomping their feet, swaying their body back and forth, wiggling with excitement), but entertaining music is not music that God accepts as worship.

A.W. Tozer

“The church that can't worship must be entertained. And men who can't lead a church to worship must provide the entertainment. That is why we have the great evangelical heresy here today - the heresy of religious entertainment.”

We see from Ezekiel 33:31-32 that God is not content to have His people listen to entertaining music in their time of worship, a music that that is designed to produce physical responses in people and not spiritual responses. Biblical music is meant to stir the heart – not the hips. Let me state it in bad English: If it's got that swing, it ain't good to sing! Musical sounds have tremendous power to drive human emotions in spite of the words which accompany them. When our emotions are directed by truth they can have a positive impact on our lives but when they are driven by personal gratification and fleshly reasons, they can become a spiritual distraction to our lives.

We must remember that true worship does not involve personal gratification and self-seeking but giving back to God (Ps. 29:1; 95:6; 96:8; 106:1; 107:1; 136:1; 138:2; 1 Chr.16:29; Ex. 28:1,3, 41; 34:14). Our English word for worship comes from an old Anglo-Saxon word which conveys giving worth, respect, and reverence to the object of one's worship, which for the true believer is God. When we worship, we are actually giving back to God His worth through prayer, praise, and personal communion (Rev. 4:10-11). Worship is God's revelation about Himself to us through His Word (John 4:24) and creation (Ps. 19:1-3) which results in a reverent response to His revelation (Jn. 9:37-38) by our declaration of who He is, His ways, what He has done for us, and what He means to us. Worship is ascribing to God His worth, or stating and affirming His supreme value in light of Who He is, what He has done, and what He means to our life. In its simplest form we might define worship as the act of giving back to God His rightful worth through the humble acts of prayer, thanksgiving, singing, meditation, preaching and even Christian service and sacrifice. It is showing God the worth that He holds in our life.

### c. Rebellion versus God's glory

To glorify God would mean to do those things that would exalt, honor, magnify or bring praise to God's attributes such as His holiness, righteousness, patience, and love. This means that our music should reflect God's holiness and purity which is the crowning attribute of His eternal being and existence (Lev. 11:44-45; 1 Pet. 1:16). When we play and listen to music during our time of worship, we are in essence saying, "God, this is what I think of You." Our music, both the TEXT and TUNE, is a direct reflection of God's character and how we view God. God is absolutely pure (1 John 1:5; 3:3). When we worship both corporately and privately we are sending a message up to God. We are saying, "This is what we think of You

(God), and this is how we want to act before You (God), and this is the message we want to convey to You as our God.”

Archibald Davison stated:

“It may be said, indeed, the very idea of what you think of God may be gained from the music you offer each Sunday in your church.”

Bad music is bad because it lacks conformity to God’s character. To glorify God (to bring proper reverence, honor, and praise to God) means that we must properly reflect God’s character in our times of worship. This means that our music must be pure. To honor God with our music, we must return to musical morality. Morality in music springs from the understanding of God’s character as applied to music. To use a style of music that carries a message foreign to the purity of God undermines God’s character and does not give an accurate depiction of the Lord and therefore cannot accurately glorify God. God’s holiness, perfection, beauty, and order have important implications in all music. Do hip-hop, rap, jazz, heavy metal, and acid rock correspond to God’s holiness, beauty and order? It’s absurd to think along these lines. Our music can move away from the realm of morality. Music is a language that has been affected by our depravity (Rom. 5:12). We should not try and disguise God’s character of holiness and purity by introducing rock rhythms into our Christian songs.

God created music to reflect Himself – the Creator. This means that our music should reflect purity and not sensuality or sexuality if God is to be glorified (1 John 1:5; Ps. 24:3-4; Isa. 52:11). The cadence or flow of Rock Music rhythm emphasizes sexuality in both the beat and chord progression. Everybody in the secular rock scene will admit to this. This statement is not a shock to them but only to CCM artists who are trying to win God’s approval by mixing perverted sounds with Christian lyrics. In the Christian community, the same beat and chord progression that the rock artists use to sell sex is used by Christians to introduce Christian themes. Even Amy Grant admitted that her CCM is sexy. But in order to glorify God our music must be pure and should not reflect the immorality and worldliness related to Rock Music. It should not reflect rebellion, since this goes against God’s holy and righteous nature, which means it cannot glorify who God is in His eternal being.

Tim Fisher states that:

“If rock music is the music of rebellion, then it follows that Christian rock music is the music of Christian rebellion.”

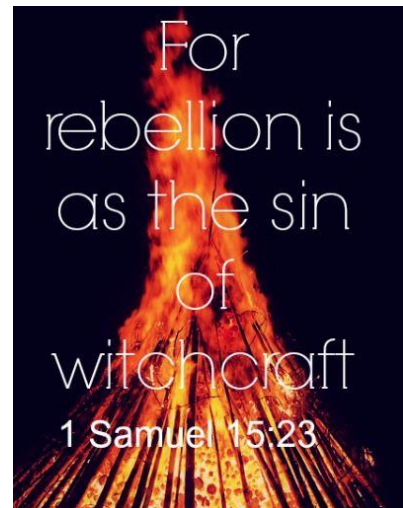
We must also remember that our music must also reflect God’s love which is an agape love that gives (John 3:16) – not a selfish type of love that seeks to get and fulfill its own fleshly wants and desires (1 Cor. 13:5). We are to possess a pure love for God that abhors what is evil (Rom. 12:9; Phil. 1:9-10; 1 Cor. 13) during our time of musical worship, a love that is not blended with a selfish and pseudo love for the world at the same time (1 John 2:15-17).

In reflecting Creator God, our music and expressions of worship should always be under the control of the Holy Spirit – not the flesh (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:22). This means our worship and music should not create artificial highs and addictions to the rock sounds of a perverted culture which are almost drug-like in nature. It means that we don’t need to work ourselves up, or feel something in order to reach emotional ecstasy, get our high, and then conclude that we have worshipped God (1 Cor. 6:12). We are not supposed to be “in the spirit” or “get in the spirit” to worship by listening to CCM. The Bible says we should be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) before we sing and worship (Eph. 5:19). The Scripture does not say that singing will connect us with the Spirit, but that we are to sing because we are already connected with the filling ministry of the Holy Spirit. In other words, singing does not “get us into the Spirit” but is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Here is something else to consider. One of the most compelling and convincing arguments in the music debate is that Rock Music is not orderly. The cadence (flow of rhythm) is erratic and it is hard to sight-read. The disorderly nature of Rock Music has been expressed in its backbeats, excessive syncopation, hypnotic repetition of chords, phrases, unnatural rhythms, extreme loudness, a sensual beat that has been the centerpiece of sex-oriented music, and the overall musical reflection that characterizes disorder and the rebellion of a sinful life against God. This not my opinion alone - the rock stars and pied pipers of rock music have said this for years. Jane Pauley of the NBC *Today Show* interviewed Annie Lennox and David Stewart. When asked what they were trying to do with their music (not their words) they replied, “We are committed to sex in our music – we are becoming like gods.” Rock

star John Oates was quoted in *Circus Magazine* as saying that “rock and roll is 99% sex.” God is a God of perfect symmetry, order, and peace and this characteristic of God applies to the realm of all good and acceptable music (1 Cor. 14:33, 40). Disorderly arranged music (rhythmic confusion) does not reflect the order of the Creator. We will say more about this later.

God is also just and righteous (Ps. 145:17) but the nature of Rock Music is rebellion and rebellion is joined with the things of Satan “For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft” (1 Sam. 15:23). Rebellion is compared to witchcraft because those who practice it open themselves up to demons or satanic intrusion into their lives. The practice of witchcraft brings people in direct contact with demons where they are openly vulnerable to the world of darkness. The same is true about rebellion. When we are rebellious, we are influenced by demons and open ourselves up to Satan’s kingdom of darkness. Witchcraft involves exposing oneself to the realm and the power of Satan’s control. Whoever gives Satan such “ground” violates the command of Ephesians 4:27: “Neither give place [ground] to the devil.” The Greek word for “place” in this verse refers to a sphere of jurisdiction. When Satan is given authority, he uses it to control and destroy the one who gave it to him.



Let’s be honest. Rock Music is the music of rebellion and we can be absolutely certain that demons are involved in bringing people under the influence and power of Rock Music, keeping them bound to it and controlling their lives through it. There are countless testimonies that confirm the demonic influence that is related to Rock Music. All Rock Music (secular or Christian) in some measure represents that which was created for rebellion against God and His ways and therefore has the potential to be used by demons to defeat our spiritual lives. I know this may be a hard pill to swallow but it is the truth. Rock Music is the style of music that demons like! It is “devilish” (demonic) in nature (James 3:15).

Overemphasizing the love of God in CCM music without reflecting on a God of justice, righteousness, and holiness, cheats the listeners out of the whole picture of

God. Many simply do not understand who God is from listening to CCM music. The music does not represent His glory. It is a reflection of rebellion against God and His ways and produces rebellion in the lives of Christians. The best way to describe Rock Music in all of its forms is that it is “earthly, sensual, devilish” (James 3:15). Anything that mirrors this description is going to hinder your spiritual life in various ways (both inwardly and outwardly) and lead to a variety of rebellious actions against God.

A sixteen-year-old from Missouri wrote:

"On September 2, 1989, I went to a 'Christian rock' concert. While I was there, I danced, screamed, and sang in ways that were displeasing to God. I have many contemporary Christian music tapes, and I find when I listen to them that I get a rebellious spirit. I am so ashamed of the things that I did while under the influence of this music. I PLEAD with you to rid yourself of this bad influence."

A seventeen-year-old from Georgia also talks about rebellion and Rock Music:

'Christian rock' music has divided my youth group. It has kept me in bondage spiritually, and my relationship with my sister has been deeply hurt. I see the rebellion in both of us after we are exposed to rock. Whenever I walk into my youth group, rock is being played. I feel Satan's control start to tighten. One of my closest friends has remarked about the difference in my countenance after I have listened to this music. I find it almost impossible to have beneficial, reverent quiet times when the sensual beat pops into my mind."

I recall a time when I bought a box of various items at a garage sale. I noticed there was a cassette tape in the box and decided to find out what was recorded on the tape. When I started listening to it, I discovered that it was acid Rock Music, call it heavy metal or whatever. I was never exposed to anything of this nature before. I must be honest with you, the hair literally stood up on my arms! I knew immediately that the presence of demons surrounded and promoted this horrible music. I went outside, got my hammer, and busted up that tape into a million pieces. I thanked God for the freedom and deliverance I had from Satan through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Yes, Rock Music by design is “devilish” (James 3:15). It is demonic. Little Richard (Richard Wayne Penniman), a founding father of Rock Music, states: “I believe this kind of music is demonic .... A lot of the beats in music today are taken from voodoo ... from the voodoo drums. If you study music in rhythms, like I have, you’ll see that is true....” There are many things that are “devilish” (James 3:15). Rock Music is one of them. No, I’m not saying that all CCM is Satanic music that is used to worship Satan. But don’t fool yourself and let your emotions get in the way. You must realize that Satan can sometimes in a subtle ways use CCM to start you on a downward path that will take you further than you ever intended to go with your musical choice. If you give Satan an inch, he will try and take a yard.

A twenty-one-year-old from Michigan shared this:

"'Christian rock' has hindered my life because the only difference between 'Christian rock' and secular rock is the words. The beat, rhythm, and the melody are not different; they are the same. It does not matter whether I listen to secular or 'Christian rock,' when the songs are over, I feel the same. I feel an emptiness in my soul, a heavy burden. Even 'Christian rock' sometimes makes me feel like going out and getting rowdy or even hurting someone else if they provoke me, and that is against all of God's teachings, and everything God stands for. So get rid of all rock!!!"

Here is our point. The sound of Rock Music is not conducive to obedience but tends to lead toward rebellion. But many Christians still want to use CCM in spite of its creative purpose to produce rebellion in the lives of people through the sensual and demonic. Christians might use it to gratify their own sensual desires, whatever they might be, impure feelings toward members of the opposite sex, a rebellious attitude toward parents and the chain of Biblical authority, or even to promote their own rebellion against God’s authority over their lives. Christians might also listen to the rock sound to produce a feeling of escape, to receive a high that helps them cover up their problems, or simply to allow the music to overtake them and give them a hypnotic thrill and a feeling of emotional ecstasy. Of course, God does not get the glory in any of this.

Many think of music and worship strictly on a horizontal plane (man to man). But music that can be applauded and be called “a blessing” and “pleasing” to us has little to do with the only worthy object of worship – God alone (1 Chron. 16:29; Ps.

29:2; 45:11; 96:9). Worshipping is giving to God (Ps. 29:1-2; 30:12; 96:7-8; 115:1; Rev. 4:9; 14:7) – not getting what we want in worship.

David Moss states:

“When the activities of a church service are directed toward a human audience, it is inaccurate to call it worship. The church is not a forum for the performing arts nor is God gratified by man entertaining himself.”

#### d. Man’s Pleasure or God’s Glory

In most Christian music today, God is not actually taken into consideration. Instead, what pleases a person is considered most valuable and important. This is not true worship since God’s glory and pleasure (not our glory and pleasure) is to be the object of our time of worship. If music is going to bring praise to God, it must reflect and represent God – His nature or who He is! God is glorified in worship when we offer Him a gift of awe, praise, adoration, obedience, submission, and reverence toward Him. The idea of the word “worship” in both Hebrew and Greek speaks of bowing or laying prostrate before God which indicates worshipful surrender and awe toward God. If we lack these qualities, our worship becomes skewed and out of balance, entertaining and for our own pleasure.

Of course, we should get pleasure out of our worship but it should be the pleasure of pleasing God (John 8:29) and glorifying Him during our time of worship. Our focus on pleasure should not be horizontal (for our own earthly pleasure) but vertical (for God’s heavenly pleasure). When we are preoccupied by our likes and dislikes, the gyrations and movements of CCM artists, when we want to get a certain feeling, or when we need a certain style or sound to move us, then we are not focusing on God’s pleasure but our own. We are in essence glorifying our worship and not God.

A contemporary Christian artist says, “We make music for people. If they don’t like it, then we made the wrong music.” This sadly illustrates the sensual standard by which today’s Christian music is being measured. It’s not for God’s glory but the pleasure of man. This is why some have called the rock beat a “Biological beat” since it caters to satisfy the fleshly appetites of man. Of course, music should never be designed to please man but God for we are called upon to keep “proving what



is acceptable unto the Lord” (Eph. 5:10) based upon God’s unchanging standard of truth.

Again, the glory of God means that we are seeking to always reflect God’s character in our time of worship. If we are going to glorify God with our music and time of worship, we must listen to music (spiritual music or spiritual songs) that reflect God’s nature – who He is. If we don’t listen to words and sounds that glorify God, then we are glorifying the flesh and man. If the words and sounds do not reflect who God is then it is perverted and spiritually bankrupt. God’s nature is one of justice (Gen. 18:25; Psalm 84:14; Jer. 23:5; Zeph. 3:5), righteousness (Ex. 9:27; Ps. 11:7; 19:9; Rev. 16:5; 2 Tim. 4:8), holiness (Ps. 29:2; 99:9; 1 Pet. 1:16; 1 John 3:3), and peace and order (1 Cor. 14:33-34; Romans 15:33; 2 Thess. 3:16; Heb. 13:20). This is what real worship is all about. We must beware of the danger of misrepresenting God in our time of worship.

Much worship today is flippant, too shallow, too uncaring, man-centered, and entertainment-driven which means that it does not properly represent God. Contemporary Christian Rock Music gives an incomplete or distorted view of who God is – a God of order, peace, holiness, righteousness and beauty. Many Christians fail to understand that music can dishonor God’s holy and righteous character. When the music emulates or reflects the sounds of a perverted rock culture, which has notoriously promoted and encouraged rebellion against God, sex, drugs, and lies, then we ought to have nothing to do with it!

Psalm 48:10

“According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness.”

#### e. God’s Nature and His Glory

Music should always reflect the nature of God’s holiness, peace, and order (Ps. 29:3; 96:9; 99:9; 1 Cor. 14:33-34; Romans 15:33; 2 Thess. 3:16; Heb. 13:20). This is why all good music has universal qualities and a distinct design of good melody and rich harmony without overriding loudness, excessive syncopation, the pounding of untraditional beats, and the overall sound of discord and confusion. More on this

later. One thing is certain, music that is designed to glorify God's character does not convey or glorify the message of sex, impurity, and rebellion against God, which is the underpinning message of all Rock Music, including its sound.

Leonard Seidel was correct when stating:

"Music is a language and for music and lyrics to be compatible, both must be communicating the same thing."

In his book *Sound Effects, Youth Leisure and the Politics of Rock*, Dr. Simon Frith reminds us that the impact of rock is generated primarily from the music's sound and rhythm, not its words. "Rock is made," he says, "in order to have emotional, social, physical, commercial results; it is not music made for its own sake. The response is to a large degree physical. The rock experience is essentially erotic." In fact, some CCM songs sound more like they are trying to create an atmosphere for an erotic relationship instead of worshipping the true God of Heaven. Now what does rock music, even its sound portray? It conveys the message of immorality and rebellion against God. This is why rock artists created it in its varying phases throughout the 50's, 60's, 70's, and 80's. Rock and roll originated as dance music in the 1950s and '60s. The musical style and lyrics were harsher and often more serious than previous musical offerings.

During its rise in popularity, rock music was often associated with drug use, anti-establishment attitudes, and rebellion against God's ways since its words and sounds were designed to promote these very things. Therefore, God's people cannot possibly glorify God (who He is) when adopting this rebellious sound of a perverted culture. The music that is holy and beautiful reflects the character of God's holiness and beauty. Psalm 96:9 says, "O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth."

One writer vividly portrays the true nature of rock music:

"The association of hard rock with violence, blasphemy, sadomasochism, sexual immorality and perversion, alcohol and drugs, and Eastern mysticism and the occult are not accidental. They are fed from the same ungodly stream. A leading rock singer once said, 'Rock has always been the devil's music. It lets in the baser elements.' Putting a Christian message in such a musical form [rock style] does not

elevate the form but degrades the message to the level already established in the culture by that form.”

God is beautiful and His music should reflect this fact. Isn't He wonderful? Yes, He is! But a sound that reflects Satan's world of drugs, sex, and rebellion does not and cannot reflect God's purity, holiness and beauty. To conclude that Satan is not behind a certain style of music is to say that there has been no music which leads people astray and causes them to live in rebellion against God. Let's be honest. Rock Music reflects the character of Satan and cannot reflect God's character. Think of how God is pure (1 John 1:5; 3:3). This means that our music must also be pure. What does rock music, even its sound portray? It conveys the message of sexuality and rebellion against God. Therefore, God's people cannot possibly glorify God (who He is) when adopting this rebellious sound of a perverted culture. Rock music is the perverted sounds of secular humanism and a culture that is in rebellion against God.

Rock Music can be described as:

- ✓ A driving and continuous beat that works up to a frenzy and which grasps the individual listener.
- ✓ Syncopation – rhythmic conflict racing simultaneously which average listener hears without intelligent awareness and victimizes the masses.
- ✓ Erratic progressions – the irregularity of both melody and harmony
- ✓ Escapism - Drugs and getting high
- ✓ Rebellion - against normal responsibilities, against authority, against the establishment, against any recognized superior
- ✓ Lawlessness – the casting aside of all restraints, degradation, vulgarity, illicit pleasure
- ✓ Ridicule – of anything that is righteous and holy.

Physical and Psychological results of Rock Music include:

- ✓ Impairment of hearing
- ✓ Pulsating and driving beats and erotic rhythms stir up biological drives that leads to trouble

- ✓ Tension over tranquility
- ✓ Excessive distortion causes hysteria and various forms of neurosis (symptoms of stress, anxiety, a loss with reality, confusion).

Wendell Babcock (one of my college instructors), in his booklet “Music on the Rocks” has described Rock Music, including its sounds, in this way:

- ✓ Irregularity in beats, rhythm and melody
- ✓ Disorderly, chaotic
- ✓ Frenzied
- ✓ Sensuous, immoral
- ✓ Irreverent
- ✓ Abnormal
- ✓ Anti-establishment
- ✓ Misrepresents freedom
- ✓ Abuses sex
- ✓ False highs
- ✓ Perverts the mind
- ✓ Desecrates the body
- ✓ Becomes an evil addiction
- ✓ A means of deceit
- ✓ Exalts man
- ✓ Warps judgments
- ✓ Means of deliberate and false indoctrination
- ✓ Advocates independence and self-made guidelines
- ✓ Has produced disaster, destruction, and death
- ✓ Instrument for false propaganda
- ✓ Destructive by nature
- ✓ Victimizes for evil
- ✓ Reverses values.

Babcock then contrasts the Bible with the Rock Music by describing it as:

- ✓ Orderly and controlled
- ✓ Peaceful pure, clean
- ✓ Upholds God, Jesus, & holiness

- ✓ Calls for propriety of life
- ✓ Acknowledges lines of authority
- ✓ Presents a true definition of freedom, with responsibilities
- ✓ Sex as proper and holy
- ✓ True filling of the Holy Spirit
- ✓ Establishes the mind by Christ
- ✓ Controls and sanctifies the body as God's temple
- ✓ Exalts God
- ✓ Grants clear thinking
- ✓ Rebukes the old nature and emphasizes true virtues
- ✓ Leads to holiness and righteousness
- ✓ Improves man and society
- ✓ Commands separation and holy distinctions
- ✓ Rebukes and repudiates the world of evil spirits
- ✓ Grants abundant life as well as eternal life
- ✓ Instrument for truth
- ✓ Tool of God
- ✓ Releases for good
- ✓ Maintains proper values.

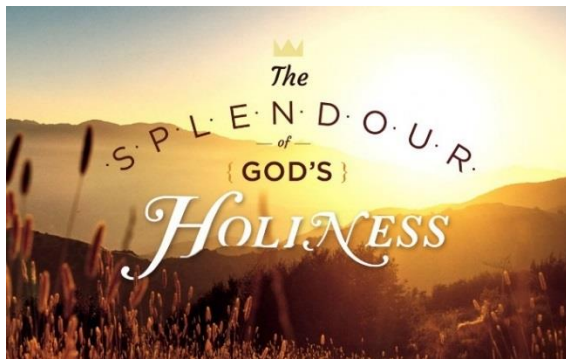
Sadly, the mixing of the sound of Rock Music with Christian words does not suddenly and magically do away with its evil corruptions, influences, and associations. What Rock Music promotes and represents does not automatically change when you stick some Christian words with it. Any attempt to mix a pagan sound that has deemphasized moral restraints, misrepresented true freedom, fueled sinful rebellion against God and the establishment of societal norms, and which has corrupted the masses makes a mockery out of God, His Word, and His righteous ways. Again, we must become aware of the danger of misrepresenting God, Christianity, and Christ in our time of worship and giving an incomplete or distorted view of who God is. Isaiah 58:13 says that we must "honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words." If God is going to receive glory it will only result when we maintain His holiness – not misrepresent His holiness.

John Phillips stated:

“When we lose sight of God’s holiness, a holiness calculated to strike awe into every heart, we lose our sense of the seriousness of sin.”

Isaiah 6:1-3 declares:

“In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory.”

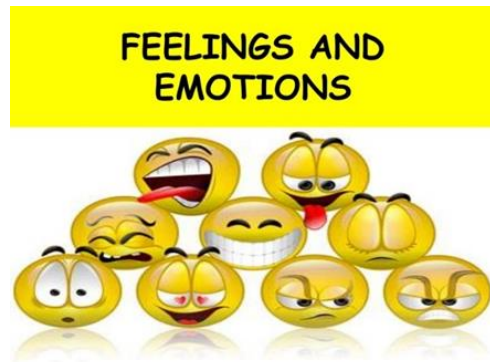


All of Heaven thinks the crowning attribute and character of God’s holiness is of utmost importance (Rev. 4:8) and so should we. Anyone who believes that a perverted sound of Rock Music is heard in Heaven, must remember that the Bible teaches about Heaven: “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination...” (Rev. 21:27). The supreme attribute of God’s character, His holiness, must be reflected, maintained, and defended in the type of music we listen to. If we promote the sound of a rebellious culture, then we are not reflecting the character of God in our music and worship experience. We must not separate our music, as we use it in church for worship, from God’s holiness, degrading it to merely a matter of personal choice. We must remember that our choices may be perverted and are not the measuring stick for what is acceptable to God (Rom. 12:2).

You can be sure that these heavenly words of worship (“holy, holy, holy”) recorded in Isaiah 6 were not accompanied with synthesizers, rock beats, and carnal expressions found in much of the church music that is being played today. Yes, I’m making a war with all forms of rock music because it is the sound of rebellion. This type of music can never be mixed with the holiness of God since the character of God’s holiness cannot be reflected in the sound or words of rebellion.

f. Feelings and God’s Glory

It seems that many Christians today are worshipping their feelings and distorted pictures of who God is instead of really reflecting the purity, holiness, and righteousness of God in their times of worship. We live in the generation that has made a god out of feeling rather than reflection and meditation upon God and His impeccable purity or holiness. Sadly, for many



Christians worship is simply the creation of an atmosphere of feelings produced by some specific sound or gyrations. It has nothing to do with God's glory. The end result is that a certain type of music and a person's feelings and personal wants can become what they worship, instead of God, and who He is in His eternal being and character. Music in worship should not become a carnal exercise of personal taste, entertainment, and self-fulfillment but an outward expression of giving to God. We are never commanded to worship so we might, as the Scripture says, "consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:3). Worship is not a personal agenda that seeks to satisfy personal tastes, styles, and wants. By the way, it's normally not a person's age but constant exposure to a certain type of music that determines their taste or likes for a particular style of music. But our tastes must always be examined in the light of God's enduring Word (Eph. 5:11).

What question should we ask about our music? Many Christians have become self-centered and often ask, "Do I like it?" or "Does it make me feel good?" We make a snap judgment by seeing if the music gives us a euphoric feeling, reinforces our mood, or sticks in our head. These are the wrong questions to ask. If we want to be a consecrated follower of Jesus Christ (Luke 9:23), we should ask, "Does the music glorify God? Does it draw us closer to Jesus Christ? Does it make us more like Jesus? Is it spiritual? Does it portray morality? We cannot afford to simply evaluate music by our preferences, feelings, or sincerity since our heart and feeling can be deceptive (Jer. 17:9). We should be skeptical about our feelings and question what we feel when we are not aligning our feelings with God's truth.

The Bible says in Psalm 119:66, "Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments." Knowledge and Bible facts related to the origin, style, and acceptability of music in God's eyes is important to control our emotional responses during a music selection. If we forget the Biblical facts (Ps.



119:105) that give us guidance regarding our musical choices and listening habits, our emotional response becomes fleshly and carnal, devoid of a true spiritual response. Jesus taught that we should worship Him “in spirit and truth” (John 4:24) which means that maturity in the truth (knowing what the Bible teaches about Biblical and separated music) is a prerequisite to the selection of proper musical forms and worship. Sadly, a large portion of the church has abandoned the Biblical teaching on Bible separation and worldly rejection.

Music certainly effects our emotions during our time of worship (Exodus 15:1-3) but they must be reverent emotions that originate from a spiritual response to God-centered music – not emotions that stem from an entertaining and carnal, musical sound. Our emotions must be tempered with reason and reverence or else they will, as Danny Sweatt said, be “resembling an amusement park roller coaster.” Bad music can confuse and often lead people in a different direction emotionally, spiritually, physically, and carnally.

Matthew Walker correctly observes:

“It does not take a rock scientist to see that music can be highly emotional, which is not necessarily wrong by the way. Christian music should display some level of emotion. Without it, the worship service will become state and the congregation will go to sleep.”

Psalms 150 is not a rock concert as so many naively suggest, but a time of worship that is filled with emotion and meaningful respect and reverence toward God. Both can be part of our worship experience. However, because emotionalism unifies people and also is very persuasive, it becomes a danger in CCM music. This is because our emotions can easily be manipulated and hijacked into following rock rhythms and a type of music that follows the flesh and not the Spirit (Jer. 17:9). Our experience and emotions must be rooted in the Biblical principles of truth, righteousness, and reverence – not jive music, rock beats, and people wiggling around on a stage while using Christian words. Our worshipful emotions and experience must be centered upon reverence for God which is maintained in all sacred music (Ps. 89:7; Heb. 12:9) – not the secularism and rebellion of Rock Music.

Paul, when addressing the Church at Corinth, was writing to Christians that were marked by excessive emotionalism. He is warning these believers to not exhibit

unintelligible and irrational outbursts when he states: “I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also” (1 Cor. 14:15).

Ernest Pickering states:

“While our emotions are certainly involved in the worship of God they must be balanced with and controlled by the rational element of our being. The emergence of ‘rock and roll’ has produced a climate of the acceptance of music whose basic purpose is to be ‘felt.’ Many exponents of rock music have noted that it is written to be experienced rather than to be understood. Its emphasis is upon ‘feeling’ rather than upon ‘thinking.’”

This is why some will tell you, “Oh, I don’t listen to the words, I just enjoy the music.” In other words, many simply want to move and groove to the music instead of in a rational way understand what is being said. Of course, any music that emphasizes sound over message cannot be of God. Remember also that our emotional experience does not justify CCM, but our obedience to God’s musical order of TSM (following traditional sacred music - separated musical expression) justifies our worship. If our emotional experience is supported by Scripture, then this goes a long way in ensuring that our emotional expressions in our times of worship will be right for they are rooted in the truth (John 4:24). Emotionalism without a Scriptural basis leads to emotional fantasy and rebellion.

Rock’s origins within the United States lie in part with the energetic Southern Pentecostal churches where Elvis, Little Richard, James Brown, and other pioneers of the genre worshipped as children. This style was eventually connected with these churches. So, it goes without saying that CCM is actually the fruit that has grown out of the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. Furthermore, since Charismatics place an overemphasis on experience, which sometimes takes precedence over the truth, it follows that those who embrace this charismatic music have also placed their emotional experiences above the truth or at least beside it. Their quick fix emotional highs and experiences related to CCM worship ignore the clear commands to worship God reverently, truthfully, and Biblically by following God’s plan for Bible separation and sacredness (Eph. 6:14). Peter says we should gear our worship experiences and emotions around “a more sure word of prophecy” (2 Pet. 1:9) and not the emotional highs, carnal expressions, and artificial Christian experiences that are generated from listening to Rock Music.

Experientialism (what *feels* right to man) is a leaven working its way through the entire church as it undermines Biblical truth, including the truths presented in Scripture that should govern our music and worship. Many who listen to CCM must admit that their experience is their authority over the Bible, the Bible is not the authority over their experience. But Biblical truth should stand as the final judgment on our experience (1 Thess. 5:21). Each Christian must learn to elevate objective truth over anything that is subjective in nature. In other words, we should elevate emotionalism and our experience over what the Bible says about true worship and our musical choices.

If God is going to be truly glorified, Christian music should always function as a musical offering to God and not a musical entertainment for people. We must always remember that it is the Lord who is our primary audience in music. While one of the purposes of Christian music is ministry to the saints (Col. 3:16), its primary objective is to honor the Lord. This is not only in what is said in the lyrics and sound, but how the music is performed. The manner of how it performed is important so that the attention and glory for the ministry of music is not stolen from the Lord.

g. Robbing God of His Glory

In Isaiah 42:8 God says: “I *am* the LORD: that *is* my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.” Isaiah 48:11 is similar: “I will not give my glory unto another.” In most CCM churches and concerts, God’s glory is compromised, veiled, or completely stolen away from Him. It is hidden or lost behind manmade worship techniques, the sounds of a rebellious culture, and performance-driven and entertaining music.



Glory can be stolen from the Lord in various ways, such as:

- When music is geared to gratifying the audience through worldly lyrics and sound;
- When the musician’s performance is showcased so people’s attention is drawn to the performer;
- When the musician (male or female) is provocative and worldly in appearance and actions;

- When people are self-seeking, wanting electrifying experiences and personal gratification through their worship;
- When flashing lights, smoke, sound effects, and other manmade background techniques fascinate and captivate people, which in some measure overtakes and replaces worship;
- When entertainment and the praise of man is mistaken for worship;
- When mixture occurs between righteousness and unrighteousness, or light and darkness.

There are sincere Christians who believe that one should reach the world on the level of the world. In conjunction with this belief, some Christian musicians dress like, act like, and perform like the secular world's counterpart. The dress may be immodest, their stage actions and vocalizations may imitate the sensual with breathy vocals and movements on the stage. The singers (whether CCM or secular) become "teen idols" and role models for different kinds of immorality such as indecent dress, rebellious images, improper crushes on married men by young girls, lustful interest in sexy females by adolescent males. It is simply inappropriate and wrong to imitate the carnal techniques of the secular world (Eph. 4:17). But this is exactly what many CCM musicians and singers do in concerts.

Let's be honest. Much of the music today (including rock, rap, and country) promotes evil. It doesn't fight against evil and sin as Christians are summoned to do (1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7; Jude 3). The words and the sounds are filled with adultery, rebellion, drinking, drugs, casual sex, cursing, and depression. God is against these things and you should be as well! Christian friend, God is NOT trying to make you miserable. He wants you to listen to the right music because you were made to glorify Him (1 Cor. 10:31). He also wants to protect you from the wrong type of music because of where it can lead you and how it can adversely affect your spiritual life. Music is to edify the believer (1 Cor. 14:12-17; Col. 3:16) – not entertain the believer. Music is to not cause him to stumble, stifle his Christian life, or sin. Instead, it is to glorify God in sound and message which leads to the edification of God's saint.

We might add that when we try to win the lost with a corrupted medium (a secularized rock sound), we have misplaced priorities. This is because our number one priority is to glorify God in all that we do, say, and sing. Even when evangelizing we are to glorify God. We cannot say "to God be the glory" when our music or songs

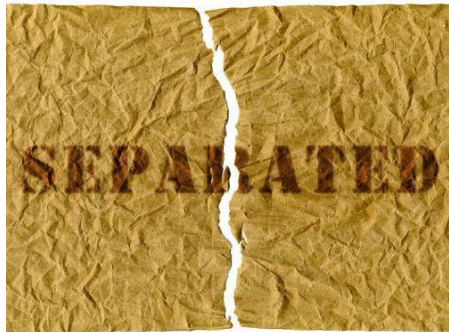
do not reflect who God is in relation to His holiness and righteousness. Attaching the phrase “Glory to God” to a perverted rock sound does not sanctify the song, since it cannot reflect God’s glory, when it is joined to an unrighteous sound promoted by a rebellious culture and Satan. We should want God to be truly glorified in all of our music and worship. Our rationalization should never be — how far can we go and still be okay. Rather it should be – what are the choices we must make to insure that we are never guilty of compromising the glory of God. Our goal should be to always properly represent God in our songs and everyday living so that He can be truly glorified.

“In my song Lord  
Be glorified, be glorified,  
In my song Lord  
Be glorified today.”

- **Music would not be important if Rock Music was not immoral and the Bible would not teach us to separate from morally unclean things.**

Dr. Lee Robertson was once asked:

“Where does a good church start to go bad? He answered without hesitation, “It starts with the music.”



When a rock style of music starts in the church it brings in its own dress code and its own philosophy. If you have contemporary music, you will bring in contemporary listeners and they will bring their contemporary lifestyle and force it upon the church. Musical syncretism with the world’s standards of music is the popular trend and way today. But God has not called us to syncretism but separation. As we have seen, the purpose of music is to glory God. Since this is true we must always reflect God’s character in the music we use in our time of worship. This means we must engage in sanctified and separate music, music that reflects morality and not rebellion. In other words, we must also purpose in our hearts like Daniel (Dan. 1:8) not to defile ourselves with music that does not reflect God’s purity or holiness.

There is a certain kind of music that is incapable of communicating Christian truth and others which is certainly inappropriate for expressing Christian truth. Let’s look

at the music issue from this perspective. Is profanity ever appropriate for expressing Christian thought? Certain not (Eph. 4:29). Since most discerning Christians would agree on this, why is it that they will not place on music the same restraints that they place on communication and the arts? Pornography is not a form of communicating art – it’s sin. In a similar way, using the secular sounds of Rock Music that have fueled rebellion against God and which has been used to produce immorality in the lives of millions of people is also an improper means of communicating Christian values and truth. We don’t curse and use pornography and say it’s okay, neither should we use the sounds of Rock Music and say that God approves of it. God does not want us to convey Christian truth and themes through an immorally-based style of Rock Music. Instead of worshipping God with a morally debunked form of music He calls us to separate from this worldly style of music.

#### a. Separation and Church Music

God’s Word demands us to turn away from evil and do good (“eschew evil, and do good” - 1 Pet. 3:11). Since the word church (ekklesia) means “a called out assembly,” our philosophy of church music should be to embrace the type of music that does not reflect the world system and which possesses a certain sound of distinction. We are called to be separate or different from the world culture and this difference should be seen in our music as well. Separation speaks of being consecrated to God and is the antithesis of being corrupted by worldliness. Scripture must influence our interaction with culture. We must ask: “What does worldliness look like in our culture?” “How would the Scriptural command to live blamelessly (Phil. 2:15; 2 Pet. 3:14) apply to my specific setting?”

Since we are called to be separate from the world system, this means our goal of sacred music (music exclusively consecrated to God) should not be to build a bridge to the world’s styles and philosophies of music. We are called to stand out – not blend in! CCM artists want to build bridges with the pop culture and unsaved people by mimicking their pagan music. God has not called us to build bridges but to tear down those bridges which are designed to create “lookalike” or “chameleon-like” worldly Christians that reflect the same ideas and musical rebellion of unsaved people. Christians cannot continue to tolerate or ignore Satan’s wicked schemes to weaken and pollute the church (2 Cor. 2:11). We must separate from all forms of musical rebellion.

Charles Bergerson said:

“We need to guard against spiritualized sentiments wrapped in worldly bundles of music.”

What is sacred music? Sacred music by definition is separated music. Sacred music is a kind of music that is different from all other kinds of



music, since it consecrated to God through the application of Biblical commands and principles of Bible separation to the music. Sacred and separated music are one and the same (2 Cor. 6:17). Therefore, all sacred music is separated music. CCM is not sacred music – it is secular music in sheep’s clothing. Sacred rock is a misnomer or wrong designation because rock music can never be sacred (separated music). CCM artists try to fix up the world and make it look like the church but God commands us to not conform to the standard of the world (Rom. 12:2). Sacred music is not entertaining and worldly music.

Sacred music is a distinct kind of music (separated and non-worldly music) which is distinct from and exclusive of other kinds of music (pop, jazz, Country, Rap, CCM, classical etc.). Sacred music (music consecrated to God in musical words and sound) cannot be attached to other kinds or genres of music since it is one of a kind. The idea of sacred Rock Music is a misnomer. By the definition of the term “sacred” (consecrated to God lyrically and musically), rock music cannot be considered sacred music. This is because it reflects musical rebellion in its sound. Rock is rock and sacred is sacred and never the twain shall meet!

#### b. Separation and the Morality of Music

Steve Miller, who espouses CCM writes: “It is not safe to err on the side of the conservative. It is never safe to err.” Well, two can play this semantics game. It would be more accurate to say: “It is never safe to err on the side of CCM. It is never safe to err.” Folks, this is not a fight between conservative and contemporary music but a spiritual battle between right versus wrong, righteousness versus unrighteousness, light versus darkness (2 Cor. 6:14-16).

There is a morality issue connected with Rock Music. By morality, I mean that music can communicate a distinction between right and wrong, good or bad, purity and impurity.





Some Christians recognize this to be true with various types of Rock Music which use sexual and suggestive *words* and music which is accompanied with explicit sexual actions and innuendos. However, Christians will conclude that using the same type of sound, when added to Christian words, is not a breach of God's holiness. However, a musical *sound* that was used for Satan's perverted and immoral purposes should never be joined with spiritual words. This crosses over the line of separation and the marked distinction between what is right and wrong, righteous and unrighteous, and light and darkness. Since music is moral it demands a mandate to separate from the type of music which is worldly and which has been used for Satan's purposes.

2 Corinthians 6:14-16 commands: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers (in their rebellious ways and practices): for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light (a metaphor for holiness) with darkness (a metaphor for sin)? And what concord (agreement) hath Christ with Belial? (a name for Satan – worthless and wicked one) or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God (God lives inside of us!) ..." In other words, God commands His children to not become involved in the same type of cultural contamination that is presented and practiced by unsaved people who do not believe in God and His righteous ways.

Is there a Biblical basis to your music? Does it adhere to the doctrine of Bible separation? Does your music in its SOUND and WORDS mimic the world system, a style of music that has historically promoted sex, drugs, and rebellion in the lives of people? The words of a song may convey a good message but does the musical sound convey the same message? The sacred text must be aligned with a sacred sound. Christian music is to be Chrislike in its presentation of text and musical sound. A pagan and perverted sound cannot glorify God in our time of worship. Both the words and the sounds of a song convey a unified message – a message of worldliness or a message of holiness. Wedding the sound with Christian words that was created to promote sexual and physical responses in people is an unholy alliance between righteousness and unrighteousness, darkness and light, God and Satan (2 Cor. 6:14).

David Cloud concludes: "To take a form of music which was created to encourage and accompany immoral behavior, a music that has literally created an immoral

revolution, and to attempt to glorify God with it is a great confusion. It is to confuse the holy God of the Bible with the unholy god of this world.”

No, music is not philosophically neutral. The Bible informs us that music is not something that is neutral in its sounds and effects. There is a vast dichotomy between the secular and the sacred.

CCM artist Phil Driscoll disagrees:

“We’ve had the mistaken impression for too long that somehow the Creator doesn’t have rhythm. God is the King of Soul; He’s the King of all rhythm.”

Of course, this is an absurdity based upon the false premise of the neutrality of music and not Scriptural truth presented in the facts of Bible separation from worldliness and glorifying God, the true God of holiness, peace, and order.

## **MUSIC: IS IT NEUTRAL AND AMORAL?**

Here is the main argument of CCM artists and those who embrace this type of music. They claim that musical sound (beats, rhythm, notes, syncopation, volume) is neither good nor bad. Of course, this argument is absurd. The witness against the neutrality of music is overwhelming! Secular rock artists deny that music is neutral but CCM artists push for the neutrality of music to sell their music. Now think of this. Since music is a language which communicates a clear and distinct message – it cannot be neutral.

The claim of contemporary artists is that musical sound is “amoral” (neutral or without any morality of its own) like the alphabet. In other words, the alphabet is made of individual letters and there are no such thing as good and bad letters. The argument is then made that music is made up of notes and there is no such thing as a good and bad notes. The weakness of this argument is that letters can form curse words and notes when arranged in a disorderly fashion can create a musical sound of rhythmic confusion and rebellion. And yet, most who embrace CCM will conclude that musical sound is neither good or bad. There is nothing unchristian or antichristian with any kind of musical sound. Only the words cause a song to have morality (rightness or wrongness).



If this is true, someone needs to tell Hollywood! They use music to lead people into feelings related to fear, pain, love, sexual promiscuity, and rebellion without a single word being spoken or sung. Musical notes speak forth a certain message in relation to the way they are arranged and played (1 Samuel 16:14-23). Yes, musical notes may be like letters in the alphabet but the way they are arranged can send drastically different messages. This means that music (including its sound) has powers for evil as well as for good.

The writers of an article “The Beat Debate,” wrote in *Moody Monthly*: “Music is neutral, like language, mathematics, or painting, and if (that) music is neutral with the morality rooted in the message (the words) that artist intends to convey rather than the form (the sound) itself, (then) there is no such thing as a particular satanic sound.” No logical thinking person can really believe this. The secular rock musicians certainly don’t believe this and neither do the Haitian voodoo, witchdoctors who perform incantations. If music was neutral, then they would use Bach for their demonic magical spells.

I remember entering a particular store in a mall in Orlando Florida. I was not sure what the store was all about so I thought I would go in and check it out. It was a long store with a lot of footage. As I got further into the store there were strange voodoo-like statues all around and they were playing a type of music that was definitely demonic in nature. There was not only a driving and persistent beat but repetitious drumming that seemed as if the store was inviting demons to enter the store. Let me tell you, I got out of that store really fast. It made the hair stand up on the back of my neck! I knew I was somewhere that God did not want me to be as a Christian.

The “rock beat” is a dominant and repetitious offbeat which competes with the melody and distracts from the words of a song. The contradictory messages in the beat, the words, the melody, the style of the presentation, and the appearance of the musicians all create a subtle confusion in the minds, wills, and emotions of the listeners, which leads them to question the absolute moral standards of God. Secular Rock music, by its inherent nature, its associations, its atmosphere, its proponents and its results, has shown itself to be the enemy of decency, morality, and spirituality. And yet, most Christians who listen to CCM also listen to secular Rock Music.

An older Christian magazine admitted the blatant sexuality of Rock Music but did not outright condemn it. The only standard that the magazine set up for teenagers was this: "If you face this problem, regulate the quality and quantity to which you expose yourself" (Dave Jackson, "Alleys in Nazareth," *Campus Life* (Youth for Christ magazine), February, 1970, pp. 55-59). On the one hand, the magazine says that Rock Music is highly sensual while at the same time they give the advice of only imbibing it in smaller quantities. This terrible advice given to teens proves that music has the power for evil as well as good. It is not neutral. Both the sound and lyrics of Rock Music have proven again and again to cause sexual promiscuity and rebellion against God's ways and truth.

The Bible says God created Satan and music for "the workmanship of thy tabrets (timbrel or tambourine) and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created" (Ezek. 28:13). The Bible also says the angels or "morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" at the time of creation (Job 38:7). Since everything that God created was declared to be good (Gen. 1:31), including the music God created (sound and words), then music must possess morality. God's music was called good since God can only create something that is morally good in nature and design. The creation account confirms that morality is built into music.

In this case, music was originally designed by God with an innate goodness. However, something good can also possess the potential of being bad. In fact, everything that God created as being originally good, Satan turned around and polluted by introducing sin into the world (Gen. 3:1). This is why someday God is going to create a new earth and heavens where no more sinful curse will experience (2 Pet. 3:11-12; Rev. 21). From the very beginning of fallen human culture, part of the line of rebellion against God would be music. Satan would make sure that every area of culture would be reflected in rebellion against God. Music would become a tool that people would use for self-will and self-gratification.

We must remember that Lucifer was created with great musical talents, which were to be used for directing the angelic host in the worship of God (Ezek. 28:13). But Lucifer's fall (Ezek. 28:11-19) evidently led to the perversion of music, so that its improper use could actually become offensive to God (Ex. 32:17-18). Satan, along with "the noise of thy viols" (Isa. 14:11) will one day be judged by God (Rev. 20:1-3). His musical rebellion which has destroyed the countless lives of many people will not be seen throughout the restored millennial earth. It's very obvious that

music has the potential of being good since God created it this way, but it also means that it has the potential of being musically corrupted and bad through Satan's interference with God's moral and ethical laws of nature. Hence, music is not *amoral* (possessing no sense of right or wrong), it is definitely *moral* in nature which basically means it has the potential of being both morally good or morally bad.

Satan has always been a master at corrupting musical words, sound, and expression by moving it away from God's original design and purpose (Gen. 1:31). Man has been the vehicle Satan has used to pervert the creation of God. Instead of using godly music for spiritual edification, worldly music is being used for entertainment purposes to fulfill the carnal appetites of man ("that ye many consume it upon your lusts" – James 4:3). Much of CCM is designed to feed the soul instead of the spiritual part of man's existence. Like so many other things that God created which are good, Satan knows how to corrupt and defile them (Heb. 13:4).

Danny Sweatt remarked:

"As with anything that God has greatly used, Satan is active to destroy its wholesome influence. He seeks to pervert the vehicle by making it sensual, to dilute the message by making it vague, and to corrupt the messenger by making him worldly."

This is certainly true in relation to music! But in spite of all this, CCM artists argue for the neutrality of all music, including the genre and sound of Rock Music, claiming that it does not have any immoral overtones attached to it. Therefore, they conclude, the sounds of Rock Music can be used in God's service and worship. But if this were true, then we must conclude that God (not Satan) created the sounds and rhythms of Rock Music, something that has altered and wrecked the lives of millions of people, something that is responsible for promoting rebellion toward God, sexual promiscuity, drug addiction, and other kinds of awful vices and sins.

Here is an important question. How could God at creation say, "behold it was very good" (Gen. 1:31), if He potentially included this type of musical sound at creation, which would in the future corrupt untold millions of lives? No, music is not amoral. If you follow God's design for music it will have a positive moral impact on your life, but if you follow Satan's altered musical expression, it will have an adverse, spiritual effect on your life. Music can be used for both good or bad, possessing a quality of

morality (the Bible and history of Rock Music prove this to be true), but the Bible and history of music prove that it is not amoral (morally neutral).



The argument pertaining to the neutrality of all musical sound is often illustrated by playing one note on the piano and then asking, “What can possibly be immoral about that note?” The rationalization then is that all music is merely the gathering together of individual notes that are morally neutral which in return make music morally neutral (possessing no moral distinctions). However, consider a contrasting illustration. If you point to one letter in the alphabet, you can say that one letter is morally neutral by itself. Following the above logic, it would then be impossible to have any immoral literature that contains swearing and lewd talk, since all writing on the subject would be merely the compilation of individual letters that are morally neutral. However, we all know that it is very possible to take the same group of letters and arrange them into entirely different messages. For example, the letters e, i, l, and v can be arranged to say “live” which is good, or “evil” which is bad. The same is true about the arranging of individual musical notes. Depending upon how they are arranged they can convey a moral or an immoral message.

Robert Shaw, the greatest secular choral conductor of the 20<sup>th</sup> century takes a view which is totally opposite of most mainline Christian thinking (Luke 16:8). When asked this question, “So you think Rock Music is very sensual?” He reacted quickly with this reply, “It’s perverse.” We must remember that when God created the earth, he saw that it was good. But when sin entered the world, a curse was placed upon creation that will be eliminated only by the making of a new heaven and new earth. Man has perverted many of the good things God made (Prov. 17:23; Job 33:27; Acts 13:10; Gal. 1:7) and music is one of them. The cultural revolution of Rock Music clearly reveals that music is not neutral in its sound. It can be perverted. But out of willful ignorance CCM artists continue to make the argument that all music is neutral or amoral.

Dr. Max Schoen in “The Psychology of Music,” writes:

“Music is the most powerful stimulus known among the perceptive senses. The medical, psychiatric and other evidence for the non-neutrality of music is so overwhelming that it frankly amazes me that anyone should seriously say

otherwise” (Quoted in John Blanchard, *Pop Goes the Gospel*, England: Evangelical Press, 1983, p. 106).

The neutrality argument of music (the sound of music is neither good or evil, without a moral sense of right and wrong, all musical sound is inherently good) is the foundational to the CCM philosophy.

“Music has no moral sense to it, it’s incapable of being either right or wrong” say the CCM artists and Christians who love their Rock Music. In other words, the sound of music is neutral. This perspective was actually institutionalized into a confession known as the “Christian Rocker’s Creed” which states: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all music was created equal – that no instrument or style of music is in itself evil – that the diversity of musical expression which flows forth from man is but one evidence of the boundless creativity of our Heavenly Father.”

## Music and morals

This statement is straight out of the worldly philosophies of relativism and existentialism which the Bible condemns (1 Tim. 6:20). It means that CCM artists and many Christians must accept what is unacceptable, never acknowledging that some music styles belong to evil, not to good. Of course, when something this absurd is repeated enough times over the years, it can start to sound reasonable.

Rick Warren tries to convince his would-be followers in this way:

“I reject the idea that music styles can be judged as with ‘good’ or ‘bad’ music. Who decides this? The kind of music you like is determined by your background and culture. Music is nothing more than an arrangement of notes and rhythms; it’s the words that make a song spiritual. There is no such thing as Christian music, only Christian lyrics. There are no spiritual tunes. If I played a song for you without the words, you’d have no way of knowing if it were a ‘Christian’ song” (Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, p 66).

There are several fallacies in this shallow argumentation. First, the Bible decides what is good and bad music, based upon the truths it presents regarding, worldliness, separation, purity, and discipline (John 4:24). Second, the Bible is the final authority on all matters that related to sanctification – not a person’s background and culture.



Man can formulate his own style of worship that is contrary to God (Romans 1). He can change the truth of God into a lie and worship and serve the creature more than the Creator (Rom. 1:25). Of course, I'm not suggesting that all CCM artists and Christians who listen to CCM are attempting to worship a false god (idolatry). However, there is a principle to learn from this passage of Scripture. We can create our own form of worship that is based more on the creature (us) than the Creator (God). When we begin to base our worship on our physical response, our feelings, our likes, and what pleases us, instead of seeking only God's pleasure, we begin to base our worship on the creature (us) more than the Creator.

The Biblical reasons why we should not follow the pagan and cultural practices of unsaved people (including their paganized music) is because Christians must reflect righteousness, light, and Christ – not unrighteousness, darkness, and Satan's kingdom. Furthermore, since God lives inside of us, our bodies are to be God's holy temple that represents His righteous character and indwelling life (2 Cor. 6:14-16). Therefore, we are not to engage our bodies in pagan practices that misrepresents God's temple or His holy residency inside of us. A temple of God is to be a reflection God's righteous and holy standard in every way, including the type of music we listen to. When we listen to the perverted words and sounds of Rock Music, we defile and defame our temple or body in some measure, which is to be the place where God is to be represented and reflected in His righteousness and purity. God's temple (our bodies) should not be associated with the work of paganism and spiritual idolatry.

There are only two sides to take in the musical battle – God's side or the Devil's side. A line of musical separation must be drawn in the sand (2 Cor. 6:17). At this point we need to answer an important question. Why should we listen to spiritual music and separate from immoral, sensual, and perverted music?

- **REASON** demands that I separate from immoral music - "for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" (2 Cor. 6:14).

When a certain type of musical words and sounds are used to promote rebellion against God, reason demands that we separate from it. This is because righteousness and unrighteousness cannot be mixed together without compromising and desecrating God's holiness. This is good reasoning! Two opposing forces cannot coexist together. Reason tells us that two opposing

ideologies cannot fellowship together. The spiritual should not be united with the pagan.

You might say, "But the words are good!" What kind of reasoning is this? If you eat a ham sandwich that has been lying in the sun for two days, you would not say, "But the bread is still good!" and eat the sandwich. This is insane and unreasonable thinking. If something is spoiled- it's spoiled! When the perverted sound of Satan's rebellious music is added to Christian words – the entire number is spoiled. Do you listen to spoiled music?

- **REALITY** demands that I separate from immoral music - "and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6:14).

This is a statement of reality! Light cannot mix with darkness – the one dispels the other. This is also true in the realm of music and worship. There can be no fellowship or communion between Christ's world of light and Satan's world of darkness. Reality demands that I cannot participate with culturally contaminated music which has been used by Satan to promote rebellion and sex. When the light shines darkness flees. You can't get passed the reality of this natural and spiritual law.

Bugs under a rock flee when they exposed to the light. In a similar way, darkness cannot coexist with the light of God's holiness or purity without causing an unholy mixture. Darkness and light are not compatible in the same realm of existence. According to God, when two opposing spiritual forces seek to be united together, Satan's rock music with God's work or Christian words with contaminated music, they create an incompatible and unsuitable relationship. So this Scriptural axiom or truth keeps me from participating with a church service where light and darkness are trying to be united together. It keeps me from listening to music that reflects the darkness. Christians should not listen to an unholy mixture of light and darkness, nor should they participate with pagan or worldly worship. This command and principle should keep us from listening to a type of sound that Satan has traditionally used to promote rebellion against God. We must become discerning in our music and apply God's holiness to our listening habits.

Isaiah 5:20

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

We should not confuse the bitter for the sweet! The principle behind Isaiah 5:20 declares that those who support CCM are calling evil good. They are claiming that darkness (sin) is light (holy) and choosing the bitter (distasteful) over the sweet (tasteful). Mixing good words with unholy and disorderly rhythmic style and the perverted sound of a rock culture, which is against God, is a travesty or mockery of God's holiness and the whole principle of Bible separation, which demands a distinction between light and darkness and righteousness and unrighteousness (2 Cor. 6:14). Many Christians actually despise traditionally accepted music that was once in their churches and they cannot stand to worship with hymns and songs which are not loud, overbearing, and addictive in nature. This is choosing the bitter over the sweet, as a result of being repeatedly exposed to that which is evil, and failing to separate from it. Remember that almost any behavior or practice begins to look and sound normal if you are exposed to enough of it!

- **RIVALRY** demands that I separate from immoral music – “And what concord (agreement) hath Christ with Belial? (2 Cor. 6:15).

Rivalry or opposition demands that I don't participate with perverted music and worship. There is a rivalry between Christ's world of light and Satan's world of darkness. Christ has no agreement with anything (even worship) that remotely reflects Satan (Belial – the worthless one) and his evil workings. Many have jettisoned God's music for the music of Belial! Those things that reflect the workings of Satan and Christ's are at opposite ends of the spiritual spectrum. Satan's musical sound and God's sound of musical order is an incongruous relationship, a relationship where there should be no agreement. Satan's workings cannot be identified with Christ's workings in any way. They are rivals, enemies, and opposing systems. This command and principle should keep us from participating with a church or worshipping in a church service that is promoting Satan's sound which he has used to promote rebellion, sex, and drugs in the lives of people.

2 Corinthians 6:15 adds this: “or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” (unbeliever). Again, rivalry or opposition between the belief systems and practices of believers and unbelievers should demand separation from the carnal expressions of music which reflect unbelieving rebellion. We should not follow the actions, aspirations, attitudes, and attractions of ungodly people. A godly person “walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in

the seat of the scornful” (Psalm 1:1). This Psalm teaches that when we tolerate, we begin to accommodate, and when we accommodate we begin to absorb into our life worldly patterns of music. As a result, we have committed musical departure and rebellion from the ways of the Lord. We have followed the “Pied Piper of worldliness.”

- **RESIDENCY** demands that I separate from immoral music – “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God?” (2 Cor. 6:16).

Since our bodies are the residency or dwelling place of a holy God (the temple of God), we are called upon to honor God’s temple (dwelling place) by not participating with any form of perverted music or pagan worship. God dwells in our body! God’s ownership of our body (His holy temple) speaks of two things: 1. We should honor His holy presence in all that we do with our body — where we go, what we listen to musically, how we worship. 2. We should allow God to possess or control our body by following His will for our lives. Since God lives within us, we should live a life that is holy and in harmony with His indwelling life and personal presence and refuse to listen to perverted music or participate with worldly churches, who play perverted music, which misrepresents God’s holy character and keeps us from doing what is right.

