

Measuring the Music (Part 11)

CCM Questions, Objections and Answers

Text: 1 Cor. 2:15

Introduction:

1. While we are not to exercise hypocritical judgement in the Christian life (Matt. 7), we are to learn to exercise spiritual judgement (1 Cor. 1:15). The word does not refer to a carnal kind of criticism but rather to a spiritual and discerning mindset. In fact, the same word is translated 'discern' in the previous verse. This is in line with the exhortations of Ephesians 5:10 and 1 Thess. 5:21 which teach us to have a proving mindset as believers.
2. In relation to the CCM issue, there are many questions and objections that arise in the debate over which style of music is appropriate for worship. In fact, expect that some will get very fierce and heated when this subject comes up. Be prepared for all sorts of unsound arguments that will be put forward in defense of using the world's music in church.
3. Remember that some questions may be coming from a sincere heart that wants the truth. Others are simply smokescreens to try and obscure the issue so that the individual can continue with his sinful compromise.

I. Isn't Music Amoral/Neutral?

- A. A common argument is that "It's not about the music, it's about the words."
- B. Emergent church pastor Rick Warren expresses this viewpoint in his book "The Purpose Driven Church": "I reject the idea that music styles can be judges as either '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. If I were to play a tune for you without any words, you wouldn't know if it was a Christian song or not."
- C. Answer: The words of a song are important but the music itself communicates a message.
- D. Clear examples in the Word of God plainly disprove this argument.
 1. The example of the godly affect of David's music (1 Sam. 16:23).
 2. The example of the unholy affect of Egypt's music (Ex. 32:17-19).
- E. Musical experts contradict this argument.
- F. The powerful affect of music in various contexts disproves this argument.
 1. Illustration: Text painting. Also called word painting or tone painting. It is "Musical depiction of words in text. Using the device of word painting, the music tries to imitate the emotion, action, or natural sounds as described in the text. For example, if the text describes a sad event, the music might be in a minor key. Conversely, if the text is joyful, the music may be set in a major key."¹

¹ https://dictionary.onmusic.org/terms/3957-word_painting Viewed 10/9/21.

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2. There is a reason why certain types of music are played in certain settings. There is a reason why nightclubs play a certain type of music for example.
- G. The fall of man disproves this argument (Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10-23). The Fall affected everything, from the farthest start to the smallest atom, from Angels to man, from animal to the smallest micro-organism. Since the fall, man has expressed the depravity of his heart, among other avenues, through the arts. Francis A. Schaeffer in his book "How Should We Then Live" stated, "The works of a man's creativity show his World View. His World View almost always shows through..." Ian Western writes, "As any society descends the Romans one decline, there is a corresponding change in its art and music." (Refer diagram)
 1. Musical notes on their own are neutral but as soon as someone begins arranging those notes they are no longer neutral as a composer is now in the equation and his belief system and world view will influence the kind of music he writes.
 2. Lucarini: "Notes and chords by themselves are benign. No one in a contemporary or traditional service is singing just the generic music notes and chords. Everyone is singing someone's song. Since humans write it, the song cannot help but inherit a certain style from the human creator. Do you believe that man can corrupt music? I'm sure you would have to agree that he can."
 3. Illustration: Art is not neutral. Paint and paint brushes on their own are neutral but as soon as someone picks up the brush and starts a painting, we are no longer in the neutral realm, hence why some artworks reflect godly aesthetics and some do not (e.g., much of modern art with its rejection of the canons of order and beauty).
- H. Satan's musical interests and abilities disprove this argument (Ez. 28:13). Evidently Lucifer was created with the ability to generate music. To believe that music is an area untouched by the god of this world is foolishness. We agree with the assessments of secular rock musicians such as Little Richard and David Bowie who plainly stated their music is of the devil.
 1. LITTLE RICHARD said of rock music, "My true belief about Rock 'n' Roll – and there have been a lot of phrases attributed to me over the years – is this: **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 the music in rhythms, like I have, you'll see that is true. **I believe that kind of music is driving people from Christ.** It is contagious." (Little Richard, *The Life and Times of Little Richard*, p. 197).
 2. David Bowie said, "**Rock has always been the devil's music,** you can't convince me that it isn't. I honestly believe everything I've said—I believe rock and roll is dangerous. It could well bring about a very evil feeling in the west. ... That's where I see it heading, bringing about a dark era. ... **I feel that we're only heralding something even darker than ourselves.**" (*Rolling Stone*, Feb. 12, 1976, p. 83).

