

Hymns and Music

If there is ever a divisive issue among born-again believers today, it has to be the issue of music. Whether it is music in the church services, or in the life of the child of God outside of the services, it is a touchy subject today. The reason for this is that individuals set their own standards above the standards of the Scripture. Regardless of what background the individual believer comes from, music forms some part of that background. However, we can be assured that whatever the background, it will not meet the standards the Lord has set for proper music. In the following verse, the Lord has set several standards for proper music for His children. Seriously consider the following passage. In fact, ponder it at length.

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. (*Colossians 3:16*)

Now, there is not a whole lot in the New Testament concerning music. There is considerably more concerning the rest of the conduct of a born-again child of God. However, we should consider this fact: The music in a believer's life, particularly in the church, ought to be in concert (no pun intended) with the rest of what Scripture describes is appropriate for the believer.

This can be easily seen by the following statements in Scripture.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (*Philippians 4:8*)

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. (I Thessalonians 5:21-22)

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. (I John 2:15-16)

Thus, the music in the believer's life, and particularly in the church ought to meet certain criteria. This criteria is not difficult, and neither is it burdensome. If it is, then something is wrong in the life of the believer. Why? Again, the Scripture, which is the only authority we should go by, is express:

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. (*I John 5:2-3*)

If godly, spiritual hymns are grievous to you, then something is terribly wrong with where you are in relationship to the LORD God. If you are offended, then you also ought to consider this particular statement in the word of God:

Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. (*Psalms 119:165*)

With that, let us consider what the Scripture teaches about the hymns and music in the life of the believer.

1. Hymns and music ought to teach solid, sound Scriptural doctrine. In Colossians 3:16, it is very plain that hymns and music ought to teach about doctrine and conduct. Moreover, this doctrine and conduct will not be at variance with the rest of Scripture.

2. We ought to be admonished, or corrected by the hymns and

music we have in our lives. If a hymn does not properly express sound doctrine, then it cannot admonish. Personally, I don't know anyone on this earth who is above the correction found in Scripture. Since the hymns and music are to express sound doctrine, admonishment should come right along with the teaching.

3. We should sing with grace in our hearts to the Lord. The hymns and music we partake of ought to be fully concordant with the grace that has been bestowed upon us by the Lord. Thus, this grace is not the 'cheap' grace that allows one to claim Christ, but be of the world. Rather, it is the grace spoken of in Titus, chapter two, which 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; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. (*Titus 2:11-14*)

4. The hymns and music ought to move us to desire to serve the Lord Jesus Christ more fully than what we do. Every one of us, myself included, could do far more than what we do for our Lord and Saviour. The hymns should move us to do so. If they do not, then something is wrong.

So where does this leave us? Without good, wonderful music?

No, not at all. The believer's hymns and music do not have to incorporate worldly styles, and music to accomplish their end. In fact, the worldly styles, such as Country, Bluegrass, Jazz, Rock & Roll, etc., all negate the message of the words, and steal the blessings the Lord would bestow upon both the believer and the church.

I think you will find that the hymns found in modern hymn books are not the only hymns in existence. In fact, the hymns that have been deliberately left out and intentionally forgotten are some of the best hymns one would ever hear (or sing). Moreover, along with sound lyrics, the music stirs the soul to glorify the LORD God.

With that, I leave you with a final admonition from the Scripture concerning proper music. Please enjoy the hymns found on this page. I pray they will bless you always.

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. (*Ephesians 5:18-21*)

In Christ,

Paul W. Davis

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