Yes, God indwells and owns our body. This means we must allow our bodies to be used for His holy purposes and completely controlled by Him. Have you given God your body? Have you turned your body over to Him for His holy purposes? Why don’t you stop playing the worldly game and surrender to Him? When you do, you will surrender your entertainments to Him, your music to Him, and your daily decisions to His will. Rebellion in the realm of worship goes against the principle of God’s ownership. We should want to use our bodies for His holy purposes and not for worldly, fleshly, and greedy purposes.

- **RELATIONSHIP** demands that I separate from immoral music – “as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (2 Cor. 6:16).

2 Corinthians 6:18 adds these words: And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” These verses are talking about

possessing a close relationship or fellowship with God the Father as we live according to His holy plan for our lives and do not compromise with sin and sinners. Cleanliness is a prerequisite for communion with God (James 4:8). I must be clean before I can commune with a holy God. My life must be connected with Him through confession and cleanliness (1 John 1:9).

I'm not suggesting that those who listen to CCM have no communion and fellowship with God. This would be an absurd conclusion. Many Christians who are part of the CCM Movement confess their sins and seek to walk with God. I know Christians who love the Lord and have their devotions every day even though they might listen to CCM. However, this type of pseudo Christian music, which can vary in its departures from TSM (Traditional Sacred Music), can draw people into secular Rock Music which can become a spiritual stumbling block to Christians. When I allow my life to be overcome and controlled by polluted music, then my fellowship with God can become strained. I can begin to lose the closeness to the Lord that I once possessed (Rev. 2:4). When I'm addicted to rock music and a certain sound my relationship with God suffers. This is because I am allowing other things to control my affections and desire and not God. I am actually putting other things before God in my life.

Rock Music can become an idol to us Beware of this! 1 John 5:21 says, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen." When life-size posters of rock artists are posted on the walls of teen bedrooms, when there are screams of pleasure that come from teens as a CCM artist walks out on the stage, when they imitate the dress and appearance of CCM artists, and when they can never get enough of their rock music, then you can be sure that idolatry has been occurring in their hearts and lives.

A seventeen-year-old from Missouri wrote:

"When I got started listening to contemporary Christian music, I started out on 'mild' music, but it grew to harder music. It grew to the point where the music took the place of Bible reading. . . .it was addictive. Later, it was brought to my attention that when you cannot get rid of something in your life that keeps you from God, it is an idol. This music, which is supposed to promote Christianity, caused me to violate God's commandments about idolatry."

As we reflect on the importance of Bible separation, there are Christians who will agree that the type of rock music which possesses sexual *lyrics* should be

abandoned. However, they often fail to admit that the *sounds* of rock music were used to promote sexual rebellion against God and departures from His righteous ways. Both the words and sounds of rock music have historically worked synergistically together. They were like the heads and tails on a coin. Since this is true, a musical sound that was used for perverted and immoral purposes should never be joined with spiritual words. Joining Christians thoughts and words with a perverted sound crosses over the line of Bible separation, the marked distinction between what is right and wrong, and what is righteous and unrighteous. It fails to make the complete distinction between light and darkness. It confuses the work of Christ with Belial (Satan's work). It promotes the paganism of infidels with the work of God's people. God's temple, on the inside of us, should have nothing to do with a type of rebellious music that has been used for Satan's agenda.

If Satan has used a type of music for rebellion, we must identify it and separate from it because of its intrinsic character and nature. Trying to duplicate it with a new face is not God's way of separation. Instead of seeing how close we can get to the line, it's better to stay far away from the line and seek to represent righteousness in the best possible light. It's far better to take the "high road" far away from any association with evil. We must err on the side of caution today when it comes contemporary rhythms and styles.

### c. Separation and Boundaries

The Bible teaches that we must create boundaries around our lives and not allow a perverted rock sound to pollute our spiritual living. In short, we must learn to separate from all forms of Rock Music (secular and Contemporary Christian Music). The Bible says we are to "come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (2 Cor. 6:17). This means to separate from the heathen ways and worldly practices of unsaved humanity ("learn not the way of the heathen" - Jer. 10:2). This would include their culturally, contaminated music. God has called us to "walk not as other Gentiles walk" (Eph. 4:17) and that we are to "put off concerning the former conversation the old man" (Eph. 4:22). The new man



and new way of life does not associate with certain types of music. He only associates with songs that honor God and which are spiritual in design and reflect God's nature. We are also to "be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children" (5:1) and must be "light in the Lord" and "walk as children of light" (Eph. 5:8). We are also called upon to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

In this same context of holiness and consecration, Paul then speaks of "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19). Can we really claim that all the previous references to the new life end when we get to verse 19? Absolute not! Our new life must also be reflected in spiritual music that honors God's character. The emphasis is on holiness and a higher calling which must also be applied to our music.

The word "separate" literally means "the erecting of a boundary, the setting of a limit, the drawing of a line beyond which we are not to go, to exclude, and sever." In other words, we must place parameters around our lives, so that we might separate from that which reflects the fleshly part of fallen humanity (1 John 2:15-16), and that which is not eternal but passing away for it is only a temporal facade (1 John 2:17). Most of what people call temporary is only temporary. It has no eternal value and reward attached to it. Surrender to God (Rom. 12:1) is when we give up something that is temporary and tangible and exchange it for something that is spiritual and eternal. In order to practice musical separation, we must surrender our music to the Lord. Separation means that I must take a stance against that which is ethically, philosophically, musically, and doctrinally of the world system and practice radical but also radiant non-conformity (2 Cor. 6:14-18; Matt. 5:14).

Separation means that there are lines that must be drawn in the sand today. It means that I will practice apartness or difference from all that is unclean and sinful, so I might be like God, whose very own nature is a separatist, and who is different in character and conduct (Matt. 5:48; 1 Pet. 1:16). Paul would never cross the line of God's holiness to appeal to the carnal and fleshly appetites of people. CCM artists will tell you that they are being like Paul who said that he wanted to be "made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. 9:22). In other words, CCM singers say they are following in Paul's footsteps when using Christian Rock Music to evangelize. But they actually misuse this verse to promote and cover-up their CCM worship. In 1 Kings 12:28, Jeroboam misused the Bible to promote his own deviant form of worship by quoting Exodus 32:4 ("these be thy

gods”). This was something Aaron had said to the people to justify worshipping the golden calf. Jeroboam quotes this same verse to justify Israel’s deviation from God’s Scriptural and obedient form of worship.

It’s interesting that Aaron professed to be worshipping the LORD but by means of the calf (Exod. 32:5). Some suggest that the pagan idol was used as a representation of worshipping the true God. In this instance, the worship of the Lord had been blended with the symbols of Baal and other fertility gods of Egypt. The “gods” were a form of blended worship of Baal and Jehovah. Others suggest that the calf was a total replacement of God. Of course, all of this was absolutely forbidden by God’s moral law (Ex. 20:3-5).

There is an application of what happened back in Israel’s history and what is occurring today in the CCM movement and worship. The Christians of today claim to be worshipping the Lord by means of a Christianized form of Rock Music (the 21<sup>st</sup> century golden calf). Although this may sound very offensive to many in the CCM movement, there are a large number of Christians today who are part of this movement that are participating in their own form of blended, golden calf worship. They have created a specific sound, a certain mood, and a worldly and polluted form of Christian Rock Music, which they think they need to experience, so they can worship God. Little do they realize that they are worshipping their music, their feelings, and their mood. These artificial means of worship become their god or in some measure are blended together in an attempt to worship the true God of Heaven, creating a mixed form of worship. Remember that when we try and become creative in our worship, making new ways to worship God, then we are erecting our golden calf. Sadly, many mistaken their golden calf worship for true worship and all of this is done on the basis of misusing and misapplying Bible texts. It’s called “Scripture twisting” and bad hermeneutics!

Here is the point, we can misuse Bible verses to justify our worldly forms of worship. 1 Corinthians 9:22 (“become all things to all people”) is a common verse used to justify a deviant form of worship. Those in the CCM Movement grossly misinterpret and then misapply this Scripture. The “all things” Paul speaks about are not the sinful, depraved, and the corrupted ways of culture. Becoming all things to all people does not mean we become sensual, carnal, and worldly in our presentation of the Gospel by incorporating rock music into our evangelist efforts. Ex drug addicts or ex pornographers would not return to their former lifestyles to



become “all things” to all people! The meaning of “all things” is understood to be a reference to those ways which are not morally corrupted by culture and which do not misrepresent God’s glory.



Many will also use the phrase “all things to all people” as a mandate to dress down in church and identify with the heathen or lost people of our cultural generation. Whatever happened to “Sunday’s best” and giving our best to God which would include the way we dress in church? The “dressing down” philosophy within the modern church (coming to church looking sloppy, dirty, casual) plays into the culture revolution that feeds a

narrative based upon Liberation Theology and the social gospel, which conveys the ideology that we should in one sense get primitive and identify with the downtrodden and disadvantaged in society. In doing this, we sympathize with those who are suffering in poverty and other social ills. However, we should remember as Christians that we should not dress to identify with people, but we should dress modestly and nicely to portray reverence before God and represent a God who is absolutely holy and pure. In dressing, we are sending this message up to God: “This is what we think of You as our great and holy God.”

Rick Warren said, “I intentionally dress down to match the mindset of those I’m trying to teach.” In other words, Warren wants to try and appease the “hang ups” that the unchurched and unregenerate sinners have with more reverent dress. Think about this for a moment. When the unsaved see our dress and appearance as loose, sometimes sensual, casual, sloppy, or worldly, then the message of the Gospel may also be understood. In many ways, the medium (our music, dress, entertainment) becomes the actual message that we are conveying to the unsaved masses. The medium is interconnected with the message. Worldliness portrays a gospel that does not transform people Paul says that our manner of living should “be as it becometh the gospel of Christ” (Phil. 1:27).

The word “becometh” means “after a godly sort, that which is worthy of respect.” This means you don’t sing like the world, dress like the world, act like the world, and entertain like the world when presenting the Gospel message! Sadly, the standard of dress in our culture today is to have absolutely no standards. It is another part of the “feel good” and self-gratification philosophy of our present-day culture that has been adopted into the church-way of life. This sloppiness and down dressing results in indecency, irreverence, and worldliness in other areas of church ministry.

Zephaniah 1:8 reveals this about the people’s dress:

“And it shall come to pass in the day of the LORD’S sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king’s children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel.”

The understanding of “strange apparel” or “foreign apparel” means that the people were clad in clothes that the pagan surrounding nations would wear. They abandoned the traditional normal clothing worn by Jews for alien clothes that were from other nations and this became a sign of their spiritual departure and rebellion toward God. For a Jew to depart from traditional clothing and wear the apparel of foreign nations was treason to the Jewish way of life. It was a sign that they had abandoned faithfulness to God and obedience to His law. Therefore, God makes a negative remark about their strange or foreign apparel, since He knew what was in the hearts of the people who were wearing it.

There is a principle we can draw from this Bible verse which applies to our present times and sloppy Sunday dress. Our dress can become “strange apparel” before God when the manner in which we dress reflects a heart attitude of rebellion and disrespect toward God instead of reverence toward Him. God knew the hearts of His people by the way they were dressing. Of course, I’m not inferring that just because someone does not wear a tie to church that their heart is not right before God or that they are disrespectful to God. But we have a generation that has “dumbed down” portraying reverence to God by “dressing down” (wearing torn jeans, shorts, T-shirts, etc.). This is because of the idea or notion that others might feel out of place who attend a church where people are dressed in more respectful clothing.

This type of mindset or thinking overlooks God and looks only at people. It’s not what Paul was referring to in 1 Corinthians 9:22. Furthermore, immodest dress (1

Tim. 2:9) is definitely heathen dress. Those who want to come to church dressed in the attire of a harlot or suggestive apparel (Prov. 7:10) should not be placed in front of God's people with a microphone and then be allowed to wiggle around before others while playing Rock Music. Everything about this is strange to God – strange apparel, strange music, and strange worship. In short, we must become “all things to God” before we become “all things to people.” Following this order is important! It will keep us from developing lackadaisical ideas and attitudes in the area of dress, music, and worship. It's Jesus first, others second, and you last (JOY).

And finally, it's true that God looks at the heart (1 Sam. 16:7) but this does not mean the outward appearance is to be discarded. God is also deeply concerned how we use and present our bodies as His vessels (1 Cor. 6:19-20). God has called us to be “a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet (useful and profitable) for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work” (2 Tim. 2:21). Any truism about the inner life and heart cannot be used as an excuse to sin, get our own fleshly way or use worldly music as an alleged sanitized version of Rock Music. Many Christians hide behind 1 Samuel 16:7 to gratify themselves with their own Christian versions of worldliness. They also forget the heart is very deceptive (Jer. 17:9) and that God “knoweth the secrets of the heart” (Ps. 44:21).

#### d. Separation and Evangelism

CCM supporter, Steve Miller, makes an incredible statement:

“For the minister concerned with giving a clear presentation of the gospel, a thorough understanding of the target group's musical preference is essential. To ignore such cultural nuances is to risk presenting Jesus as irrelevant, or even ‘wimpy.’”

This almost sounds like Miller wants to create “another Jesus” (2 Cor. 11:4) for our culturally corrupt generation – a hippie Jesus who is tuned in to Rock Music and in touch with where people are musically. The religious rockers continue to suggest that, “We must become the world to win the world.” But God's Word says we should not conform to the world (Rom. 12:2) to win the world. Others suggest that a certain style of music is part of the cultural expression (musical ethnicity) in different lands



and therefore missionaries can use it with God's approval. But since when does the culture of any given place or people dictate what is right and wrong? If this were the case, Paul would not have exposed the cultural sins of the heathen on Mars Hill (Acts 17). The Bible is the final authority (not culture) regarding doctrine, music, worldliness, and what is of God and Satan.

This means we must use Biblically-ordained modes of evangelism with Biblical principles of separation (2 Cor. 6:14-17). By the modes or means of evangelism, I mean that we can share the Gospel in creative ways as we hand out Gospel tracts, as we use separated and sacred music, and as we do Bible School ministries for children. We use balloon animals at our annual street fair as a way to get Gospel tracts into the hands of children and their parents. Proper, non-worldly methodology must always accompany the preaching of the Gospel message. However, when we incorporate worldly methods into Gospel presentations, such as CCM, the message of the Gospel of Christ dying for worldly and ungodly sinners (Rom. 5:6) can become blurred, distorted and even meaningless. The music can actually confuse the meaning of the message. The music will impact what the listener thinks about the message.

For instance, a similar sound of worldly, entertaining music does not portray a person as sinning against a holy God and in need of the Gospel. Trying to present the Gospel with worldly music can confuse the listener and the message of the Gospel. Jesus came to call "sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32) but when the church endorses the same type of music that lost sinners like, this sends a non-confrontational and non-convicting message to sinners, not a message of repentance. Jesus came to rescue people from their sins (Matt. 1:21), not make them feel comfortable in their sins. Furthermore, Jesus was a friend of sinners (Luke 7:34) but He did not compromise with sinners. There is a huge difference between these two concepts. Jesus told us to not be like sinners (Matt 6:8). The Bible says we are not to learn the ways of the heathen (Jer. 10:2; 2 Cor. 6:14-17) and that we must counteract the sinful culture (Rom. 12:2). This means our Gospel presentations must reflect the truth that people are unsaved sinners. When presenting the Gospel, we should not mimic the sinful lifestyles of the wicked for this contradicts the Gospel of Christ's death for sinners and the message of repentance.

Reed Arvin wrote:

“The truth is that we have been singing lovely songs to ourselves, and the world not only hasn’t been listening, it hasn’t even known we’ve been singing.”

In other words, Arvin is suggesting the reason why we must all convert to CCM music and leave TSM in the dust is because worldly and unregenerate people are listening to the lovely stuff. They need the “hard” stuff in order to impact them and bring them to salvation. Does Arvin understand why the unsaved don’t gravitate toward whatsoever is pure and lovely (Phil. 4:8) is because they lack spiritual life and they are not interested in spiritual things (1 Cor. 2:14). Nor should we appeal to the carnal instincts in the unsaved (essentially feed their sin natures) by using Rock Music, since this muddies the true message of repentance and the Gospel, which affirms that we are all sinners. Evangelizing people with the same rock sound of the world is actually endorsing someone’s moral corruption through this type of music, which has kept them bound to sin, while at the same time telling them that they are sinners and in need of salvation. This is a conflicting message.

The whole idea that I must “Christianize” and “sanctify” the sound of musical rebellion in order to win people to Christ is ludicrous. God does not need help in saving sinners! If the musical style is familiar to the unregenerate person, it is actually a comfort to him because it is non-convicting. The musical style of CCM itself is non-convicting. The sinner wants his lifestyle to be validated musically. This keeps him from seeing himself as God sees him. The mimicking of worldly music does not produce repentance in the hearts of people, only God can work this grace in the hearts of people (Rom. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:25; 2 Peter 3:9).

Prayer, godly living (salt of the earth), and the Great Commission is how we get people to church. We should not seek to get unchurched people into church through worldly methods and music. Have we become guilty of placing our faith in methods instead of the message and the Spirit’s power? We must be very careful that flamboyance of methods, such as the distortion of musical sound, does not distract from the message. Many churches today think they need the newest beat, the latest feel, and the latest look in order to please the worldly “seekers” (Gal. 1:10) but they are not pleasing God (2 Tim. 2:4).

John MacArthur, at one point in his teaching ministry, gave this informative statement: “It should be noted that the many contemporary entertainers who think

they are using their rock–style music to evangelize the lost are often doing nothing more than contributing to the weakening of the church. Evangelizing with contemporary music has many serious flaws. It tends to create pride in the musicians rather than humility. It makes the Gospel a matter of entertainment when there is not one thing in it that is at all entertaining. It makes the public proclaimers of Christianity those who are popular and talented in the world’s eyes, rather than those who are godly and gifted teachers of God’s truth. In using the world’s genres of music, it blurs the gap between worldly, Satanic values and divine ones. It tends to deny the power of the simple Gospel and the sovereign saving work of the Holy Spirit.

“It creates a wide generation gap in the church, thus contributing to the disunity and lack of intimacy in the fellowship of all believers. It leads to the propagation of bad or weak theology and drags the name of the Lord down to the level of the world. The music of the Gospel is certainly not a legitimate means for making money or seeking fame, and it must never be allowed to cheapen what is priceless, or trivialize what is profound.”

MacArthur is right on this. CCM cheapens what is precious and costly in God’s sight (1 Pet. 1:19) and blurs the distinctions between right and wrong. Sadly, MacArthur seems to have jettisoned his original statements on music and worship and has now become lenient toward full-blown CCM worship, openly endorsing the same type of music he once condemned.

Rick Warren said:

“You must match your music to the kind of people God wants your church to reach. We had to decide what would be our sound.”

Did you catch what he said – “our sound.” Did Warren every think that his sound might not be God’s sound! This kind of reasoning concludes that music is needed to capture the attention of sinners, to see people saved, and that we need “our sound” (a rock sound) to make it happen. We must remember that the lost are reached through the Gospel (Rom. 1:16; Rom. 10:17), that we are to be obedient to God when evangelizing (“strive lawfully” - 2 Tim. 2:5), and that worldly or carnal entertainment should never become a medium to reach the unsaved (1 Cor. 2:4).

The power is in the Gospel message. It is not in the methods of man! The main God-approved purpose of music is not to evangelize the lost but is to be used primarily for worship, praise, edification, and the teaching of doctrine (Exo. 15:1,2, 20,21; I Chron. 15:27,28; 16:9,23; II Chron. 20:21,22; Psa. 95:2; 105:2; Acts 16:25; Eph. 5:18, 19; Col. 3:16). Nowhere in the Bible does it say, "Sing the Gospel of Christ." It says to preach it (Mark 16:15; Rom. 1:15; 10:15; 1 Cor. 1:17; Gal. 2:2).

This means that the main direction for our music and worship is *vertical* (man to God) with the audience of our music being God Himself. Since music is to be directed to God alone, Biblically and godly music is not specifically designed for evangelism. We are not to gear our music around the ears of the lost. It's the ears of God that should concern us! When we try and make songs acceptable to heathen people, they become unacceptable to God. Yes, there is also a *horizontal* direction of music (man to man) when music serves God's saints by teaching them Biblical truths which can encourage their spiritual growth (Col. 3:16). Only believers were to use music as a teaching tool ("Speaking to yourselves" - Eph. 5:19). It was not specifically given as a tool to reach the lost. The Bible states that music is for the edification of saints and is to be directed toward God alone - "to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19), not toward unbelievers. In the end, the message of the Gospel is what is needed to save souls. We do not need man's cleverness, enticements, gimmicks, phony emotional appeals and manipulative strategizing to save souls (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

People are constantly saying that "the younger generation won't come to church unless we give them their music and Rock Music is the only way to reach them." Of course, this is an absolute absurdity and insult to a sovereign God (John 12:32). It's God who reaches out to save souls (Luke 19:10) – not man's musical techniques and tricks. In short, we should not depend upon music to win the lost but the Gospel message (Rom. 1:16). Furthermore, we should not drag the Gospel and the name of Jesus down to the level of the musical world when evangelizing. We must remember that if we choose to use the music of rebellion, it will inevitably produce the fruit of rebellion (not Scriptural fruit). Since God has not specifically commissioned the Church to use music in evangelism, it should not depend upon it as a means to bring people to Christ. The unsaved person does not understand or comprehend the song of the redeemed or saved (Ps. 137:4). Music was never

designed by God to appeal to the lost. The purpose of music was not for outreach to the unsaved masses but to bring glory to God.

Of course, even though the purpose for music is not specifically for evangelism and the unsaved, wholesome music can be used in conjunction with evangelistic services to support a clear Gospel presentation (1 Cor. 14:23). It can back up the Gospel message and send a message of light to the unsaved (Matt. 5:14) as they see a real change and difference in the lives and musical praise of Christians (Ps. 40:3). This is what in part took place with the jailer as Philippi in Acts 16, when Paul and Silas were singing hymns at night in their cell. It led to a Gospel presentation and salvation of this man (Acts 16:30-31). This is very wonderful. But one should not depend upon music to draw unsaved people to Christ. They should depend on the preaching or proclamation of the cross through the Scriptures (1 Cor. 1:8; 2:2). This is God's method and means for winning the lost – not Rock Music.

God's Word is the vehicle that He chose to convert the soul and bring spiritual birth into the lives of people (Ps. 19:7; 1 Pet. 1:23-25; James 1:18; 25). This message was not accompanied with music nor was music necessary to get people to the place of salvation. In other words, the music does not add to the message of the Gospel since it is the Gospel alone that saves ("the gospel of your salvation" - Eph. 1:13). People might tell you, "I got saved through hearing a Gospel song." But this experience is just that, an experience that does not reveal the truth how salvation only comes through the message of the Gospel.



Somehow CCM musicians justify their music since it supposedly "gets people saved." But this is a false assessment. It should be no surprise to the discerning Christian that the Bible never told us to reach the lost with music. I Corinthians 1:21 says, "... it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," not by singing. Music can assist this effort by helping to prepare hearts for the preaching, but music should not be thought of as a means of actually converting



sinners. Furthermore, Rock Music certainly does not prepare hearts to receive the Word since it opposes the nature of truth, righteousness, and holiness.

Many Christians think they need to help God win souls by finding new and innovative ways to do evangelistic work. Those involved in the CCM Movement seem to be saying that they have found a better way to evangelize than Paul and the apostles. In fact, many will tell you, “This person would not have been saved if they had not gone to a CCM concert.” Of course, this kind of mindset and reasoning presumes upon the sovereignty of God (John 6:44; 12:32) who is Lord of the harvest” (Luke 10:2) – not CCM performers with their worldly music. Why do "musical soul-winners" think they can attract people to God by using the world's standards and the world's music when the Bible says that God is the One who convicts and communicates the Gospel message to the hearts of lost people – not musicians, music, and mind techniques.

Worldly music is not a necessary evangelistic tool to supposedly draw people to Christ. It’s Christ who draws people to Himself — not the worldly methods of man. In short, God does not need help in saving souls for He has declared: “I will build my church” (Matt. 16:18). It is the Lord who adds souls to the church (Acts 2:47) – not CCM music. Once again, it should be reconfirmed that God does not use the Gospel presented in CCM music to actually win the lost since God’s ordained method was to preach and proclaim the Gospel to bring about conversions (1 Cor. 1:8; 2:1-5; 15:11).

Music might confirm the Gospel message that was already preached and be a preparatory step to hearing the Gospel message, but music itself was never used to replace Gospel preaching, while evangelizing and winning people to Christ. Any Biblical example where singing was done before the heathen or the lost, it was used as a testimonial of the saint’s deliverance, salvation, and difference of lifestyle from the heathen that surrounded them (2 Sam. 22:50; Ps. 18:49; 40:3; 126:2; 138:1; Acts 16:25). The theory that we must use the kind of music that the unsaved like and somehow baptize it, if we’re going to reach out evangelistically, is a debunked theory.

Never in Scripture is music ever stated to be used in a direct sense as an evangelistic tool or technique. However, in an indirect sense, sacred music is valuable as a testimonial of our salvation. As we sing of our Savior and salvation many will see a difference in our lives. But we must always remember that we are singing to God, not the world, and not to unbelievers. There's no mandate for the church to make its music appeal to the children of the devil or the sons of Satan (John 8:44). Music was never intended for the satisfaction of nonbelievers with the idea that it should be used as a needful entry point to get the lost to understand the Gospel.

God's method for winning the unsaved was preaching – not singing. The singing was to simply reflect a changed way of life, new life, a different kind of life than the heathen that surrounded them. The music of the redeemed is different. We live in a different world. We are citizens of a different kingdom. The music of the redeemed is alien to the music of the world. This can hardly be said of the CCM of today. It does not represent a new way of life (2 Cor. 5:17).

The musical aspect of teaching and learning the Scripture through music applies to the sanctification of saints who were studying the Bible and growing in their awareness of God's purpose and will for their lives (Col. 3:16). It does not apply to the unsaved. The Gospel that we present should create in unsaved people a sense of conviction - not comfort. It is not a message that we should sugarcoat and make palatable with CCM. It is a message that warns of coming judgment in hell. When Jonathan Edwards preached "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" the people were terrified with a fear of God. They were so afraid that it is recorded that some held onto the church pillars for fear of the ground opening under their feet and hell swallowing them up. There is nothing comfortable about the Gospel. Christ's death, burial, and resurrection for us (1 Cor. 15:3-4) reminds us of hell and damnation without Christ and the Gospel of salvation. This is a far cry in what others are saying about the unsaved coming to church: "Church is to meet people right where they are and make them feel comfortable about being there." But this is not what the Gospel does!

The Gospel makes people realize that they are far away from God and motivates them, through the conviction of the Holy Spirit, to be saved from their sins (Matt. 1:21). The CCM philosophy of music (making others feel comfortable with their style

of music) contradicts the very nature of the Gospel message that warns sinners about hell and their need of salvation only through Jesus Christ. The “offence of the cross” (not the user friendly approach to the cross) is still necessary for the salvation of souls (Gal. 5:11). If we try and eliminate the offence of the cross through worldly, pragmatic, and sensual music, then we lose the effectiveness of the message of the Gospel that warns people that they are sinners and in need of salvation. Our music should align itself and be consistent with the Gospel of offence. Ultimately, Gospel music should create conviction in the heart of the unsaved person – not comfort. History seems to repeat itself. There have been many attempts to make the unsaved masses to feel comfortable with Christianity.

Ric Llewellyn wrote:

“There appears to be a parallel between the attempt today to "Christianize" rock music and the "Christianization" of various pagan religious practices in fourth century Rome. The Babylonian mystery religions were introduced into Christianity by Constantine in 313 A.D. as he tried to incorporate the pagans into the newly constituted ‘Holy’ Roman Empire. The Constantine-led Roman church was willing to adapt and adopt pagan practices in order to make Christianity palatable to the heathen. The heathen festivals were adopted into Christianity, and then eventually, many of the associated pagan symbols and actions were reinterpreted in ways acceptable to Christian faith and practice. ‘Christianization’ of pagan customs, symbols, etc., occurred as Christianity had to undergo a transformation so that pagans could ‘convert’ without giving up their old beliefs and rituals.

“Those today who are able to clearly see the error and futility of "Christianizing" secular psychology and its psychotherapies by merely relabeling them as "Christian" psychology and "Christian" psychiatric clinics, somehow are unable to see that they have incorporated the same erroneous relabeling process by taking secular rock music, adopting "Christian" lyrics, and renaming it "Christian" rock. Since when does something become Christian by merely "Christianizing" the terminology and placing Christ's name in front of it? Are we not to call the lost out of the culture to repentance and righteousness, rather than imitate the culture?”

Here is the point. When the unsaved step into real God-fearing churches, they should feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit through the use of reverent and Holy

Spirit inspired music (Eph. 5:10; Col. 3:16). If they feel like they are at a ballgame or rock concert, how is conviction going to happen? The message of the Gospel should be reflected in a type of music that “becometh the gospel” (Phil. 1:27) or is worthy of the Gospel (after a godly sort), or else confusion will abound which consists of sham conversions without repentance (Matt. 13:6) and a shallow type of Christianity that lacks sanctification or growth. This is because CCM rubs out the line of separation between good and bad music and promotes an underlying current of rebellion against God – not consecration to Him. We should not try and muddy the waters of the new life that Christ is offering the sinner (John 4:14) by introducing them to a style of music that reflects their own sinful rebellion. This sends mixed messages and creates confusion in the minds and hearts of the unsaved.

The modern, pragmatic, evangelistic philosophy goes like this: “If we can get them to like us, maybe they will like our Savior.” In getting the unsaved to like the church, the church plays a similar sounding, culturally relevant, rock sound that will introduce people to Jesus Christ. The goal is to make sinners feel comfortable by giving them what they want instead of what they need. In trying to meet their “felt needs” they spend less time addressing their “spiritual needs” through the simple Gospel message and calling them to repentance and faith in Christ. In fact, the church must remember that we are not commissioned to go into an unregenerate, unchurched, and unethical godless society to ask them what their “felt needs” are and then try and fulfill these fleshy and carnal needs (Eph. 2:2-3) through spiritually contaminated music. Instead, we are to be going to the Bible to find out what kind of church we are supposed to be!

Martin Bobgan said:

“Their strategy is to throw softballs at non-Christians rather than challenge and confront their unbelief with convicting truths from Scripture.”

#### e. Separation and Pragmatism

# PRAGMATISM

It is a very serious matter when we do not do something the way God told us to do it (1 Sam. 15:22). Yes, we must do God's will, but we must also do it in God's way! Pragmatism basically says, "If it works, use it." If something good comes out of the use of CCM (the salvation of souls) then we should use it and whatever draws people into the church to hear the Gospel. The end justifies the means. Pragmatists place more emphasis on the power of a medium than the power of

the Gospel message. What is fundamentally wrong with pragmatism? In a simply answer, pragmatism undermines or disregards the authority of Word of God since the Bible is the standard of right and wrong – not results (2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Thess. 2:13; John 17:17).

Pragmatism also undermines the power of the Gospel to save souls (Rom. 1:16) claiming that the culture must be mixed with a Gospel presentation in order for the Gospel to effectively take root in the hearts of the unsaved. Today the unsaved want music like the world, programs like the world, and pragmatic clever preaching that is informal, positive, brief, and friendly. People not only want to have their ears tickled by the preaching but also by music (2 Tim. 4:3) since they will not endure sound doctrine or sound music.

Leonard Seidel states:

"The church musician is not to produce music for the ear pleasure of the listener, to take them on a ride, so that they will gasp and proclaim a 'thrill' in the hearing."

Pragmatism (give the people what they want) is designed to meet the "felt needs" of people and gets them to worship at the altar of felt needs. King Ahaz was a pragmatist, doing what seemed to work best. He catered to the unsaved kings and their gods and eventually worshipped them. But in the end his pragmatism did not work.

2 Chronicles 28:23 reveals this Biblical narrative:

"For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, *therefore* will I sacrifice to them,

that they may help me. But they (the Syrian gods) were the ruin of him, and of all Israel.”

Those who feel pragmatism does work will discover in the end that it really did not work and was not pleasing to God (2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 3:13-15; 1 John 2:17). Lastly, we must remember that what you win people with, you win them to! God wants us to set a godly example as a Bible-believing and separated Christian that others can follow (1 Tim. 4:12). For all these reasons, God has called us to separation, even as it relates to the area of evangelism and musical presentation in evangelizing the lost. By the way, who’s reaching whom? Instead of Christians reaching the unsaved of the world with the Gospel, the unsaved and world is doing a better job of reaching the Church by influencing church leaders and gurus to change their music to pattern itself “after the rudiments of the world” (Col. 2:8). Christians are “not of this world” (John 17:14) which means that their message and music should not pattern itself after the world. Being *relevant* should never be the goal of Christians, being *right* should be their goal (Deut. 6:18; Josh. 1:7).

Jesus said to the unsaved, “except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3, 5), but CCM artists with their culturally contaminated music are saying, “Relax, for we are not really so much different than you.” The point is this, God cannot redeem and use anything to win people for Christ. This is a twisted logic and perversion from God’s ways. We are not to use illegitimate means to spread the Gospel (pragmatism) on the grounds that they will attract a crowd (Rom. 3:8). If pragmatism is a Biblical philosophy (using anything to get a crowd to evangelize the lost), then we should be able to use erotic dancers to help spread the Gospel.



Can God use Crack Cocaine? Should we use cocaine as a legitimate method to win people to Christ? Can God use pornography? Should we use pornography as an acceptable method to win people

to Christ? Can God use gambling? Can God use terrorism? If some good acts of humanity came out of people’s lives following the 911 tragedy, does this make the action something that is useable and acceptable to God? If a Christian woman could

witness to people and win people to Christ by becoming a prostitute would that make her actions and method acceptable to God? If people were saved in concentration camps does this mean that this method becomes an acceptable practice that can be legitimately used by God and justify the evil of such a practice?

You say, “These examples are silly.” Yes, they are totally ridiculous and ludicrous but this is the same argument some Christians promote for using the sounds of Rock Music as a tool to win the lost. Of course, many will wiggle out of it by claiming that all music is amoral (it’s neither good or bad - right or wrong). If this is true, then why has a specific type of musical sound always been used to promote the flesh, immorality, drugs, and rebellion against God? You cannot wiggle out of it.

When the church tries to accommodate the unsaved in its time of worship, the church ends up offending God’s holiness. Breaking God’s commands to attempt something good does not help God’s cause, fulfill His true purpose, nor honor His character (1 Chronicles 15:15). David and Israel had adopted the methods of the Philistines, and Uzzah paid for it with his life (2 Sam. 6:7). In fact, when King Uzziah offered incense, something that was only to be done by the priest, he was struck with leprosy (2 Chron. 26:16-23). Here is the point, pragmatism may seem to be the right path to take initially but in the end there is a price to pay. Sometimes it is the aftermath of carnal Christians, worldly and nominal Christianity, and spiritual ineptness.

The oft-repeated phrase “all things to all men” (1 Cor. 9:22; 1 Cor. 10:33) does not refer to adopting heathen customs in our time of worship so we might please the unsaved crowd. This statement by Paul speaks of a loving response toward people but not a worldly, pragmatic, and compromising response. Paul is talking about sacrificing his own personal agenda in life, or his own personal interests, so that he might not offend others in his outreach ministry. This loving action of Paul



involved forsaking certain personal liberties in his own life that had to do with eating certain meats and following other Jewish customs. These were *amoral* issues - not *worldly* issues. These issues did not include adopting new methods of worship that

were carnal and contrary to God's holiness in order to please people. The apostles never sought to conform to the low standards of people (1 Cor. 3:3; 1 Pet. 4:3-4) or please people at the expense of God's holiness (1 Thess. 4:4). Concerning pragmatism, we must remember that "The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works" (Ps. 145:17). God is righteous in everything He does – even His methods.

A. W. Tozer said:

"Heresy of method is just as evil as heresy of message."

It's never right to do wrong in order to do right. The methodology of using the sound of Rock Music to gain a following and win people to Christ is a nonbiblical philosophy. King David discovered this when he borrowed the Philistines worldly and unscriptural method and standard (1 Samuel 6:7-8) in using an oxcart to move the Ark of God (1 Chronicles 13). God gave clear instructions on how to move the ark (only the priests and Levites could move and touch it) but David tried to do God's work in a different way (the Philistine way). As a result, Uzzah, who likely had good intentions, who was sincere, and who wanted to please the Lord, touched the Ark and ended up dying (2 Sam. 6:6-7).

Dr. Dean Kurtz remarked:

"No, even when it looks like it is 'working,' worship models should come from the world *above* us, not the world *around* us. Get you good ideas from the Scriptures, not by looking to modern day Philistines."

Borrowing the religious practices of pagans and ignoring worship practices that are revealed by God in His Word have disastrous consequences (2 Kings 16:3-4, 10-15; 2 Chron. 28:2-5, 23-25). God honors wholehearted worship in the context of obedience – not rebellion. This Old Testament lesson about the ark reminds us that Christians might be sincere in using CCM in their worship and evangelism efforts (David and Uzzah were sincere), but sincerity and right intentions is no excuse to disobey God and adopt the methods of the world. Too many Christians are trying to make excuses for using Philistine music to move God's work forward. But it does not work this way.



Mixing righteousness with unrighteousness or darkness with light is not the way we are to do God's work (2 Cor. 6:14-15). A mixture of worldly and pragmatic music with the Gospel actually hinders God's work and causes all kinds of complications such as a lack of repentance, salvation, and sanctification (spiritual growth). The results of such a mixture can produce skewed results and man's results (Isa. 3:8; 55:8; Prov. 14:12; 16:25) which include unrepentant responses regarding a person's sinfulness before God (Matt. 13:20-21) and a lack of sanctification in the Christian life that leads to nominal Christianity (1 Cor. 3:3). Ungodly music is a poison that stunts the spiritual growth of many Christians.

The end result (the salvation of souls) does not justify the means (the use of CCM and worldly methodology); the means (the use of sacred and consecrated music to God) actually justify the end (the salvation of souls). Remember that God's work done in God's way produces good results, but God's work done in man's wisdom (1 Cor. 2:4) and way (the worldly way) produces mixed results (good and bad). We can very easily have converts to pragmatism instead of converts to the Savior. We can produce worldly saints instead of godly saints (James 4:4). Let's drive home the application of all this. There are many "Uzzahs" that are sacrificed and lost to worldliness, sensuality, and addiction to Rock Music through using CCM music.

Dr. Allen Griffith has well stated:

"How many Uzzahs have we lost? How many more Uzzahs are we willing to sacrifice? ... The problem is that we have no idea how many Uzzahs are being left by the wayside when we ignore the standard of God's holiness."

A fifteen-year-old from Ohio wrote this:

"In the past, rock 'n roll music has been so detrimental to my spiritual growth that I feel privileged to share this, especially if it could keep others from being subjected to this type of music. This includes 'contemporary Christian music.' Most people do not realize what a hold this music can have on you until you try to take it out of your life. When I got into secular rock music I was bombarded by many sensual thoughts. Those that think that 'Christian rock' is OK because of the words are wrong. When I listen to that type of 'Christian' music, I have the same reaction. I cannot listen to any type of this music because when I do, I can no longer worship God or grow in Him."

Lucarini conveys this thought:

“If you put hot-blooded males and females into a passionate rock music group, there will strong temptations for sexual sins. CCM styles facilitate an atmosphere where a female’s innate desire to have emotional intimacy with a man can easily be achieved.”

Lucarini is being very honest about the side effects of Rock Music. The music itself leads many down the path of sensual desires and emotional intimacy outside the bonds of marriage. Here is some good advice from another younger person who was involved in Rock Music. It again confirms the addictive nature of the rock beat: “The rock beat is, in and of itself, an addiction. Those who vibrate with it begin to desire more and more of it. Like a drug addiction, one’s appetite for it increases so that the “rock beat” in “contemporary Christian” music soon becomes dissatisfying, and a stronger beat is required. The rock beat therefore violates the following Scripture: “All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient. . . . I will not be brought under the power of any” (1 Corinthians 6:12).”

Some Christians will say, “Look at the music I have” when the real and accurate statement is: “Look at the music that has me.” CCM causes many to stumble in the area of their musical choices for it sounds like Rock Music and opens the door for them to crossover into full-blown, secular Rock Music. CCM not only violates the principle of Bible separation from worldliness (2 Cor. 6:14-17), it also violates the principle of becoming a stumbling block and hindrance to other Christians (Rom. 14:13; 1 Cor. 8:9). What if it is one of your children who are sacrificed because of your failure to communicate good musical habits and tastes to them?

If someone is saved at a CCM concert, when the Gospel is presented to them, they are not saved because of the Rock Music but in spite of it. God has promised that His Word will always fulfill His purpose for “it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it” (Isa. 55:11). We must remember that God blessed the people in giving them water but this did not imply that Moses’ disobedience was justifiable to God when He struck the rock (Numb. 20:10-11). The point is this, although some are being saved and their lives begin to change in CCM churches, God never promises to bless our disobedience and there are repercussions that follow when we disobey and do

not do God's work in God's way (2 Sam. 6:6-7; Numb. 20:12, 23-29). Our disobedience altars God's true blessing upon our personal lives and church ministries (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Let's apply this to CCM churches. Many Christian lives are lost to worldliness and a shallow, nominal, carnal, and lukewarm type of Christianity (Rev. 3:16) through the playing and proliferation of CCM music. For instance, because there is little and often no difference between CCM music and secular Rock Music (what the sound is communicating), many listeners of CCM will crossover to secular Rock Music and allow the words and perverted rock sound of our culture to control them and defeat their spiritual lives. Many bad things come out of disobedience, which includes playing unsanctified, unspiritual, and unbiblical music.

The good should never be used to overlook the bad - the lack of repentance, sanctification, and consecration to God, the loss of our children to worldliness and addiction to Rock Music. Parents must be willing to subject their own personal music standards to the scrutiny of Scripture. This is because the following generation will almost always lower their standard that preceded it if parents do not play and teach godly standards and musical habits (Prov. 22:6; Psalm 78:1-7).

We must also realize once again that the power is in the Gospel message (Rom. 1:16) – not the manmade medium of communication. Therefore, pragmatism (“If it works – use it”) is an anti-Biblical and debunked theory since pragmatism does not work! It's the Gospel that ends up saving souls – not the perverted and immoral sounds of our culture, which are designed to lure worldly people into churches. Faith is generated in the hearts of the unsaved through the “preaching of the cross” (Rom. 1:18) – not the perverted sounds of Rock Music. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17) – not by hearing CCM. It's the Holy Spirit that produces faith in the hearts of people – not the spirit behind rock music (1 John 4:6).

By the way, pragmatism creates a false dichotomy between the medium and the message. The methods must align with the message of the Gospel which is designed to change the lives of people from their state of sin and worldliness. Sadly, CCM tries to spark evangelism without holiness. Don't be fooled, there is no true commitment to holiness when evangelizing with CCM. We must remember that

Christ never violated the will of the Father while witnessing for He sought to please the Father in all of His ways (“for I do always those things that please him” - John 8:29). The same should be true of God’s people who are committed to representing God’s character and ways when presenting the Gospel and whose conscience has not been defiled by CCM.

The moral nature of evangelistic methodologies has changed drastically in the last 40 years of church ministry. In today’s seeker-sensitive or seeker friendly models (to be appealing and nonthreatening to the unsaved), the sinner is slowly assimilated into the fellowship and services of the church, and the church is readily assimilated into the culture of the world by adopting its language, music, clothing, customs, and lifestyle. But the “sensitive” nature of churches toward the unsaved may not be so sensitive after all! When adopting cultural relevancy through CCM, the sinner is no longer uncomfortable in his sins, which in return creates a comfort zone and a greater possibility that sinners will not be drawn by the Holy Spirit.

For instance, the environment of CCM concerts are not a breeding ground for conviction. In these type of rock atmospheres, conviction has been greatly minimized and the spiritual message of the Gospel has been cleverly disguised by worldly music. God’s people are trying to say, “We are like you” but this message does not promote the need for repentance and faith through the Gospel message which states: “Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6).

We are called to be ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20) – not salesmen. The Gospel should not be repackaged and disguised by being made attractive through CCM. Sadly, in using a worldly methodology to win people to Christ, we are watering down or at least disguising the message and offence of the Gospel (Gal. 5:11; 6:14). The “consumer Christianity” movement of today is teaching the unsaved masses that Jesus has come to save consumers – not sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). Using CCM appeals to the self in man and does not demonstrate the sinfulness of people without Christ. But conviction of sin doesn’t *feel* good, not does it *sell* well!

Paul Downey wrote:

“We see churches filled with people who have no Biblical understanding of what constitutes true worship of a holy God and who see no Biblical imperative for their

own personal holiness. It is this attitude that Paul described as ‘having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof’ (2 Tim. 3:5).”

Here is God’s unchanging word on the philosophy of pragmatism which includes using worldly or carnal music and methods to win people to Christ. Romans 12:2 commands, “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.” Some things are simply not acceptable to God! Some things are simply not appropriate for communicating the Gospel. Instead of feeding a wrong desire and using wrong methods to capture the attention of people, we need to reprogram our minds regarding the application of truth to our music and worship. Romans 12:2 informs us that God does not want us to be conformer but a transformer Remember that we cannot be used to transform the world when we are conforming to it!

In order to live a transformed life, we must be willing to “prove” or discern what the will of God for our lives in the area of sanctification. This would also apply to the area of our music. Ephesians 5:11 says that we are to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” So, find out what is dark and sinister, and separate from it. Satan has notoriously used the rock and roll sound to promote sexual immorality, drugs, lies, and rebellion. This is reason enough to separate from all forms and sounds of this type of musical rebellion.

Dan Lucarini, in his book *Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Movement*, writes: “CCM is stuck with the stigma of immorality, because the music styles carry with them the baggage of the world’s immorality. It does not matter if you change the lyrics. It does not matter if you change the musicians. It does not matter if you change the record labels. It does not matter if you ask God to sanctify it. Rock music and all its children, and by association CCM, can and will corrupt the morals of everyone who practices it.”

#### f. Separation, Mixture, and Worship

When we mix the same type of rebellious, rock and roll sound with truth, Christianity, and God's temple (our body), we are trying to unite two incompatible realms, which dishonors God, creates spiritual confusion, and distorted results (2 Cor. 6:14-18). The rock sound, when added to Christian words, still reflects the music of rebellion, which was designed to lead people away from God and the truth, instead of bringing them into the holy presence of God (Heb. 4:16). Therefore, Christian Rock Music by its very name and nature is a philosophy of mixture, which brings mixed and confusing results in the Lord's work and our personal time of worship.



Whenever the fleshly and spiritual are united, confusion abounds, the external can very easily steal away our internal worship of God, the fleshly can quickly dominate the spiritual, and we can find ourselves being overtaken by a carnal response rather than a spiritual message. This is because the fleshly and “feel good” music of today violates God's clear command of separation from pagan ideologies and heathen ways (Jer. 10:2), including a sound of rebellion that Satan has used for fleshly purposes and his own evil purposes. We must remember that the flesh is capable of imitating spiritual unction, while at the same time attempt to sanctify unrighteousness, such as integrating a perverted rock sound with Christian words.

Today some CCM artists are actually saying, “We can use what was once fleshly and redeem it, making it appeal to the spiritual nature of people.” Of course, this defies all logic and the maxims of Bible separation, which dogmatically declares that righteousness and unrighteousness are two incompatible realms that cannot coexist together without creating confusion (2 Cor. 6:14). You cannot redeem a sound that was created and used exclusively to promote immorality, sex, drugs, and rebellion against God.

An old Plymouth Brethren used to say to me, “God hates a mixture!” He is right. When we mix the darkness with the light of God's holiness, we create a strange brew or mixture that diminishes the light and highlights the darkness. God reminds us about the fallacy of mixture and the need for a continued distinction between right and wrong: “And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean” (Leviticus 10:10).



Worship that does not reflect God's holiness or purity is compared to "strange fire" being offered up to God (Lev. 10:1; Numb. 3:4; 26:61). The word "strange" suggests that it was profane. Some suggest these men did not light the censer of incense from the coals off the altar, which was the fire which had come

down from heaven (Lev. 16:12). Hence, because of their use of incorrect hot coals, the incense they offered to God was distasteful to Him and an act of disobedience. It was "strange fire" in His holy presence. It's also very possible that these men intruded into the holy place within the veil to offer incense before the Lord in the wrong manner and at the wrong time (Lev. 16:1-2). As a result of their wrongful intrusion into the Holy Place, their offering was considered to be "strange fire" in the presence of God's holiness and righteousness.

Tom Constable writes:

"This incident should warn modern readers against worshipping God in ways that we prefer because they make us feel "good." We must be careful about worship that is designed to produce effects in the worshippers rather than honoring God. Some forms of contemporary worship may reflect the selfish spirits of Nadab and Abihu."

Today Christians are blurring the distinctive worship that is traditional, orderly, and sacred before God, with a worldly concoction of alleged worship that really is just a "strange fire" before God. Yes, God possesses the right to reject our worship (Amos 5:21-23; Malachi 1:7-8). He sometimes reminds His people that they don't know how to properly worship Him ("Ye worship ye know not what" - John 4:22).

How and whom are we worshipping when we gather each week for worship service? How and whom are we worshipping when we make musical choices for ourselves and our families throughout the week? Have we been worshipping our style of worship? Have we been engaging in a pagan form of worship? Are we attributing worship to our feelings and sensations that we get from a musical piece? Are we really worshipping for personal pleasure, to get our high, a certain sensation, and not really focused on God and truth during our times of worship? Our natural tendency is to be man-centered. But we must be God-centered in all of our worship.

David Cloud said:

“The true worship of God has nothing to do with a show put on by an ‘artist’; they are opposites in the extreme. One says look at God; the other says look at me. These two concepts (artistry and worship) are utterly incompatible ... How shallow and vague and frivolous the serious things of God have become!”

Many Christians say they believe in God-centered worship but they don’t actually practice it. We should be brought consciously and emotionally into the presence of God during our time of worship and all the focus should be taken off of ourselves and others. Music that directs the worshipper’s mind anywhere but to God is not appropriate for worship. Every believer is called to worship the God of the Word and it is God who outlines the true nature of all worship (John 4:24). God has governing principles that we need to apply to our music and worship. God’s Word has a Biblical model of worship that we should follow. The governing moral principles and ethics behind worship are transdispensational which means they are the same in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament.

Let us not forget that our musical message may be directed to God but the music must also be acceptable to God! Romans 12:2 speaks about worshipping God in an “acceptable” manner. Romans 12:1-2 teaches us that the only way to dedicate ourselves to God is to abandon those things which are unacceptable to Him. God wants “reasonable” or rational (logical) worship that honors His holy character. Rational worship means control of the mind – not an irrational, out-of-control experience where the mind goes in neutral. Empty and mindless worship is not befitting of the control of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18). Rational worship (a rational reaction to God’s mercies!) is the type of worship that is acceptable to Him (1 Pet. 2:5). This is because our worship is also to be a spiritual “service” (Rom. 12:1) rendered unto God as New Testament priests (1 Pet. 2:5, 9).

The KJV Bible Commentary comments this way:

“But our worshipful service can only be spiritual in the biblical sense when it is characterized by our conscious, intelligent, rational service to the Lord God. In Paul’s theology, spirituality is not some mindless fluttering of the heart but is the presentation of an entire life to the Lord.”

- ✓ God did not accept Adam and Eve’s covering of leaves.
- ✓ God did not accept Cain’s offering of fruits and vegetables.



- ✓ God did not accept the sacrifice of strange fire from Nadab and Abihu.
- ✓ God did not accept the sacrifice of Saul before the arrival of Samuel.
- ✓ God did not accept the way the ark was carried back to Jerusalem by King David on a cart.
- ✓ God did not accept the legalistic system of the Pharisees.
- ✓ God did not accept the gifts of Ananias and Sapphira.
- ✓ God did not accept the money offered by Simon the Sorcerer.
- ✓ God does not accept works instead of faith.
- ✓ God does not accept sprinkling instead of immersion.

All of these examples remind us that we can practice a deviated from worship which is not in accordance with the expressed pleasure of God. It's true, God does not accept anything and everything we throw at Him! It must be clean, pure, and align with His righteousness nature. For instance, Jeroboam set a standard of worship that was different than the expressed will of God and which did not pleasure God (1 Kings 12:25-33). This means God is not worshipped by just any kind of music. So, "What I like" and "What my preference is" is irrelevant to the issue of music in the Church and our personal times of worship. Biblical music is not based on what appeals to man but "what is acceptable unto God" (Rom. 12:1). This is why we must constantly be "Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord" (Eph. 5:10) or wellpleasing to Him, which includes the kind of music we listen to and worship with. Here is something startling. It is possible to offer something to the Lord that is not acceptable to Him. Again, let's reflect on the example of Cain. He offered the fruit of the ground to God but the Lord demanded a blood sacrifice which is what Abel brought before God (Gen. 4:3-4).

Pastor David Moss writes this:

"Cain and Abel each offered a sacrifice unto the Lord. They both offered it with sincerity of their heart. But one offering was acceptable and the other offering was not acceptable. One followed the prescription of 'what I want to do for God.' The other followed the prescription of 'what God wants me to do for him.' There is a tremendous distinction between these two things. A lot of the music being used in the Church today is following the prescription of Cain. It is sincerely being offered to the Lord as something 'I want to do for God.'"

Reflect on this for a moment. We can worship the wrong god (Ex. 20:3), we can worship the right God in the wrong way (Lev. 10:1), and we can worship the right

God with a wrong spirit (Prov. 21:27; Matt. 7:6). Many are enamored with what they want in their time worship (what they can get out of worship) instead of what God actually wants and deserves. We must also remember that things done in the church are not acceptable to Him merely because they are done in the church or in the name of Christ (Matthew 7:21). We can grossly misrepresent Christ's name. God reserves the right to reject our worship. Our music and worship should never be done carnally, worldly, hypocritically, and insincere.

God says in Amos 5:21-23: "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept *them*: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols."

God's people were bringing sacrifices and offerings to the Lord on their feast days, but their lives were corrupt, so their offerings were rejected by God. He would rather have righteousness than ritual. God was deeply concerned that His people were offering sacrifices in the temple insincerely, while living fleshly lives. God has the right to reject our worship on the basis of our worldly living and hypocrisy.

I'm not suggesting that all Christians who listen to CCM are worshipping God without sincerity. Their motives may sometimes be pure. But sadly, God may accept our *motive* in our time of worship but not our *means* of worship (Malachi 1:10). Furthermore, the *message* must not only be directed to God but the *method* being used must also be acceptable to God (Rom. 12:2). God rejects the mimicking of the music of the world. Our motive in worship must align itself with the means of our worship. We need to also be aware of artificially induced worship. We can manipulate people into believing that they've experienced worship. A worship leader may be able to motivate people outwardly though providing upbeat music, but he cannot change the people's hearts and lives.

God hates a mixture of the carnal and spiritual (John 3:6), the middle-of-the-road type of Christianity (1 Kings 18:21), and lukewarmness (Rev. 3:16). God wants us to "approve things that are excellent" (Phil. 3:10), or those things which are superior in their quality, and as previously stated, we are to be "filled with the fruits of righteousness" (Phil. 1:10). However, Christians will often say, "But the Christian Rock song has good words." Yes, that may be true in some cases. However, I've seen good food thrown in the dumpster but that is NOT where we should plan on eating

dinner! In other words, to try and put the “word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15) with a sound of rebellion is mixing good food with garbage. God hates a mixture. Rock music is a product of a rebellious, disoriented, drug-related, sex-mad generation. There’s no question about this.

The first big rock singer was Elvis Presley, who killed himself with drugs and who openly endorsed the so-called free sex philosophy. His whole act was sexual or sensual. He gave rise to the whole rock generation which we see today, and it’s still using sensual techniques (lyrically, vocally, musically) to attract the masses. The association of hard rock with violence, blasphemy, sexual immorality and perversion, alcohol and drugs, Eastern mysticism, and the occult are not accidental. They are fed from the same ungodly stream.

Once again, a leading rock singer was honest when concluding: “Rock has always been the devil’s music. You can’t convince me that it isn’t” (David Bowie who uttered those words for Rolling Stone Magazine in 1976, Feb. 12, 1976, p. 83). Here is the point. Putting a Christian message in a musical form (rock style) does not elevate and sanitize the rock form of music, but actually degrades the Christian music to a similar level of perversion already established in the culture. God has called us to separate from the debased culture in which we live by not imbibing its practices into our daily lives. The Bible summons us to “love not the world” (1 John 2:17). A particular type of rhythm or sound that has caused untold millions of people to rebel against God, live an immoral life, and promote sin in their lives is something that is worldly and should have no part in the Christian life.

The fact that your CCM (Contemporary Christian Music) does not make you go out and commit adultery and fornication, or do drugs, is no excuse to use the same type of music that Satan has promoted for his evil purposes and agenda. Musical rebellion involves adopting the same style of music (to one degree or another) that was used for the hippie rebellion against God and which brought about moral failure in the lives of countless numbers of people. Remember that the entire hippie movement was a countercultural, antiestablishment, and anti-God movement of sexual promiscuity (false freedom) that was directly fueled by the new rock ‘n’ roll music. The music (lyrics and sound) that was used to promote rebellion against the establishment, against Biblical authority, against parents and parental control, and which was against God’s Biblical mandate for sexual fulfillment within the marriage bond should not be mimicked in the believer’s music and worship. This is because

this type of sound was designed to promote open rebellion against God and His ways. It is a travesty against God to incorporate this type of music into one's heart and life and include this type of rebellious sound in worship to an infinitely holy and righteous God.

g. Separation and the Sixties

Until the 1960's, there was an accepted separation between the worldly culture of music and the sacred music of the church. Cultural divisions were clearly defined between church music and the world's music. In fact, from the time of the early church all the way to the 1960's, the basic idea behind Christian music was essentially the same and largely unchanged.



There was an established and accepted pattern for sacred music. Although there were different styles of music through the church age, a certain order in melody, rhythm and harmony has always existed in sacred music. The basic form of church music remained unchanged. However, serious fundamental shifts began to occur in the later 1960's and the split began between traditional sacred music (TSM) and Contemporary Christian Music (CCM).



The hippie generation wanted to feel rather than reflect, acquire rather than earn, and indulge rather than restrain. The philosophical wave of the 1960's produced a "cross over" effect between the high or serious culture and the popular culture (pop culture) of the day. The hippie culture invaded the high culture heritage (the normal establishment and moral heritage of our country). The crossover occurred in many areas of society and this included the area of Christian music. When hippie music finally got into the church, the musical heritage of separated music that was once uniform within the church, eventually was no longer the norm. In fact, over time, it became less and less normal and this is the situation we are in today. History does not lie. The culture of the hippie movement invaded the charismatic churches and this was the origin and beginning of CCM.

