

What is Wrong with Playing Songs to God?

David Halbrook

The true God only accepts true worship. Man has offered worship by drinking blood and honoring animals, but God has never accepted it. God showed He expected true worship when he rejected Cain's sacrifice, killed two priests who offered what He had not commanded, and sent Jesus who taught that true worship was going to be different than the worship of Moses' law (Gen. 4:5; Lev. 10:1-2; Jn. 4:21). If He rejected their worship, would He ever reject ours?

We can know God accepts worship when we are *singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord* (Eph. 5:19; also read Col. 3:16 and Jam. 5:13). God taught Christians to sing songs, but they never learned to play songs to Him on musical instruments. If that sounds strange to you, then think of the Lord's Supper. God taught Christians to eat the bread in memory of Jesus' death (1 Cor. 11:24). Would you add butter to this bread or lamb (since Jesus is the *lamb of God*)? If you would not add a different kind of food, why would you add a different kind of music? Send us your answer and contact us for a free CD on this subject. Our website offers further study on this topic, as will next week's article.

Editor's Note: If this article sounds familiar, it was a full-length article in the bulletin back in July, adapted this week (and next) for use in the *Arkansas Weekly*. I hope it helps those who read it to ask some questions and find some answers they have not been challenged to consider before. Will you help someone read and consider these things?

Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.

Pray for: Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Novela Puckett, Samuel Southall, others with ongoing trials, our brethren who are travelling, and new Christians among us.

Please check the lists of various assignments and work needing volunteers.

Our fall gospel meeting is September 9-14 (*Tuesday-Sunday*) with Ron Halbrook.

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

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Words

Kyle Campbell

Words are used every day by everyone. There are all kinds of words: generous, stingy, loving, hateful, kind, unkind, angry, peaceful, loud, quiet, etc. The words that Christians use are very important. Our words will either draw people to faith in Christ and a deep walk with God, or our words will drive people away. Consider some of the types of words Christians should use.

There are calm words (Proverbs 15:1). I know you have heard men or women explode in anger and you might have even been the recipient of a tirade of words that have left you reeling. We cannot control the temperature, harshness, or volume of the words of another. We can, however, try to control the temperature, harshness, and volume of our own words. A soft answer, in dealing with people who have done wrong or offended us, will also help keep us from a lot of angry, violent reactions (cp. Proverbs 3:30; 19:11).

There are cautious words (Proverbs 10:19; 11:13). Have you ever said something you were sorry for later? We say things especially in anger that we do not really mean, and yet the damage is done! Have you noticed that the more a person talks, the more likely he or she is to say something they should not say? When we put no damper on our words, we are likely to say things that are either sinful or disturbing to someone else (Psalm 141:3). Be cautious of gossip, slander, and talebearing. They destroy instead of edify.

There are corrective words (Proverbs 11:14; 25:12). You are probably familiar with two friends in the Bible. The older man was named Jonathan. He was the king's son. The younger man was David. They were good friends and I am sure David was able to learn and be encouraged by the words and actions of Jonathan. One time David was on the run, fleeing for his life from King Saul, and Jonathan strengthened him (1 Samuel 23:16). Who is your David? Who can you encourage this week? There are all

times when we need someone to stand beside us.

There are commendable words (Proverbs 25:11). Whatever "apples of gold in pictures of silver" refers to, we are being told that the right word spoken at the right time by the right person is commendable. There have been times when you have needed a word of encouragement or correction. Or there was a time when you needed to hear the gospel, and someone shared it with you. These are words fitly spoken. Thank God for the people who have fitly spoken in your life.

Ask God to give you a chance this week to share the right words with the right people at the right time. Colossians 4:5-6 says, "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." Use your words wisely. Your salvation and the salvation of others depends on it.

Instrumental Music At Home

Jefferson David Tant

Is it right to sing religious songs accompanied by instruments of music outside the worship assembly? This question has been a matter of concern for many, and it is certainly deserving of our careful thought and study; for surely no one can say it is a matter of indifference, since it involves a practice related to one of the most obvious differences between the church of the Lord and the churches of men.

We are all familiar with the arguments from scripture that have to do with the absence of the instruments in our worship assemblies. Basically, all the arguments can be boiled down to the simple fundamental statement. "We have no authority from God to use the instruments." The same reasoning applies to the burning of incense, the using of hamburgers and coke as the Lord's Supper, etc. The Lord has told us what he wants, and we are content to abide within the revelation he has given on these and other subjects. But some counter by saying that since we can use hamburgers, cokes and incense at home, we can also use instrumental music at home. With this I have no quarrel. In my own home we have an organ, a piano, harmonicas, a guitar, and drums. **BUT WE DO NOT USE THESE IN OUR WORSHIP TO GOD.** Nor do we partake of hamburgers, nor burn incense as an act of worship to God.

Part of the problem seems to stem from a misunderstanding on the part of some who think you cannot worship except in an assembled capacity such as we have on Sunday mornings. (Some have even gone so far as to declare that our assembly on Wednesday evenings was not "worship," since we did not have the "five acts of worship.") But "worship," the English translation of the Greek word "proskuneo"

(literally "to bend the knee towards") involves an act or acts of homage or devotion paid to God, and there are some things we are authorized to do at any time and in any place. (Another Greek word translated "worship" is "latreuo," which refers to service rather than homage.)

While it is true that we are instructed in the New Testament concerning the music we make in the assemblies (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), we are not left without direction concerning individuals or groups other than the general assembly. Acts 16: 25 tells us of Paul and Silas "praying and singing hymns unto God" while in prison. James 5:13 gives us a good formula for expressing happiness: "Is any among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praise." Now, if the language of Eph. 5 and Col. 3 does not authorize instrumental music in assembly worship, how do we escape the same conclusion from the language of Acts 16 and James 5? There is no escape!

Not only is the individual's worship in song accompanied by the instrument unscriptural, but it is highly inconsistent. How do you go about explaining to your neighbors that a song that cannot be sung with the instrument in the church building can be accompanied by the instrument at home? And let us include school choirs while on the subject. I have attended school programs in which young people who were members of the church participated in singing religious songs while someone was banging away at the piano. And I have heard the comments of others in the audience, "Why, I thought so-and-so was a member of the church of Christ?" What do you say then? You just clear your throat and weakly mumble, "Well." Even if you cannot see that such is unscriptural, surely you can have no trouble seeing the inconsistency of such a practice. In fact, I have even ceased singing along with the "gospel quartettes" on the radio, unless I can determine that they are not using instrumental accompaniment. Who can argue with such a practice?

Some reply that they do not worship when they play while singing at home. But this would still be hard to explain to the neighbors, and furthermore raises the question of what is meant by "taking the name of the Lord in vain." If these songs are not "worship" but are sung in a frivolous and empty manner, what have we done then?

Think about these things, brethren. *[Gospel Guardian 21, 32 (Dec. 11, 1969):7-8]*

Editor's Note: With the popularity today of "Christian bands" and "Christian rock," this "old" article reminds us that Jesus' authority is not limited to our assembly. While there are matters of judgment (both wise and unwise in how to view and use radio music), let's begin by being grounded in the basic Scriptures that teach us how to offer worship in spirit and truth when worshiping God privately and publicly.