

Lesson
5

Worship in Music

Where did music begin? No one race or group of people can lay claim to the origin of music, for all people have it in one form or another. Even the most primitive cultures have drums or musical instruments to help them express their happiness or their sorrow in songs and chants.

The Bible gives the earliest record of music. Job 38:7 tells us that when the world was being formed the “stars sang together and the heavenly beings shouted for joy.” Music began in heaven before the creation of the earth as we know it.

Music is important, for it can influence the way we feel, work on our emotions, and even change the way we act. If used wrongly, music can be a strong force for evil. Used in the right way music can bring peace and harmony; it can draw us closer to God. The highest purpose of music is to worship and glorify the Lord.

The Bible gives examples of worship through both instrumental and vocal music. These are given to help us in our ministry of thanksgiving and praise to God.

In this lesson you will study . . .

Ministering With Song

Ministering With Instruments

Being Blessed Through Music



This lesson will help you...

- Identify which forms of music are biblical expressions of worship.
- Identify reasons why some songs minister to God, some to people, some to no one.
- Desire the power, transformation, and freedom that worshipful music brings the believer.

MINISTERING WITH SONG

Objective 1. *Give examples of songs of worship.*

Sing psalms, hymns, and sacred songs; sing to God with thanksgiving in your hearts. Everything you do or say, then, should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks through him to God the Father (Colossians 3:16-17).

The Bible commands us to sing. Ephesians 5:19 agrees almost word-for-word with the passage quoted above from Colossians. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that songs and singing are mentioned hundreds of times in Scripture. God wants us to praise Him in song because He is worthy of our praise and also for what it will do for us spiritually.

Some of our Christian songs are taken from the Psalms, literally Scripture set to music. The idea isn't new with this generation, for the Book of Psalms was the hymnbook of the Jewish nation. They had special psalms for feast days (like Psalm 81), psalms asking for forgiveness (like Psalm 51), and many other kinds of psalms. The greater number, however, were songs of praise and thanksgiving.

The New Testament encourages us to sing these psalms and other hymns and sacred songs as well. The Christian songs of today are as varied as the old psalms—songs for special occasions such as funerals and weddings, songs of prayer and supplication, songs of praise and worship.

Each type of song serves a purpose. A song that says, "Just as I am, I come," encourages sinners to come to the Lord just as they are, so it is often used for altar calls. A song that says, "Search me, O God," helps believers open themselves to the searching of the Holy Spirit when they want to give every area of their lives to the Lord.

Many worship songs begin with another theme such as consecration. We tell the Lord that we will obey Him no matter what it costs. Then the songs remind us of why we are willing to obey Him—because He is worthy. Afterwards, maybe without even realizing it, we become caught up in spontaneous worship as we sing to the Lord. We "lose ourselves" in praise.

Too often Christians have missed this avenue of praise because they felt that their voices lacked quality. But songs of worship aren't just for special occasions or for recordings for other people to listen to at home. They are songs of praise between us and God—our love songs to Him. Although other people may hear them and enjoy them, their appreciation is only secondary. We sing first to and for the Lord.

How do we know a song of worship when we hear it? The song of worship doesn't talk about us or our own needs nor does it invite the sinner to come to Christ. It extols God, magnifies Jesus, talks of the greatness and goodness of the Lord. It's the kind of song that takes us out of our surroundings and into the heavenly places with Christ. It may be only a simple chorus, one we sing from memory, but it glorifies the Father.

O Lord, I will always sing of your constant love; I will proclaim your faithfulness forever. I know that your love will last for all time, that your faithfulness is as permanent as the sky (Psalm 89:1-2).



For You To Do

- 1 Which of the following completions is correct? A worship song differs from other types of songs because a worship song
- is always quiet and solemn.
 - reminds us of our faults.
 - glorifies only God.
 - invites sinners to Christ.

- 2 Chose the correct completion of the sentence. The Psalms are Jewish songs
- of praise.
 - that cover various themes.
 - too old to have meaning.
- 3 Circle the letter in front of each of the opening lines of song which sound as if they belong to songs of worship.
- “I will go where you want me to go.”
 - “This world is not my home.”
 - “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!”
 - “I love Thee, my Savior.”

Check your answers.