There were inroads of some jazz music within the Pentecostal Movement in the earlier 1900's. Howard Goss said, "We were the first, so far as I know, to introduce this accelerated tempo into Gospel singing." However, at one point the Charismatic

Movement (the ecumenical branch of Pentecostalism) began to introduce the “jazzed up hymns” in the era of the 1960’s. Contemporary Christian Music really began when California hippies started to “come to Christ” through the ministry of Chuck Smith’s Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa. The Calvary Chapel fellowship of churches founded the Jesus People Movement in the late 1960’s and 70’s. The CCM genre was born during the time of the hippie culture whose Rock Music reflected antiestablishment, antigovernment, and antichurch.

These hippie churches rejected the gross immorality and drug abuse associated with the hippy movement, but they kept their long hair and rock & roll which was part of this movement. These years in the 60’s and 70’s began a “crossover” effect by introducing world music from the pop culture into the churches. The “Jesus People” were really the leading founders of the Contemporary Christians Music Movement. They were the ones who popularized the philosophy that music is neutral and that sensual, party music can be used to worship a holy God. Today there are more than 1,000 Calvary Chapels, and they are still at the heart of the CCM movement. CCM is essentially the hippie music of a past rebellious generation which has been adopted and passed on to our current Christian churches.



Leonard Seidel summarizes:

“The ‘Jesus Movement’ of the 60’s introduced the counterculture to the church, and those early performers (Pat Boone, Cliff Richards, B. J. Thomas, Johnny Cash) kept right in step with the trends and performers of secular rock – they discarded neither the erotic themes nor the rhythm of secular rock. The ball has been rolling downhill ever since!”

I remember seeing the “hippies” driving past our house on their motorcycles with their long hair hanging outside the back of their helmets. They represented anti-god, anti-biblical, and antigovernment rebellion. They stood for sex, drugs, and rock ‘n’ roll and all of them were lumped together in one melting pot of godlessness and worldliness. Sadly, the church in the later 60’s and 70’s adopted the sound of this secular music which was rooted in sexual rebellion and anti-god philosophy. In doing so, they violated the Scriptural axiom of Bible separation which was a command designed for His people to reflect God’s holiness and consecration to a holy and righteous God (2 Cor. 6:14).

Matthew Walker said of this merging during the 60's and 70's:

“The merging of the gospel with rock ‘n’ roll does not create a palatable Christianity but transforms the good news into something less than good with the desperate hope that the world will choose God out of their depravity.”

Carl F. Henry, a founding father of New Evangelicalism (a departure from the old evangelical fundamentalism of Bible separation – the anti-Fundamentalist Movement) outlines what he viewed as being important to the church in 1970. He wrote in part: “An end of judging spiritual commitment by such externals as dress, hair style and other participation in cultural trends, including rock music.” This was the era when the church was married to the world musically. It was a sad point in the history of the church.

The result of this marriage continues to exist today in some of the most bizarre and worldly music trends that the church has ever witnessed or experienced such as Christian rap, hip-hop, pop, blues, urban, punk, grunge, jazz, heavy metal, etc. Henry and others labeled the music that defined Fundamentalism as antiquated and useless and opened up pathway for the birth of CCM. The TSM (Traditional Sacred Music) was rejected as being irrelevant, old-fashioned, and boring. As a result, in the 1960's and 70s, the Jesus Movement and Charismatic Movement started the new musical revolution and went in the opposite direction of Fundamentalism and TSM.

But the roots of this new style of music stem back to the days of Elvis Presley. Yes, Elvis is often looked upon as one of the founding father of CCM music. In fact, CCM Magazines inaugural issue in July 1978 attributes “the first contemporary gospel record was Elvis Presley’s *His Hand in Mine* album which was released by RCA in 1960. He followed with two other religious albums in 1967 and 1972. Another founding father of CCM was Larry Norman and his 1969 album “Upon this Rock” which is considered by some to be the first truly Christian contemporary music album. It was released by Capitol Records. Norman was a veteran of the secular and worldly rock music scene.

In 1972, Larry Norman released an album, *Only Visiting This Planet*” which to this day is considered one of the top ten CCM releases ever. The lyrics of one of the songs on the album “Why Should the Devil Have All the Good Music” goes like this: “I want the people to know that He saved my soul/ But I still like to listen to the

radio/ They say 'rock and roll is wrong ...'/ I say I fell so good I gotta get up and dance." Later in the same song Norman wrote: "I don't like none of these funeral marches ... I ain't dead yet." This 1972 album can be viewed as the origin of the CCM Movement and would have a foundational impact the musical trends in the CCM camp.

Another founding father of CCM would be Bob Dylan who in 1979 released "Slow Train Coming" and in 1980 he released "Saved." In 1981 a final album was a "Shot of Love." Here is the point of all this history. CCM did not begin in the church but in the studios of some of America's worldliest and anti-Christian artists. These founding fathers and secular artists, along with the Jesus Movement and Charismatic Movement, brought CCM into the church. Eventually its tentacles reached into mainstream evangelical churches and today it has totally been absorbed into modern-day church life and worship. But it all began back in the 1960's and 70s. It was an opposing response and rebellious attitude toward the Fundamentalist Movement and TSM (traditional sacred music). These people and movements, rooted in feelings and false theologies, wedded religious music to the world of secularism and worldliness. It was a sad era in the history of the church.

Proponents of the CCM Movement who defend the neutrality of music (music is neither good or bad) will tell us that music communicates good and bad based on its association with culture and the words it is portraying. In other words, Rock music is only bad because it has been used for bad purposes in our culture (rebellion, immorality, drugs, etc.). But the musical sound itself is not bad. The culture made it bad. There is some truth to this in the sense that the cultures of the 1950's-70's invented and expanded secular Rock Music throughout the world, but it was not culturally created for God's purposes; it was created for the Devil's purposes.

This means that Rock Music is intrinsically bad and morally depraved in its composition or design. The twisted rock beast is rebellion in its nature, origin, and use. It represents musical rebellion. People who have historically listened to secular Rock Music and who presently listen to it do so for sexual expression and pleasure, artificial highs, untoward thoughts, and escape from reality. The cults use it to promote Satanism and worship the Evil One. Why is this? It's because Rock Music is a music reflective of rebellion against God. Rock Music is not bad just because the culture made it bad, it is intrinsically evil for it was ultimately designed to control

and wreck the lives of untold millions of people. The culture might have created it but it was never created to be neutral as all the secular rock artists will tell you.

Here is a simple observation. Children will march to a Sousa march (“Stars and Stripes Forever”) but if they hear music where rhythm dominates over the melody (the storyline of the song) then they will respond with movements that are similar to a rock concert. The cultural creation of Rock Music does not vindicate the neutrality of music and the theory that “Rock Music is bad only because the culture made it that way.” No, it is bad intrinsically, evil by design, created for fleshly purposes, is confusing and disorderly in musical theory, and its essential message, including its rhythmic sound, and conveys rebellion and anarchy against God and His ways (1 Sam. 15:23). Rock music is actually musical rebellion against a holy God.

Tim Fisher rightly concludes:

“The tragic truth is that most Christians judge the effectiveness of music based upon the yardstick of the flesh, rather than the yardstick of the Spirit. If a song thrills us, we like it. If it doesn’t excite us, we don’t like it ... The strength of rock music is in its appeal to the flesh. Through the beat, the volume, and the reputation, the music is designed to appeal to our sensual nature. Its victims admit that rock music is often more addictive than drugs. It has the power to split families and alienate teenagers. It grabs hold of our bodies, and it dulls our minds.”

Let’s be very clear about this. CCM is a gateway drug into secular Rock Music. And most who imbibe CCM do so because what they really want is to crossover into secular Rock Music. Speaking of crossing over, the crossover of the hippie music into the church took place within the eras of the 1960’s and 70’s. The slow drip of contaminated music began to flow into the local churches and Christian learning institutions and it continues to manifest its ugly head to this very day. Musical rebellion has grown into a giant tree and evil monstrosity (Matt. 13:32) whose branches touch the lives of millions of Christians. The roots of musical rebellion cannot be dismissed and we should see through the facade of Contemporary Rock artists and their music, who attempt to put a new face on an old rebellious musical system that is attached to the world of sex and even Satanism.

Jim Logan shares this:

“I’m asking God to bring healing from my involvement in Satanism and the horrors of those early years of my life. Whenever I hear rock music, whether it’s supposedly



Christian or not, my reaction is extreme. I can't handle it. I don't care what the words say; as soon as I hear the beat, it takes me back to those services where we called the enemy to empower us to do great evil."



Rock groups like "Black Sabbath," "Kiss" (Knights in Satan's Service"), AC/DC, Rolling Stones, Behemoth, Dark Funeral, Mayhem, and other more modern-day rock groups have notoriously been associated with the world of the occult and Satan by their own admission and the type of music they play and sing. The Beatles and other early rock stars admittedly studied ancient beats of satanic worship and brought this sound into their own rock creations from the 1960's – 1980's. There is a type of music that demons feel comfortable with and which Satan uses to control the minds and lives of people.

In April 1990, a Christian from Zimbabwe, Africa, arrived for his first visit to the United States. He is a native missionary under the Awana Youth Association. When he turned on a Christian radio station and listened to the music, he was shocked. Here is his report: "I am very sensitive to the beat in music, because when I was a boy, I played the drums in our village worship rituals. The beat that I played on the drum was to get the demon spirits into the people. When I became a Christian, I rejected this kind of beat because I realized how damaging it was. When I turned on a Christian radio station in the United States, I was shocked. The same beat that I used to play to call up the evil spirits is in the music I heard on the Christian station."

David Pratt, from Chattanooga, Tennessee writes:

"My background is not a good one, but I give thanks and praise to God for saving me from it. I was a Satanist high priest for nine years... When I first became involved in the occult, music had a big influence on my life. It was not just the words but the music itself. Its effect on me spiritually was to bring me into another state of consciousness. The beat and style of the music used in the occult rituals is the same that I now hear in 'Christian power tracts,' 'Christian rock and roll,' 'Christian rap,' and in much of what is called 'Christian contemporary' music today."

No, I'm not saying that CCM and singers are the same as Satanists and Satanic bands. But think of this, why would any Christian want to represent a type of musical sound connected with the underworld of darkness and Satanism in order to promote Christian themes? You cannot change the face of evil, that which is intrinsically evil and which was created for the world of sin, darkness, and Satan (Job 14:4).

Wendell Babcock writes:

"Though Rock music ideas have come from Africa and India, Christian young people from these continents deny much of the supposed origin, primarily on the basis of Rock development and complexity."

Frank Garlock, writing in "The Big Beat" (A Rock Blast) back in 1971, concludes:

"All one needs to do is to make a trip to the places where rock 'n roll has its roots (Africa, South America, and India) and observe the ceremonies which often go along with this kind of music – voodoo ritual, sex orgies, human sacrifice, and devil worship – to know the direction in which we as a nation are headed. God help us as Christians to help stem the tide which is being thrust along by rock music."

Only educational blindness would reject the roots of Rock Music as coming from the slaves that entered into this country. Daven Seay quotes Robert Palmer in "Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock 'N' Roll: "in a very real sense rock was implicit in the music of the first Africans brought to North America." The Pinkster celebrations in North America (drumming, chanting, wild-prolonged dancing) which included music with unusual beats and rhythm was well known. The dances of New Orleans (introduced by Africans) were named after the voodoo gods of their ancient worship rituals. In fact, Eileen Southern, writing in *The Music of Black Americans* said: "One of the most exotic sights of old New Orleans was the slave dancing that took place in the Place Congo." The Conga was actually named after the African demon "congo." The "mamba" was named after the voodoo priestess who offered sacrifices to the demons during the ritual.

The obvious similarities and descriptions between slave music, with its unusual beats and movements cannot be denied. The movements were sensualistic and sadistic. Rock Music in its basic musical element and movements is a "carry over" from the ancient lands of Africa, South America, and India. The Rock and Roll movement and ideas partially evolved from some of the dances and music of the

early slaves which eventually progressed through a number of stages into what we now call today Heavy Metal Rock Music. Although CCM artists deny the demonic origins of Rock Music and claim “There is no such thing as a Satanic sound or beat,” they do so in ignorance.

Facts are stubborn things! The history behind the Blues, Jazz, Rock and Roll, Disco, Heavy Metal and Punk Rock music definitely have origins in the dancing and music of American slaves. Leonard Seidel concludes that “to deny that an African connection to the rock rhythms of our day does not exist, is to be equally misleading and dishonest.” Seidel concludes this without denying there are other roots behind various styles of Rock Music but not at the expense of covering up the primary root system embedded in American Rock Music.

Here is the point, if the music of the people of Africa, India, Haiti and the Caribbean area was well known to be associated with demon worship and contained rhythmic confusing sounds and dancing, it is definitely not a stretch to associate certain characteristics of Rock Music of today with Satanic worship of the ancient past. In fact, this is why Satanists and the occult still use this music today in their pagan forms of worship. Does this mean that Christians are worshipping Satan when playing and listening to CCM? No, but they are certainly playing into his hands! CCM was not created to glorify God but is an offshoot of worldly, devilish, and sensual music of ancient history.

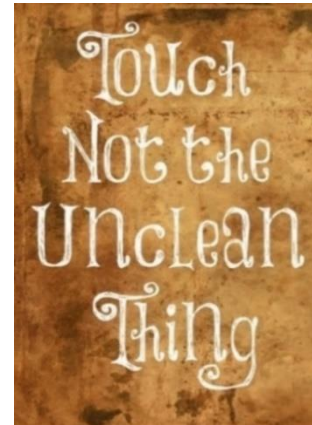
We do know that Rock and Roll emerged as a defined musical style in the United States in the early to mid-1950s. It originated and was mostly derived from the rhythm and blues music of the 1940s, which itself was developed from earlier blues, boogie woogie, jazz and swing music (a type of Black Music developed from their past heritage). The phrase "rocking and rolling" ("rock n' roll") began to be used by the early 20th century as a sexual analogy to describe promiscuous, physical relations. Rock and roll in turn provided the main basis for the music that, since the mid-1960s, has been generally known simply as Rock Music.

It's clear that Rock Music, with its roots, words, and sounds was born to promote rebellion against God through the realms of sex, drugs, Satanism, and disobedience to Gods chain of Biblical authority (Rom. 13). Why on earth would the Christian want anything to do with the words or sounds of a culture that is in open rebellion against God and glorifies Satan? The truth is this, when the enemy wants to control

and eventually destroy a person spiritually, music is often his weapon of choice. Don't fool yourself.

#### h. Separation, Worldliness, and the Unclean Thing

The curse of God is on the rock and roll music because of its open rebellion against God's laws of holiness and righteousness. What should be our response to this type of music? In the words of Scripture, "touch not the unclean thing" (2 Cor. 6:17). Rock music, which includes its sound, is an unclean thing. Rock is a perversion of music (its musical pollution) and by virtue of its devilish creation to promote rebellion against God, the Christian should be more than ready to separate from it in all of its forms. Hebrews 7:26 reminds us that Jesus was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." This means He did not participate with the pagan practices of the culture in that day. Neither should we, if we want to be more like Jesus!



God commands us:

- ✓ To not love the world (1 John 2:15-17)
- ✓ Not befriend the world (James 4:4)
- ✓ Refuse to conform to the world (Rom. 12:2)
- ✓ To separate from the world (2 Cor. 6:14-17)
- ✓ Abstain from worldly lusts (1 Pet. 2:11).
- ✓ Live free from the world (1 Pet. 4:2-3; Eph. 2:1-2).

We need to be awakened from our worldliness! Whenever we participate with a depraved form of music, we create to some extent a partnership and association with something that is spiritually flawed, evil, and which Satan has used for His kingdom of darkness. Ephesians 5:7 says, "Be not ye therefore partakers with them" (pagan ways of our culture). Ephesians 5:11 continues on to say: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." 1 Timothy 5:22 also commands, "neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure." Revelation 18:4 once again says, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins..."

The words “partakers” and “fellowship” indicate that we can potentially share in the moral corruption of perverted music when we accept it, instead of judging it, and separating from it. The Bible teaches that we become a *partner, co-sharer, or a fellow participant* in various forms of carnal and paganized music, or worship, either directly (by playing and participating with it) or indirectly (by condoning and accepting it). The words “fellowship” and “partakers” indicate wrong association with the unrighteous and unholy ways of unsaved pagan people (2 Cor. 6:14-17).



Proverbs 23:23 declares: “Buy the truth, and sell *it* not; *also* wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.” When God’s truth of separation from the world (2 Cor. 6:14-17; 1 John 2:15-17; Rom. 12:2; Titus 2:12) is sold, or to use a modern expression, thrown under the bus, it’s then that Christians attempt to unite truth with pagan philosophies and the perverted sounds of the culture. Learn and apply separation

to your music and times of worship. Learn the sound and structure of glorifying music to God and don’t exchange truth for error, principle for popularity, the Spirit for the flesh, substance for show, feelings for facts, and worldliness for worship.

God reminds us that we are “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4). This means we should not partake of those things which stem from the old nature and the world of rebellion. The new nature is in direct opposition to the sinful disposition that still remains in us (Rom. 7:18). Our worship music can be a direct reflection on what nature we are feeding, the new or the old, the pure or the impure. The incentive and goal of Bible separation from worldly music is to “do his pleasure” (Isa. 46:10) and today, through His life and nature, it is “God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). The new nature promotes godly music while the sin nature promotes worldly and carnal music.



When we adopt a pagan or perverted sound and try to put Christian words to it, It’s like cleaning up a pig for the county fair. We try to hide the true nature of the music, just like cleaning up a pig is an attempt to hide the true nature of the animal (2 Pet. 2:22). Satan’s key word in our

generation is “associate” but God’s key word for believers today is “separate.” We are not called upon to glamorize paganism or paint it in a different light than what it really is. You cannot change the nature of an unclean animal.

Martyn Lloyd Jones warned:

“Be careful with whom you associate with if you want to stand fast in the faith.”

This is important advice from a godly man of bygone years. If we associate with rock artists and their music of rebellion, then we are no longer following God’s command for Bible separation. God is against all forms of paganized music and worship and He does not want us to participate with culturally contaminated practices that have been used by Satan, demons, and pagan people (1 Cor. 10:20). In doing so, we become, to some extent, a promoter, condoner, and endorser of a type of music and sound that Satan has historically used for his kingdom of darkness and purposes. God’s Word clearly teaches we should separate from this darkness in every way (Eph. 5:8, 11; Col. 1:13; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 John 1:6). This means we must learn what ungodly music sounds like, discipline our lives (1 Cor. 9:27) and separate from that which is unclean from God’s perspective. The way God sees things is not skewed or biased. So, when we understand and open our heart to God’s Word on Biblical separation, we will begin to see things from His perspective. As a result, we will want to separate from both the sound and words of musical rebellion.

Douglas McLachlan said:

“Social acceptance is the one thing for which a good many contemporary Christians are prepared to sell their souls. The world thrives on conformity; it gags on diversity. It is always attempting to force us into its mold (Romans 12:2).”

God has called us to be radical, but godly, non-conformists. We are called to this radical difference before lost men and women by possessing different values and lifestyles, which model change and a difference (2 Cor. 5:17). This means that our music and our lives must be characterized by our spiritual rebirth, not by the old man (Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9). Colossians 3:8-9 remind us that we must put off the old songs of the world and start listening to spiritual songs, songs that originate from the Holy Spirit and which honor God (Col. 3:16), if we are going to experience and reflect the new way of life. The world cannot see a difference in our lives when we attempt to impress them with the same kind of perverted sound that feeds their old nature and which keeps them in bondage to their own sin. Matthew 1:21 reminds us that Jesus came to “save his people from their sins” (not in their sins).

Every facet of our lives should be true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (Phil. 4:8). A faulty, worldly value system and self-centered lifestyles will not be a beacon of light and hope to the lost (Matt. 5:14).

One man shared this:

“I had hoped that Jesus Christ might make some sense out of my life. I have tried everything else, and He was my last hope. But as I look in upon these Christians, I am discovering that they are really no different than I am. Therefore, the Christian faith must be impotent.”

God has called us to a behavioral difference (1 Pet. 4:3-4). It's only when being different that we exhibit light and new life in Christ. Christians are increasingly losing their distinctiveness in the world today. We are not to be copycats of the world's music and system which is only a rehash of the darkness and heathenism. Beloved, be teachable and give the Holy Spirit room to work in your heart. The truth about worldly/carnal/rebellious music will begin to make sense to you and God will open your eyes, so together “we be not corrupted from the simplicity (single-hearted devotion) that is in Christ” (2 Cor. 11:3). The simplicity in Christ means our unhypocritical commitment to Christ's purity and cause – not Satan's deception and lies.

1 Corinthians 3:18 warns us:

“Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.”

In Christian service, as in all of Christian life, there is always the danger of self-deception (“let no man deceive himself”). The heart itself is said to be “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked”

(Jer. 17:9). Beware of becoming a seduced saint! Instead of using sound judgment regarding music, we can become desensitized and deceived over the matter of music. We can relegate music to personal choice over a moral choice. We can put our taste before the truth, show before substance, and our emotions or entertainment over Biblical worship. Once again, almost any behavior or practice begins to look and sound normal if you are exposed to enough of it!



DECEPTION

A sixteen-year-old from Florida concurs with this:

"'Christian rock' music has probably been the biggest hindrance to my spiritual growth. When I first heard this kind of music, it really bothered my spirit. But then this music was brought into my church. The more I heard it, the less it bothered me. The less it bothered me, the more I listened to it. It wasn't long before I was involved in secular rock music because I didn't see any difference. This music caused me to resist the Lord and hold parts of my life back from Him. I was not able to have a freedom to truly serve Him and be totally dedicated to Him until I was willing to give up this music."

Familiarity with evil dulls one's sensitivity to it. Once one's face is turned toward Sodom, most often it is not long before the careless musician or Christian finds himself sitting in the gate of Sodom and worldliness (Gen. 19:1). This is why we must separate from that which is errant, spiritually flawed, and not endorse it, or eventually become accustomed to it. Many Christians have become numb, desensitized, and have softened their hearts toward carnal music. They have become a sensual, flesh-pleasing people, instead of wholeheartedly following the Lord (Deut. 1:36; Numb. 32:12; Josh. 14:8, 14). It is time for Christians to discern and decide what sacred music is to sound like and start listening to it.

David Cloud remarks:

"A certain type of music produces a certain type of response and creates a certain type of atmosphere. There is a type of music which accompanies the sensual atmosphere of a nightclub. There is another type of music which lifts the spirit to commune with the holy God of Creation and which creates an atmosphere of conviction and worship in Spirit and truth. These two types of music are not compatible."

Many churches today do resemble more of a nightclub atmosphere, a social club or elk's lodge mentality. As a result, they forfeit the true nature of worship when compromising with the world. 1 Thessalonians 5:22 commands us to "Abstain from all appearance of evil." This means to separate from "every form" of evil which includes different types of evil, but it would also include every view, appearance, or fashion of evil. This means we should separate from all musically-based words and sounds of Rock Music which imitate the sounds and performances of Rock Music and Musicians. Abstain! The Bible advocates total abstinence from worldliness and lusts (1 Pet. 2:11). Embracing a form of evil, like CCM which imitates the same



worldly music and performance styles, is acting in defiance against God's command. We should abstain from anything that reflects this style of music because of the underlying premise and purpose built in to this type of music, which is rebellion against God. The fruit of Rock Music is rebellion.

Dan Lucarini comments:

"We cannot separate the style of music from its immoral associations. Rock music inevitably corrupts Christians."



Lucarini is right. An honest teen, looking back, wrote this: "I slipped around behind my parent's back and listened to contemporary Christian music. This music softened me to the music that I would later come to listen to (secular Rock Music). Thank the Lord that He saved me from all of this, but my point is that this type of music softens our young people to actual rock music. I know firsthand. We should abstain from the appearance of evil because the appearance softens us to the evil itself!"

Many Christians will defend their modern CCM sound by saying, "Well, it ministers to me and the kids." What they really mean by this is that the rock music causes a certain feeling and emotional response in their lives. The popular idea of "ministering music" often means that it ministers to the flesh in certain ways, meets certain emotional needs, and creates a certain euphoria in the lives of people. Yes, music can minister to people but this does not mean that it is ministering to the spirit. It can minister to the physical and fleshly instincts of man. The basic purpose of Rock Music is to be "felt" rather than understood.

Charles Bergerson said,

"We need to guard against spiritualized sentiments wrapped in worldly bundles of music."

The false notion that Christians listening to Rock Music with Christian words are not affected by the musical sound is totally absurd. This is exactly why many Christians listen to their type of musical. It's because of its sound. They feed upon the strong worldly rhythmic patterns which can cause an unbalanced emotional response in their lives. It can very easily replace the spiritual with the physical and lead to

Christians crossing over into secular Rock Music. The truth of the matter is this. Rock Music was created to identify with the baser elements and instincts in people (Acts 17:5; Jude 19). Therefore, it should never be used in the service and worship of God. It makes a mockery out of God's holiness and righteousness (2 Cor. 6:14). To mix the sounds of Rock Music with Christian lyrics produces physical responses in the bodies of people which are carnally based responses to a specific sound, not worshipful responses toward the character of a holy God. Music that is designed for the flesh will produce fleshly responses, whether that of the body or the baser sort (John 3:6).

i. Separation, Isolation, and Worldliness

No, we cannot totally avoid all Rock Music. It's everywhere, It's in restaurants, malls, grocery stores, sporting events, and just about every place you go today. You cannot get entirely away from Rock Music or else you would have to get in a rocket and leave this world (1 Cor. 5:10). We are called to be *in* the world and witness *to* the world, but we are not to be influenced *by* the world and become *of* the world (Rom. 12:2). While I cannot entirely remove myself from Rock Music as I live in a wicked world, I can refuse to participate with this type of music in the church and in my own personal life and worship.



Music today is a watershed issue that is determining the destiny of every church in our culture. In actuality, musical choices are directional choices. This is true in our personal lives and church ministries. A wrong philosophy of music reveals and ensures a worldly philosophy of ministry.

Tim Fisher asks this timely question:

“Are congregations so used to approaching music on a sensual plane that they can no longer tell the difference between a spiritual blessing and a musical thrill?”

Sadly, many Christians today cannot tell the difference between the two, since they are so used to approaching music on the sensual and entertaining plane. We must be very careful that flamboyance of methods, such as overproduction, the abuse of technology, or the distortion of musical sound, does not distract from the message which we are trying to present. We are to keep the clarity of our Bible message the focus – not the production. The use of technology can support our message and

mission but it should never take over and hinder it by deemphasizing the truth and memorizing people so that the truth takes a back seat.

Fisher concludes by saying:

“There is a big difference between being spiritually uplifted and getting an emotional boost.”

Ministers could avoid self-deception by evaluating their ministries and realizing that the wisdom of this world reflects the mind of Satan (Eph. 2:2) and is foolishness in God’s sight (1 Cor. 3:19). What passes as wisdom in a lot of churches today is nothing more than worldliness and foolishness. Although the church must *identify* with the needs of the people in the world, it must not *imitate* the wisdom of the world. It should not follow the “counsel of the ungodly” (Ps. 1:1). There is a wisdom of this world (1 Cor. 2:6; 3:19) that works for the world, but it will not work for the church. This is because worldliness cannot produce godliness.

Sari Ann Mitchell, age 14, California shared her story:

“I have been praying for a way to express how I feel about ‘Christian contemporary’ music to my friends and others. I was so happy to receive this booklet in the mail that I wanted to share it with you. I want to add my own personal testimony to the many in this booklet. I started listening to ‘Christian contemporary’ (rock) music when I was twelve. At this time, I was attending a private Christian school, and there my friends all listened to it. The pressure was great, so I started to listen to some of their tapes once in a while.

“I became hooked. It may be hard to believe, but that music made me think sensuous thoughts, and the beat made me want to sway and dance like the world. After this I started to listen to ‘Christian contemporary’ music all the time, and even though my parents didn’t like it, I got some tapes of my own to listen to. One day, I went to my friend’s house, and she had her radio on. It was on a secular soft rock station. When I got home I turned my radio to that same station. I listened to it just once in a while, and it sounded just like the ‘Christian contemporary’ music, except the words were a little different. (Actually, I didn’t even listen to the words!)

“When I started to make these compromises, I started to make other compromises too, like stopping my daily devotions and listening to music instead of studying.

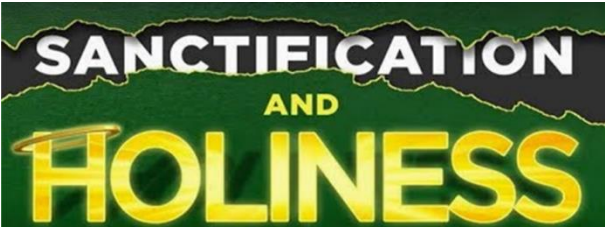
When I did do my homework, I listened to music, and I cheated on some of my homework so I could have time after school to listen to music. I shut myself up in my room and became secluded so I could listen to it. At this time, I also began to rebel against my parents, spreading from rebellion in music to rebellion in clothes. Then my Dad and Mom took me to a Basic Youth Seminar. There I heard stuff I had never heard before about music, dating, marriage, disloyalty, bitterness, genuine love, and much more.

“After that Seminar, I started to think about where my life was going. It wasn’t going how I wanted it to go, no matter how hard I tried! I knew something was very wrong. Then I went to the Advanced Seminar. This cleared it up. I was going downhill, and only God could pull me up, so I gave it all up to Him, and every day He pulls me up a little higher. I have to tell you this because I want you to know I’m not just saying that I think ‘Christian contemporary’ music is bad and is compromising—I know it is. There’s only one way to get out of its addictive clutch, and that’s to give it up to God. So please don’t let this wolf sneak into the church and kill people unaware.”

We must be careful that we do not lose our way in the current or ever-flowing tide of worldliness. Beware of the drift of the times. We can very easily (in smaller or greater ways) “give place to the devil” (Eph. 4:27) and move into the uncharted waters of compromise with the enemy and begin to promote His agenda, if we are not anchored securely to the truth of separation from the world. Let us remember what Jesus taught: “Be not ye therefore like unto them” (Matt. 6:8). We must anchor our life on the unchanging truths of God’s Word and not allow ourselves to drift musically into CCM, so we might maintain purity in our music, worship, and living.

“Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,  
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife?  
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,  
Will your anchor drift or firm remain?”

- **Music would not be important if holiness or sanctification were not to have a key role in our Christian life and experience.**



The flows out of our previous point on separation. Actually, separation from the world system, which includes an unbiblical and worldly philosophy of music, applies to the realm of holiness or sanctification.

a. The definition of Sanctification (holiness)

The words “holy” and “sanctification” speak of setting ourselves apart for God’s holy use. In other words, we separate from that which is impure so that we can be consecrated to God’s purpose and will for our lives. Holiness and sanctification basically mean to separate from that which is morally bad or corrupt so we can consecrate ourselves to God and His holy purposes. We are to set ourselves *apart* from the world system (Rom. 12:2) while at the same time consecrate ourselves *unto* God (Rom. 12:1). We are a vessel that is to be fit used for God’s sacred and holy purposes (2 Tim. 2:21). This means we cannot use our body, which includes what we listen to, in a way that does not please God (1 Cor. 6:19). The use of our body must be pleasing to the Lord in that we are using it to represent God’s purity and holiness.

Holiness and sanctification are interrelated words that connote being set apart and consecrated to God’s purity. When I am sanctified, I am willing to be set apart for God’s holy purposes and use and not be defiled by worldliness and ungodliness of any kind. Leviticus 20:24, “I *am* the LORD your God, which have separated you from *other* people.

David Cloud has correctly observed:

“The truth of the whole matter is that the mind of today’s Christian has become so amalgamated into thinking just like the world, he can no longer differentiate between music that is holy and set apart unto God, from music that is profane and of the flesh.”

b. The extent of Sanctification (holiness)

1 Peter 1:15 declares: “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation” (in all aspects of our lifestyle).

The Bible says we are to be holy in every area of our lives and this would definitely include the area of music and worship. Fundamentalist churches and Christians have always bowed the knee to God's holiness. They realize holiness is a command to be obeyed, a course to be followed, and a commitment to be kept. This means that Christians who practice Bible separation do not need to chase every new church growth fad that comes down the pike. Furthermore, they don't have the emotional need for the latest style or song in Christian music.

God is "glorious in holiness" (Ex. 15:11) and wants His children to have a high regard for holiness as it relates to all aspects of our living, including our musical expression and worship. Holiness is the foundation of all separation. Holiness is the call to separation. The pursuit of holiness demands separation from all that is opposed to God's holy nature and His Word. Holiness is the will of God for our lives (1 Thess. 4:3). We are to be like the cherubim, which surround the holy presence and throne of God and actively defend the holiness of God's presence (Psalm 18:10; 80:1; 99:1). The cherubim are the custodians and guardians of God's majesty and holiness. The holiness of God demands specific responses from God's children.

2 Peter 3:11

*"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness."*

Once again, the phrase "in all holy conversation and godliness" applies to every area of our lives, including our musical choices and worship. God wants our lives, including our music and worship, to satisfy His holiness. This means we should follow a higher and holy calling that is completely opposite from the world's standards and way of living. Since we are to express sanctification or holiness in every area and phase of our living, this would include what we listen to and use when worshipping God. Psalm 145:17 says that "The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." The same should be true of our lives. We should express righteousness in every area of our lives, including the type of music we listen to and incorporate into our worship.

The Bible reminds us that "this is the will of God, even our sanctification" (1 Thess. 4:3). It also states that a Christian is to "possess his vessel in sanctification and honour" (1 Thess. 4:4). Holiness is linked to new, fruitful and victorious living (Rom.

6:19, 22) and the putting away of sins (2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 4:24-32; 1 Thess. 4:3-7; Titus 2:3). Holy Christians will live in contrast to the normal lifestyle of the Gentile world (Eph. 4:17) and the mark of this different lifestyle is “righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:24) in both inward and outward transformation (2 Cor. 7:1).

As we consecrate ourselves to God, expressing sanctification, holiness, and purity in our lives (Rom. 12:1-2), we must remember that our songs of worship and praise should reflect God’s character and righteous ways (Rev. 15:3). Sanctification must apply to the realm of music as well, since music is not amoral (neutral in its sound and effects).

### c. The Goal of Sanctification (holiness)

A twenty-three-year-old from Wisconsin shares this: "I personally don't like 'Christian rock,' but at the cafe where I work as a waitress, they have been playing it. Since I have been working there I have had no desire to pray or read the Bible or to even get to know the Lord.



I believe that since I have been listening to 'Christian rock' it has subconsciously affected my spiritual growth. I have been on vacation for a week now and I have found that I desire to read my Bible and to pray since I have been away from 'Christian rock.'"

A twenty-year-old from Texas writes:

"I have been struggling with a moral failure. After a time of defeat, I noticed that these devastating failures were coming after or during listening to 'soft rock' or 'Christian rock' music. I now realize that I had seared my conscience in the area of music. The destructive rhythms bring a sensual awakening inside of me and this leads to a lessening of inhibitions. Since asking for God's forgiveness and healing, becoming accountable to my parents, and removing these evil influences, I have experienced amazing victory and freedom! However, I still feel the danger in 'Christian rock' and its pull on my spirit. I wish every person would take this matter seriously because so much damage has been done to me. Consequences and scars

remain that would have never happened if only I had been more alert to the dangers."

The goal of sanctification is to produce spiritual growth in our lives as it relates to observing God's ways and personally knowing about God. Rock Music is not God's tool to produce sanctification and growth. It has the opposite effect on our lives. It has the tendency to take us in a sensual, fleshly, worldly, and self-gratifying direction (Gal. 5:19). Rock Music by design appeals to our baser elements and cannot produce genuine sanctification in our lives. It's not Rock Music but truth and the Holy Spirit's work in our hearts and lives that results in sanctification and spiritual growth (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Gal. 5:22-23; 2 Pet. 3:18).

Essentially, sanctification results in spiritual advancement in the area of internal and external holiness (2 Cor. 7:1; Phil. 2:13). The way we grow today is through the expression of God's grace and favor being poured out in our daily lives. Peter said in 2 Peter 3:18 that we are to "grow in the grace (in the sphere of God's unmerited favor and kindness), and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (the personal knowledge of Christ and His ways). How do we live a spiritual life and experience spiritual growth?

First, we grow in grace (the MANNER of growth) which means that we all need the sanctifying aspect of God's grace to change us. We were saved by grace (Eph. 2:8-9), but grace does not end there! We also need to grow by being changed through God's grace (special favor and blessing), which is evidenced in God's saints today through His sanctifying and supernatural power, endless spiritual resource and supply, and complete blessing and fulfillment that He showers upon our lives (John 1:16; Rom. 6:1-15; 16:24; 1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 12:9; Phil. 4:23; 1 Thess. 5:28; 2 Thess. 5:28; 2 Tim. 2:1; James 4:6; 1 Pet. 3:7; 4:10; 5:5, 10). We are to live in the sphere of God's grace operating in our hearts and lives, causing us to grow and mature.

Second, we grow "in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (the MAIN focus of growth) which speaks of growing through an intimate awareness of Christ's daily presence and help in our lives through our union with Him (Phil. 2:13; 3:10; Gal. 2:20). We grow as we obtain a better understanding of God ("the knowledge of God" - 2 Cor. 10:5), through possessing a proper knowledge and awareness of



who God is, what He represents in His essential nature and being, and following His ways by making Him lord over our lives (Eph. 4:15).

Steve Miller, writing in “The Contemporary Christian Music Debate” makes this bizarre statement: “I firmly believe that replacing songs like ‘Born to be Wild’ and ‘I can’t Get No satisfaction’ with sermons in song such as ‘Asleep in the Light’ was a major impetus to my spiritual growth.” I have no idea about Miller’s spirituality, but I can assure you that you don’t experience true spiritual growth and sanctification through these types of sewer sounds of the world.

As previously mentioned, holiness and sanctification convey that we are to be pure, morally blameless in both our inward spirit and outward actions (2 Cor. 7:1). These terms speak of being morally and spiritually consecrated to God’s purposes and using our body for His use. Living a holy life does not mean we cannot enjoy life; it actually means we can enjoy the things that please God instead of our old nature. Yes, holiness means I CANNOT DO certain things (if we are going to be dedicated to God this must be true), but holiness (living a pure and dedicated life to God) also means I CAN NOW live a different way of life that pleases and honors God. Holiness not only pertains to things I CANNOT do, it pertains to those things I CAN and SHOULD do.

1 Peter 2:9

“Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

The result of living a sanctified and holy life is so we might “show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” In other words, we should “show” or demonstrate by our redemptive lives, through proclamation, singing, and transformation, that we have been delivered from the realm of darkness and sin. Unfortunately, CCM gives a false impression of the believer’s deliverance from darkness since it tries to maintain and promote the worldly and sinister side of our old way of life.

Again, we must always remember that the goal or purpose of Biblical separation/sanctification/holiness is *vertical* for it is always to be directed “unto

God” (Rom. 12:1). But it’s also *horizontal* since on earth we are summoned to separate from all that displeases Him (“And be not conformed to this world” - Rom. 12:2). If our music conforms to the pattern of the world, it cannot conform to God, since God does not identify or associate with the system that is in rebellion against Him. Separation means that we are to maintain a difference between light and darkness (2 Cor. 6:14). God has called us out of the darkness of our past lives to now represent the light of His holiness in our Christian lives. Since this is true, any music that turns us toward the desires of the world and flesh should have no place in our time of worshipping a holy God. From the practical perspective, the “old things” are to pass away in our Christian life and “all things” (including our music) are to become new (2 Cor. 5:17).

Think of it this way, the work of Jesus Christ on the cross should radically alter and conform our music and worship to the standard of God’s holiness in both its musical words and sounds. Christ’s death was designed to sever and free us from our past sins, the devil’s works, and ungodly lusts (1 John 3:8) and make us holy inwardly (what we desire), outwardly (what we do), musically (what we listen to), and intellectually (what we think about). The same grace that saved us also teaches us to keep “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts” so that “we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:12).

#### d. The Difference of Sanctification (holiness)

God in both the Old Testament and New Testament speaks of the importance of His children’s sanctification (being set apart unto God and for God’s Holy purposes). In practicing sanctification or holiness,



God told His people to “put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean” (Lev. 10:11). Leviticus 20:25-26 also states, “Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean...which I have separated from you as unclean. And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people that ye should be mine.” In Ezekiel 44:23 and Ezekiel 22:26, God also reminded His people: “And they shall teach my people the difference

between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean." Leviticus 18:3-5 adds this: "After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances."

The Bible is abundantly clear that God is not pleased with reproducing the heathenistic lifestyles of those who are against God and His ways. Some undiscerning Christians will react to these verses in this way: "He dude, that was Old Testament, we live in the New Testament and are free to make our own decisions today, including what kind of music we want to listen to." This kind of mentality shows the lack of understanding and knowledge one has about the Bible. First, there is a common thread between the Old and New Testament on the teaching of Bible separation which says – "Don't practice heathen living" which reflects immoral, indecent, and indifference to my ways (2 Cor. 6:14-18). Second, during the Old Testament God deemed some things unclean ceremonially to teach the enduring principle of Bible separation. When studying the Old Testament Mosaic laws, we can see the pictures God was painting and the typical lessons He was teaching. This is why all Scripture is applicable and profitable for doctrine (Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:16).

In summary, God still wants us to remain separate, distinct, and holy from the pagan influences that surround us, without enforcing the exactness of the ceremonial Mosaic regulations of the Law upon people, which typically taught the doctrine of separation and holiness. The ceremonial Law taught Bible separation in typical forms, lessons, and pictures. The ceremonial teachings of the Law were similar to a Sunday school teacher presenting truth to children in picture format. The pictures were designed to convey the truth that God wanted His people to live separate from sinners. God presented typically what He wanted His people to portray practically in their lives. Today God still wants us to live separate from our pagan neighbors in an outward way (2 Cor. 6:14-17) but not in a ceremonial or isolated way since we no longer live under the Mosaic regulations of the past.

#### e. The Message of Sanctification

## IS MUSIC NEUTRAL, AMORAL?

- "...we have to remember that, strictly speaking, **music is amoral**" (William J. Peterson, "O, What a Fantastic Day for Christian Music," *Eternity*, April 1971).

We need to revisit this question once again. The message of sanctification (living separate from worldliness) means that there must be moral evils to separate from within any given culture and society. One of the plaguing moral evils in our society is Rock Music and anything that mimics

this philosophy and ideology of this genre of music must be separated from on the basis of God's holiness. However, many in the CCM movement will dodge around the Biblical teaching of separation from their style of music by concluding that all musical sound is amoral or, which means it's neither good or bad. But reasonable thinking people know this is not the case. In fact, the rock artists would never play classical music or the cherished hymn music of the church at a rock concert. Why? It's because musical sound is not neutral.

James L. Melton wrote:

"Music can move one to feelings of sorrow, joy, anger, fear, suspense, confusion, excitement, aggression, romance, or a host of other emotions. Perhaps you've heard of the Mozart Effect, the proven fact that students score better on tests when they've listened to Mozart prior to taking the tests. It has been tested and documented that even plants grow better, hens lay better, and cows give better milk when exposed to better quality music. One test even showed that a group of rats preferred living in a room filled with Bach music to living in a room filled with rock music! Music has power, plain and simple. In the Bible, it has the power to move even God (Acts 16:25-26, II Chron. 5:13-14). We'd do well to respect it."

Intellectual honesty will lead us to the conclusion that sound is not neutral. The local tavern will not play the cherished hymns of the church. Why? It's because certain music does not fit in those places. They want music that feeds the senses and fleshly desires. Witch doctors would not use Bach to accompany their demonic spells. How sad when worldly people recognize that musical sound is not neutral, but God's people are ignorantly denying the reality of this, so they can indulge in their worldly behavior. Jesus taught: "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Luke 16:8).

It's true, the rock artists vehemently deny the neutrality of Rock Music. Listen to their own words. "Rock music is sex and you have to hit them [teenagers] in the face with it" (Andrew Oldham, manager of the Rolling Stones, *Time*, April 28, 1967, p 54). "Rock Music is Sex. The big beat matches the body's rhythms" (Frank Zappa, June 28, 1968). Rock 'n' roll is all sex. One hundred percent sex" (Debbie Harry, *The Age of Communication*", William Lutz, 1974, p. 398). "Rock and roll is 99% sex" (John Oates, interview in *Circus*, January 31, 1976). "Rock 'n' roll is sex. Real rock 'n' roll isn't based on cerebral thoughts. It's based on one's lower nature" (Paul Stanley, *The Role of Rock*, p. 44). "Everybody takes it for granted that rock and roll is synonymous with sex" (Chris Stein, interview in *People*, May 21, 1979). Rock is the total celebration of the physical" (Ted Nugent, *Rolling Stone*, Aug. 25, 1977). "That's what rock is all about – sex with a 100 megaton bomb, the beat!" (Gene Simmons of the rock group Kiss, interview, *Entrainment Tonight*, ABC, Dec. 10, 1987).

It's clear that only CCM artists hold to the "neutrality of music" position so they can support a perverted form of Christian music. They should follow the advice of rock artists and keep it out of the church. "Listen, rock 'n' roll AIN'T CHURCH. It's nasty business. You gotta be nasty too. It you're a goody, goody, you can't sing or play it" (Lita Ford, rock singer, *Los Angeles Times*, August 7, 1988). Author Steve Lawhead, a defender of CCM, makes an interesting statement when he writes, "No, rock music cannot take you anywhere you do not want to go. However, it [rock music] *can make it easier for you to go where you do want to go, but know you shouldn't.*"

In other words, here is a contemporary music defender who honestly concludes that Rock Music can take you into the realm of impurity and worldliness. And yet, on the other hand, he uses the same sound, joins it with Bible words or themes, and concludes that it will never take you down the wrong path. This is how silly and absurd the argument of the neutrality of music has become in the CCM world. If a certain kind of music, including its sound can adversely affect your spiritual life if a person is not careful, then it cannot be neutral.

Keith Green, who espouses the neutrality of music, once stated:

"But just because people with darkened hearts will use rock music as a medium for rebellion and self-exaltation, doesn't mean that the same style of music can't be used by people submitted to God, to capture the attention of sinners, and lead them away from self-and to the throne of Christ!"

Elsewhere Green makes these contradictory statements:

“Is there such a thing as ‘evil music;” To that question I would have to answer a definite, ‘Yes!’ but my reasons for calling some music ‘evil’ may surprise you.”

Then he states:

“I have never once seen a case where music was the direct cause of sin or wickedness in a person’s life.”

Later he states:

“I have also seen it (music) used to create sensual moods by people with lust and manipulation on their minds.”

This sounds like a bunch of doubletalk! Of course, these conclusions are based upon the false premise that Rock Music is neutral which Green fully espouses. Green, like other CCM artists, believes that music is neither good or bad and all that matters when worshipping God is that a person’s heart is right heart before God and that he possesses a humble spirit, while using the sound of Rock Music to reach people. On the one hand, music can be evil, even though it is neutral (neither good or bad) but the music can become bad depending on what Green calls “the motives of the heart, not the music itself.”

Several things are wrong with Keith’s conclusions. First, our heart may be sincere but this is not the test of what is right in God’s eyes (John 17:17). Jehovah Witnesses, who are sincere in their cultish proselytism, does not make this right in God’s eyes. People can be sincerely wrong even through their heart might be right. This can be true of Christians as well who might want to win the lost and help people through the vehicle of CCM. However, it’s not sincerity but Scripture that is the final test on what is right (Rom. 4:3). We must also remember that the heart can also be deceptive (Jer. 17:9). There are times we can be sincerely wrong no matter how genuine their sincerity might be.

I met a CCM singer at one of our fair ministries. He was playing music with a band that was near our Gospel tract booth. He came over and talked with me and we had a good chat. We even talked about music. Only God knows the heart (“I the LORD search the heart” - Jer. 17:10), but I had no doubt in my mind that this Christian

man possessed a sincere heart in his singing and musical presentation. He was not a fake. But sincerity is not the test of truth and what is right. We must have a higher standard than our feeling, sincerity, and even a higher goal than winning the lost. Our goal must be to uphold and properly represent God's character (glorify God) in everything we do – including evangelism.

Dr. Bob Jones Sr. used to say:

“It's never right to do wrong in order to get a change to do right.”

Second, we must remember that Rock Music is not the magic bullet that brings unsaved people to Christ. There is no special drawing power in this type of music. The drawing power comes from God alone (John 6:44). Third, Green seems to suggest that Rock Music is just a neutral “medium” (like a VBS puppet show for kids, the TV, radio, Internet, etc.) that can be effectively used as a tool to reach people with the Gospel. In other words, like all other things, you can use Rock Music for good or an evil purpose. So, according to Keith Green, Rock Music can become evil, only if your heart is already evil, but it can be good if your heart has no evil motive.

Of course, Green fails to make the distinction between that which is neutral (internet, radio, puppets) and that which is not neutral (music). In fact, Green fails to admit that all the greatest rock artists attribute the actual sound and beat of Rock Music to sexual promiscuity and rebellion. They admit it was created for sensual purposes. But Green says that it can only be “used to create sensual moods by people with lust and manipulation on their minds.” In other words, if you are in the mood for sex then this type of music will help your sexual mood along.

We might ask Green, “Why does Rock Music help your mood for sexual relations and rebellion against God?” and “Why don't the rock musicians play the hymn Amazing Grace” to get people in the sexual mood?” It's because Rock Music conveys sensuality. What kind of planet does Green live on? Well, actually he is no longer living. He died back in 1982 in an aviation accident. But these are preposterous, erroneous, and unbiblical conclusions of an earlier CCM artist. You cannot have it both ways – the neutrality of music (musical sound is neither good or evil) while at the same time it can be “evil music” and music which can “create sensual moods” as Green concludes.

Keith Green finally states: “As you can see, a wicked heart can pervert even the most holy and beautiful of things.” The problem is that Rock Music is not something beautiful, it’s something evil and sinister. Is Rock Music only wrong if one’s heart is wrong and right if one’s heart is right? Hardly. That is like saying that looking at lewd pictures is wrong only if your heart is wrong. Green’s erects a classic strawman argument, a distorted and exaggerated argument to counter the argument that says the sound of Rock Music is evil by design. But Green’s argumentation becomes a slippery slope in his reasoning process. Green’s reasoning is that Rock Music can



only be wrong if one’s heart is thinking wrong thoughts and it can be right if one’s heart is reflecting on right thoughts. However, Rock Music is wrong because of its creative design, it’s worldly and sinful degradation and departure from God’s orderly design of sacred music, and because the evil effects it has produced in millions of people since the 1950’s.

The effects that Rock Music has had on the lives of millions of people versus the effects that other types of music have had on people definitely proves that music is not neutral. I Samuel 16:14-23 is a remarkable passage that tells us how musical sound affects us. It certainly is not amoral or neutral as so many Christian artists suggest. 1 Samuel 16:23 says: “Then David took an harp, and played with his hand ... and the evil spirit departed from him (Saul).” Notice that David Played with his hand” – not “sang with his voice.” David played musical sound before Saul and he was affected in several ways. Saul’s reaction to what David played (not sang) gives us some Scriptural reminders on how musical sound affects us.

First, it affects us physically (vs. 23 -- “refreshed”). This means that Saul was refreshed or relieved physically. Second, it affects us mentally (vs. 23 -- “well”). This means to be relieved from a mental condition of fear, doubt, confusion and worry. Third, it affects us spiritually (vs. 23 -- “evil spirit departed”). Saul was troubled by the evil spirit’s presence. The music that David played actually spoke to Saul’s heart and drove the evil spirit away from him. Thus, he was relieved and uplifted spiritually by the spirit’s departure. This tells us that there are certain sounds that evil spirits are not comfortable with! Remember that this was just the sound and



not the words, which had a profound effect on Saul. The Christian today must become musically sensitive, which includes becoming sound sensitive, if he is going to maintain a pure musical life of worship before God.

Similarly, in 2 kings 3, Elisha is upset, but needing a word from the Lord, he called for a musician. 2 Kings 3:15 says, “But now bring me a minstrel (a musician). And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him.” The minstrel music (the music played on a stringed instrument) calmed Elisha’s spirit so he could hear from the Lord. The inspired playing (just the sound – not singing) had a calming impact. This also proves that music is not amoral or neutral since it can have specific effect on the hearts and minds of people. Every secular rock artist knows music is not amoral (neutral) in its expression and message that is being sent out to its listeners. There is a definite *morality*, a distinction between right and wrong, that is connected with music, even its sound. If we want to see it, we will see it – and hear it. If we choose to ignore it, then we will do so neglecting the clear revelation of God on this matter of music, and neglect an important area of sanctification in relation to our Christian life.

We have already seen that God created music (Ezek. 28:13; Job 38:7) and said that everything was good at His creation (Gen. 1:31). If something was created as good, this means that God did not create music to be amoral (neutral – neither good or bad), but to be “good” and convey a specific morality and moral code of ethics and decency. It also means that God did not and could not create the musical sound of Rock Music which has wrecked the lives of millions of people from a moral perspective. Music can be altered and become immoral (morally depraved) like so many other things that Satan distorts and removes from God’s original design and purpose (Heb. 13:4).

We might sincerely conclude, “I don’t know where to draw the lines” between right and wrong music. However, we cannot use this as an excuse to be undiscerning and remain in ignorance (1 Cor. 14:38) about music. One does not need a music degree to understand that certain types of music appeal to our flesh.

Draw the Line



Pagans know the relationship between movement and music for centuries. Even to the untrained ear, or if someone does not have any basic knowledge about music, they can easily detect a sound that is similar to secular rock music, a sound that is loud, overbearing, and which sends the message of confusion instead of order.

In Daniel 3:1-8, we discover that the false worship of the image of Nebuchadnezzar was triggered by a wrong musical sound (played by instruments) that was connected to idolatry. This reveals that musical sound by itself can promote sinfulness and idolatry. It is not amoral (morally neutral – neither good or bad). The Bible identifies this particular sound as “All kinds (sorts) of musick” (Dan. 3:5, 7, 10, 15). This is likely speaking of the same kind of music referred to in Exodus 32:17. It was a noisy, conglomerated sound full of dissonance (confusion and distress). Perhaps it was like 50 instrumentalists warming up before a concert, all playing different sounds and notes! We cannot be sure of the exact nature of this music, but it was different than the normal sound of music. The sound was distinctly different. It was a particular sound that was used to promote idolatry. It backed idolatry, promoted idolatry, and was used for idolatrous purposes.

Thank God that the three men (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) refused to endorse this sound and bow down to worship the image (Dan. 3:17-18). These men were the three servants of God (Dan. 3:26). Today, we have another style of music (Rock Music), which is distinct and different in its musical sound. It has been a musical sound used to promote sex and rebellion against God. Rock music has unnatural sounds of rhythm, pitch, syncopation, repetition, strong driving beat, and loudness which make it stand out as a noisy and conglomerated sound. It is this sound which can be subtly introduced into Christian music and lead listeners into worldliness.

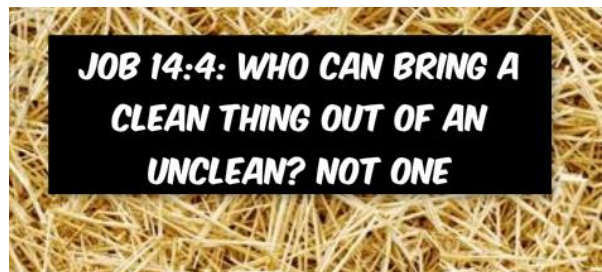
This is why we should learn to train our ears to decipher between good and bad music, the worldly and non-worldly music. You cannot plead total ignorance about music even though you may not understand musical theory. God has called us to have our “senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:14) in the realms of theology, music, and life in general. But this discernment can only occur when we open God’s Word and open our hearts in obedience!

Psalm 96:9 declares:

“O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.”

May God teach us how to worship Him in a spiritual and truthful manner (John 4:24) and in “the beauty of holiness.” For many, CCM is offered solely for the purpose of satisfying man’s insatiable lust or pleaser and self-enjoyment, rather than the offering of worship to a holy God. We must be careful in leading others to believe that artificial methods and rhythmic entertainment produces true worship. Romans 12:1 declares that when we use our body to worship God, we must “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service*” or rational act of worship. Adopting a pagan sound that began to be historically used to promote immorality and rebellion (the hippie movement and the 1960’s), and assimilate it in our time of worship, does not result in our body being “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.” In short, if one listens to the wrong kind of music he will become the wrong kind of person; but conversely, if he listens to the right kind of music he will tend to become the right kind of person.

But the CCM crowd says that we are able to determine for ourselves which musical practices are acceptable in our own lives. Everyone is allowed to have a different viewpoint for in their mind “there is nothing unclean of itself” (Rom. 14:14). But this refers to genuine amoral issues which have no direct influence on personal sanctification. As we have seen, music is not amoral (neither good or bad - right or wrong). Therefore, this passage cannot be applied to Christian Rock Music. The Bible declares in both command and principle that music which has been adopted from the depraved world of hippies, drugs, sex, and rebellion can never be holy no matter what you do with the music. It always remains unholy! Job 14:4 asks this enduring question: “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.” This is a rhetorical question. The answer is understood. No good can actually be created out of something that is intrinsically evil, which is designed to promote rebellion against God and His ways.



Can anything of lasting spiritual goodness come from something that has shown itself to be diametrically opposed to the things of God? Absolutely not! Nothing

good comes out of that which is bad. Bad cannot actually produce that which is good. Only God, His truth, and righteous ways result in lasting goodness.



Jesus taught in 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.”

Jesus gives us a clear answer on the results of Rock Music and CCM. He basically says that good things produce only good things but corrupt things only produce corrupt things. So, whatever perceived goodness comes out of CCM and CCM rock concerts is not the result of the world’s musical corruption. Any true and lasting results can only come through the truth of the Gospel (Eph. 1:13) - not Rock Music and CCM? We cannot attribute salvation and sanctification to rotten, bad, and evil fruit.