II. Where does the Bible say rock music is wrong?

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- A. This is a common argument used to justify all sorts of practices. Someone has called it the “Show me where” hall of fame.
 - 1. Show me where the Bible says it is wrong to have a few beers.
 - 2. Show me where the Bible says I shouldn’t smoke.
 - 3. Show me where the Bible says it’s wrong to buy a lottery ticket.
 - 4. Show me where the Bible says we should only use hymns and classical style sacred music in church.
- B. This argument ignores the truth of the Bible’s sufficiency for all matters of faith and practice. The fact the Bible does not specifically mention a subject by name does not mean it can’t shine a light on that subject.
 - 1. 2 Tim. 3:16-17 “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be **perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**”
 - 2. “thoroughly furnished” = fully equipped.
 - 3. This argument almost assumes the Bible has nothing to say about music when in reality, there are somewhere in the order of 500 references to the subject of music in the Bible (according to Frank Garlock). God has revealed His Divine mind on what kind of music should be a part of a Christian’s life!
- C. In reality, this argument is a shallow cop out from properly thinking through an issue.

III. **Shouldn’t we use rock music to reach people (e.g., teens)?**

- A. The proof text often used for this argument is 1 Cor. 9:22
- B. Lucarini: “When the deception includes a Bible verse to back it up, it becomes extremely powerful within the church.”
- C. This statement needs to be considered in light of Paul’s other moral teachings. It is unconscionable to assert that Paul was compromising on clear truth to reach people. God forbid!
- D. Consider the understanding of godly commentators on this verse:
 - 1. Alexander Maclaren: “The great principle incumbent on all Christians, with a view to the salvation of others, is to go as far as one can without untruthfulness in the direction of finding points of resemblance and contact with those to whom we would commend the Gospel. There is a base counterfeit of this apostolic example, which slurs over distinctive beliefs, and weakly tries to please everybody by differing from nobody. That trimming to catch all winds never gains any. Mr. Facing-both-ways is not a powerful evangelist. The motive of becoming all things to all men must be plainly disinterested, and the assimilation must have love for the souls concerned and eagerness to bring the truth to them, and them to the truth, legibly stamped upon it, or it will be regarded, and rightly so, as mere cowardice or dishonesty. And there must be no stretching the assimilation to the length of either concealing truth or fraternising in evil. Love to my neighbour can never lead to my joining him in wrongdoing.”
 - 2. Adam Clarke: “I assumed every shape and form consistent with innocency and perfect integrity; giving up my own will, my own way, my own ease, my own pleasure, and my own profit, that I might

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save the souls of all. Let those who plead for the system of accommodation on the example of St. Paul, attend to the end he had in view, and the manner in which he pursued that end. It was not to get money, influence, or honor, but to save Souls! It was not to get ease but to increase his labors. It was not to save his life, but rather that it should be a sacrifice for the good of immortal souls!”

3. Albert Barnes: “I become all things; that is, I accommodate myself to them in all things, so far as can be done with a good conscience. “That I might by all means” (πάντως *pantōs*). That I might use every possible endeavor that some at least might be saved. It is implied here that the opposition to the gospel was everywhere great; that people were reluctant to embrace it; that the great mass were going to ruin, and that Paul was willing to make the highest possible exertions, to deny himself, and practice every innocent art, that he might save “a few at least” out of the innumerable multitudes that were going to death and hell.”
4. John Gill: “**I am made all things to all men**; which is to be understood, as in all the other instances of his being so, not in cases and things criminal and sinful, contrary to the moral law, and the dictates of his own conscience, subversive of the Gospel of Christ, and of the order and discipline of it, but in cases and things of an indifferent nature:”
- E. Remember the primary purposes of church music is the edification of the saints and the exaltation of the Saviour, not the evangelization of the lost. Eph. 5:19 “**Speaking to yourselves** in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart **to the Lord**;”
- F. Preaching is the primary means God has chosen to bring the lost to himself, not rock concerts! 1 Cor. 1:21 “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of **preaching** to save them that believe.” I would challenge anyone to show me one verse that says anything about music being for the means of reaching the lost. Further, I would challenge anyone to show me the concept of music for evangelism in the Book of Acts, the missions Book of the Bible.