MINISTERING WITH INSTRUMENTS

Objective 2. *State principles relating to the use of instruments in worship.*

Worshiping the Lord with musical instruments is mentioned often in the Old Testament. Many different kinds of instruments were used—wind instruments such as the trumpet and flute, stringed instruments like the harp and lyre, and percussion instruments like the drum and cymbal. Old Testament worshipers used whatever musical instruments they had to praise the Lord.

Following their example, we can praise the Lord with anything that we have. There are no “right” or “wrong” instruments to use when we want to honor and glorify God. One person may play an electric organ or conduct an orchestra. Another beats on a hollow log or shakes a tambourine. But all play to God’s glory.

Are there guidelines for us to follow? As we studied in the last lesson, attitude is most important. If I am to play an instrument, I want to do my best because God deserves my best—but that doesn’t mean I must wait until I am a master. I will do the best that I can do here and now.

At the same time I want to be careful that I do not use music as an opportunity to “show off” my talent. Pride is sin. I must remember that whatever ability I have came from God and when I minister I must do it in love. Otherwise my music is worth no more than a noisy gong or a clanging bell (1 Corinthians 13:1).

Music comes in many varieties. Some music is loud and lively, and some soft and quiet. Each has its proper place in Christian worship. However, I must be careful to consider the tastes of others. I would not play loud music where I know the people would be offended. The principle of showing respect for one another (Romans 12:10) applies in music as well as in other areas of our lives.

If God has blessed you with musical ability, ask Him to help you use it for the spreading of the gospel and to encourage others in heartfelt worship. As you pray He can direct you to the right songs or choruses to be played. These should be carefully practiced and thought out before the presentation. The Lord will anoint your music and give inspiration and a sense of direction to every choice involved.

You can also use your instrument in your times of private devotion. You will find joy in offering music to God, making up your own music and words or repeating favorite pieces that bring to your mind the beauty and majesty of our God. Music is one of God’s greatest gifts to mankind. It can also be offered as one of our greatest gifts to God.



For You To Do

4 Read the Scripture references on the left. In front of each reference write the number of the worship with music it matches.

- | | | |
|--------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| a | Exodus 15:19-20 | 1) at the rebuilding of the temple. |
| b | 1 Chronicles 15:28 | 2) when the covenant box was moved. |
| c | Ezra 3:10 | 3) because of victory over the enemy. |
| d | Revelation 14:2 | 4) in heaven. |

5 Complete the sentence. If music is one of God’s gifts to mankind, then we have a right to

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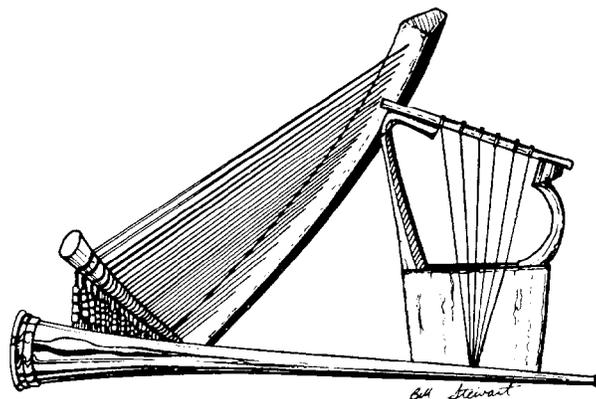
- 6 Which of the following principles or guidelines concerning music in worship are TRUE?
- a We should only use musical instruments named in the Bible.
 - b We can play any instrument if we play it to the glory of God.
 - c Even in music we should show respect for other people and their feelings.
 - d Musical instruments may be played in private devotion.

BEING BLESSED THROUGH MUSIC

Objective 3. *List at least three blessings of worshipful music.*

Second Chronicles 20 gives an unusual account of a battle that was won by worshipping the Lord in music and song. It happened after three ungodly nations had formed an alliance so their combined armies could march against the little kingdom of Judah. With their overwhelming numbers, the outcome of the war seemed certain.

When God’s people heard about it, they cried out to Him for help. Instead of guiding them in military strategy, however, God told them to send musicians who would march before their army singing, “Praise the Lord! His love is eternal!” As they began to sing, the Lord threw the invaders into panic. They turned on each other, fighting and killing. God’s people moved in afterwards only to gather the loot. Then they marched back to the city playing on harps and trumpets, giving glory to the Lord who gave them victory.