Both Job and Jesus remind us that nothing clean can come out of something that is unclean. Period. Bad does not produce good. And yet, CCM artists and churches will tell you that their music is a sanitized substitute for Rock Music and this musical genre is instrumental in the conversion of souls. But again, we must remember that righteousness cannot come out of unrighteousness and darkness cannot come out of light (2 Cor. 6:14). It is amazing how eager churches are today to adapt the music of the culture and try to sanitize it by adding Christian words or lyrics to it. When I take out the garbage, I don’t try to make it smell better by mixing deodorizers with it. The world’s music should not and cannot be effectively sanitized for God’s work without violating the command of Bible separation.

CCM followers will tell you that they are bridging the gap from secular Rock Music to Christian Rock Music. But God’s Word informs us that we must tear down the bridges (2 Cor. 10:5) and rebuild the wall of separation against worldly practices, attitudes, and mindsets (2 Cor. 6:17). CCM artists will also conclude that they can “redeem” the devil’s music and create God’s music out of it. The claim is made that nothing is beyond the redeeming hand of God. This is like saying you can redeem pornography and create something spiritual out of it, or redeem child molestation and create something holy out of it. CCM artist’s claim that we can make rock

music “Christian” by putting good words with it. But you do not make pornography “Christian” by adding Bible verses to obscene pictures. This argument breaks down and is ludicrous and unfounded.

The Bible teaches that nothing clean can come from that which is unclean. You cannot clean up something that is dirty, rotten and foul. Dirt is dirt. Filth is filth. A spoiled sandwich remains spoiled. The only thing you can do is discard it. You don’t try and cover up the foul smell with something more pleasant. Nothing will make the spoiled sandwich edible. This reminds us of the Scriptural principle that “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Galatians 5:9, I Corinthians 5:6). A little rock beat, a little worldliness, a little compromise spoils the whole musical piece.

With so much Christ honoring music available today, why go to the garbage can to look for food? Psalm 119:101 should be our heart’s desire: “I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.” This would include refraining from listening to a perverted sound borrowed from the world of drugs, sex, and hippies, and which today has escalated into an enormous industry of perverted rhythmic entertainment and unethical music designed to reflect rebellion.

Frank Gaebelein said it best:

“Evangelicals had better be concerned about the aesthetic problem if for no other reason than that a tide of cheap and perverse artistic expression is constantly eroding the shoreline of noble standards and godly living.”

Although music is only one area of sanctification in relation to the Christian life (Gal. 5:22-23; 1 Cor. 13), we can be sure that it is an important area that matters to God. This is because the adverse effects that wrong music can have on the Christian life, where it leads to, and how worldliness (adopting culturally corrupt patterns) can keep us from experiencing greater growth in grace and holiness in relation to our worship experience and personal living (2 Peter 3:18). Our prayer of sanctification should be something like this:

“Only one life to offer-  
Take it, dear Lord, I pray;  
Nothing from Thee withholding,  
Thy will I now obey (my Jesus);

Thou who hast freely given  
Thine all in all for me,  
Claim this life for Thine own, to be used, My Savior,  
Every moment for Thee.”

- **Music would not be important if God has not commanded us to promote reverence and godly fear before Him in both our corporate and personal times of worship.**



Sacred worship is contrasted with deviant worship which occurs in most Churches and CCM concerts. Deviant worship results from a *deficient* theological view and understanding of who God is, what He is like, and what He requires (Micah 6:8). It occurs because of a *disobedient* view of Scripture which gives us governing and guiding principles to follow in our times of worship (John 4:24; 7:17). Deviant worship results when people are defiant to God’s teaching on worship and musical expression. As a result, spiritual pollution of God’s people occurs (James 4:4).

#### a. The Meaning of Sacred and Reverent Music

The word “sacred” means that which pertains to God and more specifically to worship that is set apart from common secular uses (worldliness) and exclusively consecrated to an infinitely holy God. This means that sacred music should not be listened to as a means for self-gratification. Much of CCM music is used for self-fulfillment, it is self-centered, and the performers are



often success-oriented. This means they cannot be sacred songs which are solely dedicated to God for His praise and holy purpose. Sacred songs are songs which are opposite of worldly songs. Worldly songs are comparable to the song of the drunkard which is filled with mockery and sarcasm against God (Ps. 69:12), the song of fools which is filled with meaningless and nonsense (Eccl. 7:5), the song of vanity (Job 35:13) which is filled with emptiness and doom, and the song of the harlot which is sung with sensual overtones (Isa. 23:16).

Certain songs should never be considered sacred because they cannot be properly and solely dedicated or consecrated to a God who is absolutely pure in His eternal being and existence. Today, most songs, including the majority of CCM songs, are not used for sacred purposes, since they are created to elicit certain emotions, specific feelings, euphoria, to satisfy the personal and fleshly wants of worshippers, and they result in physical movements and responses which are also geared around the flesh and not the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). These are things which take away from the sacredness and dedication of these songs to a God that is sacred and perfectly set apart unto holiness (Isaiah 6:1-3). Sacred music that is truly set-apart unto God is separated (non-worldly) music that reflects God's holiness in relation to both its sounds and lyrics.

Gordon Sears wrote:

"The truth of the whole matter is that the mind of today's Christian has become so amalgamated into thinking just like the world, he can no longer differentiate between music that is holy and set apart unto God, from music that is profane and of the flesh. Tolerance sets in when families gravitate to watching the immorality, vulgarity, obscenity, and violence, which at the same time promotes ungodly music into the home by way of television. They soon become so accustomed to it, it no longer offends them. If Christians tolerate the sinful ways of the wicked, they will soon tolerate the music of the wicked, because the two go hand-in-hand. Evidence of this spiritual condition is everywhere today. The path of tolerance leads to the highway of acceptance. Once a person finds CCM acceptable, he will easily embrace it in worship."

Any deliberate attempt to make the church "feel" like the world or "look" like the world is wrong. One thing is certain, using the perverted sound of rock music in worship, which Satan has used for sex, drugs, and rebellion against God is a breach of His holiness, or His purity and infinite perfection (Lev. 11:44; 1 Pet. 1:16), and therefore cannot reflect that which is sacred or dedicated to a holy God. In fact, much of what is deemed as sacred music today is actually sacrilegious music. It's not music that is sacred or set apart to reflect the character of God's holiness. The rock sound of CCM does not reflect reverence toward God and His name. God told His people to "not defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name" (Lev. 20:3).

Our meetings together are to be "holy convocations" (Lev. 23:2) or solemn assemblies that are sacred and reverent (Heb. 12:28). Sacred and reverent music



are inseparably tied together. If something is dedicated or consecrated to God, it must by necessity also be reverent (demonstrating respect for God) in that it reflects God and His holiness, or else is cannot be properly set apart for God, dedicated to the Lord, and glorify Him. Sacred and reverent music should produce reverent emotions, a sense of holy amazement, submissive obedience, and joy.

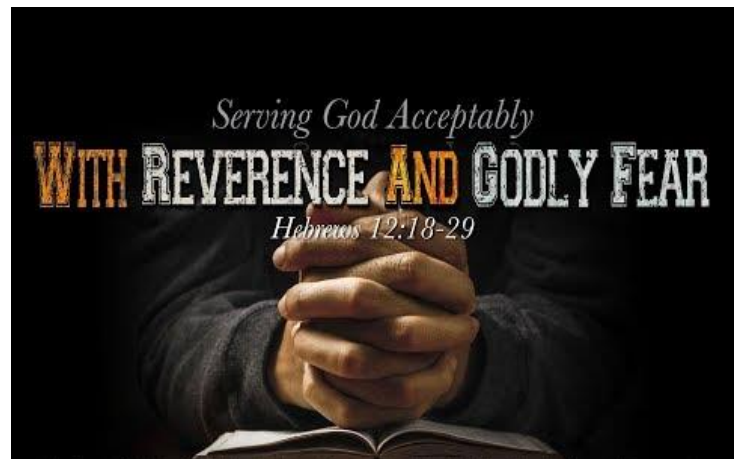
#### b. The Meaning of Fearing God in Worship

Psalm 89:7 says:

“God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him.”

As sacred and reverence are tied to one another, so a healthy fear of God and reverence for God work harmoniously together. The word “feared” (literally “to cause to tremble, feel dread”) with the accompanying word “reverence” (literally “to fear, to be afraid”) connotes a sense of awe, wonder, and amazement before a holy, righteous, faithful, merciful, kind, and good God. The idea of being terrified does not mean to be fearful of God’s judgment but to possess a respectful fear that is related to who God and His glorious attributes. Fear and reverence is a deep and solemn respect for who God is in His eternal being and what He has done for us. The fear and reverence spoken about in the Old Testament portrays how God’s saints are to possess a sense of reverential awe at His holiness and greatness.

In the New Testament, Hebrews 12:28 commands: “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” The word “reverence” literally means to possess a sense of bashfulness toward God and conveys absolute honor and respect toward God. In this



context, reverence speaks of possessing a moral awareness of God’s character and ways which will ultimately be reflected in one’s actions and worship toward God. The sense of a Biblical “fear” (reverence and awe) connotes the idea of possessing



a wholesome awareness and proper response to God's moral character and holiness.

Dan Lucarini once said:

"When I went through this study (on worship), God changed forever my casual, 'come as you are' attitude about worship services!"

The "come as you are" mentality is a slap in the face of a reverent God. Reverent actions flow out of one's view of the moral nature of God and when a person fears God they possess a continual awe and awareness of God's moral purity which results in that individual not wanting to dishonor and displease God with his actions and living. So, this is what it means to be a "God-fearing" man or individual. About 270 verses in the Bible mentions about cultivating a Biblical fear of God. We cannot dismiss fearing God as an outmoded Old Testament concept. Many Bible verses remove any doubt that fearing God is a proper response of believers toward God (Acts 9:31; Rom. 11:20; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:21. Col. 3:22; 1 Pet. 2:17; Heb. 12:28).

By definition, a reverent fear and awe expressed toward God (His attributes), would include possessing a wholesome or healthy dread of not pleasing a holy and righteous God with my life. The fear of God is to recognize God's holy character and possess a deep longing or desire to please Him in every area of life, which would include my music, worship, service, and obedience. When reverence and godly fear are joined together in Hebrews 12:28, they mean that out of a sense of awe and wonder directed toward an infinitely holy God, every Christian should want to be sure they are accurately reflecting God's ways and holy character, so that they do not displease Him because of the things that they do with their bodies, minds, and hearts.

Darren C. Hammermeister wrote:

"Man's thoughts about God are changing. The way we 'see' God, as a society and even as Fundamentalists, has changed from the way the previous generation viewed Him. God is perceived very differently today than He was by those who lived during the early part of the century (20<sup>th</sup> century). Our attitude toward has become very casual. Fundamentalists have not escape the effects of this shift in attitude. Our thinking and actions too often seem unaffected by the reality of God and His presence. In many ways, we have become dangerously 'accustomed' to the idea of

God, numbed and apathetic to the practical impact His existence and character are to have on our lives. God's character must shape our lives and govern our conduct."

Deuteronomy 13:4 states:

"Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him."

Proverbs 8:13

"The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate."

Proverbs 16:6

"By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil."

Proverbs 16:6

"By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD *men* depart from evil."

"I want a principle within  
Of jealous, godly fear,  
A sensibility of sin,  
A pain to feel it near.  
I want the first approach to feel  
Of pride or fond desire,  
To catch the wand'ring of my will,  
And quench the kindling fire."

When taking all the verses together that speak about fearing God, the general idea is that of respect, reverence, and awe toward an unchangeable, holy and righteous God. It is an exalted respect and reverence of God (Heb. 12:28) that sparks a submissive attitude toward His authority and ways.

Ecclesiastes 12:13

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man."

The fear of God governs behavior since it is the kind of healthy fear any good son has for a firm and loving father. When I fear God, I not only reverence and have respect for His unblemished character of purity, I am afraid of doing anything that would displease Him and mar my relationship with Him (1 Pet. 1:17-19). The fear of the Lord is to be a vital and dynamic element of Biblical living for it the fountainhead of all true wisdom (Ps. 110:10; Prov. 1:7; 9:10). It purifies our life (Ps. 19:9; 34:11-14; Prov. 8:13; 16:6). It produces confidence (Prov. 14:26) and even prolongs your life (Prov. 10:27; 14:27; 19:23; 22:4).

Here is the point of application. How we think about God will determine how we live for God. It will also determine the kind of the music we listen to and worship with as a Christian. When we are experiencing a genuine reverence and fear of God in our hearts, we will not want to imbibe the rock sounds and rhythms of a perverted culture. Reverencing God, showing respect for God's impeccable character of holiness, the willingness to submit to His ways (the revelation of His Word), and possessing a wholesome desire to never disappoint or displease the Lord, should be at the forefront of all our musical selections and worship. If we try and remake or reshape God, we will end up changing our music. But since God never changes (Malachi 3:6), our sacred music should not change. It should remain sacred and not become sacrilegious.

As we reflect on reverencing and fearing God, we must remember that God not only looks at our heart in the time of worship (1 Sam. 16:7); He also looks at our obedience (1 Sam. 15:22). Our worship not only is a matter of the *heart* but also a matter of *holiness* before God (1 Pet. 1:15), which is reflected in reverencing and fearing an eternally holy, righteous, and just God, whose ways are filled with perfection and purity. So here is the point. A musical sound that has been historically used in a culturally contaminated world to promote rebellion toward God, sex, drugs, and an anti-God philosophy, should not be incorporated into worship and the Christian life. This lacks reverence and respect for God's purity, holiness, and righteousness. It does not promote a healthy or wholesome fear of God and His ways. We are to "worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness" (Ps. 29:2).

We cannot do this when we adopt and integrate a sound of a perverted and rebellious culture into our music and songs. We are called to be "partakers of his holiness" (Heb. 12:10) – not sharers in the world's standard of a rebellious and

immoral, musical sound. Sadly, the world with its errant philosophes has been permitted to tell God's people how they should worship God! Our music, like everything else, should be like a ship that is anchored on the rock of the Scriptures, not left to be tossed upon the ever-shifting waves of this world. God still commands: "Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God" (Lev. 20:7). Holiness applies to the realm of our music, in relation to both words and sound.

Way back in the late 1970's, Dr. Lehman Strauss said:

"But many of the saints are disturbed and concerned about some of the self-styled, flashy combo groups who move from church to church with a new dress and a new beat that has no serious and reverent sense of God."

We should still be disturbed today by this contemporary sound of contamination and not participate with this kind of culturally contaminated music devotionally (in our personal life) and ecclesiastically (in church life and ministry). We certainly love the brethren (1 John 4:7-8) but there are times that we must break our church fellowships with them (2 Thess. 3:6) to remain respectful to God and His ways.

Dan Lucarini in writing about his departure from the CCM world said:

"That is one of the curses upon CCM: the music will continually be on the slippery slope and worship leaders will be forced to accept any musical style, no matter how disgraceful. I had to get away from that."

A proper reverence and fear of God, wanting to always please Him, should steer us away from churches that want to promote a corrupted musical sound, which has been used for rebellion against God, and steer us to churches that want to honor and reverence God for His impeccable holiness and righteousness standard (Psalm 99:9).

"Living for Jesus, a life that is true,  
Striving to please Him in all that I do;  
Yielding allegiance, glad hearted and free,  
This is the pathway of blessing for me."

- **Music would not be important if my goal is not to please the Lord in every area of my life, which includes promoting "spiritual songs" in my times of worship and reflection upon God.**

### a. Spirit Filled Singing

In Ephesians 5:18 we are called upon to be “filled with the Spirit.” The word “filled” means to be “fully supplied, filled up, render full, furnished.” When the Holy Spirit fills us, it means that He is in control of our lives which allows His virtues and victory to be manifested in and through us (Gal. 5:22-23). We are to be submissive to the Spirit and sensitive to the Spirit’s promptings in our life so “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Rom. 8:4). To be “filled with the Spirit” means to be constantly controlled by the Spirit in our mind, emotions, and will. God has not called us to “get high” by means of music but to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.



Now reflect on this for a moment. So much of the world’s music is directly associated with drugs, alcohol, and sex. It is fleshly in its composition, in both words and sound, the sound corresponding and communicating the same message of rebellion. Why would we want to import any of this kind of musical style into the church and somehow try and sanitize it? Our music is not to be like those who are controlled by alcohol, drugs, and sinful rebellion against God (“be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess”). Rather, Ephesians 5:18 says we are to be “filled with the Spirit.” We are not to be filled with liquor, drugs, or any other kind of mind-altering concoction but be filled or controlled with the Spirit. The pagans were controlled from the inside by alcohol, or by drugs, or whatever. God’s children are to be controlled on the inside by the Holy Spirit and this filling of the Spirit should be reflected in our music. We can be sure that being Spirit-controlled (Gal. 5:23) does not result in uncontrollable physical, emotional, and mindless responses to rock rhythms that reflect worldliness and rebellion against God.

It’s interesting to observe that in the context of being filled with the Spirit, Paul immediately talks about singing



and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19), which above all things, are songs directed by the Holy Spirit, songs which promote spirituality, Christian virtues, and victory. So, the Spirit-filled life is directly linked or tied to a Spirit-led musical life. If we miss this, we will miss a very important teaching of the Bible. Musical worship is the direct result of being filled with the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:19 declares:

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”

There are three verbs used here: speaking, singing, and making melody. The participle “speaking” suggests that we are using the message of the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to minister or speak to one another as we sing together in corporate worship (Heb. 2:12). The Greek word behind “speaking” was sometimes used to refer to animal sounds and sometimes to the cooing sounds of a baby. Sometimes it is used to describe the chirping of birds. Basically, it means to make music as we minister to one another in a congregational time of worship.

The phrase “Speaking to yourselves” is probably referring to speaking to one another, among other Christians, through our outward and public singing, as stated in Colossians 3:16, where we admonish one another by communicating truth to each other, as we sing together in *psalms* (songs in Israel’s hymnbook – directly taken from the Bible) and *hymns* (songs that mention and reflect upon God) and *spiritual songs*” (songs related to different spiritual themes but also songs directed by the Holy Spirit, songs which promote spirituality, Christian virtues, and victory).

Colossians 3:16 adds that we are also to be “admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” This also is a reference to *corporate* worship since we are to use our singing to minister to others. We receive this when we get together as God’s people. This is not evangelism, this is not entertainment, this is corporate expression of joy and gratitude to God which is shared among believers.

To whom is our music and worship offered? The end of Ephesians 5:19 gives us the answer: “to the Lord.” Ephesians 5:20 adds: “Giving thanks always for all things

unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Once again, we see that our worship is directed to God and God alone. It’s not to be directed toward us in any way – our feelings, wants, wishes, genre or style of music. It certainly is not to be centered upon unbelievers (their depravity, worldliness, and wicked lifestyles). The focus of all our music and worship is to be only centered upon God. It is to God. He is the audience (“sing unto the LORD” - Ps. 9:11; 95:1; 96:2; 104:33; 147:1). We’re not to entertain each other; we’re not to entertain nonbelievers. Our praise is offered to God.

The phrase “in your heart” seems to be stressing the importance of internalizing one’s worship, when a Christian allows external music (psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs) to internally minister to their own personal hearts – the inner man (Eph. 3:16). Internal worship occurs when you are vocally singing and making melody in your time of worship, but it can also occur without necessarily singing or listening to any music (Ps. 143:5). In other words, we have the tune and truth ringing in our hearts and this is what is most important.

When Paul mentions, “in your heart,” he may be talking about the *location* of all true worship which occurs within our inner being (John 4:24). We may not have a very good singing voice, but we can always have a good singing experience within our heart. Of course, even as we sing corporately with others the praises of God and listen to instruments, we can always have a worshipful experience internally for the music is getting “in your heart” which is where all true worship takes place. So, the location of our worship is internal – “the hidden man of the heart” (1 Pet. 3:4). We must remember that public worship is really to be a manifestation of private worship (what is going on inside of us). Of course, all of our worship, whether personal or corporate, is to be personal, internalized, and sincere. It’s to occur “in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16).

Perhaps the “in your heart” emphasis could be summed up with the words of a popular hymn: “There’s within my heart a melody!” We are talking about worshipping and living with a song in our hearts. It’s living with the songs of the redeemed permeating our heart and life.

“There's within my heart a melody;  
Jesus whispers sweet and low,  
"Fear not, I am with you, peace, be still,"  
in all of life's ebb and flow.”

Of course, “in your heart” may also be referencing the *origin* or our vocal and instrumental playing. The idea is that our hearts, which are filled with overflowing joy, should cause us to sing and make melody to God. Our hearts are the channel through which we sing vocally and play instrumentally. In Amos 5:23 God says, “Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.” God says to the people, “Stop singing, your hearts are not right. Stop your songs, your hearts are not right. I don’t want your songs unless your hearts are right.” Again, the whole idea of “in your heart” (Eph. 5:19) is conveying the importance of *personal* worship occurring in our hearts.



The next verb “singing” means just that – to sing with the voice (Eph. 5:19). But in the New Testament it is always used in relation to praising God with the voice (Col. 3:16; 5:9; 15:3). Lastly, “making melody” literally means to pluck on a stringed instrument, particularly a harp, with the fingers. The word came to represent the making of any instrumental music. So the idea behind the word “melody” means to worship God with musical instruments. We discover that the Spirit-filled heart will then express itself with vocal and instrumental music. Those who teach that only the words matter to God cannot justify this position based upon God’s Word which reveals that instrumentation is just as important to God (2 Chron. 7:6; 150:4). When we offer up a song to God in worship, He does not separate the words from the music and neither should we. Both must be acceptable unto Him (1 Pet. 2:5). And remember this, we cannot make a song palatable for the sinners without making it unacceptable to God.

#### b. Word Filled Singing



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.”

The two similar texts on music teach that being filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) is being filled with godly, musical expression (“psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” - Eph. 5:19) but being filled with the “word of Christ” (Col. 3:16), which is the Word of God, also results in these same musical expressions spoken about in the Ephesians 5:19 passage. There is a correlation between the two – the filling of the Spirit and the filling of God’s Word. They are mutually bound together. When a person is filled with the Spirit that person is also filled with the Word of God. In Ephesians 5:19, we have seen that singing, spiritual songs, joyfulness, and praise to God is the direct result of being filled with the Spirit. In Colossians 3:16 the same results are attributed to being filled with the Word of God. So, essentially, being filled with the Spirit is letting the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. If both the Spirit and the Word bring the same results (godly musical expression), then they are interrelated. You cannot have one without the other.

Someone posed this question and answered it:

“What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? It’s not an ecstatic experience. It simply means to be completely controlled by the Word of God. The Spirit is the author of the Word; and when you’re controlled by the Word, you’re controlled by the Spirit. The Spirit-filled life is not something you seek in a vacuum, it’s something you seek in your Bible. It’s something that flows out of your understanding of the Word of God.”

We’re commanded to live under the control of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit controls us by the knowledge of the Word of God. To be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by the Word of Christ (Col. 3:16). This means you will never see a Spirit-filled Christian contradicting the Word of God. Paul teaches the first result of a life under control by the Spirit of God, a life saturated with Biblical truth is their song or music. This is amazing. There are other results of the Spirit’s filling in this passage such as mutual submission, wives submitting to husbands, husbands loving

wives, children obeying parents, parents not provoking children, slaves obeying masters, masters doing good to slaves (Eph. 5:21-6).

All human relationships fall under the positive influence of being filled with the Spirit, which means they are driven by the truth of Scripture. But the first result and example of being filled with the Spirit is song and music. So where does Christians singing and worship originate? It comes from the mind that grasps the truths revealed in Scripture that encompass such things as the glory of God, His holiness and righteousness, His person, His work, and His salvation.

Our Spirit-filled music is also Word-filled music. It must align itself with the authority of God's Word which reveals the truth about God and his righteous ways. When we are filled with the Spirit, it means our musical choices that we use for worship should reflect spirituality and the control of the Holy Spirit over our lives (Gal. 5:22) as He directs us in accordance with God's truth. Here is the point. The Holy Spirit is not trying to get us to groove or move to a certain type of music but to be filled with the message of the music ("teaching and admonishing one another" – not jumping around and dancing with one another - Col. 3:16). Many times the movement of the music and our own movements are mistaken for the movement of the Spirit. The flesh-gratifying music of CCM can produce a false sense of spirituality. What people term as a spiritual experience can actually be a flesh experience (people experience euphoric feelings, self-fulfillment, meeting their felt needs, etc.). Many Christians choose music on the basis of what it *does* to them rather than on what it *says* to them.



Many come to church to get their weekly fix of alleged spirituality which is filled with the psychological stimulants of the sights and sounds of Rock Music, such as flashing lasers and lights, stage fog, a theater and nightclub atmosphere, and body movements. The sound of Rock Music even in its subtle forms can rob us of the Spirit's teaching ministry through a

musical piece (Col. 3:16) because we can become emotionally distracted from the words and message. We need to constantly assess if our music reflects the control and work of the Spirit of God through getting us to truly reflect on God, His truth, and cast all the praise upon the Lord – not man.

So, being filled with the Spirit will result in a Word-filled musical expression that honors God. Spirit-filled music is Spirit-directed music which reflects God's Word on every level – theologically, ethically, and morally. If you desire a Spirit-filled or controlled musical lifestyle, you should not listen to music that is dominated by rock rhythm, which is created to stir or stimulate a fleshly response. If a rock and roll rhythm controls your response to a musical selection, instead of the Holy Spirit, then you are not being led or controlled by the Spirit. A Spirit-filled life and rhythm-dominated music are in conflict with one another. This is because music which reflects disorder and rebellion is in conflict with the ministry and control of the Holy Spirit. We should choose Christian music that reflects God and the Spirit's controlling work in our hearts and lives and not confuse the Spirit's filling with manmade or artificial stimulants in musical expression.

Let's look at Colossians 3:16 once again:

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms (Scripture-based songs – Israel's hymnbook) and hymns (theological based songs about God) and spiritual songs (songs of testimony with spiritual themes), singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

We observe from these verses that music was designed to be for worship but it was always intended to have a teaching aspect related to it. Music is a powerful God-given tool that allows God's Word to be communicated to our hearts, where it can “dwell” (be at home) in our hearts and enable us to live in a spiritual manner. We must learn to live in the Scriptures so that the Scriptures can live in us! Godly music can have a powerful and sanctifying influence over our lives as it draws us to God's Word.



Music is to be very useful in our spiritual education. Some of the choruses we have learned point us back to the Scriptures in our times of difficulty. What we learn in our songs can be a great help us in times of need or discouragement. For instance, we should not miss the blessing of learning many of the great hymns and being able to call them up in our hearts to remind us of the great themes and promises of Scripture. Music, including the great hymns of the faith, are to be important outside of the church! Their Scriptural messages should ring in our hearts and minds with the result of pointing us to God's love, grace, mercy, strength, blessing, and wonderful communion and fellowship.

Here is the point. Music was never designed for religious rhythmic entertainment, to feed our fleshly wants and desires; it was specifically created for a teaching purpose. We should not minimize music's Biblical role in our lives and ministries. Colossians 3:16 informs us that Biblical truth is essential for our everyday sanctified living and worship (John 4:24).

Pastor Steven Cole wrote:

"The goal of theology should be doxology, or worship. If you worship a god who is loving, but he overlooks sin, you're not worshiping the true God, but rather an idol you made up, because the God of the Bible is loving and holy. True worship rests on knowing God truly as revealed in His Word. Without God's revealed truth, all the emotion in the world is misdirected and futile. Thankful worship begins by engaging our minds with the word of Christ."

There are great positive benefits that come from a life filled with music, a type of music that causes the Word to richly dwell in the believer's heart and life. Of course, being taught and reminded about Scriptural themes through musical expression should result in individual Christians "singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." In a specific way, songs we sing should make us mindful of God's grace to us in Christ. In other words, the theme of God's grace should be the centerpiece of our learning and music. But there may be a broader understanding of the word grace.

Strong defines "grace" in this context as "the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including gratitude." I think that is correct. Singing with grace speaks of singing with a spirit of thankfulness and gratitude as God, out of His own grace, moves in our hearts and produces a spirit of thankfulness. In other words, it's the grace of God's movement upon our hearts that produces joy and a

thankful spirit. One of the ways that we know grace is moving in our hearts and is influencing our lives will be found in our joy filled and thankful singing. It's not only WHAT we sing, but HOW we sing it – with joy and gratefulness that shows the influence of God's grace working in our hearts (Titus 2:11-12).

It must be remembered that the teaching and counseling ministry of music in our lives through the power of music affects our will and emotions. This is why musicians and music is not to be entertaining since this type of music becomes a distraction from the teaching aspect that music is to have in our hearts and lives. Our music musical teachers are important for they are teaching us what is right, acceptable to God, and how to live. The instruction given to the first century church concerning sacred music shows that there was obviously music, during the days and culture in which the early church lived, which did not reflect the new nature we receive at salvation. In other words, we can violate Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 with our musical choices since certain rhythms and styles appeal to the flesh and are created for entertainment – not a teaching purpose. Rock Music violates the music policy of Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19. Our music is to consist of spiritual songs (not fleshly songs) which are designed to influence the spiritual part of man's existence – not His fleshly existence.

### c. Musical Filled Living

The Bible reminds us that Christians are to have a song in their hearts, a song of joy and deliverance and they are to be involved in singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; 1 Cor. 14:15; Heb. 13:15; 1 Pet. 2:5; Ps. 67:3; 100:2; 126:2; Isa. 51:11). Singing is our personal responsibility and is a natural and important way Christians express praise and worship to God (Ps. 7:17; 9:11; 21:13; 27:6; 30:12; 47:6; 57:7; 61:8; 66:2; 68:4; 92:1; 98:4; 104:33; 108:1; 135:3; 146:2; 147:1; 149:1). Hebrews 2:12 says that "in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." Music is not optional for the Christian life; it is God's plan for worship. A Christian once said to me that he does not really like music and singing. I suggested that he might need a spiritual tune-up and worship tune-up at the same time. This is because singing and joyful praise (Ps. 66:1; 81:1; 95:1-3,4,6; 98:6; 100:1) is the natural heart-felt response of a believer toward their God of great wonders! Singing with emotional expression demonstrates that our hearts are turned toward God and in tune with God. Tim Fisher concludes: "Those who will not sing in church are showing that they may have nothing to sing about!" We should have a singing and joyful heart of praise

that is always ready to worship God. Singing, music, and praise should be a natural part of our Christian lives. I used to sing these words in a large choral group:

“Always there is singing, always there is a gladness,  
In my heart since Christ has saved me.”

Since being filled with the Spirit results in being filled with music (Eph. 5:18-19), a musical expression that conveys the Spirit’s filling or control over one’s life, Paul now begins to speak of the types of music we are to worship with as Christians.

Many Christians will argue that the Bible does not tell us what kind of music God does like. Therefore, they conclude that Rock Music is an acceptable form or style of music and we should stop all of the “worship wars.” Of course, the Bible does reveal what kind of music He likes. We see



God’s thinking or viewpoint on music in Ephesians 5:19. Many people will ask what genre or kind (style) of music do you listen to? I like to say, “God’s genre!” There are three genres of musical expression which could generically fall under one basic, universal, and all-compassing genre – Sacred Music. Let’s look at God’s genre of music.

### 1. Psalms

Psalms were actually inspired Scripture (the Old Testament psalms) put to song which included instrumental accompaniment since the word means “a striking or twanging of chords.” The psalms refer to the 150 canonical psalms found in the Bible. You might say that the psalms were the “church songbook” of Paul’s day and would continue to be for centuries to come (James 5:13).

### 2. Hymns

It appears that some hymns (religious odes of celebration) were taken directly from Scripture like the Psalms. There were other portions of Scripture which were also sung such as Mary’s song (Luke 1:46-47), the hymn of Zacharias (Luke 1:67-79), the angelic host (2:13-13-14), Simeon’s song (Luke 2:28-32), and a few of Paul’s poetically arranged, inspired, Biblical statements were believed to have been used

as hymns (1 Tim. 3:16; 2 Tim. 2:11-13) that were actually in the form of simple chants of praise, but they were not taken from the Psalms. These types of songs might be placed under the category of inspired hymns for they were taken directly from the words of Scripture.

In a general way, hymns brought praise to God. However, there were other hymns which were not taken directly from the Scriptures themselves but were used to celebrate God in a more direct way. The word “hymns” (a song in praise to God) means these were specific songs of human authorship that focused on God and His attributes (songs of praises directly centered upon God). These songs (Matt. 26:30) which were designed to celebrate God would be hymns like “A Mighty Fortress is Our God” and “We Praise Thee O God, Our Redeemer, Creator.” Untold thousands of these hymns were developed through the church centuries.

### 3. Spiritual Songs

#### ➤ Their content (spiritual themes)

Spiritual songs are next on the list. They might be considered as “odes of the Spirit” which mean they are certainly directed by the Holy Spirit and the people who write them are led by the Spirit (not the flesh). These spiritual songs likely include hymns with the emphasis being placed on our Christian experience (our general spiritual living). They are testimonials to the work of the Spirit and the Lord taking place in our hearts. Spiritual songs cover a wider range of spiritual themes and Scriptural subjects (the cross, resurrection, ascension, redemption, regeneration, etc.) and how these spiritual and Scriptural themes impact our spiritual living. This is a broad category of songs that cover Christian testimony, doctrine, praise, and Scriptural truth. Some examples of spiritual songs would be songs like “Redeemed” or “O How He Loves You and Me,” “I’d Rather Have Jesus” and “It is Well With My Soul.” Many of our hymns also consist of these types of songs. They are spiritual themes that directly relate to our Christian living in various ways.

We must conclude that every song is to be directed to God or “to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19) and “unto the LORD” (Ps. 33:3; 92:1; 96:1; 144:0; 149:1; Isa. 42:10) even though it may contain spiritual lessons directed toward God’s people (Ps. 33:1; Col. 3:16). This means that every song is ultimately to be offered to God as a sacrifice of worship (1 Pet. 2:5) and bring glory to God, even though within the song we

might be relaying spiritual lessons on living the Christian such as our victory, God's help and strength, our faith, and many other Christian themes.

James Montgomery Boice writes:

"But since this is 'to the Lord,' it is clearly the music Christians use to bless God. Paul is probably contrasting the edifying joyous worship of the Christian community, which has praise of God as its aim, with the destructive, noisy revelries of the pagan world, when people are drinking."

In speaking about the Old Testament Psalms, Kent Brandenburg remarked:

"Even if the content of the Psalm itself was directed toward God's people or the world, it was a song that was sung to God. The direction of our song or music will affect the nature of everything about songs that we are singing or playing. It directed to the Lord, our concern will be that it is something by which the Lord will glorified, a song of music that He would like, approve of, or desire."

➤ Their character (spiritual music)

While "spiritual songs" is a generic term referring to a variety of types of songs focus on Christian themes and experiences, they are qualified by the word "spiritual." The emphasis on the "spiritual" is important. This means that all songs should be spiritual in musical sound and content. Both the words and the music (the vehicle carrying the words) must be spiritual. Praise by its very nature is to be spiritual in substance, consisting of theological and Biblical truth, and by reflecting non-worldly musical sound. Even the first Christians and early church recognized and understood that their conversion to God through Christ required some significant changes in how they worshipped God, including the kind of music they used. Hence, there was an emphasis on "spiritual songs."

There were likely styles of music, particularly in the instrumental parts of music, which were concerning to early Christians. Eventually, this is why instruments were actually abandoned in church worship. The early church fathers condemned their use. Apparently the instrumental sounds resembled and were associated with pagan, secular, ungodly, and sensual overtones of that day. Of course, there is nothing wrong with instrumental music but even this type of musical sound can be appealing to the flesh and not be "after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1, 4). This is why we



must place a guard not only on the words but also the sounds we associated with worship (1 Thess. 5:22).

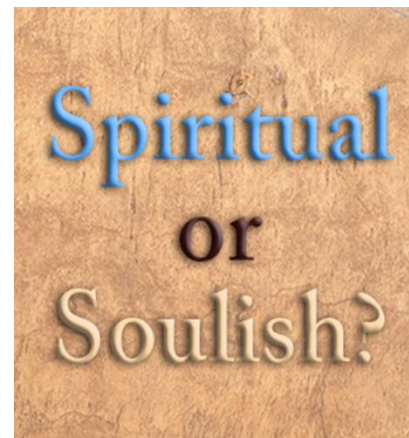
Edmond Lorenz, writing in “Church Music” makes this conclusion:

“Paul’s reference to ‘spiritual songs’ shows there were new songs in vogue among the Christians ... Certain modes were found better adapted to Christian use than others – has more notability and dignity. Other modes were forbidden as to secular and wanton. The Greeks themselves recognized the difference.”

Again, instrumental music is wonderful when it follows God’s order for musical expression and worship. The Bible clearly states that godly and spiritual music will encourage us to make “melody” (a song of praise and worship with accompanying instruments) in our hearts to the Lord. If music is written, played, and sung with driving rock beats and dominating rhythms, which cause a person to sway and respond physically to the music, it no longer can be labeled a spiritual song. This is because the emphasis is taken away from the spiritual and placed on the physical responses. We are not to be grooving to Christian music but being spiritually lead by Christian music. Rock beats are designed to elicit programmed responses which are not spiritual but physical in nature. The sound of Rock Music can eventually break us down and create a reversal of our Biblical value system.

➤ Their contrast (soulsh music)

Spiritual songs are opposite of the sensual. Spiritual songs are in conflict with the sensual and are contrasted with what is termed as soulsh music, a type of music that follows the baser elements and instincts that originate from within man’s soul. James 3:15 speaks of that which “is earthly, sensual (soulsh), and devilish.” Jude also uses the term “sensual” or soulsh (Jude 19) which refers to that part of man’s existence where the sin nature functions and thrives. A sensual person is actually a soulsh person which means they are allowing their life to be dominated by the fleshly and soulsh part of their existence. The Bible teaches that fleshly lusts, which originate from the soul, are constantly warring against our soul (1 Pet. 2:11) with the intent to control our affections, desires, will, and mind as a



Christian. The soul is not only the seat of our sinful disposition, it is the constitutional makeup within us that encompasses our entire personality and humanness as it relates to everyday life.

Here is an important question. Is your music spiritual or soulish? Is it a mixture to these two elements? Let's think about this. People can respond to an external, momentary, exciting, musical stimulus based on rock rhythms and entertaining music but not be responding in the realm of their spirit where the new nature dwells and operates in conjunction with the Holy Spirit. The Bible places an emphasis on spiritual songs, which are opposite and free from the expressions of carnal, fleshly, and worldly songs. Sensuality and spirituality are exact opposites. The nature of each necessitates the exclusion of the other. Conflict between the flesh and the spirit is a subject of considerable importance and discussion in Scripture (Col. 3:2; Gal. 5:16; Rom. 8:5).

Sensuality is characteristic of the unsaved way of life and is therefore inconsistent with Christianity (Eph. 4:17-23). The sensual is also a hindrance to our spiritual growth for the effects of carnality can keep immature Christians from handling spiritual instruction and learning God's Word (1 Cor. 3:1-3). The sensual is contrary to sound doctrine (2 Tim. 4:3), in conflict with the will of God (1 Pet. 4:1-6), and is terminal (1 John 2:17) which means it will not result in eternal gain and reward. Much of what is labeled as "contemporary" today is actually "temporary."

Spiritual songs are directly opposite of soulish songs. Spiritual songs are generated from the spiritual part of man's existence, the realm of our human spirit, which is the place where the new nature and God's life operate, where the Holy Spirit works, and where all true worship takes place (John 4:24). In Scripture there is a close connection between music and the spiritual part of man's human existence (1 Cor. 14:15). Spiritual songs, as opposed to fleshly songs, are those songs that originate from the spiritual part of man's existence and which are manufactured and directed by the Holy Spirit (Col. 3:16). As already mentioned, the understanding of "spiritual" (Eph. 5:19) would also connote the work and result of the filling or control of the Spirit occurring in our lives (Eph. 5:18). Spiritual songs are Spirit-directed songs that cooperate with the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to control our lives.

In other words, godly music, as revealed in Scripture, is designated as an activity of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:19). Godly music is a response to the presence of the Holy

Spirit in our lives. All true worship that reflects God's nature is an activity or work of the Spirit, whereas the works of the flesh are opposite of the Spirit's working (Gal. 5:19-23). The Bible teaches that when "we walk in the Spirit" we will not "fulfill the lusts of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16) which craves for an emotional, physical, and mental response through a rock beat or sound. This means that we will not have to listen to a certain type of sound to escape reality or depend upon some particular sound to produce artificial fulfillment, help, and worship in life. All of these things can be supplied by the ministry of the Spirit. Most Christian music (CCM) is listened to for fleshly and personal excitement (artificial highs, physical gyrating responses, mindless escapism, and the desire to experience certain feelings or euphoria) instead of spiritual edification. 1 Corinthians 10:23 remind us that "all things edify not."

The "spiritual songs" that are a reflection the filling or control of the Spirit means that during our times of worship, we maintain control of our feelings, bodies, and minds at all times. We do not become out of control. It's interesting that during CCM concerts, when the music reaches a certain pitch and place that musicians and others begin to move their hips and bodies in an unrestrained way, they allow themselves to be overcome emotionally and physically with the Christian Rock Music. All of this speaks against the controlling influence of the Holy Spirit. Although we are not emotionless during our times of worship, we are not to allow the physical to overtake the spiritual, our bodies to be overtaken when reacting to a specific type of rhythm, and our emotions to be hijacked by rock beats, unless we want to lose the filling or control of the Holy Spirit which includes "temperance" – self-control (Gal. 5:23).

Spiritual songs do not trigger an uncontrollable physical, emotional, and mindless response to rock rhythms which are designed to move our hips but not our hearts, which are created to produce physical responses, and which mix immoral sounds that Satan has strategically used to promote rebellion in the hearts of people. These are not spiritual songs! In general, spiritual songs are songs which reflect godliness instead of worldliness in their lyrics, sound, and presentation. When songs reflect the rock idiom of accents on the offbeat, or backbeats, the excessive or heavy syncopation, this creates musical or rhythmic confusion, and when they are

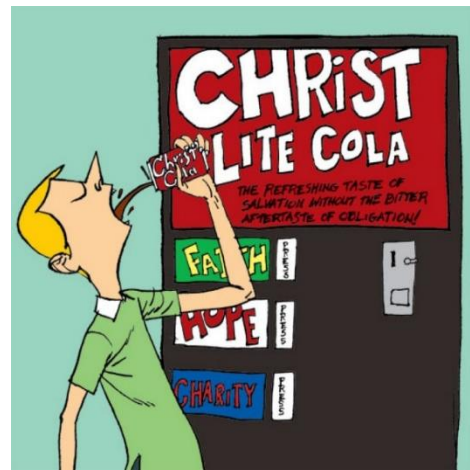
accompanied with excessive repetition and loudness, they lose their spiritual nature and become hypnotic and carnal in their expression.

This type of music is crafted to entertain the flesh. Even the style of singing can be built on commonly known sensual clichés (scooping, sliding, wailing, screaming, breathlessness, or cooing) so that the music becomes a carnal expression and not a spiritual presentation. What is the music in its lyrics, sounds, and presentation portraying? Remember that sensuality is opposite of walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:18-25).

Tim Fisher states:

“We cannot, under any circumstance, do the work of the Spirit with our flesh – no matter how hard we may try or how sincere we may be.”

Of course, we must remember that fleshly or soulish music does not always mean that it stirs up the sexual drives in people. It most certainly can do this (especially the harder CCM) but fleshly expressions through Rock Music mean more than just sexual response. This is important to realize. The flesh can be manifested in many different ways when listening to CCM which results in a person’s temporal self-gratification and self-fulfillment. A person’s flesh or soulish nature can manifest itself when they use CCM to gratify their felt needs, when they use CCM to get a certain feeling, a sense of euphoria or stimulating emotion, when they need to pass through a specific experience, when they need to get their high so they can feel like they are worshipping God. When people move and dance and put their mind in neutral while listening to CCM, when they need to be pumped up with musical performances, loud sounds and songs, experience visual effects and momentary emotional gratification, all these things are fleshly/soulish responses to this type of music.



Here we come face to face with the question of whether Scriptural truth can be legitimately sung with certain types of rhythm, such as hard rock or a modern beat.

The answer is that *medium* is just as important as the *message* for both the lyrics and sound can portray spirituality or rebellion against God. In fact, I dare say that the medium is the message! A musically perverted sound can very easily overshadow the Biblical message being conveyed. When rock is linked with a Christian message, the emotional impact of the music overtakes and dilutes the true message. Music that is directed only to the body, our physical senses, produces sensuality in varying degrees and ways. It certainly does not produce spirituality. There are also many CCM songs that have quasi-religious lyrics which are so shallow and meaningless that they do not communicate spirituality to the listeners. They are disqualified from being “spiritual songs” because of their lack of spiritual words and content but also because of musical sound of rebellion that is played.

We should not borrow from the stagnate waterholes of the world and reflect that which is carnal in our worship music. CCM is a worldly philosophy that is “after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8). Researchers have discovered that there is a direct relationship between hard rock and premarital sex relationships. Even through the young people could not always understand the words, the sound affected their emotional drives. It’s not only what the words are saying but what the musical sound is portraying. Certain rhythms are aimed exclusively toward the emotions and toward the body. When tied to a Christian message, the impact of the Gospel is often reduced to an unintelligible emotional response. The medium overtakes the message. For those addicted to Rock Music, there is deliverance through Jesus Christ. For those who have not yet accepted this type of music into their lives, an announce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Dr. Joseph Crows wrote this of Rock Music:

“This music is dangerous whether the young person fully understands the words of not. Music can stimulate the emotions and penetrate the minds in ways that seem incredible.”

Young people and any person can become hooked on Rock Music almost like those who get hooked on drugs. Some young people revert to Rock Music and depend on it to stifle the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Here is one testimony. “We’d get out of church in a hurry, get into the car, and turn on the rock station full blast. Twenty minutes later we had no desire to get right with God. We felt secure in our old

ways.” There is little doubt that the rhythm of Rock Music can adversely affect people’s emotions in a sensual and rebellious way. If this type of sound is used to promote sex, carnality, and rebellion against God in the world at large, then why would Christians want to incorporate this same type of sound into their worship songs? Our worship should not reflect the course of this world and age (Eph. 2:2) but the character of God and spirituality (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

Here is an important fact. Music is to be instructive in function, that is, all Christian music should be Biblically instructive to the Church. If music is supposed to teach us something about God’s truth and Word (“teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” - Col. 3:16), then we must ask ourselves what the message is conveying, what is the song portraying? Does it attempt to mix the carnal with the spiritual? Is it using the same perverted sound of rock music or methods of rock artists who are attempting to convey a message of sensuality and carnality in their music?

Sadly, listening to CCM music creates an appetite for unholy music (musical pollution) and bridges a gap to secular Rock Music. Those who listen to CCM normally listen to secular rock music as well because of its similarities. This should tell us something about CCM. It is worldly music for it is like the world. But the Bible has called us to separate from all worldliness (James 1:27; 4:4). Yes, we can in some sense be taught God’s truth through the instrumentality of godly music (Col. 3:16). But we cannot defend the faith (Jude 3) with worldly music because the music itself is conveying something contrary to the faith (“the doctrine which is according to godliness” - 1 Tim. 6:3).

Here is the obvious point. Spiritual music and songs reflect our new nature and the work of the Spirit. They strongly contrast with our carnal, old nature, which we are to counteract in our daily living (Gal. 5:16-17). Man’s spirit, which is his inner control center (1 Cor. 14:32) is the receptor of spiritual information and music (1 Cor. 2:11). However, when man’s soul is not influenced by the new nature, it becomes the receptor of carnal music, which is reflected in the response of the human body. Christian music should help strengthen the spiritual part of man’s existence (feed the new nature) rather than appealing to the old nature, manifested through a physical response to carnally based music. The issue is

choosing spiritual music (non-flesh appealing music) over music that does appeal to our flesh. Music that is born out of rebellion is anti-Christian from its very inception and cannot be redeemed for Christian use.

In summary, wholesome and godly music will always feed the human spirit, which is born again (John 3:6), and which is the spiritual part of man's existence, the place where the new nature, God's life, and the Holy Spirit operate and all true worship takes place (1 Cor. 14:15; John 4:24; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). All genuine worship comes from the spiritual part of man's existence as it is guided or inspired by the Holy Spirit. The place where the new nature, God's life, and the Holy Spirit operate can only produce proper worship that glorifies God. Jesus said in John 4:24 that all worship is to be done in "spirit" (the location of our worship – where God's life and nature are manifested) and in "truth" (the way we are to worship).

d. Their competition (secular rock rhythms and sounds)



Of course, spiritual songs apply not only to the lyrics but also to the sound as well. This is especially true today with the pounding of rock beats. The message of the lyrics and the message of the sound should be identical. All rock music has an underlying sensual beat or rhythm that appeals to our flesh, whether or not the words are pure Scripture. Many CCM rhythms and beats, contribute to the feeding of our flesh, rather than help us learn to deny

it. But the Christian must deny his flesh even in the area of music (Luke 9:24). Rock music in all of its forms, both words and sounds, was never intended to promote spirituality in the lives of people. Just the opposite was true. There is a reason why the phrase "sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll" was invented by Ian Dury and is still very popular today. This is because rock music is connected with a life of rebellion against God. The music of rebellion produces the fruit of rebellion (Matt. 7:17-18).

The origin of rock music and the term "rock 'n' roll" are interesting ones. In the early 1950s, a disk-jockey named Alan Freed was one of the first white people to be involved in "rhythm & blues" music, which was the direct forerunner of rock 'n' roll. He was perplexed as to what to call this music since it obviously needed a new

name. Freed had been receiving bizarre reports concerning kids' reactions to this new music, so decided to name it after a ghetto term that black people used for pre-marital sex in the back seat of a car. Hence, the term "rock 'n' roll" was coined.

The term itself was sexual in its meaning and the music represented this sexual revolution that caught fire in the 1950s and 1960's. The so-called "Christian" rock band Petra in the lyrics of one of their songs claims that God was the source of rock 'n' roll. I've quoted this already but here it is again. "God gave rock 'n' roll to you/Put it in the soul of everyone/If you love the sound/And don't forget the Source/You can turn-a-round/You can change your course." This is blasphemous. By the way, it's true that Rock Music will change your course as a Christian, but not in the upward direction of spiritual growth and sanctification. Instead, it will move you in a downward, negative, and worldly direction within your Christian life as you become addicted to it, influenced by it, and worldly because of it. Based upon the Biblical principle of Bible separation, Rock Music cannot be used to communicate spiritual truth (2 Cor. 6:14-16). It is an oxymoron to conclude that the "rock n' roll" that occurs in the back of a car seat (the origin of the name) and which Satan has used to destroy countless millions of lives can be used as a Christian medium.

It's interesting that a great number of rock artists (Brian Jones – Rolling Stones, Paul McCartney – the Beatles, Mick Fleetwood – Fleetwood Mac, and Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, and Led Zeppelin) studied with satanic masters in their attempt to find rhythms that would addict people and lead them away from God. They studied ancient beats of satanic worship and brought this sound into their own rock creations. Mick Jagger and Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones were responsible for writing and singing a song entitled "Sympathy for the Devil" which actually paid homage to the devil. Paul McCartney's fondling of a Ram on his 1971 album cover clearly shows his loyalty and allegiance to the Prince of Darkness.

History shows that the Beatles were involved in Satanism and deceitfully came to America as decent looking young men, but then led a generation of America's youth to become hippies, drug addicts, rebels, sexual degenerates and God-haters with their rock music. The message of the group "Black Sabbath" (the first heavy metal band) in the later 60's and 70's could not be clearer as they sang about wizards, satanic masses, war and the devil. Jimmy Page, the guitarist for Led Zeppelin, never



made it any secret that he was an occultist and Satanist. Then there is the band “Kiss” (Knights of the Devil) whose faces, costumes, actions, and music catered to the devil. The Rock 'N' roll godless legend, Gene Simmons of this heavy metal band KISS, was known to spew fake blood in concerts as he looks upward to Heaven and wags his head side-to-side in rebellion against God.

The late '60s and '70s spawned several classic "satanic bands," but it was the '80s when the Devil really got his due in popular music. By this decade, plenty of rock bands had learned that they could reliably sell a few records by at least giving allegiance to the Prince of Darkness. This was especially true of hard-rock and metal bands. Angus Young of AC/DC appeared on the cover of “Highway to Hell” with devil horns and a forked tail, and Bon Scott was wearing a pentagram necklace on the same album. In the mid-1990s, a goofy-looking singer named Marilyn Manson met the Church of Satan's Unholy Pope, and was ordained as an honorary priest. He promoted the Satanic Bible during his heyday.

Veteran rock metal band “Spinal Tap” decided to record a holiday song, they made sure it was a special one, and entitled it "Christmas With the Devil." More recently we have band groups like “Marduk” (name for the ancient Babylonian god) whose musical themes include religious and philosophical Satanism, anti-Christianity. Other names such as “Belphegor,” “Archgoat,” “Dark Funeral,” “Behemoth” and “Destroyer 666” are just a few that demonstrate the connection of the devil with rock music. These are just a few examples of the connection of rock music with the world of the devil and darkness. As already mentioned, Rock Music is “not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish” (James 3:15). Even the well-known rock artists believe what the Bible says about Rock Music! It is from the Devil.

Of course, I am not suggesting that Christians who espouse various forms of Christian Rock Music are worshipping the devil. They might be playing into the hands and “wiles” of the devil (Eph. 6:11) but they certainly are not openly worshipping him. Nor am I saying that all CCM is Satanic music which can be used to worship the devil. The point is this, why would a Christian mimic a sound, in varying degrees and intensity, which Satan has historically used for worship of himself, and which has created spiritual rebellion against God in the lives of untold millions of people? It certainly defies common sense and Biblical sense! How can

you call something “spiritual” which was created to honor Satan and his kingdom of darkness and wreck the lives of people? How can a style of sound and confusion, used by Satanists and the occult, be spiritual in any way? How can a rock sound that Satan uses for his purposes be identified with Christianity, truth, spirituality, and made acceptable? This is why the Bible calls us to separate from the depraved culture and “touch not the unclean thing” (2 Cor. 6:17).

Researchers have found that teenagers who listen to raunchy, sex-filled lyrics are more likely to indulge in early sexual activity than their counterparts who don't. In 2001, the researchers surveyed 1,461 teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17 (Rutgers University). Most of the participants were virgins at the beginning of the study. Between 2002 and 2004, the researchers carried out follow-up interviews to track the sexual developments in the teens' lives. Around 51% of teens whose music collection consisted mainly of sexually degrading music began having sex within two years. Teens will try to deny it; they'll say: “No, it's not the music.” But it IS the music!

Music has an incredible impact on our lives. We must know and understand about the culture which is behind our music and learn to not conform our minds, lives, and times of worship to a culturally corrupt style of music which has historically portrayed rebellion and sexual promiscuity (Rom. 12:2).

Let me give you some quotes from the rock stars themselves to substantiate the truth that rock music in both words and sound was designed by the devil to produce rebellion in the hearts of people – not spirituality.

"Rock and roll is 99% sex" (John Oates, interview in Circus, January 31, 1976). "Everybody takes it for granted that

rock and roll is synonymous with sex" (Chris Stein, interview in People, May 21, 1979). “Rock and roll keeps you in a constant state of juvenile delinquency” (Eddie Spaghetti).

“Rock n roll is about drugs” (Marilyn Manson). “There was a time I thought I couldn't enjoy rock ‘n’ roll unless I had heroin in me” (Joe Perry of Aerosmith). “I'm the one that's got to die when it's time for me to die, so let me live my life the way I want to” (Jimi Hendrix). The 60's are gone, dope will never be as cheap, sex never as free, and the rock and roll never as great” (Abbie Hoffman).

“You can't have rock and roll without drugs, you can't have rock and roll without sex” (Rick James). “When you're in a certain frame of mind, particularly sexually-



oriented, there's nothing better than rock and roll" (David Krebs – manager of Aerosmith). "Rock Music is sex and you have to hit them in the face with it" (Andrew Oldham, manager of Rolling Stones).

The *Rolling Stones Encyclopedia of Rock and Roll*, under the term "rock and roll," defines it as "a blues euphemism for sexual intercourse." Dr. Allen Bloom, in his classic best seller *The Closing of the American Mind* wrote, "Rock music has one appeal only, a barbaric appeal, to sexual desire." "Michael Jackson told Oprah Winfrey, "It's subliminal. I'm a slave to the rhythm." "I think God is the most unexplored territory in rock and roll music" (Billy Gorgan). "Drinking beer is easy. Trashing your hotel room is easy. But being a Christian, that's a tough call. That's real rebellion" (Alice Cooper). "Rock is a perfect primal method of releasing violent instincts" (Ted Nugent).

The world openly admits the sexual overtones of its immoral music but CCM artists want us to believe something that no one else believes and says about music – that is neutral; that it does not affect you; that it has no message of its own; and that that only the words make it Christian or non- Christian. Does the world recognize the sensuality of its own music, including its sound? Yes, it does. Do many Christians? Sadly, no.

Evangelist Ken Lynch did a survey:

"In a survey conducted by myself in several Christian schools, 63% of those responding indicated that they listened to CCM on a regular basis. *Of that number, 97% indicated that they ALSO listened to secular rock on a regular basis. Why? Simply put, because CCM and secular rock are essentially the same musically. Only the lyrical content changes. But, even without lyrics, the music conveys its own message.*"

Allow me to share several riveting testimonies that prove how most Christians who listen to CCM also listen to secular Rock Music.

A seventeen-year-old from Pennsylvania gives this testimony:

"'Christian rock' and Christian contemporary music have, in my life, been stepping stones. Not stepping stones going up — but down. Just a few months of listening to 'Christian rock' and contemporary music led to a life of being controlled by acid

rock. This quickly led to and encouraged rebellion, greed, moral impurity, and trying to protect my rights and hide from my parents.

"Now, however, I have become accountable to my father in this, and I am experiencing glorious victory over this satanic music. As I quit, however, I was tempted to get back into 'Christian rock,' because, after all, 'Christian rock' is better than heavy metal, I thought. The Lord in His grace, though, reminded me of the effects this music had on my life before, and I was able to overcome it. I thank God that He is leading me to victory."

An eighteen-year-old from Indiana writes:

"'Christian rock' had made me a shallow, rebellious young Christian. It made it easy for me to get into regular rock music. When I finally submitted to God and got the rock music out of my life, I was able to see the double standard that is lived out by 'Christian rock' musicians. 'Christian rock' does not praise God and it is worse than regular rock because I think it is hypocritical. Rock is wrong and addictive and has contributed to my moral failure. I praise God for His help in releasing me from it."