IV. Didn’t Martin Luther and the Wesley brothers use tavern music with their hymns?

- A. Even if this was true, it wouldn’t justify the practice as the Word of God is our standard, not fallible men. But it is a myth and a lie that has been and continues to be used to further the CCM cause.
- B. Illustration: Spurgeon, often called the prince of preachers, smoked a pipe and drank the occasional glass of wine. This didn’t make it right!
- C. Regarding the myth that the Wesleys used tavern music with their hymns, this was debunked by Dean McIntyre, director of worship resources at the United Methodist Board of Discipleship, in an article released September 30, 2002. His article reads as follows:²

² https://www.wayoflife.org/database/did_the_wesleys_use_tavern_music.html Viewed 10/9/21.

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“Did the Wesleys really use drinking song tunes for their hymns? This drinking tune myth pervades our denomination and has attained the status of truth in many people’s minds, including pastors, musicians, professors, writers, students, and our general laity.

Of particular importance is the distinction between the use of secular music as hymn tunes--a practice that the Wesleys did occasionally use--and the use of drinking tunes or saloon songs as hymn tunes--a practice that they did not use.

The Wesleys did not use tavern or drinking songs to carry their texts. Their theology as well as their sense of aesthetics would have made such an occurrence unthinkable. There are no such examples in their collections. There are no suggestions or recommendations that others do so in any of their writings.

The oft-repeated legend results from some poor, misinformed person who confused the medieval literary bar form, also sometimes known as bar tune, with tavern song. Once spoken out of ignorance, the confused version took on a life of its own and seemingly grows with each repetition.

The legend is now repeated by those who advocate this very practice in the church’s worship and music today. They use the “fact” that the Wesleys did it as justification for their argument that we should also do it. I want to argue that those who wish to commend this practice to the church should not be allowed to appeal to an historical inaccuracy or lie as their justification. They should be able to argue the position on its own merits.

The Wesleys did, indeed, make use of secular music as hymn tunes--rarely. And when they did, THE MUSIC ALWAYS WAS FROM SOURCES OF RECOGNIZABLE BEAUTY AND EXCELLENCE, such as an original composition by the great composer Handel as a tune for “Rejoice, the Lord Is King.” Other secular sources used by the Wesleys included the classical music of their day, a few opera tunes, and perhaps a folk song or two. But IN EVERY CASE WHERE THEY MADE USE OF SECULAR MUSIC FOR THEIR HYMNS, IT WAS ALWAYS OF THE VERY HIGHEST CALIBER, never a little ditty, jingle or disposable contemporary pop tune of the day that would be cast aside as soon as the next one was penned. ...

I feel quite comfortable casting my lot with ... the Wesleys in this matter. I’m happy for us to “redeem” and use secular music in our worship if it is appropriate (and legal) AND IF THE RESULT IS SOMETHING WE NEED NOT BE ASHAMED OF IN OFFERING BACK TO GOD. USE OF THE MUSIC MUST NOT PUT US IN ASSOCIATION WITH ACTIVITIES, LIFESTYLES AND BEHAVIORS THAT ARE INCONSISTENT WITH A LIFE OF LOVE IN CHRIST. ...

The legend has a seductive quality to it. How can anyone argue against the kind of evangelical zeal demonstrated by one who would go out into the bars and taverns of our communities in search of lost souls, and who would be willing to make use of that culture’s music to attempt to appeal to them to hear our message? It is that very appealing evangelistic zeal that makes us today repeat the story again and again, even if it isn’t true. We want to think of the Wesleys as having done that, even if they didn’t.

The truth is, while they quite likely preached to the lost, including a fair share of drunks and alcoholics, in many venues, **THEY DID NOT AND WOULD NOT HAVE USED THE MUSIC ASSOCIATED WITH THAT SINFUL**

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BEHAVIOR IN THEIR HYMN SINGING. They certainly did not use it in their hymnal publishing or in their journal or letter writing."