We may not be facing actual battle at this moment, but Ephesians 6 reminds us that our enemies today aren't flesh and blood—but the devil and his powers. Just as the physical enemy was conquered through song hundreds of years ago, the spiritual enemy can be put to flight today.

In view of all this, what can we say? If God is for us, who can be against us? . . . Who, then, can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble do it, or hardship or persecution or hunger or poverty or danger or death . . . No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us! (Romans 8:31, 35, 37).

Paul and Silas, thrown into prison for the gospel's sake (Acts 16), rejoiced in the Lord. Though they had been severely beaten and their feet put in stocks, they prayed and sang praises to God. Suddenly there was a violent earthquake and their chains were loosed. God had set them free!

Then something else happened. The frightened jailer was about to kill himself when Paul stopped him by assuring him that they had not escaped.

"Sirs," he cried out, "what must I do to be saved?"

This was the opportunity Paul and Silas wanted. They told the man that salvation would come to him and to his house by believing on Jesus Christ. He and his family believed and were baptized at once. Paul and Silas could then rejoice in a double victory.

Even today people are being brought to Christ through music. A South American guerilla fighter found a place of repentance after entering a little church where he had heard singing. Others have been attracted to gospel meetings by music. In some instances the music itself was not so outstanding, but because it was dedicated to the Lord, the Holy Spirit used it to draw men and women to Himself.



You can relate to their experiences even though your experience may not be identical to theirs. Through a song the Lord helps you forget about your own problems and reach out to help others. Through a song you are assured that the Lord is close by, ready to help you take the next step. Through a song you have new hope and courage and realize how great and strong God really is. Second Chronicles 5:14 tells us of an occasion in the temple when the priests sang and the presence of the Lord came down so mightily that they could not continue the service. They just waited in awed silence before His majesty.

When you are feeling sad or lonely, sing a worship chorus. When you are fearful, sing to the Lord! You will be surprised how quickly He will fill your heart with joy. Perhaps you can ask someone to sing with you—a friend or maybe a whole congregation. Singing unites us in joy and love—and all of us know there is strength in unity.

At the same time we may be helping a timid person reach out to Jesus. He takes away our fears and He will take away their fears as well. We worship in spontaneous outbursts of song and we worship in special songs that we have prayed about and practiced carefully. In either or both ways we are lifted up and strengthened.

Even more important than the benefits we receive, however, is the privilege of ministering to the Lord Himself. We praise Him not only for what praise does for us—but because He is worthy of our praise. We can enter His gates with thanksgiving and go into His courts with praise because He is good and His love is eternal (Psalm 100).

God is worthy of this worship now and throughout all eternity. Let’s joyfully bless the Lord! As we bless Him, He will bless us. I can just imagine the joy God feels as His creation blesses Him through song. In fact, He sings a song too! “The Lord will take delight in you, and in his love he will give you new life. He will sing and be joyful over you!” (Zephaniah 3:17). Hallelujah!



For You To Do

- 7 Which of the following people sang when they were in trouble?
 - a) The army of Judah
 - b) David
 - c) Silas
 - d) Many present-day believers
- 8 Which of the following statements are TRUE?
 - a Our worship in song may help others to worship the Lord too.
 - b People were brought to Christ through song in Bible times, but it won’t happen today.
 - c God told the people of Judah not to praise Him until after they saw the victory.
 - d Our worship in music can be either songs we practiced or songs we sing spontaneously.
- 9 Complete this sentence. In Psalm 104:33 the psalmist said he would sing to the Lord
.....
- 10. List at least three blessings we can receive when we worship the Lord in song. We have given one as an example.
 - a Unity with other believers.....
 - b
 - c
 - d



Check Your Answers

- 1 c) glorifies only God.
- 6 Statements **b**, **c**, and **d** are True.
- 2 b) that cover various themes.
- 7 You should mark all the choices because they all sang when they were in trouble.
- 3 c) "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!"
d) "I love Thee, my Savior."
- 8 Statements **a** and **d** are True.
- 4 **a** 3) because of victory over the enemy.
b 2) when the covenant box was moved.
c 1) at the rebuilding of the temple.
d 4) in heaven.
- 9 all his life.
- 5 offer it back to God.
- 10 Your answer. You may list fears driven away, receiving help and strength, being filled with joy, or people being drawn to Christ.