A sixteen-year-old from Oklahoma adds this:

"I began to listen to 'Christian rock' without the blessing of my father. He told me that if I listened to 'Christian rock' it would open the door for Satan. I just laughed, and listened anyway. It totally deadened my Christian growth and led to terrible immorality, rebellion, and rejection of God. It then developed into secular, hard rock. Now all I can do is go back and pick up the pieces. But I still have a scar in my life that will never be removed."

Another sixteen-year-old from Michigan acknowledges:

"When I was thirteen, I had a friend who was in his twenties. He began helping my father, who was in charge of our youth group. The music he listened to was wrong, and as I became closer to this guy, I began to listen to his music and began to get deeper into it. Finally, it was to the point that it no longer satisfied the flesh and I wanted more. So I then started to listen to regular, secular rock music, and it caused moral failure in my life. I would warn anyone who would experiment with 'Christian rock' not to do so, or it is likely that the same result would happen to them. Thank you!"

The theory of the neutrality of music is contrary to the known effects of Rock Music. In his book "Sound Effects, Youth Leisure and the Politics of Rock," Dr. Simon Frith

reminds us that the impact of rock is generated primarily from the music's sound and rhythm, not its words. "Rock is made," he says, "in order to have emotion, social, physical, commercial results; it is not music made for its own sake" ... "The response is to a large degree physical. The rock experiment is essentially erotic" (Quotation taken from Blanchard, *Pop Goes the Gospel*, Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 1991, p. 32).

There is nothing spiritual going on here! This is just a small amount of the quotes that directly link rock music to rebellion against God and His holy ways. The lives of rock artists portray the nature of this type of musical rebellion. Since there can be no doubt about the association of sexual rebellion against God within rock music, why would Christians want to mimic this type of sound in any way when playing and listening to music? The Bible says we should live to please God by only listening and participating with spiritual songs that reflect a sound that honors the character of God – not Satan. 2 Timothy 2:4 says that "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."



Like Jesus, we are to "do always those things that please him" (John 8:20). Spiritual songs (both words and music) are those that reflect God's holy character and which are opposed to the world, the flesh, and the devil's ways ("for we are not ignorant of his devices" - 2 Cor. 2:11). Music is important simply because our goal should be to live a life before God that pleases Him in all that we do, say, and sing. We are not to live or sing to please ourselves, others, or the devil. Galatians 1:10 asks: "For do I now persuade men (win the approval of men), or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." God has not called us to win man's approval but to win the approval of Jesus Christ!

Often the reason musical styles are accepted or rejected is based on the pleasure of the worshipper, not God. People will say, "I'm not getting anything out of a worship service" because they are not feeling or experiencing something. But we must remember that music is not for sensual pleasure but for spiritual enrichment. This is why they are called "spiritual songs" (Col. 3:16). We are not to appreciate music on the basis of its physical or emotional appeal but on the effects it has on

our spiritual lives. Some Christians who listen to CCM will actually tell you that because the music is labeled “Christian” that it makes them feel more spiritual when listening to it. But this is actually concluding that you can be spiritual and fleshly at the same time without any guilt! Spirituality is not something that you feel. The reality of your feelings does not make something spiritual. The sensation of spirituality does not make something spiritual. The sacrificing of truth over feelings is a dangerous path to follow. So, “spiritual songs” do not mean feeling songs but songs that are rooted in the truth and which reflect the new nature, new life, and Holy Spirit’s filling.

As we have seen, the concept of “spiritual songs” implies there are unspiritual songs, or songs that do not appeal to the spiritual nature of man; rather, they appeal to the carnal nature. Only spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) that represent God’s character are pleasing to Him. Are we really striving to listen to the type of music (spiritual music) that pleases God? Do we really want to please God with our musical choices or do we choose the words or sounds of secular rock music because it pleases us? We need to be sure that God is pleased with our music in relation to its lyrics and sound. We must learn what wholesome music is and not incorporate sounds and rhythms within our music that have been unquestionably used to promote rebellion against God in our society. In the end, we should always want to please God with our life in every area, which includes the area of musical selection (2 Tim. 2:4).

“Pleasing God should be a Christian's goal.  
Sometimes we have to take an unpopular role.  
We may have to make sacrifices to take a stand.  
Do what's right, and leave it in God's hand.”



We have been reflecting on how CCM (along with secular Rock Music) are in competition with sacred and non-worldly music when it comes to ruling our hearts and lives. Actually, the two are competing, like the flesh and the Spirit (Gal. 5:17) for control and dominance over our lives, whether we realize it or not. We need to understand what is happening in the world of CCM which is very similar to secular Rock Music. As previously mentioned, many young

people (an people of all ages) are becoming addicted to the type of strong rhythmic confusion and the sensual or soulish sounds and messages the rock ideology portrays.

A sixteen-year-old from Texas shares this:

"I listened to rock music for about four years and it was not 'Christian rock' because I always thought it was so hypocritical to listen to Christian rock. At least I was honest about it and I did not pretend to be somebody I wasn't. So, after the first couple of times I was already addicted to it. The reason I started is because everybody always thought I was, 'goody-goody.' They would say, 'Hey, did you hear that song?' or 'Have you ever heard this group?' I would say, 'No, I don't listen to rock.'" "I began by listening to 'soft rock' and progressed to heavy metal. It really had a strong effect on my life. Now my church plays 'Christian rock' and I see it ruining many kids in our youth group. It is so sad. It has ruined kids that were so sweet."

Listen to the testimony of a 19 year-old:

"When I was twelve years of age, I purchased a tape that changed the course of my life. This tape was made by a popular Christian contemporary artist. Listening to this tape was the beginning of a pattern, or more accurately, an addiction of listening to rock music. Over a period of three years, I gradually went from contemporary Christian music to pop, light rock, and eventually, to hard rock. I would use rock music to entertain, get me excited, give me courage, and drown out my troubles. All of the things I used rock music for are also common reasons for alcohol or drug addiction, which is why I refer to it as an addiction in my life. The symptoms of my addiction were manifested in many ways: I withdrew from my family, became very rebellious, chose friends who listened to rock music, and spent hours by myself listening to rock music. ... I knew it was a bondage from which I needed to be freed. Each time I tried to break free, the next rock song I heard would pull me down again."

A seventeen-year-old from Ohio shares this:

"I need to give you my testimony on 'Christian rock' music. I am in a church where 'Christian rock' has come to be accepted and where we now have dances for the Senior High Youth Group. At first, my listening was reluctant and I didn't like the metallic, hard sound, but I grew numb to it the more I listened. Even one of my friends told me it wouldn't sound so bad after I listened to it enough! That is blunt for you!

"My dad REALLY didn't like this music and even told me that I needed to get rid of it. This was very hard. You know, this contemporary music is addictive. Many people can witness to this. Try taking rock away from one who's used to it and they go through withdrawal! I certainly did! But when I purposed to remain under my father's authority, I threw the tapes away and you wouldn't believe the freedom I felt! It was like a heavy burden was lifted off my shoulders! I'm telling you, I never even knew I was in bondage! I prayed that God would re-sensitize my spirit to discern the spirit of music. It did take a while but I'm a witness now of how rock music desensitizes a spirit. I'm free now, PRAISE THE LORD!!"

The addiction to Rock Music often begins with what they call Contemporary Christian Rock Music, which uses so-called Christian lyrics, and then incorporates the same sound of rebellion that Satan uses in Rock Music. Of course, this is trying to join together light and darkness or righteousness and unrighteousness (2 Cor. 6:14). This is impossible to do. The fact of the matter is this; it is impossible to please God by adding sensual styles to spiritual songs! This is because "spiritual songs" by definition are not sensual. Let's take off our blindfolds and stop eating the fruit from the tree marked rock music. The sensual music that fills our homes also fills our churches and this type of music (words and sound) is a byproduct of our sensual or soulful part of our lives (James 3:15).

The rock sound is a fleshly and sensual sound because it generates a type of fleshly response from man's base nature. In other words, listening to rock sound feeds the old nature. This is why Rock Music leads people back to acts of rebellion. Think about it. Much of the so-called Christian music of today goes against God's holy design and order for music which is designed to reflect God. The rock sound is designed or created by rock artists for sensuality and gives emotional, mental, and physical responses that produce carnal enjoyment and addiction.

Personal highs and emotional and artificial highs, physical gyrating responses, mindless escapism and the desire to experience certain feelings of goodness and euphoria are all fleshly responses to music and is a sign that you are catering to the flesh instead of the Spirit's control (Eph. 5:18). This sounds like a drug addict experiencing a high while taking drugs. But let us remember this. Rock sound is a drug addiction! A drug addict is addicted emotionally, physically, and mentally to



drugs. In a similar way, there are emotional, physical, sensual, and mental addictions or dependencies to the rock sound of a perverted culture.

Even Allan Bloom (an unbeliever), in his book *The Closing of the American Mind*, makes some interesting observations concerning the moral effects of music on people (pp. 68-81): (a) "Nothing is more singular about this generation than its addiction to music. ... Today, a very large portion of young people between the ages of ten and twenty live for music. ... Rock music encourages passions and provides models that have no relation to any life the young people ... can possibly lead. ... I suspect that the rock addiction, particularly in the absence of strong counterattractions, has an effect similar to that of drugs."

Listen to one testimony from a young 24-year-old man who was delivered from the devilish sound of the so-called Christian rock music. "Years have passed since that time (the time I listened to the rock beat), and God has shown me the deadly poison of the rock beat in any type of music. It took months of daily time in God's Word to regain the spiritual sensitivity that was lost during that season of my life. I grieve over the destruction that Satan brought to me through the rock beat. Please don't make the mistake I did by allowing this music into your life!"

Again, James 3:15 speaks of that which is "earthly, sensual, devilish" (demonic). There is a type of earthly, soulish, and demonic wisdom that is opposite of "things which are above" (Col. 3:1-2). You can be sure that demons are not far away from using any type of Rock Music to lure Christians into addiction and spiritual defeat. Stop living in a fool's paradise. Don't deceive yourself or set yourself up to sin (Rom. 13:14). Get rid of your CCM and all of your Rock Music. Listening to any kind of Rock Music can either immediately or eventually place you into the realm of a spiritual battle with demons (Eph. 6:12). Your battle with music is not a physical war – it's a spiritual war!

Brandi Brace from Kansas, age 29, writes:

"In the summer of 1989, I purposed that I would listen only to music which is glorifying to God. However, Satan had a stronghold in my life because I listened to rock music for many years. As a result, the sounds and words were embedded in my memory. As the teachers at school lectured, or as I ate lunch or walked through the hail and heard any word that was in a song, I would begin singing a song that

the word reminded me of. Every conversation brought a song to my mind. Thus every day, evil lyrics were embedded deeper into my spirit. Only as I recognized the demonic nature of this addiction was I able to deal with it in a Scriptural way.”

e. Their Spiritual Sacrifices (worship)

We have addressed the subject of spiritual songs (Col. 3:16) but Peter also identifies and connects right worship with “spiritual sacrifices” (1 Pet. 2:5). Spiritual songs are actually spiritual sacrifices we give to God during our time of worship. Again, they are “spiritual” because they come from the



part of man’s existence that houses the new nature and which is inspired by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, spiritual sacrifices are non-carnal and they “are acceptable to God” (1 Pet. 2:5). They do not come from the flesh and therefore God accepts them as being holy and worthy of His praise.

A song cannot be acceptable to God when it conveys a message that is clearly contrary to God. If a worldly, rhythmic sound is being promoted in a song, then that song is unacceptable, even though the words might be fine. Let me ask you a question. Does God deserve less than our best? Of course He doesn’t. If you’re going to give less than your best to God, then give it to your dog or cat, but don’t give it to God! God is holy and He demands a lamb without blemish (Exo. 12:5). A Christian should always strive to do his best in all things (“approve things that are excellent” - Phil. 1:10), which includes listening to wholesome music in worship. God is looking for “spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God” (1 Pet. 2:5).

Much of what is called praise today is man-centered and fleshly oriented. When a man or woman is shaking their hips back and forth on stage, and trying to pump people up with fleshly rock music, we can conclude that these expressions or actions are no longer a spiritual sacrifice. When the perverted sounds of a rock culture are heard within the music then the music becomes fleshly in its design and purpose. God wants our music and worship to be spiritual. Hebrews 13:21 tells us that God’s desire is to: “Make you perfect (reach a goal of maturity) in every good work to do his will (this includes your music and worship), working in you that which

is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.” This should be our constant desire – to do what is “wellpleasing in his sight.” Our music should please God and not be carnally used to please ourselves.

In John Wesley’s *Rules for Methodist Singers* (abridged version), he gives us some good advice about corporate worship and singing:

- ✓ Learn the tunes.
- ✓ Sing them as printed.
- ✓ Sing all. If it is a cross to you, take it up and you will find a blessing.
- ✓ Sing lustily and with a good courage.
- ✓ Sing modestly. Do not shout.
- ✓ Sing in time. Do not run before or stay behind.
- ✓ Above all, sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing him more than yourself or any other creature. In order to do this, attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually.”

As already mentioned, most Christian music (CCM) is listened to for worldly rhythmic entertainment, personal gratification, and self-seeking purposes, instead of worshipful surrender to God’s holy will (Rom. 12:1-2). Many Christians listen to this type of music for fleshly and personal excitement, so they might experience artificial highs, physical gyrating responses, escaping from reality, and the desire to pass through certain feelings of euphoria, instead of emphasizing spiritual edification of the inner man (Eph. 3:16).

We must remember that “all things edify not” (1 Cor. 10:23). In fact, all the reactions mentioned above are physical responses (not spiritual responses) that keep people worshipping a rock sound, or their own feelings and experiences, instead of centering their worship upon God alone. If we are not careful, we can worship our style of worship instead of worshipping God. Some churches like the saying that they are “the flock that rocks.” This is the kind of thinking that distorts true worship, while at the same time promotes a carnal type of worship through a musically maligned philosophy and physical response.

Pastor David Moss said:

“When music is used as a means to draw people into the ‘spirit,’ all it does is create an emotionalism that is called spiritual, but in reality is not. True worship can be very emotional, but emotions are to be the result of and not the cause of true worship. The proper approach to worship will produce godly emotions. The improper approach will produce fleshly emotions.”

If we must “crank up” the CCM music in order to have a worship experience, we can be sure that our worship is accompanied with carnality and fleshly emotions. Satan wants to shift the focus of our worship from the spiritual/intellectual to the physical/emotional. In fact, some forms of music can evoke feelings and emotions that can be addictive to our carnal self. Our emotions do not make us spiritual. People want to have an experience that leads them to believe they are worshiping God if they have been emotionally satisfied. Yes, our emotions are certainly part of worship, but they can also get in the way of worship. In fact, a sensational emotional experience incited by a flesh-pleasing piece of music, does not put a Christian in the right frame of mind to produce repentance and godliness in their life (1 Thess. 4:4). Satan wants to shift the focus of our worship from the spiritual/intellectual to the physical/emotional.

## ***feelings***

What we need today is to return to a God-centered music standard instead of a “feeling standard” for music. Many believers today simply listen to music on the basis of what gives them a warm and fuzzy feeling or some kind of emotional response. The underlying basis for the music of most Christians is how the music makes them feel. It is assumed by many Christians that if they feel something when listening to CCM music, then this must make the music spiritual. For many spirituality and so-called spiritual music becomes based upon feeling instead of the truth of the Bible. This is nothing more than existentialism (“if it feels good, do it” or “it can’t be wrong if it feels so right”).

If you listen to CCM because it makes you feel good and want the music to elicit a certain emotional or physical response in your body, or for mindless escapism, then your music is fleshly (1 John 2:15-17). You are listening to that music for self instead of using it for worship directed toward God. Christians say today, “It suits my tastes and needs,” “It sounds good to me,” “It makes me feel good,” “It gets me up for

worship,” “I need this music in order to feel fulfilled,” “I need an emotional boost from this music,” and “It helps me get away from it all” (mindless escapism).

Many times CCM listeners want to listen to a type of music because of what it *does* for them rather than what it *says* to them. This is a fleshly attitude toward music. When we use music to only generate emotional, physical and mental responses we become selfish instead of worshipful. Self-will and self-gratification is often the reason why Christians listen to CCM. The emotional high and dependency that is connected with CCM music unifies people and it’s very persuasive and controlling. Emotional control can become very dangerous in Christian music since emotional responses can be placed above truth (what is right), holiness and righteousness.

Following our fleshly emotions can lead to wrong conclusions and actions that run contrary to truth and holiness. We must remember once again that emotions are not the test of Biblical truth; Biblical truth stands in final judgment on our emotions (Rom. 4:3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Ps. 138:2) to determine whether or not they are based upon a proper response to God that represents His holiness and righteousness, or whether they are a human fleshy response to some questionable experience.

We can be sure of one thing, moving and grooving with a musically maligned and perverted rock sound is not a spiritual response triggered by the Spirit’s control (Eph. 5:18). It is a fleshly response that seeks to overtake or dominate a spiritual response before God. A spiritual response before God involves possessing a teachable spirit, a deep desire to learn truth, even when listening to music (“teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” - Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19). Our bodies will automatically “interpret” music in only two ways – carnally or non-carnally (spiritually). Carnal responses are the thrusting of the hips or the head (like a chicken), a shimmy or dancing of the shoulders, or other hip-swaying movements which can easily overtake us during a musical selection.

Time Magazine once recorded that “rock ‘n roll has by its very beat and sound always celebrated sexuality.” (October 31, 1969, p. 49). The entire rock world seems to recognize and even flaunt the sensual through the repetitive strong beats of Rock Music, through indecent motions and movements spawned by this music, and other associations that go with Rock Music, wallowing in this music because it appeals so strongly to the flesh. Rock Music and the motions that go to with it

discard traditional and Biblical restraints (1 Cor. 9:24-27). Christians should not listen to this style of music which causes these same type of physical reactions which stem from the realm of the old nature – not the new nature. A Christian’s body belongs to Jesus Christ and our bodies, which are to be presented to God as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1), should never be misused in this way.

No matter what the motivation of the band/performer is people are still reacting to the carnal music in a carnal manner, regardless of what the lyrics communicate. A spiritual response toward music is when *internal* worship is emphasized over *external* stimuli, since John 4:24 states, “they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth.” The location of worship occurs within our “spirit” (our inner life - the place of God’s dwelling and life) and “truth” (the way we worship God – according to God’s Word) must always dominate our worship – not a secularized, perverted rock sound that was created to promote rebellion against God’s spiritual order.

The Bible teaches us that “the inward man is renewed day by day” (2 Cor. 4:16). God wants the focus of our worship to be on the internal – not the external. Much of CCM with its stage performances, flashing lights, and entertainment has nothing to do with worship for its merely external. True spiritual worship occurs on the inside (“the spirit” and “the inner man” and “the hidden man of the heart” - Eph. 3:16; 1 Pet. 3:4) and is opposed to the external or only visible.

Kent Brandenburg states:

“A manifestation of the Holy Spirit is not a personal feeling or an externally manufactured response to God. Everything that is spiritual would be consistent with every aspect of the fruit of the Spirit. Everything that is spiritual would be exclusive of that which is a work of the flesh. There would be nothing sensual, no provision of the flesh, no inordinate affection, no disorder, and nothing out of control. Something spiritual would not be stimulated by gimmicks. It is not energized by artificial methods. Worship is not an external activity for which an environment must be created.”

Think about Psalm 4:4:

“Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.”

**SILENT WORSHIP: “Stand in awe, and sin not:  
commune with your own heart upon your bed,  
and be still. Selah”  
Psalm 4:4**



Actually, I have found these are the best times of worship. They are the silent times with God. How wonderful it is to just be still and know that He is God (Ps. 46:10). If you can only worship God with a specific sound, such as the heavy beat of rock rhythm, then your worship has become man-centered (focused on yourself) and not God-centered (focused only on God). Your worship cannot be purely

based upon God if you need some kind of outward stimuli to evoke a certain physical reaction so you can worship. This kind of stimulating worship can result in giving you an artificial high or pseudo experience of worship. Many in our present generation have lost a God-focus in their times of worship.

Of course, feelings and controlled expressions in our times of individual and corporate worship are not to be overlooked and suppressed. God has not called us to be Quakers! We are emotional beings. However, we must be careful that the outward does not override the inward and we lose control of our bodies, minds, and spirits (1 Cor. 14:32) during our time of worship (1 Cor. 14:23). In fact, some forms of music can evoke feelings and emotions (cause sensory stimulation) that can become addictive to our carnal self. When this happens, we are in danger of losing our focus on God during our times of worship. Our worship can become more physical than spiritual and we can begin to focus on ourselves, what we want, how we feel, what we think that we think that we need during our times of worship. John MacArthur said: “Worship is all that we are, reacting rightly to all that He is.” William Bright wrote about the simplicity and loveliness of worship when he said:

“And now the wants are told, that brought  
Thy children to thy knee;  
Here, lingering still, we ask for naught  
But simply worship thee.”

- **Music would not be important unless we choose to follow God's established musical order of decency and decorum (non-confusion and peace) in our musical selections.**

Those who seek to justify a shift in musical philosophy sometimes make statements such as "The Bible has nothing to say about musical styles" or "There is no abominable praise." I've had people tell me, "There is no such thing as a Satanic beat." Many Christians claim that God is not concerned how we use notes and rhythms and the Bible does not mention Rock Music or the kind of music that God likes and dislikes. Of course, the Scriptures do not refer to specific styles of music (Christian, classical, rock, jazz) but neither does it refer to specific literature (books, magazines, newspapers) or drama (theater, television, movies, videos) or TV and the Internet. However, this does not make everything connected to these realms honorable and virtuous.



The Bible provides us with many guiding principles and even commands that can easily be applied to these unmentioned areas. For instance, Psalm 119 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17 clearly reveal that God gave His Word to instruct us concerning how to live and glorify Him. We should never make the claim that any part of our living lies outside the scope and authority of the Scriptures. The Bible talks about worldliness (1 John 2:15-16), the sin nature (Rom. 7:18), and fleshly lusts (Rom. 13:14; 1 Pet. 2:11).

Actually, the debate over music is not so much about "styles" as it is about order. Music by design (God's creative design) is very organized even though many Christians do not want to listen to well organized and ordered music. God created melody, harmony, and orderly rhythm (Gen. 1:31). But CCM artists move away from God's orderly creation and no longer follow musical restrictions. Nadab and Abihu saw fit to disregard God's ordained order when making an offering to God (Lev. 10:1; Numb. 3:4).

- a. God's Attributes of Order and Peace



The Bible declares that “God is not the author of confusion, but peace, as in all churches of the saints” (1 Cor. 14:33). 1 Corinthians 14:40 adds this: Let all things be done decently and in order.” God is a God of peace and order. He never promotes spiritual disorder and confusion of any kind since He is a perfectly holy and righteous God in all of His works and ways (Ps. 145:17). Therefore, the music God created to be sung by the angels at creation (Job 38:7; Ezek. 28:13) and the musical order and expression passed down to mankind (Gen. 4:21; Exodus 15) was not music that promoted the disorder of rhythmic confusion, sensual rhythms, and rock beats, but portrayed God’s nature of peace, righteousness and holiness – not spiritual confusion and disorder. God wants order, not chaos and confusion, which is what the sound of Rock Music presents. Rock music is noise pollution. It lacks order in musical design and arrangement.

If you want a peaceful home environment, don’t play Rock Music! Rock Music creates tension and disorder. Peaceful and orderly music produces tranquility and calmness. Here is the point. The music of the redeemed should always display elements of beauty and peace, elements of loftiness, elements of majesty, elements of order and design that are consistent with God’s nature. It is to be intelligent, systematic, and sequential, harmonic, and rhythmic without being hijacked with strong beats and distorted by overpowering rhythm. Since our Bible is timeless, divine truth is timeless, and God is timeless, there’s a certain timelessness or unchanging order about Christian music – or at least there should be in the church. There is an orderly pattern of music which was created by the Creator, which along with everything else was considered to be “good” at the time of creation (Gen. 1:31).

But Steve Miller wants us to believe that there is no specific order that God gave to music and that there is no such thing as dominant rhythm and disorderly music. According to Miller, this is only assumed by those who are “trained in Western classical music” for they say, “But the melody line should be dominate: cries the Westerner.” Miller then concludes by saying, “we take the Western classics and set them up as a universal measuring stick for music ... Truly good music must be judged within a form by those who appreciate the form, not by those from without who neither understand nor enjoy the style.”

In other words, Miller is saying there never was any universal form to music and only those who like a certain style (like CCM and Rock Music) are in the place to make an accurate assessment whether it is good or bad music. That is like saying we must start taking drugs or look at pornography to determine whether or not it is right or wrong. We cannot remain on the outside and be a fair judge. Miller like many others CCM advocates do not want to embrace the historical reality that music has always possessed certain “built in” qualities from an orderly Creator. However, up until the days of the blues, jazz, and rock rhythms, there has always been a basic form of music which has been accepted as being part of societal norms. Rock Music was designed to break the established norms and rebel not only against God’s design for music but societal morality standards that God established. It was rebellion against God’s musical and ethical order. It was a complete package designed by the devil to misrepresent God musically and morally.

The point is this, God has created music with order and reason. There is an orderly balance that all music should possess. Since God is a God of order, He also created music with an orderly design. But Rock Music was created in rebellion against God’s order and therefore promotes rebellion in the lives of millions of people. The created characteristics of Rock Music (rhythmic dominance of rock beats, excessive repetition, sliding, syncopation, dissonance, loudness, tension) defy the Creator’s design for orderly music.

Tom Allen (a supporter of CCM) concludes:

"One of the elements of rebellion in rock music is the disorderly insistence that rhythm be the main attraction. Rock-n-Roll is a form of music which gives preference to rhythm over BOTH melody and harmony thus throwing off the ESSENTIAL BALANCE intended for all musical styles."

Rock Music, which includes its sound, breeds rebellion against God’s way.

A Seventeen-Year-Old from Texas shares how Rock Music produces rebellion in his life. “When I got into 'Christian' and secular rock, I went out from under my father's protection. I lost sleep, was rebellious, had a rotten attitude, and made life miserable for my parents. I also had major impure thoughts. I no longer listen to that music, and life is so much more enjoyable and I have much more spiritual

victory. Whenever I hear this music, I get uptight and am tempted to get back into it. Thank God I am not in it anymore."

A Twenty-Year-Old from Oklahoma also testifies:

"When I used to listen to rock music it hindered my spirit and caused a rebellious attitude. I can tell you that when I hear 'Christian rock' music, it makes no difference what the lyrics are. It is the music that causes the poor spirit and rebellious attitude."

A nineteen-year-old from Texas says:

"I began with a high standard of music in my life. Through my youth group, that became watered down. I gradually began to build a collection of contemporary artists who professed to be Christians. As I collected more tapes and the music's beat became stronger, I became more rebellious. I believe that the so-called 'Christian music' led me into rebellion. During the Seminar, I was convicted of having wrong music influence my life. When I got home, I threw away all of my bad music tapes, which made up virtually my whole collection. I am relearning now how to have only Godly music in my home and not compromise in that area any longer."

Another Nineteen-Year-Old from Texas writes:

"I am very intimate with music. I was brought up in a strict Christian home, but I rebelled and moved away from home. While in the world I got into dance and choreography. All was very sensuous!

"The music we used was rock music, of course! After a while my body was so in tune with the music that it controlled me. After I gave my life back to God I was discouraged one particular day, so I turned on the local Christian radio station for some encouraging music. "Well, I don't remember one word except, exalt.' All I know is that my sensuous feelings all came back with the beat and the spirit of the music. I can now say there is no such thing as 'Christian rock,' and this type of music should not be in one's house, much less in God's holy house of worship!"

#### b. God's Order in Creation

There are universally recognized qualities in all good music which have been passed down from generation to generation. Those who created CCM upset God's orderly

balance of melody, harmony, and rhythm. This is exactly what the secular rock artists do who design music to feed the fleshly and baser element in people. Music is designed to promote peace and not disorder (rebellion and impurity) through rhythmic dominance and loud decimal levels. Since God is peaceful and orderly, our music should be as well. Our Christian music we use in worship should be a reflection of God's peaceable nature and orderliness that He originally built into music at the time of creation, when He pronounced that everything was good (Gen. 1:31). Furthermore, since man is created in God's image (Gen. 1:27), this means that there is a certain musical order built into his human existence that reflects God.

It's interesting that music has three basic components: melody, harmony, and rhythm. It's these three elements that in some way correspond to man's spirit, mind, and body. They are interconnected aspects of our being (human existence) and the wrong type of music can lead our spirit, mind, and body down the wrong path. But music also has the power to connect our spirit, mind, and body to those things that are holy and in the will of God.

The following is a good explanation from Evangelist Ken Lynch on how music relates to our constitutional makeup as a human being. There is a certain order to how music interacts with man's tripartite (trichotomous) nature (1 Thess. 5:23). Ken Lynch begins with a chart and then summarizes.



"The **"spirit"** is man's spiritual side or his "God consciousness." The **"soul"** is man's intellect, his ability to reason and think in a logical fashion. And, of course, the **"body"** refers to the biological, or physical, part of man. Each one of these unique parts of man's being is, in a special way, affected by one of the different parts of music's "anatomy." The three parts of music are melody, harmony, and rhythm. **"Melody"** is the primary structure in music, sometimes called the "tune." It is what makes music. It is the tune that we whistle, hum, or sing, while working, playing, or relaxing. **"Harmony"** is what I have come to call the "intellectual side of music" as it forms the logical chord progression and supports the melody. **"Rhythm"** is what

we might call the "musical skeleton". It is what everything else hangs on. But skeletons, without the flesh and muscle, are not very attractive. Rhythm is, in a way, like a foundation that supports the rest of the structure. However, it must be remembered that a foundation by itself without the rest of the building is, like a skeleton, a pretty poor sight and fairly useless."

The New Webster's Dictionary defines music as: "The art of organizing or arranging sounds into meaningful patterns or forms involving pitch, harmony, and rhythm; ...euphony (agreeableness of sound)." Rock music could be defined as: "The artless approach of not organizing sound into meaningful patterns or forms." Rock music is not true music for it is a confused sound characterized by repetition, strong driving beat, rhythmic confusion, and intense loud volume. It often seeks to drown out the melody and abuse the rhythm. There is no agreeableness of sound in this noise.

## Melody

MELODY in a musical piece is a sequence of single notes and progression of sound that is musically well-ordered and satisfying. The melody is primarily what influences the spiritual side of man's existence or his God awareness or consciousness through the human spirit. It is the melody that carries the message of the song. Of course, spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19) possess a clear melody and message that portrays godliness and holiness. I mention this for even a harlot can play a seductive melody to lead people astray (Isa. 23:16). Even when melody is dominant it can still be used in a sensual way. It can be a harlot's melody which is likely accompanied with a harlot's attire and movements.

The Bible assumes that there should be an identifiable melody in any song and that this melody is what stands out as its dominant quality. That assumption is reflected in the example Paul uses about understanding what is being communicated via language in a church service. He uses the example of an identifiable melody. He argues that even the pattern of notes played on a musical instrument must convey meaning through the melody of what is being played. If the instrument does not play an identifiable melodic progression, the meaning and identity of a song cannot be communicated (1 Cor. 14:7-9).

This means the melody is the driving engine of the song that is supposed to communicate God's truth to our hearts (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). The melody relates to our inner man (the human spirit) which is the constitutional part within man that is capable of communicating with God directly. It is called the "inner man" (1 Pet. 3:4) and "inward man" (2 Cor. 4:16) where fellowship and communion with God occurs. It's the place where God's life and nature exist (John 3:6). The Bible talks about "melody" (Eph. 5:19) for it is very important to a musical piece. It is the primary element of music which supports the communication of truth to our inner being. Music can have a profound impact upon our spiritual lives. However, when a melody contains or conveys sexual overtones or worldly sounds that are not musically ordered, the part of us that should be communing with God can be overtaken by the soul (the part of man's existence that houses the sin nature – James 3:15; Jude 19) which results in a "pseudo-spiritual" experience.

People can be deceived into thinking they are actually worshipping God when in fact they are not. They are simply following fleshly patterns being portrayed in aberrant melody which departs from a well-ordered design of melody. It should also be noted that some Rock Music does not even possess melody but is a conglomeration of rhythm and syncopation where no melody can even be detected. This kind of musical departure from standard melody and sometimes no melody allows the musical piece to convey a message to the soul (the sin nature's home and existence within man) and not the spirit (the spiritual part of man's existence). Hence, we should distinguish between soulish and spiritual music – the sensual and spiritual (James 3:15; 1 Cor. 2:14; 15:46).

The meaning of being soulish or sensual speaks of gratification of the physical senses. It can certainly mean sexual pleasure and Rock Music is definitely portraying this type of sensuality. This is one reason why we should not use this type of musical sound with Christian music. Need I tell you what some teens want to do after attending certain CCM concert? The rock sound is a sensual sound that feeds the old nature and promotes human sexuality. There is absolutely no question that sexuality, sensuality, aggression and adrenalin are all part of the rock world and none of this should be mimicked in Christian music for God's enduring moral command is still true: "Learn not the way of the heathen" (Jer. 10:2). The New

Testament version is similar: “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord” (2 Cor. 6:17).

Of course, not every Christian who listens to CCM is lured into sexual promiscuity even though the original intent of Rock Music was designed or created with this purpose in mind. Understandably, there are also lighter and harder forms of Rock Music which can have varying effects. That being said, we must understand that soulish or sensual (James 3:15) can also speak of gratifying other pleasures and experiences with our body such as seeking a certain feeling, wanting to get in a certain mood, wanting to experience euphoria through listening to a specific sound, beat, and dominating rhythm that resembles rebellion and carnality. These are sensual reactions to music – not spiritual reactions. They are physical reactions which stem from the soul of man.

Rock has a primal beat and the audience responds to it on a primal (soulish) level. Many Christians think that we are turned on to God through a rock beat but they are only being turned on to their feelings and flesh. By the way, worship does not mean that we get *turned* on to God through a specific sound but that we are *tuned* in to a holy God – His perfect ways, holiness, righteousness, love, mercy, grace, and faithfulness.

Again, the sensual (soulish or earthly part of man) is characteristic of the unsaved way of life and is therefore inconsistent with Christianity and worship (Eph. 4:17-23; Titus 3:3). The sensual is a hindrance to our spiritual growth (1 Cor. 3:1-3), conflicts with sound doctrine (2 Tim. 4:3), opposes the will of God (1 Pet. 2:11; 4:1-6), and will not last (1 John 2:16). What is often considered as contemporary is only temporary! We must remember that the Christian has been liberated from the sensual aspect of his earthly nature (Gal. 5:24). Our soulish and physical experiences should not control and dominate our worship, body, and life (1 Thess. 4:4).

There are some Christians who base their worship on what they can experience in the flesh (2 Tim. 3:1-7). To justify their worship, they label it a spiritual experience even though it has nothing to do with spirituality. It only has to do with pleasing their flesh, what they appeal to, what they want, how a certain rhythm can make them feel, and what experience they can get out of their worship. Beware of

worshipping human sensations and not God. The rock beat and rhythm is the element of sensuality in music. The only question today that revolves around worship seems to be what pleases and appeals to individual or generational tastes. But the fundamental issue, however, is whether a style of music and its performance is pleasing to God.

In an article titled, “Not Too Old to Rock and Roll,” a contemporary Christian artist says, “We make music for people. If they don’t like it, then we made the wrong music.” This sadly illustrates the sensual standard by which today’s Christian music is being measured. In other words, much of the CCM is created to give what people like in music, to jolt the senses and sensations of people – it is not created for the purpose of God’s glory and worshipping God. If people do not feel the music or move to the music, then it is a flop. If they don’t get enough rock beat and rhythmic movement then they are not pleased with the music. All of this means that much CCM is being created for the wrong reasons – fleshly and greedy reasons. It’s created so man can get something out of worship, not to simply give something to God during the time of worship.

HARMONY (notes or chords joined to the melody) relates to the mind of people which is part of man’s soul or human consciousness and rational awareness. The soul connects man to the world and gives him an awareness to what is around him. Harmony bears a strong



influence on our mind or thinking which is to be renewed in the truth (Rom. 12:2). The harmony is when notes are joined together into chords which are to make agreeable sounds which create personality and richness to the musical piece. This is the element of music that leads or directs our thoughts as we listen to a musical piece. Agreeable chords and sounds (good harmony) encourages our mind to reason and follow the truth that is being communicated to us in a musical piece and results in spiritual edification (1 Cor. 14:15, 26).

By contrast dissonance (chords that create disagreeable sounds and increase tension in the music) can result in thoughts like depression, anxiety, or rebellion. These negative sounds may actually lead our thoughts away from the Lord Jesus



Christ and from bringing our thoughts captive to obedience to Jesus Christ alone (2 Cor. 10:5). Music that is contaminate with harmful elements of unresolved tension fails to distinguish between the holy and unholy, the clean and unclean (Lev. 10:10), and will hinder our spiritual life. It has been proven that heavy doses of unresolved tension in music can be detrimental to a person's physical and spiritual well-being.

A fifteen-year-old from California shared this:

"'Christian rock' has always been a source of battle within me. I could never go anywhere without rock music haunting me. I could not be comfortable anywhere. The music brought so much tension and lack of inner peace that I ended up in total depression, which was completely removed by taking rock and contemporary music out of my life."

Disharmony actually can numb the mind or thinking of the listeners and has the power to produce a hypnotic effect. We see this in rock concerts and music that reflects dissonance and disharmony. Of course, this kind of music does not reflect a God of order and precision (Gen. 1, Ex. 20:11; 1 Cor. 14:40). It is strange that when people want to get away from the pressures of life, Rock Music is often the drug of choice because it provides a way of escape for them (the escapism mentality) from reality and responsibility. It has a hypnotic and controlling effect over the emotions of people which allows them to escape what is real and face life on a spiritual level. Of course, all of this is contrary to the filling or controlling of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

Evangelist Ken Lynch adds this note on harmony:

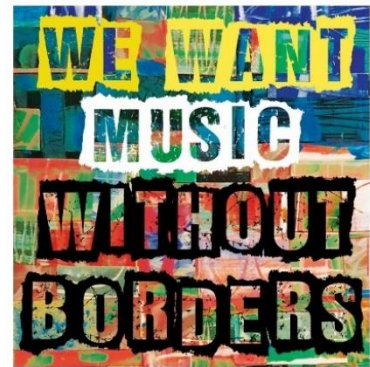
"However, harmony, taken by itself, does not provide very pleasant listening material. Have you ever sat during a choir rehearsal while the altos, tenors, or basses have had to go over and over their parts? Wasn't it a thrilling and exuberating experience? You quickly learn that it is only when all the parts are put together that the music begins to make sense. Even the melody, as important as it is, when taken alone, tends to seem incomplete."



RHYTHM (the orderly movement of music through a specific time) relates to the body for it effects our heart rate and breathing patterns. It interacts with the physical part of our bodies. It does not take a

lot of intelligence to figure out that the body responds, first and foremost, to rhythm. Of course, there is a grave danger that music will overly impact the physical aspect of our bodies and leave behind the spiritual impact it is to have on our bodies which are God's temple (1 Cor. 6:19; 1 Thess. 4:4). We are to yield our bodies to God (Rom. 12:1), which means to give our ears, eyes, hands, and senses to God's will and purpose – not to the words and sounds of a perverted rock culture. Music should help us to honor God with our bodies (1 Thess. 4:4).

Biblical music should have borders or Biblical parameters around it to keep it from turning into worldly or carnally-based music (2 Cor. 6:14-17). But the cry of many Christians today is that they don't want any borders around their musical choices. But the very nature of the word "separate" means to make borders, draw lines, and do not cross over them. Music which tends to imitate the effects of a godless rock sound upon the human body or which either destroys or impairs one's hearing is not



Christian music. If the rhythm is overemphasized in a musical piece instead of remaining subdued or in the background, then it is geared for the body and man's pleasure. When it contains the rhythm of rock beats, dissonant chords, disharmony, and excessive repetition and loudness within the musical piece (producing tension), then the music results in a physical response of the body but not a spiritual response, or at best, a mixed response.

The New Penguin Dictionary of Music on p. 345, defines the term "rock 'n roll" as "bodily movement of response." Another book, The Billboard Book of Rhythm, says, "the beat is what primarily ties music to human movement. "Speaking of the power of music, author Robert Palmer writes, "I do continue to believe in the transformative power of rock and roll . . . not so much in the words of songs or the stances of the stars, but in the music itself [sic] in the sound, and, above all the BEAT." It is very clear that driving beat of Rock Music is what sells Rock Music to the fleshly or soulish part of man's existence. Spiritual music (words and sound) identifies with the spirit (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) and not the body.

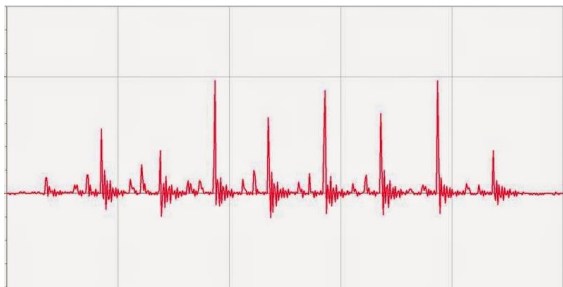
In fact, sound can be distinguishable as something spiritual or carnal. Paul spoke about instruments not playing enjoyable music because they lacked a specific

discernible sound that did not make musical sense, a type of sound that did not make distinction in notes, one that possessed no definite rhythm or sense of clarity (1 Cor. 14:7-8). Instead, the instruments produced nothing but confusion. This reminds us that music is not designed to be confusing in its rhythm and overall presentation. Genuine music is not unintelligible noise. It must make musical sense.

In 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 Paul compared to using gifts without love to making a bunch of unintelligible noise with musical instruments. He states: “I am become as sounding brass (a noisy gong made of brass), or a tinkling cymbal” (the jangling and inarticulate sound of metals crashing against each other). The gong and the crashing of metal pieces together were actually used in heathen worship to create confusion and disorder. There was no natural musical sound in their heathen worship. Bruce and Plummer confirm that gongs and cymbals were common in some of the popular pagan cults of the time. They made much noise but no sense. This could be said for a lot of music today. It lacks musical sense and order that the Creator gave to all music. Much of the Christian Music today is “gong” music!

Kent Brandenburg again writes:

“There are distinct chrematistics of something that is of the Holy Spirit. Something with a dominant rhythm would to be of the Holy Spirit. Something with sensual syncopation or other musical means of sensuality would not be of the Holy Spirit. When we say it is God’s music and yet is hounds like the world, it is confusing. The music of the believer should not be confusing. It should not give an uncertain sound. It should be clear with whom it is identifying. If it is of the Holy Spirit, it will not be confusing.” There are those that judge music by how much ‘happiness’ it brings. What they really mean is how good it makes them feel.”



Once again, I’m not implying that music doesn’t need some rhythm, for it surely does, just as your body needs a pulse, which by the way is beating in a 4/4 time. A body without a pulse is dead and music without any rhythm is dead. All music would be

lifeless without rhythm. In short, it would not be music. Those who say to me, “You just don’t like a song with a beat” really do not know what they are talking about.

All music has beats but not all music has rock beats and rhythms that create musical confusion instead of musical peace (1 Cor. 14:33). All music has rhythm but music doesn't need to be dominated by rhythm. The rhythm of Rock Music has a definite sound and aim. It is designed to overtake a musical piece and create disorder and confusion. Rhythm is primarily what causes a person to use music in a self-gratifying way. "Music in the Balance," written by Frank Garlock and Kurt Woetzel, illustrates this truth in the following manner on page 59:

Too much (or erratic) pulse-----Body is sick  
Too much (or erratic) rhythm-----Music is sick  
No pulse-----Body is dead  
No rhythm-----Music is dead  
Pulse under control-----Body is well  
Rhythm under control-----Music is "well"

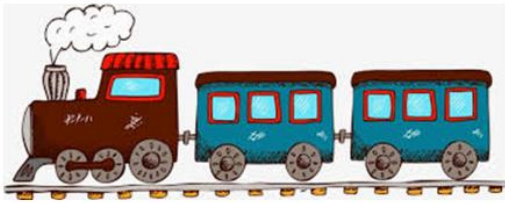
Evangelist Ken Lynch explains it like this:

"It must be reinforced that in the Kingdom of Music, Mr. Melody is to be the reigning monarch with both Mr. Harmony and Mr. Rhythm serving as faithful, loyal, and supportive subjects. When either Mr. Harmony (though he is much more likely to be content in his position of servant) or Mr. Rhythm decide to begin a musical 'coup' and attempt to dethrone King Melody, musical anarchy, chaos, and confusion result."

In other words, if the music gets us grooving and moving physically, then it is not moving us spiritually. The physical begins to overtake the spiritual. Any time the rhythm becomes dominate and the body begins swaying and moving, when the mind goes into neutral, then the physical is overtaking the spiritual in some form and on some level. Many confuse the physical for the spiritual and relegate a specific emotional response, feeling, or high to actual worship. They experience what gratifies the physical senses of the human body. All of this is man-centered worship and not God-centered. We must remember that the effects of worship have nothing to do with true worship which is to be vertically directed to the great God in Heaven (Psalm 100).

A professional orchestra of one hundred pieces might have a maximum of three or four instruments playing rhythm, and even then they don't play continually. This means that less than four percent of the orchestra's music is rhythm. The rhythm isn't totally absent, but it is well controlled. By contrast, at least seventy percent of the average rock band's music is rhythm. This is why Rock Music and Christian Rock Music majors on bodily and fleshly responses, even when Christian lyrics are placed alongside the rhythm. So, in order to be acceptable to a God who created orderly and peaceful music, the musical piece must be properly balanced with the melody playing the dominate role, the harmony next, and the rhythm last.

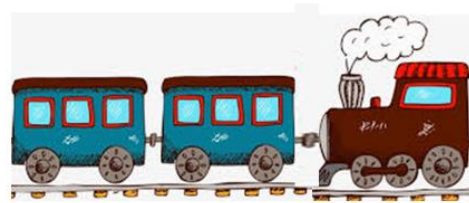
**Order of Sacred Music**



**MELODY HARMONY RHYTHM**

**Results in Musical Balance**

**Disorder of Christian Rock Music**



**RYTHM HARMONY MELODY**

**Results in Disharmony**

Rhythmic balance is important. Too much rhythm overrides the spiritual aspect and nature of the song. Subdued rhythm that remains in the background and which does not overwhelm a musical piece, proper rhythm that follows traditional or regular rhythmic patterns and beats, does not overtake the physical aspect of the body. It can lead us into the paths of righteousness (Ps. 23:3) and bear a positive, spiritual influence upon our lives. It can impact the "inner man" to live for God (1 Pet. 3:4). Rhythm should be present but not dominant. It should not draw attention to itself but to the truth being communicated by the melody and words (Col. 3:16).

Of course, when rhythm is distorted, overemphasized, and becomes the dominant part of a musical piece, it hinders the communication of truth and begins to replace it with the physical. Dominant rhythmic patterns overwhelm the spiritual and mental aspect of the music and encourage physical movements and predictable, sought after emotional feelings as the primary response. The abuse of rhythm can cause a mixture between the physical and spiritual, or the soulish and the spiritual, it can cause the physical to overtake the spiritual, and rhythmic confusion can elicit ungodly emotions that excite the carnal elements of our human nature.

This is why rock artists use specific rhythmic patterns to promote lust, rebellion, and control over a person's body and soul. If Satan convinces us that musical sound is neutral and not ethical or moral in nature, through what the Bible terms as "the wiles of the devil" (1 Peter 5:8), then the Evil One can use music to lead us into a worldly pattern of life and all kinds of errors. God's Word reminds us that we are to take control of our bodies, emotions, and never allow outside influences (including our music) to lead us astray in our times of worship and overall living (1 Cor. 9:27). Our fleshy and even emotional response to music can be misinterpreted as something spiritual when in reality it is only physically and soulish. Beware of this.

We may not be pouring out our hearts to a holy God in our time of worship but following certain aspects of our physical desires, wants, and mistake our bodily response and movements to overriding rhythmic confusion as worshipping God. The Bible has something to say about "a show of wisdom in will worship" (Col. 2:23) which essentially means that we can selfishly worship and impose our own human will and wisdom during our time of worship, which is nothing more than a pseudo-experience. Whenever we mix the spiritual with the soulish aspects of music, we will get mixed or skewed results, and the greater the soulish aspect of music has over the spiritual, the greater the physical and soulish (sensual) response will be. This will be evidenced by the emotional sensations, physical or bodily reactions to the music, and other reactions which are not the result of worshipping "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

The rhythmic dominance and confusion, which today centers on rock beats is the primary characteristic that distinguishes CCM from TSC (Traditional Sacred Music). Historically, dominating beats and pulsating rhythms have pagan roots and this musical rebellion was gradually incorporated into our American culture. The rhythms that were designed to move people and create fleshly responses to certain rhythmic sounds have been with us for a long time. We have the heavily syncopated ragtime rhythms of the teens (20<sup>th</sup> century), the percussion dance band sounds and swing of the 1920's, the jazz and swing of the 1930's, the pop sounds of the 1940's and 1950's, and the rock and roll which emerged in the 1960's.

A book entitled, "Better Music in Our Churches," compiled by John Walker, back in 1923, concluded: "Church music should be standardized. Ditties and jingles and jazz

compositions in words or notes should be refused place in every school and sanctuary. Cultivation of a taste for cheap music creates a cheap type of experience" (p. 29). Now this was in what was called the "roaring twenties" and the jazzy dance music that was prevalent in the culture. If it was cheap back then, it's still cheap today.

This overall emphasis of the different rhythmic dominating music of the past and today is described by one historian in this way: "It's music which is syncopated and rhythmically exciting, it is hot sounds that compel the listener to want to dance." There has been a progression of musical pollution and rebellion that was designed to move the body (appeal to the sensual and physical) – to get people to dance and appeal to their baser instincts. It was dance music. In the late 60's and 70's the rhythmic confusion crossed into the hippie churches and eventually into all the churches.

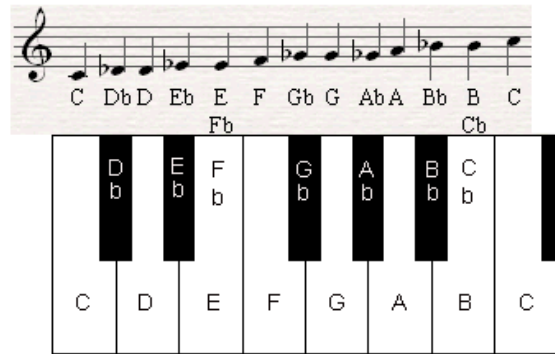
Today this same beat-based, rhythmic dominating, worldly, sensual, dance music is called sacred music. Of course, this defies all common and Biblical sense. It is not sacred or separated music unto God and which represents His holiness. Instead, it is music that is "earthy, sensual, devilish" (James 3:15). This is because this type of music was created for that which is earthly in origin, not heavenly, that which is sensual and not spiritual, and represents those things which are demonic in nature - not Godlike in nature (2 Pet. 1:3). We should stop mimicking the world of sensuality in our church music. God has drawn a line in the sand that we should not cross. Overriding rhythms, dominating and driving rock beats, disharmony and dissonance, excessive sliding and syncopation, repetition on steroids, extreme loudness, sensual voices, entertaining dance music, does not represent God's order in music, God's holiness, and sacredness.

David Moss concludes:

"God's standard has not changed. He is not pleased by sacrifices of praise that are blemished with human sensuality. Only the purest forms of music can adequately praise the Almighty. May God give us the grace to be discerning in this matter, to deny the selfish interests of our flesh, and worship God on his terms, rather than on ours."



Let's recap what we have studied. Melody predominately ministers to man's spirit which is designed to fellowship with God. Harmony effects the intellect and mind. Of course, rhythm definitely effects the body (the outward stimuli). The melody, harmony, and rhythm working together in a musical piece would not exclude



impacting the emotional part of man which can be connected to either the spiritual or soulish part of man's existence depending on the type of music being listened to. Think of it like this. God made or created man (his spirit, mind, and body) to align with an orderly pattern of music which was also a reflection of the Creator Himself (Gen. 1:26). The Bible teaches that God created music and the angels (Ezekiel 28:13), along with all of His creation, to give musical worship back to Him as the Creator of all things (Rev. 4:11), a musical pattern that aligned itself with man's constitutional makeup.

So we have learned about the three elements of music - melody, harmony, rhythm. Of course, it would be important to remember dynamics as well. When these elements are not presented in an organized and proper fashion, musical disorder is the result. This is why not all music is Biblical and godly. It can become fleshly by the nature of it reflects a disorderly sound, which defies a God-ordained order, design, and purpose for music, which is to glorify Him (1 Cor. 10:31). Every component of the music must contribute to accurately picture the God of the Bible, including its rhythm or sound. Since music is about communication, the sounds are communicating a message as much as the lyrics.

c. God's People Following Disorderly Music



The classical reference to the ungodly and worldly effects of music on the lives of God's people is found in Exodus 32. The music being played by God's people, when Moses came down from the mount,



was said to be comparable to “a noise of war in the camp” (Exodus 32:17). The depravity of the people was reflected in the disorderliness of their music. The sounds that were accompanying the sensuous worship of an idol did not sound like worship at all. They were more like the sounds of war. They were not the sounds that were distinctly reverent and worshipful. They were the sounds related to worldliness, sensuality, and irreverence. This is why we should be against the use of rock and jazz music in Christian music. We can be sure that the same music that was used to call men to worship a golden calf in Exodus 32:18-19 would not have been used by the chief musicians of the tabernacle.

It’s interesting that in Exodus 32:17-18, Moses and Joshua knew that God’s people were corrupted by the kind of sound coming forth from the camp. But what kind of sound was it? Again, it was a type of singing that was warlike in its sound because it created a distinct sound of confusion and distress in the ears of Moses and Joshua when they heard it. Again, it was said to be like the “noise of war in the camp” (Ex. 32:17). It was the kind of singing which Moses actually called the “noise of them that sing” (Ex. 32:18). This particular singing produced a loud, shouting sound (noise) that was evidently out-of- sync with the normal flow or pattern of the God-ordained musical pattern for singing. It did not have the normal order or arrangement of musical singing and was confusing in its design and sound. This is why it was heard to be different and considered to be noise.

It evidently was a type of perverted musical sound, linked to idolatry (Ex. 32:1,4, 8), immodesty (Ex. 32:25) and sexual immorality (Ex. 32:6), which was loud and full of unnatural accents and beats. It was a sound that created confusion and distress in the ears of Moses and Joshua. It was a noisy, unnatural, perverted, carnal, worldly, and irreverent sound that these men heard as they came down from the mountain. Whatever the specific sound was that they heard, there was clearly something wrong with it.

We need to be discerning and listen intelligently to our music and make sure the music is only ministering to us spiritually and not capturing our flesh. We don’t need a degree in music theory to understand and discern the difference between godly and fleshly music, and music that is a mixture of the spiritual and carnal. If it sounds worldly, it is worldly. We can learn to train our ears to decipher between good and bad music, worldly and non-worldly music. You cannot plead total ignorance about music even though you may not understand musical theory. God has called us to

have our “senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:14) in the realms of theology, music, and life in general. But this discernment can only occur when we open God’s Word and open our hearts in obedience.

Because God is a God of peace and order and not confusion (1 Cor. 14:33, 40), He has created music that has a distinct flowing order and design, which promotes peace and not disharmony, dissonance, and disorder in its sound. Music should always reflect the nature of God’s holiness, peace and order (Ps. 29:3; 96:9; 99:9; 1 Cor. 14:33-34; Romans 15:33; 2 Thess. 3:16; Heb. 13:20). This is why all good music has universal qualities and a distinct design of good melody and rich harmony without overriding loudness, excessive syncopation and repetition, the pounding of untraditional beats (backbeats), and the overall sound of discord and confusion which is an overload that causes tension. Again, God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33) but He is the author of “every good gift and every perfect gift” (James 1:17).

Music is a wonderful gift of God to mankind and therefore should always imitate the orderliness of the Creator. This means that the melody should be pleasant and easily discernible. The harmony should create a sound void of tension and discord. The rhythm should be predictable and not heavily syncopated nor should the rhythmic flow shy away from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> beats and emphasis placed upon the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> beats. This creates confusion and disorder. God is a God of order and since He created music, it too should have order, which is God’s universal musical order that He built into all music as the original Divine Composer.

The unity and balance of the melody, harmony and rhythm will have an effect on the listeners. Rhythm is the orderly movement of music through a specific time. Just as the heartbeat is the life of the body, rhythm is the life of music and provides it with essential energy. Without rhythm music cannot exist. Rhythm itself is not the problem. It is the misuse of rhythm which is the problem. When rhythm is organized into regular beats (patterns of two, three or four) then the music reflects a natural order which was arranged by the Creator. In any good piece of music, the strongest beat in a measure is the first downbeat in the measure and the second strongest is the third beat.

In a four beat measure it would look like this: ONE, two, THREE, four. However, those who compose Rock Music reverse the order and emphasize the opposite beats:

one, TWO, three, FOUR. This creates a rhythmic pattern of confusion that is disorderly and which has been historically used to promote the rebellion, sex, drugs, and worldliness of Rock Music. This type of rhythmic pattern and confusion was introduced into the Charismatic Church in the 1960's, eventually making inroads to all other churches during the 1970's right up to our present day. Surrendering to the rhythmic confusion of Rock Music is surrendering a church to a type of music that has historically represented worldliness, sexual immorality, and rebellion.



## syncopation

Many ask about syncopation. Syncopation is a rhythmic device that is used to put an accent on a beat other than the downbeat of a measure or on some portion of a beat other than its beginning. It creates a kind of metrical jerk. Syncopation is not bad in itself. It is simply a rhythmic device that, when used correctly, can add variation to a piece of music. It can help bring out the force of the words and the main religious theme of the song. Good composers know that syncopation should never be used continually throughout a musical piece for it creates rhythmic confusion. Too much salt and pepper to a recipe spoils the dish and creates a bad tasted in your mouth. The same is true regarding too much syncopation in a musical piece.

Rock Music can be defined as “syncopation on steroids!” It is overemphasized in this type of music. If we include that syncopation also means the pounding of the unnatural 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> beats within a musical composition, which do not align with God's natural rhythmic order for music, then CCM is certainly plagued with dominance of syncopation. All of this creates confusion, where the rhythms overtake the *melody* (chords or notes that are musically satisfying, smooth and steady – not throbbing or pulsating) and *harmony* (notes or chords joined or played with the melody creating richness to the musical piece).