D. Concerning the argument that Luther also used worldly music for his hymns we offer some scholarly answers from Tim Fisher in his book "The Battle for Christian Music".³ There are several facts that disprove this theory:

1. Luther believed that there was good and bad music even in his day: "And you, my young friend, let this noble, wholesome, and cheerful creation of God [music] be commended to you. By it you may escape shameful desires and bad company. At the same time you may by this creation accustom yourself to recognize and praise the Creator. TAKE SPECIAL CARE TO SHUN PERVERTED MINDS WHO PROSTITUTE THIS LOVELY GIFT OF NATURE AND OF ART WITH THEIR EROTIC RANTINGS; and be quite assured that none but the devil goads them on to defy their very nature, which would and should praise God its Maker with this gift, so that these. . . purloin the gift of God and use it to worship the foe of God, the enemy of nature and of this lovely art" (Friedrich Blume, *Protestant Church Music*, New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1974, p. 10).
2. Luther's idea was to use more familiar, singable tunes to teach the people quickly the new German texts he was compiling or writing. His plan was to develop a unique style of music for use in worship. LUTHER DIDN'T RELY ON THE SENSUAL, EROTIC MUSIC OF HIS DAY. HE DIDN'T LOOK TO THOSE WHO WOULD REBEL AGAINST HIS VERY CULTURE TO SERVE AS A MODEL FOR HIS MUSIC. It is more truthful to say that Luther used as his example the "classical" music of his day. Even then, the practice of borrowing from secular sources--contrafacta--was short lived. Blume refers to the "quick rise and decline of contrafacta" (Blume, *ibid.*, p. 45) and admits that those tunes borrowed from secular sources "rarely attained the timeless greatness" (Blume, *ibid.*, p. 44) of Luther's original compositions--which were, by far, the greater portion of his work.
3. EVEN THE MUSIC THAT LUTHER DID BORROW FROM SECULAR SOURCES DID NOT REMAIN IN ITS ORIGINAL FORM. LUTHER CHANGED THE MELODIC AND RHYTHMIC STRUCTURE TO TAKE AWAY ANY WORLDLY INFLUENCES THAT THE MUSIC MIGHT HAVE. Robert Harrell explains:

"The most effective way of (negating] 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. The other way in which Luther sought to remove secular associations from the minds of the congregation was through the use of Scripture and scriptural allusions in his texts. By filling his chorales with the written Word, Luther sought to direct the thoughts of his people toward the Living Word" (Harrell, *Martin Luther, His Music, His Message*, Greenville, SC: Musical Ministries, 1980, p. 21).

Harrell, in his excellent and well-documented study, concludes:

"A study of Luther's chorales reveals two important facts about Luther's use of secular elements in his sacred music: (1) ALTHOUGH THERE WAS MUCH POPULAR MUSIC AVAILABLE TO HIM, FROM DRINKING SONGS AND DANCE TUNES TO RELIGIOUS FOLK SONGS AND CAROLS, LUTHER CHOSE ONLY THOSE TUNES WHICH WOULD BEST LEND THEMSELVES TO SACRED THEMES AND AVOIDED THE VULGAR, 'ROLLICKING DRINKING SONGS' AND DANCE TUNES. (2) No material which Luther used for a chorale remained unchanged, except for the one case noted previously. Rather, 'he carefully tested. . . the melodies he considered, and when necessary molded them into suitability. Alterations were freely made'" (Harrell, *ibid.*, pp. 21-22).

³ https://www.wayoflife.org/database/did_luther_use_tavern_music.html Viewed 10/9/21.

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4. Luther, in the forward he wrote to Johann Walter's collection, stated "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, so that they can enter with pleasure into that which is good, as is befitting to youth" (Luther's foreword to Johann Walter's collection; quoted in Blume, p. 78). Note: Walter edited the first Protestant hymnal for choir, [*Eyn geystlich Gesangk Buchley*](#), in Wittenberg in 1524, with a foreword by [Martin Luther](#) himself.

V. How can you use the association argument when you sing hymns by people like Martin Luther and the Wesleys who had some doctrinal problems?