Rhythms that are reflected in God's natural order of things are quite and subdued. For instance, the heart beats in the human body but it is unseen and subdued. It is absolutely necessary but is not the dominant feature. This is the way rhythm is to be in music. It's to be quiet, orderly, and in the background of a song. It is to be present but not dominant. It does not draw attention to itself but makes it possible for the listener to appreciate the truth being communicate by the melodious words. When rhythm follows the words the musical piece or orderly but when the words

follow the rhythm, it becomes disorderly. According to the “Billboard Book of Rhythm,” by its nature, syncopation and the specific pounding of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> beats in a musical piece has a built-in tension.

Along with the syncopation is the repetition. Repetition is essential to Rock Music, whether is the constant repetition of the rock beat or some other kind of syncopated rhythms which causes an overload of tension. These kinds of repetitive Rock Music traits provide a hypnotic effect on the listeners and drives home the message of promiscuity and rebellion. Rock Music has a



Repetition  
Repetition  
Repetition  
Repetition

spiritual hypnotizing effect on the listeners or would-be worshippers. It's these unnatural and abused rhythms that create carnal movements (unrelated to spiritual living) and reactions in people's hearts and lives which can stem from the realm of the old nature and not the new nature. They are simply physical reactions but not spiritual reactions. It's clear that the very first effect of Rock Music on a person is physical. It creates motions and gyrations that are not becoming to a Christian but resemble that of a night club outing. The big beat sound, repetition, rhythmic stress and confusion, are the key components of Rock Music.

The beat and body movements of Rock Music work together to promote a fleshly (not spiritual) response in the lives of people. The *New Penguin Dictionary of Music* on p. 345, defines the term "rock 'n roll" as "bodily movement of response." Another book, *The Billboard Book of Rhythm*, says, "the beat is what primarily ties music to human movement. Speaking of the power of music, author Robert Palmer writes, "I do continue to believe in the transformative power of rock and roll . . . not so much in the words of songs or the stances of the stars, but in the music itself [sic] in the sound, and, above all the BEAT".

Of course, all music has beats, rhythm, and movement. It would not be music without these basic components.

David Cloud makes an interesting remark:

“The key to being a good cook is knowing how much of each ingredient to put into the mix, and when to do it. Too much salt, spice, too much sugar, too much flour –

each of these can ruin what is cooking. The good cook, as well as the good artist, good musician, knows the correct balance of the ‘main ingredients.’”



Rhythm, which would include syncopation, must remain subordinate to the melody to bring order to the song. When rhythm climbs from a subordinate position to the

melody (many times by syncopating and pounding out the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> beats), the rhythm becomes a dominant factor or influence that overshadows and overpowers the melody and the message of truth becomes hindered in varying degrees. It shifts the focus from the truth to man’s body, where the individual becomes worked up and responds physically to the music. The overpowering of rhythm shifts the focus from the spiritual to the carnal, from God to man. Let’s be honest, if you de-emphasize or take away the beat in CCM music, there is not much left in a CCM piece of music. This is because the music is built around the beat and not the melody.

Rock rhythms are not designed to captivate the spiritual part of man’s existence (the human spirit where the new nature resides and operates) but the carnal part of his existence (his soul where the sin or fallen nature resides and expresses carnality). Therefore, when a worship service is geared to upbeat music (music that reflects rock rhythms) the responses in people become at best, a mixture between the spiritual and carnal, if not entirely carnal depending on the severity of the music. Look at the actions of the audience in many churches today which promote heavy-beat rock rhythms. They are swinging, swaying, gyrating to the beat of the music but not the message of the music. A spiritual message does not produce this result but the rock beats do generate this result.

I have had several people tell me that CCM carries the same beat and swing that they used to dance with before they were saved. It’s similar to a hippy-oriented music that was brought into the church in the 1960’s that disguises itself as consecrated Christians music. This type of music must be repulsive to a holy God who clearly reveals that He will not share His glory with anything else or anyone else (Isaiah 42:8). Rock Music is glorified in the hearts of people today and the people who are performing are also glorified before audiences. God is given the

back seat for He cannot be glorified through a style of rebellious music that the devil has strategically used for His evil purposes. Sadly, the beat goes on! I don't see CCM being removed from the Church until the Rapture which is the time when all Christians become like Jesus (1 John 3:2).

Again, the Scriptural principle that we need to follow for all music is stated in 1 Corinthians 14:33: "For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." This character trait of God should condemn every form of Rock Music, CCM included, since this type of music does not promote peace but tension through its sounds of dissonance and rhythmic confusion.

Earnest Pickering states this about godly music:

"It should be expressive of the peace that accompanies the Christian life, not the clamor, confusion, din, and turmoil of the world (Col. 3:15-16). The various forms of rock music do not contribute to peace of heart but partake of the constant jangle of the sinful world. Christ promises peace to His people (Jn. 14:27)."

Titus 1:5 also reminds us "that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting" or lacking in the local churches. God is a God of ordered design. This is true in relation to how He wants the church to function in the realms of both leadership and expression of worship. Now let's think about Rock Music. By its very design, all forms of Rock Music (secular or Contemporary Christian Music) create confusion with God's character which is one of peace and order (1 Cor. 14:33, 40). A God of order established a moral and musical order as well at the time of creation (Gen. 1:31), which reflects His unchanging character of peace, orderliness, holiness, and righteousness. The style of Rock Music violates the Biblical principles of peace and order which is a reflection of God's eternal character.

Rock artist, Vance Packard, once said:

"Rock and roll might be summed up as monotony tinged with hysteria."

Rock music is not a music that presents orderliness. Instead, the music itself is one of confusion and disorder and this is exactly what it wants to produce in the lives of those who listen to it.

To summarize, Christian Contemporary Rock Music with its disorderly music of overriding loudness, excessive syncopation, the pounding of untraditional beats

(2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> beats), lack of melody, the dominance of the big beat, hypnotic repetition, and the overall sound of rhythmic discord, disharmony, and confusion which becomes an overload of “in your face” tension, mocks the new way of life that Christians are to express (Rom. 6:4). As we’ve already seen, Rock Music (words and sound) also confuses righteousness and unrighteousness, light and darkness (2 Cor. 6:14), Christ’s work with Satan’s work, and God’s temple (our bodies) with the work of paganism and idolatry by failing to make a marked distinction between the two. Anything that generates moral and ethical confusion should not be embraced and deemed spiritually unhealthy for the Christian life. The leavening process occurs with just a small amount of rock music, similar to how legalism infects the message of the grace of God (Gal. 5:9).

#### f. God’s Music and Dancing

Since we have talked about the rhythm of music moving people, we must address the subject of dancing which is often coupled with the rock sound. Some Christians justify their physical movements during their worship by constantly reminding everyone that David danced before the Lord (2 Samuel 6:14).

This is their ‘go to’ proof text. In fact, many claim that David danced in the Spirit or under the influence of the Holy Spirit to worship God and therefore it is an appropriate expression to use in our corporate gatherings of worship. In other words, they claim that we too can dance today in our church meetings as David did long ago when worshipping God. We can dance in response to CCM being played in church and at rock concerts and incorporate it into our times of gatherings. It seems that many Christians hang their hat, so to speak, or their entire support for the CCM movement with all of its interacting and interpretative praise dancing to a secular rock sound (beat), on the fact that David danced before the Lord.

#### Dancing in the Spirit?



This conclusion is a gross misunderstanding about the nature of David’s dance, where he danced, and is a violation of incorporating Jewish customs into New Testament Christianity. But worst of all, it links David’s dance of joyous expression

unto the Lord with the perverted sounds of a rock culture. Here are the facts on dancing.

First, although the word “danced” (2 Samuel 6:14) is assigned to David’s experience, this is NOT the normal Hebrew word that is translated for “dance” (machowl). Therefore, David’s activity was not actual dancing but “twirling about and leaping or skipping with joy.” His actions were not dancing per say but simply a leaping and twirling about which was an outward expression of his joy.

Second, there is no record of David celebrating with other people in what we know today as the modern group dance. There is absolutely no proof that David actually danced in a manner that fits our 21st century dancing methods. The Jewish customary dance of the Old Testament was not like the modern, formal, well-planned, rehearsed dancing movements of today. They were often steps of spontaneous movement that were a reflection of joy. They certainly were not steps designed to follow the rhythmic patterns of Rock Music.

Third, the Scripture informs us that David danced on the way to the Tabernacle as he moved the ark (2 Samuel 6:12-16). However, the Bible does NOT say that David danced in a formal way at the Tabernacle and used his dance as part of a corporate worship experience.

Pastor Kilmer correctly observes:

“Let’s look at the story of David in 2 Samuel 6:12-18. In all of David’s life he is found dancing only one time. Where was David when he was dancing? Notice that when he arrived at the tabernacle he offered sacrifices, but he didn’t dance there. He danced or leaped for joy in the community as he moved the ark of God. If you read Exodus 15 you will see that Miriam and the ladies of Israel danced after they were saved at the Red Sea. Verse 20 shows that they were not at the tabernacle, but in the community when God did a special work.”

“Furthermore, where did they dance? Often people assume it was in a worship service of some kind, but in neither case was it so. In the Bible when we find dancing in a worship service of some kind it was always false worship (e.g. Exodus 32 when the people of Israel tried to worship Jehovah before the golden calf & the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel in I Kings 18).



Fourth, it should also be noted that none of the later kings, priests, or prophets instituted any kind of formal dance associated with Jewish worship. David did not do this and neither did any of his descendants. Neither David nor his priests took David's dancing incident as a template for how worship was to be conducted in the Tabernacle, nor was it found in Solomon's Temple, the Second Temple, nor was it in the synagogues. The Jews didn't take what happened to David as a formal expression of corporate worship.

Brian Edwards was correct when he wrote:

"...neither can we allow every hop, skip and jump of holy joy to be called dance...it is equally false to suggest that David leaping with joy demonstrated an artistic form of religious dance. The only Hebrew word that refers clearly to dance (maol) is not used of David's joy before the ark or of any activity in worship."

Dance is mentioned in two other verses that are often used to support dancing in church with CCM.

Psalm 149:3

"Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp."

Psalm 150:4

"Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs."

The fact that these verses appear in the Old Testament and are put in the context of Jewish culture should be the first indicator that they cannot be directly interpreted for church worship today, much like the Jewish customs of betrothal, marriage, and veiling (1 Cor. 11).

Nathan Stone said this about dance:

"There is no command to dance anywhere in the Bible ... as such (it) is only mentioned occasionally in the Old Testament. It is never mentioned as part of worship in the New Testament. Many customs mentioned in the Bible obviously have only local and passing significance."



This would also be true regarding the lifting up of hands during times of corporate worship. Lifting up the hands was seen to be a posture of prayer and praise during some Hebrew expressions of *individual* worship (Ps. 28:2; 63:4; 141:2; 143:6) and was indicative of expectancy from God and surrender to God. Prayers were sometimes offered

with lifted hands (1 Kings 8:22; 2 Chron. 6:13; Ezra 9:5; Lam. 2:19). However, it's interesting to note that the lifting of hands was never practiced by the entire congregation of Israel. The priests individually practiced this (Ps. 134:1-2) as they served in the temple but the lifting up of hands was not a universal part of Israel's worship. The Scriptures do not teach this was a practice in the Jewish stated gatherings and feast days.

Robert McQuilkin has correctly observed:

“That an event was reported to have truly happened does not necessarily make it a revelation of God's universal will.”

We must remember this and look to the Scriptures themselves to determine what is NORMAL for today and what God would have us to follow and practice within our Christian lives and local church services. In the writings of the new Testament epistles we find that there is no direct reference to Christians raising their hands during church services or the stated gathering of the saints. In fact, during the infant days of Christianity and their Christians services, we read about the believer's singing, praying, breaking of bread, teaching doctrinal truth, and fellowshiping (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) but there is no mention of the lifting of hands as a specific expression of corporate worship. The expression “lifting up holy hands” (1 Tim. 2:8) was a euphuism to portray a pure and consecrated life to God (Psalm 18:20; 24:4). These references point to God's work of inner sanctification taking place in a person's heart and life – not the physical lifting of hands.

The point is that we should not insist on applying ancient Jewish customs to our corporate times of worship today within the local church setting. As seen in the Old Testament, some expressions of worship are more suited for times of personal and

individual worship (Ps. 28:2; 2 Sam. 6:14) but when used in corporate worship they can become distracting and not edifying to others (1 Cor. 10:23). Furthermore, in the setting of CCM churches and concerts, excessive physical expressions in worship can become one more way to move and groove to the sounds of Rock Music, while flashing lights and other visual effects are occurring, allowing the physical and visual to overtake spiritual worship that originates from the inner man (Eph. 3:16).

Since dancing had nothing to do with corporate worship in the Old Testament, it surely should have nothing to do with corporate worship in the New Testament. We never read about dance as having any part in church worship and ministry. Nowhere! Therefore, it is never sensible for a Christian to think that he can create dance as an actual form of worship, since it has never been used before in the hallowed halls of the church. In addition, today people want to dance in church with a type of musical sound used for rebellion and Satan's purposes. In addition, we must never assume that we can do something just because the Bible does not spell out "Thou shalt not dance in church." This is because there are other important governing principles to consider about actions related to church ministry and life (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; 1 Cor. 14:40; Titus 1:5).

Again, ancient, Jewish, cultural customs that were practiced individually during times of joyous worship (Ps. 63:4; 2 Sam. 6:14), but which were not corporately practiced by the Jews, and which were nonexistent during the early church gatherings, should not be incorporated into our local church gatherings today. Instead of using dance as a corporate expression of worship, the dance mentioned in the above verses (Ps. 149:3; 150:4) was referencing a customary joyful expression among the Hebrew people in various phases of their lives and on special and rare occasions. Here is one example. Applying a Hebrew cultural expression of joyful dancing among the same members of the sex (Ex. 15:20) to dancing in a modern CCM service of today, where women dance in front of men, is a total misapplication of the dance being presented in Exodus 15.

The Bible teaches that women expressed joyful dance together *without* the men (Ex. 15:20; 1 Samuel 18:6). Since modern dance within the church is associated with Rock Music, which in itself is sensual, a service where there is dance can very easily cause sensual responses in men. Women that dance in church, who move themselves around in front of men, or even jump up and down and twirl around as David did, are actually distracting men from true worship and might cause them to

stumble, while they display their bodies before the entire church. This is a travesty or mockery of the holiness of God and purity that should always be upheld in the local assembly (Ps. 89:7; Heb. 12:28).

The whole idea and concept of praise dancers and interpretive dancing in the church today lacks support from the Bible. The solemn worship occasions in God's House were never accompanied with dancing. In fact, the corporate, sensual type of dancing with suggestive movements (pelvic thrusts or other sensual movements) in response to the Rock Music, which is occurring in today's churches, bears no resemblance to Old Testament forms of cultural dancing which took place outside the church.

Who should we think about when we worship? We should think about God! When women do performances at church like dancing they make people think about the performer and in the end they are not worshipping properly. Corporate dancing draws a congregation to the dancer and not to the Lord. How do we see the Lord when a person is dancing in front of us? How can I find the Lord's presence or reflect upon Him when someone is doing dance moves in front of me? Here is a good question to ask. Do we go to church to please ourselves or to please God? All true worship draws attention to God - not to people (Ps. 29:2; 96:8).

Here is the point, if dance were such a vital aid in worship, why would God have overlooked it, especially when He was so clear on every other detail of Old Testament worship such as singing, instrument playing, choir leaders, orchestra conductors, and teaching (1 Chron. 9:29; 15:16, 27; 28:14; 2 Sam. 6:5)? Dance was the exception, not the rule, throughout the Old Testament and it never was included in corporate Jewish worship. Dancing was NEVER used as a formal part of Hebrew worship in the setting of the tabernacle or temple.

To state it succinctly, nowhere in the Old or New Testaments do we see specific instructions for dancers or dancing during corporate worship. This is because dancing was not part of corporate and united worship. It's interesting that whenever God's glory appeared in the Temple, the Bible records that the people "stood" out of great reverence and respect; they did not dance (Ezek. 10:19).

### g. God's Music Versus the Devil's Music

Satan was created with perfect harmony in his musical career to bring honor and glory to God. He was created with tremendous God-given musical abilities that honored God by mirroring His holiness and righteousness. He was the chief leader of Heavenly praise.



Ezekiel 28:13 records:

“Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone *was* thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.”

Notice that the Bible says God was actually the creator of music (“thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created”). God not only created Lucifer; He created music as well. In fact, Lucifer was likely one of the greatest musicians that ever existed. He was designed to lead all of Heaven in worship in that heavenly land of Eden. He was created by God to know and use the orderly arrangement and characteristics of praise. But Satan fell and historically he has repeatedly proven that he knows how to manipulate music to bring about his own agenda and purposes in a fallen world. Although Satan was created with an orderly musical pattern to reflect the Creator, he has devised his own creative characteristics of musical rebellion with the purpose to dishonor God the Creator.

CCM should be properly termed as Counterfeit Christian Music – not Contemporary Christian Music. Satan knows how to counterfeit the true nature of music and malign the character of God in doing so. He has counterfeited almost everything by his subtle and openly revealed corruptions. Do you not think he has also counterfeited music? He most surely has. The Evil One appears as a messenger of light (2 Cor. 11:14) and sends beguiling messages to our minds to corrupt us from the “simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Cor. 11:3) which is our simple and sincere (unhypocritical) commitment or devotion to Jesus Christ – His holy ways and purposes.

Someone said:

“When Satan fell out of Heaven he fell into the choir loft.”

## **Music: God's Gift Or Satan's Tool?**

Lucifer is a skilled musician. He is proficient in every aspect of music. He knows how music works and how it can be manipulated and structured to attain a specific goal when it is heard. For him to misuse and distort music today

should be no surprise. Satan distorts every good thing that God creates (sex, music, creation). Satan has deceptively twisted and distorted music today to meet his approval instead of God's approval. We must always remember that Satan knows how to disguise the true nature of things, as they really are, by making things (even music) appear as something filled with light, holiness, and goodness (2 Cor. 11:14), when in reality these very things reflect rebellion, unrighteousness, and carnality. Satan has the ability to make things look good in order to subtly cause us to become involved in something that is not good. Good music should always imitate the orderliness of the Creator – not the disorder of Satan.

Satan can in some measure deceive God's children to certain spiritual realities and truths (Rev. 3:17). One of the best ways to deceive non-thinking Christians is by using the argument that says, “Oh well, there are at least words out of the Bible in CCM.” Of course, this is a ploy of Satan. Remember that when Christ was being tempted in the wilderness that Satan wrongly quoted Psalm 91:11 to try and confuse Christ (Luke 4:10-11). The point is this, just because someone uses Scripture does not mean that it makes something spiritual. Satan used Scripture and it was for the purpose of ruining Christ. Don't you think that Satan would use Scripture if he knows he can get Christians to fail in some specific area of their lives? Most certainly. This is part of his deception.

Another way that the Devil can deceive Christians is through the worldly sound of CCM. Much of the CCM that has been written is worldly in its composition. Christians can blindly forget that they have been purged from their old sins (2 Pet. 1:9) and embrace worldliness within their music choices (James 4:4). The Devil sends confusion and carnality into the lives of Christians as they embrace various types of worldly Rock Music and in some ways draw them away from God.

Matthew Walker asks this question:

“Considering that Satan is a counterfeiter and a charlatan, is it too much to presume that he has his own brand of Christian music?”

We can be sure that Satan knows how to make music disorderly which dishonors God who is the Creator of music. God designed the original physical creation with precision and order (Ps. 19:1-3) and this reflects His infinite wisdom and knowledge. However, God also designed music with precision and order as well (Gen. 1:31) which is a reflection of His own nature. He is a God of order and design. Music should follow a specific order which was built into it by our Creator.

Danny M. Sweatt observed:

“As with anything that God has greatly used, Satan is active to destroy its wholesome influence. He seeks to pervert the vehicle by making it sensual, to dilute the message by making it vague, and to corrupt the messenger by making him worldly.”

Those who claim that music is “neutral” (possessing no qualities of good or evil) must categorically deny that Satan has used a certain style of musical sound to promote sexual rebellion and many other kinds of rebellious acts against God and His ways. Since all good music possesses order, which aligns with God’s attributes and creative design (1 Cor. 14:33, 40), it remains for us to explore some differences between good and bad music. So let’s talk about musical vocabulary one more time and discover what God’s spiritual order is within the realm of music.

Musical order means that the melody should be pleasant and easily discernible. The harmony should create a sound that is void of tension and discord. The rhythm should be predictable and not heavily syncopated, nor should the rhythmic flow move away from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> beats and the emphasis placed upon the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> beats (backbeats). The music should not be excessively loud and overbearing. All of these things create musical confusion and disorder which does not reflect the naturally flowing melody, harmony, and rhythm that God has built into music.

Don’t misunderstand what I am saying. I am not implying that a song is unacceptable if it has a beat. This is impossible because all music is made up of beats, or counts. It’s the accent, overemphasis, and tampering with God’s natural rhythmic order that can cause rhythm to become unacceptable, which flows against

God's creative and orderly design for music. Rhythm can create confusion, fleshly human responses, and lead us away from the spiritual and central message being taught.

h. God's Balance of Music

**How To Ruin a Good Song!**

**“Ha-PPY birth-DAY  
to YOU.”**

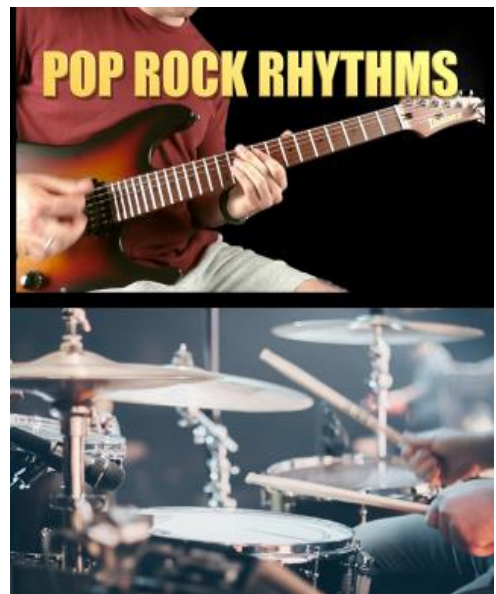
**“Je-SUS loves ME this I  
know.”**

Here is how to ruin a perfectly good song. Sing the following words with their proper tune: “Happy birthday to you.” Now, watch me single-handedly ruin a perfectly good tune by accenting the wrong count, or beat. Sing the words again and emphasize the capital syllables: “Ha-PPY birth-DAY to YOU.” The original melody has been so altered that it's hardly recognizable. Now, watch what

happens when we try this with a piece of traditional Christian music. Sing the following words two or three times and allow the melody to flow through your mind: “Jesus loves me! This I know.” You'd never make a living as a Christian rock “artist” singing that, but you might make a few bucks on this one: “Je-SUS loves ME this I know.”

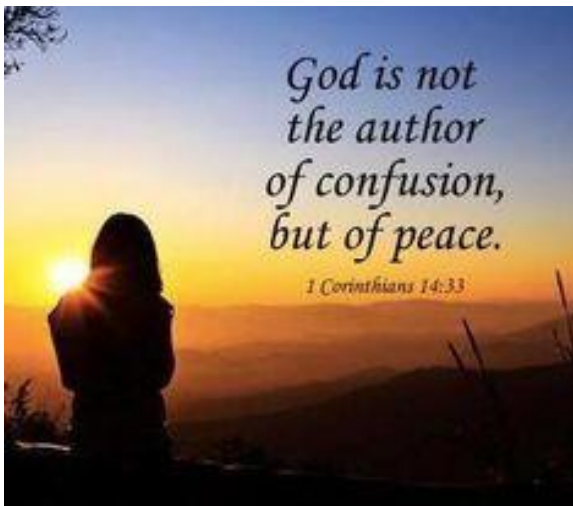
What am I doing with these examples? I am tampering with the balance of music, much like a careless child would tamper and play around with a dangerous electrical fence. This is what worldly musicians do for a living, and it's what CCM artists do with their music as well since the 1970's. There is a created characteristic of all Rock Music that

stands out in defiance of all normally patterned music. Rock rhythms with instruments (bass guitar, drums, synthesizers, etc.) always apply a strong emphasis to these backbeats (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>). The strong beats fall on the first and third beats in four/four time or the first beat of three/four time. Drums are often used to drive these specific backbeats and create rhythmic confusion.





Western civilization's music, up until about the time of very early jazz (1900), out of which evolved such musical styles as swing, blues, rock, etc.) did not practice this type of musical sound of confusion. Historically, the rhythm and blues style of music was common in the black communities of the south and it eventually gave birth to rock and roll in the 1950's. However, this style or type of music incorporated into its structure the rhythms and drumbeats of the African jungles, which promoted the worship of Satan and the practice of witchcraft in Africa. This is yet another reason why we should separate from this type of perverted sound. The believer who practices "apartness" or separation and who reflects righteousness in his musical choices should have no historical ties or connection with a type of musical sound that the devil directly uses for His purposes ("And what concord hath Christ with Belial" - 2 Cor. 6:15).



Let's get back to our main point. The Bible declares that "God is not the author of confusion, but peace, as in all churches of the saints" (1 Cor. 14:33). God never directly promotes spiritual disorder and confusion of any kind (physical, psychological, spiritual, musical) since He is a perfectly holy and righteous God. Although God the Creator had built order into all musical expression to glorify Him, the god of this world (John 12:31; 16:11; Eph. 2:2) has built confusion into musical

expression to distract from God's glory and lead people into the realm of rebellion against God. Since Satan has historically used a type of disorderly music to promote his rebellious agenda in the world, it's clear that he has redesigned God's orderly arranged music to promote his own agenda.

Disregarding God's order leads to disorder (1 Cor. 14:40). Therefore, all good music possesses an orderly arrangement designed by God who is the Creator of music. When the order is ignored the music becomes in some measure confusing, disoriented, filled with tension, and can influence people carnally. This disorder can be reflected in a musical piece in a minimal or small way by introducing light rock beats (accenting the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> beats) in the background of a musical number, or the disorder can be easily detected by pounding these beats and introducing other

elements of confusion, such as excessive repetition, syncopation, loudness with base guitars, synthesizers, and drums.

Reflect on this for a moment. Secular Rock Music is designed to be loud and hypnotic so people can engage in their flesh, escape their guilt, and fulfill their need or sense for domination, which means to experience a need for a type of controlling love in one's life. People want to feel love and acceptance and this can be experienced in various ways, through the controlling or dominating effects of Rock Music, food, and even through abuse. Those who are Christians and allow Rock Music to control their lives are finding their sense of "dominating love" through the Devil's music which in return makes them a slave of their sin nature and Satan (Rom. 6:16, 19). The Bible teaches that God's love for us should fulfill our need for love and acceptance (Rom. 8:38-39). This means we are to experience the controlling and dominating effect of God's love for us in our daily Christian life (Rom. 5:5; 1 John 3:1) – not the dominating effects of Rock Music. Rock Music in general has become the Devil's masterpiece for enslaving the lives of people. Beware!

What is good music? In all good music the melody should be predominate, then the harmony, then the rhythm - just as the "spirit" (the human connection with God) should be dominating over his "soul" (the human emotions) and his impulses (the human body). But if these elements are out of order, or if they are emphasized in an imbalanced way, the melody can become imbalanced or lost, polluting the original design and order of music. Sadly, this type of skewed musical expression can also adversely affect our spiritual lives by causing us to imbibe and promote a form of worldliness in our personal lives and in some cases bring us under bondage. Some Christians are in bondage to the big beat of Rock Music. They can prove this by trying to do a musical fast for ten days and attempt to totally avoid this type of music. If they struggle with "withdrawal symptoms" then they have become addicted to a particular sound. Many Christians have make an idol out of CCM. But as previously mentioned, the Bible forbids this when it states: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen" (1 John 5:21). Your idol may very well

**JUST  
GOOD  
MUSIC**

be CCM and Rock Music. Many Christians do idolize CCM and are literally addicted to this type of music.

A fifteen-year-old student from Missouri wrote:

"I became influenced in 'Christian rock' from some bad friends I had made. Every free minute I had was spent listening to this music. I felt really proud that everybody else was listening to regular rock and I was listening also, but mine had Christian lyrics. One day as I was listening to this music I switched the station to FM and I was shocked to hear the same song on a secular station! I have done some searching in my life and realized that this music was controlling my thoughts, and that because of it, I could not conquer the giant of lust. This week I realized that I would have to give up 'Contemporary-Christian music' if I was going to have victory over the giant of lust!"

We must remember once again that God has called as a Christian to “possess his vessel in sanctification and honour” (1 Thess. 4:4) and “glorify God in your body, and spirit, which are God’s (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Responding to rock rhythms that stir us physically but not spiritually is not using our body for the purpose of sanctification and God’s glory or honor. Listening to secular rock music denies God’s ownership of our body. Period. Listening to and using a *lighter* version of Contemporary Christian Music in our times of worship becomes a mixture of both good and evil, and at its worst, when using a *heavier* and overpowering emphasis on rock rhythms, results in a total distortion of what is right and wholesome. In either case, this type of rhythmic disorder and confusion takes us away from the purpose of using our bodies for the purpose of sanctification (being set apart for God’s holy use) and the promotion of God’s glory.

William L. Banks wrote: “In some strange psychological manner the pronounced beat...touches a responsive chord in the lower nature of man.” Rock artist, Robert Palmer, wrote: “Rock and roll is a single, monolithic beast, manufactured solely for profit and the shattering of refined eardrums.” Rock artist, Church Berry wrote this:

“Just let me hear some of that rock and roll music  
Any old way you choose it  
It's got a backbeat, you can't lose it  
Any old time you use it  
It's gotta be rock roll music  
If you want to dance with me.”

One rock band actually titled themselves “The Backbeats” because they know this is the dominant feature in Rock Music. Backbeats refer to pounding out the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> beats in a measure which was introduced



as one of the hallmarks of Rock Music. Offbeat drum rhythms appeal to the carnal/physical. In rock music, offbeat or backbeat rhythms dominate the musical piece instead of the melody. Repetitious offbeat accents, whether played by a drum or bass guitar do not support the melody but overtake the musical piece. This misuse and abuse of syncopation is a dominant feature in all Rock Music. Syncopation puts the accent on a beat other than the downbeat of a measure or on some portion of a beat other than its beginning. Carefully placed syncopation, which supports the melody can make music lively and exciting, but improper and excessive use of syncopation will pollute it and make it disorderly and carnal.

Here is a secular and unbiased conclusion concerning Rock Music:

“Rock and roll music has a certain feel to it, but what creates this feeling? Well, it is a combination of the rhythm, instruments, vocals, and attitude. All of these elements blend together to create the rock and roll music people love. Some of these elements have been enhanced since the creation of rock and roll music through a natural evolution. Rock and roll music began as a melting of the rhythm and blues and country western genres of the 1940s. The beat of rock and roll music comes mainly from a rhythm and blues boogie beat. The difference is made by the addition of an accented backbeat. This backbeat is one of the essential elements of rock and roll music.”

Of course, rhythm itself is not wrong, if used properly. All music has rhythm. It is the backbone of music. It is the highway of all music. The rhythmic beat controls the movement of the music, the rhythmic tempo regulates the speed of the underlying beat and music (beats per minute), the rhythmic time controls how many beats are in a measure, and the rhythmic period is the grouping together of measures to form a musical sentence, which is characterized by balance and symmetry.

Rhythm is the central part of music since it provides an organized system, a path over which musical notes can travel in a manner that will make sense to a listener. Without rhythm music would be non-existent. Think of the song “happy birthday”

which has rhythm. We could change the rhythm, yet keep the same notes, and the entire “feel” of the song would be different. Rhythm is a powerful and sometimes suggestive tool. When we respond to repetitious, offbeat drums, or when drums overpower or dominate the music, we respond to this carnal rhythm. When we refer to CCM music as being carnal we mean that it uses techniques that appeal to our carnal side, although we don’t recognize them as such until we gain discernment (Heb. 5:14). Cutting right to the point; rhythm was designed to give structure and direction to music, but the world, the flesh, and the devil always accentuate and distort rhythm, which can provoke and enlarge the carnal and physical impulses of man.

Often the melody in the "Christian" version of Rock Music is obscured and overpowered by the heavy beat and the accompaniment is so predominant that it completely overpowers any message that might be present. We must remember that the message of truth is to be the most important element in music (Col. 3:16). So, we are called upon “to make melody in our hearts” (Eph. 5:19) which means that melody is to be the dominant part of all orderly music and that melody is what communicates the message of a song to our heart or human spirit, which is where God’s life and nature dwell and all true worship occurs (John 3:6; 4:24).

When the melody becomes lost in a dominant and overriding rhythm, we naturally begin to bypass the worship center (the realm of our spirit) in exchange for the carnal center of man’s existence (his soulish existence outside the spiritual realm – 1 Cor. 2:14), which is the place where the flesh or old nature operates to control and adversely influence our life (Rom. 7:18). Therefore, “spiritual songs” (Eph. 5:19) are literally “non-carnal” songs which align with the spiritual part of man’s existence (his human spirit) where God’s life and nature exist, and they are also inspired by the Holy Spirit who operates in this realm of our human existence.

Hebrews 4:12 states:

“For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

This means the Bible, when properly understood and applied to one’s life, can warn us of right and wrong by sorting out what is of the “soul” and “spirit” which are the two invisible and nonmaterial parts of man’s existence interwoven together like the

joints and marrow (tendons). In other words, the truth of Scripture will tell us what is of the *soulish* part of man's existence (the flesh) and what originates from *spiritual* part of man's existence, where God's life and nature operate and function.

i. God's Positioning System



God's inner GPS system (God's Positioning System) which controls our life originates from the realm of our human spirit, which has been made spiritually alive (Eph. 2:1). This is the place where God communicates to His children with "spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:10; Col. 3:16). These are the types of songs that allow us to make melody in our hearts to the Lord, songs

where the melody is dominant and not rhythmic confusion. Spiritual songs are not songs that feed the soulish or base instincts in man but which comply with the new nature. The soul (our desires, affections, feelings, conscience, memory, reason, will) is to be aligned with the spiritual part of our human existence where God's nature exists and where God communicates to us on a spiritual plane or level of existence (John 3:6; Rom. 8:16).

When music promotes disorder and rebellion, instead of melody, harmony and peace through proper rhythm, our affections and desires are not guided by the inner life of our new nature. Instead, our affections and actions are being misdirected and compromised by the promptings of the sin nature. This is why you have fleshly responses to fleshly-based music and selfish responses (instead of worshipful responses) to this type of music ("I like it," "It makes me feel good," "It sounds good to me"). Christians might return from a CCM concert and say, "Wow, what a great night," "I had a fun time," and "It was a real blast." Of course, these are simply fleshly responses which have no bearing on giving one spiritual direction and victory. They center on self and not the Spirit's leading and direction into godly living (Gal. 5:22-23). What stands before you and a focused heart in worship is your fleshly nature. But we cannot enter into worship with God with a preoccupation with self and our flesh. Worship must be on God's terms – not our terms.

This means that Christians must be very careful and watchful (1 Pet. 5:8-9) as to what kind of music they permit to influence their emotions and inner life. Yes, we

are created as emotional beings, but our emotions, which are generated from within our soul, must be controlled by the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) and spawn from the new nature, which resides in the realm of man's spirit. Here is the point. Emotions and physical responses can overpower and overtake us when the music of a song is not written in an orderly fashion. When it comes to Christian music, agreeable chord structure, rhythm, and good harmony settles the listener and allows them to focus on the message of the song and attentively absorb the spiritual message of what is being declared about God. It does not excite the listener into a frenzy and cause physical responses which detract from the message. However, disagreeable chord structure, rhythm, and bad harmony will overpower the melody and emotional and physical responses can very easily emerge which draw Christians away from the message, shifting the focus away from the truth. In short, the emotional and physical can very easily overtake the spiritual message that is being presented in the song.

A little compromise with CCM can eventually lead to greater compromises and a leavening process or worldliness that sets into our lives. Of course, the writer is aware that Contemporary Christian Music may sometimes cross the line of God's order in a subtle way with less of a physical effect on the listener, while at other times the discord and rhythmic confusion can totally overtake the listener and cause physical responses



that override any spiritual message which is trying to be conveyed. However, when it comes to music, God has called us to total separation from anything that reflects carnality and worldliness and which has the potential to become a stumbling block in our life (Rev. 2:14). God has summoned us to never touch the unclean thing of paganism (2 Cor. 6:17) which would include the pagan sound of a perverted culture.

This means we must school and discipline ourselves (1 Cor. 9:24-27) to make good musical choices for ourselves and families. We pay a high price when we allow the "little foxes" (Song 2:15) and a "little leaven" (Gal. 5:9) of CCM to make inroads into our hearts and homes. We must remember that little things eventually grow into bigger things that take us down the road of compromise, spiritual confusion, and insensitivity to musical rebellion and disorder.



One teenager shared this to warn others of the dangers of CCM and Rock Music: “I started listening to ‘contemporary Christian’ music about four years ago. I thought that the music was OK, and I enjoyed it, but one day I was listening to a Christian radio station and a song came on that I have never heard. I liked the song even though it was questionable. When the group who played that song came to town, I went to their concert with some friends. I knew, however, that my parents would not have approved had they known what type of music was played.

“After the concert, I borrowed money from a friend to buy their tape. I brought it home, but my parents did not want me to keep it. I did anyway. I listened to it all the time and finally bought some other ‘Christian rock’ tapes even though my parents did not want me to. I listened to them for a while but soon got bored with them. I then started listening to secular rock on a light rock station without my parents’ knowledge.

“I began to want to listen to rock music more and more, and I began to enjoy the harder stuff. I soon changed stations to a hard rock station so I could listen to the harder stuff. After listening to that station for about a year (all without my parent’s knowledge), I found that the stuff I liked the station could play only at night. So I got the tapes of some of the groups I liked, and I found that I loved heavy metal. I just couldn’t get enough. When I finally faced the reality of how wrong I was, I made commitments to give it up. However, I still struggle with it daily, and every time I hear it I am tempted to get back into it.”

#### j. God’s Formula for Musical Choices

God’s formula to make good musical choices is to choose Christian music that represents His character of purity in the best possible light. We do this when we “approve things that are excellent” (Phil. 1:10) or superior in quality instead of putting up with half-baked music and various diversions from sacred music. Striving for excellence in our musical choices keeps us from approving and becoming insensitive to various degrees of CCM in our musical choices, which can result in us moving to harder and more radical forms of CCM.





The question is often asked about the "gray" areas of the Christian life. What about the "in between" or gray areas where the Bible does not give specific instructions on some practice, where things are not so clearly stated in Scripture, where no seemingly definite answer can be given? Of course, many will use the "gray argument" and apply it to their music, so they can indulge in any kind of music they want to. There are several thoughts I can share about this way of thinking today. First, what many like to call gray areas are not really gray areas.

For instance, God's Word gives many direct commands and universal Scriptural principles which apply to the subject of music (Lev. 10:10; Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 6:14-17). Granted, there are some legitimate gray areas (non-compromising ways not forbidden in Scripture) which pertain to certain areas of the Christian life. However, studying the Bible will eliminate most gray areas and move the gray into the category of the white or black, depending on one's disobedience or obedience to Scripture ("obedient, by word and deed" - Rom. 15:18). In other words, the more we study Scripture, the less gray we will see! Of course, those who intend to find a gray area will find it, or should I say create a gray area will create it, if they ignore the clear teaching of the Bible on a given subject, including musical expression and worship.

Second, gray areas are normally areas of compromise (1 Kings 11:6). When it comes to music and worship, we should apply God's unchanging truths presented in the Bible to our music and worship and always seek to avoid gray areas (musical compromise), which means, we should not live in the proverbial gray zone where our music might in a small way reflect worldliness, heathenism and entertaining music. We should not try and cross the white line, step into the gray area, which might cause us to eventually take a step in the direction of greater darkness. Sometimes small steps away from the light (1 John 1:5) will take us further than we want to go and keep us longer than we want to stay! Before we know it, and maybe without realizing it, almost imperceptibly, we have moved into the dark zone through a progression of wrong choices and downward steps.

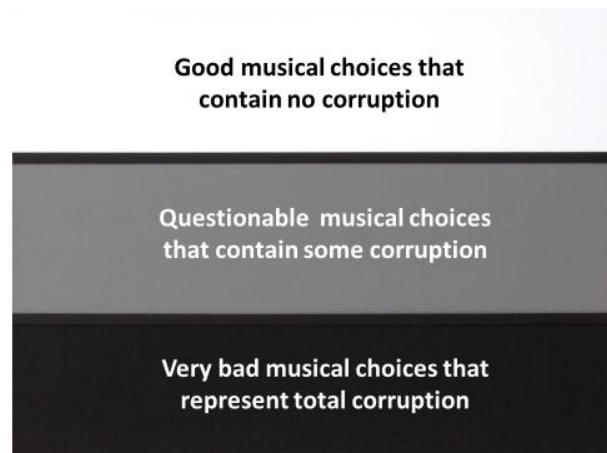
The powerful currents of compromise can catch the soul and carry it to a place of spiritual shipwreck (1 Tim. 1:19). Spiritual compromise is usually a slow process.

Psalm 1:1 says, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.” This is the true separatist’s uncompromising position. There should be no allowance for walking, standing or sitting in the presence of evildoers and their worldly sins and accepting their ungodly patterns of living.

The child of God is to have within his heart and life no place for casual compromise with the world (“walking”), which leads to a more rooted compromise with the world, a stronger endorsement and favorable attitude toward the ungodly world (“sitteth”), which eventually results in a more established compromise with the world that consists of a deep-seated, settled and full acceptance and participation with the ungodly practices of the world (“standeth”).

The final phase is selling out to the world. Please note the progression of compromise that can take place in the believer’s life. This is what happens when we fail to remain separate, as we should. We begin a process of compromises that lead to an end of full-blown compromise. The downward spiral of compromise can be easily detected in these three words – “walketh, “standeth,” sitteth.” A little compromise will finally end in a position of full acceptance and approval with ungodly ways and worldly patterns of life.

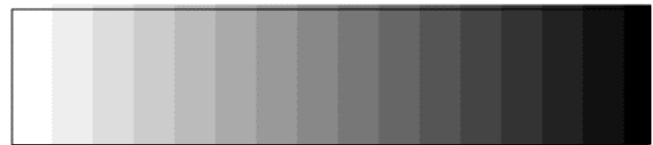
The graph or chart represents the musical progression from good, to questionable, to exceedingly bad musical choices. Obviously, we should choose music and worshipful expression that represents God’s glory (including His holiness, righteousness) and Bible separation (consecration to God) in the best possible light. We should choose Christian music that contains no mixture and which turns the white into gray. Once again, Philippians 1:10 says we should only “approve things that are excellent” (distinctly different and superior in quality) over that which is gray and questionable (cheaper in quality and represent small compromises and corruptions).



The more we apply Scriptural commands and principles to our music and worship, and learn the difference between worldly and sacred music, entertaining and non-performing music, the more we will strive and desire to remain in the white zone with our musical choices and worship. Many times the “gray zone” is actually a questionable zone which involves small compromises and departures along the way (1 Kings 15:14) which ultimately leads to moving toward the black zone where we “join in affinity with the people of these abominations” (1 Kings, 3:1; Ezra 9:14) and when greater abominations occur in our lives (Numb. 25:1-2; 2 Tim. 4:10; Rev. 2:14-15; 20). We put up with things we should put out of our lives. “A righteous man falling down before the wicked *is as* a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring” (Prov. 25:26). “He that *hath* no rule over his own spirit *is like* a city *that is* broken down, and without walls” (Prov. 25:28).

Think of it like this. The Bible paints the metaphor and picture that blackness is a description of sin and departure from God’s ways (1 John 1:5-7; Rom. 13:12; Eph. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:5; 1 Pet. 2:9). Now let’s apply this to music. Small doses of musical corruption (the lighter shades)

Small compromises  
lead to greater compromises!



If you move away from the  
WHITE zone you are moving  
toward the DARK zone!

can lead you further down the colored spectrum pathway into all kinds musical corruption (the darker shades). It’s far better to remain in the white zone than to digress into the shaded zones of compromised and rebellious music. One compromise leads to another and eventually find yourself on the other side of the color spectrum. Eventually, little musical compromises take us away from the white zone, move us into the gray zone, and often move us closer to the black zone.

We can eventually forget that Christ “hath delivered us from the power of darkness” (Col. 1:13) and that we “were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord” (Eph. 5:8), that God “hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9), and that we are now to be “children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness” (1 Thess. 5:5). To state succinctly, we should not want to live in the gray zone which is a shade away from the white zone (the right path) and a

shade toward the dark zone (the clearly forbidden path). Training ourselves about godly and non-worldly musical expression will keep us in the white zone, out of the gray zone, and portray Christianity, God's glory, and Bible separation in the best possible light. Dare to be a Daniel, be resolved to stay on the right path (Dan. 1:8; 3:16-18) and not deviate from it at all (Josh. 1:7).



Normally it's little musical compromises that lead to bigger compromises. But let us remember that God never compromises on any issue! John Ashbrook said: "Compromise ties your tongue, so that you cannot rebuke evil." Charles Spurgeon once said: "Complicity with error will take from the best of men the power to enter any successful protest against it." Misplaced loyalties to certain movements, denominational structures, institutions and even personalities will cause people to compromise. Instead of our loyalties being placed in earthly movements and men, our loyalty must be directed to God and His absolute truth and precious Word.

Also, a love for the world, desire for recognition, fear of controversy, peer pressure, weak convictions and personal deception are all reasons why we compromise. When Christians and churches crumble to the pressure of being outside the mainstream and the pressure of bigness they can find ourselves compromising. If a person is casual, careless and superficial (shallow), instead of being precise and caring about spiritual details, he will eventually be swept away in the New Evangelical tide of compromise. Carl Laney said, "We must not compromise and call sin anything less than it is." Many of us find ourselves "getting along by going along." Remember that "The most dangerous deviation is the one closest to your own position."

If we are not careful we can become comfortable with compromise! Tolerance and accommodation has always plagued God's people (Psalm 106:34-35; Exodus 34:14-16; Duet. 31:16; Ezra 9:1-3; 1 Kings 22:43-44; 2 Kings 14:4; 15:35; 2 Chron. 20:33).

Someone has said: "In our age we

**TOLERANCE**

have made an idol of tolerance.” The church has created an atmosphere of *leniency*. The easy-going, doctrinally-generic, and musically-maligned church is becoming the norm. This is because the church has become intolerant of the Biblical teaching of God’s Word on the subject of separated and sacred music and does not want to make waves among the people. Instead, they want to be tolerant and accommodating to allegedly meet all the worship needs of the people. We might call this tolerance “latitudinarianism” which speaks of not having any precise limits. When you have no limits you will become tolerant of those things that should be shunned.

Tolerance, which leads to participation and acceptance of various kinds of worldliness and false doctrines, eventually soften the heart toward these evils. A tolerant heart will in time become a soft heart that begins to accept and condone those things that God despises. God does not want us to become tolerant in our position and stance. Instead, He is pleased with us and praises us when we remain separated (Rev. 2:2-3, 6). We should remember that tolerance and compromise may appear to be good on the surface, but in reality it can destroy some greater good and open the door for more obvious evils.

A. W. Tozer remarked:

“A new Decalogue has been adopted by the neo-Christians of our day, the first word of which reads ‘Thou shalt not disagree’; and a new set of Beatitudes too, which begins ‘Blessed are they that tolerate everything, for they shall not be made accountable for anything.’”

We must remember Lucifer’s ability to manipulate and market music for his end and not allow musical rebellion to override musical spirituality. We must also be aware how Lucifer can make something look good to us which is not spiritual and good (Gen. 3:4-6; 2 Cor. 11:14). The devil knows how to make corrupt music look like the colors of the rainbow, or make it appear to be something that is Christian, beautiful, and wonderful. Beware of this disguise and deception. We are not to be conformers and imitators but transformers and light bearers (Rom. 12:2).

Now let’s make our statement from assessing Scripture. In order for us to “make melody in our hearts” (Eph. 5:19) and for our songs to be labeled “spiritual songs” (non-carnal songs) as Ephesians 5:19 declares, we must follow God’s musical order

or design which is non-worldly and non-confusing. This means the melody (a sweet, agreeable, organized succession of arranged sounds created by notes) must always have priority with orderly rhythm (beats and tempo) in full support and subjection to the melody. The melody is what transports and communicates the message of the song. The melody is a string of notes that is musically satisfying and which carries the message to be communicated to the listener.

In music, the correct order is a good melody, supported by balanced harmony, undergirded with a firm and consistent rhythm. The harmony is the support structure for the melody by building musical notes and chords that have a pleasing effect and sound to the melody. Again, the rhythm (beat and pulse of the music) should always compliment the melody and harmony. Music has order but when this order is strained and abandoned, musical disorder occurs, which is then reflected in promoting varying amounts of worldliness, disorder, and rebellion in the lives of people. Furthermore, when rhythm becomes dominant, the truth can very easily become lost in the song. Instead of truth reigning, emotions, physical movements, gyrations, and other physical diversions overtake the truth and message.



In Matthew 7:20, Jesus said, “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” Of course, Jesus was referring to false teachers and the corrupt fruit of doctrine and living that comes forth from their lives. But there is a musical principle behind this verse. Let’s state it this way: “Wherefore by their fruits (the results or reactions people have toward songs) ye shall know them” (that they are CCM songs).

One of the easiest ways to test a piece of music is to simply observe how people respond or react to it, or to see what kind of fruit it produces. False teachers produce ungodly fruit and fleshly music will often produce the kind of fruit that is opposite of true spirituality. When the music generates excessive body movement and people begin to sway back and forth uncontrollably, jump up and down, and lapse into a euphoric state, they are missing the message. The fruit is fleshly. This is because there is a fleshly response to the dominating rhythm that overtakes the message. To state it simply, the kind of music being played will often be known by the responses (fruit) that people display who are listening to it.

Again, some will ask, “Where does the Bible say a certain beat or rhythm is wrong?” Of course, the Bible does not give a “Thou shalt not follow a 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> beat in your music” command. But neither does it directly say “Thou shalt not look at nudity on TV.” However, the multitudes of cultural sins must be dealt with through the direct application of various commands and principles (1 John 5:2-3; John 17:17) that help us to live a pure life and counteract cultural rebellion in all areas and phases of life.

The more we evaluate our music and conform it to God’s orderly and non-worldly design, the more we will learn about spiritual music. Furthermore, the more we conform our music to God’s character and design, the more spirituality we will experience and reflect in our lives. So, when we begin to drown out the melody, add a subtle or strong emphasis on the wrong beat, and begin to filter into the music a loud, repetitious, driving beat and abused pattern of syncopation; it’s then that the music becomes disorderly and corrupted. God is a God of order and since He created music, it does have order, God’s universal musical order, which He built in to all music as the original Divine Composer, when He concluded that everything He had made was good (Gen. 1:31). To abandon this established order and follow the disorder and chaos of rebellious music of the last days (2 Timothy 3:1-5) is to misrepresent God and His orderly design for music, which is a reflection of His moral purity.

Disregarding God’s order of music leads to disorder in music and within the Christian life. This is because the rock sound communicates sensuality, freedom from regulation, disorder and rebellion. For this reason, the rock sound cannot be anything but worldly. It is music designed for the flesh, which is at war with the Spirit (Gal. 5:17). The world is not a friend of grace! We must understand that a certain kind of music can cause us to participate in worldliness but it can also break down our spiritual defenses. Music is powerful and a Christian must be sure that what he is listening to is wholesome and reflects God’s character and order. Therefore, we must avoid any music patterned after the flesh and refuse to feed the flesh what it wants (1 Pet. 2:11).

The rock sound is a fleshly and sensual (soulish) sound because it generates a type of fleshly response from man’s base nature. In other words, listening to rock sound feeds the old nature. And this type of music is one of Satan’s clever devices (2 Cor. 2:11). Think about it. Much of the so-called Christian music of today goes against God’s holy design and order for music and is actually designed or created by rock



artists to elicit emotional, mental and physical responses which can produce carnal enjoyment and even addiction – not spiritual living and commitment to God. The rock style of music has captured the minds and bodies of Christian teenagers and even the older generation of believers. In fact, the teens who develop the carnal taste of music from their parents will normally require more carnal music to satisfy it. The fleshly appeal of music does not change.

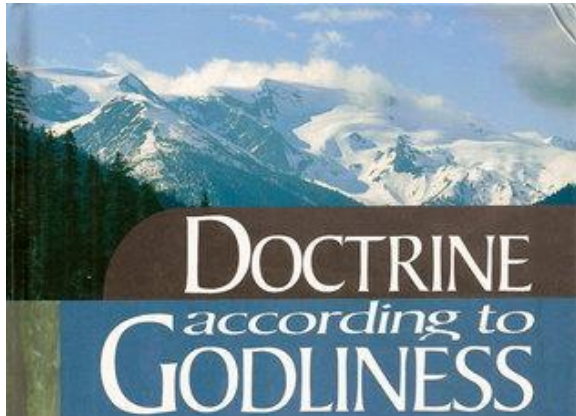
Psalm 119:133 should be our goal and desire:

“Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.”

J. S. Bach remarked:

“All music should have no other end and aim than the glory of God and the soul’s refreshment; where this is not remembered there is no real music but only a devilish hub-bub.”

- **Music would not be important if God did not call us to be discerning about spiritual music that honors Him and “the doctrine which is according to godliness.”**



The Bible does mention about a doctrine which supports godliness.

1 Timothy 6:3 declares:

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness.”

In the context, the doctrine of godliness focuses on living a life of contentment instead of greed and covetousness. Timothy was told that “godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Tim. 6:6). Of course, anytime you seek to live out a godly life, instead of engaging in carnality, it will be great spiritual gain, growth, and blessing in your personal life. I can assure you that if you seek to live and worship with godly music (sacred music) it will be great gain for you as well! Don’t sell yourself short. Learn to listen to music that reflects the Creator and which is



reflective of godliness – not worldliness. Play it in your home, let your children learn to discern and understand the nature of musical order - not musical rebellion.

A doctrine or teaching that is in accord or which agrees with godliness (1 Tim. 6:3) means that it encourages and promotes godliness and godly behavior. However, the contemporary teaching that says we can mix sacred words with a pagan and perverted sound, which reflects Satan’s musical rebellion, does not foster godliness and becomes a violation of God’s holy standard. For this reason, the Bible says we are to “prove all things” (1 Thess. 5:21) and only “approve things that are excellent” (Phil. 1:10). This is a call to be discerning. Hebrews 5:14 says that we are to have our “senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”



#### a. The Definition of Discernment

The word “discern” (Heb. 5:14) means to distinguish or judge and possess spiritual perception regarding the type of music that we listen to and use in our times of worship. The total expression which speaks about our “senses exercised” means to school or train our mind so that we might possess proper perception about spiritual and evil things. This is exactly what we must do when it comes to judging our music. We must school our minds and learn the difference between the good and the bad and even the better and the best. This verse calls us to discern or judge between that which is right and wrong, the false and the genuine, the good and evil, the spiritual and carnal, the inferior and superior, and even mark a difference between the eternal and temporary.

Hebrews 5:14 challenges us to remain vigilant and maintain moral judgment. We are to possess discernment in all spheres of life, even as it relates to the morality of music. This means we are able to form spiritual judgments and save ourselves from musical, moral, ethical, and doctrinal departures which in some measure pose a danger or detriment to our spiritual lives. God wants us to be spiritually discerning and not become carnally stimulated by musical techniques which appeal to the flesh.

I do not believe we need to be a musical expert with a degree in musical theory to be able to discern between good and bad music. We don't have to know all the intricacies of musical technique or be a concert musician to be able to discern godly, sacred music. Discernment involves good judgment and understanding. It means to examine, scrutinize, judge, investigate, sift or question. Discernment is linked to a seasoned, developed, and Biblically informed mind.

Psalm 119:66

“Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments.”

Psalm 119:104

“Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.”

Psalm 119:130

“The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.” Discernment can only flourish in an environment of faithful Bible study and teaching. The discernment that we gain from studying the Bible should be reflected in the type of music we listen to. God wants us to be discerning about the quality of our music and kind of music we allow to penetrate our souls.

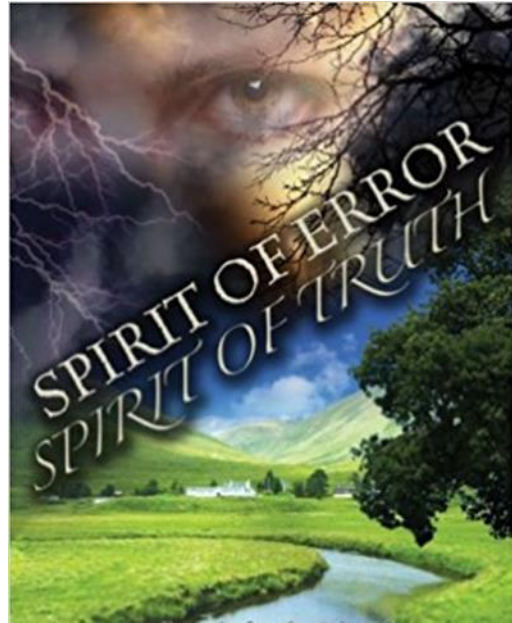
John Walvoord said:

“Spiritual discernment sorts all things out as good or bad in the sight of God determined by divine rather than human criteria ... In a world which has lost its sense of value, a Christian must have unusual sensitivity to what really counts.”

b. Discernment and the spirit of error.

As we understand what the Bible teaches regarding God's character, holiness and separation, as it relates to music, we can ask some basic questions about the type of music we are listening to. Does it possess the rock sound of a perverted culture? Is it spiritual or carnal in nature? Does it reflect cultural rebellion? Is it the same old rock sound splattered with a Christian message? Is it a mixture between the good and evil? God wants us to be discerning about our musical habits. Beloved, beware of the spirit of the age! 1 John 4:6 speaks of truth and error: “Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.”

We must learn to decipher between these two realms even in the area of music. The “spirit of truth” is likely a reference to the Holy Spirit which confirms the truth in our minds and hearts (John 16:13). The term “spirit” could also be referring to the disposition and attitude within those who teach the truth and what they confess. Of course, the Holy Spirit would be behind their messages and proclamations.



The “spirit of error” (falsehood and deception) can be referencing the basic disposition and attitude of those who teach error and their failure to confess the truth. It could additionally refer directly to evil spirits who are behind the false message of the apostates (1 John 4:1). These two spirits represent two distinct moral realms competing for control over our hearts and lives. As Christians, we must remember that we are in a spiritual battle (Eph. 6:12). Truth must prevail in our hearts. We must constantly seek to know the truth and not be led astray by deceit and falsehood, whether it’s in the area of Christology or Practical Theology (sanctification). In other words, we should want to apply the truth of Bible separation to our musical choices and make sure that we are not imbibing the spirit of error by possessing a wrong disposition or attitude toward the truth of Bible separation, while at the same time possessing an orientation toward accepting worldliness. We want to make sure our musical choices represent “the doctrine which is according to godliness” (1 Tim. 6:3).



It’s interesting that two Christians may listen to a contemporary rock song and give totally opposite evaluations of it. One will say, “I know that song is wrong because it causes me to be rebellious and sensual.” The other Christian may say, “I don’t see anything wrong with that music. It doesn’t stir up any rebellion or sensuality in me.” Does this prove that music is neutral and boils down to individual taste and likes? No, it proves that two different Christians are on different levels or at different stages in their development or depletion of sanctification. For instance, one Christian might need

a harder stimulating sound and beat to stir up and control their baser instincts while the other is stimulated to rebellion through a lesser form of Rock Music.

Of course, rebellion is rebellion no matter how one responds to it! The fact that Rock Music was created to conflict with the true character of God (peace, order, holiness, righteousness), and since CCM music is worldly, distorts the true nature of God, and is designed to produce carnality and rebellion against God, we should separate from it on this basis. We should not separate from CCM and Rock Music based upon the “level we can handle” without it polluting ourselves (and who can really know this level). We should separate from all forms of Rock Music based upon God’s command to separate from worldliness (Rom. 12:2). Separation takes the possibility of spiritual pollution away from our lives for it will keep us from the unclean thing (2 Cor. 6:17). Whenever someone says, “I can handle it” because he is allegedly stronger, he should “take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). We should not experiment with CCM and Rock Music to see how much we can handle or get away with, we should separate from it out of obedience and loyalty to God (1 John 5:3). Separation keeps us from eventually opening ourselves up to being tempted and swayed into musical rebellion and spiritual corruption in varying ways and degrees.

Ignorance is not bliss! Don’t hide behind your excuses (“I’m not a musician, I cannot read music”) to sanctify your worldly music. You can easily train your ear to hear a distinction in musical sound and how it is being presented. Stop pleading ignorance over the “sounds” related to Rock Music. Most Christians make the choice to remain ignorant



(willingly ignorant) over the subject of CCM (1 Cor. 14:38). We must take the initiative to learn the basic traits of Rock Music, such as dominating rhythm while lacking melody or no melody, rhythmic patterns based upon the second and fourth beats (backbeats), excessive syncopation, and loud, repetitious, hypnotic music.

You can add to this “showy,” “breathy,” hoarseness, sensual sliding, etc. which is entertaining and worldly music that does not reflect someone who is trying to communicate their joy in knowing Christ and possessing a relationship with Him. We must take our stand and refuse to imitate the world’s standard above God’s righteous standard and order. 1 Corinthians 2:15 says, “But he that is spiritual

judgeth all things” or makes an accurate assessment of what is right and wrong based upon God’s commands, as outlined in the Scripture.

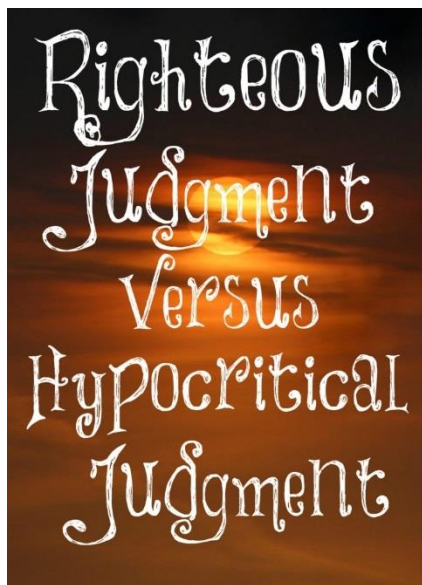
Harry Ironside said this about the spiritual man:

“He is able to see the difference between what is of God and what is of man, what is of the flesh and what is of the Spirit, what is of the new and what is of the old nature.”

- **Music would not be important if Jesus has not called us to possess a righteous judgment.**

Jesus shared these words in John 7:24:

“Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.”



In this context, judging according to “appearance” speaks of a wrong type of judgment that is based upon a misinterpretation of the truth (in this case it was the Sabbath). It involved a type of judgment that was superficially biased and which had no Scriptural basis. Righteous discernment involves judging something or someone (what they say, do, or promote) on the basis of what is right (righteous criteria), judging with true Biblical commands and principles in view, instead of by hypocritical, unwarranted, unfounded, and unbiblical judgments (Matt. 7:1). Christians are to make a constant assessment of what is right and wrong. We are called upon to “prove all things” (1 Thess. 5:21) based upon

the enduring commands and principles that God reveals in the Bible. This should be a normal part of the Christian life as one walks in the Spirit and not in the realm of the flesh (Gal. 5:16, 25). We are commanded to walk in the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) and listen to music that assists in this walk.

Righteous judgment does not always result in a confrontational or critical and argumentative spirit, in the normal routine of living, but is needful for personal sanctification. Nor is righteous judgment a type of judgment that compares one Christian with another we mentioned at the beginning of this study. The Bible does



condemn a “holier than thou” type of judgment which is done to elevate oneself above others (2 Cor. 10:12). The discerning Christian is not out to compare himself with others but to assist and inform them in the spirit of brotherly kindness and love (2 Pet. 1:7; 1 Cor. 13:6; Gal. 6:1; Prov. 27:17). Even necessary “rebuke” (Titus. 1:13) can be done in the spirit of love, grace, and kindness (Col. 4:6; Eph. 4:15). We are not to be arrogant in our faith and unfriendly to others who do not believe like we do in the area of music and worship.

Remember that listening to and worshipping with the right music is a very important part of the discipline and sanctification of the Christian life (1 Cor. 9:27). This is because listening to the wrong type of music can become a fleshly distraction in your life and also lead to other worldly struggles depending on the severity of the CCM and Rock Music one embraces. It can even lead to a carnal Christian life (1 Cor. 3:3). But having the right music is not the only test of a person’s Christian walk.

We must also develop right relationships, cultivate the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, pray, be a testimony in our Christian life, attend church, study the Bible, evangelize, etc. I say this because we should not become the sole judge over a person’s entire spiritual life. Ultimately, only God can know the kind of heart, attitudes, and entire spirituality of an individual life (Ps. 26:2; Jer. 17:10; Rev. 2:2, 9, 13, 19). We can judge a person’s music and see it as a fleshly diversion and distraction in their spiritual life (1 Thess. 5:21) and a specific area where there is need for improvement and growth (Eph. 4:15), but we should never become the sole judge over the spirituality of a person and place ourselves on a higher plane than others.

We have in the previous point discovered that each believer is to have their “senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:14). We have also mentioned how every Christian should “approve things that are excellent” (Phil. 1:10). In other words, we are only to approve (discern) those things which are “excellent” or of superior quality. This means we are to strive for excellence (focus on quality) in our musical selections that we use for worship and not step over the line and adopt worldly and questionable sounds that come from the realm of worldly music. To state it simply, we are to test everything and make right decisions in regards to those things which are superior and best for our Christian lives.



Remember that sometimes what is considered to be good might actually be an enemy of the best.

A man who was saved from the rock music lifestyle came up to me and said, "Preacher, the music that is being promoted in the church today is a cheap imitation of my old way of life." He was right. God is looking for excellence in our worship. He is looking for music that does not mimic the kind of sound that promotes rebellion and carnality in the lives of people. Striving for excellence or approving "things that are excellent" (Phil. 1:10) means a believer will distance himself from the line which passes over into the realm of compromise. He will follow godly, holy, and Biblical standards that move him in a direction away from the line of compromise and contamination. Many Christians get into trouble by straddling the fence instead of striving for excellence. We must remember that the proper judgment and assessment of music which honors God is based upon the believer's loyalty to God and doing what is right and holy in God's eyes.

John Miles states:

"Believers can lead us into compromising positions more quickly than anyone else. So though we long to fellowship with believers and recognize the unity of the body of Christ, if a believer leads us into a compromising position, where our loyalty to God is going to be questioned and compromised, then we have to part company with that believer. This seems like a contradiction to many, but again we must remember the most important thing in life is to be loyal to God and to do His will. As Jesus said, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself (say no to himself), and take up his cross (the will of God) and follow me.'"

There are times we need to be separate from deplorable worship styles and music, even when it means separating from the saints in an ecclesiastical (church) setting (2 Thess. 3:6). There is much foolishness and froth being promoted today in many local churches where ministers are entertaining people with a "Christianized form" of Satan's Rock Music, while at the same time attempting to impress people with watered-down preaching, which does not touch upon a person's need to allow grace to transform their lives from carnality, worldly lusts, and all ungodliness (Titus 2:11-12). Jesus must be Lord of all – even Lord over our music! Instead of bowing the knee to a contemporary corrupt sound, we should bow the knee to the Lord Jesus Christ and His mastery over our life, even in the area of music, which pertains to the type of music that we use to worship God with.

“Bow the knee, Bow the knee  
He is King of all the ages Bow the knee.  
God alone on His throne,  
See Him high and lifted up and bow the knee.  
Kneel before Him, All adore Him.  
As you live to love Him more, Bow the knee.”

Let us never forget that God has called us to be discerning today. We are to be like the Bereans of old who in Acts 17:11 “searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so.” In other words, they tested everything by the sacred Scriptures (the teachings, conclusions, actions, choices, & music of others). Yes, we can use the Scriptures to analyze even the sound of music in terms of “good” and “evil” or “appropriate” and inappropriate” when we apply Scripture commands and principles to the type of sound being promoted by music. I need to use the Scriptures which speak of God’s attributes, the importance of Bible separation and non-conformity to the world, so that God’s Word can become “a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Ps. 119:105) and help me discern between good and bad music, and even know the difference between better and the best music. We need to “test” our music today and make sure it does not reflect the words and sounds that fuel the old nature and which Satan has historically used to corrupt our society.

- **Music would not be important if God did not command us to hate ever false way which includes the words and sounds of rebellious music.**

There are many Bible verses that command God’s people to hate or despise all forms of evil, to depart from every evil way, including music that does not reflect God’s nature and glorify Him. These same Bible verses reminds us to only embrace those things which are good and honoring to God. Let’s name of a few of them.



Psalm 34:14

“Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.”

Psalm 37:27

“Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.”



Psalm 97:10

“Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.”

Psalm 119:104

“Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.”

Psalm 119:128

“Therefore I esteem all *thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.*”

Amos 5:15

“Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate...”

Isaiah 7:15 states that we are to “know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.”

Jeremiah 18:11 adds that we are to “return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.” 2 Timothy 2:19 says, “Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

Proverbs 4:14-15 gives us timely advice:

“Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil *men*. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.”

There can be no question regarding what God requires of His dedicated followers. We are to depart from every evil way. Anything that reflects evil and rebellion should not be embraced in our Christian lives. Hating that which is wrong and departing from it would include separating from those forms of music that do not accurately reflect God’s character and righteous ways. In short, what God likes, we are to like, what God hates, we are to hate. You might conclude that you like something, but does God like it? This is the most important question you need to ask yourself.

R. B. Ouellette said:

“Find out what God likes and do it. Find out what God does not like and don’t do it!”

Good advice! Our likes and loyalty must be to God (Luke 14:26) and our goal must be to please the Lord at all times. Our emotional appeal to a song does not matter.

Our likes and dislikes don't matter. Our personal tastes do not matter. What matters is does a song align itself with the Scriptural truth of Bible separation and does it honestly glorify God who is infinitely holy and righteous? We are commanded to "Hate the evil, and love the good" (Amos 5:15). We must not only love the good but also hate the evil. Both are important.

Dr. Arnold of Rugby once remarked:

"I never could be sure of a boy who only loved the good. Until that boy also began to hate evil, I never felt that he was safe."

We must train ourselves, through the process of sanctification, to despise and not participate with those things that God hates. Romans 12:9 says, "Abhor (detest) that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." The word "hate" should remain in the Christian vocabulary. Of course, we don't hate people but the world, the flesh, and the devil (1 John 2:15-17). Jesus loved the sinner (Luke 7:34) but hated sin. There is a vast difference between the two. He accepted the sinner but He did not accept their sin (John 8:11). The same should be true in our lives.

As we learn to hate the evil and love the good, as we learn to refuse to follow a mixture between the good and evil, we will constantly assess our music and only approve those things which reflect God's character of holiness and righteousness. Our goal in listening to the right kind of music is so we might be more like Jesus in purity and righteous living (2 Cor. 3:18).

"O to be like Thee!  
O to be like Thee!  
Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art;  
Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fulness;  
Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart."

- **Music would not be important if we don't want our children to follow a separated path and live free from those cultural things which can pollute them spiritually and potentially control and overtake their lives.**



Sadly, a generation of worldly adults have raised a generation of worldly children and teenagers. Blaise Pascal observed that the people who have the greatest influence in shaping the hearts and minds of any generation are not the folks who write the laws, but those who write the songs. Plato observed that musical training is a more potent instrument than any other, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul, on which they mightily fasten.

This is why Christian fathers and mothers need to train their children on the subject of Biblically-based and non-worldly music. Of course, it's not always what they (our children) were merely *taught* but what they *caught* while living in the home with their parents. As they see parents living out separated lives unto God in the realm of their musical choices, this can leave an indelible mark on their hearts and lives. Setting an example before our children of musical discipline is as important as teaching our children about musical discipline (Tutus 2:1-8). Children will often do what we do – not merely what we say!

The repeated emphasis of training children in the right ways to walk and how to live cannot be dismissed without tragedy occurring in the home. Parents are to train their children in all areas of living. This includes teaching them the right kind of music to listen to. Musical training is important. We should not allow the culture to dictate to our children what is right and wrong. It is the solemn responsibility of parents to teach Biblical values and virtues to their children, which pertain to every area of living, including music.

Proverbs 22:6

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

Deuteronomy 11:18-20

“Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine

house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates.”

Ephesians 6:4

“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture (education, instruction, training) and admonition (warning, rebuke, and encouragement) of the Lord.”

It’s the God-given responsibility of parents to teach their children the difference between right and wrong and provide a stable environment that will be conducive to godly living in their early formidable years. Later, as the children reach adulthood, they will see the relevance and importance of what their parents taught them. Instead of following the cultural contaminations of society and broader or progressive evangelicals (a segment of compromised Christianity), they can pass on God’s Biblical commands for purity of music to their own children.

Psalms 78:5-6

“For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know *them*, *even* the children *which* should be born; *who* should arise and declare *them* to their children.”

Passing down “musical separation” from one generation to the next is very important. When we learn the traits of Biblical and godly music, which reflect God’s holiness and righteousness, then we can play this type of music in our homes and attend those churches which also mirror the same type of music that reflects God’s character. All of this will have a lasting impact upon our children. We must take the responsibility as parents to monitor our children’s music on TV, video games, iPhones, iPads, and other media and cyber sources, so that they might learn to make the necessary distinctions between the good and the bad, and so we might spark a healthy, reverent, fear of God in the hearts of our children.

Psalms 34:11

“Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.”

Deuteronomy 6:2 should be our goal for our children:

“That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged.”

An adult gave this account regarding CCM:

“We realize we now that we were practicing compromise in its grandest form! But it wasn't until a couple of months ago when my youngest (8-year-old), came to me upset because he said he felt like the devil as around when I played my Twila Paris CD's. Oh, that used to be his favorite, I might add, but this just broke my heart. What lesson what I teaching my children that compromise was alright in one area, but not another? ... The next evening, my husband took every tape and CD that was even questionable, and destroyed them.”

David Sorenson gives this story in his book on training children about how a when his church began, they were using a small chapel in a private school. The administration informed him that was going to be a Christian Rock concert elsewhere in the building that evening. Here is what he said about it: “That evening the concert fires up. The large building reverberated with numbing decibels as the Contemporary Christian Concert blasted away down the corridors. We watch as police were necessary to control the crowd. This was the standard punk-rock complete with dyed and spiked hair, ragged-to-the-point-of-being-immodest clothing and all the other accoutrements of rock concert. During the intermission, the crows poured out into the corridors and onto the lawn. The air was thick with smoke. There was necking and crude epithets were shouted. Now mind you, this was a Christian concert because the music was genuine, authentic Contemporary Christian Music.”

As parents, you cannot ignore where this type of music leads our young people. It is the type of music that has historically been used to promote sexual passions and uncleanness in the lives of millions of people. Why would it be any different if you throw a few religious words into the mix? Its musical sound of sexual rebellion is still is a breeding ground for immorality and impurity. There is a moral laxness produced by loose music and many in church congregations will live on a moral low ground because of this type of music. We need to stop kidding ourselves about the power behind this type of spiritually flawed music. It can very easily set the mood of

sensuality and causes most Christians to cross over into secular Rock Music which emphasize explicit sexual themes and concepts.

Kent Brandenburg aptly remarks:

“When the right kind of music is constantly played and sung in the home, the children will be able to detect immediately when the wrong kind of music is being played. With the wrong music comes a definitively wrong lifestyle. This right music encourages, teaches, and admonishes the hearts of the parents and children. It will set a tone for the whole family to live godly lives that are not filled with sinful self-gratification.”

Sadly, some parents want their children to become heavily dosed and involved in CCM music within the church setting to avoid secular Rock Music but they don't realize the dangers this presents to their children. The music can lead a young person (or any person) into a weakened spiritual position because of what the sound of the music portrays (sinful rebellion against God and His ways) and also because it can easily lead an individual into secular Rock Music with all of its evil enticements.

An Eighteen-Year-Old from Oklahoma writes this:

"When I was twelve or thirteen years old, I was given some 'Christian rock' tapes by my parents to listen to because they thought I was getting into secular music. The truth is, I was getting into some bad music. The 'Christian rock' dominated my life for over a year until I could not get the same satisfaction I received the first time I heard it. I went to secular rock music and kept this desire and sin from my parents. I started out on soft music and grew to pop/rock-type music.

"It was not long until my desire grew to 'hard rock' and 'progressive' stuff. I started getting into drinking and going to dance clubs. Minor recreational drugs came in and soon my life was going down the drain.

"One night while drinking, I fell into immorality and my life was devastated. God used this tragedy to turn me around and bring me back to Him. I feel very deeply that if I had not started out in 'Christian rock' I would have been convicted about the bad music I got into. Maybe I would not have messed my life up so much."

As parents, we should not be fooled and ignorant of the extreme damage wrong entertainment, wrong music, and wrong philosophy can do to our children. Giving our children a heritage of godly, spiritual songs is an important way to strengthen the family, give guidance for the future generation, and bring glory to God. We need to teach them (Eph. 6:4) that there is a morality issue connected with music and explain to them how Biblical separation applies to the realm of music. We need to help them create Biblical parameters for their music and explain the differences between good and bad music.

Our children will quickly learn that they cannot escape all the Rock Music and media that society floods their way and into their ears, as they shop, go out to eat, move about in society, and live from day to day. However, early on in their life, they will learn from their parents that they do not have to promote it in their own personal lives, their homes, and in their personal and corporate times of worship. Teaching our children to fear and reverence God is most definitely linked to the type of music they listen to and incorporate into their lives.

Psalm 78:1-4 says:

“Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide *them* from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.”



Parents sometimes give up and hide the truth of CCM from their children. They open up the musical floodgates for their children and they reap the whirlwind (Hos. 7:8). Part of parenting is to rock the boat when necessary! Steven Miller thinks we should allow free musical expression in the lives of our children. He states: “We have been called to shape our children’s values without exasperating them” which according to Miller means that we should not take away their Rock Music. Miller shoots himself in the foot when making this statement since we cannot properly shape the spiritual values of our children when allowing them to openly embrace a style of music that mimics worldliness and which opens the door for secular Rock Music to come into their lives. No, we should not stir up our children to wrath (Eph.

6:4) but guarding their lives from spiritual defeat, worldliness, and carnality is part of parenting. By the way, if you teach your children the Biblical principles behind good and godly music, monitor their lives (not suffocate them), then you won't need to take away their Rock Music!

Again, the underlying musical message and sound of CCM encourages our children to embrace worldly attitudes and behaviors that run contrary to Scripture. This type of music tempts them to enter the world of secular Rock Music and the statistics show that most do when listening to CCM. As parents, we are to train our children in the paths of righteousness (Ps. 23:3) and bring them up to God's standards - not move them down to the world's standards. The lines between the world and the church have been blurred. We have sold out our youth to a compromised lifestyle. We encourage them in carnal Christianity and the moral cancer of Contemporary Christian Rock Music that seeks to feed the flesh, rather than teaching them to deny their flesh (Gal. 6:8).

Some parents give in and give up when it comes to training their children about godly and separated music. They conclude, "O well, everyone is doing it." Where is your faith in God's power to change your children and make them into vessels fit for the Master's use? Settling for compromising music in the home and church is not demonstrating faith that God can change the hearts of your children. Will your children actually thank you in the years to come for the worldly and lower musical standards you have allowed them to embrace in their lives?

"A careful man I ought to be,  
A little fellow follows me.  
I do not dare to go astray  
For fear he'll go the selfsame way.  
I cannot once escape his eyes,  
What e're he sees me do he tries.  
Like me he says he's going to be –  
The little chap that follows me.

He thinks that I am good and fine,  
Believes in every good word of mine.  
The base in me he must not see –  
The little chap who follows me.



I must remember as I go,  
Thru summer's sun and winter's snow  
I'm building for the years to be –  
That little chap who follows me.”

In a more recent essay called “Music in 2020,” written by Cindyann Rasquinha, she emphasized the importance of parenting our children and leaving behind a legacy of godly music. Here are few excerpts from her excellent essay.

“I have good memories of hearing hymn and quartet music playing in my home as a child. I will never forget hearing my mother playing hymns while she sang. Beyond the Sunset, O blissful morn. I loved hearing her sing in church, the same way I like listening to my daughters sing in church, in a pew near me. Do beautiful voices skip a generation? Not always; right?

“These beautiful hymns became mingled and eventually overshadowed by the music of the world. Most of the music was sensual and took my mind to places that a young single woman need not go. Those songs were not primarily love songs, with the understanding that the passions sung about were within marriage. They promoted immorality ...

As parents and women that love children, it is vital to pull help from every source available. Obviously, a place to begin is on our knees, but when we get up, we much act. The first place is to consider the music you enjoy ...

“I try to stay relevant, but hiding one's head in the sand is not how to stay relevant. Music that mocks Biblical standards is not going to add anything to your life. Mark it down; it will tear you down. Do not underestimate the power of music in your homes ...

“We are to teach the young ones, but let us be careful ourselves. They are watching us; they are listening. What conviction; what opportunity. Be careful little ears what you hear” (<https://cindyannrasquinha.com/music-in-2020/>).

- **Music would not be important if the grace of God was not teaching us to deny ungodly practices or those things that dishonor God.**

Titus 2:11-12 states:

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”



Many Christians who participate with the CCM Movement will tell you that grace frees them and allows them to choose whatever kind of music they want to listen to since grace means freedom. The popular Christianity of today has a way of interpreting God's grace to fit in with their own preferred way of lifestyle which

conforms to the culture. The new spin on the message of God's grace is that God is not interested in standards of music, dress, or but is only interested in the hearts. Grace does away with all rules and regulations and therefore we should not judge others in the area of their personal choices, music, and style of worship. Sadly, this becomes the age-old philosophy of using grace for license (Rom. 6:1).

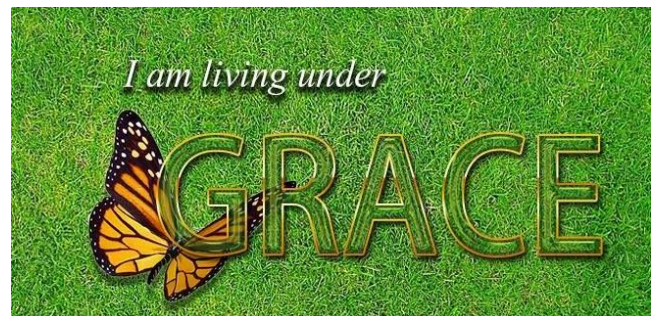
Let me explain a few things. It's true that New Testament Christians living today have been freed from the penalty of the Law (Gal. 3:13; 4:5; 2 Cor. 3:7), the many intricate procedures and practices of the Mosaic Law (Col. 2:16), and also from the powerless nature of the Law which could not deliver us from sin's power (Rom. 6:14-15; 8:3). We no longer must live under Law for these very reasons. We have been released from the penalty, intricate procedural practices, and powerless nature of the Law to both save and sanctify our lives. This means that in the "age of grace" we no longer must worship according to prescribed Jewish rituals, but we must still worship in "spirit and truth" (John 4:24), which will result in our worship reflecting God's unchanging moral nature and absolutes.

We must remember that in the Grace Age we have never been released from actually following God's unchanging moral and ethical commands. The key to New Testament Christianity is "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:4). Paul teaches that the wonderful feature of the grace dispensation is the "ministration of the spirit" (2 Cor. 3:7) or the new inner work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. In short, the Holy Spirit writes the moral nature of God's Law upon our hearts ("the fleshly tables of the

heart” – 2 Cor. 3:3), produces a new sensitivity to sin that comes from within and then translates into our everyday living.

In summary, the righteous character and moral principles of the Law must still be followed today through the power of the Holy Spirit which results in our personal transformation and Christlikeness (2 Cor. 3:18). Remember that living under grace (Rom. 6:14-15) comes with responsibilities and discipline (1 Cor. 9:24-27). If we are not careful, we can find ourselves “turning the grace of God into lasciviousness” (Jude 4) or use grace as an excuse and license to sin, “an occasion for the flesh” (Gal. 5:13) or “a cloak of maliciousness” (1 Pet. 2:16). In short, just because we live in the “age of grace” does not mean that God has changed in His attribute of holiness! God still reserves the right to reject unacceptable worship (1 Pet. 2:5; Heb. 12:28). We must recognize again that God does not accept everything we send up to Him, which we consider worship and which we like a “whole lot.”

We must also remember there are many New Testament commands to follow while living “under grace” and the grace way of life, which the Holy Spirit uses to guide and direct our lives (John 16:13; 1 John 4:6) in the way of righteousness and godliness (1 Cor.



11:14-15; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; Eph. 4:26-32; 5:1-7; Rom. 12:2). Grace does not get rid of God’s command for holy and consecrated living. Instead, the present display and working of grace in our lives gives us a new inward power, dynamic, and motive to live a godly life (2 Cor. 3:1-6; 18; Phil. 2:13; Rom. 6:14-15; Gal. 5:18; Titus 2:11-12).

We need to understand that the ceremonial rules and regulations regarding sacrifice were given to provide typical lessons about God’s requirements for salvation (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:24) and ultimately provided a picture or shadow (Heb. 10:1) of salvation through Christ in figures (Heb. 9:9, 24) and patterns (Heb. 9:23) relating to His sacrifice (1 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 9:11, 23-26; 10:19-20). Tabernacles, temples, and typical lessons in feast days (Lev. 23) are no longer God’s plan for the Church. These ceremonial laws were also object lessons designed to teach practical holiness in the Christian life (Lev. 11:44-47; 19:1-2; 22:31-33) and worship (Lev. 23:2-4). They could be viewed as teaching tools to help the people understand that God was holy and they were required to live in a holy fashion (Ex. 19:3-6). The

intricate laws between the clean and unclean and the entire Mosaic code was a perpetual reminder of God's holiness (Lev. 19:2; 20:7, 26) and that Israel was to be set apart from the pagan nations around them (Ex. 19:5-6; Lev. 20:26; Deut. 14:1-2; 28:1) under the old covenant of the Mosaic Law.

The Mosaic laws with all of their dietary regulations, days, and distinctions between clean and unclean (Lev. 11:47) have been rescinded (Acts 10:9-16; Rom. 14:14; 1 Tim. 4:1-5) but the principle of holiness which they taught remains intact (1 Pet. 1:15-16). Grace does not change moral principles. God's moral laws never change. Today God still wants His people to live separate from our pagan neighbors who are culturally contaminated with sins (2 Cor. 6:14-17; Eph. 5:7). But our separation from the heathen or lost does not pertain to ceremonial separation or isolation, since we no longer live under the Mosaic regulations of the past.

Here is the point. The same lesson of separating from worldly influence is applied in the New Testament without all the ceremonial and typical regulations (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 15:33; 1 Pet. 4:4). Today we still live in a fallen world and must continue to display redemptive holiness to pagan people who live among us (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Col. 4:5; 1 Thess. 4:12). So, even though the regulations for ceremonial laws have been removed, what these laws revealed remains relevant and instructive for believers today (Rom. 15:4). When studying the Old Testament Mosaic laws, we can see the pictures God was painting and the typical lessons He was teaching. This is why all Scripture is profitable for doctrine (2 Tim. 3:16).

So does living under grace really make us free? Yes, it frees us from the penalty of sin (Rom. 7:6; Gal. 3:13), the procedures of the Law (typical and ceremonial – Col. 2:16) and also from the power of sin through its sanctifying work in our hearts and lives (Rom. 6:1-15. Titus 2:11-12). This is because the Mosaic Law could never deliver us from sin (Rom. 8:3). Grace as presented in the New Testament is not only about what I CAN DO (making personal choices that do not overrule God's moral law), it's also about what I CANNOT DO (live under the power of sin, mimic heathen lifestyles and culturally corrupt patterns of unethical living). The message of grace, as seen in the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross, teaches the never-ending story that God hates all sin (Titus 2:11-12).

Sin nailed Jesus Christ to the cross. Let us never forget this! For this reason, the message of God's grace teaches believers to despise sin and separate from all

worldliness and carnality in every area and phase of their lives, including the realm of music. “For the grace of God” (as seen in Christ’s death on our behalf) is always “Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” Today we are in the school of grace which is teaching us the message of separation from all worldly and ungodly ways. This would include the need to separate from unethical and paganized forms of music which do not reflect God’s nature and ways.

Worldliness is rarely mentioned today, much less identified for what it is. Worldliness is the sin of allowing one’s appetites, ambitions, or conduct to be fashioned according to earthly values (I John 2:16-17). God’s people must allow the sanctifying work of grace to teach them what music to reject and what music to embrace. The word “teaching” (Titus 2:12) means to be disciplined by God’s grace or trained by grace to be the kind of people that glorify Him. This means that grace does not obliterate lines of separation from the world and evil age, or override convictions based upon the principles of Bible separation. Grace is not a “free-for-all” and “live-and-let-live” lifestyle. Grace does not give us the permission for sloppy living. Grace does not mean, “hang loose and make up your own mind.” Rather, grace trains, disciplines, and instructs us in godly living. Grace teaches us to live “soberly” (staying in control of our bodies), “righteously” (living uprightly and with integrity), and “godly” (reflecting God’s likeness) in this present world.

Grace working in our hearts, the sign of the New Covenant work of God (2 Cor. 3:3; Jer. 31:33), produces a new way of living that reflects godliness and purity. Grace and godliness are twin truths. Grace steers us away from every form of evil. It keeps our lives in check (Romans 6:14-15). The message and purpose for New Testament grace is that it sanctifies us and therefore liberates us from sin. Living “under grace” (Rom. 6:14) is to allow the transforming nature of grace to change our thinking, living, music, worship, and everything that is part of our lives. When we reflect upon God’s grace on the cross and experience God’s grace working in our hearts (Titus 2:11-12; Phil. 2:13), we will seek to live a life of sanctification in every area of our lives, including the type of music we listen to and worship with.

1 Thessalonians 4:4 is worth repeating:

“That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.”

There are many Christians within the Contemporary Christian Movement that must learn (in a greater way) to use their bodies as vessels which are consecrated to God, honoring to Him, “a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet (fit or prepared) for the master’s use (2 Tim. 2:21). Our body is God’s vessel and for this reason we should use our body, which includes what we listen to (our ears and hearts), as a vessel that reflects “sanctification” (a body set apart for God’s holy purposes) and “honour” (a body that demonstrates proper dignity, reverence, and recognition to God for the infinite value of His holiness and ways).

Grace changes us and the change starts on the inside and makes its way to the outside (Phil. 2:13). When you reflect upon the cross of Christ and your salvation, when you deeply appreciate and experience God’s unmerited favor in Jesus Christ, which He has showered upon your life, it motivates you to live a godly life and please the Lord in everything that you do (Titus 2:12). This means that grace will teach us to choose the right kind of music to listen to, so that we might separate from the type of musical sound and lyrics that has been strategically used by the Devil to promote rebellion, lust, and immorality in the lives of untold millions of people. Grace transforms us and should reform our musical likes and dislikes. Grace should create a love for wholesome music that reflects the beautiful and lovely character of a holy God.

Our growth in sanctifying grace is a lifelong process (2 Pet. 3:18). This is why we must open our hearts to God’s truth about music and listen to what He is teaching us through “the word of his grace” (Acts 20:32). Gradually, we can change our musical habits as God’s grace transforms our hearts by guiding us in godliness and purity.

Tim Fisher states:

“Developing proper music taste is like any other part of our education – it takes time and effort. Some young adults have given twenty years of more of their lives learning to love rock music. Yet they are not willing to give thirty minutes a week to learn good music.”

I’ll repeat something I mentioned earlier in this study. We need to be discerning and listen intelligently to our music and make sure the music is only ministering to us spiritually and not capturing our flesh. We have talked about this in our section dealing with rhythm, melody, and harmony. Again, we don’t need a degree in music

theory to understand and discern the difference between godly and fleshly music, and music that is a mixture of the spiritual and carnal. If it looks like the world and sounds like the world – it is the world! If it quacks like a duck – it is a duck! Let’s not hide behind the argument that says, “I don’t understand musical theory and notes and therefore I cannot discern between good and bad music.” This is nothing more than a smokescreen which allows the contemporary worshipper to keep listening to CCM on the basis of what they like or what appeals to them on a carnal level.

Here is my point. The sanctification related to grace will eventually teach us to separate from the type of musical expressions which reflects rebellion and sin. When we are being transformed by grace, we will possess the power to say “no” to those things which are not pleasing to God, including the type of music that is inherently evil. This would include the type of music that seeks to mix the good (wholesome words) with bad (a perverted sound of rebellion). God wants us to surrender to the transforming rule of grace and live victoriously, righteously, and godly in this present world (Titus 2:12).

Christians will sometimes say, “I’ve seen changed lives through CCM” and therefore a person’s changed lifestyle supposedly vindicates the Christian Rock Music. But this is a wrong analysis and skewed thinking. Rock music does not change the life of anyone. It’s the Gospel and truth that liberates and transforms the lives of people (Rom. 1:16; John 8:32; 17:17). As I have stated previously, if the Gospel was presented at a CCM concert and someone was saved, they were saved in spite of the corrupt music, not because of it. It’s the truth that saves and sanctifies people (2 Tim. 3:15) – not the driving beat of worldliness. One of the great tragedies of our times is to confuse the work of God with the work of Satan, or confuse the Spirit’s work with the work of the flesh. Because of the ongoing attempts to unite the holy with the unholy, we have confirmed the old Biblical truth, which states how God’s people “call evil good, and good evil; and put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isaiah 5:20).



The Bible teaches that the grace-motivated and Spirit-filled life produces holiness (Romans 6:14-15) and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:18-19). Grace changes everything! This means that the sanctifying work of grace will change your musical choices and the type of music that you worship with, if you give grace the opportunity to do so (Heb.



12:15). Here is a prayer that I found that can have a meaningful impact upon our lives: “Heavenly Father, the more I read your Word, the more I see your grace as the most heart-transforming, life-reorienting power in the universe. Through the Gospel, you haven’t just rescued me from the vanity of self-righteousness and the futility of legalism. You’ve placed me in a whole new dominion and have released a power in my life that claims all things and changes everything.”

May this be true in relation to the music that you listen to and worship with. Grace changes everything!

- **Music would not be important if God did not want us to possess a testimony of light that reflects His nature and likeness before an unsaved world.**

We have mentioned the light and dark metaphor already. However, we want to reconfirm this truth without being redundant. Remember that it’s not *sameness* that makes an impact on the lives of the lost and unreached, but a marked *difference* in our lives that invites the sinner to a new way of life. This is why we are called to be the “salt of the earth” (preserving truth) as stated in Matthew 5:13 and the “light of the world” (emulating light or holiness) as mentioned in Mathew 5:14. To pretend that we as Christians are not to be different from the world is to be deceitful to the unsaved. Jeremiah 48:10 remind us: “Cursed *be* he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully.” We are to be different as Christians, to pretend that we are not is to be deceitful in God’s work, not matter how noble out goals might be.



The present generation of Christians believe they are moving closer to God when in fact many of them may be moving further away from the Lord. Why else would churches rely so heavily on programs, rock bands and concerts, and other special events in order to keep people in the pews? A drastic shift has occurred in the church since the 1970’s, which has caused the church to mimic more darkness than light, in the specific area of its musical expressions in worship and also in everyday living.



There has been a disastrous accommodation to worldly music and the non-Christian culture. Too often there is no significant behavioral difference that is evident between Christians and non-Christians. Dearly beloved, God has called us “out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:9). This includes the darkness of Rock Music which reflects Satan’s agenda in this world. The lyrics and sounds of Rock Music, the one supporting the other, should be abandoned when we become a Christian. We must leave the darkness behind us! Ephesians 5:8 reminds us: “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: walk as children of light.” When we are a born again Christian, we are to no longer reflect the former life of rebellion, including our life of musical rebellion. The foundation and message of Rock Music is rebellion and it has not changed. You cannot change it by adding the word “Jesus” and “God.”

1 Thessalonians 5:5 declares:

“Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.”

Light is a metaphor for God’s holiness (1 John 1:5) and portrays how we are to reflect God’s holiness and present a testimony of this light (purity) before a watching world who is stooped in the darkness of sin and unbelief. Light reveals who we are as Christians. Yes, we want lost people to attend our churches, but we do not help them if we mimic their unsaved way of life, culture, and worldly practices. Our life and musical expression is not to mimic the darkness of our past sinful lives in any way. We are called upon to reflect light or display God’s holiness and righteousness in everything that we do, including our musical expression (words and sounds).

Jesus taught in Matthew 5:14:

“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.”

Sadly, when we attempt to add the perverted sounds of a rock culture to the standard of truth, we dim the light of our testimony. Our “salt” (Matt. 5:13) can lose its pungency (tastefulness) and our light loses its brilliance. In fact, it can become so bad, the lights go out completely! Jesus reserves the right to “remove thy candlestick (lampstand) out of his place, except thou repent” (Rev. 2:5). This means that we can eventually lose our Christian testimony when we adopt cultural conformity to the world. Remember that a Christian and their music should be

conformed to Christ (2 Cor. 3:18) – not conformed or molded to the world (Rom. 12:2).

Christian music is that music in which the text (lyrics) and musical sounds are conformed to the nature of Jesus Christ. Our music should be conformed to the image or likeness of Christ in both its words and sounds, so it's Scriptural and non-worldly methodology can in return serve as a vehicle to conform us into the image of Christ. In other words, so we can be like Jesus Christ! Much music of our present day and time is "after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8). We must always examine music and be sure it conforms to Christlikeness and Scripture.

Christians are to be light bearers reflecting the image and likeness of God (Rom. 8:29), including God's holiness, which should be reflected in our songs of worship and the type of music we listen to and take into our soul. Music that reflects the old way of life, whether by words or sounds, attempts to mix light and darkness together, which the Bible forbids (2 Cor. 6:14), and dims or diffuses the brilliance of God's holy character and righteous ways which are to be reflected in the Christian life.

One author mentions this:

"Our music cannot be like the music of the world, because our God is not like their gods. Most of the world's music reflects the world's ways, the world's standards, the world's attitudes, the world's gods (sex, drugs, alcohol, rebellion). To attempt to use such music to reach the world is to lower the gospel in order to spread the gospel. If the unsaved hear that our music is not much different from theirs, they will also be inclined to believe that the Christian way of life is not much different from theirs."

**Not SAMENESS but DIFFERENCE!**



This is why God has repeatedly called us to be light-bearers in our message, music, methods of worship and manner of living (Phil. 2:15). I want to reiterate that It's is not *sameness* that impacts the unsaved but the *difference* in our lives. If the unsaved are looking for new life, they must see it manifested in our lives, even when it comes to the type of music we listen to and worship with.

Evangelist Alan Ives, former rock & roll band member, asks:

“How do you understand what good Christian music is? It ought to sound different from the rock station, the easy listening station, and the entertainment music.”

The unsaved are not changed by the darkness but when seeing the light (2 Cor. 4:4). Unbelievers are not spiritually impacted when viewing similar patterns in the Christian, which reflect their own heathen ways, they are impacted when seeing a *difference* that reflects God’s light of holiness and righteousness. Be light!

Philippians 2:15

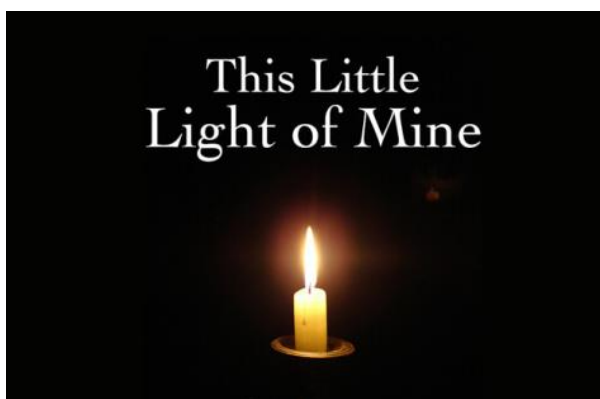
“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.”

We are not to become part of the crooked (untoward, improper) and perverse (morally corrupt, depraved, and twisted) generation. We are to shine as light in the midst of it.

Philippians 1:11

“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”

As we shine as lights, manifesting fruitful living that relates God’s righteous ways, it’s only then that God is fully pleased with our lives. Furthermore, only as we are bearers of light, not darkness, that we can expect to have the greatest impact on the lives of others. We must cut holes in the darkness – not mimic the darkness!



“Oh, this little light of mine,  
I’m gonna let it shine.  
This little light of mine,  
I’m gonna let it shine,  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.”

- **Music would not be important if the Christian was not to possess a new song of deliverance.**

Psalm 40:1-3

“I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, *and* established my goings. 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 33:3

“Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.”

a. The Distinction Between the New and Old Song

The “new song” of David’s experience does not refer to a new rock song and sound for our times. David certainly was not teaching that his new song of deliverance was a reflection of an old way of life when he was down in the pit. That was a song of despair and hopelessness. It was a blues song! The implication of this text is that when David was down in the pit there was an old song in his mouth, but now that he was out of the pit there was a completely different song and tune in his heart and life.



Let’s be very honest at this point. CCM music is actually an old song of worldliness that is a reflection of the old way of life. Its worldly sounds are a reflection of people living in the pit of their own sinful rebellion against God. There is nothing new about it. It’s the same old worldly-based music of a rebellious generation. By definition of the word newness, CCM could not be what David is talking about here. Many have used this passage to approve of their compromised music. They claim that this new song in David’s day would be similar to so-called Christian hip-hop, soft rock, folk rock, wrap, urban, alternative, metal, etc. for our contemporary times and culture.

Of course, to come to this conclusion is a total absurdity and distorts the meaning and understanding of this text. The Bible reveals that the “new song” is a different

and distinct song that does not reflect vanity (an empty way of life) and that which is false (Ps. 144:7-10). It is a new, distinct, and different song that has no similarity to the type of song promoted in heathen idolatrous worship (Isaiah 42:8-11). David declares that his new song was something fresh and different from his previous song in the pit.

This refers to a renewal song, a purer and nobler song that would reflect David's deliverance. It would be a renewal song to David's own heart but at the same time a song that does not reflect the corrupt sin nature or the contaminated culture around him. The new song does not mimic worldly songs. We can be absolutely sure about this. Something new does not mean something new or different in its musical order, structure, and design but new in its freshness and blessing to David's heart. In other words, the new song by virtue of its definition reflected God's original, musically created order, in contrast to the old order of man's sinful rebellion, but at the same time it was a new renewal song that brought spiritual refreshment to David's heart. Actually, if we want to be specific, all David was saying in Psalm 40 is that he had a new song of joyful deliverance that was no longer part of his old way of life. We are a new people. We have been recreated, we have been given life, and we have a new song. It is distinct from all the old music. It is the song of the redeemed.

We should not read specifics into this new song, that it was like the new sound of Rock Music for our current generation, that it was a totally different music created by David for a new generation. This is eisegesis (reading something into a Bible text that is not taught by the text). Read the text. Nothing is actually said about a new sound but only vocal singing ("he hath put a new song in my mouth"). The whole argument that Psalm 40 and the new song is referencing a new style or genre of rock sound falls flat on its face. This is because David was not talking about a new style of music but simply a vocal song of joy and gladness that accompanied his deliverance and which resembled his deliverance from his old experience and old song of sorrow, confusion, and turmoil. You cannot read CCM into Psalm 40 or even make application to it without committing voodoo exegesis.

#### b. The Defining of the New Song

The word "new" indicates that this song was basically something that was fresh and which brought joy and blessing to David's heart. In essence, this song was new in

its use but not in its quality. It remained unchanged in its quality and character. The song was like the previous spiritual songs David had known and sung but it was new and fresh in its creation and impact upon David's heart, while it remained untouched in its nature and quality, or its musical ethics. David's new song was a holy song, a song of the soul set free, a song that resembled spirituality and purity in every way. Yes, the newness relates to the songs creation and freshness to David (a song that renewed his inner spirit and heart), but it is not a song that was changed in its musical quality and order. This would disqualify the song from the realm of newness. Therefore, David's "new song" was new or fresh in how it impacted his heart and life but it was also a reflection of God's musical order and morality. By definition, this new song must portray God's moral character and purity, which is reflected in His musical order, or else it would not possess the quality of newness, but it was also a newly created song that flooded David's heart with the refreshment and joy that stemmed from his deliverance.

Of course, you cannot say this about Christian Rock Music. It is not new music that retains the fresh quality of musical sound and ethics but mimics the sounds of the world's corrupt culture. CCM is not new music in the way David described newness (a song that refreshes but still reflects musical order and separation). Israel, living in the promised land and surrounded by Gentile nations, was expected to sing a new song, a different song that did not reflect the heathen who surrounded them. This is why Jesus said, "Be not ye therefore like unto them" (Matt. 6:8). The expression of a "new song" does not indicate a new style of song that lacks God's order but a new song that reflects purity and which expressed David's joy and thankfulness to God. The newness of the song relates to the impact it had on David's life, not the recreation of a new genre of Rock Music, which was not part of David's day and time.

Let's update this to our times and make some important application. By virtue of its name, a new song demands freshness and difference in every way, in both the expression of its words and musical sounds. Otherwise, it cannot be new and fresh in its makeup. Just because something is new does not make it good. Now think about this. For there to be a new song, there must also be an old song. The old song is that which prevails in the heart of the undelivered who are still in the pit and does not reflect the new way of deliverance and living. This means that CCM music does not meet the definition of the new song of Psalm 40. If anything, CCM is by definition an "old song" because it is mutually linked to the songs of the flesh, the

world, and the devil. If CCM retained the newness of quality that David spoke about it would not divert from the previous generation of musical order and design that reflected God's purity and orderliness.

By way of application, the new song is obviously contrasted to the old song and reflects the newness of the Christian life (2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:4). David was not really talking about a new style of song, but a song that was filled with joy and gladness and which reflected his deliverance from his pit of defeat and sorrow. It was a song that was a reflection of a new life, a new start, and a new heart. Of course, in David's day, this "new song" was a continual reflection of God's musical order, and it was a vocal song that resulted in joy and praise to God after David experienced deliverance from his calamity. It had nothing to do with a new type of rock beats or the loud sounds of CCM. Most CCM does not meet the standard of the new song for it alienates itself from the enduring quality of newness and freshness that is inherent in all good music.

### c. The Direct Effect of the New Song

CCM artists want Psalm 40:3 to read, "many shall hear it" (the new rock sound) but this is not what the text actually says or is conveying. The Bible says "many shall see it" which speaks of the transformation in David's life – a transformation from sorrow to joy, from the realm of defeat to victory. Of course, this transformation would also be reflected in his song which he sang. It was a renewal song – a song that centered upon the joy and blessing of David's deliverance. Many shall see it! What do they see? The obvious difference in David's life and they will also see the difference in his renewal song of joy and gladness because of the Lord's deliverance. The song will be a reflection of his deliverance. The point needs to be stressed by Psalm 40 that people should see a difference in our Christian lives (a difference in our living, appearance, music and worship) and this will have a profound spiritual impact upon the lives of other people, even those who need the Lord.

It's not our sameness in musical expression (listening to a perverted rock sound) that will make an impact in the lives of other people but our difference (listening to sacred or spiritual music) that will make an impact on their lives. CCM reflects the same sound of a perverted culture stooped in rebellion and will not allow people to see the true difference between God's people and themselves, between light and darkness, and righteousness and unrighteousness. People today need to see a total

difference in lifestyle – “many shall see it.” There needs to be a total transformation of our life and music (words and sound) if we are going to have a real spiritual impact in their lives (Matt. 5:14). Remember that Christian music is not designed to accommodate the world; it is to be a renewal song that testifies of the redemption and transformation that has taken place in hearts and lives of God’s people. People can see this transformation in our personal lives and musical choices and this can be a testimony that God may use to draw people to the Lord.

#### d. The Description of the New Song

A new song is a renewal song by its very nature and this renewal song falls under the category of “spiritual songs” which are a reflection of the filling or control of the Spirit in one’s life (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:18-19). Spiritual songs appeal to the spiritual nature of man. In other words, spiritual songs are those musical songs that feed the spiritual part of man existence within the human spirit, the place where the new nature, God’s life, and the Holy Spirit operate and where true worship occurs (1 Cor. 14:15; John 4:24). However, the rock sound is a reflection of worldly and carnal music that feeds the soulish part of man’s existence (1 Cor. 2:14), the place where the flesh or old nature operates to control and adversely influence the believer’s life (Rom. 7:18).

Christian music should be a reflection of the “new song (Ps. 33:3), “the newness of the spirit” (Rom. 7:6), our “newness of life” (Rom. 6:4), and our “new creature” (creation) emphasis in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). In fact, unbelievers relate to flesh-pleasing music which is part of the old life of deliverance. What the unsaved need to see is the “new life” or “new creation” principle in our music and lives. We are not modeling a new song of deliverance or changed life in Christ when we are musically imitating the very forms of sinful techniques and carnal rhythms that unbelievers listen to on a daily basis.



The Christian life is to revolve around the significance of new things – a new song, new nature, new life, new outlook, new friendship, new goals, ambitions, and desires. If our music is not new or fresh in its sound and words, if our music reflects



a culture of rebellion, then we are missing out on an important part of the new way of life that God wants us to experience and express in our lives. New life is accompanied with a new song!

“New Life in Christ abundant and free!  
What glories shine, what joys are mine,  
What wondrous blessings I see!  
My past with its sin, the searching and strife,  
Forever gone -- There's a bright new dawn!  
For in Christ I have found new life.”

We must remember that the medium or way that we present or deliver the message is part of the message. So, the medium must be holy and different and reflect newness. Tim Fisher said: “We must abandon the notion that we can reach the world with a spiritual message by using a fleshly medium.” The world cannot see a difference in our lives when we attempt to impress them with the same kind of perverted sound that feeds their old nature and which keeps them in bondage to their own sin. The church needs to demonstrate by its godly music and worship that it has come “out of a horrible pit” (Ps. 40:2). Much of the sound associated with CCM still reflects the noise associated with the old pit of sin and bondage.

#### e. The Deceptive Teaching About the New Song

As mentioned previously, many contemporary musical artists claim that the new song (Ps. 40:1-3) can be applied to the invention of new rock songs and sounds for our own times, the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. However, this is deceptive and is an unwarranted interpretation and application of what the Bible is teaching. First, David could not be referring to rock sounds since they did not specifically exist in his own day and time. Second, there is no mention of instruments in any of the “new song” passages but only that we should “sing unto the LORD a new song” (Ps. 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1). Singing out of a heart of joy and gladness for God’s deliverance is the intended meaning of these passages. They have nothing whatsoever to do with modern rock sounds being incorporated into our times of worship. They do not refer to changing hymns into rock songs and creating a new genre of music and new songs for the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. None of these verses can be interpreted or applied in this way without doing injustice to what the Bible is actually teaching.

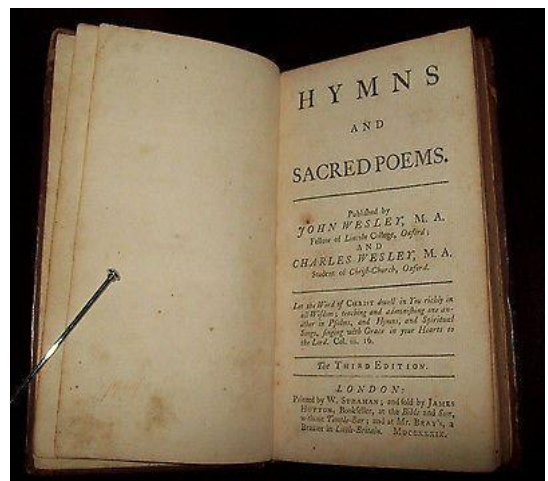


Many CCM artists have used the “new song” idea and related it to the days of the reformation. They claim that Luther and the Wesley used contemporary music (newer music of their time) in their churches. The CCM argument goes like this. “Luther borrowed from the secular music of his day. This is proof that it is okay to borrow from the Rock Music of our day. The church has always used contemporary music. Wesley and Luther even used new tavern songs and changed them into Christian songs. This means we can redeem secular

music for sacred use.” It’s then asserted that this is exactly what Psalm 40 is talking about when it mentions about the “new song.”

We have already debunked the interpretive myth that concludes the “new song” means to change normal Christian music into Christian Rock Music. It would not be considered “new” if it sounded like the same old song David sang while in the pit. But we also need to debunk the oft-repeated myth among contemporary Christians that the reformers changed bar music into Christian music. This is a deceptive argument designed to promote Rock Music in the church today. Many have blindly accepted this as the absolute truth from CCM leaders. They claim that the church has always borrowed worldly tunes and remade them. Essentially, the argument goes like this. When Luther and Wesley borrowed tunes from sources of the world, man’s tunes became God’s tunes, and this is exactly what CCM artists are doing today.

Here is a rare 1739 John and Charles Wesley Hymn book. This study is not dealing with all the arguments generated by the CCM movement to promote their style of rebellious music. However, I will deal with one key argument at this point. It must be understood that John and Charles Wesley, along with Martin Luther, the Reformers, did not do what CCM artists are doing today with their altered form of music.





about the tunes they chose, so the argument they used worldly songs to format Christian music is simply erroneous.

Robert Harrell explains:

“The most effect way that worldly influence would be to “de-rhythm’ the music. By avoiding dance tunes and ‘de-rhythming’ other songs, Luther achieved a chorale with a marked rhythm, but without the devices that would remind the people of the secular world. So successful was the work done by Luther and other Lutheran musicians that scholars were often unable to detect the secular origins of chorales.”

He then adds:

“Luther chose only those tunes which would best lend themselves to sacred themes and avoided the vulgar, ‘rollicking drinking songs” and dance tunes” (Harrell, *Martin Luther, His Music, His Message*, Greenville SC: Musical Ministries, 1980, pp. 21-22).

At the time of Wesley and Luther, there were no sharp distinctions between secular and sacred musical styles and forms. Like Isaac Watts, they simply were putting a good and acceptable form of music to Scripture-driven themes, instead of only singing the Psalms. All of their hymns were distinct from the value systems of the pagan culture in their own day. They did not mimic any musical corruption in relation to words or sound. In fact, Luther stated this of music: “Take special care to shun perverted minds who prostitute this lovely gift of nature and of art with their erotic rantings” (Friedrich Blume, *Protestant Church Music*, New York; W.W. Norton & Co.; 1974, p. 10). Whatever tunes that Luther used, you can be sure they were not corrupted by sensual innuendos in relation to their words and sounds.

It’s clear that Luther did not believe in the neutrality of music. Luther was careful to not rely on the sensual and erotic forms of music in his day. He did not use songs which rebelled against cultural norms and sacredness. Luther was careful in his choice of music for the church. His purposes for composition are confirmed by his own words: “Therefore, I too, with the help of others, have brought together some sacred songs, in order to make a good beginning and to give an incentive to those who can better carry on the Gospel and bring it to the people . . . And these songs were arranged in four parts for no other reason than that I wanted to attract the youth (who should and must be trained in music and other fine arts) away from love songs and carnal pieces and to give them something wholesome to learn

instead . . .” (Martin Luther, from the foreword to the first edition of Johann Walter’s hymnal, the Wittenberg Geistliche Gesangbüchlein [1524], in *Liturgy and Hymns*, ed. Ulrich S. Leupold, vol. 53 of Luther’s Works, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965, 315–16). Luther also said, “I wish to compose sacred hymns so that the Word of God may dwell among the people also by means of song” (Kenneth Osbeck; *Singing with Understanding*, Grand Rapids, Mi: Kregel Publications, 1979, p. 48).

Charles Wesley also considered that all music should be dissociated from worldly music in his own day. He wrote: "Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of its being heard, than when you sung the songs of Satan" (John Wesley, *Directions For Singing*, 4th Direction). It is clear that Wesley intends the "songs of Satan" to no longer be sung. He then goes on to say: "Above all sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to do this attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve here, and reward you when he cometh in the clouds of heaven."

Those who are dishonest with God’s Word, refusing to identify sacred (non-worldly) music as God’s choice for worship music that reflects His holy character, will also be dishonest in their statements and conclusions about the music of Martin Luther and Wesley. Steve Miller states: “Luther was not so concerned with the associations or origins of tunes as he was with their ability to communicate truth.” This simply is not an accurate statement from someone who is trying to misrepresent the past in order to justify his present use of CCM.

The actions of Luther and Wesley have nothing to do with using the perverted rock sounds of sexual rebellion within the hallowed halls of the church today. Let’s get real! CCM advocates will also constantly try and convince us that they are doing the same thing that Moody and Sankey did in the later 1800’s with their revivals. When Moody and Sankey first set foot in Scotland, the people were still devoted primarily to the use of the Psalms. But Moody and Sankey introduced new music and fresh worship to the public (hymns of Christian experience) which also included lively instruments.

The claim is made that Moody's songs were "upbeat" for that generation so what CCM musicians are doing today is no different than the stylistic changes Moody and others made throughout the history of the church such as Calvin, John Knox, Watts, Wesley, Luther and Cowper. The claim is also made that when hymns and instruments began to replace some of the older forms of the Psalms and Gregorian chants, the people fought tooth and nail, claiming they were productions of the devil. Therefore, we are committing the same errors of the past when complaining about CCM.

In other words, hymns replacing Psalms, music with or without instruments, organs versus no organs, and using different styles of music during different periods of time has been something practiced throughout the centuries of church history. The argument is simple. Since Moody and others revamped the stylistic heritage, we can do the same thing today. We can change the church music as others did in the past and adopt it to the culture of our present era and time. We should not be in bondage to the past traditions of music but create new traditions for a new age.

The obviously flaws in these types of assessments can be easily overturned. First, those who embrace TSM are not in bondage to the traditions of the past but practicing obedience to Biblical traditions (2 Thess. 2:15). They also enjoy a variety of music that does not align itself with the world of CCM and reflect Rock Music.

Second, psalms and hymns are directly stated to be Biblical styles of music (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

Third, the stylistic changes during the Reformation and Moody's day (folk songs) were not worldly or carnal like the Rock Music of today (Heavy Metal Rock, rap, etc.).

Fourth, any adaptations of musical choices that were used in the public realm during the Reformation or Moody's day did not override the true character and nature of "spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) that are contrasted with worldly songs and which correspond to God's character of holiness and righteousness.

Fifth, the musical choices and additions to Luther's and Wesley's music followed God's creative musical structure of balanced melody, harmony, and rhythm.

Sixth, the divide between the sacred and the secular in Luther's day was not as clearly pronounced as it is today.

Seventh, even though the difference between the secular and sacred were less pronounced, Luther and Wesley were still very selective and careful about the secular songs they chose. They avoided the drinking songs and dance tunes of the day and the apparent evil associations with these songs.

Eighth, to liken what Moody and Sankey did to what rock artists are doing today with the sounds of secular Rock Music is being intellectual dishonesty.

These types of arguments are raised by lovers of CCM and cultural worldliness. They are arguments designed to wiggle out of the obvious facts of how the sounds associated with Rock Music have destroyed the lives of millions of people from a moral and spiritually perspective. The additional argumentation that says early 20<sup>th</sup> century hymns and music of that era cannot be effective today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that people cannot go back to traditional hymns if they were saved while in the rock culture, and that an alternative form of music is needed to reach and help the new converts grow. This type of philosophical reasoning concludes that the transformation of people saved out of Rock Music is dependent on them hearing a similar type of worldly music of their past lives. However, this is a philosophy that denies the command to no longer imitate our past unsaved lives (1 Pet. 4:3-4).

It's a philosophy that also doubts the power of God to change the hearts, lives, natures, and musical choices of people (Phil. 2:13). Furthermore, when Christians think that sacred or separated music is too stuffy for them and boring, they likely need to be filled with the Spirit and the Word of God (Eph. 5:18-19), who will open up their hearts to musical worship that reflects true spirituality and not the selfish consumerism worship of these last days (2 Tim. 3:4-5).

By the way, I'm not against the writing of newer songs and choruses that are "spiritual songs" which today encompass a wide range of musical variety. Even some of the hymns have been reworked with a newer presentation. There are many newer styles of music that do not reflect the Rock Music of rebellion and sex-oriented culture of our times. It's music that excluding rock beats, excessive syncopation, hypnotic repetition of chords, phrases, unnatural rhythms, extreme loudness, and is not a performance-driven type of musical presentation. I love the

hymns and also a variety of spiritual songs being written today which are non-worldly and sacred in their instrumentation, singing, and presentation. When we open our hearts to God's Word on music and worship we will not find our worship to be stale and stagnate (John 4:24; Psalm 100, 150). It will remain fresh, real, and vibrant without adopting the rock sounds of a perverted culture which produces a form of pseudo and mixed worship (John 4:22).



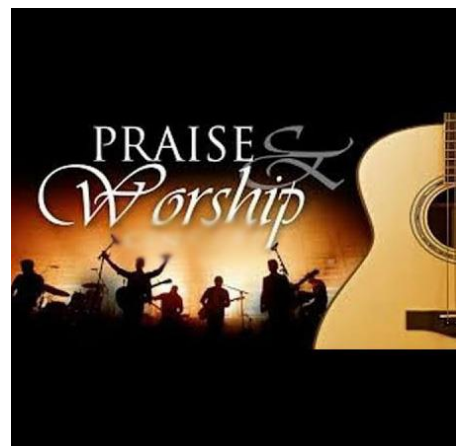
Many CCM artists will tell those who oppose them that we are “putting God in a box.” This lame excuse suggests we should not limit God. However, God places limitations on Himself (Lev. 11:44). He will not change His holy and righteous nature or standards. This “God in a box” excuse is actually avoiding our own personal responsibility to live a consecrated life to God (1 Thess. 4:3-4). In using this debunked expression, we attempt to shift the focus on to God, so we may continue to excuse our sensual and unspiritual music practices.

Yes, we are to have a “new song.” But it’s not a new song related to the old way of life. It’s a new song that is a fresh, untainted, pure, and a noble song of praise and thanksgiving to God for what He has done for us.

“I sing a new song, Since Jesus came,  
Serve a new master, Wear a new name.  
Walk a new road, Have a new goal,  
Know a new peace, Down deep in my soul.”

- **Music would not be important if Jesus did not teach us how to properly worship.**

Today there is a style of music called “Praise and Worship Music” that is led by worship bands or praise teams. I often wonder what they mean by the title “praise and worship.” Have not the previous generations of Christians had “praise and worship music?” Did not Moody and Sankey praise and worship God and all the Christians in their generation? Did not all previous Christians worship





God before the invention of the so-called “Praise and Worship Music?” It seems that some Christians think they have a corner on worship that no one else previously had or experienced.

We must remember that worship has always been a separation issue. Since CCM is reflected in a particular style of worldly worship, worship has to fall in line with the doctrine of Biblical separation (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; 1 John 2:15-17). Many Christians feel they would be “too narrow” if they practice separation in the area of music. But without practicing separation from fleshly and worldly music (personally and ecclesiastically), we will imbibe that which is contrary “to the doctrine which is according to godliness (1 Tim. 6:3).

Leonard Seidel once remarked:

“The worship of an Almighty God has been replaced with the worship of rock musicians and their music.”

To millions of devoted fans, CCM doesn't simply deal with religion, Rock Music is their religion. It has become a way of life that acts as a person's stimulant or narcotic. Sadly, Christians who steadily imbibe CCM can very easily miss out on the true meaning and fulfillment of the Christ life (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21). We must also remember that the quick fix of shallow emotionalism is not the way to revive our worship. We must have our own personal, daily walk and devotion with God (Ps. 5:1-3) and enter church with a song of thanksgiving and joy already in our hearts (Ps. 95:2; 100:2, 4). This keeps us from spiritual deadness during our times of worship and also from needing shallow emotional responses to CCM and entertaining effects during our times of worship.

If we come to church with an open heart in tune with God we will not need the world's tunes to “get us going in worship” or give us artificial highs which have nothing to do with true worship in the inner man. When we attend church with a heart that is already prepared to worship God (James 4:8; Heb. 12:28), we won't need a would-be worship leader to crank up the volume to create a worship atmosphere that can whip people into worshipping God. A cold heart toward God and spiritual things cannot be changed by musical and worship techniques designed to cater to man's flesh and not the spirit.

### a. Misconceptions About Worship

Today there are various misconceptions about worship. One of them is that many think that music is worship. I want to begin this next point by making it very clear that music is not worship. Music is a means to express worship, but it is not worship. Worship occurs when the heart (inner man – 2 Cor. 4:16) expresses gratitude and thanksgiving to God for all that He has done. Worship is acknowledging who God is as revealed in Scripture. It is acknowledging what God has done, that He has saved us, redeemed us, given us eternal life. Worship is essentially expressing gratitude to God for His works, ways, Word, and wisdom. There are many ways we can express gratitude toward God; music is one of them. But music is not worship. Music is a *means* by which a worshiping person expresses his thanks to God. Music might be one ingredient of worship but it is not what actually constitutes worship. This is because worship occurs on the inside of one's heart in response to God's revelation. It can be a totally silent response without musical sound (Ps. 143:5; 63:6; 77:6; Job 35:10).

Dan Lucarini, the former rock composer, singer, and worship leader says:  
“Many believers think contemporary music is the only way they can truly praise and worship the Lord. (You don't agree? Then I suggest you take their music away from them and watch their reaction!).”

Lucarini goes on to say: “Years of CCM propaganda may have convince him or her that the contemporary service is the only way to experience genuine, spontaneous and diverse worship, and therefore anything associated with conservative services is fake and dead worship ... But I have good news ... You can have Spirit-filled, exciting, ‘close-encounter with God’ worship service without CCM styles. Without a praise band. With good old hymns and non-rock contemporary songs. God inhabits the praise of his people without the presence of controversial music styles and performances that closely imitate the world's music system.”



A second misconception is that music motivates worship or that music induces worship. Music makes worship happen. This is not true. Music gives expression to our love and adoration that we have for God. But the motivation for worship has to come from

somewhere else, not from music. Music enhances and enriches our love for God, but the motive for all of our music is not music or a specific musical sound – it’s truth. This is what Jesus meant when He said we are to “worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Truth is the starting point of all worship (Ps. 119:15, 23-24, 48, 78, 148; 143:5) – not a sound or feeling. It’s the truth about God’s greatness, Jesus Christ, His Word, and His grace and mercy that elicits worship.

This means we don’t need a mood created by some form of music that in many cases shifts the mind into neutral and generates a kind of empty and mindless feeling. In fact, the mood that is created by much of the CCM is a very dangerous mood in a local church. A certain kind of rebellious sound (a mood of sensuality) can actually create the mood for wrong affections, loose morals, and the sensual. The pastor might preach a wonderful exposition that strongly admonished believers to “flee fornication” but the teens will ultimately obey the music! This kind of thing happens more than you realize. This type of “mood” enhancement certainly is not creating worship. What actually creates worship and is the foundation of worship is not a mood but the truth about God and the truths found in His Word. So, when you know the truth (not feel a mood), your heart reaches out to God to express praise and gratitude.

Another misconception about worship, somewhat related to the last point, is that when people have trouble worshiping, music will create worship, music will create the atmosphere for worship and what many have called “the mood for worship.” But worship is not created by experiencing a certain mood. It cannot be conjured up by a specific atmosphere. Once again, worship is spawned by God’s unchanging character and Word. Furthermore, worship is something that is to be part of our everyday lives as we reflect upon God’s greatness and extend our gratitude to Him through meditation, prayer, and singing (Ps. 1:2; 77:12; 100:2; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Worship is not to be something jumpstarted by rhythms, rock beats, and a theater atmosphere.

You could attend many churches and so-called CCM rock concerts and you’ll find yourself in the dark, and there will be a sensual kind of music playing that appeals to the flesh at one level or another. There may also be lights flashing and other kinds of directions. All of these artificial



stimulants designed to create worship but they have absolutely nothing to do with true worship. Frankly, these alleged “worship centers” do the very opposite of inducing genuine worship. They simply create what we might call a “fickle feeling” which becomes a false substitute for true worship. Paul taught that heathen people can “ignorantly worship” (Acts 17:23) false gods, but Christians can also worship ignorantly when they try and worship the true God with the same manmade and manipulative techniques of the heathen. This “getting into the mood of worship” or “creating an atmosphere for worship” is a type of worship technique that can turn into “a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility” (Col. 3:23).

This speaks of man’s wisdom and undertaking, something that comes from one’s own desire and initiative, something man conjures up, something that is self-imposed, self-chosen but does not represent true worship and which is actually a false show of humility in the expression of worship. In short, worldly worship techniques based on man’s wisdom to get people to worship do not impress God nor are they a true expression of worship. Jesus is about to teach us, as He did the Samaritan woman, that true worship has nothing to do with going through certain physical rituals which would include the need for darkness, lights, a theater, atmosphere, rock rhythms, and the copying of heathen ways (John 4:23–24). He is going to teach us that true worshippers do not search for a specific place or engage in carnal forms of worship for all true worship occurs within the heart and in accordance with truth. In short, it has nothing to do with a specific place or a staged atmosphere.

#### b. The Meaning of Worship



The music issue is a worship issue since music is often used with worship. Part of keeping our worship pure is separating from all fleshly, entertaining, and false worship (Joshua 23:6-8). A lackadaisical attitude toward music and worship will adversely affect our generation and the generations to come in our local churches. Jesus taught something about worship in John 4:22-24: “Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we

worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit (with a heart that is truly occupied with God and spiritual living) and in truth (with a heart that is occupied with God's revelation of 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.”

We have mentioned these verses previously. Let's take some time to reflect upon them at this point in our study. Jesus admitted that the Samaritans did not know how to properly worship God for lack of Old Testament revelation. They added pagan concepts to their time of worship which came from their Gentile forefathers. In essence, Jesus was basically saying, “You don't know what you are doing in your time of worship.” That was a hard pill to swallow but it seems very applicable to what is happening in our own day. Many Christians are attempting to worship God while promoting a mixture of pagan sounds with spiritual words. They have adopted an unholy mixture which dims the light of God's holiness while at the same time promoting the darkness of the age. In fact, the light has gone out completely in much of what is termed Christian Contemporary Music.

➤ In Spirit

Jesus then began to teach this woman the true nature and ingredients of worship. This is something we must understand today so we do not become paganized and ignorant in our time of worship. The point of all true worship is that it should occur “in spirit and in truth.” First, the mention of worshipping “in spirit” is an obvious reference to the human spirit. It is speaking of the *location* of all true worship.



The Samaritan woman wanted to worship God at a specific place, in a temple, and with various pagan rituals. But Jesus was teaching her that true worship occurs inward (in the human spirit). It does not occur in a specific place or building and certainly not with pagan rituals. So, the expression “in the spirit” would likely be a reference to the inward nature of all true worship. We do not have to worship at any altar but can worship the Father anytime since all true worship occurs from within – not at a specific location where certain rituals and manmade criteria invoke worship.

Second, this expression “in spirit” may also suggest the spiritual nature of true worship as opposed to the carnal nature of worship. Carnal worship which incorporated heathen aspects into their time of worship was practiced by the Samaritans. Jesus may be teaching that God is completely spiritual in His essence as the eternal God. Therefore, our own worship should be “in spirit” which means it should be spiritual in every respect, in its source, object, subject, and method, so that it properly represents God’s true character and nature. True worship is spiritual, not carnal, fleshly, or worldly.

Leon Morris writes:

“Since God is spirit, our worship must be in spirit; it must be of a spiritual kind. Worship must always be such as to agree with the kind of God being worshipped.”

The essential reason worship of God must be spiritual is that God is a spiritual being. This means people should not worship God in any manner that may seem attractive or pleasing to them. To worship “in spirit” would mean to worship after the pattern of God’s essential nature which is a spiritual nature that reflects righteousness and holiness. In other words, our worship must reflect God’s essential and eternal nature which is spiritual. Worship is not a quest to fulfill our emotional feelings and wants but to be devoted to God’s essential nature and character which is spirituality and not carnality.

If a Christian chooses music on the basis of how it makes them feel, they are doomed to follow the fleshly part of their human existence (1 Pet. 1:14-15) instead of the spiritual part of their existence. When we conclude, “This stuff does not thrill me like the CCM” we are admitting that we are following music for feeling and fleshly reasons instead of spiritual reasons. Rock music is by its very nature is sensual and emotional. It seeks to captivate the physical part of man’s existence (soulish aspect of man) instead of the spiritual part of his existence. If we are not careful we can become excited about carnal entertainment and not the spiritual edification that comes from the truths of Scripture. Therefore, we must learn to approach music on a spiritual and not physical level of existence (Gal. 5:17). To do so, we must exercise the new nature and not allow the old nature to dominate our lives through needing music to raise our adrenaline.

Third, this expression “in spirit” can also mean that worship should come from the heart that possesses a spirit of sincerity – not something that is relegated by mere

outward forms and rituals as the Samaritans had adopted. Worship should not be a put-on or an empty ritual. There should be no sham or hypocrisy in worship, thinking that we are worshipping God when we pass through certain rituals, when our church has liturgy, stained glass windows, and when we need a certain musical sound and staged presence to get us to worship God. The word “spirit” speaks of the inward part of man’s constitution, the location where genuine and sincere worship occurs, when a person has a right relationship with God. To worship in spirit without truth (John 4:24) results in pagan worship of varying degrees. To worship in truth without spirit, without true sincerity, zeal, and possessing an intense yearning for God, is to fall into dead orthodoxy. We may be doctrinally correct, while at the same time be dead or lifeless in our worship.

In the *Existence and Attributes of God*, Stephen Charnock writes:

“Without the heart it is no worship: it is a stage play: an acting a part without being that person really which is acted by us: a hypocrite, in the notion of the word, though we (lack) perfection: but we cannot be said to worship him, if we lack sincerity.”

So, to worship “in spirit” can also mean to possess a relationship with God which results in sincerity of worship, instead of mere ritual, formality, and empty sentimentality. Jesus was teaching this woman that true worship involves a personal relationship with the Father. He was teaching that the Father was seeking sincere worshippers – not just empty, ritual worship. Of course, possessing a right spirit (sincerity) in our time of worship does not mean we can be sloppy with the externals of our worship for they also need to be “holy, acceptable unto God” but also non-confirming and transforming (representing the new way of life) according to Romans 12:1-2. Our “reasonable service” or response of rational worship to God’s mercies should always be a reflection of separated and non-worldly methodology.

Paul also taught that we are to “worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. 3:3). This could mean that we are to worship God by means of the Holy Spirit and not by external ceremonies and rituals, whatever they might be, with the view that they will give us acceptance before God. In other words, the Holy Spirit prompts all true and acceptable worship out of love for the Lord. Rituals which include the electrifying theater atmosphere of CCM, lights, and a show time feeling are not true expressions of worship but are

merely fleshly. What is often deemed as worship where CCM is played is nothing more than external stimuli creating an electric atmosphere and feeling that is mistaken for true worship.

So, when Paul stated to “worship God in the spirit,” he could also mean to worship God with sincerity and genuine spirituality which is something that occurs from within the realm of our own human spirit. God does not want us to pass through physical rituals (pagan rituals and rites) without possessing a true relationship with Him and a genuine and sincere desire to worship. Actually, a dual emphasis might be this: God-orientated and sincere worship is conducted in the human spirit by the power of the Holy Spirit. In other words, our worship is to come from our hearts, generated by the Holy Spirit, and not become hampered by physical stimuli and manmade, heathen rituals.

William MacDonald said:

“In true worship, a person enters into the presence of God by faith, and pours out his love, praise, adoration and homage. Soulless worship, on the other hand, is occupied with beautiful buildings and ecclesiastical furniture, with elaborate ceremonies, with brocaded priestly garments, and with whatever appeals to the emotions.”

It’s interesting that many Christians have made a ritual out of Contemporary Christian Music and are actually worshipping their form of worship instead of worshipping God from the inward depths of their heart. I’m not making a blanket statement about every Christian who is part of the modern music movement of our present generation. However, there is a type of glamor, showmanship, and entertainment in much of the so-called worship of today, which can quickly cause a worshipper to lose sight of the very One that he is to be worshipping. Many churches have become entertainment centers instead of worship centers, even though they might deem themselves a worship center.

Rod Mattoon writes:

“The place of worship should be of such character that it will be easy for men to find God and difficult for them to forget Him.”

Let me say one more thing about entertainment. It’s very easy for an entertainment spirit to hijack a worship service. Folks might want to applaud after a special



number or later talk to us about “how well we did” or “how good we played our instrument” or “how pretty her dress was.” If we aren’t careful, this can become overly stressed and quench the spirit of true worship by directing the attention and glory to man instead of God. The church has become enamored with clapping, even in many fundamental churches. I’m of the opinion that we have adopted the entertaining spirit in many churches today and if we are not careful we can begin to reflect more and more an entertaining atmosphere within the local church. When did clapping start and why? Of course, people say they are clapping for Jesus, but are they really? Are we fooling ourselves? And should clapping replace the early church formula of saying, “Amen” (1 Cor. 14:16). Okay, I got that out of my system!

The Bible teaches that Christian music has a definite style (a non-worldly and non-entertaining style) and should be distinct or different in its form and presentation (Rom. 12:2). When we go to church it’s our responsibility to make sure that we are truly and sincerely worshipping God in a spiritual manner that reflects God’s nature. It is not the job of the worship leader, music pastor, or minister of music to pump us up, so we can allegedly worship the Lord. Our worship should never be dependent upon the song or selection of Rock Music and choruses, or what is happening in the service in regards to entertainment and excitement. This is not worshipping “in the spirit” as Jesus taught which speaks of a sincere commitment to spiritual worship that is non-carnal, not man-centered, and which is committed to the truth.

Of course, when reflecting on sincerity, our heart or sincerity is not the only criterion for measuring true worship. We can worship in sincerity and ignorance at the same time but this is no excuse to not learn about pure and wholesome worship that reflects God’s character and nature. We must remember that sincerity does not make something right. I might be very sincere in painting your kitchen. But if while painting I slop paint all over your kitchen cabinets, I would not be a good painter. I was sincere in helping you, but sincerity is not the measuring stick that I am doing what is right. There are Christians who are sincere in their worship, but their worship is largely man-centered. They might sincerely conclude: “I am giving these people a blessing in singing CCM songs.” The reality is that many times the musician is gratifying the fleshly desires of consumers to whom he sings of plays.

Many times Christian music is patterned more after the entertainment world than after the Bible. By the way, sincerity cannot be the test for what is right and what

is truth. The Bible is the final test to determine what is right (1 Thess. 5:21; Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16; John 17:17; Isa. 8:20) – not sincerity. A Muslim can be very sincere in what he believes but he is sincerely wrong! Furthermore, sincerity can be the result of a deceptive heart (Jer. 17:9). Uzzah steadied the cart by holding the ark, but God struck him dead (1 Sam. 6:6-7). As we have seen, I'm sure he had sincere intentions while assisting in the work of God, but God did not accept it because it was not done according to His Word.

Externalism reduces worship to the right place, the right lighting, the right time, the right words, the right demeanor, the right clothing, the right environment, and the right mood. This was the extreme type of worship represented not only in pagan worship but also the legalistic worship of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Forms of external worship in the Scriptures are seen to be vain repetitions and giving gifts to God in order to be seen by men (Matt. 6:3-8). Man has the tendency to place too much emphasis on the external and not the internal in his time of worship. Many times the worldly entertainment and mood setting sounds of Rock Music which revolve around the external is mistaken for true worship. In actuality, they are nothing more than external worship. Many today are actually worshipping at the altar of sound, performance, style, and technique. In all of this, God is not getting the glory nor is true “in the spirit” worship taking place.

➤ In Truth

Yes, we should worship God “in spirit” which would include the thoughts of being both spiritual and sincere in our worship. For those who make the claim that they are sincere in their worship, while they participate with the sounds of a paganized culture, they must also



remember that Jesus also taught that true worship must be done “in truth.” This means above all else that we must submit our worship to God’s words, sayings, and commands (John 14:15; 1 John 5:2). Our worship must be an offering in line with His truth. Many will tell you that they want to worship God in the way that they feel most comfortable, or the way they want to worship God. In other words, they want to worship in a way that makes them feel good and which meets their needs.

But our concern in our worship is not how we feel, but what God has said about worship in His Word.

If our worship is inconsistent with God's character, as revealed in His Word, something that does not represent who He is, something that contrary to godliness, holiness, and separation, something that is fleshly, sensual, and pleasurable to us, then this type of worship is not directed toward God and cannot be rooted in God's Word. At the root of all false worship is man following his desires and feelings instead of consulting with God's Word. God does not accept worship which is centered upon making someone feel good and something that gives them a thrill. Many will tell you today, "You can worship God with rock, rap, uncontrollable laughter, with a hoe-down, in any kind of clothing, even immodest dress. It's fine to use whatever kind of music you want to in your worship experience, but just make sure that you like it and use Christian words." Sadly, this is what worship has come to in many CCM churches.

Satan said to Jesus in Matthew 4:9:

"All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

So how does the Lord Jesus answer Satan on the subject of worship. He says, "It is written" (Matt. 4:10). Jesus knows the truth about worship and quotes the Scriptures to back it up (Deut. 6:13). The point is this, truth is what should drive all of our worship – not experience, feeling, mood, likes and dislikes, atmosphere, escapism, an electrifying experience.

Worship "in spirit and truth" complement one another and balance each other out. The phrase "in truth" suggests that our worship should be done in accordance with the revelation God has given to us about Jesus Christ in the Scriptures, who is the truth (John 14:6). When Jesus taught that "salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22), He was reminding the woman that salvation came through the Jewish Messiah, which was revealed in the Jewish Scriptures of which the Samaritans were ignorant about. Messiah had come and this means that all worship is to be done through Him and for Him since He is the personification of truth. Christ was calling the woman to obey the Jewish Scriptures that spoke of the Messiah.

The truth of Scripture, which would include what it taught about true worship within Scripture, should be the focus of all genuine worship. Worshipping must be

centered in the Scriptures, the revealed truth of God's Word, which teaches us how to worship correctly instead of ignorantly, as this woman was doing in Mount Gerizim. This would mean that all worship should be done in accordance with the full revelation of Scripture which is the truth ("thy word is truth" - John 17:17). Worshipping according to truth would mean that I should not attempt to worship God, while adopting a paganized form of worship, since the Bible strictly forbids this (2 Cor. 6:14-17; Rom. 12:2).

Kent Brandenburg comments on pagan forms of worship:

"There are forms of worship today that are much like those pagan religious rites and practices. The music creates a chemical and emotional effect on the body that results in a sensual, ecstatic type of experience. It is also an experience so tied in to the body that it is very convincing and habit-forming. In this religious subculture there is the thought that these experiences are produced by the Holy Spirit, and have brought this person into close communion with God ... The control of the Spirit is manifested far differently. It is manifested by decency and control (Gal. 5:24)."

Rhythmic swaying back and forth, twisting, turning, and screaming was Samaritan-style worship on Mt. Gerizim. It was also similar to the false worship Diana in Ephesus. Some think worship is an ecstatic, frenzied, out-of-control experience. But this is similar to the pagan mystery religions which also had in some measure influenced and corrupted the Corinthian worship (1 Cor. 14:23) by promoting the existential, subjective feeling and gratification of the worshipper but not the glory of God. What many people call self-expression in worship is actually flesh-expression. The truth of God's Word which teaches us how to worship must be applied to both the *message* and *method* of our worship. Does our music reflect the truth about Jesus Christ, God's character, Bible separation, and represent obedience to God's known and revealed Word (1 Pet. 1:14-16; 2 Pet. 3:11)?

In his commentary, Adam Clarke wrote this:

"A man worships God in spirit, when, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, he brings all his affections, appetites, and desires to the throne of God; and he worships him in truth, when every purpose and passion of his heart, and every act of his religious worship, is guided and regulated by the word of God."



Bible separation must be applied to our music and worship if we are going to worship God “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Abraham’s way was one of separation from the world but Lot’s way was one of identification with the world (Gen. 13). Like Lot, we “pitch out tent toward Sodom” (Gen. 13:12) and eventually end up in Sodom (“Lot sat in the gate of Sodom” – Gen. 19:1). Be careful, once you accept the philosophy behind CCM (music is neutral – neither good or bad) then you grease the tracks and can begin to slip into the worldliness of CCM. Once we start giving in to CCM and secular Rock Music, it’s gets easier to surrender more ground to the sin nature and the Devil. The Bible says we are not to “give place to the devil” or a starting point for the Devil to work in our lives (Eph. 4:27).

Christians might sometimes say, “It’s borderline, but I like it. I don’t like the hard stuff. This is far better to listen to than the hard stuff.” Beware of the borderline excuse to listen to CCM. There is no such thing as being borderline clean. If a fork or spoon has old and dried food on it, it’s not borderline clean. It’s dirty. Look what happened to Lot when he pitched his tent toward Sodom and lived on the border? Some Christians have told me that they listen to “soft rock.” I normally ask them if they were ever hit by a soft rock! Listen, we can make our excuses to listen to Rock Music but in the end the excuses will get us into trouble. It’s not how soft or hard the music is, how close to the borderline we can get, but how far away we can stay from the line, how we can please God, and what represents wholesome and godly music in the best possible light. This is what is important when it comes to our musical choices and worship.

It has been proven over and over again that even “borderline” Rock Music can cause teenage rebellion against parents. Why is this? It’s because Rock Music promotes rebellion in both its lyrics and sound.

A Fifteen-Year-Old from Nebraska said:

"When I started listening to 'Christian rock' I slowly started to listen to just regular worldly rock (soft rock). Then I was listening to something harder and harder. It not only led me into worldly rock, but I was getting rebellious toward my parents, and I

was having sensual and lustful thoughts. I also could not memorize or read God's Word and understand it or retain it.

A Seventeen-Year-Old from Texas wrote this:

"I would like to share a little testimony concerning my experience with 'Christian rock' music. I had listened to this music with my friends and at church social functions for several years before I got my own tape, recorded by a famous artist.

"Buying that tape was the biggest mistake of my life. Under its influence, my moral convictions began to dissolve and I allowed myself to become involved in a relationship with a boy from my church, against my parents' wishes.

"When we were together we listened to 'Christian' and 'soft rock' music. It was all sensuous and destroyed my inhibitions. I am so ashamed of what happened.

"The music made me rebellious and pulled me away from my family. I thank God that I can say today that I have not listened to this harmful music for several months now and I feel a freedom I had not experienced before."

When we live on the borderline we will set ourselves up to cross over into full-blown CCM and even secular Rock Music. Moving musically toward the world's music is a downward progression and path (Ps. 1:1) that can result in worldly addictions, behaviors, and patterns developed in our lives which are not according to godliness. If you can get a glimpse of Sodom with the type of music you have been listening to, then you are opening yourself up for greater spiritual failure and demise.

Borderline music can become deeply ingrained in our flesh. Whether you are addicted to a lighter or heavier fleshly form of music makes no difference. All flesh must be removed from our music for it to glorify God. Carnal music becomes part of us in a very physical, emotional, and addictive way. It takes a spiritual, surgical procedure to remove it! Getting rid of the wrong type of music can be a ripping process. You might at first seem empty and alone as you withdraw from this type of musical addiction. Sadly, there is nothing to deaden the pain of its removal from our lives but "afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness" (Heb. 21:11).

A fifteen-year-old from Florida shares this:

"When I was twelve I began listening to 'Christian rock.' My friends listened to it and I felt pressured to listen to it, too. I became addicted to the beat and slowly progressed until I was into 'heavy metal Christian.' I was talking to a boy in our church about rock music. He told me I listened to the same thing in 'Christian rock.' I decided to listen and find out for myself. The beat was exactly the same, and I quickly was addicted to rock. I have been working on conquering this, but when I hear any 'Christian rock' I immediately feel guilty and stay away from my parents."



The best way to get rid of bad music is to quickly and abruptly remove it from your life as illustrated by Jesus ("cut it off" and "pluck it out" - Mark 9:43-45). No, Jesus was not advocating self-mutilation but to discipline your life and cut everything out of your life that will cause you to stumble. There is no other way to get rid of sin but to cut it off. We are to "cleanse ourselves from all

filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1). We should make no provision for the flesh (Rom. 13:14) and completely sever ourselves from our old musical choices and worldly ways. King Jehoshaphat walked in the many godly ways of his father Asa but the Bible records: "Nevertheless the high places were not taken away; for the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places" (2 Chron. 20:33, 43). In other words, here is a man who lived for God in many ways but his "Achilles heel" was that he did not get rid of the idolatrous altars. The application of this is easy to see. We can strive to live for God in many ways but we fail when we allow CCM to control our hearts and lives and lead us down wrong paths of living.

An unscriptural view of sanctification is that we keep some of the lighter CCM. We don't remove it from our lives. However, the failure to remove our music slowly (like wearing a nicotine patch) often means we don't remove it completely, which can cause us to keep living in perpetual carnality (1 Cor. 3:3). Beloved, we must cut it off and pluck it out of our

**DESTROY  
WHAT  
DESTROYS  
YOU.**

lives completely (2 Cor. 10:5) and replace it with godly music. The Scriptural method of getting rid of worldly and carnally-based music is to destroy it. We must destroy what destroy us! This means you don't give it to a friend or sell it at a yard sale. This is like giving a live grenade to someone else because of what it might do to you!

Many Christians will often "slightly lower" their musical standards and "pitch their tent toward Sodom" but this is when Satan greases the tracks and eventually slides them into a deeper commitment to CCM and the world. Remember that "the most dangerous deviation is the one closest to the Biblical position." Eve dabbled with God's commandment about separating from one specific tree and look what happened (2 Cor. 11:3). Dabbling normally leads to destruction of some type or other. When you start down the wrong musical path you will open yourself up to possibly quenching the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:17) and this will keep you from advancing in specific areas of sanctification. Rock Music, including CCM which fuels the desire to crossover to secular Rock Music, can very easily become an "occasion to the flesh" (Gal. 5:13).

This is a military term that means the rock sound linked to CCM music can become a starting point and base of operations for the devil to work in your life. In fact, it can become the ground and base of operations for more devilish control to occur in your life (Eph. 4:27). So, Rock Music becomes an issue of the lordship of Jesus Christ.

John Blanchard wrote:

"We deny his lordship when we decide that we can use nay means we choose, then bring him (God) in at the next stage and ask his blessing on it."

Here is the obvious point. Allowing the perverted rock sound into our minds and hearts can hinder our sanctification through the Spirit, make it easier for us to sin, cause us to develop patterns of sin in our lives, and become conditioned to worldliness in the realm of our mind, emotions, and will.

Here are some life application questions. Have I surrendered my worship to the standard of truth as presented in God's Word? Is my worship separated, distinct, holy, sacred, and consecrated to God as outlined in God's Word? Am I being controlled by my worship? Am I seeking to get instead of giving to God during my



time of worship? Does my music reflect Rock Music? Does its sound like the world's music? We must move forward and let the Word of God have preeminence in all of our thinking and expressions of worship and music. God's Word, which gives guiding and governing principles for our worship, must be our final authority for all worshipful and musical expression.

Music is very important in relation to the Christian life. Our feelings and experience generated by a certain type of worship or sound does not justify the expression of our worship; the expression of worship must be justified by the Bible. Scripture and truth is to be our final authority for everything that we do and enjoy in life – even our worship and music (1 John 5:3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; John 8:32; Ps. 119:11, 105, 11; 138:2). The multitudes of cultural sins in our world today must be dealt with through the application of commands and principles that reflect the cultural departures in our present times. Popular culture (including its music) will move in when we become passive about thinking and acting according to God's thoughts and ways (Isa. 55:8-9). Therefore, we need to be vigilant and protect our spiritual beliefs and practices (1 Pet. 5:8).

Remember that the television, internet (electronic devices) and music seem to be the most significant forces that shape our culture today. God has called us to counteract the culture and not conform to it (Rom. 12:2). God has called us to separate from the corrupt culture (not mix with it). This means we must refuse to endorse the popular culture by creating a parallel culture complete with its own sanitized versions of rock bands and easy-listening music and peaching,

Here is the point. God wants us to possess a Biblical basis for all of our music and worship. The Biblical axioms and truths examined in this study would lead us to this conclusion. Jesus taught that we must worship on the basis of truth, as it relates to Jesus Christ, and by extension, as it relates to all the revelation of the Bible which governs our worship and musical expression. He has given within His Word important worship guidelines to follow (Lev. 10:10; Ps. 89:7; Heb. 12:28; John 4:24; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 14:40).

Someone said:

“Emotion without devotion is nothing more than commotion.”

An emotional experience is not necessarily a spiritual experience. People get very emotional at rock concerts. Does this mean they had a religious experience? A piece of music might be moving and emotional but this does not mean it is spiritual (directed to build up our Christian life). Emotions are very unreliable spiritual gauges. Jesus taught we must worship “in truth” (by knowing and following the truth). Truth is to be the centerpiece that guides our emotions, thinking, and living (Ps. 119:130; 2 Tim. 2:15; Titus 1:1). Paul taught something similar to what Jesus taught in John 4:24 (“in spirit and in truth”) when he said in 1 Corinthians 14:15, “I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also.” In other words, music contributes to both the spiritual and mental aspects of worship. It should not be centered on emotion without understanding and reason which comes from knowing the truth.

This means that a song is inadequate for worship if the music makes it impossible to understand the words. We must embrace truth in our time of singing but this cannot happen without understanding. Only when we understand and embrace truth can our worship and thinking be spiritual in nature. All our activities of worship must be geared around understanding and following the truth. Truth must also be applied to the realm of our emotional response in worship. Our emotions must be directed by understanding and truth (1 Cor. 14:15) in order for true edification to occur (1 Cor. 14:12).

Much CCM is emotionally charged but truth deficient. People will say, “O, I felt the presence of the Lord” and “It felt good to move to the music” or “That sounded so good.” Actually, we should say, “I really learned something from this song.” What is more important in your time of worship – what you know or how you feel? Our emotions must be based on truth or what I know and not what I feel. If feeling gets in the way of truth (what is right) then music can get us to believe almost anything. This is why our music must teach us the truth (Col. 3:16). By teaching us truth, music can lead us to a correct emotional response. Music was not intended for mere enjoyment; it was designed by God to communicate truth in a creative way.

The exercise of personal taste in music is really only valid within the parameters God has outlined in His Word since Jesus taught worship must be done “in truth” (John 4:24). Our opinions and preferences are not the authority – God’s Word is the

final authority. Haldor Lillenas, one of the greatest hymn writers of music, said: “I will plant my feet on its firm foundation, for the Bible stands.” Yes, we must stand on the truth of Scripture so that we take a right stand on music. Romans 4:3 asks this enduring question: “What saith the scripture?” – not “what doeth the people.” It’s not a question as to *who* is right, but *what* is right.

Wendell Heller once remarked: “We are to do right because it is right.” It’s not a question as to *who* is right, but *what* is right. It’s not about different styles of music or personal preferences, but what is right and what the Bible says regarding true worship and how it should never conform to the standard of the world (Rom. 12:2). We must live and move in the Biblical boundaries that God has given to us. Within these boundaries we are free to exercise personal preference in both sacred and secular music which does not violate God’s truth and order. But the Bible places parameters on our music and worship which we cannot violate.

When we violate God’s regulating principles on worshipping Him “in spirit and truth,” we can miss out on important aspect of our sanctification, purity, conformity to Christ, and discipleship, which involves denying the flesh and following Christ (Luke 9:23). Discipleship means I must surrender to the truth and at the same time surrender my music and worship to God and allow Him to purify it. We must put our music on God’s altar and surrender to Him (Rom. 12:1-2). Worshipful surrender is part of the Christian life.

“All to Jesus I surrender  
Humbly at His feet I bow.  
Worldly pleasures all forsaken,  
Take me, Jesus, take me now.  
I surrender all, I surrender all,  
All to Thee my blessed Saviour  
I surrender all.”

I understand that there can be small diversions and compromises in our music and worship and there can also be a massive departure from wholesome worship and musical expression, but it’s the little diversions, when left go, that create the larger chasm between holy and carnal worship. Once again, the Bible warns us about the “little foxes” (Song 2:15) and a “little leaven” that has a corrupting influence on the whole (Gal. 5:9 – “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”). Beloved, it’s time to

examine your music and worship make sure that you are not following “the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:4), the “course of this world” (Eph. 2:2), and “this present evil world” or age (Gal. 1:4) in the type of music you listen to and worship with.

### c. The Main Cause of Worship

When thinking of the music issue in the church today, we need to consider the cause and effect of worship. As a result of knowing and understanding God’s revelation of Himself through His Word (the cause) worship can then be expressed through music (the effect), but true worship is not caused by music or initiated by some particular foot tapping or rhythmic sound. In other words, Biblical worship is not determined by some particular style of music (“Praise Songs,” “Praise and Worship,” or “Contemporary Christian Rock Music”). Worship is initiated by the inner joy of salvation and the Christian life (Ps. 40:3; James 5:13), the Spirit’s presence and filling (Eph. 5:18-19), and the indwelling of God’s Word (Col. 3:16; Ps. 119:62). This is the true cause or origin of all genuine worship. Sound and specific beats do not initiate worship. Worship may be expressed by music but it is not caused by music. In fact, worship can be done without any music (Ps. 143:5; Job 35:10).

Again, the secular sounds of foot stomping and dance-band rock beats are not the cause of worship. Nowhere in the Bible do we see that true worship needs to be induced or triggered by some particular music or sound. If this were the case deaf believers could not worship God! Rather, we see that worship is a response to the inward revelation that God has given to us about Himself and the promises of His Word (Psalms 86:9; 95:6-7). Furthermore, to claim that the Holy Spirit needs a certain sound in order to get people worshipping is ludicrous. It must also be understood that the Holy Spirit does not cause people to have emotional, mental, and physical dependencies to a rock sound that is being promoted by a perverted culture. The Holy Spirit gets credit for many things He is not doing. We must remember that He is the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of truth (1 John 4:6; 5:6). He is not the spirit of rock and roll, or rebellious musical spirit, but the Holy Spirit of godly and spiritual music (Eph. 5:18).

There are varying tastes in music (vocal, instrumental, choirs, quartets, solos, etc.) but there are also moral and Biblical principles involved with music. Remember that

we are to please God with our music and worship. Worship is all about pleasing God – not our own wants, desires, and selfish interests. We should not live to please ourselves, but please Him, who loved us and gave Himself for us (Gal. 1:10). And pleasing God means that we will strive to be holy in all manner of living (1 Peter 1:15). Loving God with all of our heart means that we will want to please Him with the type of music that does not contain sensual techniques (lyrically, vocally, musically). The purpose of worship is not to get young people to the church, to bring people into fellowship with one another, or to fulfill our worship needs and desires as CCM artists claim. This makes worship selfish and man centered. However, the Bible never suggests that worship is about man. Worship is about God and ascribing to Him the worth of which He is worthy (Rev. 4:10).

Are you really pleasing God in the area of your musical choices? Can you honestly say that you are worshipping God, not only with sincerity, but also in truth? Does the music that you listen to reflect rebellion in its lyrical content or its musical sound? Is it trying to mimic the world's music? It is attempting to mix the good with the bad? Are you being entertained on Sunday instead of being led in worship that truly reflects God's nature of holiness, righteousness, and order? Would you still follow Jesus if your music was taken away? Have you ever performed a musical fast to indicate if there are any addictions to your music? Do you need to retrain your ears? Do you really want to honor God with your music and worship? Are you worshipping your worship? Have you asked God to change your heart concerning the type of music that you listen to? Have you come the place of worshipful surrender to God? Are you ready to surrender your music to God and His mastery over your life?

I understand that this this study has been an emotional and controversial subject. But the controversy is with man – not with God and His Word! We must align every area of our lives, including our music and emotions, with the revelation that God has given to us about separation, godliness, and holiness. When we surrender our musical choices to God, and let Him begin to work in our hearts, we can find deliverance and transformation in the area of music.

God only accepts spiritual sacrifices (1 Pet. 2:5) – not fleshly and carnal sacrifices. True sacrifices or expressions of worship are spiritual in nature because they originate from the regenerate part of man's nature and are inspired by the Holy Spirit. Also, they are spiritual in the sense that they can be used of God and for His

spiritual purposes. They are also pleasing to God. Many offerings or sacrifices that are deemed as worship today have become like “strange fire before the LORD” (Lev. 10:1). We have already studied how Nadab and Abihu offered a form of worship which was unacceptable and repugnant to God. Their expressions of worship were soulless and carnal. The Bible clearly says that God reserves the right to reject the worship of His people.

Malachi 1:7

“Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar (inappropriate worship); and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible (disgraceful, disrespectful).”

Worldly deception running rampant within the church today (Heb. 3:13). Many contemporary pragmatists are offering polluted bread, or their polluted worship up to God, and they are so entrenched in their worldly ways of worship that they ask, “Wherein have we polluted thee?” Our music should eliminate human and sinful culture.

Kent Brandenburg said:

“Putting a Christian message into a musical form that reflects a sinful culture degrades its message to the level of that culture.”

Malachi 1:8 responds to the people’s question of how they polluted their worship: “And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice (unholy things in the time of worship), is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil?... saith the Lord of hosts.”



God said that the people should know better than to worship in such a way as this but they still practiced this type of contemptible worship. They were offering the blind, crippled, and diseased animals on the altar. This kind of offering was a disgrace to a holy God. Much of what is being offered up to God today in contemporary worship is a form of blind and diseased worship. The kind of music

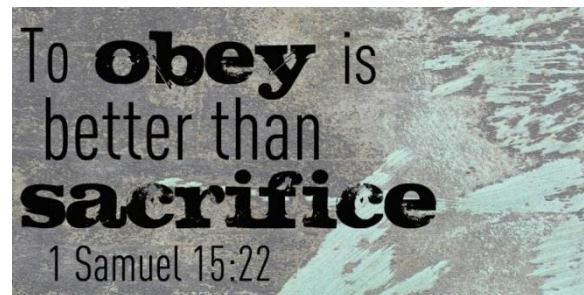
and worship being presented to God today resembles a similar sound of rebellion and discord that Satan has used to promote sex, drugs, and other acts of rebellion.

In Malachi 1:10 God concludes by saying,  
“... I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering (your unholy worship) at your hand.”

Today the church is trying the same thing with its worldly, pragmatic offerings of worship, which are directed toward God. The contemporary music of a perverted rock culture is being offered to God as a form of holy and acceptable sacrifice. But God is saying the same thing He said to His people many years ago. “I don’t want your blind and unholy worship. The table of the Lord is polluted and contemptible (Mal. 1:7, 12). It is full of disgrace and disrespect. I despise such offerings.”

Saul kept some sheep and oxen alive, along with the pagan King Agag, so the people could worship God (1 Samuel 15). But God had instructed the people to destroy the enemy. God makes know to Saul that He would not accept his offerings of worship for He said: “to obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Sam. 15:22). In other words, obeying God is better than worshipping God out of disobedience, which would include incorporating the sound of Rock Music into our worship, a musical sound of rebellion and carnality. In essence, to be obedient to God and His Word is a better gift to God than to worship Him in our flesh.

Remember that God does not merely look at our heart in the time of worship (1 Sam. 16:7); He also looks at our obedience to His commands and eternal truth (1 Sam. 15:22). Many quote 1 Samuel 16:7 (“the LORD looketh on the heart”) but forget about 1 Samuel 15:22



(“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice”). In short, obedience is even better than worship! In fact, obedience is part of our worship. We should want to obey God’s commands and Biblical principles regarding true and wholesome worship and therefore comply with what is right and holy in our time of worship.

A right motive of heart never should become an excuse for disobedience. God may accept your heart but He may reject your worship (John 4:22-24). We should want to obey God by worshipping God properly and obediently, according to the commands and principles found in His Word. 1 Samuel 15:22 speaks of the importance of obedience in our time of worship. Obedience should be valued over

worship and be integrated into our time of worship, realizing that the true worship of God is born out of an obedient heart that is surrendered to Scriptural guidelines on worship. It is to be done “in truth” (John 4:24) as Jesus taught.

What we must understand is that obedience is the greatest and purest form of worship. To be obedient to God and His Word is a better gift to God than to worship Him in our flesh (“to obey is better than sacrifice”). Cain brought an offering of worship to God but the Lord rejected it for it was not the right kind of offering (Gen. 4:3-8). Cain chose to worship in his own way rather than to incorporate obedience into his time of worship. And if you want to know how important it is to keep worship Biblical and holy, just ask Cain! Cain knows how high standards should be part of our time of worship. God delights when we surrender our worship to Him. We must come to God on His terms, not ours! We cannot choose to worship God on our own terms. We must remember that it’s not enough to do a right thing (worship). We must also do it in the right way! Scripture makes it very clear that it is not enough simply to do the right thing; we must also do it in the right way (2 Tim. 2:5 – “lawfully”).

The idea that is being promoted today is something like this. “Even if one is disobedient at times, God still loves him, and so it should not matter how we worship, since God will always love us.” Of course, this is an unbiblical idea and mindset. God’s love for us as His children is not conditioned upon our obedience or disobedience (Rom. 8:38-39). However, our expression of love toward God is connected with our obedience to Him and what is right (John 14:15; 1 John 5:2). Worship can become entertaining and outwardly showy in its display (1 Cor. 14:15-16; 27-33). It can also become disorderly (1 Cor. 14:33, 40), self-seeking (1 Cor. 14:2, 6, 12-16), carnal or fleshly (Matt. 6:7, 16; 23:5; 1 Cor. 11:20-21), manward in its focus (1 Cor. 3:3-4), and ignorant in its knowledge and outward practice (John 4:22; Acts 17:23). It can be convenient but not correct (1 Kings 12:28-30).

Jeroboam made worship convenient but certainly not correct. Worship can become tailored or designed to fit what people think is right and what they want (self-made worship), rather than what God’s Word says is correct or holy worship (Col. 2:23). We must be obedient in our time of worship by reflecting God’s character and following Biblical principles of order and decency. If Christians are not careful, they can begin to “worship their form of worship” instead of worship the true and living God. I’m afraid that this is happening today.



God's asks a question regarding Christian Rock Music: "... wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? (Acts 13:10). Malachi 1:8 also asks us this timeless question: "Will he be pleased with thee or accept thy person?" The point is this, God will never be pleased with His people or their worship when it reflects a rebellious culture. The desire of every Christian should be to please the Lord (1 Thess. 4:1). Of course, many Christians are fully persuaded that their Christian Rock Music is honoring to God but their ideas about music cannot be supported from the Bible.

Our personal belief about any issue, such as music, doesn't necessarily make our belief Biblical. What the Bible says about our belief system is what confirms its truthfulness. There must be better criteria than "I like it" when it comes to our musical choices. We must constantly check our attitudes and appetites and bring them back in line with the authority of God's truth. 1 John 5:17 declares: "All unrighteousness is sin" which would include the type of music we listen which reflects paganism, carnality, and the worldliness of the present age. We are not to sin, not even in moderation (2 Cor. 7:1).

Warren Wiersbe is on record as saying:

"Those who uphold great music in Christianity are becoming museum pieces."

We must try and stop this trend and ensure that the spiritual remnant (Luke 12:32) who embraced non-worldly music do not become stone statues sitting in museums. We must pass on our Biblical, musical heritage to our own children and the next generation. Without doing this, the music which was once known and embraced in church life and ministry will be a thing of the past. This would be part of what Dr. Francis Schaeffer termed as "The Great Evangelical Disaster." In speaking about the death of the sacredness of Christianity, Schaeffer writes: "Once we begin to slip over into the other methodology – a failure to hold on to an absolute which can be known by the whole man, including what is logical and rational - historic Christianity is destroyed, even if it seems to keep going for a time. We may not know it, but when this occurs, the marks of death are upon it, and it will soon be one more museum piece."

We might be a voice crying in the wilderness (John 1:23) but we must keep making the Biblical case for SCM (Sacred Christian Music) which is separated and consecrated to God and which truly glorifies our Creator God.



We now return to our main question which has been systemically and Scripturally answered throughout this study. Is Music Important? Many Christians will conclude that music is not very important when compared to the salvation of souls and other doctrinal issues. They will tell you that music does not really matter because

it's a non-essential, it's amoral (neither good or bad), it's a personal choice related to liberty, and because God's Word does not condemn any style of music. But as we have seen, this surely is not the case. Therefore, music is very important from God's perspective. Music does matter! The kind of music we listen to on a daily basis and our musical expressions during our times of worship is extremely important to God. It should also be important to us for it can affect our spiritually lives positively or negatively. It can change the course and destiny of our lives.

#### **Music would NOT be important or matter:**

- ✓ If God's glory does not matter ...
- ✓ If separation from worldliness does not matter ...
- ✓ If sanctification and holiness does not matter ...
- ✓ If reverence, sacredness, and godly fear does not matter ...
- ✓ If pleasing God with Spirit-filled, spiritual songs, and spiritual sacrifices does not matter ...
- ✓ If God's creative order of music and moral purity does not matter ...
- ✓ If our discernment does not matter ...
- ✓ If righteous judgment does not matter ...
- ✓ If hating every false way does not matter ...
- ✓ If grace teaching us to deny ungodly ways and vices does not matter ...
- ✓ If our testimony of light does not matter ...
- ✓ If God's renewal song of deliverance from worldliness and sin does not matter ...
- ✓ If what Jesus taught us about worship does not matter.

Jesus taught that if a person wants to hear and discern truth, they can. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Mark 4:9). We need to hear what God's Word says

about music and worship and apply it to our musical choices. In another sense, we must also learn to hear the difference between the secular and sacred, the temporary and eternal, the pure and impure.

Beloved, beware of the GRADUALISM that occurs over time. By gradualism, I mean the subtle acceptance of Rock Music in the local church and your own personal life. Gradualism is the slow change from a Biblical position on music to a more relaxed and compromising position. I keep repeating this for emphasis. Gradual



acceptance of CCM is like the little foxes that spoil the vines (Song 2:15), the little city (Gen. 19:20), and the little leaven (1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9) that eventually overtakes everything. Gradualism can result in catastrophism! Don't open the door to CCM for it will lead you down a worldly path that will slowly break down your spiritual defenses to godly worship and God's Word which clearly denounces worldly worship and living (Titus 2:12). Let me repeat one final time that almost any behavior or practice begins to look and sound normal if you are exposed to enough of it! Participation softens the heart toward error and worldliness (Rom. 12:2). This is why God has called us to separation.

R. B. Ouellette gives us good advice:

"When you have a choice between doing right and doing wrong, the only good time to do right is right away. It gets harder the longer you wait."

Our culture has been permeated with a musical form, which in varying degrees, has been corrupted by worldliness. Its leading practitioners admit this. Rock icon Little Richard, said "I believe this kind of music is demonic." Yet, many believers have uncritically embraced this musical form and incorporated it into the worship of God. This kind of music, in its varying degrees of corruption, cannot possibly be glorifying to God nor ultimately edifying to the body of Christ.

Ric Llewellyn concludes with this:

"Convictions must be based on the Word of God and not personal tastes, likes, and dislikes. Since most of religious rock, or so-called contemporary Christian music, has

its roots in, and draws its inspiration from, secular rock 'n' roll, the result is worldliness in the music, and even worse, worldliness through music invading the church. Further, it authenticates the rock sound by having professing Christians playing the music. When one applies the standards of Scripture to this form of worldliness (e.g., II Cor. 6:17; I Thes.5:21, 22; Rom. 12:2; I Jn. 2:15,16; Js.4:4; etc.), the wrongness of such music should be obvious to all who truly desire to please their Lord."

You might say, "Well, CCM ministers to me and my kids. We both like it." This kind of reasoning is not good enough. Worship is not about personal taste or what we enjoy. We must ask, "Does God approve of it?" Does it glorify God? Does it follow the Biblical, moral, and orderly guidelines for music and worship? Does it promote edification and growth (1 Cor. 14:26) in my life and not merely the thrill of entertainment?

Conductor Arthur Fiedler died in July of 1979. Newspaper commentaries around the country carried one of Mr. Fiedler's favorite quotes: "There are only two kinds of music, good music and bad. If it is good -- I play it."

Some Christian shared this true story:

"My parents, Salvation Army officers, were out on a miserable December night for an open-air meeting. Not another person was around, but my dad said that 'God didn't need people to be out listening--he only needed us to be faithful.' So they played a few carols and dad gave a short message before everyone retreated inside.

"A few weeks later, dad was ringing the bell at a mall when a lady asked him if he had been on that street corner two weeks earlier. She explained to him: 'My father had been in a coma for six months. We were dreading the holidays since dad was not really with us. But then we heard the carols being played, to our amazement, my father sat up and said, *That's God's music*. And with that he died.' What an encouraging proof of God's faithfulness to those who are faithful. How wonderful it is to recognize God's music when we hear it and go into glory listening to the music that we will hear throughout eternity!"

My prayer is that those who are reading this and reflecting on the truth of Scripture will have "ears to hear." I pray that you will hear God's Word speaking to us and make the necessary distinction between godly and rebellious music, between pure

and pagan music, that you will mark the difference between wholesome music and a mixture of the sacred and carnal, and that the musical expression in your life will change for God's glory. My longing is that you will have a true musical revival, a revival in your worship (2 Chron. 30:20-26).

Wendell Babcock once said:

"Every child of God ought to be informed, transformed, then conformed to Christ. Let the mind of Christ dwell in you, and you'll change your mind about Rock!"

How do we change a bad musical diet?

- Read God's Word on the subject of music with a teachable spirit (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; 2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- Review your music in relation to both sound and lyrics (1 Thess. 5:21; Eph. 5:10)
- Reject music that is not separated (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 6:14-17)
- Renew your music based upon God's renewal principle (Ps. 33:3; 40:3 with 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:4; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24)
- Replace your music and redo your listening habits (2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 4:22, 24; Col. 3:1-5, 8-9)
- Remember to strive for excellence (Phil. 1:10; 1 Thess. 5:22)
- Reoffer acceptable worship to God (1 Pet. 2:5; John 4:24)
- Realign your music and life with God's purpose (Dan. 1:8)
- Realize you will be challenged for taking a new stand (1 Pet. 4:4; 5:8; Gal. 6:9; 2 Thess. 3:13; Heb. 13:12)

I believe that if we hear what the Word of God teaches about music and worship that we will eventually hear the difference between the good and the bad music, and even make the distinction between the better and the best. God will guide and direct our lives in the way of truth and sanctification. Each one of us must take a spiritual inventory of our lives and make sure we are listening to music that is spiritual in its makeup or design and which truly glorifies God. We must stay "in tune" with God's tune and not divert from the path of sanctification as it relates to our musical choices.

John Calvin said:

“We know by experience that music has a secret and almost incredible power to move hearts.”

We just need to make sure that its moving our hearts in the right direction! So...



“O be careful little ears what you hear  
O be careful little ears what you hear  
There's a Father up above  
And He's looking down in love  
So, be careful little ears what you hear.”

Here is a prayer and newfound commitment you can make to reject the deception, authority, and addiction to the “rock beat” in both Contemporary Christian Music and Secular Rock Music. Maybe it’s time for you to make this commitment to God and start on a new journey.

“Almighty Father, based on the authority of your Word, and wanting You to be Lord over my physical, emotional, musical, and spiritual life, I now renounce my involvement with Rock Music in all its forms. I renounce my involvement with the flesh and the world of darkness from which You have delivered me. I no longer want to give place to the Devil and take back the territory that the Evil One has stolen from me. As of this day and moving forward, I purpose to remove from my life any music that contains a rock beat, which reflects rebellion, and replace it with music that glorifies You and enhances my spiritual life. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_