- A. The argument goes something like this: "Some of the old hymn writers (such as the Wesleys) had slightly different doctrinal views yet you sing their hymns, so what's the difference between that and modern music where the writer has a slightly different doctrinal view?"
- B. Unlike modern CCM artists, the old hymn writers believed in separation from the world and this influenced their hymn writing and choice of tunes as demonstrated above. This is very different to the philosophy of CCM that borrows heavily from the world's styles and fashions with its music. As we have seen in the series to date, CCM is more than just music, it is a philosophy that encourages spiritual adultery with the world and with the world of doctrinal error. The key emphasis of early methodism was on **holiness** and a life of strict **separation** from the world! The Wesleys weren't borrowing rhythms out of Satanic voodooism to use in the worship of God!
- C. Unlike modern CCM artists, the old protestants were strongly opposed to compromise with the Roman Catholic Church. CCM, including even the so called "conservative" CCM (e.g., the Gettys), is very at home in the ecumenical environment. In fact, it is a major ingredient in building the one world church. The old, doctrinally sound hymns could not be accused of such a thing.
- D. Unlike CCM, the old hymns written by non-Baptist authors did not transform a fundamental church into something completely different. I am not aware of one example where a Baptist church became Lutheran from singing "A Mighty Fortress is our God" or of a fundamental Baptist church becoming Methodist and embracing some of the errors of Methodism by singing some of Charles Wesley's hymns. However, there are multitudes of examples of how CCM has totally changed conservative, hymn singing churches into rock and roll, worldly, entertainment centers. To compare the old sacred hymns to the CCM phenomenon is not a fair and accurate comparison. It is like comparing apples to oranges.
- E. Note: It should be remembered that we do not consider hymns to be infallible and that even hymns can and should be scrutinized by the Scriptures as necessary. But one will find few errors in comparison with the perverted world of CCM with its widespread promotion of charismatic errors as well as other false concepts of God etc...

VI. Isn't Sincerity of heart the most important thing?

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- A. The argument is also expressed something like this: “It’s the heart that matters most, not the music.”
- B. Sincerity of heart is very important in our praise and worship of God but on its own it is not enough. God does not accept sincere disobedience! There are several prominent examples in the Bible that illustrate this:
 - 1. The example of Nadab and Abihu, Aaron’s sons. Lev. 10:1-2 “And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered **strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not**. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.”
 - 2. The example of Uzzah and the ark.
 - a. 2 Sam. 6:6-7 “And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook *it*. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and **God smote him there for *his error***; and there he died by the ark of God.”
 - b. Not only was Uzzah in error but so was David for employing an un-Scriptural method of transporting the ark. That was an idea borrowed from the Philistine world (1 Sam. 6) 1 Chr. 15:13 “For because ye *did it* not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, **for that we sought him not after the due order**.”
 - 3. The example of Saul and the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:20-23)
 - a. 1 Sam. 15:20 “And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. (21) But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. (22) And Samuel said, Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? **Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams**. (23) For rebellion *is* as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is* as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king.”
 - b. This passage reveals the heart and mind of God on obedience. God is way more concerned about our obedience than an outer show of religiosity.
- C. As believers we will be rewarded according to our obedience. 2 Tim. 2:5 “And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, **except he strive lawfully**.” Keeping the judgment seat of Christ in view will help keep you on the straight and narrow for the Lord.
- D. The worship God desires is worship that is in “spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24).

VII. Doesn’t Sacred Hymn singing tend to be stuffy, dead and boring?

- A. This accusation is sometimes on account of the fact there are churches that have conservative forms of worship but are dead and cold

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spiritually. The problem is in the spiritual condition of the congregation, not the godly old hymns!

B. To sit there and mindlessly mumble the hymns in a dry and heartless manner is no more pleasing to God than swaying to a rock beat! God wants our praise to come from the heart.

1. Eph. 5:19 "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody **in your heart** to the Lord;"

2. Col. 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.**"

C. John Wesley has some helpful tips for hymn singing.

I. Learn these Tunes before you learn any others; afterwards learn as many as you please.

II. Sing them exactly as they are printed here, without altering or mending them at all; and if you have learned to sing them otherwise, unlearn it as soon as you can.

III. Sing All. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a slight degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you, take it up and you will find a blessing.

IV. Sing lustily and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of its being heard, than when you sung the songs of Satan.

V. Sing modestly. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation, that you may not destroy the harmony; but strive to unite your voices together, so as to make one clear melodious sound.

VI. Sing in Time: whatever time is sung, be sure to keep with it. Do not run before nor stay behind it; but attend closely to the leading voices, and move therewith as exactly as you can. And take care you sing not too slow. This drawling way naturally steals on all who are lazy; and it is high time to drive it out from among us, and sing all our tunes just as quick as we did at first.

VII. 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 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 of here, and reward when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.

Conclusion: